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A Phono-Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts in Political Interviews: Evidence from Brexit Discourse

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Abstract

Despite growing interest in political discourse and prosodic pragmatics, integrated phono-pragmatic analysis of speech acts and intonation in political interviews remains underexplored, especially in Brexit discourse. This study aims to investigate the phono-pragmatic realization of speech acts in Brexit interviews with Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn. The study is significant because it links pragmatic force with prosodic realization and shows how political meaning is strategically constructed in institutional media discourse. Using a qualitative design, the study examines forty excerpts, twenty from each interview. These excerpts were selected because they contain coherent speech-act sequences, while isolated words and disconnected utterances were excluded. The unit of analysis is the excerpt-level speech-act sequence, with the main speech act used for tone analysis. It applies an eclectic model integrating Searle's (1969) speech act taxonomy, Ferrara's (1980) discourse-functional relations, and Brazil's (1997) discourse intonation model. Praat was used to identify falling, rising, fall-rise, and rise-fall tonal contours. Findings reveal that assertive acts predominate in both interviews, accounting for 68.97% and 64.95% of May's and Corbyn's speech acts, respectively, followed by commissives and directives. Expressives remain marginal, and declaratives are absent. Subordinate acts mainly operate through justification and amplification. Both speakers prefer proclaiming tones. May uses falling and rise-fall contours more evenly, indicating institutional control. Corbyn relies heavily on rise-fall patterns, producing a more emphatic rhetorical style. The analysis shows that intonation actively regulates illocutionary force. These results suggest that a phono-pragmatic framework offers a useful perspective for analyzing strategic spoken communication in institutional media discourse.

Keywords: Brexit, discourse intonation, phono-pragmatics analysis, political interviews, speech acts

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Introduction

Political interviews constitute a distinctive form of institutional discourse, that is, a form of communication shaped by unequal participant roles, topic control, public accountability, and the expectations of a specific institution. In such discourse, politicians must not only respond to questions but also defend positions, negotiate responsibility, and influence public understanding under media scrutiny. The political interview, in contrast to normal conversation, is typified by asymmetrical interactional roles and a dual communicative focus on the interviewer and the wider audience. Recent studies on mediatized political interviews have revealed that such interactions are highly strategic and that speakers make discourse choices to regulate stance, shape interpretation, and control the ensuing interaction (Fu et al., 2024). Political interviews, in this regard, can be treated as a special form of political communication, rather than an extension of ordinary conversation, and therefore are particularly well-suited to linguistic analysis (Nurmaganbetova et al., 2025).

Alrufaiey and Alrikabi (2024) point out that political communication is based on context-dependent pragmatic decisions through which speakers develop effective and convincing meanings. In this sense, political interviews are particularly appropriate for the analysis of speech acts, as they are constructed through acts of asserting, justifying, challenging, committing, and directing. Central to this analysis is the concept of illocutionary force, which refers to the communicative function performed by an utterance, such as making a claim, giving a promise, issuing a challenge, or directing the listener's attention. Language in these environments is not merely used to convey information; it is strategically used to convince, justify, and persuade the audience. This view is supported by studies indicating that political communication is also characterized by metapragmatic monitoring, whereby speakers organize discourse and guide its interpretation within the institutional context (Naait & Alshimmary, 2024).

However, the pragmatic force of political speech is not realized through words alone. Meaning in political interviews is expressed through lexical and pragmatic choices as well as through prosodic realization. This is why a phono-pragmatic perspective is theoretically necessary. Phono-pragmatics examines how phonological and prosodic features, especially intonation, pitch movement, stress, and rhythm, contribute to pragmatic meaning in context. Intonation helps deliver emphasis, certainty, evaluation, and speaker commitment. It can strengthen, weaken, or redefine the illocutionary force of an utterance depending on the context. For example, in Brazil's discourse intonation model, a proclaiming tone presents information as new, authoritative, or interactionally dominant. In political interviews, such a tone may help a politician frame a statement as firm, complete, and publicly accountable. More recent phono-pragmatic studies have indicated that pitch movement plays an important role in attitudinal meaning and in hearers' interpretation of speech acts (Al-Jumaily et al., 2026). This insight is particularly relevant to political communication, where intonation may function as a key resource for emotional framing and affective alignment even when propositional content remains relatively stable (Artero Abellan, 2025).

Despite these contributions, relatively little attention has been paid to the integrated analysis of speech acts and intonation in televised political interviews, particularly in politically contested contexts such as Brexit. Much of the existing work has tended to investigate pragmatic and prosodic dimensions separately, or to deal with political communication more broadly rather than with the political interview as a specific communicative genre. Recent research on political evaluation suggests that political meaning is shaped through layered rhetorical and interactional

mechanisms (Sun & Liu, 2023). Brexit-related scholarship has also shown how public meaning is tied to processes of self-legitimation and strategic self-presentation (Brusenbauch Meislová, 2025). Therefore, examining speech acts without intonation may miss how political commitment, authority, and stance are acoustically reinforced. Conversely, examining intonation without speech acts may overlook the pragmatic action being performed. The present study addresses this issue by examining the phono-pragmatic realization of speech acts in selected televised Brexit interviews with Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn. It is guided by two main questions: (1) Which speech acts do politicians employ in political interviews? And (2) How do the pragmatic functions of speech acts relate to their tone types?

Literature Review

Phono-Pragmatics

Phono-pragmatics refers to the area of inquiry that examines how suprasegmental features of speech, such as pitch, length, loudness, and rhythm, contribute to the interpretation of the speaker's meaning in context. From this perspective, prosody is not treated as a purely phonetic layer added to verbal content, but as part of the communicative process through which intentionality is recognized in real interaction. Recent work in prosodic pragmatics has emphasized that the relation between prosody and context is central to spoken communication because acoustic cues help listeners infer cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal meanings that are not always encoded lexically (Romero-Trillo & Sadeghi, 2023).

Later empirical studies have also indicated that pragmatic interpretation is systematically related to prosodic variation. A recent study on high-imposition requests and refusals revealed that the intonational variation interacts with both verbal and sociopragmatic strategies in the development of how utterances are perceived, particularly in situations involving pressure, politeness, and interpersonal alignment (Azam et al., 2025). Similarly, recent phono-pragmatic research on Persian interaction revealed that prosodic action can be related to the various pragmatic roles of the same utterance, which is that prosody does not just follow the construction of discourse meaning, but is actively engaged in the process (Kazemian et al., 2025). This view is crucial to the current research as it offers the general picture under which the speech acts and intonation can be considered dependent elements of spoken political communication.

Speech Act Theory

The primary pragmatic basis through which the use of language is analyzed as an action by the speaker & not an information conveyance, is in speech act theory. Within this framework, utterances can be interpreted in terms of their illocutionary force, i.e., the communicative act, which is carried out by the speaker by saying something. One of the most helpful systems of classification of the speech acts is given by Searle (1969), who distinguished between assertive, directives, commissive, expressive and declaratives, and this classification is particularly helpful in the pragmatic analysis of institutional discourse, as also connects the linguistic form to the communicative purpose and enables the researcher to see how speakers position themselves, make commitments, issue challenges, or convey attitudes in interaction.

The speech act theory remains applicable to the study of public and institutional discourse; it facilitates the understanding of how the concepts of commitment, normativity, and communicative action work in discourse (Lewiński et al., 2023). Specifically, the model proposed by Searle in the current research is especially relevant due to the fact that the political interviews

are organized around the acts of asserting, justifying, committing, and challenging. This is why speech act theory is a clear functional foundation for determining the key pragmatic tendencies in the chosen interviews and exploring the role of the speech acts in the construction of political meaning.

Intonation in Spoken Political Communication

Intonation plays a pivotal role in any spoken meaning as it assists a speaker to organize information, indicate prominence, and indicate their interpersonal orientation towards what is being talked about. Intonation in discourse-based descriptions is not viewed as a phonetic ornamental feature, but rather as a communicative resource where speakers convey information in the form of new, shared, contrastive, or interactionally meaningful (Brazil, 1997). This perspective is also underpinned by discourse-based work that indicates that prosody helps to form coherence ^ meaning of spoken interaction beyond the sentence level (Wennerstrom, 2001).

The importance of intonation in political communication is even greater since speakers in public tend to use prosodic differences to convey authority, judgment, emotional engagement, or restraint in strategy. Recent studies of political rallies demonstrated that intonation is an emotional framing mechanism, affecting affective alignment and ideological positioning by controlling pitch contour, tempo, pausing, and intensity (Artero Abellan, 2025). In current research, intonation is thus addressed as a practical tool that helps in the comprehension of pragmatic force in verbal political communication. Recent phonetic research has also found that intonational categories are organized and not impressionistic, which makes them more analytical in the speech (Steffman et al., 2024).

Political Interviews as Institutional Discourse

The interviews in politics are understood as a type of institutional speech as opposed to regular conversation. They consist of structured media encounters whereby public figures are interrogated on issues of public interest, and their format is influenced by role asymmetry, topical control, and audience orientation. Feldman (2022) characterizes political interviews as a genre of media & suggests that these types of interviews should be analyzed considering several factors, including participants, the sequence of questions and answers, the setting, and the sociopolitical context. Political interviews have also been delineated in a related genre-based account, which claims it to be a hybrid mode of discourse that incorporates the constraints of media communication with professional and political discourse.

Fu et al. (2024) demonstrate that even a comparatively minor discourse decision, especially the use of pragmatic markers, helps to control the stance and manage interactions during mediatized political interviews. The present study is particularly interested in this institutional nature since it will clarify the reasons why political interviews are a fruitful location for analyzing speech performed strategically. Interview politics require politicians to defend their positions, not harm their commitments, answer pressure, and be perceived to have credibility in the eyes of the interviewer and the general audience of the electorate. This is why special focus can be given to the idea that the genre of political interviews may be taken as a rather appropriate genre of studying how the spoken meaning of the political discourse is formed under the influence of the strategic linguistic performance (Nurmaganbetova et al., 2025).

Previous Empirical Studies and the Identified Gap

In a study by Shitwi et al. (2019), the information tones in the political interview of Barack Obama were analyzed using the discourse intonation model in Brazil & the results revealed that all the information tones were found (proclaiming, referring, & level tones) with high termination as the most frequent one. Their research applies to the current study as it shows that intonation in political interviews can be used to indicate discourse control, contrast, and dominance. But, it is mainly intonational in its breadth, in the sense that it does not categorize utterances in such a way that they can be classified by speech acts, nor does it analyze the organization of pragmatic functions across interview sequences. On the same note, Kampf (2021) examined the frequency of the question do you condemn? In Israeli and American news interviews and demonstrated that it is a ritualized speech act that is formed by moral and ethical demands. Even though this study is very pertinent to the pragmatic study of political interviews, it concerns itself with a particular recurrent speech act and does not provide information on how intonation is involved in the expression of pragmatic force.

Another empirical line of study is exemplified by Alroumi (2025), who examined the phenomenon of equivocation within the context of interviews conducted by Adel Al-Jubeir and revealed how political interviewees evade commitment in media communication in a strategic way. The value of this study is that it brings out the practical complexity of the discourse of interviews and the contribution of strategic maneuvering to high-stakes public interaction. Artero Abellan (2025) demonstrated in a related, though more prosodic, direction that intonation during political rallies helps to frame emotions and align affects by use of characteristics like pitch, pitch contour, pausing, tempo, & voice quality. Although these have been contributed, the available literature is still inclined to focus on either of the two intonations, selected speech acts of news interviews, or pragmatic strategies like equivocation in media communication. Very little has been done to discuss the combined phono-pragmatic analysis of speech acts and intonation in aired political interviews, especially in politically contentious situations like Brexit. The current research paper fills this gap by discussing the relationship between speech acts and the types of tones in chosen televised interviews with Theresa May & Jeremy Corbyn on the topic of Brexit.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods research design based on a phono-pragmatic approach to examine the pragmatic and prosodic realization of speech acts in selected televised Brexit interviews with Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn. The design is qualitative-dominant because the main purpose of the study is to interpret how illocutionary force is constructed and prosodically realized in naturally occurring political discourse. Qualitative inquiry is suitable for research that seeks to understand the construction and interpretation of meaning in actual communicative contexts, rather than through statistical generalization alone (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). At the same time, the study also has mixed-method features. It uses frequency counts and percentages to show the distribution of speech acts and tone types. It also uses Praat to examine pitch movement and tonal contours. These procedures are not used for statistical generalization. They are used to support the qualitative interpretation and to identify recurrent pragmatic and prosodic patterns. Therefore, the study combines qualitative interpretation, simple quantitative description, and acoustic analysis to examine how speech acts and intonation interact in political interview discourse.

Research Instruments

The analysis was based on interview videos, their transcripts, & the Praat software. The acoustic preparation of the selected excerpts consisted of determining the utterances of interest of the two televised interviews and transducing the audio content to the WAV format to be analyzed in Praat. The discussion was aimed at determining the key tone patterns, especially falling, rising, fall-rise, & rise-fall patterns, and how these patterns relate to the primary speech act in each passage. They employed these tools alongside pragmatic classification to analyze the relationship between the speech-act functionality and the prosodic realization in context.

The corpus consisted of two televised Brexit interviews with Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn. These interviews were selected because both speakers were key political figures in the Brexit debate, but represented different political positions. May spoke as the then Prime Minister defending the government's Brexit deal, while Corbyn spoke as the opposition leader responding to Brexit and party policy. The dates were selected because both interviews took place during politically sensitive stages of the Brexit process, when public justification and political commitment were especially important. The corpus information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Summary of the dataset*

Speaker	Interview title	Date	Duration	interviewer	Source platform	No. of excerpts
Therasa May	Terasa May on Brexit vote timing and her political future	6th of January 2019	25:42	Andrew Marr	BBC News	20
Jeremy Cobyn	Corbyn on Brexit and the rising Labour movement	4th of September 2017	25:13	Andrew Marr	BBC News	20
Total	Two Brexit interview	/	/	/	/	40

Reliability and Validity

To enhance analytical reliability and validity, the study applied consistent pragmatic and acoustic criteria throughout the analysis. Tone identification was based on recurring pitch patterns observable in Praat rather than on impressionistic judgement alone, and the interpretation of excerpts involved repeated cross-checking of the audio recordings, transcripts, and pitch contours. In addition, a sample of the data was reviewed by specialists in phonetics and pragmatics to support the credibility of the analysis. Frequency counts of speech acts and tone types were included only to support the qualitative interpretation and to identify recurrent patterns in the dataset.

The Eclectic Analytical Model

The present study adopts an eclectic analytical model that combines three complementary components in order to examine the phono-pragmatic realization of speech acts in selected televised Brexit interviews. At the pragmatic level, Searle's (1969) classification is used to identify the major types of speech acts performed by the speakers, particularly assertive, commissive, directive, and expressive. To account for the internal organization of discourse, Ferrara's (1980) framework is employed to distinguish between main and subordinate speech acts and to identify their functional relations, such as justification, amplification, and contrast. At the prosodic level, Brazil's (1997) model of discourse intonation is used to analyze the tone patterns associated with the main speech acts, especially falling, rising, fall-rise, and rise-fall contours. A summary of the main tone types in Brazil's (1997) model is provided in Appendix E. The integration of these three

components makes it possible to examine the data at two interrelated levels: first, by identifying the pragmatic function and sequential organization of speech acts, and second, by analyzing how intonation contributes to the realization and interpretation of illocutionary force in political interview discourse. This eclectic model is therefore appropriate for the present study because it brings together the pragmatic, sequential, and prosodic dimensions required for a comprehensive analysis of spoken political communication. The relationship between the three analytical components adopted in the present study is illustrated in Figure 1.

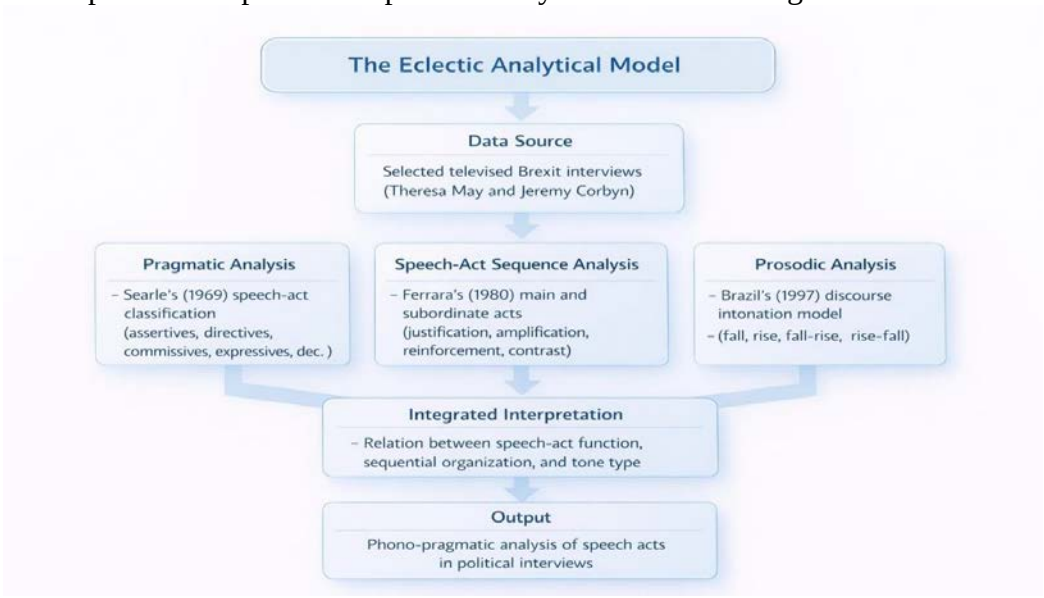


Figure 1. The Eclectic Analytical Model adopted in the present study (Adapted by the author from Searle (1969), Ferrara (1980), and Brazil (1997).

Procedures of Analysis

- The two televised Brexit interviews were first reviewed repeatedly in order to identify analytically relevant utterances containing coherent sequences of speech acts.
- From the two interviews, forty excerpts were selected, twenty from each interview. The selection was limited to excerpts that contained coherent speech-act sequences, while isolated words and disconnected utterances were excluded because they did not provide sufficient discursive context for meaningful analysis.
- The selected excerpts were then analyzed pragmatically in order to identify and classify the speech acts performed by each speaker.
- Within each excerpt, the analysis distinguished between the main speech act and the subordinate acts that supported it through relations such as justification, amplification, and contrast.
- To support the qualitative interpretation, manual frequency counts were recorded for both speech-act categories and tone types. These counts were used only as descriptive support and did not alter the qualitative nature of the study.
- After the pragmatic stage, the relevant interview audio was prepared for acoustic analysis by downloading the interview videos, identifying the required utterances, and converting the selected material from MP4 into WAV format.

- The selected excerpts were then examined in Praat in order to determine the pitch movement and contour pattern associated with the main speech act in each excerpt, with particular attention to falling, rising, fall-rise, and rise-fall tones.
- Finally, the pragmatic and prosodic findings were interpreted together in order to examine how speech-act function relates to tone type in the selected political interviews. The full dataset analysis was placed in the appendix, whereas the main text discusses representative examples in detail.

Results

This section presents the findings of the pragmatic and acoustic analyses of the selected Brexit interview excerpts. In accordance with the procedures of analysis outlined in the methodology, the discussion proceeds from the pragmatic classification of speech acts to the sequential relations between main and subordinate acts and then to the prosodic realization of the main acts. In this way, the section is directly aligned with the two research questions of the study: first, which speech acts are employed by the politicians in the selected interviews, and second, how the pragmatic functions of those speech acts relate to their tone types.

Distribution of Speech Acts in the Selected Interviews

To answer the first research question, the analysis first examines the overall distribution of speech acts in the two interviews. The following tables summarize the frequencies and percentages of the speech-act categories identified according to Searle's (1969) classification. These tables provide the quantitative basis for the later qualitative discussion of how the politicians construct claims, commitments, directives, and evaluations in institutional interview discourse.

Table 2. *May's speech acts according to Searle's classification*

Speech act	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	80	68.97%
Commissive	23	19.83%
Directive	11	9.48%
Expressive	2	1.72%
Declarative	0	0%
Total	116	100%

Table 3. *Corbyn's speech acts according to Searle's classification*

Speech act	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	63	64.95%
Commissive	17	17.53%
Directive	13	13.40%
Expressive	4	4.12%
Declarative	0	0%
Total	97	100%

Tables 2 and 3 show a clear dominance of assertive speech acts in both interviews. In May's data, assertive accounts for 80 instances (68.97%), while in Corbyn's data, they account for 63 instances (64.95%). This reaffirms that acts of stating, explaining, clarifying, defending, and reframing propositions are the dominating acts by both politicians. This trend is entirely in line with the institutional nature of political interviews, where politicians are repeatedly constrained in developing their standpoints, responding to questioning, and handling social interpretation.

The second most common type in both datasets is commissive. May produced 23 commissive acts (19.83%), whereas Corbyn produced 17 (17.53%). The repetition of the commissive acts shows that political interview talk is not restricted to providing information; it includes projecting intention and futuristic policy placement. The number of directives is smaller, but they also play an important role, as in the case of Corbyn, they occupy 13.40 percent of the data in the interview, whereas in the interview with May, they occupy 9.48 percent. In this case, the imperatives are usually more of an attempt to plan the center of attention of the listener, form the meaning-making of evidence, or preempt some political consequences.

In both interviews, expressive acts are peripheral, and there are no declaratives at all. This is not an incidental distribution, but an analytic meaning. The relative rarity of expressiveness implies that the 2 politicians tend to be argumentative and policy-focused instead of being overly dependent on outright emotional outpouring. It should also be expected that the lack of declaratives, as the interview is not a situation that generally grants the speakers the authority to carry out institutional acts using language in the strict Searlean sense. On the whole, the distribution proves the dominance of informative, justificatory, and persuasion functions of interviews over personal expression or institutionalization.

These findings are in line with earlier observations that political interviews operate as a specialized form of institutional discourse rather than as ordinary conversation. They support Abdul-Raof's (2021) account of the political interview as an organized media genre shaped by role asymmetry and public accountability, and they are also consistent with Fu et al. (2024) and Nurmaganbetova et al. (2025), who emphasize that political interview discourse is strategically managed in order to control stance, guide interpretation, and maintain credibility before a wider audience.

Functional Relations between Main and Subordinate Speech Acts

The second phase of the pragmatic analysis does not just deal with the question of what types of speech acts transpire, but also deals with the way they are structured into excerpt-level sequences. In accordance with the model of Ferrara (1980), every passage was discussed with respect to primary speech act & subordinate relations that provide its support. The stage is critically important as it demonstrates that the political discourse is constructed with either single actions or discourse structures that build up and safeguard the primary communicative intent.

The data in the checked appendix indicate that justification is the most frequent subordinate relation in both interviews. Justification is found in seventeen out of the twenty excerpts in May in both simplicity and combined forms. It is found in nineteen out of 20 passages in the interview with Corbyn. This repetitive tendency shows that both politicians strategically justify their key speech acts by providing reasons, procedural justifications, previous stances, or background presuppositions. This pattern is incredibly effective in political interviews, when interlocutors should defend the validity of their words & minimize the possibility of negative interpretation many times.

The second eminent relation is amplification, but it is more common in the interview with May than in the interview with Corbyn. Thirteenth amplification of excerpts in May, where combined forms are used, it is observed that in twenty excerpts there are thirteen appearances of amplification, as compared with twelve in the interview of Corbyn. This suggests that more often than not, the discourse of May extends the contents of the main act with some explanation, institutional detail, or scope, particularly in the commissive main act. A less common relation, as contrastive, is found in the appendix and demonstrates that interview talk is not monolithic; it is a dynamic form in which politicians vary the form of support based on the pressure of the interaction.

Collectively, these observations prove that political speech in the identified interviews is multi-layered rhetorically. The predominant illocutionary force is present in the main act, which is systematically justified, reinforced, amplified, or otherwise, in subordinate acts. This substantiates the idea of Ferrara (1980) that speech acts in discourse are functionally structured with regard to each other. It also complements the findings of Alroumi (2025) in terms of strategy maneuvering in political interviews, as the current data indicate that, despite not being directly vulnerable, speakers still manage to build coherence and persuasion based on well-controlled relations between supporting and dominant acts.

Representative Pragmatic Analysis of Selected Excerpts

To enrich the numerical distribution, some representative excerpts were also studied further to demonstrate how the identified speech acts work in a real discourse. The discussion below demonstrates the use of main and secondary acts in the selected passages of the interview of May & Corbyn.

In the passage in May, “Yes, we are going to hold the vote ... but we will be holding the vote,” the order is arranged in terms of a prevailing commissive act. The first promise is given publicly to the government, and it is committed to a later parliamentary action, and the intervening assertive actions bring about procedural clarification of the time of debate and the vote.

The last commissive restates the promise & thus reinforces the promise. The assertive acts in justification and amplification relation to the hegemonic commissive in the terms of Ferrara, and the entire chain is aimed at maintaining political responsibility and regulating the popular explanation of the procedural delay.

This trend is reflected in the statement made by May in May's interview, "That's what I'll be setting out in the coming days". The commissive act is again the predominant act here, yet it is succeeded by assertive acts with reference to previous speeches, previous governmental speeches, & the possible role of Parliament. These assertiveness do not function as independent main acts. Instead, they justify commitment by showing it as continuity of an institutional process. This order thus indicates how the legitimacy of political commitments is always sold using the discourse that pays much attention to deliberation, continuity, and procedural legitimacy.

The passage of Corbyn, which we have just discussed, "The movement is stronger than ever", focuses on a negative implication which is directly opposed by an assertive act that redefines the political situation in a positive light. The next instruction, "look at…." is a reference to evidence on elections & is not an order in the usual meaning of the word, but a supportive gesture. Later assertive and expressive acts enhance the statement by incorporating ideological critique and identification with the group. This series demonstrates how assertive force, directive support, and evaluative amplification are used in a way that creates a persuasive counter-narrative. In this regard, the current results are also in line with the fact that, as observed by Kampf (2021), the speech acts of political interviews may become very strategic in situations of challenge and scrutiny of the population.

Distribution of Tone Types in the Main Speech Acts

In order to respond to the second research question, the analysis will then shift to the acoustic realization of the main speech acts. The tables below provide an overview of the types of tones detected in the 20 main acts selected in each of the interviews in light of the discourse intonation model developed by Brazil (1997). Introducing the results in such a manner . enables one to look at what contours the individual speakers find preferable, and what role those contours play in the communicative framing of political meaning.

Table 4. *Intonation patterns used by May*

Tone type	Frequency	Percentage
Falling (proclaiming)	9	45%
Rise-fall (proclaiming+)	8	40%
Fall-rise (referring)	2	10%
Rising (referring)	1	5%
Level	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Table 5. *Intonation patterns used by Corbyn*

Tone type	Frequency	Percentage
Falling (proclaiming)	2	10%
Rise-fall (proclaiming+)	17	85%
Fall-rise (referring)	1	5%
Rising (referring)	0	0%
Level	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Tables 4 and 5 indicate that both speakers use mostly proclaiming tones, however, with some differences. The data in May show that the proportion of falling tones in the main acts 45%, and the proportion of rise-fall tones is 40, i.e., the majority of her main speech acts are performed using the prosodic patterns of informational authority, completion, & controlled prominence. Referring tones are much less frequent, and the absence of level tones indicates that her speech tends not to remain prosodically neutral or flattened. Conversely, Corbyn's distribution is even more highly concentrated in the proclaiming domain. The simple falling tone is present only twice, and the rise-fall contour explains 85% of the twenty major acts. It implies that Corbyn is not only informative but highly emphatic and contrastive in his style of prosody. Rather than only presenting information as new, he repeatedly foregrounds it with added rhetorical force. The small number of referring tones further indicates that his main acts are rarely framed as dependent on shared knowledge or interactional tentativeness.

These acoustic findings are broadly consistent with previous intonational research in political discourse. Shitwi et al. (2019) likewise found that proclaiming tones played a central role in political interview speech, while Artero Abellán (2025) showed that prosodic variation in political communication contributes to emotional framing, prominence, and affective alignment. The present study extends such findings by showing not only which tones occur, but also how those tones relate to specific speech-act functions in televised Brexit interviews.

Qualitative Phono-Pragmatic Analysis of Selected Representative Excerpts

The previous tables identify broad patterns, but the phono-pragmatic relation becomes clearer when representative Praat images are interpreted qualitatively. The following four figures correspond to selected main speech acts from the two interviews.

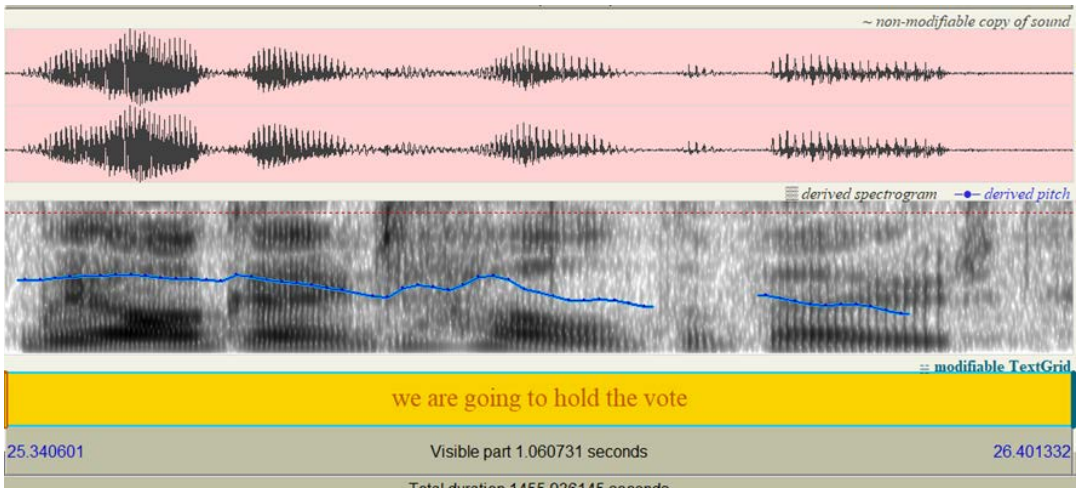


Figure 1. Praat image of May's utterance " we are going to hold the vote"

This figure represents the main commissive speech act in May's first representative excerpt. The contour is interpreted as a falling tone, that is, proclaiming tone in Brazil's (1997) model. The descending movement of the pitch moves towards the nuclear portion of the utterance and ends without a subsequent upward movement of the utterance, thereby providing a sense of completeness and finality to the utterance. The contour, prosodically, introduces the proposition as something new, as being in control, and as being authoritative. This is particularly important in phono-pragmatic terms since the utterance is not merely informative; it is commissive. The speaker is making a promise to the government, which is to be done in the future. It is the falling contour that thus reinforces the illocutionary force of commitment by displaying it as settled, institutionally established, instead of provisional or exploratory. The practical impact of this outline is that it enhances political believability, whereby the interview setting mounts pressure on the interviewee to look responsible. The falling tone assists in establishing the commitment as conclusive and dependable, rather than allowing interpretive uncertainties. This helps Brazil in the argument that the act of declaring tones is related to the non-dominant role of the speaker, who does not share information, and demonstrates that intonation is a resource that can be used practically to exercise political power. In this case, the phonological contour reinforces the commissive force of the utterance & assists in turning the future-oriented promise into a rhetorically serious pledge to society.

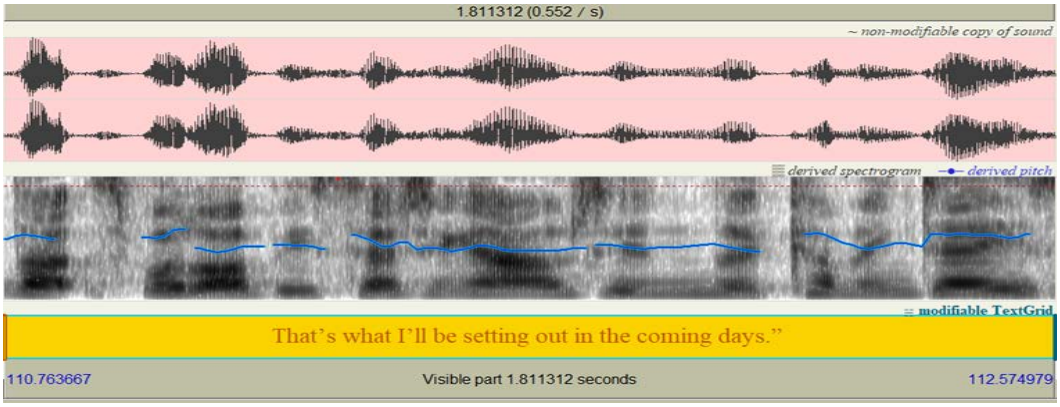


Figure 2. Praat image of May's utterance "That's what I'll be setting out in the coming days"

This characterization of Figure 1 shows one more commissive utterance of May; however, the prosodic realization varies. In this case, the contour is perceived as a rising or referring tone instead of a definite, proclaiming fall. The pitch is not as closed in the final note; rather, the utterance appears to be more open-ended and interactionally connected to the rest of the discourse. The utterance represented by such a contour in the framework of Brazil would be represented as part of the shared or ongoing discourse, but not as a completely closed informational unit. This tonal selection is pragmatically important since the speech act is commissive, but the commitment of the speech act is adjusted by the intonation. The utterance, however, is still an indication of future action but in a manner that is more procedural, preparatory, and context-dependent. This more gentle prosodic enactment helps to diminish the effect of categorical closure and enables the speaker to maintain flexibility & yet sound responsive in the context of a political interview. The figure thus shows that commissive force is not actualized uniformly: a commitment can be expressed as a continuation of justification, instead of as a commitment that is absolute and immediately determined.

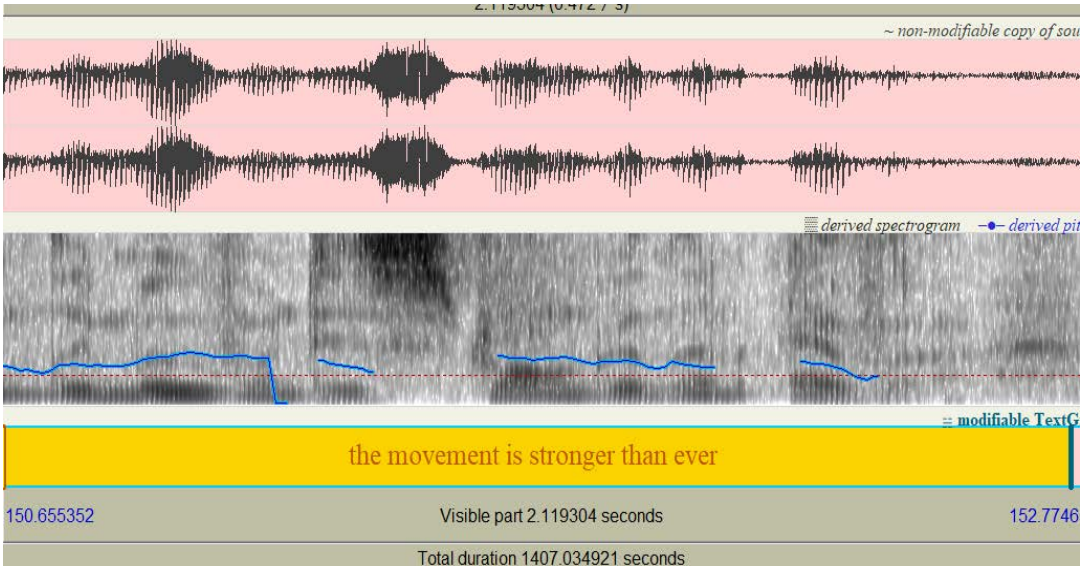


Figure 3. Praat image of Corbyn's utterance "The movement is stronger than ever."

This figure shows the acoustic pattern of a prominent assertive utterance in the interview with Corbyn. The contour is discussed as rise-fall, which is the proclaiming-plus tone of Brazil. The pitch increases to the nuclear stress, and then drops abruptly, thus forming a contour that comes out emphatic & prominent. The lexical accent is on the evaluative part of the utterance, i.e, the prosody is directly correlated with the most politically significant element of the message. It is not a disinterested declarative statement; it is an assertion that is strategically stepped up. The phono-pragmatic worth of the contour is that the utterance can serve as a refutation of a negative judgment. Through a rise-fall pattern, Corbyn is doing more than making a counter-claim: he is providing that counter-claim with rhetorical salience and persuasive force. The outline assists in moving forward, contrast, confidence, and argumentative vigor, which is why it is particularly appropriate to assertive acts, which are likewise evaluative.

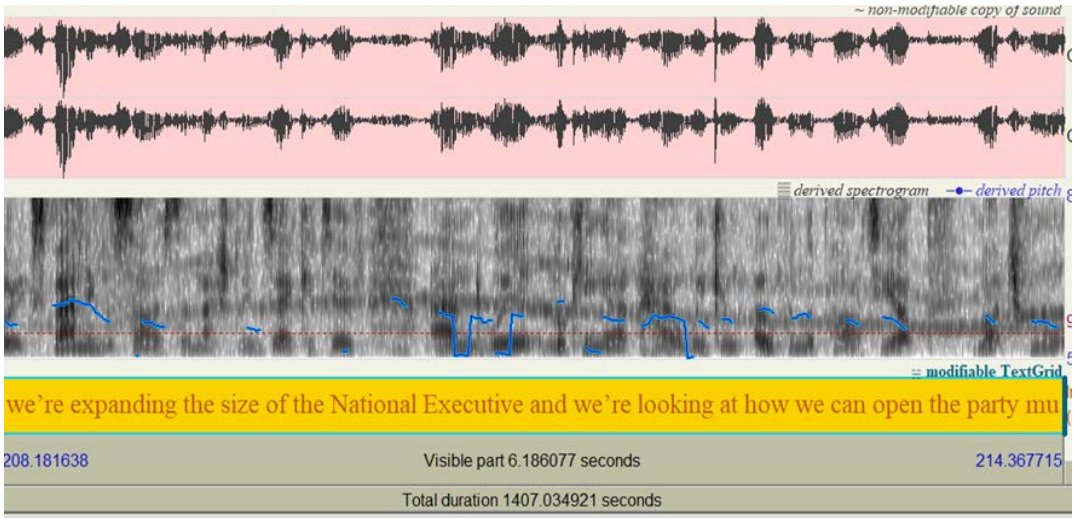


Figure 4. Praat image of Corbyn's utterance "We're expanding the size of the National Executive…"

This character is a rise- fall curve, which is associated with the proclaiming-plus tone of Brazil (p+). The stress on the nuclear is increased with a pitch & then dropped abruptly, forming a contour that is emphatic & prominent. The utterance is a commissive where Corbyn promises to continue doing things in the party. The pattern of the rise-fall means that commitment is not given sketched or procedurally, but is foregrounded with additional rhetorical emphasis and persuasive force. This tonal choice is pragmatically important in that it supports the illocutionary power of the commissive act by introducing the mentioned commitments as assured, willful, and politically meaningful. The descending motion after the nuclear ascension lends the utterance an effect of closure and certainty, and the oratorically charged civic commitment otherwise of mundane organizational report turns into an oratorically infused civic commitment. Through this, the rise-fall contour itself adds to the overall persuasive framework of the interview in its capacity to frame the institutional developments that are described as determined commitments, as opposed to intentions.

Discussion

The results of the current work demonstrate a systematic interdependence of speech acts and intonation in the discourse of a political interview. At the pragmatic level, the assertive acts are the most important to both speakers, then commissive, and then directives. This affirms that the interview genre entails that politicians should mainly explain, defend, justify, and locate themselves as well as project commitment where it counts. Speech acts are not often isolated at the sequential level. Instead, they are organized in a stratified series of acts, where the subordinate acts justify, enhance, reinforce, or otherwise give weight to the dominant act. The process of political persuasion in such interviews is thus not merely the consequence of the kind of speech act carried out, but of how the speech acts are interrelated within the discourse.

The prevalence of falling and rise-fall tones at the prosodic level shows that there is a preference towards proclaiming tones, which is in line with the public, adversarial, and stance-heavy character of the political interview. However, both speakers do not employ an identical

prosodic profile. The distribution of falling and rise-fall contours in May is relatively even, & her discourse has a relatively measured and institutionally restrained character. Corbyn, in his turn, uses rise-fall contours too much, which results in a more emphatic and contrastive style of rhetoric. This opposition implies that the selection of prosodic is within the wider interactional strategy of each speaker.

The current research also contributes to the existing literature in a number of ways. To begin with, they substantiate previous reports on political interviews as institutionally structured discourse (Abdul-Raof, 2021; Fu et al., 2024; Nurmaganbetova et al., 2025). Second, they align with pragmatic research that has found interview speech entails challenge, commitment, and maneuvering as opposed to the uncomplicated transfer of information (Kampf, 2021; Alroumi, 2025). Third, they build upon the works of Shitwi et al. (2019) and Artero Abellan (2025) by showing that the tone type is not just an autonomous phonetic characteristic but a resource that directly interacts with the illocutionary force. That is, speech acts and intonation are not considered as distinct layers in the current study; it demonstrates them as the intersections of building political meaning.

Above all, the research shows that prosody is an active way of influencing the performance of speech acts. When commissive acts are performed with falling contours, commitment is enhanced & it is put across as final and authoritative. When the assertive acts are made with rise-fall contours, the assessment & contrast are heightened, which makes the utterance more prominent rhetorically. Therefore, intonation does not simply follow political speech; it also plays a direct role in the interpretation of political speech. This combined discovery is the key contribution of the eclectic model of the study that unites Searle's speech-act taxology, discourse-functional relations by Ferrara, and the discourse intonation model of Brazil in one analytical design.

Conclusion

The results of the current research indicate that a systematic interaction between pragmatic role and prosodic performance determines the discourse of a political interview. The findings show that assertive and commissive speech acts are the most frequent types in the selected Brexit interviews. Directives are used less frequently, expressives remain marginal, and declaratives are absent. This distribution reflects the communicative requirements of political interviews, where speakers are expected to state positions, justify arguments, clarify policies, and project future commitments.

The study also shows that speech acts do not occur in isolation. Instead, they are arranged in sequences where subordinate acts justify, amplify, support, or sometimes contrast with the main act. This layered structure strengthens coherence and persuasion. It also shows that political meaning is constructed across discourse sequences rather than through isolated utterances.

At the prosodic level, the acoustic analysis reveals a strong tendency toward proclaiming tones, especially falling and rise-fall contours. Falling tones tend to indicate certainty, completion, and authority, while rise-fall tones add contrast, emphasis, and rhetorical salience. The central finding is that illocutionary force is not conveyed by lexical content alone. It is also strengthened, adjusted, or highlighted through prosodic realization. In this sense, the study confirms that a phono-pragmatic approach offers a useful framework for understanding how politicians use spoken language strategically in institutional media discourse.

The study has several implications. For discourse analysis, it shows that political discourse should be examined not only through lexical choices and speech-act categories, but also through prosodic features such as tone, pitch movement, and emphasis. This helps discourse analysts better understand how authority, stance, and persuasion are constructed in spoken political discourse. For media training, the findings suggest that politicians, journalists, and public speakers should be more aware of the communicative effects of intonation. Falling tones may help present a message as firm and complete, while rise-fall tones may make a statement more emphatic and rhetorically forceful. Such awareness can help speakers manage public messages more effectively in interviews and other media contexts. For pragmatics teaching, the study provides useful examples for explaining how illocutionary force is realized in actual spoken interaction. It shows that speech acts are not expressed through verbal content alone, but are also shaped by prosodic choices. Therefore, political interview data can be used to help students understand the relationship among speech acts, context, and intonation. For political communication, the study suggests that persuasion, authority, and commitment are produced through both pragmatic choices and vocal delivery. Political meaning is therefore not only a matter of what politicians say, but also how they say it. This finding contributes to a fuller understanding of strategic spoken communication in institutional media discourse.

The study also has some limitations. It is based on forty excerpts from two televised Brexit interviews, so the findings cannot be generalized to all political interviews. Future studies may examine larger datasets, different political contexts, or cross-linguistic political interviews to further test the phono-pragmatic framework.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Searle's (1969) and Ferrara's (1980) Classification of Speech Acts in May's Interview

Excerpt No.	Searle's (1969) Classification		Ferrara's (1980) Classification	
	Speech Act	Freq.	Main Clause	Subordinate Relationship
1	Assertive	4	**Assertive**	*Justification & Amplification*
	Commissive			
	Directive	1		
	Expressive Declarative	1		
2	Assertive	3	**Commissive**	*Justification* and amplification
	Commissive	2		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
3	Assertive	5	**Assertive**	*Justification* and amplification
	Commissive	1		
	Directive	1		

Excerpt No.	Searle's (1969) Classification		Ferrara's (1980) Classification	
	Speech Act	Freq.	Main Clause	Subordinate Relationship
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
4	Assertive	3	**Commissive**	*Amplification & Justification*
	Commissive	3		
	Directive Expressive			
	Declarative			
5	Assertive	1	**Directive**	*Justification* and amplification
	Commissive	2		
	Directive	1		
	Expressive	1		
	Declarative			
6	Assertive	5	**Commissive**	*Justification and amplification*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive			
	Expressive Declarative			
7	Assertive	2	**Directive**	*Justification*
	Commissive			
	Directive	1		
	Expressive	1		
	Declarative			
8	Assertive	4	**Assertive**	*Justification*
	Commissive			
	Directive Expressive			
	Declarative			
9	Assertive Commissive	4	**Directive**	*Justification*
	Directive	1		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
10	Assertive	3	Commissive	Justification & amplification
	Commissive	2		
	Directive Expressive			
	Declarative			
11	Assertive Commissive	3	**Directive**	Justification

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Excerpt No.	Searle's (1969) Classification		Ferrara's (1980) Classification	
	Speech Act	Freq.	Main Clause	Subordinate Relationship
	Directive	1		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
12	Assertive	3	**Directive**	*Justification and amplification*
	Commissive			
	Directive	2		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
13	Assertive	1	**Commissive**	*Amplification*
	Commissive	3		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
14	Assertive	4	**Directive**	*Justification* and amplification
	Commissive			
	Directive	2		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
15	Assertive	3	**Assertive**	Justification , amplification and contrast
	Commissive			
	Directive			
	Expressive	1		
	Declarative			
16	Assertive	3	**Assertive**	Justification and amplification
	Commissive			
	Directive	1		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
17	Assertive	3	**Commissive**	*Justification*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
18	Assertive	4	**Directive**	*Justification*
	Commissive			
	Directive	1		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
19	Assertive	3	**Assertive**	*Justification*

Excerpt No.	Searle's (1969) Classification		Ferrara's (1980) Classification	
	Speech Act	Freq.	Main Clause	Subordinate Relationship
	Commissive			
	Directive	1		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
20	Assertive	2	**Commissive**	*Justification and Amplification*
	Commissive	2		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			

Appendix B

Searle's (1969) and Ferrara's (1980) Classification of Speech Acts in Corbyn's Interview

Excerpt No.	Searle's (1969) Classification		Ferrara's (1980) Classification	
	Speech Act	Freq.	Main Clause	Subordinate Relationship
1	Assertive	2	**Commissive**	*Justification & Amplification*
	Commissive	2		
	Directive	0		
	Expressive	0		
	Declarative	0		
2	Assertive	5	**Commissive**	*Justification & Amplification*
	Commissive	3		
	Directive	0		
	Expressive	0		
	Declarative	0		
3	Assertive	3	**Commissive**	*Amplification*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
4	Assertive	3	**Directive**	*Justification & Amplification*
	Commissive			
	Directive	2		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
5	Assertive	2	**Commissive**	*Justification*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
6	Assertive	5	**Commissive**	*Justification & Amplification*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive	2		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
7	Assertive	1	**Commissive**	*Amplification*
	Commissive	2		
	Directive	1		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
8	Assertive	4	**Commissive**	*Amplification*
	Commissive	2		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
9	Assertive	4	**Commissive**	*Justification*
	Commissive	2		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
10	Assertive	5	**Assertive**	*Justification*
	Commissive			
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
11	Assertive	5	**Commissive**	*Justification*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
12	Assertive	5	Directive	Justification &amplification

Excerpt No.	Searle's (1969) Classification		Ferrara's (1980) Classification	
	Speech Act	Freq.	Main Clause	Subordinate Relationship
	Commissive	0		
	Directive	3		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
13	Assertive	6	**Directive**	*Justification*
	Commissive			
	Directive	1		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
14	Assertive	7	**Assertive**	*Justification*
	Commissive			
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
15	Assertive	5	**Assertive**	*Justification & Amplification*
	Commissive			
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
16	Assertive	4	**Assertive**	Justification and amplification
	Commissive			
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
17	Assertive	2	**Commissive**	*Justification & amplification*
	Commissive	4		
	Directive			
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
18	Assertive	5	**Commissive**	*Justification & Amplification*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive	2		
	Expressive			
	Declarative			
19	Assertive	5	**Commissive**	*Justification & Contrastive*
	Commissive	1		
	Directive			
	Expressive	1		
	Declarative			
20	Assertive	2	**Commissive**	*Justification*
	Commissive	2		
	Directive			
	Expressive	1		
	Declarative			

Appendix C

May's Interview Excerpts (1–20)

1- ***May****: yes, we are going to hold the vote// commissive // and you said it was good to be next week // assertive // actually the debate starts next week, and the debate will carry on into the into the following week// assertive // but we will be holding the vote// commissive //*

2-**May**: well what we've been doing//assertive// since we decided not to go ahead with the vote in December having listened to the concerns that have been expressed by members of parliament is obviously I've been talking to European leaders //assertive //there was the December European Council meeting immediately after that decision and we got some changes some insurances from the December European Council we I've been talking to European leaders since obviously including in the last few days talking to colleagues// assertive // and what we'll be setting out over the next pope what we'll be setting out over the next few days //commissive // because actually this isn't just about the EU it's about us as well what we can do domestically so what we'll be setting out over the next few days is a sort of assurance// commissive // is measures in three areas the first is// assertive // measures that will be //commissive//specific for Northern Ireland the second is a greater role for Parliament as we take//assertive// these negotiations of into the next stage for our future relationship and the third and we're still working on this is further assurances from the European Union to address the issues that have been raised .

3- **May**: well that's what I'll be setting out in the coming days//commissive// Andrew but we've already said as I said at the speech//assertive// I gave when we opened the debate that started on this issue that we were// assertive// looking at the role that Parliament can have in looking perhaps at the mandate for the negotiations for the future there's// assertive // a number of ways in which we're looking to see how we can involve Parliament in a greater way in the future.

4- **May***: well the European Union's made clear and that this is the deal that is on the table//assertive// there are further assurances we're seeking from them in relation to the specific issues and concerns that members of parliament have//assertive// but I think when MPs come to look at this vote when they come to consider what they're doing they need to think of the three things//directive// and I think they need to ask themselves first of all does this deal deliver on the referendum does it bring back control of our borders laws and money yes it does does it protect our jobs and security yes it does does it provide certainty for businesses and citizens for the future and yes it does//directive// so those three issues that station that you looked at//assertive//*

5- **May**: I'm working on getting this vote through Parliament// commissive // it's the it's for those who oppose the deal to actually say what the alternative is//assertive // and so far nobody nobody has put forward an alternative that delivers on all those issues crucially delivers on the referendum result //assertive //

6- **May**: the deal is on the table //assertive//let's look at what we've got in the House of Commons at the moment//dierective// in terms of that the views that MPs are taking on this on this deal and remember we've got no article figure 50 was triggered leaving like we're

leaving on 20 no//assertive// I want to see this deal go through as you and I want to see it go through //commissive//when when people work well if the deal is not voted on as a this vote that's coming out of//assertive// then actually we're going to be an uncharted territory//assertive// I don't think anybody can say exactly what will happen in terms of the reaction //assertive// we'll see you good because because well if I can just go back to what I was going to do which is setting out what we have in the House of Commons mean what in the House of Commons is a Labour leadership and Labour Party that is //assertive // playing politics with this that is opposing any deal in order to create the most the greatest chaos that they can we've got people who are promoting a second referendum in order to stop brexit and we've got people who want to see their perfect brexit and I would say don't let the search for the perfect become the enemy of the good because the danger there the danger there is actually end up with no brexit at all. //directive//

7- **May**: Andrew, what I'm doing you're saying what happens if if they say //assertive//,what I'm saying is that's actually let's actually remove the first//directive// if and let's get this vote through the House of Commons //commissive//that's what you'd like to do//assertive // I'm working for two colleagues and we'll be continuing to talk with colleagues over the coming days. //commissive//

8- **May**: the key concern that members of parliament raised on the backstop was the concern that it could become permanent or it could become indefinite//assertive// and they need to know that it can be replaced if it's put into place now//assertive// we in the European Union are very clear this has been reiterated it was reiterated at that December council//assertive// that this is not intended to be used in the first place and if it is it is only temporary but it's that concern that maybe there is some way in which it could become indefinite so ensuring that we actually//commissive// get the future relationship in place to replace the backstop if it's used is a crucial element of this we say the European Union say that's what we want to do it's making sure that we can give people the confidence//assertive// that that will be delivered.//commissive//

9- **May**: well first of all the way are very clear that we will do everything//commissive// whatever the circumstances everything in our power not to have a hard border between north and Ireland and Ireland but what what but what you have to well you say well it won't happen actually no border nope no border doesn't happen//assertive// simply because people sit around saying well we won't have a border we'll put it up and know if you could will but it's about more than that it's//assertive// about businesses knowing what they do so if you're in a situation where you're operating different tariffs how how do businesses deal with that in terms of customs and that is going across that border so actually as over this isn't//assertive// just about aspiration it's about practicality and that's the point it's about making sure that we can guarantee that there will//commissive// be that no hard border but that's//assertive// important to us northern islands part of the United Kingdom we owe it to the people of Northern Ireland.

10- May: no it is not// assertive// what we have in the political declaration which sets out is a set of instructions effectively to the negotiators in the next stage//assertive// and it is more comprehensive it's more ambitious it's an unprecedented degree of relationship//assertive// in and people focus on trade but also on security//assertive// which is hugely important to us it's about protecting jobs and security of people here in the UK.//assertive//

11-May: I'm going//commissive// for my deal Andrew the alternative I know you've given me a choice of the alternatives but what I'm saying is what I'm working for and I'm doing//assertive// it because I genuinely believe this is what is in the interests of this country I believe//assertive// it's in our national interest to leave the European Union to deliver on the referendum but to do//assertive// it in an orderly way to do it in a way that gives//assertive// certainty to citizens EU citizens here UK citizens living in Europe that gives certainty to businesses I think that's important that's what this deal does //assertive//delivers on the referendum protects jobs and security give certainty to businesses and people.

12- **May**: in my view there should not be//directive// a second referendum now let's just look//directive// at what you're saying in terms of Parliament having a second referendum as I said earlier what we see//assertive// in Parliament is some people who are advocating a second referendum because they want to stop brexit now we've also got some people on the opposition I'm the chairman of the neh party in Lavery that said that this would be//assertive// disrespectful to those people who went out and voted leave it would divide our country//assertive// it would I believe and practically actually you couldn't get//assertive// a referendum in time before the 29th of March you'd be talking about extending article 50 we're//assertive// already nearly three years from the vote to leave the European Union I think we should//directive// be leaving the European Union and delivering on that phone all of those all of all of me.

13- **May**: what what I do//assertive// in the first place is trying to ensure and persuade people that actually going for a second referendum is not//directive// the way forward for this country it's not the way forward because it is disrespecting people, disrespecting the vote of the people mostly inspecting the House of Commons and if they say//assertive// this is what we want surely as Prime Minister you have to do it. now the House of Commons obviously will come to //assertive//its view on these things at the moment we've got different views across the House of Commons we've//assertive// got people who want a second referendum to stop brexit we've got people who are trying to use up you know various means in the House of Commons to stop No Deal my message to anybody who doesn't want//assertive// No Deal is actually you you have two alternatives you can have No Deal or you can have a deal and actually the deal that's//assertive// on the table is the deal people will be voting on.

14-May: no this is about no you would let speak the let's be clear//assertive// about the situation that we're in there's lots of people talking about all sorts of things that could happen yeah extend article 50 actually I think it's //assertive//only the government that can extend aquavit extend article 50 have a second referendum do this what is//assertive// this about actually it's about not confronting the decision that we all have to take and the decision that we all have to take //assertive//is a very simple one do we want to deliver on the referendum do we want to bring back control of our borders laws and money do we want to protect jobs and security in this country do we want to give certainty to businesses and people and if the answer to all of those questions is//assertive// yes which I believe it should be then there is one way forward which is to ensure that we leave//assertive// with a good deal and there's//assertive// a good deal on the table.

15- **May**: what is //assertive//the best what is in the national interest what is best for this country is to leave the European Union with a good deal the good deal is //assertive//on the

table that our concerns about it I'm continuing to listen to colleagues and we'll continue to talk to colleagues about this and we're//assertive// continuing to talk with the European Union about the further assurances that can give members of parliament the confidence of knowing that they can support this deal because it is//assertive// a good deal that's on the table it does all the things that I've talked about delivering on the referendum and so forth what is//assertive// important I think is when members of Parliament come to look at this that actually they recognize the responsibility you know Parliament overwhelmingly voted for a referendum Parliament voted to trigger article 50 Parliament by majority voted for the EU withdrawal.

16- **May**: what I'm I'm looking for the reassurance of people//assertive// but what I'm saying is it's important to recognize what this is about people focus on the backstop //assertive//but actually within that document are all the issues which if you're a business with contracts in the EU that go beyond the 29th of March//assertive// what happens to those contracts I used to label to sell those goods under a you log all those sorts of issues really but are really important for people. //assertive//

17- **May**: what I've been clear//assertive// with my colleagues I was clear before Christmas with my colleagues the two things what I'm not going to//commissive// call a snap election and secondly that I'm not going to //commissive//be leading the party into the twenty two general election but what colleagues have have said they want me to do//commissive// is to deliver brexit which is what I'm working on doing//commissive// and also deliver on the agenda that I set out when I first became Prime Minister on the steps of that and that is //assertive//why for example tomorrow we're announcing our long-term plan on the national debate to come on.

18- **May**: yeah let me just sort of stand//directive// back and say what we're//assertive// doing in relation to the NHS now come on if I may - the issue with the target because it feeds into what we're doing tomorrow what we did//assertive// in the summer is we announced that we are giving the biggest cash boost to the NHS in its history that enables the NHS to come up with its 10-year long long-term plan now this is//assertive// crucial for ensuring the sustainability ensuring the NHS is there for us in the future as it has been in the past and there are key areas within that plan so making sure we have//assertive// the best maternity care in the world giving the babies at best start in life ensuring that we get better at preventing detecting and treating conditions so that people and we improve the outcomes on conditions and managing better between health and care in relation to people's old age as people age making sure they can live independently for longer and live healthier lives now what we've in the NHS and the reason why I wanted to make sure that we looked at this and did this is that yes we are //assertive//actually within those targets which we're seeing more people we're treating more people but because the demand no we're not we're slipping against the targets because despite the fact that we're actually doing more the demand is outstripping that that's why we need to take a look//directive// that's why we need to put//commissive// the extra money in that's why you needed say in the future but what the extra money enables us to do what the long-term plan enables us to do is actually to step back and say how do we ensure that the NHS continues to be on the best health services in the world that's what we'll be announcing tomorrow.

19- **May**: yeah we've//assertive// throughout the introduction of universal credit we've been clear that we would roll it roll it out as a sort of study process learn as we were going

along we've//assertive// done that we've made changes to universal credit as we've been as we've been going on we'll be saying more about the future as in the coming but it will be//commissive // fully rolled out on the time tape by 2023 as was originally intended but what I think it's important on universal credit the reason why it's important to get this right and why we've been taking our time why we've been ensuring that we have made changes as we've been learning through this process is because this is a much better system than the system it replaced this is//assertive// a system that encourages people in to work make sure when they're in work it pays the legacy system we inherited//assertive// from the Labour Party had nearly 1.4 million people left on benefits for almost a decade now that is//expressive// not good for them it's not good for their families it's not good for us as a country actually helping people into work//assertive// giving the dignity of being in work the ability to support their families that's what universal credit is about.

20- **May**: I look I approach these things I talk//assertive// to my colleagues and I was //expressive//grateful for the fact obviously the old colleagues who supported me but I recognize//assertive// that there have been concerns around the issue we were talking about earlier about this issue of the the brexit deal and that's why I'm continuing to talk //commissive//with colleagues listen to colleagues about that and work with the European Union to provide the assurance//commissive// clarifications that I believe are necessary for people to feel the confidence that they can support the deal.

Appendix D
Corbyn's Interview Excerpts (1–20)

1- **Corbyn**: no no no no the steam is rising not falling and the movement is //assertive//stronger than ever look at//directive// the numbers of people that came to Brighton last night look at all those that are supporting the party and look at the local election results we've gained since June listen labour is//assertive// a party of the people it's a party of activists it's a party of the community and what is so exciting //expressive//now is as we start//assertive// putting more details into our policies social policies housing transport health and so on is the numbers of people that want to be involved and have something very positive and very constructive to say that's that's //assertive//something that is pretty new in British politics policymaking in the open…..

2- **Corbyn**: what I put forward to the National Executive earlier this week I was endorsed on again on Friday with more detail//assertive// to it is that we're//commissive// having a democracy commission in the party we're expanding//commissive// the size the National Executive and we're looking at how we can open the party up much more and make conference the final decider of policy so that there has to be//assertive// some structural issues addressed in the party but that's//assertive// fine and I have to say it went through the National Executive in opposition

3-**Corbyn**: of course I will listen//commissive// to them the what I would say is that the important priority is to ensure that we have a tariff free trade access the European market//directive// half of all our trade is //assertive//with Europe I would also say that we need to look very carefully//directive// at the terms of any trade relationship because at the moment we're//assertive// part of the single market obviously that has //assertive//within it restrictions on state aid and state spending that has pressures on it through the European you

to privatise rail for example in other services I think we have to//assertive// be quite careful about the powers we need as national governments .

4- **Corbyn**: I would have wanted us to intervene immediately on SSI red car when the steel industry was in a crisis at that time //assertive//the government claimed //assertive//there issues of state aid we disputed that at the time but I would also want to say that we would want to be//commissive// able to invest in industries another example the labor labor //commissive// governor box a steel industry if necessary in order to make sure we have a strong steel industry as the basis of a manufacturing economy but it's//assertive // also about a a mixed economy it's about investment in new industries and so for example I want to see//commissive// a much bigger renewable sector look out here you've got fantastic wind farm in the in the sea out here I want to see us as a country investing in those industries to make sure they thrive and become a source of exports.

5 **Corbyn**: indeed I like//expressive// the point you're making about the force field I don't want //commissive//us to become some kind of offshore tax haven on the shores of Europe I don't want//commissive// us to do some sweetheart deal with Donald Trump which means that you lower environmental concern and working conditions in the USA then you lower them in Britain in order to meet the USA and they go down further and for race to the bottom very bad what I want//directive// is us to have a neck an economy that develops and grows an investment//commissive// led economy high wage high activity economy you do //assertive//that by an effective trading relationship with Europe look everyone every one of our manufacturing industries cars ships everything else has a massive supply chain food industry food processing industry all across Europe you can't cut that off and break it.

6- **Corbyn**: we made//assertive// this very ……. we made it very clear throughout the referendum campaign and through the general election campaign that we wanted//assertive// to protect consumer workers environmental conditions we want//commissive// after Brexit to be part of a number of European agencies because it's//assertive// important to have that there has to be some//assertive// judicial process of settlement of any dispute and indeed the Teresa may finally has//assertive// come round to that position in her Florence speech and ……

7- **Corbyn**: when the referendum took place//assertive// there was a result given I think we have to//assertive// recognize the economic importance to Europe of us and us to Europe it's a big choice I think we have to go down//directive// an economic road continues that good relationship with Europe because I'm very concerned //expressive//about the idea that Teresa may and others flying around the world this summer sort of offering all kinds of sweetheart trades which could be damaging to our to our working conditions in this ….

8-**Corbyn**: I understand what they're//assertive// saying I understand you agree with them well I understand the points //assertive//they're making and I understand the importance of workers moving for in place to the other what I also understand is that there is //assertive//an abuse of free movement by some employers who have grotesquely exploited some very low paid workers that has to stop but we have to recognize//assertive// that in the future we're gonna need people to work in Europe and people from Europe we're going to need to work here there's gonna be a lot of movement.

9-**Corbyn**: well inside of Europe a lot of people are//assertive// gonna come and work here and a lot of people in Britain are gonna go and work there there has to be an agreement on it and how it's //assertive//achieved listen every go to any Airbus office go to any rolls-

royce place go to any of those places there are //assertive//engineers coming from Europe on a daily basis in going back all of that happens all the time you can't stop//assertive// that and you shouldn't stop that.//dierctive//

10- **Corbyn**: well we will //commissive//challenge them all the way on all of these issues their relationship with the DUP is //assertive//a strange one to put it mildly a billion pounds given to pet projects the DUP in Northern Ireland and then the DUP presumably supposed//assertive// to be their close allies in the Parliament it doesn't look like it we will//commissive// challenge them because the pay cap because of and rebut essence because it cuts//assertive// in public service inequality in Britain that's what people out there are thirsting for something a bit different.

11-Corbyn: trade unions represent their members trade unions are//assertive// there to negotiate on behalf of their members and they will be //assertive//making protest actions and many other things over the winter so instead of turning the blame on unions that represent their members why can't//directive// we instead look at the way in which this government has exploited public sector workers over the past seven years not annulled what's in the blame//assertive// on anybody.

12- **Corbyn**: do you agree//directive// with him that it is the duty of socialists and the duty of trade unionists to defy this law? Andrew your rights and my rights came//assertive// because of protests over historically in this country you and I fully understand//assertive// that I agree but I suggest ask I suggest a way to deal //directive//with this now is for the government to recognize their problems they have created//assertive// by making public sector workers pay the price of the chaos created by the bankers.

13- **Corbyn**: it's//assertive// a crucial issue I'm supporting //commissive//those people that are demanding a decent public sector pay rise I'm supporting//commissive// those people in making that demand and I'm saying a Labour government will//commissive// repeal this trade union act and bring in fairness and justice at the workplace

14-**Corbyn**: what I think//assertive// we need with uber is decent paying conditions for its its staff there is//assertive// a huge level of exploitation as a GM B Union has pointed out and what TfL have pointed//assertive// out is they serious concerns about safety which is why they propose suspension of their license and that I understand is going to be subject to appeal there is//assertive// an issue about safety clearly the public as a whole want access to rapid rapid access to taxis of all sorts it should be//directive// regulated the public should be//directive// protected.

15- **Corbyn**: sorry//expressive// or it's either going to go to court or they're going to mend their ways and make a new application//assertive// and TfL will have to reconsider it//assertive// but I do think there has to be proper regulation of the taxi service and licensing all over the country//assertive//

17- **Corbyn**: we live//assertive// in a mixed economy and we would increase the public participation in that economy in order to shore investment ensure proper investment across the cone if you take//assertive// the post mining areas of Britain precious little investment in 20 or 30 years low low quality jobs low pay real poverty there that's because there's//assertive// been a lack of government involvement a lack of public involvement so we will//commissive// set up a national investment bank we will have regional development agencies we will invest in all those areas we would not be cancelling Crossrail for the north

we would not be cancelling Midland mainline electrification we'd not be cancelling electrification in the south.

18-**Corbyn**: we put at wealth we put//assertive// forward proposals which would raise corporate taxation and raise some taxes on the very wealthiest and also try//assertive// and deal with the issues of tax avoidance and tax evasion and tax havens and so I think we are certainly understanding of that but we also understand//assertive// the need for investment if we don't//assertive// invest we've got the lowest level of investment in the OECD let's get on//directive// with it let's do it.

19- **Corbyn**: I don't think//assertive// I'm worried about taxing the super-rich and the super wealthy what I'm looking at//assertive// first of all is the levels of unpaid tax and evasion and start//directive// with that and move on from there but the objective surely has to //assertive//be a stronger economic base for everybody in this country in dealing with the waste of poverty and inequality.

20- **Corbyn**: we would be giving//commissive// every young person a chance to go to university without getting into 57,000 pounds worth of debt at the end of it we would //commissive// putting two billion immediately into the DWP in order to deal with the awful effects of the of the 500-pound cap and also the way in which people disability being treated that would not be the end of the story that would be the start of it because we have //assertive//half of the families with a disabled person as a member of the family literally living in poverty there would be a lot more to do because I am appalled//expressive// at the levels of poverty amongst people particularly people with disabilities.

Appendix E

Tone Types in Brazil's (1997) Model of Discourse Intonation and their meanings

Type of Tone	Symbol	Meaning	Speaker's Role
Proclaiming (p)	fall ↘	Unshared information (separateness)	Non-dominant
Proclaiming plus tone (p+)	rise-fall ↗↘		dominant
Referring (r)	fall-rise ↘↗	Shared information (togetherness)	Non-dominant
Referring plus tone (r+)	rise ↗		dominant
Level tone	o	Formulaic (routine) hesitation	

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