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*Corresponding author: Anne Bannink, ACLC, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
E-mail: e.a.bannink@uva.nl

Reviewing editor:
Derek Kompare, Southern Methodist University Meadows School of the Arts, USA

Additional information is available at the end of the article

LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS & CRITICISM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The accountability interview revisited: De-constructing anti-abortion discourse in Spain

Anne Bannink^{1*} and Julián Albaladejo¹

Abstract: This paper adopts a case study approach to the investigation of the genre of the accountability interview. It zooms in on one particular political interview that was broadcast on Spanish television in 2012. The interview, with Spain's former minister of Justice, Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, addresses the bill on abortion that he intended to present to parliament later that year. We have selected this particular interview because it sheds light on the complexity of the interactional configuration of the news interview and inherent shifts in alignment around one of the most contentious topics in politics today. Detailed analysis of the data, focussing on (1) changes in footing and grammatical person, (2) the representation of women and (3) lexical and argumentational features of ideological construction, shows that although, on the surface, the interview displays many of the features of the prototypical accountability interview (Montgomery, 2008), the journalist and Gallardón collude to groom the audience into accepting their shared ideologies. These results prompt us to suggest a refinement of Montgomery's typology.

Subjects: Mass Communication; Political Communication; Language & Literature

Keywords: accountability interview; abortion discourse; speaker roles; footing; social actors; political discourse; TV; social practices

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Anne Bannink is coordinator of the research group Institutional Discourse at the Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication. Researchers in this group investigate how institutions are discursively constructed and maintained through the linguistic and semiotic behaviors of their members. We aim to articulate specific proposals for the analysis of (multimodal) data in a number of professional social contexts, especially multiparty discourses that involve complex roles and participation frameworks. Having started out with a focus on educational environments and language learning, these proposals increasingly address professional communication in a range of face-to-face and technologically-mediated situations. These include (broadcast) political discourse, doctor-patient communication, educational discourses in secondary schools and university settings.

Julián Albaladejo is a student of the Research MA Linguistics at the University of Amsterdam. The data for this paper originated in a term paper he wrote under supervision of Anne Bannink.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

A rising number of private TV channels all over the world aims to promote specific ideological positions, which makes us re-consider the role of journalists and politicians in news interviews. In this paper we take a detailed look at one particular interview that was broadcast in 2012 in a TV show produced by the Spanish media corporation *Intereconomía*. In this interview the Spanish minister of Justice at the time is questioned about his proposals for a reform of Spain's abortion legislation. A linguistic analysis of his answers show the interview shows not only a profound disregard for the voice of women, but also many inconsistencies in his argumentation. The interviewer does not challenge the minister's position and even shows support for his ideas in the formulations of his questions. We conclude that the journalist fails in his iconic role of impartial watchdog, which prompts us to suggest a refinement of the genre "news interview".

1. Introduction

Although social media are rapidly gaining importance in the changing news ecology of the twenty-first century (Lewis & Cushion, 2017), television remains a powerful channel for politicians when it comes to reaching a mass audience. A steady stream of news interviews, in serious as well as popular programs, give those in office the opportunity to communicate their proposals and ideas to the general public. Over the years the discursive structure of the traditional TV news interview has been widely studied (e.g. Heritage, 1985; Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Heritage, 2002, 2008; Montgomery, 2007). Montgomery (2008) distinguishes four different sub-types of the genre. Among these is the *accountability* interview that calls “a public figure to account in relation to an issue or event of the moment either for their own deeds or words or for the actions/statements of the institution with which they are associated” (2008, p. 262). This definition provides us with a useful benchmark for the analysis of the interactional configuration of this particular type of interview (cf. Baym, 2013), but it also raises a number of questions: what exactly are the institutions the participants in the event are said to represent? Is this always clear and unequivocal? Does an interview that is presented as an accountability interview and that seems at first glance to be discursively constructed as such necessarily result in the politician being held accountable? If not, why not? These are the research questions this paper addresses.

We adopt a case study approach in our endeavour to find answers to the questions raised above and zoom in on one particular political interview with Spain’s former minister of Justice, Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, that was broadcast on Spanish television in 2012. During the interview, the host and Gallardón address the bill on abortion titled *Law on the Protection of the Conceived* that he intended to present to parliament later that year. We have selected this particular interview because it sheds light on the complexity of the interactional configuration of the news interview and inherent shifts in alignment around one of the most contentious topics in politics today. Fine-grained analysis of the data shows that although, on the surface, the interview seems to adhere to Montgomery’s definition of the prototypical accountability interview (2008), the journalist and Gallardón collude to groom the audience into accepting their shared ideologies, which prompts us to suggest a refinement of Montgomery’s typology.

The theoretical orientation of our investigation is interdisciplinary. Starting from Goffman’s (1981) analysis of speaker/hearer roles and “footing”—the alignment of speakers in an interaction to themselves and others—we will map out the different roles the participants perform throughout the interview. Van Leeuwen’s Social Actor Model (1996) will be used to determine which social roles are allocated by the speakers to those involved in the general debate on abortion. We will employ a mixed methods approach. We do not only use qualitative methods for a detailed description and analysis of specific episodes from the interview and unravel the rhetorical strategies of the participants in the studio, we also include quantitative data regarding, e.g. grammatical person or lexical choice, as these will help us understand the scope of specific strategies in the discourse.

2. Background to the data

2.1. *The position of women and the debate on abortion*

The position of women in Spain has changed considerably during the last decades. The increase of the influx of women in higher education and their improved employment status has led to greater economic power and independence (Domínguez-Folgueras & Castro-Martin, 2008). But in spite of the shift in gender equality in the public sphere, the role of women in the private sphere has largely remained the same: women are still primarily responsible for housework and child care activities. Moreover, the Catholic church remains an important influence in Spanish society and its learnings on issues such as family planning and abortion still resonate with a substantial, although steadily decreasing, part of the population.

In 1985 the Socialist Party endorsed Spain's first law on abortion. This law granted women the right to an abortion in case of rape, of serious deformity of the foetus or if their physical or mental health was imperilled. By far the majority of the 115,000 abortions carried out in 2009 were performed at private clinics on the grounds that the pregnancy posed a psychological risk to the woman (Govan, 2012). In 2010 this practice induced the socialist party to propose a new, more liberal law which gave women the right to choose for an abortion until up to 14 weeks into their pregnancy, or up to 22 weeks if their health was at risk or the foetus showed serious deformities.

The debate on women's right to abortion continued, however, after the elections of 2011 when the People's Party (PP)¹ gained an absolute majority. In 2012 the PP's minister of justice, Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, called for a reform of the law on abortion and proposed the *Law on the Protection of the Conceived*, which would have ended the right of women to decide freely. The bill considered only two conditions for legal abortions: reported rape (until up to 12 weeks of pregnancy) and permanent or lasting risk to the woman's physical or mental health (until up to 22 weeks). The latter would have to be accredited by two doctors from two different hospitals who had to be different from the doctor performing the abortion. After the evaluation of her case, the woman would be contacted by a member of staff from the hospital to inform her about alternatives to the termination of the pregnancy and she would have to wait for at least 7 days before she could make her decision (as opposed to the 3 days in the 2010 Law). In the case of under-age women, the involvement of parents or guardians would be compulsory (unlike the 2010 Law that allowed women over 16 to have an abortion without the consent of others). Women would be exempted from any criminal sanction in the event their abortion did not meet the conditions set out in the proposal, but administrative sanctions were left unspecified, and doctors who side-stepped the law would be prosecuted.

The government of Mariano Rajoy, prime minister at the time, had pledged to only revoke the clause that allowed women aged 16 and 17 to have abortions without parental consent, but Gallardón's proposal went way beyond this and would have completely overturned the abortion reforms passed by the previous socialist administration. The freedom Rajoy gave to Gallardón to go through with his plan seems to be the result of a political trade-off. When he was Mayor of Madrid in 2008, Gallardón had been involved in a conflict with Esperanza Aguirre, the President of the Community of Madrid. Despite by-laws of the party opposing it, Gallardón, at the time, aspired to be the representative of Madrid in the Spanish Congress Electoral District. When Aguirre became aware of Gallardón's intentions, she threatened to resign as President of Madrid and to run for National Deputy. Gallardón lost the political battle that ensued and Rajoy decided to exclude him from the PP list for the general elections, but in 2011 he was elected as Deputy to Congress for Madrid and then appointed Minister of Justice by Rajoy. It seems feasible that after Rajoy allowed Aguirre to win the internal conflict against Gallardón in 2008 he felt he owed Gallardón the ambitious and radical reform. The extreme conservatism of Gallardón's proposals, however, took most people by surprise: Gallardón had always belonged to the progressive wing of the party and it was seen as unexpected that he would be the architect of such an ultraconservative bill. Aware of the public surprise, Gallardón presented his reform as "the most advanced and progressive legislation that the government has made". He claimed that he "had done something never before seen: end the myth of the presumed moral superiority of the left-wing" (Villanueva, 2013).

2.2. Political journalism and media organizations

Spain's political history has had a negative impact on the standards of journalism in the country. Freedom of the press and the right to information were only recognised as human rights as late as 1978, when the Spanish Constitution came into force. Due to the late emergence of a press that had no ties with government institutions and specific political factions, professional autonomy for journalists has never been fully established (Humanes, Martínez-Nicolás, & Saperas, 2013). The journalistic tradition of Spain fits into the pluralistic polarised media system typical of Mediterranean countries, as described by Hallin and Mancini (2004). Journalists have mostly been advocates of particular ideologies or causes and have never fulfilled the watchdog role (cf.

Baym, 2013) that sees it as its task to hold those in power accountable for their actions (cf. Casero-Ripolles, Fernández-Beaumont, & García Santamaría, 2015). As a result, the general public has a largely negative perception of the media and of journalists as a professional group. Journalists are seen as mainly guided by political and business interests, and not so much by public service.²

The media company *Intereconomía*, producer of the interview investigated in this paper, is a clear representative of Spain's highly politicised media landscape. Julio Ariza, its owner, was a Member of the Catalanian Parliament for the PP, the same party Gallardón represented as a minister at the time of the interview. And although the company claims that it is independent and not linked to a particular political party, the channel launched an advertising campaign under the slogan "proud to be right-wing". Moreover, the mission statement of the company says that it "acknowledges its identification with the Christian roots of civilisation [and shows] a special esteem on the right to life from conception to natural death".³

3. Selection of the data

The data analysed in this paper derive from an interview that took place on 26 July 2012 during the TV program *El Gato al Agua*, a show on political issues, presented by Alberto Jiménez Martínez, former director of *Radio Intereconomía*. In the interview a number of reforms are discussed that Gallardón planned to introduce during his term of office. The episode that we will zoom in on runs from 19' 29" to 31' 09". In it Gallardón addresses both the subject of abortion in general as well as his *Law of the Protection of the Conceived*. The interview has been selected for investigation because it marks a pivotal moment in the articulation of the reform: it is not only the first of the few television interviews where Gallardón talks about his plans but it is also the first time that he advocates his reform as grounded in the principles of the Constitutional Court.

A note on translation and transcription. For the purpose of this paper, the interview has been transcribed and translated into English. In line with Bucholtz's observations on the politics of transcription (2000)⁴ we sought corroboration from two native speakers of Spanish and proficient L2 speakers of English, who did not know the purpose of the study. Some of their recommendations on the representational level were taken on board, with the proviso that agency would be retained, when possible, in both the original and the translation. Passive structures are more frequent in English than in Spanish: in Spanish they are generally restricted to formal and written texts. Due to the specific purpose of this paper and the focus on the analysis of agency we decided that keeping equivalent agency structures, whenever possible, was of particular importance, even if it was detrimental to a more native-like style in the translation.

4. Theoretical framework and methods

For the description and analysis of the data, we employ a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework. Genre analysis allows us to zoom in on the interactional accomplishment of the accountability interview. Goffman's work on participant frameworks (1981) guides us in the analysis of speaker and hearer roles in the speech event. And we use Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Model (1996) to unravel how both individual and collective identities are assigned to the parties involved in the discourse.

4.1. The accountability interview as a genre: Discursive features

The political news interview constitutes a genre in itself: it has a clear communicative purpose and specific conventional features (cf. *moves*; Swales, 1990). As manager of the discourse, the interviewers hold a powerful position (cf. Ekström & Kroon Lundell, 2011; Huls & Varwijk, 2011). It is their institutional right to nominate the topics and to decide if and when a question has been fully answered (cf. Greatbatch, 1998). The discursive organization of the proto-typical accountability interview, then, leans heavily on a strict question-answer format. Turn-taking rules are clear: it is the task of the interviewer to ask questions; the interviewee is expected to provide satisfactory answers to these questions. In this sense the interactional configuration resembles that of courtroom discourse (cf., e.g. Sidnell, 2010): interviewers may take on the role of inquisitor if and when

politicians evade answering the questions that are posed to them (cf. Heritage, 1985; Hutchby, 2011). Journalists are even expected to express adversarialness if their questions are not adequately answered: in those instances they are supposed to challenge the politician's responses through supplementary questions (Roca-Cuberes, 2014).

The differentiation of speaker/hearer rights and obligations in the *speech event* accountability interview (Hymes, 1967) promotes distinct discursive strategies. Montgomery (2008) observes that interviewers typically refrain from minimal response tokens, since these might be interpreted as affiliative and might therefore damage the impression of impartiality that is expected. He also reports a high incidence of struggles for the floor and frequent overlap, in particular at turn boundaries. Huls and Varwijk (2011) found interruptions and repetition of the question if the interviewer felt the politician's answer was not satisfactory. And data of news interviews presented by Angus, Fitzgerald, Atay, and Wiles (2016) show a significant number of challenges and clarification checks on the part of the interviewer and instances of topic avoidance on the part of the interviewee.

4.2. The accountability interview as a speech event: Participant framework

For a detailed analysis of the *participation framework* of news interview, we draw on the work of Erving Goffman. In his essay "Footing", Goffman proposes a re-examination of "the primitive notions of speaker and hearer" (1981, p. 5) in interactions and suggests that we should distinguish three speaker roles: *animator*, *author* and *principal*. The animator is what Goffman calls the sounding box through which the utterances are made. The author is the individual who owns and selects the words that are spoken. Often animator and author roles coincide, but this is not always the case: it could also be that, e.g. a speechwriter writes the words for a politician to animate. The principal role in Goffman's proposals refers to the individual or party whose beliefs and viewpoints are represented by the words that are spoken. Again it could be that the principal is the same person as the animator and/or the author but the roles can also be fulfilled by different individuals. In a given situation, the animator, for instance, could be a politician giving a speech; the author, the speechwriter who has chosen the words for the politician to speak, and the principal the political party, the politician and the speechwriter represent. It is important to keep in mind that these different roles are not static: within a speech event there are likely to be shifts in *footing*, in the speakers' alignment to themselves and the hearers.

In TV interviews, both interviewer and interviewee are by definition *animators*, as they are the ones who physically ask and answer the questions, but their *author* role is less straightforward. Although the more or less spontaneous nature of interviews requires improvisation and forces the participants to take some degree of authorship (even if the questions and specific arguments or formulations have been scripted and rehearsed), they tend to be co-authors: they both talk as representatives of social institutions (cf. Ekström & Lundell, 2011), which makes them also *principals*, sharing the responsibility for the words spoken with the institutions they represent.

4.3. The accountability interview as an ideological text: Agency and social action

Van Leeuwen's *Social Actor Model* (1996) proposes a grammar for the classification of social actors. The model allows us to determine what roles are allocated to the social actors in a particular stretch of discourse. As Koller (2009) explains: "... social actors as a discourse analytical category are seen as the textual instantiations of models of the self and others, both individual and collective". Agency, Van Leeuwen argues, is not always realised by the grammatical role of *Agent*. It can also be realised by, e.g. the use of possessive determiners (as in "our proposal"). This means that there is no need for congruence between the actual roles that participants take in an activity and the role they are assigned in the discourse. It is the speaker who decides which social actors are presented as initiators (agent) of the event and which as ones that are merely acted upon (patient). The motivation for that decision can be explored and sheds light on the ideologies of the author of the discourse.

5. Results

Below we will present the results of our analyses of the data.

5.1. Participation framework: The role of the interviewer

The principal role of Alberto Jiménez Martínez as host and conductor of the interview is complex. On the one hand, he represents *Intereconomía*, the institution he is employed by and that endorses a particular worldview (see Section 2.2). At the same time, however, he remains a representative of the broader caste of journalists, who, as a professional group, place a high value on notions such as autonomy and lack of bias. These dual principal roles have to be negotiated in the questions he poses and in his response to the answers he receives. Below we will see if he is successful in balancing both identities. First we zoom in on two marked lexical choices:

DATA 1

Host: And, in that respect, is abortion ((moves his hand towards Gallardón)) a right like the left wing Manicheanly argues?

Presentador: Y, en ese sentido, ¿es el aborto ((dirige su mano en dirección a Gallardón)) un derecho, como sostiene de forma maniquea la izquierda?

The Dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language (DRAE) defines “*Maniqueísmo*” (“manicheism”) both as “a sect” and as “a tendency to interpret reality on the base of a dichotomist observation”. The DRAE adds to this definition that the word is used as a pejorative. Thus, the adverbial phrase “*de forma maniquea*” (translated as: “Manicheanly”), used to qualify the position of the left-wing political parties that abortion is a right, is undeniably a negative appreciation.

Another example can be found below:

DATA 2

Host: Will it be avoided that, for instance, the mother’s mental damage becomes an unjustified amnesty? Because that’s what was happening with the previous law, not just this one but also the 1985 one.

Presentador: Se va a evitar por ejemplo que el daño psíquico de la madre se convierta en un coladero? Porque así lo ha sido en la anterior ley, ya no en esta sino en la del 85 también.

The word “*coladero*” (translated as “unjustified amnesty”) literally means “colander” but it is used here metaphorically, according to the DRAE referring to “a place that enables people to enter somewhere surreptitiously or without permission”. It invokes the image of liquid being drained with the help of a colander. Here it is used to describe the fact that women used to resort to the option of claiming mental damage in order to be granted an abortion and can be understood as a negative appreciation on the host’s behalf of both the first and the current laws on abortion.

His ideological orientation does not only colour his vocabulary but also surfaces in the following question:

DATA 3

Host: Minister, do you think it is reasonable that in a time of budget cuts on eehm medical materials in medicine in particular—on drugs for the elderly and even on the Law of Dependency—the social security system continues FUNDING abortions?

Presentador: Le parece a usted razonable ministro que en un momento en el que hay recortes de eehm de material de sanidad, de medicina concretamente—de fármacos para mayores e incluso la Ley de Dependencia—la Seguridad Social siga financiando los abortos?

Through his framing of this question, Martínez forges a connection between the funding of abortion and cuts on medical care and benefits for vulnerable groups in Spanish society. The

implication is that funding of abortion facilities takes place at the expense of the care for the elderly and the poor.

The data above show that Martínez's principal role is firmly lodged in *Intereconomía's* official point of view on abortion as recorded in the mission statement of the company, both with respect to his choice of words and to the nature of the questions he brings to the table.

5.2. Participation framework: The role of the audience

Although the audience is not physically present at the event and unable to contribute to the conversation, it plays an important participant role in the speech event, i.e. the role of overhearer (cf. Heritage, 1985). In fact, the viewers are of course the true target of everything that is being said. But “the” audience does not form a monolithic group: it comprises not only of the general public, but also of fellow party members of the politician—and political adversaries. All of these groups have a different stake in the issue at hand. Gallardón's awareness of the heterogeneity of the audience surfaces in the data below where he draws a parallel between the United Nation treaty on the rights of the disabled and the issue of the right to abortion on the grounds of deformities of the foetus:

Data 4⁵

Gallardón: That [the right to perform abortions because of deformities of the foetus] is ethically absolutely blameworthy and let me tell you something, it is also LEGALLY INADMISSIBLE as a consequence of the agreement that, by the way, was adopted unanimously in the Spanish Parliament ((points to the front with both fingers)). ((change of tone: aside)) I hope the Socialist Party will remember what they voted for when this agreement was put to the vote. We do have a commitment with the United Nations

Gallardón: Eso [el derecho al aborto debido a deformidades en el feto] es éticamente absolutamente reprochable y le digo una cosa, además es LEGALMENTE INADMISIBLE como consecuencia del convenio que, por cierto, por unanimidad [fue] aprobado en Cortes Generales. ((señala hacia adelante con ambos dedos)) ((cambio de tono: aparte)) Espero que el Partido Socialista recuerde lo que votó cuando votó este convenio. Nosotros tenemos comprometido con Naciones Unidas.

In this data we see a change of footing (Goffman, 1981) that is cued both nonverbally (gesture of pointing) and prosodically (change of tone to indicate an aside) when Gallardón says: “I hope the Socialist Party will remember what they voted for when this agreement was put to the vote”. This remark is an instance of *innuendo* (Goffman, 1981; Obeng, 1997). It is not directed at the TV audience at large, but targeted at the members of the Socialist Party: Gallardón insinuates that the Socialist Abortion Law from 2010 ignores the rights of the disabled, which, in his view, is incoherent with the Socialist Party's endorsement of the principles of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.⁶

5.3. Participation framework: The role of the interviewee

The heterogeneity of the audience leads to frequent shifts in alignment by the interviewee. In the following section, we will analyse the way Gallardón uses grammatical person and changes in footing to frame his own role and the roles of the other participants in the presentation of his reform.

5.3.1. Framing responsibility: Negotiating principal and author roles

A quantitative analysis of the instances Gallardón uses the first grammatical person during the interview will tell us how often he presents himself as grammatical agent, both as an individual (first person singular) or as part of a group (first person plural).

Figure 1 shows that Gallardón uses the first person plural twice as often as he uses the first person singular. This *pluralis auctoris* is a rhetorical strategy that allows speakers to refer to themselves in the plural as a way to share responsibilities or present their ideas as shared. It shows that Gallardón prefers presenting himself as part of a group, legitimising his claims and ideas as ratified by others.

In DATA 3, for instance, Gallardón presents his intention to follow the Constitutional Court's doctrine as a collective endeavour, although the participants of this collective remain implicit:

DATA 5

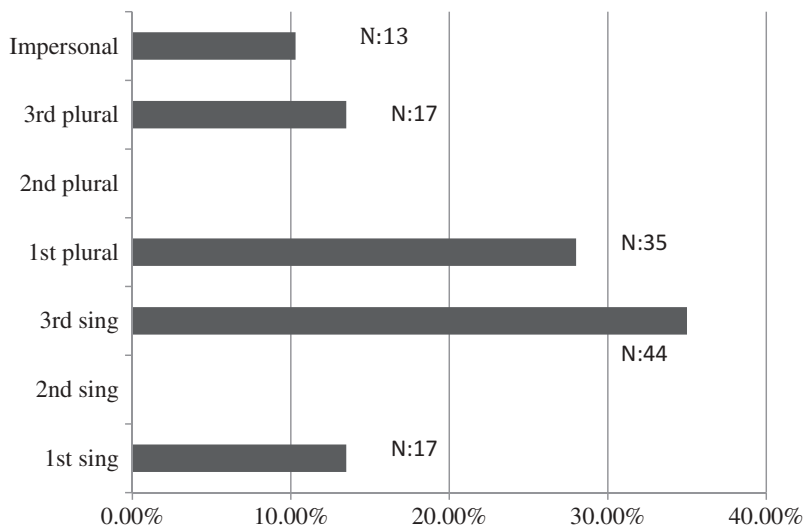
Gallardón: **We** are going to lean towards the Constitutional Court's doctrine in the sense that I was telling you. I mean, **we** cannot allow a doctrine like the one **we** have, in which during a specific time the life of the conceived is left completely UNPROTECTED and therefore, **we** are going for a law based on legal assumptions.

Gallardón: *Vamos a ir a la doctrina del tribunal constitucional en el sentido que le estaba diciendo. Es decir, no podemos permitir una doctrina como la que tenemos, en el que durante determinado plazo SE DESPROTEJE absolutamente la vida del concebido y, por lo tanto, vamos a una ley de supuestos.*

Although he appeals to the Constitutional Court to legitimise his claims no less than 21 times throughout the interview, no instance of Gallardón's use of the first person plural explicitly includes the political party he belongs to or his fellow cabinet members. The exclusion of the PP could be due to the fact that certain members of his party openly disagreed with his proposals. Cristina Cifuentes, delegate of the government in Madrid, e.g. claimed to be a greater believer in a law based on time limits rather than in a law based on legal assumptions and Borja Sémper, president of the PP in Guipuzcoa stated that there were aspects of the law he did not like and that the reform had to be voted because political parties should not be sects.

At the same time, Gallardón's use of the first person *singular* suggests that he is also keen to profile himself as a statesman with the personal responsibility to unite the people:

Figure 1. Use of grammatical person.



DATA 6

Gallardón: Before the end of October, before the end of the month of October, my idea is to ah:m present this project in the Spanish Parliament and to do it in a rational explanatory way. I would really like...—((adjusting his position)) Let me tell you something, this is one of the most important things, IF NOT THE MOST, that I will have to face and address during my term in office as Minister of Justice and I will try to convene not only those who at this point may celebrate this reform but even those who at this point are fighting it.

Gallardón: Antes de que termine el mes de octubre, antes de que termine el mes de octubre, mi idea es eh: introducir este proyecto en el congreso de los diputados y hacerlo desde una explicación racional. Me gustaría mucho...—((se acomoda en la silla)) Yo le digo una cosa, esto es de las cosas más importantes, SINO LA MÁS, a la que yo voy a enfrentarme a abordar durante mi mandato como ministro de justicia y yo voy a intentar convocar no solamente a aquellos que en estos momentos pueden celebrar esta reforma sino a aquellos incluso que en estos momentos la están combatiendo.

In response to the interviewer's question about the timeframe for the legislation, Gallardón first provides a factual answer. But then he interrupts himself. He stops mid-sentence and produces a cluster of verbal (emphatic "yo"), paralinguistic (pause) and non-verbal (settling on chair) contextualisation cues (Gumperz, 1982) that mark a change of footing. He directly addresses Martínez and proceeds with a much higher degree of personal involvement. Spanish rich verb morphology allows speakers to omit subject pronouns in all cases. Consequently, explicit use of subject pronouns, such as "yo", is marked and adds extra emphasis. Through his repeated use of "yo" Gallardón highlights his individuality and responsibility. He presents the reform as a personal challenge and implies that he has assigned himself the role of conciliator. The clause "but even those who at this point are fighting it" can be understood as another instance of innuendo (Goffman, 1981; Obeng, 1997). It has a wide reach: it is not only targeted at those who support the pro-choice movement, but also constitutes an indirect snub to fellow party members who had publicly manifested their reservations about the reform, and probably even to Mariano Rajoy, who did not explicitly support it.

5.3.2. Framing the issue 1: Negotiating ideologies and audiences

Historically, religion has played an important role in discussions on ethical issues in Spain, but today the doctrine of the church is not as influential as it used to be. Although a majority of young Spaniards still identifies themselves as Catholic, they largely ignore the church's stance on issues such as pre-marital sex, sexual orientation or contraception (Loewenberg, 2005). Saurette and Gordon (2013) observe that secularisation leads to shifts in anti-abortion discourse. In Canada, so they found, pro-life groups only rarely refer to religion in public discourse on the matter. Instead, two arguments against abortion legislation take central position today: the traditional foetal personhood argument and a new type of argument that Saurette and Gordon label the "abortion-harms-women" argument. Since Gallardón describes himself as "a practicing Catholic" (Elplural.com, 2012), we will investigate whether he keeps with religion-based arguments to ground his position or if he has adopted the new rhetoric.

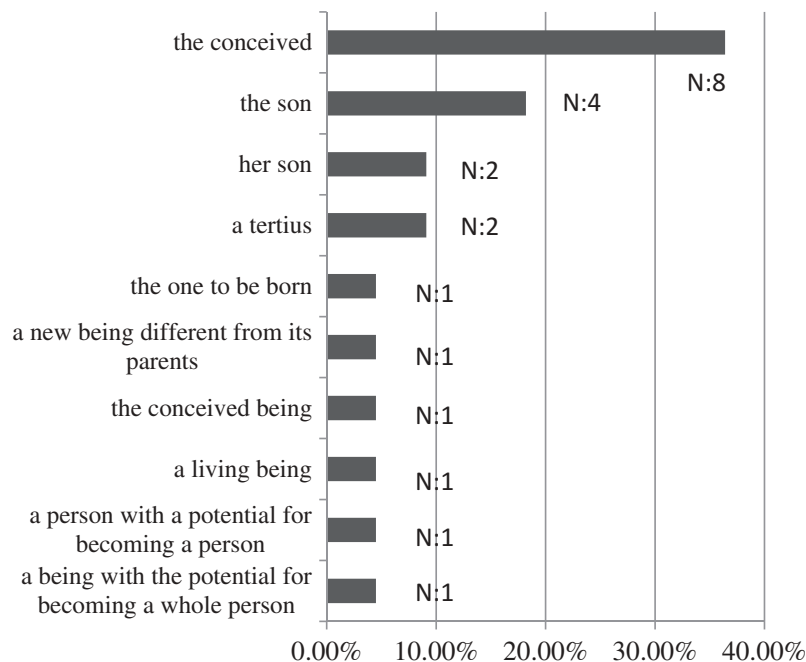
Personhood of the foetus

Gallardón refers to the foetus in a variety of ways as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that Gallardón's lexical choices to refer to the foetus range from a highly abstract, legal term (*tertius*) and a phrase with clear religious connotations (*the conceived*) to an emotion-laden noun, denoting kinship (*son*). We will discuss each of these lexical choices below.

Gallardón uses the word *tertius* to refer to the foetus twice:

Figure 2. Reference to the foetus.



DATA 7

*Gallardón: But, in any case, conceiving abortion as an exclusive right of women would mean something different to what our Constitutional Court has stated and that would be that instead ((separating both hands)) of a **tertius**, of a being with a potential for becoming a **WHOLE** person, it would just be a part of the mother's body and that not science, nor—((looks down)) our Constitutional Court has established to be the case. And it is for that reason that we are going to protect the right to life ((drinks water)).*

*Gallardón: Pero desde luego, concebir el aborto como un derecho exclusivo de la mujer significaría algo distinto de lo que ha dicho el tribunal constitucional y es que en lugar ((separa ambas manos)) de un **tertius**, de un ser con potencialidad de convertirse en una persona **PLENA**, sería una parte del cuerpo de la madre y eso ni la ciencia, ni—((mira hacia abajo)) nuestro tribunal constitucional ha establecido que es así. Y por eso vamos a proteger el derecho a la vida ((bebe agua)).*

Tertius is a highly abstract and impersonal legal term that refers to an interested third party who is not privy to a contract or a transaction, but who has an involvement. This third party has no legal rights in the matter, unless the contract was made for its benefit (Law.com, 2016). It suggests that Gallardón's bill is based on the premise that the foetus is a "natural person", although this does not fit the legal definition. To use this term in a television broadcast meant for the general public is remarkable, since it is mainly used in institutional, legal discourse. In combination with his mention of the Constitutional Court, it allows Gallardón to invoke the highest legal authority in the country as supporting his stance.

At the other end of the spectrum we find the use of "el/su hijo" ("the/her son"), which allows Gallardón to ascribe capacities and attributes to the unborn that constitute personhood.⁷

DATA 8

*Gallardón: The infamous law based on time limits didn't establish that in the event of conflict between the mother's life with **the son's** or the: mother's physical health with that of **the son**, the mental health of the mother with that of **her son**...((hits table softly)) We had to resolve this conflict. NO, what it said [the law based on time limits] is that during a certain period of time, the one to be born did not have any right because without being*

able to allege that his [the son] continuity was IN CONFLICT with ANOTHER RIGHT of another person, EVEN IF IT WAS his mother's right, it was allowed ((looks down))—to end up with his existence.

Gallardón: *La famosa ley de plazos del aborto no estableció que en el caso del conflicto de la vida de la madre con el hijo o de la: salud física de la madre con la del hijo, de la salud psíquica de la madre con la de su hijo...((golpea levemente la mesa)). Teníamos que resolver ese conflicto. NO, lo que dijo es que durante determinado plazo de tiempo, el que iba a nacer no tenía ningún derecho porque sin alegar que su continuidad entraba EN CONFLICTO con OTRO DERECHO de otra persona, AUNQUE FUERA su propia madre, se permitía ((mira hacia abajo))—eliminar su existencia.*

The word “hijo” is defined by the DRAE as: “a person or animal in relation to his parents”. It is a generic term that is not only employed to refer to individuals of male gender but also to designate class: i.e. all individuals of a particular species, disregarding gender.⁸ The meaning of “hijo” is intrinsically characterised by a relation of kinship. Its use is linked to Van Leeuwen’s idea of relational identification that “occurs when social actors are defined, not in terms of what they do, but in terms of what they more or less permanently, or unavoidably, are” (1996, p. 54). More specifically, it is an example of relational identification which represents children in terms of the kinship relation to their parents, in this case their mother. Gallardón could of course also have chosen the epicene noun “bebé” (“baby”), since this word, although it still contributes to the personification of the foetus, does not imply a relation of kinship and can designate both male or female indistinctively. The decision of presenting the foetus as “hijo” ascribes both a gender and a social role to the foetus which contributes more explicitly to its personification (cf. Hopkins, Zeedyk, & Raitt, 2005). Gallardón highlights the relational aspect even more by the use of the third person singular possessive “su” (“her”) in “su hijo”, which assigns the mother the role of sociological agent. The fact that Gallardón decides to represent women as mothers and agents in this particular institutional context assigns them a high degree of responsibility and moral obligation with regard to the foetus.

Gallardón makes another marked lexical choice with *the conceived*, which he uses to indicate the foetus eight times throughout the interview⁹:

DATA 9

Gallardón: *The Constitutional Court told us that the right to live of the **conceived** was not an absolute value. That is the Constitutional Court's doctrine, and that therefore, if it is in conflict with other rights, that conflict can be resolved. What it never said—,the Constitutional Court, is that the **conceived** was DEPRIVED of rights and a law based on time limits, that says that during a specified time the life of the **conceived** ((looks down)) can be disrupted, WITHOUT ALLEGING ANY CONFLICT with any other right is, on my view, a clearly unconstitutional law.*

Gallardón: *El Tribunal Constitucional nos dijo que el derecho a la vida del **concebido** no es un valor absoluto. Es la doctrina del tribunal constitucional, y que por lo tanto si entra en conflicto con otros derechos se puede resolver ese conflicto. Lo que nunca dijo—,el Tribunal Constitucional, es que el **concebido** estuviese PRIVADO de derechos y una ley de plazos, que dice que durante un tiempo determinado se puede ((mira hacia abajo)) acabar con la existencia del **concebido**, SIN ALEGAR NINGÚN CONFLICTO con ningún otro derecho es, desde mi punto de vista, una ley claramente inconstitucional.*

The DRAE mentions “concebido” as the participle of the verb “concebir” (“to conceive”), but does not include the nominalisation “el concebido” (“the conceived”). A search of CREA (Corpus of Reference of Contemporary Spanish) only yields one result: a mention in a Puerto Rican legal document from 1997 that defends the personhood of the foetus. Google News gives 727 instances of “el concebido” (article immediately followed by the noun)¹⁰ in 267 news articles,¹¹ 93,2% of which appeared during the years 2012–2016. This suggests that its use in the media is recent and probably prompted by Gallardón’s reform.

Similar results are found for the prepositional phrase “*del concebido*” (“of the conceived”) as it appears in constructions such as “*derechos del concebido*” (“the rights of the conceived”). 86.4% of matches (N = 3490) appeared in the years 2012–2016, suggesting again that the nominalisation has popped up in the press only recently and that its spread in the media is linked to the formulation of Gallardón’s reform. The very first instance of the use of the nominalisation “*el concebido*” is to be found on ACIPrensa, a Catholic website that brings news and resources on the defence of life and controversies about the Church in America, Spain and the world. We may conclude then, that the nominalisation probably originates from Catholic texts, which is not surprising if we consider expressions such as “*Immaculate Conception*” or “*Hail purest Mary, conceived without sin*”.

The above shows that Gallardón seems to be aware of the broad spectrum of people that TV shows address. While the use of an abstract legal term may convince the undecided, the use of words that confirm the claims on the personification of the foetus is likely to please the pro-life conservative audience (cf. Menegatti & Rubini, 2013). It also shows that Gallardón’s stance on religion is inconsistent. He does not use arguments that are directly religiously inspired, but his frequent use of the nominalisation “the conceived”—which is charged with religious connotations—suggests that religion still plays a role in his ideological position. In this way, Gallardón negotiates the ideologies of a diverse audience. Addressing religion through more subtle and abstract strategies allows him to adhere to the principles of the most conservative voters while also appealing to a less religious public. Although Gallardón does not explicitly mention the Catholic Church at any time during the interview, its doctrine still resonates in his discourse.

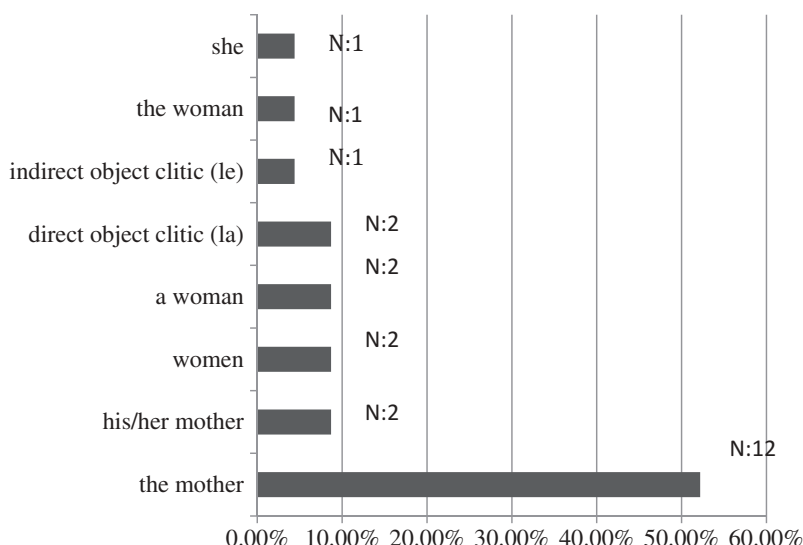
5.3.3. Framing the issue 2: The role of the woman

Traditionally, anti-abortion discourse has been highly critical of women in its tone, but contemporary pro-life discourse is increasingly adopting a “pro-woman” tone as Saurette and Gordon found in their investigation of Canadian pro-life websites:

Whereas the traditional portrait represents the anti-abortion movement as using language that blames and vilifies women, the opposite seems to be the case in contemporary discourse. The representation of women is more positive and compassionate, largely portraying women as victims of abortion. (2013, p. 169)

Figure 3 shows the ways in which Gallardón refers to women in the interview.

Figure 3. Representation of women.



Most frequently (N = 14) Gallardón represents women as mothers. This is another example of relational identification (Van Leeuwen, 1996): women are only identified in terms of the kinship relation to their child. In two instances Gallardón precedes the word *mother* by a possessive determiner (e.g. “*su madre*”: “his/her mother”), which strengthens the relational identification, since it represents the foetus as a sociological agent and suggest that it plays an active role in the debate, contributing once again to the personification of the unborn. In this way “*su madre*” mirrors “*su hijo*” (“his/her child”) (see Section 5.3.2).

Gallardón’s use of the word “mother” is also an example of *functionalization*, which occurs when “social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance an occupation or role” (Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 54). In this context the use of the noun “mother” promotes the idea that women fulfil this role even before giving birth, which helps anti-abortion supporters to reinforce the concept of foetal personhood, as can be seen in DATA 10:

Data 10

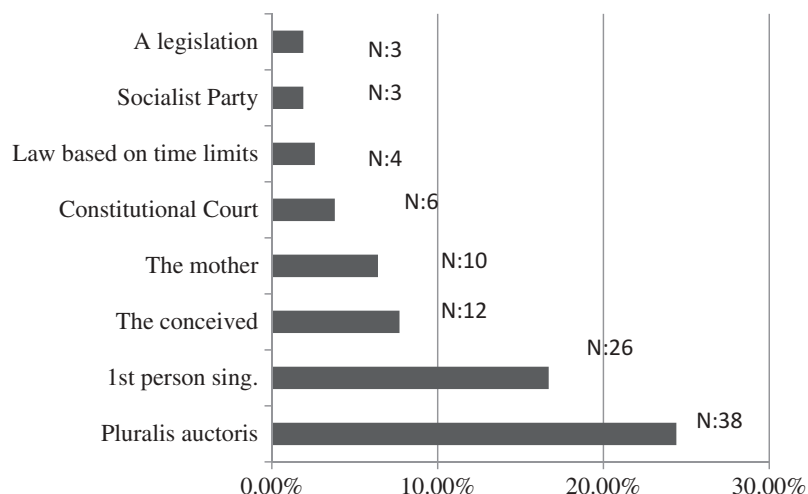
Gallardón: When there is a conflict between right to life... For instance, the son’s right to life and the mother’s right to life or between different rights, even if they [the rights to life of each party] have a different assessment, the legislator has to solve that conflict.

Gallardón: Cuando existe un conflicto entre un derecho a la vida... Por ejemplo el derecho a la vida del hijo y el derecho a la vida de la madre o entre distintos derechos, aunque tengan distinta evaluación, el legislador tiene que resolver ese conflicto.

Agency is also important for the analysis of the roles that are allocated to particular social actors. Grammatical subjects are not necessarily agents and, vice versa, direct objects are not automatically the ones acted upon. Through representations speakers can reallocate roles, i.e. agency can be manipulated. The speaker decides which social actors he/she wants to present as active and which actors as only acted upon. Figure 4 shows the percentages of those social actors that are represented as agents at least 3 times throughout the interview.¹² Different lexical items or phrases that point to the same referent have been grouped together (e.g. “she”, “women”, “woman”, “mother”, are all grouped under the category “mother” because it is the most frequent sociological agent within the group).

As Figure 4 shows, “the mother” is only represented as sociological agent 10 times. This is less than the conceived (N = 12) and far less than the *pluralis auctoris* (N = 38) and the first person singular (N = 26). These numbers are a clear indication that Gallardón allocates a rather passive

Figure 4. Sociological agents.



role to women in the debate, especially considering the actual role they play in the social practice of abortion. This observation is corroborated by the data below:

Data 11

Gallardón: *It is not enough to say to a woman that abortion is forbidden a woman has to be told which are the positive options so when she makes her decision of going ahead with her pregnancy SOCIETY as a whole and the state as a whole in its representation [looks down] ACCOMPANIES HER, PROTECTS HER and provides her with not only the material but her wellbeing and the wellbeing of her son in every sense [drinks water].*

Gallardón: *No basta con decir a una mujer que el aborto está prohibido hay que decirle a una mujer cuales son las opciones positivas para que cuando ella tome su decisión de seguir adelante con su embarazo LA SOCIEDAD en su conjunto y el estado en su conjunto en su representación ((mira hacia abajo)) LA ACOMPAÑE, LA PROTEJA y le facilite no solamente material sino en todos sus sentidos su bienestar y el bienestar de su hijo ((bebe agua)).*

In this data women are passivated, they are acted upon as recipient or beneficiary (spoken to, accompanied, protected). They are only allocated an active role in the phrase “tome su decisión” (“she makes her decision”). There, Gallardón refers to women as actors through the grammatical role of Agent and through the use of the possessive determiner “her” in the noun phrase “her decision”. The decision, Gallardón speaks of, however, turns out to be that of *not* having an abortion—not of terminating the pregnancy.

Gallardón’s portrayal of women as patient ties in with the abortion-harms-women argument, as identified by Saurette and Gordon (2013), which he invokes in DATA 12:

Data 12

Gallardón: *Abortion is in the first place ((directs his gaze to the TV host)) a tragedy and that we have to, we have to ((looks down))— we have to explain we have to explain C:ATEGORICALLY—that abortion is a tragedy in the first instance, of course, for the conceived who sees his existence being interrupted ((directs his gaze to the TV host)) ((emphatically)) and for the mother,—and for the mother.*

Gallardón: *El aborto, en primer lugar, es ((mira directamente al presentador)) una tragedia y eso tenemos, tenemos que ((mira hacia abajo))— explicarlo, tenemos que explicar r:otundamente—que el aborto es una tragedia en primer lugar, por supuesto, para el concebido, que ve interrumpida su existencia ((dirige su mirada hacia el presentador)) ((con énfasis)) y para la madre,—y para la madre.*

The lexical choice of “tragedia” (“tragedy”) shows that Gallardón considers abortion to be an event that causes great suffering, destruction and distress. He stresses the importance of understanding the severity of this tragedy verbally: through the repetition of “tenemos que” (“we have to”), which shows obligation through modality, and prosodically, through the lengthening of the word initial trill [r] in “r:otundamente” (“categorically”).

In data 12 Gallardón presents both the foetus and the woman as victims of abortion. The main victim is the foetus: “in the first instance, of course, for the conceived who sees his existence being interrupted”. Note how with these words Gallardón attributes a particular quality to the foetus: it seems to be capable of consciously assessing its state of being. After this, Gallardón looks the host directly in the eye and adds in an emphatic tone: “and for the mother—and for the mother”.

Data 11 and 12 show how, again, Gallardón negotiates a heterogeneous audience: he sanitises his discourse for the more liberal viewers while he simultaneously legitimises traditional anti-abortion claims; he presents himself as pro-woman while still exerting patriarchal roles. As Gilligan

(in Collins, 1987, p. 12) points out, women and men have historically been assigned different moral voices. The male moral voice speaks in terms of rights and justice, while the female moral voice is based on relationships and context and does not speak in terms of rights, but in terms of care. Because the male voice still leads in public discourse, pro-choice groups led by women have appropriated the male moral voice, which has been resisted by in pro-life discourse. Data 13 shows that Gallardón has joined their ranks:

Data 13

Gallardón: No, abortion is not a right. It isn't.[.....] We have to address THE DRAMA of abortion as what it really is. As you were saying before, not as the confirmation of a right. Not as a reality e:hm ((points to the TV host)) against which we cannot act, not as a: ehm curse against which we have to fight but as something—against what, and I am not talking about repressive measures but also positive measures, we haven't been aware enough, the public institutions, of what we had to do.[.....]

Gallardón: No, no es un derecho el aborto. No lo es [.....] Tenemos que abordar el DRAMA del aborto como lo que es. Como decía usted antes, no como la constatación de un derecho. No como una realidad e:hm frente a la cual no podemos e:hm actuar, no como una: maldición con la que tenemos que combatir sino como algo—frente a lo cual, y no estoy hablando ahora solamente de medidas represivas sino también de medidas positivas, no hemos lo suficientemente conscientes, las instituciones públicas, de que es lo que teníamos que hacer [.....]

In data 13 Gallardón addresses the use of the male moral voice by pro-choice groups and questions the legitimacy of women's attempts to speak about abortion in terms of rights and justice. He uses the pronoun “we” to refer to himself in connection with public institutions; he ignores the voice of women in the issue.

6. Conclusion

In their study on abstraction in political communication, Menegatti and Rubini argue that “politicians vary the abstraction of their messages as a function of the similarity between their ideological orientation and the political orientation of the audience” (2013, p. 596). Politicians accommodate their language to the characteristics of their addressees, paying particular attention to appearing as similar as possible to their audience. TV interviews are complicated in this respect (unlike, e.g., political speeches at party conferences) because the positions of the viewers are bound to be heterogeneous. Through the analysis of changes in footing, lexical choices, grammatical person, and role allocation this paper has examined the ways in which Gallardón negotiates his diverse audience throughout the interview. The use of words charged with religious connotations show that religion is still implicitly present in his discourse, but the lack of explicit appeals to religion (he does not defend the personhood-of-foetus on the basis of the traditional religious argument, but on scientific and legal grounds, for instance) points to a secularisation of his line of argument. A similar trend seems to govern his representation of women: he colonises pro-choice narratives while subjugating female roles. Although the lexical choices he makes when referring to women (his frequent use of the word “mother”) and the passive role he allocates them in his discourse show that he still adheres to patriarchal principles and does not acknowledge women's right to an active role in the debate, the inclusion of the abortion-harms-women argument could be considered as a shift towards a more pro-woman tone.

Close scrutiny of the data also shows that Martínez does not challenge the inconsistencies in Gallardón's arguments and position at any point during the interview. There are no supplementary questions or requests for clarification of particular lexical choices or arguments, as are to be expected in accountability interviews. “Non-neutrality”, Hutchby (2011) argues, is a interactional accomplishment, i.e. it surfaces in the talk that goes on. In this interview, it is not only constructed

through the words that were spoken by both interviewer and interviewee, but also through those that the interviewer failed to speak.

The intricate, diverse media landscape of the twenty-first century has infringed on the transparency of the genre of the accountability interview. These days we find a marked difference between independent, public networks (with the BBC as the iconic, archetypical bulwark of neutrality; cf. Heritage, 1985) and broadcasting companies that aim at occupying well-defined niches of the viewer market (right-wing conservative, populist, left-wing). The latter have the hidden—and often not so hidden—agenda to attempt to influence the world view of those who watch their programs and tend to sacrifice the quality and objectivity of the information they present to achieve their aim. As a result, journalists employed by these networks no longer fulfil their principal role of watchdog (cf. Baym, 2013), but, instead, have turned into lapdogs: they are hired to simply enable politicians to create and promote their own narrative. The interview investigated in this paper, we argue, is a prime example of this development and a token of a new type of news interview.

In his essay *The presentation of everyday self*, Erving Goffman (1959) uses the dramaturgical perspective as a way of understanding human interaction and behaviour. He uses the concepts of “front stage” and “back stage” to refer to different modes of behaviour that we engage in. If we apply this metaphor to our data, we could say that front-stage the interview investigated was presented as a regular accountability interview, but backstage the journalist colluded with Gallardon. We conclude, then, that there is reason to add another genre to Montgomery’s typology. We suggest to name this type of news interview the “alternative accountability interview”—pace Kellyanne Conway.

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Author details

Anne Bannink¹
E-mail: e.a.bannink@uva.nl
Julián Albaladejo¹
E-mail: albaladejo44@msn.com

¹ ACLC, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Data

Excerpt from the interview between Alberto Jiménez and Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, 26 July 2012. Retrieved on 27 of December 2014 from Youtube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0c_uxXuCPz4 (19’ 29” – 31’ 09”)

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Notes

1. The PP was the opposition leading party and defined by Ersson and Lane (1998) as *conservative* and by Haynes and Hennig (2013) as *Christian Democratic*. It was Manuel Fraga, former Minister of the Interior and of Tourism during Franco’s dictatorship, who re-founded the party in 1989.
2. <https://medialandscapes.org/country/spain>.
3. <http://gaceta.es/ideario-intereconomia>.
4. “Ethnographic texts are not transparent and unproblematic records of scientific research but are creative and politicized documents in which the researcher as author is fully implicated. Transcription choices may lead to self-fulfilling analyses” (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1440).
5. Transcription conventions. For easier reading, we have added only minimal transcription conventions: (()) contextual information, meta-comments

BROTHER emphasis through pitch, tone or volume—short pause— marked pause: (:) lengthening of preceding sound? rising intonation indicating question

6. DATA 1 also shows how the speaker can assign the role of *principal* to other social groups or institutions. Gallardón presents his ideas as shared by both the UN and the Spanish Parliament, but the Convention on the Rights with Persons with Disabilities does not address this topic at all. His claim is a fallacy and should be understood as an attempt to legitimise his argument on the personhood of the foetus.
7. The word “child” has not been used in the translation because it can refer to any young person below the age of puberty and does not necessarily involve a relation of kinship.
8. This generic use of masculine grammatical gender designating a whole class has been labelled by some as androcentrism and defended by others on the basis of linguistic protectionism. There are voices that criticise this use, particularly in institutional contexts; the advised form would be to repeat the word in feminine; e.g. *alumnos y alumnas* “pupils (masc.) and pupils(fem.)”. The Royal Academy of Spanish (RAE) describes this gender unfolding as “artificial and unnecessary”. The RAE also considers the use of the feminine form as a generic term incorrect “even if the number of female pupils is higher than that of male ones”. (Rae.es, 2015).
9. This nominalisation is also part of the title of the reform itself (*Law on the Protection of the Conceived*).
10. These results mostly correspond to the nominalisation discussed, but a few cases refer to the relative clause *el concebido* “the one conceived”, such as: “*Hay métodos para facilitar la enseñanza, como el concebido por Henning Ørberg*” (“there are methods to make teaching easier, like the one conceived by Henning Ørberg”). A search of the first 300 instances reveals, however, that only an average of 1 in 98 results corresponds with the relative clause and not with the nominalisation.
11. Search conducted on 16 April 2016.

12. There are 39 different actors that fulfil the role of sociological agent so only the most frequent ones are included in Figure 4.

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