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Research article

“Stirring it up!” Emotionality in audience responses to political speeches

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Abstract

Speaker-audience interaction in political speeches has been conceptualised as a form of dialogue between speaker and audience. Of particular importance is research pioneered by Atkinson (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b) on the analysis of rhetorical devices utilised by politicians to invite audience applause. Atkinson was not concerned with emotionalisation in political speech-making, rather with how applause was invited in relation to group identities through ingroup praise and/or outgroup derogation. However, his theory has provided important insights into how speakers invite audience responses, and a powerful stimulus for associated research. The purpose of this article is to address the shortfall of emotionalisation research within the realm of political speeches. We begin with an account of Atkinson’s influential theory of rhetoric, followed by a relevant critique. The focus then turns to our main aim, namely, how key findings from previous speech research can be interpreted in terms of emotionalisation. Specifically, the focus is on audience responses to the words of political speakers, and how different forms of response may reflect audience emotionality. It is proposed that both duration and frequency of invited affiliative audience responses may indicate more positive emotional audience responses, while uninvited interruptive audience applause and booing may provide notable clues to issues on which audiences have strong feelings. It is concluded that there is strong evidence that both invited and uninvited audience responses may provide important clues to emotionalisation – both positive and negative – in political speeches.

Keywords: *oratory, political speeches, rhetorical devices, applause, laughter, cheering, chanting, booing*

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Эмоциональность в реакциях аудитории на выступления политиков

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Аннотация

Взаимодействие спикера и аудитории в политических выступлениях концептуализируется как форма диалога между ними. Особое значение в этой связи имеют исследования Аткинсона (Atkinson 1983, 1984a, 1984b), который первым обратился к риторическим приемам, используемым политиками с целью получения аплодисментов аудитории. Аткинсона интересовала не столько эмоциональность в политических выступлениях, сколько способ получения аплодисментов в привязке к групповой идентичности, а именно через внутригрупповую похвалу и / или внегрупповое уничижение. Его теория позволила понять, как выступающие вызывают отклик аудитории, и она послужила стимулом для дальнейших исследований в данной области. Цель статьи – восполнить недостаток исследований эмоционализации в политическом дискурсе. Мы остановимся на анализе теории риторики Аткинсона и отметим ряд ее недостатков. Затем перейдем к нашему главному вопросу, а именно – как результаты предыдущих исследований в области риторики могут быть интерпретированы с точки зрения эмоционализации. Основное внимание будет уделено реакции аудитории на слова политиков и тому, как различные формы ответа аудитории отражают ее эмоциональное состояние. Высказывается мнение, что как продолжительность, так и частота ожидаемых реакций аудитории могут указывать на более положительные эмоциональные отклики, в то время как случайные прерывистые аплодисменты и освистывание могут указывать на то, какие вопросы вызывают у аудитории неприятие и возмущение. Делается вывод, что как ожидаемые, так и неожиданные реакции аудитории, положительные и отрицательные, могут быть свидетельством эмоционализации политических выступлений, и они дают ключ к пониманию этого процесса.

Ключевые слова: *ораторское искусство, политические выступления, риторические приемы, эмоционализация*

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1. Introduction

Oratory has always been an important form of political communication, its study dating back to the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome. In the modern era, significant insights have been gained into how politicians interact with live audiences through the finely detailed microanalysis of audio, visual, and text-based materials across a broad range of research approaches. Whilst oratory was traditionally regarded as monologic, a central finding from this substantial body of research concerns the role of audiences in a two-way interchange. Indeed, research

on speaker-audience interaction has shown how political speeches can be conceptualised as a form of dialogue between speaker and audience. The key purpose of this article is to consider how emotional responses feature in those interactions.

To set the scene, we will first describe and review some highly influential and relevant studies. Of particular importance is research focused on rhetorical techniques utilised by politicians to invite audience applause, pioneered by Atkinson (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b). His theory of rhetoric is reported in the next section, which includes a critique based on subsequent related research. In section 3, the focus is on audience responses in political speeches in relation to speaker rhetoric and speech content, and how different forms of response may reflect different degrees of audience emotionality.

2. Atkinson's theory of rhetoric and its critique

Atkinson's key insight was to compare political speech-making with how people take turns in conversation. Thus, just as a listening participant in a conversation may take a turn by anticipating when the speaker will reach the end of an utterance (e.g., Duncan & Fiske 1985, Walker 1982), so audience members are able to anticipate when the speaker will reach what is termed a *completion point* (Jefferson 1990). This occurs via the rhetorical structure of the speech, which can facilitate applause at appropriate moments, and which is typically reflected in close speech-applause synchrony. So, just as conversation participants take it in turn to talk, speaker and audience may also take turns – although the “turns” of an audience are essentially limited to traditional displays of approval or disapproval (such as applause, cheering or booing). From his close analysis of speeches, Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b) revealed how *rhetorical devices* (RDs) embedded in the structure bring about the typically seamless transition between speech and applause.

Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b) identified four such RDs – *list*, *contrast*, *naming*, and expressing *gratitude* – which, when used appropriately by speakers, facilitate timely applause. For example, in conversation, the end of a list can signal the end of an utterance. Such lists typically consist of three items, and once the listener recognises that a list is under way, it is possible to anticipate when the speaker is about to complete the utterance. Similarly, in the context of political speeches, the *three-part list* may signal to the audience when to begin their applause.

The second RD identified by Atkinson (e.g., 1984a) is the contrast, which juxtaposes a word, phrase, or sentence with its opposite. To enhance effectiveness, the two parts of the contrast should be a close match in terms of construction and duration, thereby allowing the audience to more easily anticipate the point of completion. If the structure of the contrast is too brief, people may have insufficient time to recognise that a completion point is approaching, let alone to produce an appropriate response. According to Atkinson (1984a), the contrast is by far the most common RD used to invite applause.

A key feature of both the three-part list and the contrast is that they are not used *explicitly* to invite applause, for example, “Please put your hands together to give a round of applause” or “I ask for your support”. However, these RDs are *implicit* invitations, embedded in the structure of the speech, thereby discretely indicating to the audience when applause is appropriate.

The two remaining devices identifiable from the work of Atkinson (1984a), naming and expressing gratitude, are often used jointly. In inviting the audience to show their appreciation for a particular individual, the speaker may start by giving some clues to the person’s identity, then continue with their eulogising, before finally revealing the person’s name. The audience is thus given ample time to realise that applause is expected and to anticipate to whom the speaker is referring, so that they are fully prepared when the name is finally announced (Atkinson 1984a). Such instances of naming are often combined with expressions of gratitude, where the speaker thanks the named person, who, in the context of political speeches, is often someone in attendance.

Expanding on the foregoing research, Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) identified five further RDs used to invite applause implicitly: namely, *puzzle-solution*, *headline-punchline*, *position taking*, *combination*, and *pursuit*. In a puzzle-solution device, the speaker first establishes a kind of puzzle (or refers to a problematic issue), to which they then offer or propose the solution – which is the significant and thereby applaudable part of their message. Similar in structure to the puzzle-solution, although somewhat simpler, is the headline-punchline device. Here, the speaker proposes to make an announcement, pledge, or declaration, then proceeds to make it. The approaching applaudable part of the message is made salient by the speaker giving advance notice of what they are about to say. The device of position taking, is recognisable by the speaker first describing a state of affairs for which they may be expected to take a strongly evaluative stance. Immediately following their description, the speaker clarifies their position by overtly and unambiguously either supporting or condemning the stated issue. Any of these devices may be used in combination with one or more of the others to further emphasise the approaching completion point and the applaudable part of the message. Finally, in cases where an audience fails to provide the desired timely response, speakers may employ a pursuit – often in the form of a re-emphasised or re-phrased point – to actively pursue the applause.

Heritage and Greatbatch’s (1986) analysis was based on all 476 speeches from the conferences of the three main political parties (Conservative, Labour, and Liberal) broadcast on British television in 1981. They found contrasts to be associated with one third of the incidents of collective applause during speeches, and lists with 12.6%; hence, almost half of the applause was associated with the two main RDs identified originally by Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b). With the inclusion of their five newly-identified devices, 68% of collective applause was associated with these seven RDs.

A further two RDs were identified by Bull and Wells (2002). They argued for the inclusion of *jokes* – as jokes often lead to applause as well as laughter – and

what they termed *negative naming*. Distinct from naming, where the audience are invited to show their appreciation for a particular individual (Atkinson 1984a), negative naming is typified by applause brought about by the condemnation or ridicule of a named person. The negatively named person tends to be an opposition politician, but the device can be used more widely to castigate an opposing political party or some other group that the speaker wishes to criticise. Negative namings may even prompt a more raucous form of audience response, namely, booing, especially in speeches at political rallies in the United States (Bull & Miskinis 2015), but this tends not to be a common feature in the UK.

A clear demonstration of the audience impact of RDs comes from a recent study by O’Gorman and Bull (2021), in which they compared 14 speeches from two recent British political leaders: Theresa May (former Conservative Prime Minister, 2016–2019) and Jeremy Corbyn (former Labour Leader of the Opposition, 2015–2020). The speeches were delivered at party conferences in 2016 and during the general election campaign of 2017, and were closely matched in terms of when and where they took place, speech duration, and comparable stages for each politician during the campaign. This close matching was an important and novel feature of the methodological design, since thereby any observed differences in the speech-making of the two politicians might reasonably be attributed to their oratorical skills, not to the situational context. RDs occurring prior to each incident of collective applause were coded in terms of the eleven categories as listed above (lists, contrasts, naming, gratitude, puzzle-solution, headline-punchline, position taking, combination, pursuits, negative naming, and jokes). Almost all the incidents of collective audience applause (98%) occurred in response to these eleven RDs, thereby showing an almost perfect match between applause invitations and applause incidents.

The results of that study also showed that Jeremy Corbyn was significantly higher in terms both of the frequency of his RDs, and in the frequency with which he received collective applause. Notably, the two politicians differed markedly in their reputations as public speakers. Whereas Theresa May’s podium performances were widely criticised, Corbyn was typically regarded more highly (O’Gorman & Bull 2021), and the analysis pinpoints aspects of his oratory which led to greater audience impact.

2.1. Critique of Atkinson’s theory

An obvious objection to Atkinson’s theorising is that audiences do not simply applaud RDs, they also respond to the *content* of a political speech. While Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b) acknowledged that applause occurs in response to relatively narrow types of speech content (e.g., supporting the speaker’s own party or attacking the opposition), he also argued that audiences are much *more* likely to applaud if such speech content is expressed in an appropriate RD. Similarly, Atkinson was also well aware that applause is affected by the speaker’s *delivery*: nonverbal features associated with speech, both vocal (change in pitch, speed or

intonation) and non-vocal (stance, gaze or gesture). But again, Atkinson argued that audiences are much *more* likely to applaud if a RD is accompanied by appropriate delivery (Atkinson 1984a: 84).

Atkinson's (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b) original observations have made an enormous contribution to our understanding of political rhetoric. In summary, his key theoretical insight was the analogy between audience applause and conversational turn-taking. Just as people take turns in conversation by anticipating when the speaker will reach the end of an utterance, so audience members are able to anticipate when the speaker will reach a completion point through RDs embedded in the structure of talk. This enables them to applaud at appropriate moments, and is reflected in the close synchronisation between speech and applause.

However, while not detracting in any way from Atkinson's (1983, 1984a, 1984b) important theoretical insights, several major theoretical modifications to his conceptual framework have been proposed (Bull 2000, 2006, Bull & Wells 2002). Firstly, one important modification relates to the role of cross-cultural differences. Thus, based on Atkinson's theoretical framework, two studies of Japanese political speeches were conducted: the first on 36 speeches delivered in the 2005 Japanese general election (Bull & Feldman 2011), the second on 38 speeches from the 2009 Japanese general election (Feldman & Bull 2012).

One notable feature of the study by Bull and Feldman (2011) was that applause occurred most frequently in response to *requests for support* (29% of incidents of applause). This made an interesting comparison with the data for British political speeches. Whereas Atkinson's analyses (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b) were based on the proposal that applause invitations from British politicians are implicit (i.e., built into the construction of talk to indicate to the audience when applause is appropriate), in contrast, in these Japanese speeches, the politicians explicitly asked for support, which they received in the form of applause. Hence, it was decided to make a comparison of what were termed *explicit* and *implicit* RDs. Notably, the majority of applause incidents occurred in response to explicit invitations from the speaker: 68% in the study of the 2005 election (Bull & Feldman 2011), 70% in the study of the 2009 election (Feldman & Bull 2012).

Secondly, delivery is arguably as integral to applause invitation as is the use of RDs. Whereas Atkinson argued that appropriate delivery only increases the chance of a RD being applauded (Atkinson 1984a: 84), Bull and Wells (2002) proposed that delivery is important in indicating whether *or not* the message constitutes an invitation to applaud. For example, a speaker might use a three-part list, but their associated delivery suggests that they intend to continue with the speech. Hence, a RD in itself is not sufficient to constitute an applause invitation – it also has to be accompanied by appropriate delivery.

Thirdly, not all applause is “typically” synchronised with speech in the way in which Atkinson describes. In this context, he observed that “...displays of approval are seldom delayed for more than a split second after a completion point, and

frequently just before one is reached” (1984a: 33). This contrasts with the results of a more formal analysis by Bull and Noordhuizen (2000) of speaker-audience synchrony, based on six speeches delivered by the three leaders of the principal British political parties to their respective party conferences in 1996 and 1997. The study was intended to assess both the frequency of speaker-audience synchrony, and also to analyse instances where this failed to occur. The results showed that only 61% of audience applause was fully synchronised with speech in the way in which Atkinson described. A further discussion of the results of this study concerning synchrony, or a lack thereof, is presented below in section 3.1.

Fourthly, a significant distinction can be made between invited and uninvited applause (Bull 2000). Atkinson’s analysis was concerned with applause invited through RDs, but uninvited applause can also occur through a misreading of RDs (Bull & Wells 2002) or, in the absence of RDs, as a direct response to the content of speech if that content is of particular importance to the audience (Bull 2000).

A good example of uninvited applause through misreading a RD comes from a speech by William Hague (7 October, 1999). At that time he was Leader of the Conservative Opposition, and subsequently became Foreign Secretary (2010-2014) in the coalition government led by David Cameron. Hague received collective applause when he said “What annoys me most about today’s Labour politicians is not their beliefs – they’re entitled to those – but their sheer, unadulterated hypocrisy. They say one thing and they do another”. In this extract, Hague used the RD of a contrast twice in quick succession (“beliefs” are contrasted with “hypocrisy,” “saying one thing” is contrasted with “doing another”). However, Hague also showed a very clear and visible intake of breath following the phrase “they do another,” which suggested that his intention had been to continue. Hence, the applause which occurred immediately after “...they do another” was judged to have been uninvited and interruptive. From this perspective, uninvited applause may occur not only as a direct response to the content of the speech, but also through misreading of RDs as applause invitations, when the associated delivery suggests that the politician intends to continue with his speech.

Some good examples of uninvited applause as a direct response to speech content can be found in the analysis of speeches by Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn referred to above (O’Gorman & Bull 2021). In that study, it was noted that almost all incidents of collective applause occurred in response to invitations through RDs. However, in the speeches by Corbyn, there were a few exceptions of uninvited applause which could be seen as direct responses to speech content. So, for example, in the following extract (1a), the interruptive applause and cheering seems to be a direct response to the mention of the National Health Service:

(1a) *It was that great Labour government before I was born that gave us the National Health Service after the Second World War... (CHEERING & APPLAUSE) because they believed in the principles of an inclusive sustainable society (campaign speech in Scarborough, Yorkshire, 2017).*

Again, in the following example (1b), the interruptive applause seems to be a direct response to the mention of “children who are not properly fed”:

(1b) *It's the election of 2017, the election of 2017 that says we want to develop our country fit for the 21st century. We don't pass by on the other side in life. We look out for, and support each other. So why should we have a government that passes by on the other side to the homeless, to the children who are not properly fed, (APPLAUSE) to the small businesses struggling to survive, to those who want to change and improve their lives, and build a strength to our communities* (campaign speech in Scarborough, Yorkshire, 2017).

The National Health Service (NHS) and child poverty are major issues for the Labour Party, and their mere mention in these speeches was enough to evoke applause without invitation through RDs. From this perspective, uninvited applause is of particular relevance to the analysis of emotionalisation in political discourse, since it may indicate highly emotive audience responses.

3. Emotionalisation in audience responses

3.1. Mismatches (lack of synchrony)

In the study of speaker-audience synchrony referred to above (Bull & Noordhuizen 2000), four ways were distinguished whereby lack of synchronisation may occur between speech and audience applause (referred to as *mismatches*). One form of mismatch – *interruptions of applause by the speaker* (speaking before the applause has subsided) – notably differs in certain important respects from the other three types of mismatch. In particular, whereas the other three relate to audience behaviour, this is the only category that deals with the behaviour of the speaker. Furthermore, as Atkinson (1985) pointed out, a charismatic orator – by speaking into the applause – may create an impression of overwhelming popularity, struggling to be heard while at the same time inhibiting and frustrating the audience. When the speaker does finally allow the audience an opportunity to respond, their desire to applaud may have intensified, thereby the speaker is seen as receiving a rapturous reception. As such, interruptions of applause by the speaker may be strategic, stirring up the audience into a high degree of expressed emotion. However, there is no reason to believe that every incident of the speaker interrupting applause is necessarily strategic in the way Atkinson (1985) describes. Audience applause can simply go on for so long that the speaker has to interrupt in order to continue with the speech. Thus, speaker interruption of audience applause is regarded as a mismatch, but one of a special kind.

One form of audience mismatch is *isolated applause* (claps from one or two people), which Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) distinguish from collective applause. Given that isolated applause does not involve a co-ordinated response from all or a large proportion of the audience, it may be regarded as a mismatch. Secondly, another form of audience mismatch (referred to as *delayed applause*) may occur if there is an extended silence between the speaker's utterance and the

applause. Silence suggests that the speaker was expecting applause, but for some reason the audience failed to respond appropriately, hence a failure of synchronisation between speaker and audience, just as an extended silence in conversation may also be considered awkward.

Thirdly, just as interruptions in conversation may be regarded as potentially disruptive to turn-taking, so too interruptive applause may be regarded as a form of mismatch. Such incidents may be initiated either by the speaker, as indicated above, or indeed by the audience. The audience may interrupt the flow of the speaker by applauding well in advance of a completion point; this can be regarded as a mismatch, whether or not the speaker goes on to complete what they were saying. However, brief *overlaps* where the audience starts to applaud just before the speaker completes an utterance (similarly, cases where the speaker resumes speaking as applause begins to subside) would not be regarded as mismatches, because they suggest the anticipation of a completion point. Such events are comparable to brief overlaps in conversation between one speaker and another, which also would not be regarded as interruptive.

Across all six speeches, audience mismatches accounted for a mean 29.2% of applause events, and speaker mismatches for 12.9% (Bull & Noordhuizen 2000). By far the most frequently occurring type of mismatch was applause where the audience interrupts the speaker (mean: 17.8% of applause events), followed by incidents where the speaker interrupts the applause (mean: 12.9%). Delayed applause accounted for a mean 7.5% of applause events; isolated applause was the least frequently occurring type of mismatch (mean: 4.7%).

Mismatches can occur for a whole variety of reasons (Bull & Noordhuizen 2000), but in the context of this paper they are of notable interest as potential indicators of audience emotional responses. Whilst both delayed and isolated applause may reflect a lack of audience enthusiasm, instances where audiences are interruptive of speakers may be important indicators of emotionality. For example, although interruptive applause may be seen as a failure of synchronisation (the audience fails to applaud at a completion point), it may also be seen to reflect audience enthusiasm – in their eagerness to endorse aspects of the speech, they do not wait for the completion point to be reached. This can be seen in the above extracts from Jeremy Corbyn's 2017 speech. In extract 1a, their cheering and applause following the mere mention of the NHS appears indicative of their attachment, and perhaps pride, in the UK's publicly funded healthcare system. In extract 1b, the timing of the interruptive applause is symptomatic of a negative emotional response – displeasure or even anger – related to the speaker calling attention to child poverty.

3.2. Other audience responses: laughter, cheering, chanting, and booing

Of course, not all audience responses take the form of applause. In the two studies of the Japanese general elections of 2005 (Bull & Feldman 2011) and 2009 (Feldman & Bull 2012), it was found that audience responses could be divided into

laughter and cheering, as well as applause. Although collective applause was the predominant form of audience response in the 2005 election (59% of responses), there was also a substantial proportion of laughter (25%) and cheering (16%). In the 2009 election, there was almost as much laughter (39%) as applause (40%); cheering was 9%.

In a study of speeches from the 2012 American presidential election (Bull & Miskinis 2015), chanting and booing were found in addition to laughter, cheering and applause. Most of these forms of response (applause, laughter, cheering and chanting) can be regarded as typically conveying a positive emotional message, which has been subsumed within the concept of affiliative responses (discussed in section 3.2.1). The only exception is booing, which may or may not be an affiliative response; because of its distinctive character, it is analysed separately (and discussed in section 3.2.2).

3.2.1. *Affiliative responses*

One way of assessing the impact of affiliative responses is to compare them with electoral performance, and this form of analysis has been conducted in three separate studies (Bull & Miskinis 2015, Feldman & Bull 2012, Goode & Bull 2020).

The study by Feldman and Bull (2012) was based on 38 speeches delivered during the 2009 Japanese general election by 18 candidates for the House of Representatives (the lower house of the National Diet of Japan). The results showed no significant correlations between electoral success (measured in terms of whether or not the candidate was elected, and the proportion of votes cast) and what was termed *affiliative response rate* (incidents of applause, laughter, or cheering per minute of speech). However, it is important to stress that the speeches analysed in this study were delivered at indoor meetings (at places such as school classrooms or gymnasias), attended principally by individuals who were already supporters of the candidates and their political group, and were most likely to vote for them. Those who gather at these meetings do so more to encourage the candidates and show loyalty to them and their political party, rather than to appraise the political views and policies of speech-making candidates before deciding for whom to cast their vote. At these “rallies of the faithful” (Feldman & Bull 2012: 393), affiliative responses were only to be expected. Hence, it is perhaps unsurprising that affiliative response rate was not predictive of electoral success.

In contrast, two other studies were conducted in the context of the American presidential elections of 2012 (Bull & Miskinis 2015) and 2016 (Goode & Bull 2020), based on speeches delivered in informal public meetings without a pre-selected audience, in a sample of so-called swing states. Swing states are those in which no single candidate or party has overwhelming support. In the American political system, it is the electoral college that votes in the president, not the popular vote; furthermore, whoever wins a state takes all the electoral college votes for that state. Thus, winning swing states is critical, and is the best opportunity for the main

political parties to make significant gains in the electoral college. In these open public meetings, it was hypothesised that affiliative responses might be a more significant indicator of speaker popularity, hence, affiliative response rates in this study would be predictive of electoral success.

In the study based on the 2012 election (Bull & Miskinis 2015), ten speeches were analysed, delivered in informal outdoor locations (stadiums, parks, and fields) by the two candidates (Barack Obama, the incumbent Democrat president, and Mitt Romney, the Republican challenger) in the following swing states: Wisconsin, North Carolina, Florida, Ohio, and Iowa. The rate of affiliative responses (per minute) was correlated for both candidates with their election results (percentage of votes) for the ten swing state speeches. The results showed a significant positive correlation between affiliative response rates and electoral success ($r = .67, p = .017$, Pearson's one-tailed). Notably, Obama had a higher affiliative response rate and a higher percentage of the vote in Wisconsin, Florida, Ohio, and Iowa; Romney had a higher affiliative response rate and higher percentage of the vote in North Carolina.

In the study based on the 2016 election (Goode & Bull 2020), the candidates were Hilary Clinton (Democrat) and Donald Trump (Republican). In the following swing states, the candidates delivered the speeches in both indoor and outdoor locations (auditoriums, gymnasiums, halls, and parks): Michigan, Pennsylvania, Florida, New Hampshire, and Colorado. Audiences attended meetings which required prior bookings, but did not require a declaration of party affiliation. In this regard, they can be interpreted as unselected, but more restrictive to the general public than the 2012 presidential election campaign speeches that took place in venues allowing free attendance (Bull & Miskinis 2015).

In this study (Goode & Bull 2020), both the affiliative response rate (number of responses per minute) and total audience response times were correlated with the election results (percentage of votes received by each speaker) for the ten swing-state speeches. (As speeches varied in length, the total audience response time was then calculated as a proportion of overall speech time). Results showed a non-significant correlation between affiliative response rate (.20), but a significant correlation between duration of audience responses and electoral success (.73, $p < .01$).

Notably, the popularity of a speaker may be reflected in both the duration and frequency of affiliative responses. If audiences respond more frequently with affiliative responses or if those responses go on for a longer period of time, this suggests a more positive emotional response to the speaker (i.e., audiences are motivated towards expressions of approval and appreciation of the speaker or the speaker's message). This is supported by the significant correlations with electoral performance, which show that affiliative response rate (Bull & Miskinis 2015) and response duration (Goode & Bull 2020) are predictive of electoral success.

3.2.2. Booring

Booring is a highly emotive audience response, whereby audiences typically express their disapproval of the speaker. According to Clayman (1993), the way in which booring occurs is quite different from that of applause. Booring tends to be preceded by a sizeable delay, by another form of audience behaviour (e.g., clapping, heckling, jeering, or shouting), or by a combination of these. Clayman further proposed that there are two principal ways in which an audience can coordinate its behaviour, which he refers to as *independent decision-making* and *mutual monitoring*. In independent decision-making, individual audience members may act independently of one another yet still manage to coordinate their actions, for example, through applause in response to RDs. In what Clayman calls mutual monitoring, individual response decisions may be guided, at least in part, by reference to the behaviour of others. Responses organised primarily by independent decision-making typically begin with a “burst” that quickly builds to maximum intensity, as many audience members begin to respond together; whereas, in contrast, mutual monitoring tends to bring about a *staggered onset*, as the initial reactions of a few audience members prompt others to respond. Clayman writes that “...clappers usually act promptly and independently, while boorers tend to wait until other audience behaviours are underway” (1993: 124).

Interestingly, data from the study by Bull and Miskins (2015) showed evidence for two distinctive types of booring: disaffiliative (the audience boo the speaker), and affiliative (the audience align with the speaker to boo political opponents). The following example of disaffiliative booring comes from a speech delivered by the Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney to a predominantly hostile audience at a conference in Houston, Texas during the 2012 presidential election (11 July, 2012). “If our goal is jobs, we have to stop spending a trillion dollars more than we take in every year. And so, I am gonna eliminate every non-essential programme I can find. That includes Obamacare.¹ And I’m gonna work to reform...”. Not only was Romney boored for this statement, there were shouts of “No”, “Shame” and “Get off the stage”, which appear indicative of the audience expressing their disapproval and aversion at his proposed removal of Obamacare.

A contrasting example of affiliative booring can be seen in the following statement from a speech by Barack Obama (the incumbent Democratic president) at Colorado State University (28 August, 2012): “Last week my opponent’s [i.e., Romney’s] campaign went so far as to write you off as a lost generation. That’s you according to them”. When the audience boored this statement, they could be seen not as attacking Obama, but as aligning themselves with Obama by expressing their disapproval of his opponent Romney. Affiliative booring is typically preceded by RDs, hence may be seen as an invited response, unlike disaffiliative booring, which is typically not preceded by RDs, given that it is an unwelcome response for the

¹ In 2010, President Obama introduced the Affordable Care Act – known as *Obamacare* – which represented major changes to the provision of health care in the USA.

speaker. In the eleven speeches by Obama and Romney, 7% of audience responses took the form of affiliative booing, most frequently associated with the RD of negative naming (accounting for 55% of devices associated with affiliative booing).

Negative naming does also occur in British political speeches, but typically as a form of applause invitation (Bull & Wells 2002), for example, a speaker derides or ridicules a named opponent, which tends to prompt expressions of audience approval in the form of clapping. However, no instances of affiliative booing were identified in any of the aforementioned analyses of British political speeches (e.g., Atkinson 1984a, Bull 2006, Heritage & Greatbatch 1986); affiliative booing seems to be characteristic primarily to American political culture. Notably, neither negative naming nor booing (affiliative or disaffiliative) were observed in either of the foregoing studies of Japanese speeches (Bull & Feldman 2011, Feldman & Bull 2012), and very rarely in a study of Norwegian speeches (Iversen & Bull 2016). However, some instances of booing were observed in an analysis of French presidential speeches (Ledoux & Bull 2017), although in every instance the booing was exclusively affiliative, invited by the speaker to attack the rival candidate, typically through use of negative naming. These findings are strong indicators of cross-cultural differences in terms of audience emotionalisation in political speeches.

Most of the audience responses discussed above (applause, laughter, cheering, and chanting) were affiliative, that is to say, the audience are invited to align with the speaker. However, even booing can be affiliative, as shown in the analyses of both American and French speeches (Bull & Miskinis 2015, Ledoux & Bull 2017). Of course, booing can also be disaffiliative, for example, when Romney was booed in his speech in Texas (Bull & Miskinis 2015); but on occasions so too can applause, cheering, laughter, and chanting (e.g., audiences may slow hand clap, cheer, or laugh at a pratfall by the speaker). From this perspective, it is not the responses themselves that are intrinsically affiliative or disaffiliative, but how they are used and in what context. The range of nuanced speaker-audience interaction revealed by such studies clearly highlights the potential for future emotionalisation research.

4. Conclusions

Overall, in this paper it has been proposed that both invited and uninvited audience responses provide important clues to emotionalisation in political speeches. So, for example, the popularity of a speaker may be reflected in both the duration and frequency of affiliative responses. If audiences respond more frequently with affiliative responses or if those responses go on for a longer period of time, both suggest a more positive emotional response to the speaker. This view is supported by the significant correlations with electoral performance, which show that both the rate and the duration of affiliative responses (Bull & Miskinis 2015, Goode & Bull 2020) are predictive of electoral success.

Furthermore, both uninvited and interruptive applause can provide notable clues to issues on which the audience has strong feelings. Whereas interruptive

applause may reflect audience enthusiasm, an orator who interrupts applause may be both inhibiting and frustrating, such that when finally allowed an opportunity to respond, the audience applause may be noticeably more enthusiastic and rapturous. Thereby, the speaker may stir up the audience into a high degree of expressed emotion (Atkinson 1985).

Booing is in a separate category of its own. It is a highly emotional audience response, whereby audiences may express their disapproval of the speaker. Data from Bull and Miskinis (2015) showed evidence for two distinctive types of booing: disaffiliative (the audience boo the speaker), and affiliative (the audience align with the speaker to boo political opponents). In cases of affiliative booing, speakers appear to motivate audiences towards an expression of negative emotionality, typically directed not at anyone in attendance, but at disfavoured opponents (individuals or groups).

Applause alone was the focus of Atkinson's original theory of speaker-audience interaction (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b), but subsequent research has both refined his analysis of applause (through the detailed examination of mismatches), and extended it to other forms of audience response (cheering, laughter, chanting, and booing). Also, Atkinson's original theory was not concerned with emotionalisation in political speech-making, but rather with how applause was invited in relation to group identities through ingroup praise and/or outgroup derogation. However, his analyses have provided important insights into speaker-audience interaction, and a powerful stimulus for associated research. Thereby, useful clues have been provided for the analysis of emotionalisation in political speeches, through the development of a theoretical framework whereby the dialogic interaction between speakers and their audiences can be conceptualised and more clearly understood.

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