

Investigating the Legal Discourse of Bill Clinton's Impeachment Trial

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Abstract

This paper presents a legal discourse analysis of Bill Clinton's impeachment trial held in 1998. The paper's main objective is to explore the different meanings communicated by the dexterous use of some lexical and pragmatic strategies used by discourse interlocutors involved in the trial. More specifically, the article offers a linguistic study of the testimony and statements of President Bill Clinton relating to his impeachment trial. The paper focuses on three main analytical dimensions: word selection, power relations, and questioning and answering, and the way these strategies influence the discourse participants' conversational performance in the selected trial. To this end, this study draws on a legal discourse analysis approach as discussed by Coulthard (2013) and Mey (2016), focusing on lexicalization, the notion of power, and the use of questions and answers in courtroom settings. The overarching research question is: What are the different ideological and pragmatic meanings targeted beyond the use of selected words during the trial? Results reveal that language is a powerful tool in courtroom testimonies as it helps to extract information, verify evidence, draw legal outcomes, and encode and/or decode the underpinning meanings of courtroom discourse participants. These, in turn, serve to support or defy evidence and ultimately lead to issue a legally just decision.

Keywords: Clinton, courtroom, ideology, impeachment trial, legal discourse

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Introduction

Within courtrooms, language is manipulated for particular linguistic and ideological purposes. In most cases, these purposes target the speaker's benefits within the courtroom interaction. Deciphering the hidden ideologies and meanings in legal discourse can be analytically conducted through an extensive linguistic investigation, which, in turn, serves to explore the different meanings in discourse. Thus, in order to be able to understand what is going on in a legal interaction between courtroom participants, a linguistic analysis is needed to show the connection between law and language in discourse. Here, the focus will be on offering a legal discourse analysis of Clinton's impeachment trial to decode the various legal meaning carried in this trial through using different linguistic and argumentative devices. Language, in this sense, therefore, is a powerful tool to decode ideologies and communicating legal meanings. The paper's main focus, therefore, is to demonstrate the linguistic contribution language provides for other disciplines, including not only social settings (Fairclough, 2013), but also legal discourse and legal settings (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007).

One of the facts that is analytically and linguistically evidenced is that there is a close connection between language and law. Such a reciprocally significant relationship between language and law has been the focus of many studies (e.g., Mead, 1985; Eades, 2000; Farinde, 2009; Berukstiene, 2016; Breda, 2017; Cheng & Danesi, 2019; Aldosari, 2020; Aldosari and Khafaga, 2020, Riner, 2020; Gupta, 2022, among others). Legal texts are always in a need to be analyzed linguistically; not only this, but in most cases language is the key element in determining the final decision of the court concerning a specific case. Language operates effectively in legal texts, either written or spoken, within courtroom discourse. Crucially, the effective extent to which language is employed in legal settings is significant in the decision-making process in courtrooms, wherein laws are presented to defend or accuse. These laws can be conveyed either in a written form or orally, and in both modes of presentation, language has an effective role to play. Within courtrooms, language is dexterously employed to realize specific goals and objectives. The ability of discourse participants to decode the meanings beyond the semantic proposition of the linguistic expressions facilitates the process of communication and helps arrive at a final decision concerning any lawsuit addressed.

When addressing legal texts, we then refer to what is called courtroom discourse, or legal discourse; a term used to compromise the relationship between language and law. In other words, courtroom discourse or legal discourse is a type of discourse that highlights the way language is employed in legal texts and settings. Legal discourse is mainly concerned with oral interaction that occurs face to face within courtrooms (Farinde, 2009). The way discourse participants use language in their speech or defense serves to shape and reshape the decision of the court towards one specific lawsuit. Language, in this sense, can be employed to obtain specific verbal responses from judges, witnesses, and/or opponents, both argumentatively and rhetorically. Thus, the more dexterous language is employed the more effective and satisfactory results are obtained. Within courtroom settings, language is not only utilized in a purely linguistic sense, but as a tool to reinforce the state of defense. Such a task is employed to motivate the cognitive potentials of recipients (Mead, 1985). Language is also used in legal discourse to decode the various relations of power among participants. These power relations can be related to judges or lawyers. They are

used for achieving particular meanings, for persuading, and, sometimes, for manipulating (Hale, 1997). From this context, it can be claimed that the ability to use language in its proper context and in a persuasive and/or manipulative way enables one discourse participant to gain supremacy over the other participants in courtroom settings.

Three reasons constitute the rationale of selecting this trial in particular. First, Clinton's trial occupies a great deal of world and public opinion in its time. Second, Clinton's impeachment trial constitutes various usages of linguistic devices on the lexical, semantic and pragmatic levels of analysis that are dexterously employed to communicate particular legal meanings and ideologies in courtroom discourse. Third, the trial at hand maintains and mirrors a type of legal discourse that shows the way language is manipulated to demonstrate specific legal meanings as well as interpersonal relationships among courtroom discourse participants.

The paper is significant because it provides an investigation of the legal discourse of one of the most critical legal trials in the twentieth century, that is, Bill Clinton's impeachment trial in 1998. The paper sheds light on the connection between language and law. It highlights the extent to which various linguistic strategies are employed within courtrooms to communicate specific ideologies of the communication participants. This will be conducted by employing different linguistic levels of analysis, including the lexical, the pragmatic, and the semantic levels. The paper, therefore, is anticipated to contribute to both the linguistic and legal studies, particularly the relationship between the two dimensions. From the linguistic perspective, on the one hand, this paper attempts to show the extent to which language operates effectively in legal texts and within legal settings. This study highlights the role of language as a decisive element in determining the court's decisions. From a legal perspective, on the other hand, this paper offers a legal discourse analysis of one of the distinguished trials in the twentieth century, namely, Bill Clinton's impeachment trial. Thus, the paper tries to shed light on the connection held between language and law and the way linguistic strategies are employed in courtroom discourse to clarify and verify evidence. The paper also has a pedagogic value in the sense that its obtained results can be applied to legal courses delivered in universities. This, in turn, might contribute to the general understanding of the linguistic structures of the different laws, and offer legal and law practitioners an opportunity to know how language works in legal discourse.

This paper attempts to answer the four research questions. First, what are the linguistic strategies employed in the trial to achieve the ideologies of the involved discourse participants? Second, to what extent does the selection of particular words contribute to communicating different ideological and pragmatic meanings during the trial? Third, to what extent are power relations reflected in the trial at hand? Fourth, how do questioning and answering serve to elucidate particular meanings in courtroom discourse? The answer to these research questions constitutes the four research objectives of this article. First, to provide a legal discourse analysis of Clinton's impeachment trial; second, to show the extent to which lexical choices influence discourse interpretation; third, to explore the different linguistic realizations via which legal meanings and ideologies are encoded and decoded in courtroom discourse; and, fourth, to shed light on the mutual connection held between law and language, and the extent which they are complementary in arriving at a comprehensive interpretation of discourse.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section two reviews the literature pertinent to the topic under investigation, focusing on the previous studies relevant to the linguistic analysis of legal discourse. Section three presents the methodology of the current study, wherein data collection and description, and analytical procedures are provided. Section four is dedicated to the analysis of the selected data. Section five offers a discussion of the findings. Section six concludes the study and recommends some ideas for future research.

Literature Review

Legal discourse analysis and the use of language in the different legal settings have been approached by many legal and linguistic scholars, who discussed the connection between language and law and the way the former effectively operates within the latter's settings. These studies investigate the relationship held between language and law, which can be traced linguistically in the different types of legal texts and in different legal settings (e.g., Tiersma, 1999). This relationship has linguistically been discussed from different perspectives, including the following: (i) exploring the lexical features and the use of vocabulary pertaining to courtroom discourse (e.g., Bhatia, 1993); (ii) shedding light on the ways language can encode and maintain power relations among discourse participants (e.g., Stygall, 2012); (iii) highlighting the extent to which language contributes to the interpretation of legal texts (e.g., Tessuto, 2016); and (iv) discussing notions pertinent to identity and culture within the scope of legal communities and courtrooms settings (e.g., Bhatia & Gotti, 2015). The core concern of these studies was to highlight the connection between language and law in the different legal settings. This connection has been emphasized by Riner (2020) who highlighted the necessary connection between linguistic structures and socio-cultural processes, which, for him, offers a fruitful guide for understanding the relationship between law and language. This also makes Karasev, Savoskin and Chufarova (2020) to conclude that "presently one could consider legal linguistics as an independent interdisciplinary area of science" (p. 733).

Furthermore, other studies have discussed the influential role played by language to negotiate topics of justice within the various legal communities, as well as the extent to which language is practiced and mediated by the various legal discourse tools (Berukstiene, 2016; Breda, 2017; Cheng & Danesi, 2019; Williams & Tessuto, 2013). Thus, one can notice the complementary nature held between language and law. Such a connection is clearly shown by the fact that the different legal texts can be analyzed and investigated not only from a legal point of view, but also from a purely linguistic perspective that significantly contributes to the ultimate understanding of the various legal texts, such as contracts, legislation and regulations. These varieties of legal texts can be investigated by using the different linguistic perspectives, including the lexical, the semantic, the syntactic, and the pragmatic levels of analysis. This, in turn, helps decipher the different legal meanings and the hidden ideologies in courtroom discourse. Spasov (2016) shares a similar point of view, wherein he emphasized that "legal language is a holistic concept embracing several types of language of law" (p. 83).

Investigating legal discourse within courtrooms has linguistically been approached by many studies. Aldosari (2020) conducted a study in which he offered a linguistic investigation of Nelson Mandela's defense speech *I am prepared to die*. This study draws on a critical discourse analysis approach and focuses on highlighting some strategies that are employed in the selected

speech to communicate specific ideologies of the language users. Aldosari's study concluded that some of critical discourse analysis (CDA) strategies were utilized by Mandela to convey his political and ideological stance. These strategies have been based on the lexical and pragmatic levels of analysis. The study also revealed that Mandela's speech abounds in various linguistic strategies through which ideologies are communicated to addressees, which is realized by several strategies, including the use of terms of address, the employment of rhetoric, and the dexterous use of argumentative strategies.

A Further study by Aldosari and Khafaga (2020) investigated the language of persuasion in courtroom discourse by employing a bi-dimensional approach constituting critical discourse analysis and the computer-aided text analysis. This study explores the extent to which a computer-aided text analysis contributes to deciphering the various strategies of persuasion utilized to control, defend or accuse within the framework of courtroom discourse. The study employed four critical discourse analysis strategies, the use of repetitive expressions, the use of questioning and answering, the use of justification, and the use of emotive language. These strategies have been incorporated within a frequency distribution analysis aided by a computer to demonstrate the extent to which both CDA and computer-aided text analysis (CATA) software are employed to decode the different legal meanings and ideologies in courtroom discourse.

Within the courtroom, legal and ideological meanings can be communicated at various linguistic levels, including the lexical, the semantic and the pragmatic levels. On the lexical level of analysis, this study presents the notion of lexicalization in the selected trial. It sheds light on the lexis employed in the discourse of the discourse participants within courtrooms, and the way these lexis are ideologically laden by particular legal meanings that serve the understanding and interpretation of the whole discourse. In this regard, Fowler (1991) emphasized the importance of lexis as ideology carriers in the analysis of texts. Highlighting the significance of lexis in the process of persuasion, Schaffner (2004) and Khafaga (2017) argued that one focus of attention in discourse analysis is the emphasis it puts on the strategic use of vocabulary to achieve specific goals.

On the semantic level of analysis, the paper focuses on the propositional meanings pertaining to the different linguistic manifestations employed in the discourse of the trial. At this semantic level, the focus is on the use of synonyms, antonyms as well as the other different lexical relations. Further, a semantic discussion of function words will be provided concerning the use of pronouns, passive and active voice, and modality. Fairclough (2013) accentuated the significance of using various pronouns to carry ideological significations of the speaker. They maintained that these pronouns show the speaker's responsibility, competency and authority over others. As for the use of modal verbs, it will be discussed in light of Fairclough's (2013) classification of the term. He divided modality into two types: relational modality and expressive modality. Regarding the use of the passive forms in discourse, it functions to hide the agent and to leave responsibility unknown. As such, passivization encodes a specific ideological purpose pertaining to the speaker.

On the pragmatic level of analysis, the paper scrutinizes to explore the intended meanings of the speakers in the trial under investigation. This is conducted by shedding light on specific pragmatic devices used in the discourse of the trial, including agency (Fairclough, 2013),

reference, inference, implicature (Yule, 1996), and speech acts (Searle, 1979). These pragmatic concepts will be discussed in relation to their functions as ideology and legal meanings carriers in the discourse of the selected trial.

Obviously, the previous literature on the language of courtroom discourse has approached the language of courtrooms from different perspectives. However, this paper tries to provide a linguistic integration between the lexical, semantic and pragmatic levels of analysis to decode the hidden ideologies in the trial under investigation. This study, therefore, is expected to contribute to the field of legal discourse studies.

Methods

This part is dedicated to presenting the process of data collection, data description, and the research procedures of data analysis.

Data: Collection and Description

The data used in the analysis of this study consist of the discourse of the lawsuit of Bill Clinton's impeachment trial in 1998. The testimony and statements of President Clinton's trial consist of 23954 words and are divided into two main parts: the first part is dedicated to the testimony in the Paula Jones case deposition, and, the second part presents the testimony and the questions regarding the case of Monica Lewinsky. The whole trial of Clinton's impeachment is downloaded from Famous Trial site available at <https://www.famous-trials.com/clinton/883-clintontestimony>.

Approach of the Study

This study entirely draws on legal discourse analysis approach as discussed by Coulthard (2013) and Mey (2016) to analyze the linguistics of Clinton's impeachment trial. Legal discourse analysis is one type of discourse analysis that shows the connection between language and law. Its primary concern is to expose the different ways language operates in legal settings in order to reveal the various legal meanings and ideologies in courtroom discourse. Legal discourse analysis, therefore, focuses on the communication acts pertaining to the different practices of law.

Research Procedures

The analytical procedures conducted in this paper encompass four stages: the first stage is dedicated to demonstrating the macro propositions addressed in the trial. The second stage constitutes the collection of the selected trial by downloading it from the Famous Trial site, as is mentioned in Subsection 3.1 above. The third stage comprises the complete reading of the trial to highlight the various lexical and pragmatic strategies employed to communicate specific meanings in the trial. In this stage, some expressions were highlighted as indicative in conveying particular ideologies. The fourth stage is an interpretative and explanatory one, wherein the ideological and pragmatic purposes targeted beyond the semantic propositions of the selected expressions were analytically clarified by means of the use of specific lexical and pragmatic strategies that include power relations, lexicalization and questioning and answering. Notably, some words were emphasized by being written in bold and italics for some analytical reasons.

Discourse Participants

The trial under investigation comprises six discourse participants that have conversational turns throughout the trial. These are as follows: (i) Susan Weber Wright, who is the Judge of the court

and is referred to in the discourse of the trial as Judge Wright; (ii) President Clinton, (iii) Mr. Robert Bennett, who is the president's attorney, and is referred to as Mr. Bennett in the discourse of the trial; (iv) Mr. Fisher, who represents the court; (v) Mr. Mitchell S. Ettinger, who is associate of Mr. Bennett; and (vi) Bill Bristow, who is the attorney of Mr. Danny Ferguson. Despite the fact that these participant participated in the discourse of the trial, the majority of the conversational turns in the trial are related to only two participants: Judge Wright and Clinton.

Analysis

Macro propositions and the Context of Situation

Clinton's impeachment trial abounds in macro propositions that constitute the general thematic structure of the trial as a whole. These macro propositions are as follows: (i) the case was backgrounded by the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit; (ii) Clinton's harassment with Monica Lewinsky; (iii) Lewinsky alleged that Clinton enforced her to have sex with him; and (iv) Clinton's arguments as well as response to the judge's questions indicate that the whole affair with Lewinsky was consensually conducted. These four macro proposition are presented throughout the conversational turns of the various discourse participants involved in the trial.

As for the context of situation of the trial, it shows the testimony and statements of President William Clinton relating to his impeachment trial. The origins of the case were dated back to 1995, when Monica Lewinsky came to the White House as an intern employee who aged 21 then. Monica Lewinsky proclaimed that President Clinton had practiced around ten sexual activities with her during 16 months between late 1995 and 1996. When the news of such sexual activities began to spread, the president decided to end such sexual affairs. Clinton's decision of ending his relationship with Lewinsky was not accepted quite willingly by the latter, who quickly fall victim to Clinton's political opponents, who in turn convinced her to accuse the president of sexual harassment against her.

Power Relations Manifested in the Trial

According to Fairclough (2013), language is perceived as "a primary medium of social control and power" (p. 3), by which dominance practices and power relations are clearly manifested in the different linguistic strategies employed among participants (Khafaga, 2019, 2022). Because legal courts are the contextual setting of exercising power, i.e., by judges over lawyers and attorneys; by lawyers over witnesses; etc., language, therefore, is structured in such a way as to facilitate control and to show the extent to which power is linguistically produced, reproduced and maintained in discourse.

In the context of the trial under investigation, some power relations are manifested in the conversational practices conducted among discourse participants involved in the trial. There are power relations between the judge and Clinton; the judge and the attorneys; the attorneys and Clinton; and the judge and the witness. In the following lines, the paper will focus only on the first two types of power relations, i.e., judge-Clinton and judge-attorneys relation of power. As for the judge-Clinton relation of power, it is linguistically manifested in the use of the terms of address as well as the use of pronouns throughout the trial. This is clearly shown by the way Judge Wright addresses Clinton, as she uses the second person singular pronoun 'you' to address Clinton in almost all the conversational turns between the two conversationalists. Only in three

conversational turns, Judge Wright calls him as 'Mr. President', and in one conversational turn as 'the president'. This employment of 'you' in addressing the president of the United States sheds light on the nature of power relations held within courtrooms between judges and the rest of discourse participants. This correlates with Fairclough's (2013) argument that the use of the pronoun 'you' communicates power, domination and authority. Here, the judge is seen as more powerful than Clinton regardless the fact that the latter is still the president of the United States. The same power relations can also be seen in the conversational turns between Judge Wright and the attorneys. It is obvious that the adherence to the established norms and terms of address is there within the courtroom. The judge is addressed by the courtroom well-established expression 'your honor', in a reference that further accentuates the supreme legal status and authority that Judges have over the rest of discourse participants within courtrooms.

Lexicalization

Lexicalization process, the use of specific lexis in discourse, plays a significant role in Clinton's impeachment trial. Lexis usually carries ideological significance, either on the part of the speaker or on the part of listeners. They are ideology communicators that target particular purposes in the process of communication. In the trial at hand, the skillful use of lexis varies from the employment of specific verbs to the use of particular nouns and adjectives. In these cases, lexicalization reflects particular ideological meanings. That is, they not only express their semantically established meanings, but also communicate specific pragmatic and ideological purposes. The process of lexicalization in Clinton's Impeachment trial is manifested in three categories of the word level: the verbs, the adjectives, and the nouns. These will be analytically reflected on in the following subsections.

The selection of particular verbs in the trial, particularly on the part of Clinton, plays a significant part in communicating specific meanings to the court. As one of the parts of speech, verbs are ideology communicators; they not only convey their ordinary semantic meanings, but also communicate ideological and pragmatic purposes. The trial witnesses the employment of verbs, such as *know*, *think*, and *believe* are recurrently used in the trial by the two main discourse participants, i.e., the judge and Clinton. These verbs, which semantically express personal beliefs of speakers, convey further pragmatic purposes that revolve around the authenticity and credibility of Clinton's testimony in front of the court. It is noticed that the verb 'know' is used in many expressions, either in the positive or negative forms, in which Clinton expresses his beliefs concerning specific points asked by the judge. Expressions, such as "I don't know what happened to the folder," "I don't know, four or five, over a ten-year period, maybe a few more, maybe a few less, I don't know," "That's all I know about that," "I don't know if that qualifies as suppression," "I didn't know she was back," etc. In these expressions, the accused president seems that he simply wants to escape the answer of specific questions by using the expression 'I don't know'. It is a matter of dissociating himself from being involved in a specific event.

In the same vein, the verb 'think' is employed by Clinton to go around the direct answer of the judge's questions. The president uses this verb in many situations, such as "I think they did," "I think she was a volunteer," "I don't think she stayed long enough to go into any great detail," "I don't think I was notified when she got the job at the counsel's office," etc. Again, the same pragmatic purpose lies beyond the use of the verb 'think' in these expressions. That is, Clinton

attempts not to be direct in his responses; the meaning of uncertainty is targeted here. This holds true for the verb 'believe', which is employed by Clinton in discursive situations in which he wants to communicate the certainty of the argument.

Another type of lexicalization can be found in the employment of adverbs as is shown in the following extract:

I don't recall, but as I said, when she worked at the legislative affairs office, they *always* had somebody there on the weekends. I *typically* worked some on the weekends. *Sometimes* they'd bring me things on the weekends. She – it seems to me she brought things to me *once* or *twice* on the weekends. In that case, whatever time she would be in there, drop it off, exchange a *few* words and go. (Clinton's impeachment trial, 1998, my emphasis)

In the above extract, it is evident that the employment of particular adverbs in the president's turns is very indicative. To clarify this point, we can notice the use of the two adverbs of frequency always and sometimes. Given the meaning of normality and regularity conveyed by 'typically', the meaning of continuity and permanence communicated by 'always' and the meaning of irregularity channeled by 'sometimes', one can infer that the use of the three adverbs is ideological in nature. Here, the president tries to communicate three meanings: first, his work in weekends is something normal for his position as a president of the United States of America; second, it is recurrently and continually conducted that some of them (the White House employees) are in the place where he spends his weekends; and third, it may happen that the employees occasionally bring him things to conduct in such weekends. These meanings target a further pragmatic meaning: it is not intentional that the president is there in the weekends to have some sort of affairs with Monica Lewinski; it is not something planned or schemed before, but his meeting with her is something normal and customarily. This last pragmatic meaning is emphasized by three linguistic lexicalizations: first, the president's use of the verb 'seems' in 'it seems to me she brought things to me *once* or *twice* on the weekends', which further emphasizes unintentionality beyond his meeting with Lewinsky; second, the employment of the two adverbs 'one' and 'twice', which is also a reference to the irregularity of the event (the meeting); and third, the use of the quantifier 'few' in 'exchange a *few* words and go'. Crucially, lexicalization, which is manifested here in the selection and employment of particular adverbs, is highly indicative in communicating specific pragmatic and ideological meanings that go beyond the semantic proposition of the linguistic expression.

A further indicative employment of adverbs can be shown in the use of the negative frequency adverb 'never', which is highly indicative in communicating specific pragmatic and ideological meanings in the trial under investigation. Consider the following extract:

I *never* knew she was back in Arkansas. Contrary to her protestations, I *never* saw her in Texas, I *never* knew what she was doing there, I *never* had any contact with her except once in a while she'd come back to Arkansas and call and say hello and how are you. (Clinton's impeachment trial, 1998, my emphasis)

As indicated in the above extract, the negative frequency adverb 'never' is employed to end any suspicion raised against the president concerning his previous knowledge that planned to meet with Lewinski. The accused president is trying to dissociate himself from any responsibilities

and to deny any doubts about his planning to meet with Monica Lewinsky while he was governor of Texas, or while being in office, except through her position as an employee in the White House. The repetition of the same adverb (4 occurrences) in the same conversational turn emphasizes that it is skillfully selected and utilized to convey such a meaning of dissociation. Notice also the combination between the first person singular 'I' and the negative adverb, as well as its active construction. The president attempts to communicate that he is completely certain that he never planned the meeting. The use of the active voice here is to acknowledge the responsibility for the communicated action; that is, he did not plan or know anything about Monica's presence in Arkansas, that he saw her in Texas, or that he conducted any calls with her. Such dissociation serves to convince the court of his point of view concerning his affairs with Lewinsky.

The use of adverbs to communicate specific ideologies continues in the trial through the employment of the adverb 'certainly', which is utilized by Clinton in response to the judge's question and in more than one conversational turn of the two discourse participants. Consider the following extract:

Judge: Have you ever met with Monica Lewinsky in the White House between the hours of midnight and six a.m.?

Clinton. I *certainly* don't think so.

Judge: Well, have you ever given any gifts to Monica Lewinsky?

Clinton: I don't recall. Do you know what they were?

Judge: A hat pin?

Clinton: I don't, I don't remember. But I *certainly*, I could have.

Judge: A book about Walt Whitman?

Judge: If she told someone that she had a sexual affair with you beginning in November of 1995, would that be a lie?

Clinton: It's *certainly* not the truth. It would not be the truth. (Clinton's impeachment trial, 1998, my emphasis)

Again, the use of the adverb 'certainly' in Clinton's answers to the questions directed to him by the judge attempts to eliminate the accusation of harassment with Lewinsky. This persuasive goal beyond the use of 'certainly' can be inferred from his conversational turns. However, the idea that he tries to dissociate himself from the harassment accusation is dominant, as it can be also presupposed from the contradiction that can be inferred from his first turn in the above extract 'I *certainly* don't think so'; the president is certain, however, he does not think so. Significantly, the use of 'certainly' in Clinton's turns can be said to be speaker-argumentation-supporter that functions to strengthen his position in front of the court.

Adjectives and nouns also play a significantly indicative part in Clinton's trial. In more than one conversational turn, the adjective 'sure', for example, is recurrently used by Clinton in response to several questions directed to him by the court's judge. Consider the following extract:

Judge: Have you ever had a conversation with Vernon Jordan in which Paula Jones was mentioned?

Clinton: I'm *sure* I have.

Judge: Without consulting your notes, do you have any independent recollection of anything that was said in any of those conversations with Danny Ferguson?

Clinton: I *sure* do.

Judge: Did you look at the transcription before your deposition today?

Clinton: I'm not *sure* that I did

Judge: My question, though, is focused on the time before the conversation occurred, and the question is whether you did anything to cause the conversation to occur.

Clinton: I think in the mean – I'm not *sure* how you mean the question. I think the way you mean the question, the answer to that is no, I've already testified. (Clinton's impeachment trial, 1998, my emphasis)

The above extracts show that Clinton uses the adjective 'sure' in his answer to the judge's questions. This skillful employment of the adjective is of ideological significance. Given the semantic proposition the adjective 'sure' carries, which indicates certainty and a high level of confirmation, one can infer the pragmatic purpose beyond the surface semantic meaning of the adjective. That is, the accused president is highly confident and certain of his answers. This pragmatic meaning in turn functions to shift the wheel of suspicion from away from his side so as to be proclaimed unguilty at the end of his testimony. The same holds true for the employment of other adjectives, such as *certain* and *aware*, yet the former is recurrently used by Clinton, whereas the latter is more representative in the questions of the judge to Clinton.

Similarly, the discourse of the trial presents a significant use of some nouns, such as *harassment*, *affairs* and *allegations*. Indicatively, the three words are collocated with the words *sexual*, *extramarital* and *her*, respectively. These words, together with their collocated items serve to shed light on two important things that are closely associated with the trial macro propositions: first, the first two collocational expressions function to cast emphasis on the main reason beyond the trial, that is, sexuality. Both *sexual harassment* and *extramarital affairs* connote the meaning of sexuality; second, the combination between the third person singular pronoun *her* (referring to Monica Lewinsky) with the word *allegations* serve to dissociate President Clinton from the accusation of harassment. Also the connotation carried by the word *allegations* further accentuates the pragmatic meaning that Monica Lewinsky did not tell the truth in terms of her accusations to Clinton.

The Employment of Questions and Answers

The process of questioning and answering is always inherited within courtrooms. It is the core concern and a dominant feature of courtroom discourse. Questioning constitutes different forms, as it can be produced in a wh- question type, or a yes-no question. In both cases, the speaker seeks an answer in response. Sometimes, these questions are information-seekers; in other times they come to confirm a piece of information. The process of answering also comprises different structures on the part of the respondent participant. Answers may occur very short, constituting one or two words, either in the positive or negative forms; in other times, they come in full structures; and in a third time they may be responded by a further elaborating question from the respondent himself.

In Clinton's impeachment trial the different forms of questions as well of answers are represented in the discourse of the conversationalists. One of the forms of questioning is the questions that start with one of the wh-interrogative operators, as is shown in the following table.

Table 1. *Question words and their frequency in Clinton's testimony*

Question word	Frequency	Example
Where	8	Where did you meet with her on that day?
What	21	What was the process by which she received that job?
When	12	When did you meet her for the first time?
Why	7	Why don't you say it's not true?
Who	9	Who in the White House would be responsible for receiving applications for that job and making the decision who would receive it?
How	5	How do you know her?
How many	9	How many times did you visit the home of Jane Doe 2 when her husband was not there?
How much	4	How much time elapsed between the time of the reunion and the time when you made these notes?

As indicated from table one, various interrogative markers have been used to form questions, including, where, what, when, why, who, how, how many and how much, with occurrence frequencies of eight, 21, 12, seven, nine, five, nine, and four, respectively. All these questions are information seekers, that is, they require responses on the part of the other discourse participants.

Yes-no questions is another type of questions employed in the trial. These are questions that start with helping and/or modal verbs, and also require a response from discourse participants. The following table adds more clarification:

Table 2. *Yes-no questions and their frequency in Clinton's testimony*

Question initiator	Frequency	Example
Do	59	Do you remember giving her a gold brooch?
Did	87	Did you ever talk with Monica Lewinsky about the possibility that she might be asked to testify in this case?
Does	3	Does that happen all the time, sir, or rarely?
Have	14	Have you ever met with Monica Lewinsky in the White House between the hours of midnight and six a.m.?
Has	9	Has Monica Lewinsky ever given you any gifts?
Is	12	Is this a copy of a sexual harassment policy that you signed when you were the governor of the state of Arkansas?
Are	9	Are there any other individuals who are specifically assigned to be your secretary?
Would	7	Would you repeat the question?
Will	1	Will we do that in your room Judge, here?

Table two demonstrates that various helping and modal verbs are employed by the different discourse participants in the trial to form yes-no questions. These forms are also information

seekers, as they require responses on the part of the listeners. As indicated in the table, the different question-initiators constitute the three times, i.e., the present, the past and the future. Significantly, among the different question initiators used in the trial, the modal 'would' is employed only in situations that require the speaker to be polite with his addressees. That is, in the seven occurrences of the 'would', the addressee has more power than the speaker. All of them are directed to the judge of the court, who is contextually more powerful than the other participants in the trial, as she, being the judge, has both the access and authority over the court.

Crucially, sometimes, the Judges and attorneys employ a sort of questions that attempts to confirm a piece of information, not to seek information, as is the case for wh-questions and yes-no-questions. This type of question is used in Clinton's trial by Judge Wright to confirm some sort of information on the part of the addressees or to make the addressees admit their knowledge concerning some information. Consider the following extract:

Judge: And when you were governor of the state of Arkansas, you appointed Jane Doe 2 to the position of Judge on the Arkansas Court of Appeals correct?

Clinton: I did, yes.

Judge: And she decided cases on the Court of Appeals for two years, correct?

Clinton: That's correct. (Clinton's impeachment trial, 1998)

Here, despite the fact that the two conversational turns of the Judge do not carry any interrogative word, i.e., wh-word or auxiliaries that operate as questioning initiators, the two conversational turns are still considered as questions. The word 'correct' at the end of each turn fulfills the interrogative function of the various questions words, either wh-questions or yes-no questions. These questions are employed in courtrooms to confirm information, not to ask for information. Judge Wright, in both conversational turns, attempts to get a confirmation from President Clinton that this information listed by her in the two turns is true or false. Thus, we can say that confirmation questions equal yes-no question in the sense that both types can be answered with 'yes' or 'no'.

In all their forms, questions that are used in Clinton's impeachment trial are met by different forms of answers. That is, they are responded in three ways. First, in a short linguistic terms constituting one or two words, including the positive or the negative response operators 'yes' or 'no'. This is clearly shown in answers like 'yes, I did', 'yes, this is right', 'no, I don't', 'I don't think so', 'it is correct', 'not to my knowledge', etc. Second, in full linguistic sentences comprising a complete syntactic structure that functions as both a response to the question and an explanation of the answer by adding some information, as in Judge Wright's question: "What were her qualifications to serve as a judge in the Court of Appeals?" and Clinton's answer that immediately follows: "She was an intelligent, hard-working person who was a good friend and supporter of mine. And I thought she would make a good judge. The evidence is that she did, I think." Third, in some discourse situations in the trial, a question is answered by a further question from the addressee, in which he/she asks for more elaboration to the question initially given, as in Clinton's response to the judge: "Would you repeat the question?" when she asks him: "Has it ever happened that a White House record was created that showed the Monica Lewinsky was meeting with Betty Currie when in fact Monica Lewinsky was meeting with you?" Thus, various forms of answering

have been employed in the trial as a response to the different types of questions initiated within courtroom.

Discussion

The analysis of the selected data demonstrated the relevance of applying the various linguistic levels of analysis to the investigation of legal data. That is, the paper showed that the different ideological purposes within courtroom settings can be decoded at the lexical, semantic and the pragmatic levels of analysis. This goes in conformity with Adosari's and Khafaga's (2020) argument that hidden legal meanings can be deciphered by means of the linguistic investigation of the legal data. Language, in this sense, contributes significantly to decoding ideologies and communicating legal meanings, which, in turn, highlights the linguistic contribution language provides for other disciplines, including not only social settings, as argued by (Fairclough, 2013), but also legal discourse and legal settings (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007).

The analysis further showed that language is used deftly in courtrooms to accomplish specific goals and objectives. The ability of discourse participants to decipher meanings beyond the semantic proposition of language terms promotes dialogue and aids in reaching a final conclusion on any lawsuit under consideration. This correlates with Farinde (2009) contention that the discursive intelligibility a prerequisite towards a successful act of communication within courtroom. As a result, the more dexterous language used, the more successful and satisfying the results are. This also reconciles with Mead's (1985) argument that language is used in courtrooms not just in a linguistic sense, but also as a tool to bolster the state of defense. This type of task is used to inspire participants' cognitive abilities.

In terms of the linguistic strategies employed in the trial to achieve the ideologies of the involved discourse participants (research question No. One), the analysis identified two main linguistic strategies: the use of particular lexis and the employment of questions and answers. The two strategies are dexterously used to decode particular ideological meanings pertaining to discourse participants. This, in turn, sheds light on the relevance of the linguistic analysis to the study of legal discourse, either spoken or written. This chimes with Aldosari's (2020) and Aldosari's and Khafaga's (2020) arguments that lexical choices as well as the utilization of questioning and answering in legal trials are among the commonly established linguistic strategies used by discourse participants to arrive at their targeted ideologies.

Concerning the extent to which the selection of particular words contribute to communicating different ideological and pragmatic meanings during the trial (research question No. two), it is analytically evidenced that lexicalization is a very significant tool of linguistic analysis. The analysis in this paper goes in conformity with Fowler's (1991) argument that the use of specific vocabulary in discourse is ideological in nature. In the context of this paper, vocabularies are employed ideologically to communicate as well as reveal particular meanings on the part of discourse participants. The same argument has previously been accentuated by Schaffner (2004) who emphasized that vocabulary is strategically employed by discourse participants to achieve specific goals.

With regard to the extent to which power relations are reflected in the trial at hand (research question No. three), the analysis demonstrated that power is always represented in courtroom discourse. It is produced, reproduced and consumed by discourse participants. In the current study, power relations are linguistically manifested in two ways: the use of pronouns and the use of specific terms of address. The analysis has evidenced the use of the pronouns as well as of specific terms of address to reflect various relations of power in the discourse of Clinton's impeachment. This emphasizes the ideological role played by linguistic devices in communicating power, either persuasively or manipulatively. This reconciles with Fairclough's (2013) and Khafaga's (2021) arguments that function words, including pronouns and modality are ideologically loaded. That is, they are employed to achieve specific ideological purposes in discourse.

As for the way by which questioning and answering serves to elucidate particular meanings in courtroom discourse (research question No. four), the analysis showed that the employment of questioning and answering strategy is very indicative in elucidating information from discourse participants. This is analytically clarified by the use of two forms of questions: the yes-no questions and the wh questions. The analysis further showed that within courtrooms, questions are sometimes employed not to seek information but to accentuate and confirm a fact. This correlates with Aldosari's and Khafaga's (2020) contention that the use of questions as information seekers is less representative in courtroom settings than using them to explain and/or confirm a piece of information. Consequently, within courtrooms, legal and ideological meanings can be communicated at various linguistic levels, including the lexical, the semantic and the pragmatic levels.

Conclusion

This paper presented a linguistic and legal discourse analysis of Bill Clinton's impeachment trial in 1998. The analysis revealed the integration between legal discourse and linguistics with its various analytical approaches. The analysis demonstrated that the selected trial abounds in linguistic expressions and strategies via which various ideological beliefs and legal meanings are encoded and conveyed to discourse participants. This is linguistically evidenced on the different linguistic levels of analysis: lexically, by means of a dexterous employment of specific lexis that covers the different parts of speech on the word level, including the verb, the noun, the adjective and the adverb. Semantically; by clarifying the extent to which various types of questions and answers are employed to communicate particular legal meanings and ideologies. Pragmatically, the analysis highlighted the different power relations within courtroom, by demonstrating the extent to which these power relations are encoded in discourse by means of specific employment of pronouns and terms of address. Ideologically, it is analytically clarified that there is always a specific ideology lies beyond any use of linguistic strategies. Therefore, within courtroom contexts, the process of lexicalization, power relations and the employment of questioning and answering are ideological in nature that are employed to achieve specific ideological purposes. Furthermore, it is analytically demonstrated that legal discourse is a discourse genre that mirrors the different relations of power among discourse participants, and, therefore, is integrated within language with its linguistic scope to communicate specific legal meanings and to decode particular ideological purposes in courtrooms settings.

Recommendation

For future research, the paper recommends further linguistic investigations for other legal discourse texts, both spoken and written, to show the extent to which particular legal meanings as well as various power relations are manifested by means of the linguistic employment of specific discourse strategies. These studies might reveal findings similar and/or different of those reported here that pertain to legal discourse analysis.

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