# Rhetorical devices and audience responses in Norwegian political speeches

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# Abstract

This article reports the first investigation in Norwegian political speeches of 16 different rhetorical devices used to invite collective audience responses. An analysis was conducted of 30 speeches delivered by 20 Norwegian parliamentary candidates during the 2013 Norwegian general election. Results were compared with pre-existing data from American, British and Japanese political speeches. The Norwegian audience responses showed striking similarities with those of the Japanese, although the use of rhetorical devices resembled American and British speeches, with a greater use of implicit over explicit devices. The results were considered in the context of Hofstede’s individualism (IDV) scale. The Norwegian speeches had one instance each of booing and a disgust response from the audience. A novel 17th rhetorical device was proposed, that of *repetition*/*familiarity*.

KEYWORDS: political speeches, rhetorical devices, applause, booing, chanting, cheering, individualism, collectivism

# Introduction

Oratory has always been an important form of political communication. Its study dates back to the times of classical civilisations, in ancient Rome through the writings of Cicero (55BCE/2001) and Quintilian (c.95CE/2015), in ancient Greece through the writings of Aristotle (4th century BCE/2006). In the modern era, significant insights have been gained into how politicians interact with live audiences through the detailed microanalysis of video and audio recordings, with a particular focus on rhetorical devices used by politicians to invite applause. In the study reported here, a microanalysis was conducted of politician-audience interaction in speeches delivered during the 2013 general election in Norway, the first such study to be conducted of Norwegian political speeches.

In this context, of particular importance has been the work of Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b), who analyzed the use of rhetorical devices to invite applause. Atkinson’s key insight was to compare political speech-making with how people take turns in conversation. Just as listeners may take a turn in conversation 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 a completion point through rhetorical devices embedded in the structure of talk. This enables them to applaud at appropriate moments, and is reflected in the close synchronization between speech and applause.

So, for example, the end of a list in conversation can signal the end of an utterance - a point at which another person can or should take over the speaking turn (Jefferson, 1990). Such lists typically consist of three items, so that once the listener recognizes that a list is under way, it is possible to anticipate when the speaker is about to complete the utterance, referred to as a *completion point* (Jefferson, 1990). However, in the context of political speeches, the *three-part list* may signal to the audience not when to start talking but when to applaud. Thus, just as conversationalists take it in turn to speak, so speaker and audience may also take turns, although audience “turns” are essentially limited to gross displays of approval or disapproval (such as applause, cheering or booing).

Another device identified by Atkinson (e.g., 1984a) is the *contrast,* which juxtaposes a word, phrase or sentence with its opposite. To be effective, the second part of the contrast should closely resemble the first in the details of its construction and duration, so that the audience can the more easily anticipate the point of completion. If the contrast is too brief, people may have insufficient time to recognize that a completion point is about to be reached, let alone to produce an appropriate response. According to Atkinson (1984a), the contrast is by far the most frequently used device for inviting applause.

An important feature of both three-part list and contrast is that the speaker does not explicitly ask the audience to applaud. For example, the speaker does not say “I am asking you for support”, or even “Please put your hands together to give a round of applause“. Rather, these devices are implicit in the structure of speech, embedded in the construction of talk itself that indicate to the audience when applause is appropriate.

How these features work can be seen most clearly in ritualized messages, such as introductions and commendations, which involve what Atkinson (1984a) calls *naming*. 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 some appreciative comments, and finally reveal the person’s name. The audience is thus given ample time to realize that applause is expected and to anticipate who is to be identified, so that they are fully prepared when the name is finally announced (Atkinson, 1984a, pp.49-57). Namings are often be combined with *gratitude*, in which the speaker thanks a named person in the audience.

Another five rhetorical devices for inviting applause were identified by Heritage and Greatbatch (1986), referred to as *puzzle-solution, headline-punchline, position taking, combination,* and *pursuit*. In a puzzle-solution device, the speaker begins by establishing some kind of puzzle or problem, and then, shortly afterwards, offers the solution - the important and applaudable part of the message. The headline-punchline device is structurally similar to the puzzle-solution, although somewhat simpler. Here, the speaker proposes to make a declaration, pledge or announcement and then proceeds to make it. The applaudable part of the message is emphasised by the speaker's calling attention in advance to what s/he is about to say. In a position taking, the speaker first describes a state of affairs towards which s/he could be expected to take a strongly evaluative stance. At the end of the description, the speaker overtly and unequivocally either praises or condemns the state of affairs described. All these devices may be combined with one another, with the result that the completion point of the message is further emphasised (combination). Finally, if an audience fails to respond to a particular message, speakers may actively pursue applause (pursuit).

Heritage and Greatbatch’s (1986) analysis was based on all the 476 speeches broadcast from the British Conservative, Labour and Liberal Party conferences in 1981. They found that contrasts were associated with no less than 33.2% of the incidents of collective applause during speeches, lists with 12.6%; hence, almost half the applause was associated with the two rhetorical devices originally identified by Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b). Overall, 68% of collective applause was associated with seven rhetorical devices – the five Heritage and Greatbatch had introduced, together with contrasts and lists as originally identified by Atkinson (referred to subsequently as the seven traditional devices).

A further two devices were identified by Bull and Wells (2002). They argued for the inclusion of *jokes*, since jokes often receive applause as well as laughter, and also for what they termed *negative naming*. Whereas in naming, the audience are invited to show their appreciation for a particular individual (Atkinson, 1984a), in negative naming, the audience are invited to applaud the abuse or ridicule of a named person. Typically, this is a politician of an opposing political party, although negative naming may also be used to castigate a social group, such as another political party.

One major limitation of all the studies described above is that they were based exclusively on British political speeches. Hence, these rhetorical devices may not be characteristic of political oratory worldwide, they may be specific only to British political culture. Thus, two cross-cultural studies have been conducted in Japan, based on 36 speeches from their general election of 2005 (Bull & Feldman, 2011), and 38 speeches from their general election of 2009 (Feldman & Bull, 2012). In addition, a third cross-cultural study has been conducted, based on 11 speeches from the Democrat and Republican candidates (Barack Obama and Mitt Romney) in the American presidential election of 2012 (Bull & Miskinis, 2015).

In two studies of two Japanese general elections (2005 and 2009), a further five rhetorical devices were identified (Bull & Feldman, 2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012). These were *greetings/salutations*, *expressing appreciation,* *request agreement/ask for confirmation*, *ask for support*, and *description of campaign activities*. Greetings/salutations refers to an opening utterance in which the candidate introduces him/herself by name, and requests the audience’s support. Expressing appreciation follows the greetings/salutations in which the speaker expresses thanks or gratitude to the audience for attending the meeting. Request agreement/asking for confirmation refers to statements in which audience agreement/confirmation is requested explicitly in response to what the speaker has just said. In asking for support, the speaker explicitly requests the audience’s support for his/her candidature. In description of campaign activities, the speaker relates details of his/her campaigning activities, e.g., talks with voters in other parts of the constituency.

A notable feature of these additional rhetorical devices is that they are predominantly explicit. Thus, the speaker openly requests an audience response, through requests for agreement and support, jokes and humorous expressions, and ritual exchanges, viz. greetings/salutations and expressing appreciation (Bull & Feldman, 2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012). In marked contrast, devices identified in British speeches are exclusively implicit, built into the rhetorical structure of speech (Atkinson, 1983, 1984a, 1984b; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986). Notably, in the two studies of Japanese speeches, over 70% of affiliative audience responses (applause, laughter and cheering) occurred in response to explicit invitations from the speaker (Bull & Feldman, 2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012),

The distinction between explicit and implicit devices was further explored in a third cross-cultural study, based on speeches delivered in the US 2012 presidential election (Bull & Miskinis, 2015). In addition to the 14 rhetorical devices analysed in the two Japanese studies, two further devices were included, those of naming (Atkinson, 1984a) and negative naming (Bull & Wells, 2002), neither of which had been observed in the two studies of Japanese speeches (Bull & Ferldman, 2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012).

Results of the American study showed a highly significant positive correlation (*r*=+0.87) between Obama and Romney for the overall pattern of rhetorical devices (Bull & Miskinis,2015). The seven traditional devices altogether accounted for most of the techniques used by both Obama (82%) and Romney (81%), in particular, contrasts and lists (Obama 33%; Romney 35%). Overall, the total proportion of implicit devices (namings, negative namings, description of campaign activities, the seven traditional devices) was high for both candidates (Obama 82%; Romney 81%). In this respect, the results were strikingly similar to those found in British speeches. Both candidates predominantly made use of the seven traditional devices, and most of the techniques were implicit. Arguably, it is thus possible to speak of an Anglo-American style of speech-making, which contrasts markedly with that of Japanese politicians (Bull & Miskinis,2015).

However, there were noticeable differences between the UK and the USA in audience responses. The collective American audience responses were coded into applause, cheering, laughter, chanting and booing. Overall, in marked contrast to both Japan and the UK, it was found that cheering was by far and away the most frequent response (63% of total audience responses); applause accounted for only 12% of all responses.

Another distinctive feature of American audience responses was the phenomenon of booing (Bull & Miskinis,2015). In contrast to Clayman (1993), who regarded booing as essentially a disaffiliative response, two distinctive types of booing were identified: disaffiliative (the audience boo the speaker), and affiliative (the audience align with the speaker to boo a political opponent). Overall, in the 11 speeches, there were 48 instances of booing. Most of these instances (N=45) could be seen as affiliative, invited through rhetorical devices in the same way as invited applause. However, the three instances of disaffiliative booing also seemed to have been invited by the speaker, namely, the Republican candidate Mitt Romney, in a speech he gave to the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). In that speech, he made a number of provocative statements to the predominantly black audience for which he got roundly booed, arguably to make himself look good in the eyes of a different audience, namely, that of hard-line, ultra-conservative, white Republicans. From this perspective, these examples of disaffiliative booing could also be seen as an invited response.

A further distinctive feature of American audience responses was the frequency of individualized responses. These were observed throughout the speeches, with a constant flurry of isolated applause and encouraging individual verbal remarks, mostly interruptive (Bull & Miskinis, 2015). In marked contrast, in the Japanese speeches, there was a complete absence of *isolated applause* (instances where only one or two members of the audience respond), in contrast to *collective applause*, where all the audience applaud, or a substantial proportion of it (Bull & Feldman, 2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012). In British speeches, although collective applause is the norm, isolated responses do also occur, as observed by Atkinson (1984a), Heritage and Greatbatch (1986), and Bull and Noordhuizen (2000).

It was proposed that these cross-cultural differences in speaker-audience interaction could readily be conceptualized in terms of the distinction between individualist and collectivist societies, as proposed by Hofstede (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In a collectivist culture, people tend to view themselves as members of groups (e.g., families, tribes or nations), and usually consider the needs of the group to be more important than the needs of individuals, whereas in an individualist society, the emphasis is on personal freedom and achievement at the possible expense of group goals. On the basis of a range of large-scale questionnaire studies, Hofstede et al. (2010, pp.95-97) provided ratings of different cultures on individualism and collectivism. Whereas the USA and the UK are rated to have one of the highest levels of individualism in the world, scoring 91 and 89 respectively, Japan scores just 46 (scores range from 0 to 100).

Thus, in the two studies of general elections in Japan (Bull & Feldman,2011; Feldman & Bull,2012), all audience responses were collective; there were no incidents of either isolated or uninvited applause. Nor were there any incidents of either negative naming or booing, which might be regarded as disruptive to group harmony, and hence to the interconnectedness regarded as such a distinctive feature of collectivist societies (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Furthermore, rhetorical devices were predominantly explicit, thereby making it clear to the audience when it would be appropriate to respond. Arguably, if people in a collectivist society want to respond together *en masse*, it is helpful if speakers provide the audience with clear guidance as to what is expected (Bull & Miskinis,2015). Implicit devices can be confusing, and result in applause which may be uninvited (Bull & Wells,2002), or may be asynchronous, delayed or interruptive (Bull & Noordhuizen,2000).

Conversely, in the UK and the USA, rhetorical devices are also predominantly implicit, which arguably shows greater respect for individual autonomy, thereby allowing audience members greater freedom of action as to whether or not to respond (Bull & Miskinis,2015). In the UK, audience responses are typically collective, but incidents of isolated applause have also been observed (e.g., Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986; Bull & Noordhuizen,2000). In the study of American speeches, there was a constant flurry of encouraging individual verbal remarks audible throughout all the speeches (Bull & Miskinis,2015). In that respect, American audiences are highly individualistic, in marked contrast to the pronounced collectivist audience behaviour observed in the two studies of general elections in Japan (Bull & Feldman,2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012).

The aim of the study reported in this paper was to extend this cross-cultural approach to political speeches in Norway. To date, there has been no systematic analysis of speaker-audience interaction in the context of Norwegian politics. However, Kjeldsen in his book *Hva er retorikk* (2014) introduced students of rhetoric to Atkinson’s (1983, 1984a, 1984b) concepts of the three-part list and the contrast. Amongst Norwegian politicians, Kjeldsen claimed that former prime minister Stoltenberg made the most frequent use of three-part lists, which he deployed with the greatest skill (Kjeldsen, 2006). So, for example, in a speech at Rådhusplassen Oslo (25 July 2011), Stoltenberg was applauded for the following list: “A march for democracy, a march for solidarity and a march for tolerance”.1 (The original statement is given in Norwegian in Appendix C, numbered according to the superscript).

In terms of individualism-collectivism (Hofstede,2001; Hofstede et al.,2010), it can be seen that Norway’s individualism score (69) falls below that of both the UK and the USA, but well above that of Japan (see Figure 1). This may to some extent reflect Norway’s chequered political history during and following the Second World War. The Soviet Union played an important role in driving German soldiers out of the northern part of Norway, a gesture which attracted much goodwill. Soviet-style communism presented an attractive prospect for the ruling Labour party in Norway, especially given the precarious situation of the economy. Notably, Norwegian social democracy is the only one in Europe to have developed from communistic roots, whereas other European social democratic parties developed from the liberal tradition (Erichsen & Halvorsen, 1998). To counteract this trend, the USA offered Norway Marshall aid, with the main condition that Norway should steer away from communism, and ally with the west. Thus, there would seem to be elements of both individualism and collectivism in Norway’s recent political history, which may possibly account for Norway’s individualism score between that of the UK and the USA, and that of Japan on the IDV scale (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Overall, the principal research aim of this study was to analyse collective audience behaviour and rhetorical devices as used by Norwegian politicians in the context of Hofstede’s distinction between individualist and collectivist societies (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010), and to compare those findings to existing data on British, American and Japanese political speeches. In addition, on the basis of Kjeldsen’s (2006) observation that Stoltenberg used the list device most frequently amongst Norwegian politicians, a comparative analysis was conducted of Norwegian party political leaders on their use of this particular rhetorical device.

# Method

## Sample of speeches

This study was based on 30 election speeches delivered by 20 parliamentary candidates for the eight parties who achieved parliamentary representation as a result of the 2013 election. The election period starts at the national parties’ conferences in the spring, and ends when the results are released on the evening of September 9th. Full details of the eight parties are given in Table 1 (percentage of the vote obtained, number of seats won, and respective National Party conference dates).

(Table 1 near here)

Speeches that were not explicitly directed at the election were excluded, such as 1st May speeches for Labour Day, 17th May celebration speeches of the National Constitution Day, 11th June speeches on the centenary of female suffrage, and the 22nd July memorial of the terrorist attack at the Government Quarter and on the island of Utøya. Although political parties might arguably use these events to gain electoral support, the speeches did not explicitly refer to the election, hence were not included for analysis. The election speeches were delivered indoors and organized for party members/supporters, with the exception of one speech by the Green party, which was presented outdoors.

Overall, speeches were included only if there was available footage, either from Youtube, the party Youtube account or the Norwegian Broadcasting Channel (NBC). All video sources are listed in Appendix A. The full list of speeches is given below, with durations (minutes:seconds) and dates (all 2013) in parentheses. Speeches varied in duration, the shortest was by Knut Arild Hareide (Christian Democratic Party, 5:35), the longest also by Knut Arild Hareide (67:7).

### Labour Party

* Jens Stoltenberg (56:51, April 18)
* Jonas Gahr Støre (10:08, April 19)
* Helga Pedersen (43:16, April 19)
* Raymond Johansen (43:57, April 20)
* Jens Stoltenberg (7:45, September 9)
* Jens Stoltenberg (9:34, September 9)

### Progress Party

* Siv Jensen (43:01, May 26)
* Siv Jensen (7:08, September 9)

### Conservative Party

* Erna Solberg (46:43, May 3)
* Bent Høie (28:14, May 4)
* Arne Hjeltnes (11:19, May 5)
* Linda Hofstad Helleland (18:55, May 5)
* Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide (12:56, May 5)
* Erna Solberg (12:11, September 9)

### Christian Democratic Party

* Knut Arild Hareide (67:07, April 26)
* Knut Arild Hareide (5:35, September 9)
* Kjell Magne Bondevik (15.04, April 5)

### Centre Party

* Liv Signe Navarsete (45:06, April 5)
* Liv Signe Navarsete (7:10, September 9)
* Ola Borten Moes (16.52, April 5).

### Socialist Left-wing Party

* Audun Lysbakken (60:02, March 15)
* Kristin Halvorsen (12:46, March 15)
* Heikki Holmås (20:31, March 16)
* Inga Marthe Thorkildsen (47:00, March 16)
* Bård Vegar Solhjell (15:55, March 17)
* Audun Lysbakken (6:33, September 9)

### Liberal Party

* Sveinung Rotevatn (12:13, April 12)
* Trine Skei Grande (60:54, April 12)
* Trine Skei Grande (6:05, September 9)

### Green Party

* Rasmus Hansson (11:19, August 12)

## Materials

* Video recordings of the 30 speeches posted on the Internet
* Transcripts of each speech

## Procedure

Transcripts of the 30 speeches were downloaded from the University of Bergen collection of speeches, the Government official speech archives and the Party web pages. The transcripts of each speech were checked and corrected against each video recording to ensure a verbatim record. The sources of the transcripts are listed in Appendix B. Speeches without any online transcripts were transcribed by hand. In accordance with previous research, audience responses were categorised in terms of applause, laughter and cheering (Bull & Feldman,2011), as well as collective chanting and booing (Bull & Miskinis,2015). In addition, verbal responses and a disgust response were recorded.

Collective applause was represented by a succession of lower and upper case crosses (xxXXxx), to indicate quieter or louder applause respectively, and was coded throughout the duration of its occurrence. Using different letters, laughter (hH), cheering (cC), and booing (bB) were transcribed in the same way. Chanting marked as CHANTING with inclusion of chanted message. (e.g. FOUR NEW YEARS, ERNA ERNA). Verbal responses were written out in full (e.g. YES, PEOPLE FIRST). The disgust response was marked “DISGUST”. It was based on vocalised sounds of “Ugh” or “Yuck”, commonly used expressions to convey disgust or horror (Oxford English Dictionary,2006).

Sixteen rhetorical devices, based on previous research, were coded as follows:

* Four devices from Atkinson (1984a) – *contrasts*, *lists, naming* and *gratitude.*
* Five devices from Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) - *puzzle-solution*, *headline-punchline, position taking, pursuit,* and *combinations*
* Two devices from Bull and Wells (2002) *- jokes* and *negative naming*
* Five devices from analyses of Japanese discourse (Bull & Feldman,2011) - *greetings/salutations, expressing appreciation, request for agreement, asking for support,* and *descriptions of campaign activities*.

The category *other* (Bull & Feldman,2011) was used for instances which did not fit into the preceding 16 categories.

In the analysis of the data, rhetorical devices which occurred together were counted both separately and as combinations. So, for example, a three-part list which included a contrast would be counted as both a three-part list and a contrast, but also as a combination.

An inter-rater reliability study was conducted with a Norwegian undergraduate from the University of York trained in coding rhetorical devices in Norwegian political speeches. Both raters coded one speech, which was not a part of the original sample of 30 analyzed speeches. The speech was delivered by Erna Solberg, the current Prime Minister at The Conservative Party, National Party conference, 9 May 2014 (46:33 minutes duration).

# Results

## Inter-rater reliability

There was a substantial level of agreement (Cohen’s ᴋ, 1960) between the main coder and the independent coder in their analysis of rhetorical devices (ᴋ= .77, *p* <.001).

## Audience responses

In total, 12 hours, 37 minutes and 34 seconds of Norwegian political speeches were analysed. The overall response rate was 1.39 responses per minute. Audience responses are shown in Table 2.

(Table 2 near here)

The most common audience response was applause (57% of audience responses, 0.79 per minute). This was followed by laughter (25%, 0.33 per minute) and cheers (15%, 0.21 per minute). There was only one instance each of booing and disgust, which are both illustrated below. The two extracts are given in English, the original quotes in Norwegian are provided in Appendix C.

The following extract is the one example of booing:

“During this election the public had the choice between twelve years of a red-green

government..

-BBBBBBBB-

Or a new government and you know with what: new ideas and better solutions -CCCC

CCCCXXXXXXXXXXXXXXxxxxx-”

(Erna Solberg, The Conservative party, September 9th 20132).

The following extract is the one example of disgust:

“The Progress Party is and always will be the most noticeable Party in Norway – It’s a Party that should never govern developmental politics. Like their parliamentary representative Ulf Leirstein, who gives a thumbs up to Facebook statuses saying; “Somalians are a shitty people from a shitty country.” Thumbs up…

-DISGUST-“

(Heikki Holmås, Socialistic Left-Wing Party national conference, March 13th 20133)

## Rhetorical devices

Frequencies of occurrence for each of the 16 rhetorical devices are shown in Table 3, expressed both as raw scores, and as a percentage of the total number of devices. The most commonly occurring device was jokes (20.12%). The seven traditional devices accounted for 67.76% of all devices, the combined use of list and contrast for 28.79%. Implicit devices were more prevalent (72.31%) than explicit devices (24.41%). (N.B. Implicit and explicit devices do not together add up to 100%. This is due to the omission of the category *Others* from the calculations.)

(Table 3 near here)

The distribution of rhetorical devices between the Norwegian parliamentary parties is shown in Table 4, expressed both as raw scores, and as a percentage of the total number of devices for each party.

(Table 4 near here)

Contrasts were the device used most frequently by the Labour Party, the Progress Party, and the Socialistic Left-wing Party. Jokes were the device used most frequently by the Conservative Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Liberal Party and the Green Party. Combinations were used most frequently by the Centre Party. Description of campaign activities, salutations, asks for support, and asks for confirmation were used rarely by any of the parties.

In the Introduction, it was noted that according to Kjeldsen (2006), Stoltenberg was the politician who used the rhetorical device of *list* most frequently amongst Norwegian politicians. Table 5 presents comparative data for the use of this device by seven of the party leaders*.*

(Table 5 near here)

The figures are based on two speeches for each politician (the main speech at the party conference and the election celebration speech), with the exception only of Stoltenberg, who presented three speeches on these two occasions. The table shows the rate per minute at which each politician used the list device, and their overall rate per minute for all rhetorical devices. The results showed that Hareide was the politician who used the list device at the highest rate, Stoltenberg the politician who actually used the device at the least frequent rate. In terms of overall usage of rhetorical devices, the highest rate was used by Solberg, the winner of the 2013 Norwegian general election and the current prime minister. Notably, she used rhetorical devices 170 times in the two speeches analysed, almost three times as much as Navarsete, who used rhetorical devices at the least frequent rate. (It should be noted that data for the Green Party were not included in Table 5, because the party does not have one party leader, rather a group of people who constitutes the representatives of the party. Also, the sample of speeches only considers a single speech from the Green Party, which was delivered outdoors).

All the analyses reported above were based on the 16 rhetorical devices as described in the Introduction. However, in the course of these analyses, a novel device was identified, which may be labelled *repetition/familiarity.* This may be a party motto, a phrase well known by the general public, or the theme or a title of the speech. These may be repeated throughout the speech, thereby increasing audience familiarity. Some examples are given below. The original Norwegian versions are given in Appendix C, these can be identified from the superscripts attached to the English translations below.

#### Party mottos

* “People first.” (Trine Skei Grande, Liberal national party conference, March 15)4
* “New ideas, better solutions.”(Erna Solberg, Conservative national party conference, May 3)5

#### Familiar phrases

* “Take from the rich, and give to the poor.”(Knut Arild Hareide, Christian democratic national party conference, April 25)6
* “If it ain’t broken, don’t fix it.” Spoken in English. (Liv Signe Navarsete, Centre national party conference, April 5)

#### Repeated phrases

* “This is care from the Conservative heart.” (Linda Helleland, Conservative national party conference, May 5)7
* “The Norwegian model gets in the way of the Norwegian people. The system obstructs reason.” (Siv Jensen, Progress national party conference, May 24)8

In 16 out of the 30 Norwegian speeches, the device of *repetition/familiarity* could be identified. In total, the device was found to invite audience responses on 62 occasions.

# Discussion

Overall, the principal research aim of this study was to analyse audience behaviour and rhetorical devices as used by Norwegian politicians in the context of Hofstede’s distinction between individualist and collectivist societies (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010), and to compare those findings to existing data on British, American and Japanese political speeches. In addition, on the basis of Kjeldsen’s (2006) observation that Stoltenberg used the list device most frequently amongst Norwegian politicians, a comparative analysis was conducted of Norwegian party political leaders on their use of this particular rhetorical device.

Audience responses in Norwegian speeches were remarkably similar to those observed in the two studies of Japanese political speeches (Bull & Feldman, 2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012), that is to say, they essentially consisted of applause (56.67%), cheering (15.14%), and laughter (24.00%). The comparable proportions in the Japanese studies were applause 58.7%, cheering 16.2%, laughter 25.1% for the 2005 general election (Bull & Feldman, 2011), applause 39.7%, laughter 38.9% and cheering 8.6% for the 2009 general election (Feldman & Bull, 2012). However, it is not possible to make direct comparisons with the United Kingdom, because the studies of British speeches have been based solely on applause.

American audience responses were found to be much more varied than Norwegian, including both chanting and booing, as well as applause, cheering and laughter (Bull & Miskinis,2015). In 10 American speeches, 7.1% of audience responses took the form of invited affiliative booing, in which the audience booed the rival candidate. In the Norwegian speeches, there was only one instance of booing. The speaker was a Conservative politician (Erna Solberg) at a Conservative political rally, who stated: “During this election the public had the choice between twelve years of a red-green government or a new government and you know with what: new ideas and better solutions”. The booing starts in response to a “red-green government”, and was clearly affiliative, as the audience were aligning with the speaker against the left-wing opposition. However, the booing did not seem to have been invited by the speaker, who was trying to complete the second part of a contrast (“… or a new government and you know with what: new ideas and better solutions”); instead, the booing seemed to be interruptive, and initiated by the audience. In fact, the speaker could be seen trying to calm the audience, and to stop the booing, in order to continue with the speech. From this perspective, booing seems not to be a feature of Norwegian audience responses, in clear contrast to American audiences (Bull & Miskinis, 2015).

The one incident of a disgust occurred in response to a reference to Ulf Leirstein, parliamentary representative of the Progress Party, who was said to have given a thumbs up sign to a statement on the social media site Facebook that “Somalians are a shitty people from a shitty country”. The speaker (Heikki Holmås) used negative naming and invited the audience to draw the conclusion that this was the view of the Progress Party, not just an individual, and by implication that the Progress Party are all racists. Interestingly, Hagelund (2003) notes that the Progress Party has a special role in politics. They have brought immigration onto the political agenda, won support for anti-immigration views and have worked as a unifying force for other parties. The Progress Party has become “the evil” other parties contrast themselves against (Hagelund, 2003). The disgust response was clearly affiliative, the audience were aligning themselves with the speaker against Leirstein and the Progress Party. Notably, in none of the other studies of British, American or Japanese speeches referred to above has such a disgust response been observed.

With regard to rhetorical devices, the overall pattern of in Norwegian speeches was remarkably similar to that of Anglo-American speeches. In the Norwegian speeches, the seven traditional devices accounted for 67.76% of all devices, in British speeches 68% (Heritage & Greatbatch,1986), in American presidential speeches 66.63% (Bull & Miskinis,2015). In contrast, in the study of the Japanese general election of 2005, these seven devices accounted for only 17% of affiilative audience responses (Bull & Feldman,2011), in the 2009 Japanese general election for only 18.9% of affiiative audience responses (Feldman & Bull, 2012). Furthermore, in the Norwegian speeches, implicit devices were more prevalent (72.31%) than explicit devices (24.41%), just as with the American data (81.7% explicit, 14.62% implicit (Bull & Miskinis, 2015). In contrast, Japanese rhetorical devices were predominantly explicit. Thus, in the study of the 2005 Japanese general election (Bull & Feldman, 2011), 71.2% of affiliative audience responses occurred in response to explicit invitations, only 27.9% to implicit invitations. Again, in the study of the 2009 Japanese general election, 76.1% of affiliative audience responses occurred in response to explicit invitations, only 19.7% to implicit invitations (Feldman & Bull, 2012).

In the Norwegian speeches, jokes were the most commonly used rhetorical device (20.12%). This was also the case with Japanese speeches: 25% of rhetorical devices in the 2005 general election (Bull & Feldman, 2011), 34.1% in the 2009 general election (Feldman & Bull, 2012). In Anglo-American speeches in comparison, the two most frequently occurring devices were contrasts and lists. In the analysis of the 2012 American presidential election, lists accounted for 19.15% of rhetorical devices, contrasts for 15% (Bull & Miskinis, 2015). In the analysis of the British 1981 party conferences, contrasts accounted for 33.2% of rhetorical devices, lists 12.6% (Heritage & Greatbatch,1986). In the Norwegian speeches, both devices were also common: contrasts 18.6%, lists 10.19%. However, both devices were rare in the Japanese speeches: in the 2005 general election, lists just 0.8%, contrasts 3.4% (Bull & Feldman, 2011); in the 2009 general election, lists just 0.3%, contrasts 1.1% (Feldman & Bull, 2012). From this perspective, the use of both contrasts and lists is very much a feature of Western rhetorical style.

Among Norwegian politicians, according to Kjeldsen (2006), Stoltenberg is the Norwegian politician who makes the most frequent use of lists. This observation was not supported by the results of this study. In fact, the results showed that of the seven party leaders, Stoltenberg was the politician who actually used the list device at the least frequent rate, Hareide the politician who used the list device at the highest rate; however, it should be noted that this analysis was based on only two speeches from the other six party leaders, and three from Stoltenberg. Interestingly, in terms of the overall usage of rhetorical devices, the highest rate was used by Solberg, the winner of the 2013 Norwegian general election and the current prime minister. To date, although audience responses have been analysed in relation to electoral success (Feldman & Bull,2012; Bull & Miskinis,2015), there has been no comparable analysis of the electoral impact of rhetorical devices. It may be, as initially suggested by Atkinson (1984), that more charismatic politicians make greater use of rhetorical devices, but to date, there has been no systematic empirical testing of whether as a consequence they achieve greater electoral success.

In addition to the 16 rhetorical devices analyzed in this study, incidents of a potentially novel device were observed. The audience responses in these cases were preceded by a motto or known phrase. This motto could for instance be the Party motto: People first! (Liberal Party motto) or the theme/title of the speech: Norway at its best (Erna Solberg, Conservative Party). The commonality between these instances is the use of *familiarity* and *repetition*. The audience are highly familiar with the mottos and slogans presented by their respective party. When these familiar phrases pop up, the audience respond on cue. Moreover, during Solberg’s speech at the national Party conference, she introduced a new slogan at the beginning of her speech: by repeating “Norway at its best”, she built up familiarity with this phrase. This in turn will have the audience responding on cue when they recognize it later in the speech. The identification of repetition/familiarity in this study is not novel, for example, Atkinson in his blog (2008) states that the basic building blocks in a political speech are: *lists*, *contrasts*, *alliteration*, *imagery*, *anecdotes* and *repetition.* What is novel is the suggestion that it be included as another form of rhetorical device used to invite affiliative responses from the audience.

Overall, speaker-audience interaction in Norway has similarities with both Japan, and the USA and United Kingdom. The predominant Norwegian audience responses were applause, laughter and cheering, in that respect directly comparable to Japan (Bull & Feldman, 2011; Feldman & Bull, 2012). Furthermore, booing was not observed in any of the Japanese speeches, and only once in this study of Norwegian speeches, whereas it is quite common in American speeches (Bull & Miskinis, 2015). In British speeches, booing has been observed (Clayman, 1993), but there is no systematic data available on its relative frequency in relation to other audience responses. The use of rhetorical devices by Norwegian politicians, in contrast, was strikingly similar to that of Anglo-American politicians. In the Norwegian speeches, the seven traditional rhetorical devices predominated, just as with British and American speeches, whereas in Japan, these seven devices were comparatively rare. Furthermore, in Norwegian speeches, implicit devices were more prevalent, just as with American speeches, whereas in contrast, Japanese rhetorical devices were predominantly explicit; there is no systematic data available on the use of explicit devices in British speeches.

Interestingly, in terms of individualism-collectivism, Norway’s score of 69 (Hofstede et al., 2010) falls below that of both the USA (91) and the UK (89), but well above that of Japan (46). In the Introduction, it was proposed that there are elements of both individualism and collectivism in Norway’s recent political history, which might be seen to be reflected in these data. It has been argued elsewhere (Bull & Miskinis, 2015), that if people in a collectivist society want to respond together en masse, it is helpful if speakers provide the audience with clear guidance as to what is expected. Implicit devices can be confusing, and result in applause which is uninvited (Bull & Wells, 2002), or asynchronous, delayed, or interruptive (Bull & Noordhuizen, 2000). On the other hand, in an individualist society, implicit devices show greater respect for individual autonomy, thereby allowing audience members greater freedom of action as to whether or not to respond. In this respect, the use of implicit devices in Norwegian speeches shows the characteristics of an individualist society. Conversely, the similarities between Norwegian and Japanese audience responses might be understood in terms of a comparable degree of collectivism, but of course might also simply reflect similar politeness norms. In both societies, applause, laughter and cheering may be regarded as polite, whereas booing may be seen as rude, although it seems to be perfectly acceptable in American audiences.

This is the first study of its kind of speaker-audience interaction in the context of Norwegian politics. It was based on 16 categories of rhetorical device identified in previous research on British, American, and Japanese speeches. Notably, the device of salutations was the only device not observed in this sample of 30 speeches, and description of campaign activities was the only device to be identified on one occasion. The other devices were observed on at least several occasions. In this respect, this analysis of affiliative audience response invitations seems to work extremely well in the Norwegian context. However, in addition a novel seventeenth device of repetition/familiarity was proposed, which may or may not be specific to the Norwegian context, but would require further cross-cultural analysis. Of particular importance is the remarkable similarity between Norway, the United Kingdom and the USA in the preponderant usage of the seven traditional rhetorical devices. Whereas resemblances between the United Kingdom and the USA might be explicable in terms of a common language, this is obviously not the case with Norway. From this perspective, it increasingly suggests the possible existence of a Western style of rhetoric, characterized by the use of these implicit devices built into the structure of speech. Elsewhere, the second author has argued that political speech-making needs to be understood as a form of dialogue between speaker and audiences, and that it also need not be understood in a cross-cultural context (Bull, 2016). The data reported in this study of Norwegian speeches provides further evidence in support of both these propositions.

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# Appendix A.

## Video sources for the sample of 30 speeches

The video sources are listed according to political party.

### The Labour party

Johansen, R. (2013, April 20). Raymond Johansens tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8toytyiUew](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8toytyiUew)

Pedersen, H. (2013, April 19). Helga Pedersens tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjbYeUEyfc0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjbYeUEyfc0)

Stoltenberg, J. (2013, April 18). Jens Stoltenbergs tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRlIgJnVWxQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRlIgJnVWxQ)

Stoltenberg, J. (2013, September 9a). Jens Stoltenbergs avskjedstale ved valgvaken. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from <http://tv.nrk.no/serie/valg-2013-tv/NNFA80004513/09-09-2013>

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### The Progress party

Jensen, S. (2013, May 26). Siv Jensens tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lyy4PnNNs5c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lyy4PnNNs5c)

Jensen, S. (2013, September 9 ). Siv Jensens tale ved valgvaken. Morna Jens. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from <http://tv.nrk.no/serie/valg-2013-tv/NNFA80004513/09-09-2013#del=2>

### The Conservative party

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Hjeltnes, A. (2013, May 5). Arne Hjeltnes' tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sma72DiDZX0

Høie, B. (2013, May 4). Bent Høies tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qwn6ceinWY

Solberg, E. (2013, May 3). Erna Solbergs tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGn4kxHje8c

Solberg, E. (2013, September 9). Erna Solbergs tale ved valgvaken. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from http://tv.nrk.no/serie/valg-2013-tv/NNFA80004513/09-09-2013

### The Christian Democratic Party

Bondevik, K. M. (2013, April 5). Kjell Magne Bondeviks tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=XExRDnhfX6E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XExRDnhfX6E)

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### The Centre Party

Moe, O. B. (2013, April 5). Ola Borten Moes tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=lirpHwfU3yk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lirpHwfU3yk)

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### The Socialistic Left-wing Party

Halvorsen, K. (2013, March 15). Kristin Halvorsens tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wG\_SgdSdV4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wG_SgdSdV4)

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Thorkildsen, I. M. (2013, March 16). Inga Marthe Thorkildsens tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7774riEfVcQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7774riEfVcQ)

### The Liberal Party

Grande, T. S. (2013, April 12). Trine Skei Grandes tale ved landsmøte. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ac27M5wDrU&index=1&list=PLOpYdd3sCiyc-GYWW\_9mfvhtpmcfhGdpQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ac27M5wDrU&index=1&list=PLOpYdd3sCiyc-GYWW_9mfvhtpmcfhGdpQ)

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# Appendix B.

## Transcript sources

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Jensen, S. (2013, September 9). Morna Jens! Retrieved April 12, 2015, from <http://virksommeord.uib.no/taler?id=8581>

Johansen, R. (2013, April 20). En plan, et forsvar, en midtbane og et angrep. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from <http://virksommeord.uib.no/taler?id=7764>

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Thorkildsen, I. M. (2013, March 16). Til kamp for likestillingen. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from <http://virksommeord.uib.no/taler?id=7342>

The following speeches were written by hand according to delivery. See Appendix A for video sources.

* Jonas Gahr Støre (10:08 minutes, April 19)
* Jens Stoltenberg (9:21 minutes, September 9)
* Siv Jensen (43:01 minutes, May 26)
* Kjell Magne Bondevik (15:04 minutes, April 26)
* Knut Arild Hareide (5:25 minutes, September 9)
* Ola Borten Moe (16:52 minutes, April 5)
* Liv Signe Navarsete (7:10 minutes, September 9)
* Bård Vegar Solhjell (15:55 minutes, March 17)
* Kristin Halvorsen (12:46 minutes, March 15)
* Audun Lysbakken (6:33 minutes, September 9)
* Sveinung Rotevatn (12:13 minutes, April 12)
* Trine Skei Grande (6:05 minutes, September 9)
* Rasmus Hansson (11:19 minutes, August 12)

# Appendix C

## Quotes in Norwegian

1“En marsj for demokrati, en marsj for samhold og en marsj for toleranse.” (Jens Stoltenberg, Rådhusplassen Oslo, 25. july 2011)

2“Velgerne hadde ved dette valget valget mellom 12 år med rødgrønn regjering,

-BBBB-

eller en ny regjering, og dere vet med hva: nye ideer og bedre løsninger.

-CCCCCCCC

Cccccxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx-”

(Erna Solberg, H landsmøte 3.mai 2013)

3 “Fremskrittspartiet er og blir det mest navlebeskuende partiet i Norge – det er et parti som aldri må få styre utviklingspolitikken. Sånn som stortingsrepresentant Ulf Leirstein, som gir tommelen opp til innlegg på Facebook som sier at «somaliere er et møkkafolk fra et møkkaland». Tommel opp.

-DISGUST-”

(Heikki Holmås, SV landsmøte 15. mars 2013)

4“Folk først” (Trine Skei Grande, V landsmøte, 5. mai 2013)

5“Nye ideer, bedre løsninger.” (Erna Solberg, H landsmøte, 3. mai 2013

6“Ta fra de rike og gi til de fattige.” (Knut Arild Hareide, KrF landsmøte, 25. april 2013)

7“Dette er omsorg etter Høyres hjerte.” (Linda Helleland, H landsmøte, 5. april 2013)

8“Den norske modellen står i veien for det norske folk. Systemet står i veien for fornuften.” (Siv Jensen, FRP landsmøte, 24. mai 2013)

Table 1.

*Overview of the parties gaining representation in parliament following the 2013 election, their percentage of the vote in parentheses, number of seats won (Eriksen, 2013) and their respective National Party conference dates (Skille, 2013) – indicating the starting point for the election campaign.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Party (Norwegian name of the party) | Seats(%) | Party conference date | |
| The Labour party (Arbeiderpartiet) | 55 (30.8) | | 18th – 21st April |
| The Conservative party (Høyre) | 48 (26.8) | | 3rd – 5th May |
| The Progress party (Fremskrittspartiet) | 29 (16.3) | | 24th – 26th May |
| The Christian democratic party (Kristelig folkeparti) | 10 (5.6) | | 25th – 28th April |
| The Centre party (Senterpartiet) | 10 (5.5) | | 5th – 7th April |
| The Liberal party (Venstre) | 9 (5.2) | | 12th – 14th April |
| The Socialist left party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti) | 7 (4.1) | | 15th – 17th March |
| The Green party (Miljøpartiet de Grønne) | 1 (2.8) | | 26th – 28th April |
| Total number of seats | 169 | |  |

Table 2.

*Number and percentage of audience responses.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Audience responses | n (%) |
| Applause | 595 (56.67) |
| Booing | 1 (0.10) |
| Chanting | 10 (0.95) |
| Cheers | 159 (15.14) |
| Disgust | 1 (0.10) |
| Laughter | 252 (24.00) |
| Verbal responses | 32 (3.05) |
| Total | 1050 (100) |

Table 3.

*Number and percentage of rhetorical devices used in the sample of Norwegian political speeches.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rhetorical devices | N (%) |
| List\* | 121 (10.19) |
| Contrast\* | 221 (18.60) |
| Combination\* | 192 (16.16) |
| Namings | 42 (3.54) |
| Negative naming | 11 (0.93) |
| Position taking\* | 97 (8.16) |
| Puzzle-solution\* | 100 (8.42) |
| Headline-punchline\* | 64 (5.39) |
| Pursuits\* | 10 (0.84) |
| Campaign activities | 1 (0.08) |
| *Jokes* | 239 (20.12) |
| *Expressing gratitude* | 33 (2.78) |
| *Salutations* | 0 (0.00) |
| *Ask for support* | 3 (0.25) |
| *Ask for confirmation* | 14 (1.18) |
| Others | 39 (3.36) |
| Total | 1188 (100) |

The 7 traditional rhetorical devices are marked with \*. Explicit devices are noted in *italics*

Table 4

*The distribution of rhetorical devices according to parties. Percentage for every party given in parentheses.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rhetorical devices | Labour party | Conservative party | Progress Party | Christian democratic party | Centre party | Liberal party | Green party | Socialistic left-wing party | |
| List\* | 19(9.05) | 25(9.80) | 3(3.80) | 21(13.29) | 8(13.11) | 18(14.52) | 4(13.79) | | 23(8.42) |
| Contrast\* | 40(19.05) | 41(16.09) | 23(29.11) | 19(12.03) | 10(16.39) | 17(13.71) | 4(13.79) | | 57(20.90) |
| Combination\* | 31(14.76) | 49(19.22) | 10(12.66) | 34(21.52) | 11(18.03) | 19(15.32) | 4(13.79) | | 34(12.45) |
| Namings | 15(7.14) | 6(2.35) | 1(1.27) | 6(3.80) | 2(3.28) | 1(0.81) |  | | 11(4.03) |
| Negative naming | 1(0.48) | 3(1.18) | 3(3.80) |  |  | 1(0.81) |  | | 2(0.73) |
| Position taking\* | 21(1.00) | 18(7.06) | 5(6.33) | 12(7.59) | 1(1.64) | 8(6.45) | 3(10.34) | | 29(10.62) |
| Puzzle-solution\* | 16(7.62) | 22(8.63) | 10(12.66) | 11(6.96) | 5(8.20) | 7(5.65) | 3(10.34) | | 26(9.52) |
| Headline-punchline\* | 14(6.67) | 18(7.06) | 5(6.33) | 6(3.80) | 6(9.84) | 7(5.65) |  | | 8(2.93) |
| Pursuits\* | 2(0.95) | 3(1.18) | 2(2.53) |  | 1(1.64) |  |  | | 2(0.73) |
| Campaign activities |  |  |  |  | 1(1.64) |  |  | |  |
| *Jokes* | *36(17.14)* | *52(20.39)* | *5(6.33)* | *35(22.15)* | *7(11.48)* | *25(20.16)* | *8(27.59)* | | *71(26.01)* |
| *Expressing gratitude* | *8(3.81)* | *12(4.71)* | *1(1.27)* | *1(0.63)* | *4(6.56)* | *1(0.81)* | *1(3.45)* | | *5(1.83)* |
| *Salutations* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |
| *Ask for support* |  |  | *1(1.27)* | *1(0.63)* |  |  |  | | *1(0.37)* |
| *Ask for confirmation* |  |  | *5(6.33)* |  |  | *8(6.45)* |  | | *1(0.37)* |
| Others | 7(3.33) | 6(2.35) | 5(6.33) | 2(1.27) | 5(8.20) | 11(8.87) | 1(3.45) | | 3(1.10) |
| Total | 210(100) | 255(100) | 79(100) | 158(100) | 61(100) | 124(100) | 29(100) | | 273(100) |

The 7 original rhetorical devices are marked with \*. Explicit devices are noted in *italics*

Table 5.

*The Party leaders’ use of the rhetorical device list compared to overall use of rhetorical devices (including others). Shown in frequency (N) and rate per minute.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Parties | Party leader | N and rate of lists per minute | N and rate per minute of total rhetorical devices |
| Labour Party | Jens Stoltenberg | 7(0.09) | 113(1.52) |
| Socialistic left-wing party | Audun Lysbakken | 14(0.21) | 144(2.16) |
| Centre party | Liv Signe Navarsete | 6(0.11) | 63(1.20) |
| Progress party | Siv Jensen | 3(0.06) | 104(2.07) |
| Christian democratic party | Knut Arild Hareide | 20(0.28) | 151(2.08) |
| Liberal party | Trine Skei Grande | 17(0.25) | 153(2.28) |
| Conservative party | Erna Solberg | 18(0.27) | 170(2.89) |