The Role of Secondary Orality in the Construction of Factual Discourses about

Colombian Corruption

A dissertation presented to

the faculty of

the Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Adriana M. Angel Botero

December 2012

© 2012 Adriana M. Angel Botero. All Rights Reserved.
This dissertation titled

The Role of Secondary Orality in the Construction of Factual Discourses about Colombian Corruption

by

ADRIANA M. ANGEL BOTERO

has been approved for

the School of Communication Studies

and the Scripps College of Communication by

Benjamin R. Bates
Associate Professor of Communication Studies

Scott Titsworth
Interim Dean, Scripps College of Communication
ABSTRACT

ANGEL BOTERO, ADRIANA M., Ph.D., December 2012, Communication Studies

The Role of Secondary Orality in the Construction of Factual Discourses about Colombian Corruption

Director of Dissertation: Bejamin R. Bates

This dissertation examines the role of secondary orality in the construction of factual discourses about Colombian corruption. By performing a rhetorical analysis of the Colombian radio program *Hora 20*, I analyze how factual discourses about Colombian corruption are constructed through radio and, specifically, through secondary orality. After analyzing thirteen radio episodes on corruption, I claim that secondary orality leads to a highly polysemic understanding of corruption in which different approaches to this phenomenon correspond with particular terministic screens. The invitational nature of secondary orality makes possible the co-existence of various terministic screens in which different factual discourses of corruption are represented through language. These different factual discourses on corruption emerge in the context of what I call dialogic rhetoric. Beyond the realm of discourse, this polysemy of corruption has material consequences resulting on what I called the normalization of corruption.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation offers a description of radio and corruption in Colombia. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature produced on radio; examines the concepts of orality and secondary orality; and discusses the problem of factuality and its related terms, such as rhetoric and symbolic efficacy. Chapter 3 discusses cluster analysis and explains how I used this method to rhetorically analyze the radio program *Hora 20*. 
Chapter 4 describes the six clusters of terms that radio speakers of *Hora 20* use when discussing issues of Colombian corruption about three broad contexts: corruption as a long term Colombian problem, agricultural corruption, and health corruption. It also analyzes the different rhetorical strategies that speakers employ to make factual their own accounts on corruption.

Chapter 5 discusses how the language of radio influences the way in which radio speakers communicate about corruption and, specifically, how secondary orality works in radio. In this chapter I suggest three main levels –emphatic, grammatical, and dialogic– through which we can start to understand the language of the secondary orality of radio.

Finally, Chapter 6 offers a more detailed connection between chapters 4 and 5, and, therefore, between radio representations of corruption and secondary orality. It also summarizes how this dissertation advances our understanding on corruption, radio, and cluster analysis. Lastly, it suggests some directions for future research.
DEDICATION

A mi querida Colombia: Un país que no deja de sorprenderme y en quien albergo todas mis esperanzas.

(To my beloved Colombia: A country that never ceases to surprise me and in which I invest all my hopes)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I always thought that writing my dissertation would be a very solitary endeavor. Surprisingly, it turned out to be a collective process of thinking in which one author (me) was in charge of putting into words the ideas, theories, and the discipline that professors and friends have taught me during my academic career. I do not have enough words to thank them.

First, I thank my advisor, Dr. Bates, for guiding me in this difficult process of writing a dissertation. I would like to become as clear, patient, and efficient as he is. I also want to thank to all the members of my committee. Drs. Babrow, Rawlins, Welser and Obregon are professors that I greatly admire. That you are the readers of my dissertation is a great honor for me.

Three institutions also deserve my gratitude: Fulbright for giving me the opportunity to pursue a PhD in Communication as I always dreamed, the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University for helping me to become a communication scholar, and the University of Manizales for sponsoring my studies here in the United States.

Other professors and mentors also deserve my deepest gratitude: my mentor Karen Greiner, who always helps me to organize my ideas, to believe in myself, and to admire the Colombian scholarship in communication. My undergraduate professor Ancizar Narváez, who introduced me to the field of communication and taught me ideas and theories, some of them present in this dissertation. And my graduate professor Jorge Hernández Lara, who with enormous patience has always answered my questions and
who has helped me select and comprehend the cases of corruption that I analyze in this dissertation.

I also want to thank my family, and especially my sister, Lina Ángel, for believing in me. Last, but not least, I want to thank my Athenian family, Claudia Nieto and –mi Pavo– Alvaro Fuentes, for reminding me about the world outside this dissertation. You became my family and that is the most important support that I could ask for.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: Introduction to the Dissertation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio in Colombia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Different Uses of Radio</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, Public, and Educational Radio</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Radio</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Cultural Contributions of Radio</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio in Colombia and Radio in the United States</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in Colombia</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions and Typologies of Corruption</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes of Corruption</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media and Corruption</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption, Communication, and Media</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Problem</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preview of the Dissertation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on Radio</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk Radio</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio and Rhetoric</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language of Radio</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orality and Secondary Orality</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orality and Literacy</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Orality</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric of Facts</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Methodology</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hora 20 and Corruption</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure Agricultural Income</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance Companies</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Criticism and Cluster Analysis</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Clusters Analysis of Colombian Corruption</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption as a Long-Term Colombian Problem</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to Corruption as a Long-Term Problem</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Strategies used to Frame Corruption as a Long-Term Problem</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in the Agricultural Sector</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure Agricultural Income</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Approaches to Agricultural Corruption</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Strategies used to Frame Agricultural Corruption</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in the Health Sector</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Colombian Health System</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Approaches to Health Corruption</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Strategies Used to Frame Health Corruption</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding Thoughts</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Secondary Orality of Radio</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Emphatic Level</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phatic Function of Language</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosody</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Level</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneity</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enumeration</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogic Level</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Dialogues</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1: Hora 20’s broadcasts about corruption</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2: Secondary orality in radio</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Orality and literacy</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Secondary orality</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Cases of corruption</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Main clusters around corruption</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Corruption as invasive decay</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Corruption in the agricultural sector</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Severity of the connotations of corruption</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Corruption in the health sector</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Severity of the connotations of corruption</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION

“The written word has taught me to listen to the human voice, much as the great unchanging statues have taught me to appreciate bodily motions.”

Yourcenar (1955).

Since its arrival to the country, radio has played a fundamental role in Colombian society. Beyond providing talk shows or music, radio has generated political, social, and cultural processes that somehow have influenced the history of the country (for an overview, see Castellanos, 2001; El’Gazi, 2011; Lalinde, 1998). People of all ages, gender, and occupations listen to radio with some frequency. Radio is the second most widely consumed medium in Colombia after television. According to the most recent data, 67% of the Colombian population listens to radio every day, 94% watch television, 39% have access to Internet, and about 35% read newspapers and magazines (ACIM, 2011). In their study of communicative industries in Latin American, Mastrini and Becerra (2005) found a significant presence of radio in most households in the region. On average, there is one television and two radio receptors per household in Latin America. Radio is also consumed in a similar proportion by individuals throughout all social classes and cities (Centro, 2011).

Despite technological developments and, specifically, despite the arrival of the Internet to Colombia in the early 90s (Narváez, 2002), radio has continued to be highly consumed. Similarly, although radio has overcome processes of modernization (Valencia, 2008) and many listeners access to it through Internet, this medium continues generating social initiatives, national and international news, and diverse forms of entertainment.
The formats chosen by Colombian radio stations are diverse. Colombian radio stations offer both music and talk. Some stations only broadcast music; others focus exclusively on producing news; and others combine music, news, and thematic shows. Talk radio and news radio are not limited to the AM band. Generally, both AM and FM radio stations, as well as public and commercial radio, broadcast talk programs, sometimes combined with music. There are religious, sport, news, college, music stations, and even pirate radio stations, which are used by guerrilla groups.

News radio is especially important in the Colombian context. In fact, radio has a strong influence on the journalistic agenda of other media such as television and newspapers (Herrera, 2006). The contents broadcast by radio influence public opinion to the extent that radio is seen as the medium that provides information, while television is approached as an entertainment medium (Lalinde, 1998). As I will explain later, radio has also been used to achieve social change in the case of community radio stations and, particularly, in scenarios of conflict (Mwakawago, 2006). Finally, radio is used by most of the Colombian population because of the additional advantages that this medium offers; not only it is inexpensive, it also gives listeners the opportunity to do other activities while listening (Lalinde, 1988; Márquez, 1998).

Despite its high levels of consumption and its importance within the journalistic field, there is very little research about public and business radio in Colombia. In particular, there is little discussion about radio as a medium that allows journalists to represent reality through what Walter Ong (2002) calls “secondary orality,” that is, the orality that depends on writing and print for its existence. Considering this lack of research and the power of radio in Colombia, I explore the role of secondary orality in the
construction of factuality about Colombian corruption. As Potter (1996) explains, factuality is related to the way in which discourses are organized to appear factual so that speakers’ worldviews seem independent from their interests.

The main purpose of my dissertation was to study radio as a language in order to understand how this language allows individuals to create factual discourses about Colombian corruption. Before providing more details and explanations about the purpose, nature, and scope of the study that I present here, I consider it necessary to offer a brief context of both Colombian radio and Colombian corruption. My purpose is not to present complete theories or historical accounts that explain the causes and consequences of both phenomena in Colombia, but to describe the most important characteristics of them so that readers can have more elements to understand the geographical, political, cultural, and social contexts of my research problem. After providing this context, it might be easier to understand the importance of the topics that I study and the different approaches that I embrace in order to do that. Since radio and corruption are different in Colombia, but this dissertation is addressed to North American readers, I acknowledge the need to explain the particular characteristics of these phenomena in my country.

Thus, in the rest of this introductory chapter, I describe the role of radio in Colombia and analyze its history, characteristics, kinds of offering, and social power. Then, I describe the problem of corruption in Colombia and analyze causes, typologies, and the role that media have played in communicating about this issue as presented in extant literature. At the end of the chapter, I explicitly present the purpose of my study, the research question, and the rationale for embracing this question.
Radio in Colombia

As mentioned above, Colombian radio is very diverse in its offerings. Radio stations focus on—or combine—topics such as religion, sports, news, self-help, and educative contents, among other issues. In terms of formats, they use interviews, news, reports, radio chronicles, or “plain” conversations. According to the law, and regarding ownership, there are three main kinds of radio stations: public radio, business or commercial radio, and community radio (Herrera, 2001). Public radio stations are owned by the State and their main purpose is to educate citizens and to offer high culture programs (Murillo, 2003). Business radio stations are owned by private companies (for-profit organizations) and they generally offer sports, music or thematic shows. Finally, community radios seek to “serve as a tool of democratic participation in society so as to allow citizens a voice in decisions relating to the environment, health, politics, economy, social development, and cultural expression” (Murillo, 2003, p. 132).

The Different Uses of Radio

Colombian radio has been used as a music station, a sport narrator (Antequera & Obregón, 2002), a source of news (Lalinde, 1998), a tool for community development (Mejía & Gómez, 2001; Mwakawago, 2006), a strategy against violence (Bonilla, Restrepo, Vásquez & Betancur, 2011; Vaca, 2011), and as an educational medium (Kaplún, 2006; Mwakawago, 2006). Radio has had both structural and casual uses. One example of these apparently trivial uses of radio that had profoundly surprising consequences on the incorporation of radio in citizens’ routines is founded in the use of radio as a clock. The arrival of the small transistor radio in the 50s facilitated Colombians’ access to radio because people could carry this portable device and listen to
the medium while doing other activities, both inside and outside home. Farmers in coffee
plantations, secretaries in their offices, and drivers in their cars, for example, began to
listen to radio daily using a portable device.

According to Castellanos (2001), this phenomenon had important consequences
on the notion of temporality of people’s everyday life. Radio became the medium of time.
As Castellanos (2001) describes, in a city like Bogota, where most public clocks were
damaged in the 50s, local radio stations were crucial to help listeners to know the hour of
the day. Thus, *Radio Reloj* [Clock Radio] emerged as a set of radio stations whose
purpose was to communicate the time while offering music and news. The relationship
between radio and time shows how this medium became a part of the routine of
Colombian citizens because radio helped listeners to perform this everyday routine.
Finally, this use of radio helps us to understand why some people became dependent on
radio and how the radio audience began to consolidate in Colombia.

*Community, Public, and Educational Radio*

Community radio has been broadly studied in Latin American and, specially, in
Colombia where these radio stations have played a very important role in helping
community initiatives that seek social, educational, and cultural improvements of specific
regions (Peppino, 1998). Radio has gone beyond its North American image of
broadcasting music to passive audiences, and has become a tool through which citizens
achieve social change for their communities. Community radio is also an example of
democratization of communication and, specifically, of what the McBride Report calls
“The New World Information and Communication Order” (MacBride, 2006). Radio
stations like these allow ordinary citizens to be producers of information and to use media
to improve their life conditions (Mejía & Gómez, 2001; Mejía & Gómez, 2002). Although the kinds of programs offered by community radio vary according to the specific needs of the regions where these radio stations operate, in general terms, programs include topics such as land use, local music, youth identities, advice and analysis about the social problems of the community, and local news (Angel, 2004).

In relation to its educational purposes, community radio becomes closer to public radio because both intend to educate citizens for the sake of Colombian society. Radio Sutatenza constitutes an example of this–sometimes-entangled relationship between community and public radio. But, more importantly, Radio Sutatenza shows how influential radio has been throughout the history of Colombia. As Gisela (2005) tells, the story begins in August 1947, when father José Joaquín Salcedo came to Sutatenza—a small farming village in the Colombian Andes—and noticed that most people spent their time drinking beer. Then, Salcedo found out that most of the population was illiterate because they did not have access to basic education. As a way to solve this problem, Salcedo used radio to teach millions of listeners reading and writing and to provide them basic knowledge about mathematics, crop improvement, land use, and religion. Radio Sutatenza was so successful in this town that the experience was replicated in other departments of the country, and it became a national chain with coverage in several regions and with powerful radio transmitters located in major cities. Throughout its history, Radio Sutatenza educated millions of citizens and promoted what later were called Escuelas radiofónicas [radio schools].

According to many scholars, Radio Sutatenza is one of the most important organizations for popular education in Colombia and it continues to constitute a world
model (Vaca, 2011; Moemeka, 2006). Luis Ramiro Beltrán, one of the most acknowledged authors in the literature of communication for development and social change, has even claimed that Radio Sutatenza was the most important practical experience of communication for development. Although Radio Sutatenza preceded the theory of communication for development, this radio was the first institutionalized case of communication to support the development of Latin America (Vaca, 2011). Thus, Radio Sutatenza shows not only the power of a mass medium to educate audiences, but also the alternative uses that mass media may have according to the place where it is utilized. This use challenges the idea of radio as an exclusively entertainment medium and illustrates the educational purposes that it may have.

**News Radio**

News radio stations are also very common in Colombia, but less studied. This gap is interesting, considering that most news radios have national coverage and special sections for local news. As I will explain later, in the early 80s, Colombian radio stations began to specialize in news production (Lalinde, 1998). From this decade on, news programs were broadcast throughout the day (morning, noon, evening, and night) and produced using less rigid formats. In these news programs, journalists do not usually read scripts with neutral voices, but they conduct live interviews with important figures of the political field and commonly interject analysis, commentary, and opinion.

This trend, which continues to this day, has created what some scholars call a “radio need” (Antequera & Obregon, 2002; Lalinde, 1998). This “radio need” refers to both the audiences’ need to periodically know what is happening in the country and the world, and the politicians’ need to be interviewed in one of these news radio shows. As
Lalinde (1998) points out, “who did not appear in [radio programs such as] 6:00AM-9AM, Radionet, La FM... did not have any political existence. Being interviewed by the hosts of these programs was a public acknowledgment of social legitimacy” (p. 54). This emphasis on news has created a specialization of news radio discourse which has certain characteristics based on the oral nature of its language. In this sense, Colombian radio has played an important role in the way in which news is communicated and consumed. These issues will be explored in future chapters because they constitute the core of the research problem that I study.

Colombian radio has several examples of these news programs. One of these programs is Hora 20, the program in which I focus to explore the characteristics of factual discourses about Colombian corruption. Because I will describe broadly this show in chapter 3, I will briefly mention here another example of a news program that shows the importance of radio and the use that Colombian audiences make of this medium. La Luciérnaga [The Glowworm], for example, is a three-hour program that every weekday presents and analyzes news through humor, tropes of sarcasm, irony, and parody. The program was created in 1992 as a result of an extensive and unusual summer when Colombia had one of the strongest droughts of its history and the government decided not only to change the official time (what had not happened in the country before), but also to stage energy blackouts to save water. Without energy in their homes and offices, people did not have much to do to spend their time. Radios, however, could operate on batteries. In this context, Caracol Radio, one of the most important stations in the country, created a program to entertain audiences while they were waiting for the energy to return. They created La Luciérnaga as a way to inform and entertain audiences at the same time.
Although *La Luciérnaga* was created with the intention of being a temporary show, it continued to be broadcast after the energy blackouts because of its large audience (Caracol, 2011). Families still spend time together listening to the show.

*Social and Cultural Contributions of Radio*

Because of all of these uses and functions, scholars attribute to radio an enormous social and cultural power. According to them, radio has influenced the transition from a rural culture to an urban one (Antequera & Obregon, 2002). This happened especially in the 30s when the Colombian government saw a need to consolidate a national culture and the urgency to promote processes of education through radio. In the 40s, for example, the government began to use the national radio station –*La Radiodifusora Nacional*– to try to connect the capital with the rest of the country (Castellanos, 2001; Murillo, 2003). Thus, radio contributed to strengthen a national project of unification of the Colombian territory.

Colombian and Latin American scholars also attribute to radio the audiences’ possibilities of participation. Even though radio is a mass medium, it allows listeners to participate in a more active and frequent way than television or newspapers do (Buendía & Pinto, 2008; Lalinde, 1998). Since the 80s, radio has been used as a tool of denunciation and enunciation through which citizens complain about political decisions that affect them, report problems, or just talk and give their opinions about the news of the day (Lalinde, 1998). Unlike other media, radio gives access to minority groups, not only because it offers programs specially produced for them, but also because through efforts like community radio, these groups have the opportunity to produce their own programs (El’Gazi, 2011). Being producers gives them an active in media and allows
them to represent their own cultures (Márquez, 1998). Ethnic radio is one example of this possibility of participation for minority groups (Murillo, 2003). There are also special programs for campesinos [farmers], youth, women, children, victims of violence, and other different groups.

Because of these possibilities of participation that radio offers, communication scholars have analyzed the entangled relationship between radio and the public sphere (Buendía & Pinto, 2008). Through different experiences, researchers have shown the role that radio has played in relation to the Colombian conflict between government and rebellion groups (Bonilla, et., al, 2011; Durán, 2011; Mata, 1998). Radio offers citizens the possibility to talk about the conflict and to overcome some of its symbolic consequences. In a similar sense, research shows the contribution that radio makes to the formation, representation, and strength of the public sphere (El’Gazi, 2011). Although radio by itself is not the only necessary element to build the public sphere, it has been an important tool insofar as it has been a medium that gives voice to diverse actors.

According to El’Gazi (2011), for example, some radio stations in the country have invited their audiences to talk about topics such as, “participation as a right and as a function of the collective life; mass diffusion and visibility of topics of public interest; defense of diversity and plurality; [and] discussion and dialogue as mechanisms to construct collective meanings and to promote new democratic values” (p. 308).

Because of its role in the construction of the public sphere, other scholars have approached radio as an example of citizen’s media. That is, these scholars see radio as a kind of media that allows citizens to collectively enact their citizenship by actively intervening and transforming the mediascape, and by doing so, radio empowers them to
achieve projects of social change (Rodríguez, 2006). Radio, in this sense, gives individuals the opportunity to enact citizenship and to be more than simply consumers of mass media (Gómez, 2011).

By presenting these social and cultural contributions that radio has made to the Colombian context, I do not want to reproduce a romantic idea of this medium. Not all attempts are as successful as one might wish. Many community radio stations are still far from constructing citizenship, embracing diversity, educating individuals, and promoting social change (Angel, 2004; El’Gazy, 2011). Many radio stations are subjected to the economic and political interests of the groups that manage them. The limits of business radio are even more dramatic because these stations are cultural industries and, as such, their logics of operation are based on profit interests (Herrera, 2006). Business radio has been also accused of communicating political issues in a light manner and presenting them as a spectacle (Lalinde, 1998; Rodríguez, 2009). The arrival of Internet has also forced radio to change its formats and to sometimes produce less profound information (Valencia, 2008). However, Colombian radio has taken important steps in the construction of a better society. Moreover, as I showed at the beginning of this chapter, despite television and Internet, radio continues to be a highly consumed medium insofar as it is a part of the everyday life of most citizens in the country.

Radio in Colombia and Radio in the United States

As we can notice from the characteristics of radio that I have presented so far, radio is a very particular medium in Colombia. The scope of radio in the United States seems to be different: not only is radio here a less used medium (Althaus, Cizmar & Gimpel, 2009), but it has been much less studied (Sterling, 2009). I did not find any
comparative studies that contrast radio in both countries. However, based on the literature that I have read and after comparing the history of the medium in both countries, I would like to suggest two factors that explain the differences of radio in both countries.

First, radio in Colombia has had a more powerful role because of the context of conflict in the country. Community radio, for example, has helped social groups to mobilize individuals, to accomplish democratic projects, to cope with the conflict, and to canalize social and cultural initiatives. Colombian radio has responded to the context of violence, inequity, and discrimination of the country. In the United States, on the contrary, radio has been used primarily to entertain through music and talk shows (Boggs & Dirmann, 1999).

Second, besides being used to achieve social change at the community level, Colombian radio also plays an important role in producing and communicating news. This trend does not seem to be similar in the United States where music and talk shows are the most common topics broadcast. This difference on the kind of production may be found in the history of radio in both countries. Radio arrived to Colombia in the 30s strongly influenced by the US business model (Lalinde, 1988). Based on this model, many radio stations operated under a commercial logic of economic profitability in which listeners were considered audiences more than citizens (Herrera, 2001). Thus, radio contributed to the consolidation of the national market through advertisement, which became fundamental for Colombian radio.¹ To this point, the history of radio was somewhat similar in the United States where the medium operated under a business logic

¹ With the exceptions of public radio which is usually State-owned. It is important to say that the business or commercial model is still the preferred model of radio ownership in Colombia.
with the purpose to entertain audiences. In fact, over the 30s and 40s both countries had similar offerings based on music, soap operas, and game shows (Castrillón, 2009).

With the arrival and consolidation of television –in the 50s in US and the 70s in Colombia- radio was affected in both countries. The magic of motion pictures captivated many listeners who replaced radio by television. In both countries the numbers of listeners decreased considerably (Lalinde, 1998; Boggs & Dirmann, 1999). Faced with this situation, both countries took different paths and for this reason, I believe, radio became so different between the United States and Colombia. While Colombian radio focused on the production of news to counteract the power of television, the US radio specialized its production toward music and, later in the 80s, toward talk shows (Boggs & Dirmann, 1999).

Colombian radio sought its own identity in the production of news and “became a machine for making news, taking the lead to newspapers and television” (Lalinde, 1988, p. 55). In the United States, on the contrary, the crisis generated with the invention of television led radio to identify itself as an entertainment medium. As Stamm, Johnson, and Martin (1997) point out, “[After the 60’s] while most radio stations [in the United States] broadcast brief newscasts in between entertainment segments, only a very small percentage of stations primarily program news” (p. 688). The different orientation that radio took in each country can help us to understand the developments and characteristics of this medium in both places.

It is precisely in relation to this news production that I study the role of secondary orality. Among all kinds of topics, facts, and agents about which Colombian radio produces news, I focus on issues of corruption in order to analyze how corruption is
constructed and represented through the orality of radio. In the next section, I describe the problem of corruption in Colombia and analyze its causes and consequences, and its relationship with media representation.

Corruption in Colombia

The last report of Transparency International confirms that Colombia is a highly corrupt country. In a scale of transparency from 0 to 10, Colombia only reached 3.4 and, out of the 183 countries that are measured, this country ranked number 80 (Morales, 2011). In fact, over the last several months several issues of corruption have emerged in different fields including land, health, military forces, and public administration. Several cases investigated by the Attorney General, the Public Prosecutor, and the Comptroller, as well as many studies conducted by NGOs and academic institutions, reveal the magnitude of the administrative irregularities in the country (Semana, 2011).

According to the last Gallup Survey, 63% of Colombians believe that the country has serious problems of corruption (Samper, 2011). The latest General Audit of the Nation states that the Colombian state recovers only 8 of every 1000 pesos stolen. Likewise, 10% of all public budgets are diverted to improper payments. This means that Colombia loses annually about 18 trillion pesos (about 10 billion dollars) due to corruption. To overcome this problem, the government has created more than 4,500 internal control units, but, according to the Attorney General, they have not succeeded in reducing the magnitude of the phenomenon. Out of 26,000 cases of bribery, extortions, and embezzlement, only a few of them are fully investigated and adjudicated (Samper, 2011). In fact, impunity in Colombia may reach even 90%, which means that most authors of corruption are not accused and punished (Cepeda, 1999).
Some scholars consider that corruption has become a part of the Colombian identity (Cepeda, 1999; de la Calle, 1999). In other words, Colombians think that being corrupt is a part of their culture. Over the last ten years between 60% and 80% of Colombians consider other citizens as corrupt. As de la Calle (1999) points out, “at the same time that we, Colombians, consider ourselves as happy (87%), intelligent (83%), enterprising (79%), only 28% of us believe that we respect the law and only 30% think that we are honest” (p. 1). As I will argue in the next section, culture plays a very important role in the way in which scholars approach and define corruption.

**Definitions and Typologies of Corruption**

Even though every country in the world has corruption, what is considered to be a corrupt act varies from country to country (Rønning, 2009). Scholars have defined corruption as “the abuse of public office for private gain and the abuse of public power for private benefit” (Vargas-Hernández, 2009, p. 270). In some cases, corruption involves the payment of bribes to finance a State decision (Gamarra, 2006). In other cases, corruption implies clientalism, that is, a system of privileges in which “resources are controlled by patrons and delivered to clients in exchange for deference and various kinds of support” (Yusha’u, 2009, p. 162). Corruption not only involves the payment of money, but some kind of exchange of favors or benefits (Solimano, Tanzi & del Solar, 2008). In most cases, it implies inappropriate use of power and reflects a failure of political institutions (Jain, 2001).

Scholars have also classified the kinds of corruption according to the type of agent who commits the act, the scope of the act, the kind of result that the act seeks, and the theoretical framework that is used to explain its causes. Regarding the scope or the
magnitude of the act, corruption can be black, gray or white (Ureña, 1997). Black corruption involves large-scale corrupt acts in which high-status officials are involved. Grey corruption includes middle-range practices whose origin is not precisely known. White corruption refers to minor practices such as small bribes or kickbacks. While white corruption is usually tolerated, black corruption is regarded as a “severe violation of community moral and legal forms” (Vargas-Hernández, 2009, p. 277). The color that a given practice may receive depends on cultural, legislative, and political aspects. To pay a small bribe to the traffic police, for example, may be considered as a gray practice in Colombia, but a white practice in Mexico.

Regarding the type of agent who commits the act, there are four kinds of corruption: State corruption which involves State officials; political corruption which is performed by political parties; private corruption; and non-governmental corruption (Solimano, Tanzi & del Solar, 2008). It is interesting to notice that classic approaches to corruption, such as the one developed by Max Weber, consider corruption as a State-centered phenomenon that is determined by subjective intentions of individuals who want some kind of power (Vargas-Hernández, 2009). Contemporary approaches are broader in the sense that they include corruption performed by private companies and non-governmental agents.

Regarding the kind of result that the corrupt act seeks, there are political and economic corruptions. While through the former agents seek to gain political power, through the latter they seek making profits (Vargas-Hernández, 2009). In general terms, we can claim that a large set of activities is included under the umbrella of corruption; this set includes bribery, embezzlement, theft, fraud, extortion, abuse of discretion, and
improper political contributions. The characteristics, magnitude, social sanctions, and modes of operation of every of these practices vary. Thus, a corrupt act may include the payment of extra-money to a low-rank State official in order to accelerate the delivery of a document, or the actions of individuals or groups –either in the private or the public sector– to influence the formation of policies, decrees or laws that directly benefit them.

Finally, regarding the theoretical framework that is used to explain corruption, there are two broad types (Jain, 2001). According to the behavioral approach, corruption is an abuse of resources or power in order to have a particular benefit. For the neoclassical approach, on the contrary, “corruption is not the attribute of an action, but rather a deeper problem with politics –a problem that resides in the broader processes through which consent is won, and influence and authority are used” (p. 20). Thus, according to these approaches, corruption is attributed either to structural causes found in the social system or to subjective motives found in the individual’s behavior.

Thus, corruption can be defined in several ways and considering many different typologies. In the case of this dissertation, I did not embrace any concrete definition since the purpose of this study was precisely to explore how different speakers define corruption and use oral language to create factual discourses about this phenomenon. In general terms, I approach corruption as the abuse of public office to obtain private benefit. However, one of the purposes of this dissertation was to analyze the way in which speakers elaborate, contradict, or refer to this definition in order to present factual discourses on corruption.
Causes of Corruption

The review of the literature shows that there is not consensus about what corruption is, let alone the causes of corruption. According to some scholars, corruption is lower in dictatorships than in partially democratic countries because all power is controlled by the state and other institutions and business do not have opportunity to take advantage of the government resources. (Montilla & Jackman, 2002). In this sense, a cultural approach explains that corruption stems from cultures where gift-giving and loyalty to family are stressed (de la Calle, 1999). A revisionist approach attributes corruption to the countries’ stage of development. According to this latter perspective, countries with protectionist economies are more likely to have problems of corruption because the large size of a government may stimulate gift-giving practices, political abuse, fraud, among other corrupt actions. However, other studies show how corruption has increased in post-communist countries, even considering that corruption has been strongly associated with communism and protectionism (Montilla & Jackman, 2002).

Some of the scholars who attribute economic causes to problems of corruption claim, for example, that there is a positive relationship between corruption and economic growth (Bardhan, 1997). This relationship, however, has been denied by other studies (Gamarra, 2006). In the same way, the attribution of political causes is confirmed by some research and denied it by other scholars (Rønning, 2009). More particular causes related to the Latin American context have to do with regulations, tax systems and incentives, public investment, and services delivery (Rønning, 2009; Solimano, Tanzi & del Solar, 2008). These factors motivate corruption insofar as they incite individuals to seek benefits, exceptions, favors, and profits.
Considering this lack of consensus about the causes that explain why corruption emerges in a certain country and why levels of corruption differ among regions, I agree with the authors that consider corruption as a multi-causal phenomenon in which economic, cultural, political, historical, and social factors intervene (Solimano, Tanzi & del Solar, 2008). In the case of the Colombian context, it is interesting to explore the extent to which corruption has been interiorized and, to use Berger and Luckman’s (1991) words, the extent to which it has become an institution that is the result of processes of habitualization and typification of corrupt practices. In other words, through the analysis of the conversations that politicians and journalists have in radio, I had the opportunity to examine whether or not corruption has become an institutionalized practice as a result of the historical, political, and cultural characteristics of the country.

Some particular characteristics of the Colombian context explain why the country has reached the high levels of corruption that were described at the beginning of this section. Unfortunately, there is not significant research about the causes, implications, and possible solutions for this problem, which is surprisingly specially if we consider the magnitude of this phenomenon. Fernando Cepeda has been the Colombian scholar who has studied this problem the most. According to his book (Cepeda, 1997), there are six main factors that explain why corruption is so rooted in Colombian reality. These causes are: drug trafficking, a climate of easy enrichment, violence, absence of a strong political opposition, impunity, and existence of guerrillas. The combinations of these factors make the phenomenon even more complex. Even though all other countries of the world have
some kind of corruption, problems of drug trafficking and violence make Colombian corruption a unique phenomenon in the world (Cepeda, 1999).2

Besides all of these economic, social, and political factors, many researchers (de la Calle; 1999; Mockus, 2004; Ureña, 1997) agree that some characteristics of the cultural identity of Colombian citizens might explain why white and gray corruption are considered common, and even expected common acts. Some corrupt practices are accepted as undeniable dimensions of the Colombian cultural identity. Ureña (1997), for example, explains that a series of expressions and excuses demonstrate a cultural dimension of corruption: People may say, “Just for once; I won’t be caught; in Rome, do as the Romans; there is no rule that restricts me.” The commonality of these expressions may explain why some middle range practices of corruption are accepted. Insofar as corruption becomes a normalized practice and the levels of impunity increase, this culture of corruption reifies and makes itself stronger.

Finally, even though these forms of white and gray corruption are very popular in Colombia, I focus on black corruption or large-range practices that have broader consequences in the public sphere. The denunciation of these major acts of corruption, as I mentioned above, coincides with the inauguration of the new president of the country in 2010. Unlike smaller acts of corruption, these events include the participation of mayors, chief executives officers, ministers, senior military officers, and congressmen. In addition, these acts of national scope have had profound economic, political, and social consequences (Semana, 2011). Interestingly, many of these events have been denounced by mass media rather than by the competent authorities.

2 Italian corruption may be a comparable case, but Colombia seems to have more complex variables that make the phenomenon very peculiar (Giglioli, 1996).
Mass Media and Corruption

For some scholars, scandals of corruption are unthinkable without the intervention of media because it is through the latter that information becomes public (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004). An event of corruption becomes a scandal after mass media have communicated or denounced it (Restrepo, 2005). In this sense, Neckel (2005) claims that, “scandals are context-bound events and can only be understood against the background of the typical conflicts, opportunities for power and normative patterns of the field of society in which they occur” (p. 107). Some of the criteria to define what an scandal is include elements such as an act in which norms are transgressed, identification of the authors of this violation, knowledge of the names of the people affected by this transgression of the rules, and reportage of the action in mass media (Yusha’u, 2009).

In the same way as there are typologies of corruption, it is possible to find typologies of scandals. Restrepo (2005) mentions three kinds of scandals. Noisy scandals occur when media warn about a corrupt issue but do not provide further information about it. Silent scandals refer to corrupt practices that are generally accepted; media and society know about them, but nobody publishes them. Finally, prolonged scandal arises from journalistic research with the purpose of communicating complete information about a corrupt act at a later date.

The role of media is crucial in this process by which unknown facts of corruption become public scandals. However, there is not consensus about the precise role that media play in this relationship. While some scholars argue that media only represent these events, others claim that scandals are socially constructed through media. In the last case, scandals are constructed because media provide frames of interpretation, determine
the magnitude or severity of the facts, and influence audiences’ reaction toward them (Giglioli, 1996; Restrepo, 2005). In other words, through its coverage, media contribute to the social construction of corruption (Breit, 2010).

Consensus is also lacking about the consequences of this media role in representing and constructing scandals of corruption. Some scholars accuse media of trivializing corruption and turning it into a spectacle. Media saturation, for example, can make audiences insensitive and disinterested about issues of corruption (Giglioli, 1996). Another criticism has to do with what some scholars (Pásara, 2003) call mediatization of justice:

In this process, media try to meet the deficiencies of the State institutions by reporting and investigating cases of corruption that the State ignores. Thus, media generate a parallel process where the accused individuals do not have the same procedural guarantees as those who are accused by the competent institutions. Finally, although media can denounce cases of corruption, they do not have power or the means to judge or to establish verdicts about them.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that it is important that media create these scandals because they “put in motion the politics of shaming, actions that publicly damage individual reputations and serve as social reminders” (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004, p. 1145). In this sense, media have an important function in the creation of scandals, not only because they make information public, but also because they help audiences to understand the consequences of these acts (Giglioli, 1996). Scandals are necessary to attack corruption because without them it would be impossible to have, at least, a moral sanction towards the individuals who produce them (Restrepo, 2005).
Neckel (2005), for example, approach scandals as civilizational indicators of moral development because their existence requires a bourgeoisie that works as an independent realm from the State. Thus, distinguishing pre-bourgeois plots from modern scandals, Neckel argues that the latter are healthy and necessary for the development of democracies.

The role of the Colombian media in the coverage, representation or creation of scandals cannot be fully assessed because there are few studies on this topic. While it is clear that media in Colombia play an important role in reporting and investigating cases of corruption, it is necessary to conduct research about the characteristics of this coverage. As I will explain in the last section of this chapter, this was one of the main purposes of my dissertation, as there is a gap in the study of the relationship between Colombian media and representation of corruption. The few studies on this matter –most of them outdated- attribute an ambiguous and even condemnatory role to media when communicating about corruption. The Fedesarrollo’s research team (1997), for example, claims that the role of media is ambiguous insofar as it publishes scandals that help citizens and authorities to know about the problems of corruption of the country. However, the information tends to be sensationalist, superficial, and fragmented. Journalists are also accused of passively reproducing official information without conducting any research by themselves (Ureña, 1997).

Corruption, Communication, and Media

Although Colombian media have been accused of trivializing issues of corruption, they can play a very important role in the denunciation, prevention, and communication of this phenomenon. In fact, when scholars –all around the world- reflect about the
possible solutions for corruption, they mention communication and information as the most important steps to address this problem. Systems of public information, transparency, and communication are often mentioned as important tasks to be accomplished.

Access to information is fundamental, not only because citizens have the right to access the data of public institutions, but also because politics must always be based on communication (Cepeda, 1997). On the level of interpersonal communication, for example, practices of white and gray corruption may start to be changed through processes of citizen education. As Mockus (2004) explains, one first step against corruption consists of talking about the issue. Citizen participation becomes a very important element to prevent small actions of corruption and to monitor large practices committed by public institutions and private business (Cano, 2006).

In relation to transparency, mass media are approached as institutions that not only help citizens to have access to this information, but also to conduct investigations about other institutions. In this sense, research shows that there is a “strong link between the level of press freedom and the amount of corruption in different countries” (Rønning, 2009, p. 164). Several scholars agree that investigative journalism is the most effective strategy that journalists can embrace against corruption (Jarso, 2011; Yusha’u, 2009).

Considering this important role that media may play in communicating, preventing, denouncing, and educating about corruption, I study the extent to which radio in Colombia fulfills this function. In the next and last section of this chapter, I explain the general purpose of my dissertation by presenting the research question, the rationale, and some preliminary ideas about the concepts and topics on which I focus.
Research Problem

Having described the nature and scope of both radio and corruption in Colombia, in this section I present the research problem that I study. With this description, it will be easier to argue the importance, need, and characteristics of my research. In general terms I focus on two phenomena that are very important in the Colombian context: news radio and media representation of corruption. News production, as I mentioned above, is part of the identity of Colombian radio. This production of news is significant not only in relation to radio itself, but also in relation to the field of journalism. Although radio has become a “machine for making news,” as Lalinde (1999) describes it, the production of news in radio has been a very little studied phenomenon. The few studies that I was able to find were conducted in the 80s and 90s; the rest of scholars interested in radio have focused on studying community radio, a topic that I consider relatively over-studied in relation to commercial radio in Colombia, based on the review of the literature I made. The production of news, on the contrary, has not been analyzed over the last decade. This lack is surprising, given the large audience, the offerings of this kind of radio, and the importance of radio within the journalistic field.

The case of corruption is similar. Despite the scope of the problem, there is not significant research about the role of Colombian media in the coverage, representation, and creation of scandals of corruption. The few pieces that directly approach this issue are essays that, with a pessimistic tone, condemn the work that media have done in the denunciation of scandals. Moreover, only a few studies analyze the characteristics of media justice and, especially, the implications that this phenomenon has in the communication field.
Striving to contribute to fulfill this gap in the literature, I conducted a study that relates both phenomena so that we can gain more knowledge about the representation of corruption through radio. Besides filling this gap, the study of these topics also contributes to the understanding of the very serious problem of corruption. The few Colombian scholars who have studied this topic agree that one of the most urgent steps against corruption consists of studying its causes, implications, and its relationship to media. My research strove to understand how we publicly communicate about corruption so that we can have clues on how to start managing the problem.

Because both news radio and media representation of corruption are two very broad topics, I narrowed them down by focusing on some of the aspects that I consider fundamental, taking into account the review of the literature and the nature of both phenomena in the Colombian context. Among the many issues that can be studied in relation to radio and corruption, I focused on radio programs in which news about corruption are widely discussed and analyzed by politicians and journalists. I was especially interested in analyzing how the language of radio influences the way in which these scandals of corruption are represented. In this sense, it is interesting to notice that, first, most studies on media representation of corruption examine television and newspapers; and, second, that these studies conclude that media trivialize corruption insofar as they reduce the complexity of the cases.

In order to understand how radio represents corruption, I approached this medium in terms of its language. In other words, I analyzed how the orality of radio influences the way in which journalists and politicians communicate about issues of corruption. In this communicative practice—like any other—speakers use language and create their
discourses in a certain way so that they can persuade their interlocutors and undermine contrary opinions. In relation to a highly polemical topic such as corruption which is full of uncertainty, accusations, and opposite versions, this use of language becomes very important because it determines the credibility and effects that speakers will have on their interlocutors. Thus, the creation of factual discourses becomes indispensable so that speakers can persuade others that their worldviews are objective and independent from their interests. In order to persuade others and to create factual points of view about a polemical issue, speakers use rhetorical mechanisms that allow them to create solid discourses difficult to be undermined. I studied the rhetorical mechanisms that radio speakers use to create factual discourses about corruption. These factual discourses have specific characteristics insofar as they depend on orality, and therefore, on the possibilities that orality offers to its speakers.

As I will explain in the following chapter, the orality of radio constitutes what Ong (2002) calls secondary orality because it depends on the existence of writing. Although I study radio in terms of language, I do not reduce the understanding of language to a mere system of signs where human beings are dominated by them. Rather, a rhetorical approach toward language includes the role of human beings in the creation, use, and interpretation of those signs (Craig, 1999). Going beyond a semiotic perspective of language, I understand orality in terms of dialogue that needs rhetoric to achieve symbolic efficacy (Bourdieu, 1982). To say that achieving symbolic efficacy is one of the purposes of orality is fundamental to overcome the idea that language is a system that allows individuals to neutrally re-present reality and to disinterestedly transform their thoughts into words. On the contrary, language is always persuasive insofar as
individuals seek to convince their interlocutors about their own points of view. Thus, symbolic efficacy refers to speakers’ need that their ideas or perspectives are valued, accepted, and even obeyed. In this sense, secondary orality refers not only to verbal expression, but also to the way in which this verbal expression is used to create a factual discourse, that is, a discourse that portrays reality as if it were fixed.

Following this line of thought, the general research question that I sought to answer in my dissertation was: How does secondary orality contribute to the construction of factual discourses about Colombian corruption? In other words, I analyze how a factual discourse about Colombian corruption is constructed through radio and, specifically, through secondary orality.

To answer this question, I studied, discussed, and analyzed four main concepts: orality, rhetoric, dialogue, and factual discourse. Because I approach radio as a medium in which representations of the world are based on orality, I discussed the concept of orality and secondary orality and analyzed the extent to which this condition of language influences the way in which factual discourses are constructed. In addition, because I also approach this orality in terms of dialogue, I examined the concept of dialogue in relation to its rhetorical dimensions. All of these concepts and their theoretical relationships will be presented in the next chapter.

From a methodological standpoint, I focused on examining the oral construction of factual discourses about corruption. As I argued above, this is not only a very serious problem in Colombia, but also an under-studied phenomenon. I performed a rhetorical analysis of Hora 20, one of the most important radio programs in Colombia. I will
provide all explanations and justifications about the selection of this radio program and about all methodological decisions in the third chapter of this dissertation.

Besides embracing two topics - radio news and media representation of corruption - that have been little studied, with my dissertation I hope to have contributed to the field of communication by studying a topic that has been usually examined within the field of media studies and, therefore, using middle range theories of mass communication (Merton, 1967; Pietilä, 2005). What drew on the rhetorical tradition to study radio as a language that allows speakers to construct fixed and factual representations about corruption. In this sense, I conducted a rhetorical and discursive analysis of radio by taking advantage of the historical and theoretical connections between rhetoric, orality, and dialogue. To study the relationship among these three concepts, from the rhetorical tradition of the communication field, may contribute to create connections between the traditions of media and communication studies.

Finally, it is important within the field of communication to conduct more research about secondary orality - and oral culture in general - because this phenomenon has been rarely studied after classical rhetoric and pre-1940s studies of public address (Brigance, 1960). Although Western culture is highly influenced by writing and its logic of thought, orality continues to be a fundamental and indispensable form of communication that has been even influenced by writing culture. In the next chapter, I develop these concepts and ideas in more detail.

Preview of the Dissertation

As I have explained, this dissertation examines the role that secondary orality plays in the construction of factual discourses about Colombian corruption. Using cluster
analysis I describe the way in which radio speakers invited to the Colombian radio program *Hora 20* construct and reproduce factual discourses on Colombian corruption.

This dissertation consists of six chapters. This first chapter has offered an overview of the two phenomena in which this dissertation focuses: Colombian radio and corruption in Colombia. It also provides a rationale for the dissertation. The second chapter has three main sections. First, I present a review of the literature produced on talk radio. Second, I explain the concepts of orality and secondary orality as well as important characteristics of secondary orality such as addressivity, dialogue, and genre. Finally, I discuss the problem of factuality and its related terms, such as rhetoric and symbolic efficacy.

In the third chapter, I describe *Hora 20* and explain why I selected this program to analyze the role of secondary orality in the construction of discourses about corruption. In addition, I describe the specific cases of corruption that I analyze in this dissertation. Finally, I explain the method of cluster analysis and describe each of the stages that I followed in order to perform a rhetorical analysis of *Hora 20*. The fourth chapter examines the different clusters of terms that emerged from this rhetorical analysis. I describe six main clusters of terms that radio speakers use when talking about corruption as a long term Colombian problem, agricultural corruption, and health corruption. I also examine the different rhetorical strategies through which they construct factual accounts about corruption.

In the fifth chapter, I discuss how the language of radio influences the way in which radio speakers communicate about corruption and, specifically, how secondary orality influences factual accounts on corruption. I suggest three different levels in which
secondary orality works, at least in the context of a talk radio program like *Hora 20*. In the sixth chapter, I present a more detailed connection between chapters 4 and 5, and, therefore, between radio representations of corruption and secondary orality. In addition, I offer a preliminary answer to the research question that guided this dissertation by explaining three important ideas: the invitational nature of secondary orality, the characteristics of what I call dialogic rhetoric, and the normalization of corruption. In this chapter I also summarize how this dissertation might advance our understanding on corruption, radio, and cluster analysis. Lastly, I suggest some directions for future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the previous chapter, I described the main characteristics of Colombian radio by analyzing its history, functions, and scope, as well as its cultural and economic dimensions. Now that readers are familiar with the characteristics of this particular phenomenon in Colombia, in this chapter I discuss the ways in which radio has been examined as a subject of study. The main purpose of my dissertation was to explore the role of the language of radio in the construction of factual discourses about Colombian corruption. In general terms, this means that I studied how radio, as a language, allows speakers to construct and present factual discourses about corruption. This broad problem includes two interrelated issues: first, the study of radio in terms of language; and, second, the study of how factual discourses are constructed through that language. To accomplish the former, I will focus on concepts such as orality, secondary orality, dialogue, addressivity, and genre. To achieve the latter, I will examine concepts such as factuality, rhetoric and symbolic efficacy.

Before discussing these two broad topics, I will describe a few studies that constitute the closest examples of the study that I conducted. These studies provide some clues about ways in which radio, orality, and factuality may be studied. I will also reference other studies that are not directly related to my research problem, but that show the state of the research in the field of radio. Thus, this chapter has three main sections. In the first section, I present a review of the literature produced on radio. In the second section, I discuss the concepts of orality and secondary orality, as well as the characteristics of orality: addressivity, dialogue, and genre. In the last section, I discuss the problem of factuality and its related terms, such as rhetoric and symbolic efficacy.
Research on Radio

Radio can be approached from several perspectives. From a functionalist approach, it can be defined as a subsystem that allows other subsystems to be connected through information flows. From a critical standpoint, radio can be seen as a cultural industry whose cultural production is determined by the market. From the cybernetic tradition, it can be described as a channel that allows communication between systems. From a phenomenological perspective, radio can be approached as a set of experiences mediated by the world of sounds. Although all of these perspectives are important and may even be complementary, I approach radio from a rhetorical perspective; I see radio as a kind of language that is used to represent reality and, therefore, to construct it in specific ways.

Because I privilege this rhetorical standpoint, I do not reduce the understanding of language to a mere system where human beings are dominated by signs. Unlike semiotics, a rhetorical approach toward language includes the role of human beings in the creation, use, and interpretation of those signs (Craig, 1999). Going beyond a semiotic perspective of language, I understand orality in terms of dialogue that needs rhetoric to achieve symbolic efficacy (Bourdieu, 1982).

However, this rhetorical dimension of radio –and orality– has been rarely studied. In fact, non-entertainment radio in general has been a little studied medium since the 1960s (Katriel, 2004; Tolson, 2006). The review of the literature shows that scholars have produced more research about television and film than about radio. Although some scholars (Sterling, 2009) claim that research on North American radio has increased over the last decades, it is difficult to find studies about this medium. As a medium we still
have questions about the nature of talk, orality, and audio in radio (Tolson, 2006). The little available research about North American radio focuses on topics such as biographies of important broadcasters and radio entertainment (Sterling, 2009). In addition, with the rapid development of information and communication technologies, several media and communication scholars are focusing their attention on computer mediated communication, virtual reality, simulation, among other experiences and phenomena related to the Internet.

Most research on radio has been conducted in South America and Africa where community radios have played an important role in implementing projects for social change. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Colombian community radio can be considered as an over-studied topic in relation to commercial or public radio. Colombian scholars have focused on exploring the characteristics of community radio (Mejía & Gómez, 2001; Mejía & Gómez, 2002), the access of minority groups to these radio stations (El’Gazi, 2011), the possibilities of participation (Murillo, 2003), the relationship between radio and public sphere (Buendía & Pinto, 2008), and the role of community radio in the Colombian conflict (Bonilla, et., al, 2011; Durán, 2011; Mata, 1998). Although most of this research gives us a very complete picture and a very profound analysis of Colombian community radio, it says little about the language or the rhetoric of radio and the specific ways in which radio language represents reality.

In this sense, in the following parts of this literature review, I present research studies that focus on this rhetorical dimension of radio. Even though I searched for and read several studies that approach radio from diverse perspectives, I focus here on those that examine radio in terms of its language and the power of this language to represent
Having explained this, it is also important to mention that the literature review is organized into three broad parts. The first part explores the way in which talk radio has been studied and the characteristics that scholars attribute to this kind of radio. The second part describes the extent to which radio has been analyzed from the standpoint of rhetoric. The third category examines studies that focus on the particular language of radio.

**Talk Radio**

First of all, it is important to notice that I understand the concept of talk radio in its broadest sense, that is, as radio or radio programs based on the production of conversation or talk rather than on the broadcasting of music. I do not reduce talk radio to “trash conversation,” self-help talk, or discussion of mundane and superficial issues. Talk radio may take these forms, but it also may include highly specialized debates, educational content, or participatory radio. Readers from different geographies can have different understandings about what talk radio is and I want to start this section by disclaiming any particular connotation or value for this label.

The research on talk radio provides some interesting concepts, information, and methodological ideas that may be useful to further understand the role of orality in the construction of factual radio discourses. Here, I will refer to several of these studies and highlight the points that somehow contributed to my own research. My analysis will be a little longer when referring the studies that I considered closer with respect to my work.

In many cases, talk radio is approached from a political perspective in which conversation is analyzed in terms of participation, power, asymmetry, and control. Pinseler (2008), for instance, analyzes the politics of talking in German radio in order to
explore verbal interactions from the standpoint of power and control. From this political point of view, radio interviews have been also studied and considered as one of the most important genres of radio (Pinseler, 2008; Zagacki & Grano, 2005). Ekströ (2010), for instance, explores the announced refusal to answer questions in radio political interviews. Specifically, she analyzes the discursive mechanisms through which politicians accomplish this refusal and the way in which journalists respond to it. In relation to radio genres and interview strategies, Turbide, Vincent, and Laforest (2010) analyze how discursive denigrations are constructed in trash radio, which can be defined as a type of opinion radio where provocative hosts denigrate absent third parties. In order to study the discursive characteristics of these kinds of programs, the authors combine elements of linguistic, discursive, and pragmatic analysis which can be interesting to overcome reductionist analysis that are based on very small units of analysis.

Boggs and Dirmann (1999), describe the growing role of talk radio in the United States as a consequence of the decline of print journalism. According to the authors, this growing importance of talk radio is leading North American society to the decline of the public sphere. They believe talk radio discusses topics in a highly superficial and very emotional manner, which contradicts the rational nature of public deliberation. For Boggs and Dirmann (1999) the serious topics that audiences should be thinking of and discussing about are “too complicated and ‘dull’ for the high-priced airwaves of talk radio” (p. 77). One of the purposes of my research was to study the extent to which dialogue and conversation in radio does or does not allow speakers to present deep and strong arguments because of the nature of the medium and, ultimately, because of the characteristics of orality.
Roeh’s (1982) book on the rhetoric of news in Israeli radio constitutes the closest antecedent to the study that I present here. Roeh asks whether information and facts is predominant in Israeli radio news or whether other functions of speech also take part in news presentation. To approach this research problem, Roeh uses Jakobson’s functions of language (referential, aesthetic, emotive, conative, phatic, and metalingual) and hypothesizes that “radio language is not a pure-and-simple transmitter of referential information” (p. 7), but that other functions also play an important role, even when journalists only refer to facts. From a methodological standpoint, Roeh recorded and transcribed two emissions of three daily radio magazines.

Through these radio magazines, Roeh examines elements such as rhythmic patterns of speech, functions of speech, dramatic elements employed by the anchormen, and figures of language, among others. He approaches rhetoric as the set of strategies that speakers employ when using all of these elements; that is, he understands rhetoric in terms of form and, therefore, as a criterion of style. Roeh concludes his study by suggesting a theory of the genre of news, which includes four dimensions: Structure (rules and conventions), content (representation of reality), point of view (perspective of the teller), and pragmatics (broader effects of news in society). He also distinguishes between sentimentalist and news genres by arguing that the former tends to deviate from accepted norms, while the latter avoids alternative ways of representation and privileges a plain presentation of facts.

In relation to my own study, it is interesting to notice that Roeh’s conclusions also confirm the complexity of the representation of facts in radio journalism to the extent that these facts are not always presented as pure events, independent from the person who
narrates them. In addition, it is interesting to consider the four dimensions of genre that Roeh suggests. Even if I do not embrace them as my main categories for analysis, it is worth considering the role of structure, content and point of view in order to examine how these elements are used in oral contexts. Finally, it is be important to extend Roeh’s analysis in two main ways: first, to give a more prominent role to rhetoric since this concept is superficially approached in Roeh’s work; and, second, to analyze the representation of facts in radio genres that combine news and opinion to see whether or not the mixture of both genres constitutes a new genre in itself.

Hutchby’s (1996) book on radio and confrontational talk constitutes a second important antecedent for my own study because he analyzes how arguments are made and how recipients respond to them. Hutchby does not focus on a particular set of data, but he seems to arbitrarily choose fragments of different talk radio programs to show how arguments are created and used in this kind of radio. In order to describe the controversies between radio hosts and callers, Hutchby employs conversational analysis to examine the characteristics of talk in radio programs. After analyzing several excerpts of conversations between hosts and callers, Hutchby concludes that these talks follow an underlying structure that includes greetings, presentation of caller’s opinion, the host’s response to that opinion, and closing.

Hutchby also argues that speakers engage in controversy by using several rhetorical strategies such as mitigation, aggravation, shifts in footing, negotiation of roles, and expression of opinions. He also points out the asymmetrical relationship between caller and host because, while the former is required to express his/her position at the beginning of the call, the latter may choose whether he/she takes a position and when
he/she will stake it out. Finally, Hutchby (1996) concludes, “talk radio disputes involve a relatively unconstrained exchange of personal opinions. But at the same time, those disputes are constrained by certain institutional imperatives and systematic asymmetries” (p. 110).

In relation to my own study, Hutchby’s (1996) research provides some interesting elements to analyze what he calls “the pursuit of controversy” (p. 59). However, unlike Hutchby, I believe that using conversational analysis may limit the scope of observations and conclusions in a rhetorical study. While one of the main goals of some conversational analysis consists of showing the underlying structure of a given interaction, I consider that language offers many other possibilities of analysis that allow researchers to study broader consequences of communicative acts. Finally, while Hutchby focuses on the relationship between hosts and callers, I explore the interactions between hosts and guests and, therefore, longer and more specialized interactions than those between callers and hosts.

The third close antecedent to my own study is Katriel’s (2004) book entitled *Dialogic moments: From soul to talk radio in Israeli culture*. Katriel’s work is based on three particular cases: The study of communal conversations among Zionist settler groups in the 1920s; the study of straight talk of native-born Israeli Jews between 1930s and 1940s; and, the study of talk radio in the 1980s and 1990s. Katriel’s main objective is to analyze the extent to which Buber’s (1958) definition of dialogue, as an intimate encounter between *I* and *Thou*, explains different kinds of interactions among Israelis.

With respect to his case study about talk radio, Katriel (2004) identifies a “dialogic turn” (p. 231) enacted in the transition in Israeli models of radio in the 1980s
after adopting a more participatory way to produce radio. This dialogic turn involved a change from one voice broadcasting to several voices participating, and gave the opportunity for listeners to become producers, to express their opinions, and to have dialogues with other members of the community. As Katriel (2004) points out, this dialogic turn offered “new forms of intimacy as well as a new arena for democratic participation” (p. 233). After analyzing two main radio programs, Katriel also claims that this “dialogic utopia” associated with the idea of having an open society took several years to materialize, but had important consequences in particular Israeli listeners-participants. Finally, she concludes that it is unavoidable to deny the tension between “call-in radio programs as sites of authentic individual expression and as sites of social control” (p. 238). Thus, while talk radio potentially offers this possibility of authentic dialogue, the institutional frames in which this radio is produced constrain the option for a totally open and authentic dialogic encounter.

Even though I do not study call-in radio programs, Katriel’s (2004) reflections and findings about the dialogic turn in Israeli radio are useful for my research since I examine dialogues between hosts and guests. Dialogue may be approached as the core element of oral interactions among radio speakers and Katriel offers interesting analysis of the work of Buber (1959) in this regard.

I have presented in some detail the works of Katriel (2004), Hutchby (1996), and Roeh (1982) because they discuss some concepts that are central to my own study such as news radio, genre, controversy, rhetorical strategies, and dialogue. The following studies also provide clues about talk radio even though they diverge more from the research that I present here.
Radio and Rhetoric

Unfortunately, for my own research, there are very few studies that approach talk radio, and radio in general, from a rhetorical standpoint. The few studies that explore this relationship between radio and rhetoric approach the latter concept in a superficial way because they define rhetoric either as a set of strategies to deceive the public or as pompous speech with no relevant content. For example, in examining development radio in rural Nigeria, Ojebode (2008) accuses these radio stations of promoting a false rhetoric of participation. Ojebode understands rhetoric as a promise that has not been fulfilled. In a similar sense, in examining the Internet’s promises of democratization and globalization to enhance the possibilities of public online radios in Australia, Burns (2008) analyzes what he calls the rhetoric surrounding both public service broadcasting and the Internet. The author here approaches rhetoric in terms of the obligations and characteristics that both public radio and Internet must fulfill to guarantee citizens their rights of participation and democratization and finds that the obligations go unmet.

However, some studies go beyond this narrow definition of rhetoric as deceptive discourse. For instance, also embracing a rhetorical perspective, Kane (1998) understands rhetoric as public argument. Interestingly, the author claims that talk radio can be used to teach students about rhetorical practices in the United States because of the proximity between radio and orality. Finally, Lee’s (1991) book on Garrison Keillor constitutes an example of the way in which rhetorical criticism can be employed to analyze not only the work of one radio speaker, but also radio itself. From a methodological standpoint, it is interesting to see how Lee analyzes Keillor’s discursive characteristics: narrative
formulas, devices of storytelling, performance of spontaneity, radio technology, and realistic rhetoric.

The few studies that address the relationship between rhetoric and radio confirm the necessity to approach radio from a rhetorical standpoint, not only as a method to study radio production, but also as a concept that helps us to understand how speakers’ arguments are constructed and, ultimately, how the nature of radio language influences the kinds of discourses that this medium produces. From a professional or disciplinary perspective, to study radio from the standpoint of rhetoric might allow scholars to reconstruct bridges between communication studies and media studies, which are sometimes separated fields in the United States academy.

The Language of Radio

A last group of studies focus on exploring the characteristics of radio as a language. To describe these characteristics, most scholars draw on the concept of orality and, therefore, on the nature of oral language (Lalinde, 1998; Vásquez, 1998). Some studies explain the characteristics that make radio a unique and a different language, when compared with television and writing. In his article about the processes of education through radio, Rodero (2008) explains that cognitive processes are different when individuals watch television and when they listen to radio. In the first case, an individual’s brain activity is passive and close to hypnosis because television offers multiple sensorial referents that generate hyperstimulation. Radio, on the other hand, stimulates imagination, strengthens analytical thought, and develops discursive skills because this medium stimulates only one sense and, therefore, asks listeners to be active in order to respond to its stimuli.
With the intent to explore the language of radio, Rincón and Forero (2008) explain how narration and storytelling work in radio. Radio narrations, they hold, are based on spontaneity, emotion, imagination, interaction, dramatism, memory, intimacy, interaction, feelings, and rhythm. The authors also argue that the importance of radio for Latin American countries can be explained by considering that the forms of narration used in radio are the most common and intrinsic forms of narration of everyday communication for the Latin American culture. The language of radio represents the aesthetics and tastes of Latin American popular culture.

From a different geographic place, the North American school of media ecology (see Kong-Lum, 2006, for a review) has also explored radio in terms of its language and, more specifically, the role of secondary orality in the production of radio, electronic media, and cell phone texts. For instance, in his reflections about the electronic mediated word, Soukup (2004) explains that media act as frames that situate voice in very particular ways. In the case of radio, a voice presents content at distance, which creates a rhetorical situation where listeners can hear speakers, even though they are far from each other. In another study produced within this school of media ecology, Micheti (2005) explains that radio language is designed to stimulate imagination and participation which creates rhetorical situations of active listeners. Listeners’ cognitive involvement in radio is active because “the mind seeks to make up for the lack of complex sensory data through representations that are predominantly visual” (p. 245).

Unfortunately, there are very few pieces that explore the language of radio. Most discussions are not research studies, but reflections that authors make based on their own experiences with radio and their knowledge about some foundational authors on orality.
(see Rincón & Forero; 2008; Soukup, 2004; Vásquez, 1998, for example). The findings that I present here may contribute to fill this gap because they bring some data from which we can see, in actual radio conversations, how orality works. The purpose of the next section will be to discuss the concepts of orality and secondary orality from the perspective of several foundational and contemporary authors who have created and studied these terms.

Orality and Secondary Orality

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in order to talk about radio we must consider the role that orality plays in the nature of this medium. In this section, I will discuss the concept of orality as well as other related terms such as secondary orality, dialogue, and genre. These concepts serve as a theoretical framework from which I conducted rhetorical analysis for this dissertation.

Orality and Literacy

In general terms, radio is based on the language of secondary orality. In order to understand what this means, we can imagine a spectrum whose left end represents pure orality and whose right end represents literacy. Pure orality refers to the orality of cultures that do not have or know writing at all, and literacy refers to those societies that know and use writing as a medium of communication. In the middle of this spectrum we can place secondary orality because it shares elements with both orality and literacy.

Within the field of communication, the school of media ecology (Kong-Lum, 2006) is the tradition that has most paid attention to the problem of orality and literacy and, specifically, to the study of communication media as technologies of thought and extensions of humans. According to this tradition, because of their languages, media
create different environments and social scenarios that make possible the establishment of particular routines and cultural dynamics. Havelock (1991), McLuhan (1964), and Ong (2002) are the authors that, within this tradition, have produced some of the most influential works on orality and literacy, considering not only the historical dimensions of their emergence, but also the contemporary consequences of both forms of communication. While some anthropologists (Cassirer, 1993; Levi Strauss, 1999) have discussed the social, economic, and political consequences of the emergence of orality and literacy in particular regions of the world, authors such as Havelock, McLuhan, and Ong have focused on the communicative characteristics of orality and literacy.

From an historical perspective, the act of speaking makes us humans and differentiates us from animals (Cassirer, 1993). Primary orality was the medium of communication for more than forty thousand years until the emergence of the first scripts in the Sumerian culture. As Ong (2002) points out, it is difficult for us to imagine how a totally oral mind would communicate, because our contemporary societies are permeated by writing, even if some individuals are illiterate or do not often write. Pure oral cultures developed a set of strategies and patterns of thought that allowed individuals to create, maintain, and reproduce knowledge. These psychodynamics of orality, as Ong (2002) calls them, are not simply figures of language such as repetition, antithesis, alliterations, or assonances, but constitute technologies of thought; that is, these psychodynamics are ways of consciousness that influence the way in which oral cultures perceive, interpret, and reproduce the world.

Interestingly, both Ong (2002) and McLuhan (1964) consider that our understanding of orality should not be reduced to the physical practice of speaking, but it
should be approached as a technology of thought, a form of consciousness, and a state of mind. Orality and writing can be approached as technologies, not only in the sense of “exterior aids, but also [as] interior transformations of consciousness” (Ong, 2002, p. 81). Thus, as technologies, orality and writing have both exterior and interior dimensions: They work as exterior devices, but also as interior forms of consciousness that influence what can be said and how. In the case of orality, the nature of the oral world entails a particular kind of communication and interaction. In fact, according to Ong (2002), more than a sign, the oral word constitutes an event. The oral word is not a verbal representation of a referent, but it highlights both the ephemeral existence of sounds and the interactions in which oral words are shared.

In this sense, it is important to take into account that a “sound is an event in time, and ‘time marches on,’ relentlessly, with no stop or division” (Ong, 2002, p. 75). Oral words are tied to time because they no longer exist once we have pronounced them. Unlike writing, we cannot “go back” to words unless we have recorded them, which was impossible before the existence of writing and is still rare for most of all our oral interactions. Because it is impossible to simultaneously stop sound and “have it,” Ong (2002) approaches oral words as modes of actions. Written words, on the contrary, are things insofar as they can be preserved, stored, and manipulated.

The words of oral cultures are events, that is, they are communicative acts that generate interaction and participation. Ricoeur (1976) approaches the spoken word as an event because it entails an intersubjective exchange between speakers. Unlike writing that implies detachment between authors and readers, the instance of the oral event is the instance of dialogue. In addition, unlike written words, which are generally read in
isolation and silence, oral words entail interactions because they are spoken for an addressee. We can talk to ourselves for hours, but it is more common that we talk to others. Later on this section, I will develop these concepts of addressivity, dialogue, and language from Bakhtin’s standpoint (1981, 1990, 2001a, 2001b).

Because of all these characteristics, orality and writing should not be understood as transparent, neutral, and impartial devices through which individuals exteriorize their thoughts and emotions; rather they constitute the ways by which individuals think and feel. As Ong explained when interviewed by Altree (1973), every language can be seen as one of many windows to approach the world. In other words, not only do pure-oral cultures communicate differently than do literate cultures, but also both cultures perceive the world differently. This claim is important and problematic. It is important in the sense that authors such as Ong and McLuhan give a very important place to communication insofar as communication is not reduced to an issue of expressing or exteriorizing thoughts. However, the claim is also problematic as it suggests a deterministic approach to communication according to which communication media such as orality and writing determine humans’ perceptions of the world.

This criticism has been voiced by several scholars who accuse Ong’s and McLuhan’s ideas of being too deterministic. Ong has also been criticized for defining orality in contraposition to literacy and, therefore, for creating a dichotomous view of both forms of communication. Furniss (2004), for example, refers to Ong’s approach as the great divide because it polarizes the differences between orality and literacy and, thus, transmits an underlying idea of progress. In a similar sense, Scheunemann (1996)
considers Ong’s work limited because it reduces cultural history to a three-stage model that moves from orality, to literacy and finally to electronic communication.

While these criticisms might be plausible to some extent, I do not consider that we should completely reject and discard Ong’s ideas. We should keep in mind that his work still constitutes a very important contribution to the little research that has been done about orality. I agree with Ong’s critics in the sense that we should not approach orality and literacy as a dichotomous perspective or as a polarized binary. Because of this reason, at the beginning of this section, I presented both concepts in the context of a continuum which allows us to find intermediate positions. I consider that we can re-locate Ong’s ideas in this continuum. We could use his notions, categories, and assumptions by being aware that such concepts do not always work as binaries. That is the standpoint that I embrace here: I return to Ong’s ideas, but I place them in a more flexible position according to which media do not determine cultural history. Finally, it is also important to consider that many other scholars have supported Ong’s research (Micheti, 2005; Farrell & Soukup, 2002; Soukup, 2004). Even though Ong’s supporters outnumber his critics, I considered it important to present my point of view regarding that criticism.

Approaching orality and literacy from a dialectic –rather than a dichotomous standpoint– may help us to understand the characteristics of each of these forms of communication. Because they work as technologies of thought, orality and literacy carry with them different forms for perceiving and interpreting the world. As Connors (1979) explains, even though there has been a strong assumption that speech and writing emerged from the same continuum, some scholarship has shown important differences between these systems of communication.
This difference is not a difference in societal development. It is important to note that orality does not constitute a primitive language or way of thinking. First, as anthropologists have shown, there are not primitive languages because no culture is pre-logical or pre-rational (Lévi-Strauss, 1999). Second, the fact that oral cultures did not have writing systems does not mean that their way of thought was simplistic or less complex than thought in primary oral cultures. On the contrary, to produce, preserve, and reproduce knowledge without the aid of writing required a rich communication system that allowed individuals to memorize and share very large amounts of information. In this context, speakers needed to create mnemonic devices, formulas, syntactic combinations, pragmatic clues, and highly complex forms of communication in order to survive as a culture (Havelock, 1991).

There are, nonetheless, some differences between orality and literacy if we consider them as ideal types in a Weberian sense. That is, these categories and typologies work abstractly, but get blurred in the concrete world. As I mentioned above, Ong (2002) calls the patterns of thought that characterize the oral set of mind of primary oral cultures psychodynamics of orality. There are several psychodynamics that explain how oral knowledge is produced and reproduced. According to Ong (2002), in primary oral cultures, expressions and thoughts are additive, aggregative, redundant, conservative, close to the human lifeworld, agonistically toned, empathetic and participatory, homeostatic, and situational. It is difficult for literate individuals—and specially scholars—to understand these psychodynamics because we have already interiorized the way of thinking of literate cultures. For this reason, it becomes difficult for us to imagine a culture that does not have any writing system to preserve and reproduce its knowledge.
Redundancy and conservatism are two important ways to reproduce knowledge when there is not any written system to preserve it. Repetition, for example, allows speakers to think what they are going to say next while repeating an idea, and it allows audiences to remember ideas against the ephemeral nature of sounds. Thoughts and expressions are also aggregative in pure-oral cultures because additive thinking (i.e., $x$ and $y$ and $z$) constitutes a mnemonic device that makes simple the construction of sentences and that helps speakers to remember the information they want to communicate. Written languages, on the other hand, are more complex in the sense that they introduce subordination and fixed grammar, which is possible because of the visual nature of the written word that allows writers to manipulate the organization of words. In addition, orality is situational rather than abstract in the sense that oral cultures use concepts in situational and operational frames where abstract thinking is minimal and thoughts and ideas remain close to the human life world. The oral word is also agonistically toned insofar as oral words are spoken to engage others in conversation and verbal combat. As I mentioned, more than signs and things, oral words are events or happenings because they are always used in and for interaction. Unlike the detachment that writing and reading entail, speaking invites participants to react in tone, gesture, and verbal expressions (McLuhan, 1964).

All of these characteristics explain, in part, why rhetoric emerges in an oral world. As Ong (2002) explains, this agonistic tone influenced the emergence of the Greek rhetorical tradition:

The agonistic dynamics of oral thought processes and expression have been central to the development of Western culture where they were institutionalized
by the art of rhetoric, and by the related dialectic of Socrates and Plato, which furnished agonistic oral verbalization with a scientific base worked out with the help of writing. (p. 44)

Rhetoric becomes crucial in the production of oral language because of the physical presence of the addressee in the communicative interaction and because of the ephemeral nature of sound. Later, the invention of writing not only affects the nature of rhetoric, but the human consciousness itself.

Indeed, the emergence of writing constitutes one of the most important events in human history. Besides generating changes in the exterior world, the invention of writing brought a change in humans’ perception of the world (Farrell & Soukup, 2002, 1978; Havelock, 1991; Ong; 2002). The invention of the alphabet transforms the spoken word into a written sign that can be stored, manipulated, and reproduced. As McLuhan (1964) claims, “Only the phonetic alphabet makes such a sharp division in experience, giving to its user an eye for an ear” (p. 84). The phonetic alphabet, thus, constitutes a highly specialized technology in which 28 phonemes allow individuals to make an endless combination of words to communicate and preserve knowledge. Of course the historical transition between orality and literacy was not a linear process where the former form of communication replaced the latter. Languages are living systems that permanently transform themselves because they are used by individuals who have agency over them to communicate (Altree, 1973).

As Ong (1971) clearly points out, new technologies of communication and thought rarely annihilate their antecedents, but new media alter and give some relevance to the older ones. Thus, Plato’s (2001) fear that writing would eliminate orality and all its
related faculties (i.e., memory, deliberation) has been denied by a history which shows that languages change but do not disappear. It is also important to say that not all societies have faced this transition from orality to literacy, as there are still a few regions in the world that do not know writing.

Historically, this transition from orality to literacy – that still continues to some extent – has left what Ong (1971, 2002) calls an oral residue, that is, a set of habits of thought and expression that derive from the dominance of the oral language. The history of Greek rhetoric constitutes one of the best examples of this transition from an oral to a written way of expression and, specifically, of this oral residue. In fact, rhetoric emerges in an oral world where words are agonistically toned. After the invention of writing in Greece, and even later in the Renaissance, rhetoric shows an oral residue that is expressed in the conversational elements of the literary style, in the use of dialogue and informal speech, and in the allusion to commonplaces and formulas (Ong, 1971). In other words, rhetoric emerges given the speakers’ need to make persuasive the spoken word and it continues to be oral even centuries after the arrival of writing. Finally, this concept of oral residue is also important because it shows that orality and literacy should not be treated as a dichotomy, but as a dialectical relationship where both of them influence each other and co-exist. Many authors have described the characteristics of orality and literacy in order to explore the nature of each language.

I already explained Ong’s psychodynamics of orality in some detail; next I will present a graphic that summarizes other characteristics of orality and literacy. As I argued above, it is important to consider these characteristics as ideal types – in a Weberian sense – which also need to be understood in relation to a continuum. I designed this figure
based on the ideas of Farrell (1978, 2002), Logan (2010), McLuhan (1964), Olson 
(1991), and Ong (2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orality</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>Sequential and linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>Deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystical</td>
<td>Causal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>Rational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>Subordinative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregative</td>
<td>Analytic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundant</td>
<td>Linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to human life world</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agonistically toned</td>
<td>Abstract knowledge and formal language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>Objectively distanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Abstract and analytic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centered on the individual</td>
<td>Separateness of the individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No separation between knower-known</td>
<td>Distance between knower-known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation bound</td>
<td>Distance act</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1. Orality and Literacy.*
This figure helps us to understand the different nature of orality and literacy. However, it is problematic if the relationship between both forms of communication is understood as a dichotomy. Authors like McLuhan (1964) and Logan (2010) present the relationship as a binary, but, as I have argued many times, it would be difficult to prove that these elements are pure, universal, and exclusive. Ong (2002) would say that my skepticism towards these kinds of generalizations may be explained by considering that it is almost impossible for us, as individuals from writing cultures, to understand how different pure orality is/was from writing because our minds have already interiorized the forms of thought characteristic of writing. On the other hand, it is also necessary to consider that pure orality is different from secondary orality. For example, it is not that when we talk we are conservative and when we write we innovate. Rather, it means that pure oral cultures needed to be conservative in order to memorize and share knowledge; writing, on the other hand, allowed individuals to explore and innovate because of the material support of the written word.

Beyond this historical discussion about the cultural and social consequences that the invention of writing had for pure oral cultures, I am interested in exploring the characteristics of orality in societies that already have writing and, specifically, the characteristics of mediated orality through mass media. As a mediated orality produced in the contexts of writing societies, this orality might share elements with both columns of Figure 1. However, there is not enough research that allows me to describe the particular characteristics of this mediated orality. Although Ong (1971, 1977, 2002) has referred to this phenomenon by coining the notion of secondary orality, there is very little scholarship that focus on studying secondary orality. In Scheunemann’s (1996) words:
The particular challenge of extending the debate of orality and literacy into the field of modern media lies in the need to discover and develop new patterns of thought and categories appropriate for the description of the new phenomena and our experience with them. (p. 81)

Certainly, mass media cannot be described as one-dimensional languages because they incorporate complex ways of representation that challenge conventional ways to understand orality and literacy.

Next, I will discuss some elements that constitute the theoretical framework to study the secondary orality of radio.

**Secondary Orality**

In general terms, secondary orality can be understood as a set of communicative conditions inherent to oral interactions that occur in societies that already have writing. Because orality is a fundamental dimension of our everyday experiences, literate societies are not less oral than pure oral cultures (Furniss, 2004). The differences between them are explained by the ways of consciousness and the technologies of thought that individuals interiorized in both scenarios. Unlike pure oral cultures, literate societies use writing as an additional mechanism to produce knowledge and to interact with others. As I mentioned above for the specific case of rhetoric, the oral residue that medieval and Renaissance rhetoric incorporate constitutes an example of this co-existence of orality and literacy.

The situation becomes even more complex with the invention of mass communication media such as film, radio, and television insofar as these technologies transform the co-existence of orality and literacy as they introduce new forms of
representation and narration. Because telephony, film, radio, and television have a strong component of orality, Ong claims that these technologies work under the logic of secondary orality. According to Ong (2002), secondary orality “is sustained by telephone, radio, television, and other electronic devices that depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print” (p. 11). As Durand (1984) explains, the notion of secondary orality has been introduced to refer to the language of those mass media and other communication technologies that give primacy to speech over writing, but that are somehow influenced by writing.

As a language, secondary orality is an open system, but it depends on writing and print (Ong, 1977). This claim may be exemplified by imagining a radio announcer who orally broadcasts the news, but who actually is reading them out loud based on a previously written script. It also happens in the dialogues of film and television that are written to be spoken and performed. In Ong’s (1977) words, “Nothing is left to chance in the world of secondary orality, for the producer is obligated to present a program which is not only spontaneous but conspicuously so” (p. 293). In this sense, secondary orality is not an autonomous system, but it depends on writing and because of this reason, it constitutes a more deliberate orality in which the use of formulas and oral expressions is mediated by writing.

Moreover, we can claim that the secondary orality of television and film also draws on the language of images, but this is an even less studied issue in the scholarship of secondary orality. The orality of television and film, for example, is entangled with the discourse of images which makes different the forms of representation and storytelling of these media.
Because of this interdependence between both forms of consciousness, we can consider secondary orality as literate to various degrees (see figure 2 above). The case of the radio announcer who “reads” the news, for example, represents a more literate orality than, let us say, a group of speakers who participate in a radio debate without using any script. However, both cases illustrate the notion of secondary orality as both situations are somehow mediated by writing. In the case of the radio speakers who, without any script, engage in spontaneous conversation, we need to keep in mind that these individuals come from literate cultures and that the arguments that they offer reflect those previously written by themselves or by someone else. In other words, these speakers have internalized the psychodynamics of literate cultures, but they adapt them to oral speech.

The mediated nature of secondary orality makes even more complex the co-existence of orality and literacy because the orality of media such as film, radio, and television is a massive orality. That is, this orality is speech directed to a large and unknown audience. Unlike pure orality, secondary orality is not practiced in face-to-face interactions between two or more people—or small groups, in any case—, but it is typical of communicative situations where few producers or speakers address large audiences. In this sense, Ong (2002) claims that secondary orality keeps the strong sense of participation and communal life of pure orality, but it is directed to larger
incommensurable audiences. The audience, thus, is a fiction in the sense that addressers cannot perceive it and they need to construct this collective group in their imagination.

Interestingly, Ong’s concept of secondary orality is defined in relation to electronic media, which could be considered as limiting in the sense that, from Ong’s standpoint, this notion could not be applied to describe or to study face-to-face or non-massive interactions that are not mediated by any electronic media. An interaction like this is still oral and influenced by the world of writing, but could not be considered as secondary orality insofar as it is not produced in the context of electronic media. Even though I focused on studying the orality of radio, it would be interesting to further explore the extent to which non-mediated oral interactions can be considered as products or manifestations of secondary orality. However, contemporary scholars addressing these issues of orality seem to be interested in studying the orality of newer forms of communication characteristic of digital communication. Logan (2010), for example, claims that the necessity of examining digital communication has lead scholars to coin the notion of third orality: “the territory of digital orality as the orality of emails, blog posts, list-servers, and text messaging which are mediated paradoxically by written text transmitted by the internet” (p. 103).

The inclusion of this third stage of orality confirms the importance of the oral residue and the fact that new media rarely eliminate the previous ones. However, I think that it is important to be critical regarding the study of orality in terms of stages or hierarchies. Regardless of the original intentions of the authors who created these notions, I consider it necessary to claim that I do not embrace a progressive perspective according
to which orality evolves and improves itself. The fact that orality changes throughout time should not force us to make value judgments with respect to its quality.

Moreover, I also reject an approach that considers secondary orality as a reversal from the world of writing to the world of orality. The spectrum presented in Figure 2 should not be read as an evolutionary line in which writing represents a final and superior stage and secondary orality constitutes a historical reversal to the stage of orality. Even if we adopt a progressive perspective, it would be impossible to go back to pure orality since it would not be pure after living in the midst of writing. In addition, as long as secondary orality incorporates elements of writing, it is different from primary or pure orality.

These clarifications are important because I also reject the idea that radio and television constitute a reversal to “primitive” forms of culture because these media rely on orality. McLuhan’s (1964) ideas about radio are problematic in this sense. McLuhan does not offer any substantive argument to support his ideas according to which, first, radio “retribalizes mankind” (p. 304) and, second, its consumption implies a reversal to primitive cultures. Behind this line of thought, I think, underlies the idea that orality is a primitive language while writing is a superior form of communication, a claim that has been denied by anthropologists and linguists over the last centuries (Lévi Strauss, 1999). As Ong (1978) explains, if radio takes us back to the oral culture, that would mean the end of radio. Finally, Durand’s (1984) arguments are useful to understand why secondary orality does not imply a reversal:

It is obvious, in any case, that secondary orality could never be simply a reversal.

Quite apart from the fact of changed social circumstance, and co-existence with
print, its major element of reproduction is new: the new media do not involve live transmission and telecommunications alone, but have established new forms of ‘text.’ (p. 338)

A few scholars have studied the characteristics of this text in the case of radio. According to Tolson (2006) the language of radio has not been studied because scholars have focused on analyzing images, television, and film and because there are few studies that provide a theoretical and methodological framework to examine the orality of radio. Based on the conclusions of the few available studies, we can claim that the language of radio is characterized by the elements of liveliness, genre, voice, words, and addressivity. Next, I will discuss them.

First, one of the most important characteristics of radio is its liveliness: the simultaneity between production and reception makes of radio a very spontaneous medium (Tolson, 2006). In addition, the act of speaking to large audiences –whether or not this act is live– constitutes a type of performance in which speakers need to rapidly and spontaneously communicate their ideas in effective ways. The presence of a microphone forms part of this ritual of communicating to “invisible” audiences who listen from different geographic places. Finally, this liveliness condition of radio is tied to the ephemeral existence of the word, which “dies” as soon as speakers finish speaking.

The liveliness of radio and the ephemeral condition of the spoken word are part of the performative nature of orality. According to Furniss (2004), the performance of orality refers not only to the non-verbal processes surrounding utterances, but also to the “expectations and reactions of the audience and the performer” (p. 46). Those expectations are closely related to the genre that speakers use in order to communicate.
The notion of genre becomes fundamental because it helps us to realize that even though oral communication is spontaneous and ephemeral, there are social expectations about the form, content, and delivery of an oral utterance. It does not mean that orality constitutes a genre itself, but that there are several genres that speakers use when communicating orally. The use of this genre is conscious but once it becomes naturalized it works in a somehow unconscious way. In Furniss’ (2004) words, “the genres of everyday speech live in the half-conscious practices of the switches we make depending upon circumstance” (p. 26).

As Bakhtin (2001b) points out, genres are “relatively stable types of utterances” (p. 1227) that are determined by a style. For Bakhtin there are as many genres as styles, and genres cannot be predetermined but examined only in the actual performance of communication. According to Bakhtin (2005), the style of a genre depends on the way in which a particular discourse is structured as a totality, the types of conclusions that it presents, and the kinds of relationships that it establishes among interlocutors. Speakers talk in ways that will be familiar to their interlocutors. Based on the characteristics of their addressees, speakers choose the style, thematic content, and compositional structure of their utterances (Bakhtin, 2001b). Although there may be as many genres as styles, it does not mean that every speaker creates a new genre or that there are as many genres as speakers. Genres are used individually, but they are socially conditioned and they are also influenced by the kinds of utterances that a speaker communicates. Unlike scientific genres, other literary genres allow speakers more freedom of style, creativity, and participation. The degree of complexity among genres also varies depending upon the type of communicative action, the organization and development of utterances, and the
relationship between those utterances and the reality that they represent (Bakhtin, 2005).

Besides liveliness and genre— but also closely related to them— voice constitutes another very important element that helps us to understand orality and to study radio. Voice is an indispensable element of radio because it carries words (Herrera, 2000; Soukup, 2004). The mediated voice of radio invites rhetorical situations in which speakers and listeners identify through the production of mental images. Voice also functions as “a metonymy of the speaker’s body and as a metonymy of the radio station” (Micheti, 2005, p. 251). The fact that radio does not offer visual stimuli incites listeners to imagine what they listen to. Speakers, on the other hand, communicate through what Micheti (2005) calls transcodification, that is “the substitution of one set of codes for another” (p. 148). Thus tactile, visual, or olfactory information is transcodified into sounds, music, and spoken words. Radio asks listeners to transform symbolic and indexical sounds into iconic images that operate as mental representations. The transcodification of radio is also explained by the fact that, unlike other media, radio does not offer any interface and listeners might not be aware of confronting a medium, but the context of that medium (Micheti, 2005).

Thus, voice should not be understood as a phonological act of converting thoughts into sounds, but as a rhetorical practice of communication. As such, voice not only connects individuals and creates a communicative event, it also expresses belief and persuades. As I pointed out above, the oral and live condition of language encourages the use of agonistically toned words, words that seek to persuade and to engage listeners. In other words, the spoken word generates rhetorical situations in which individuals are connected through sounds and, therefore, through the meaning-making process that this
production of sounds carries with it. While I will explain in more detail the rhetorical condition of voice and radio in the last section of this chapter, I will focus next in the concept of addressivity which is crucial to understand the role of voice in oral interaction.

The sounds that speakers articulate through their voices are words of address. Traditional linguistics does not focus on this relational dimension between speakers over the communicative experience. Saussure (1970), for example, emphasizes the role of signs within the system of language, an emphasis which makes of communication a problem of signifiers and signifieds and not of speakers. Bakhtin does not reject the importance of signs, but he approaches meaning as the result of the interaction between speakers and their utterances. While traditional linguistics (Saussure, 1970) and semiotics (Barthes, 1972; Lozano, Peña, & Abril, 1997; Verón, 1996) consider that meaning emerges from the process of attributing a signified to a signifier –that is, an idea to a representation– Bakhtin (1981) argues that meaning is the product of the speakers who use utterances. Unlike linguistics and semiotics that consider the sign as the unit of meaning, Bakhtin (2005) claims that the utterance is the unity of communication and meaning. According to Bakhtin (2001a), the utterance is the unit of speech and it can only be understood in relation to dialogue. While the sentence is a unit of a system constituted by morphemes and words, the utterance is the starting point of dialogue.

It is important to point out that, from a Bakhtinian perspective, dialogue can be understood in two senses: As an act of communication between two or more speakers and as a condition of language. In the last sense, language is dialogical because the meaning of words is always constructed by and in relation to the speakers who participate in an interaction. Utterances are full of dialogical nuances because our thoughts originate as the
result of interactions and struggles with others’ thoughts (Bakhtin, 2005).

Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue emerges from an ontological approach to the human being in which he “has no internal sovereign territory; he is all and always on the boundary” (as cited in Todorov, 1984, p. 96). Not only is it impossible to draw a sharp limit between a single human being and “his others,” but also it is difficult to subtract that human being from his socio-historical context.

That is why Bakhtin (1981) claims that “the word in language is half someone else’s” (p. 293). Words are not finished units ready to be used at any moment regardless of the context in which they emerge. Meaning is neither in the word used by the speaker, nor in the audience who reads or listens to that word; instead, meaning is in the dialogue between speakers. From Saussure’s perspective, the word is pure, ready, neutral, and finished. From a dialogic standpoint, the word is pregnant with meanings, “populated by intentions,” colorful connotations, and fugitive definitions (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). As Bakhtin (2001a) points out:

A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addressee and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor. (p. 1215)

Communication, in this sense, is a dialogue in multiple levels: between the multiple meanings of a word; between the word and its context; between the word and its speaker; and, between speakers. I embrace this Bakhtinian perspective of communication according to which communication is a dialogic act based on the dialogic nature of language and the intersubjective condition of human beings.
In his book *Art and Answerability*, Bakhtin (1990) presents an ontological perspective of the human being based on the role of aesthetics in social actions and relationships. However, Bakhtin does not define aesthetics in terms of beauty and ugliness, but in relation to the idea of consummation. This act of consummation refers to the speakers’ practice of giving shape to themselves and to the others through different processes of meaning making. Even though Bakhtin develops this perspective to explain the relationship between author and hero in the aesthetic work, I consider that his approach is so abstract that it can be used to define communication. The philosophical character of Bakhtin’s perspective allows us to extrapolate his ideas to the field of communication in order to understand broader social interactions. Approached from this standpoint, communication can be understood as a process of meaning making in which both language and individuals—and not only signs—play important roles. Following Todorov (1984) we can claim that communication is not about what we want the other to receive based on what we think or know, but about that in which are united.

The idea of being united is a core element of the communicative act that also refers to the notion of addressivity. Thus, the dialogical condition of communication is not only present in the nature of language itself, but also in the interactions between speakers. Words are always directed toward somebody else and both speakers and listeners have inalienable rights upon them (Todorov, 1984). Addressivity is inherent to utterances (Furniss, 2004). In this context, the concept of dialogue is based on the rejection of an expressive function of communication according to which we can transfer our ideas or feelings to someone else (Moragas, 1985). The possibilities of communication are not in the information that passes from one person to another, but in
the co-construction of meaning that both individuals experience. In this sense, Ricoeur (1976) claims that the instance of discourse is the instance of dialogue: “Being together, as the existential condition for the possibility of any dialogical structure of discourse, appears as a way of trespassing or overcoming the fundamental solitude of each human being” (p. 15).

Bakhtin (1990) also rejects this expressive function of language because he does not see communication as an act through which authors or speakers transform into words what they think. Communication is not a co-experience because isomorphism is not possible. Listeners do not receive meaning in the same sense that it was sent, but speakers and their interlocutors co-construct that meaning through their interaction. Insofar as Bakhtin rejects this approach to communication as an act of transmitting information with the hope to achieve isomorphism, he does not define dialogue as the opportunity that speakers have to become a unity of meaning. The notion of dialogue, as I will show later, is based on the idea of difference (Burke, 1969). As Bakhtin (1990) points out:

Let him rather remain outside me, for in that position he can see and know what I myself do not see and do not know from my own place, as he can essentially enrich the event of my own life. (p. 87)

The review of the literature shows that many scholars have used this dialogical approach to communication to understand dialogic interactions among different kinds of individuals (Wierzbicka, 2006). Few authors have focused on Bakhtin’s perspective of dialogue as a condition or characteristic of language. In the first sense, contemporary scholars have used these ideas to explore dialogue in different settings and to understand interpersonal communication as a dialectical relationship. As Baxter and Braithwaite
(2008) explain, Bakhtin’s ideas have strongly influenced the so-called relational dialectics theory whose purpose is to help scholars to understand the process of meaning making “that emerges from the interplay of competing discourses” (p. 349). According to this theory, and consistent with Bakhtin’s perspective, meanings are not stable or fixed, but emerge in a dialectical process.

Rawlins (2009) applies Bakhtin’s and Buber’s ideas to understand what he called the compass of friendship, that is, how communication works dialectically in creating and maintaining friendship. To explore the ways in which dialogue and storytelling construct friends’ identities, Rawlins explains different aspirations of dialogue that are present in communication between friends. He also claims that both dialogue and storytelling are inseparable dimensions of communicative actions. As he points out, “both narratives and dialogues are vivid ways of sharing and shaping a specific person’s point of view” (p. 60).

In the specific case of this dissertation, I took Bakhtin’s ideas to a different scenario and used them to understand talk radio as a dialogical practice in which dialogue works at two levels: as an interaction between speakers and as a condition of oral language. Bakhtin’s notion of genre was also useful to understand the style and utterances employed by speakers when they communicate issues of corruption. In addition, Bakhtin’s ideas on addressivity helped me to understand the characteristics of oral interactions. Finally, Bakhtin’s approach to dialogue was useful to deepen our knowledge of mediated oral communication.
As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the study of my research problem involves two broad questions or interrelated issues: The study of radio in terms of secondary orality and the study of the way in which factual discourses are constructed through secondary orality. So far, I have discussed the first issue; in this section, I explore the latter. Participants in any interaction strive to present their claims as valid, credible, and understandable, which we can consider as a central and basic purpose of most argumentative communicative acts (Tracy, 2002). In the specific context of this dissertation, speakers who participate in talk radio programs about corruption also strive to present their ideas as solid, logical, understandable, and persuasive. Following Potter (1996), I use the term factuality to refer to this process of producing discourses that appear factual so that speakers’ worldviews seem independent from their interests.

It is very important to note that the production of factual discourse has been studied in relation to written discourses as it happens in science and philosophy (Mulkay, 1985). Pure orality, on the other hand, has not been associated with facts, but rather with myths or, at least, with other logics of thought different from Western, rational, and scientific knowledge (Ong, 2002). Here I studied production of factuality in a language that is neither purely oral nor written, but a language that shares elements of both technologies of thought. While there is significant scholarship about the role of writing in the production of facts (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Latour, 1987; Raigoso, 2006; Schiappa, 1991; Woolgar, 1988), very few studies have focused on exploring how orality influences the presentation of facts (Potter, 1996) or, in particular, how facts are produced and
presented in the context of secondary orality. In this last section I discuss the notion of facts and describe the role that rhetoric plays in their construction and representation.

**Facts and Factuality**

Paradoxically, to define the term “fact” is a very complex task. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a fact as:

Something that has really occurred or is actually the case; something certainly known to be of this character; hence, a particular truth known by actual observation or authentic testimony, as opposed to what is merely inferred, or to a conjecture or fiction; a datum of experience, as distinguished from the conclusions that may be based upon it.

However, this definition has been criticized by several sociologists of science who argue that, because reality is socially constructed through language, it is very problematic to draw a sharp distinction among facts, language, and our interpretation of them (Raigoso, 2006, 2009). In other words, facts are not independent and pure entities existing outside language and human subjectivities. Something becomes a fact as a result of some kind of consensus, and not as a consequence of a natural-intrinsic attribute that “that something” might have. In this sense, philosophers of science claim that facts are theory-bound since they are “temporarily reified interpretations which are socially constructed” (Schiappa, 1991, p. 12).

According to this philosophical and sociological perspective, the mediation of language is essential so that an idea or an object may be considered as a fact. In short, to be turned into a fact, ideas and objects need to go through the world of writing. Of course, we should notice that most of the literature about facts and factual discourse has
been produced by sociologists of science who focus on studying the field of science. Even though the issues of corruption that I study here do not belong to the field of science, I draw on sociology and philosophy of science because these are the only fields that have broadly explored the notion of fact and the role of language in its presentation, construction, or reproduction.

Sociologists of science such as Latour (1987) and Woolgar (1988) consider that it is the process of writing that turns ideas or objects into facts. Certainly, they are referring to complex processes of academic and institutional writing through which authors present their objects of study as fixed, pre-given, and objective phenomena. Woolgar (1988), for example, lists five phases in the construction of facts that include, among others, the use of written documents to project the idea of a particular object and the removal of the voice and role of the author in the description of the object. It is through the specific processes of writing that authors create facts. In this sense, Latour (1987) claims, “A sentence may be more of a fact [...] depending on how it is inserted into other sentences. *By itself a given sentence is neither a fact not a fiction; it is made so by others, later on*” (p. 25, emphasis in the original). Woolgar (1988) also considers that it is through writing that the facticity of a statement can be enhanced or lowered.

Thus, the facticity of statements is constructed through language and specifically through the creation of factual discourses (Raigoso, 2006). This factual nature emerges from the authors’ need to present a certain phenomenon as something out-there in the “real” world (Potter, 1996). Empiricist discourses like these are the result of the scientists’ use of specific stylistic, grammatical, and lexical features that allow them to attribute agency to data, rather than directly ascribing this agency to themselves, as
human beings (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Potter, 1996). In other words, facts speak by
themselves because they are attributed their own agency via writing. As I have shown,
the creation of empiricist repertoires or factual discourses is the product of writing and, in
a broader sense, it is the result of the rules of the scientific field and its scientists’ habitus
(Bourdieu, 1995).

Surprisingly, there is very little scholarship about the concept of facts outside the
scientific field and the influence of writing. As Potter (1996) explains, all discourses are
factual in the sense that speakers strive to present their statements as solid descriptions of
the world. Philosophy and sociology of science describe how this factuality is constructed
through writing. However, it is not clear how factuality works in the context of pure oral
cultures or in relation to secondary orality. Some scholars only refer to orality to argue
that oral disputes are often emotional conversations where scientists tell the process
through which they “discovered” a given fact. Unlike papers, oral conversations allow
authors to present the history of a fact, the scientist’s agency in its discovery, and some
emotional reactions toward this process (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Latour, 1987).

Although coming from the scientific field, these ideas are helpful to understand
the notion of fact and how individuals turn some objects and ideas into facts. In chapter 4,
I show how empiricist repertoires and factual discourses about corruption are constructed
through radio, especially considering that the language of this medium combines both
orality and literacy. I will not provide a theory about the construction of factual
discourses through secondary orality, but I will contribute with a preliminary exploration
about the way in which factuality is constructed in radio conversations about a non-
scientific topic such as corruption.
Despite all the differences between oral and written facts and between scientific and non-scientific facts, the rhetorical constitution of facts seems to be a common element in the presentation of factual discourses. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the concept of rhetoric and, specifically, the approach that I embrace in order to understand the rhetorical nature of facts.

The Rhetorical Character of Language

We can approach rhetoric as a theory, a method, and/or a practice (see, for example, Gaonkar, 1997; Gross, 1994). We can also embrace a constitutive or a non-constitutive approach to rhetoric. While the latter considers rhetoric as an art to be used under specific circumstances and with specific kinds of discourses, the former extends the concept of rhetoric to all dimensions of life and to all kinds of discourses. A non-constitutive approach to rhetoric can be found in Aristotle’s (2001) definition of rhetoric as a faculty of observing the available means of persuasion to be used when communicating doubtful and probable matters. In other words, rhetoric, in contraposition to dialectic, must be employed for matters where there is not truth, but doubt and probability about a certain issue. Quintilian’s (2001) and Cicero’s (2001) approaches also consider rhetoric as a particular field of language –different from grammar, for example– that teaches speakers issues, ornament, and oratory.

On the other hand, a constitutive approach considers rhetoric as a fundamental element of language regardless of the type of discourse being created or analyzed (Scott, 1999). In this sense, Leff (1987) explains that because rhetoric is a dimension rather than a type of discourse, we should no longer talk of rhetoric, but of rhetorics of economy, of anthropology, of science, etc. Leff, as well as many other scholars interested in the
revival of the Sophists’ ideas, consider that rhetoric is not a separate discipline, but a part of every discipline. This broader and constitutive definition of rhetoric can be seen as the result of the rejection of the expressive function of language that I discussed in the previous section. This instrumental approach to language is criticized from a rhetorical standpoint by arguing that individuals do not just speak in order to translate their thoughts into words, but they “talk in particular ways in order to accomplish desired identities and purposes” (Tracy, 2002, p. 27). This rhetorical perspective not only highlights the idea of individual agency, but also emphasizes the importance of the dialogical dimension of language that I already discussed.

Following a rhetorical—rather than an instrumental—approach to language, I embrace Brummet’s (1991) definition of rhetoric as a function of discourse. As he points out:

Rhetoric is not a kind of act or object, it is not giving a speech, writing an essay, choosing a metaphor, or composing a poem. It is the function of managing meaning within social arrangements, and is thus a dimension of countless acts and objects. (p. 38)

As a function of language, rhetoric manifests at different levels: It is employed with the concrete purpose to persuade through a specific discourse; it is used in everyday interactions; and, it is also embedded in the values, grammatical categories, and fundamental assumptions that cultures and languages carry with them (Brummet, 1991).

In addition, as a function of language, we could claim that rhetoric’s main purpose is to persuade interlocutors about the value of their own utterances or statements. Nonetheless, more than persuading, what rhetoric seeks is to achieve identification, that
is, to make those utterances consubstantial. I acknowledge the strong emphasis that the Western tradition of rhetoric has given to the notion of persuasion. However, following Burke (1969) and Charland (1987), I draw on the concept of identification as a way to reject the idea of a passive agent who may be easily persuaded. As Burke (1969) explains, while the notion of persuasion assumes the existence of a transcendental subject who can be persuaded, the notion of identification suggests an individual with agency and who has the option to identify with another individual, rather than being passively converted. However, by assuming this rejection to the idea of the passive and transcendent subject, I do not want to suggest that all individuals are active and critical interlocutors who may avoid being persuaded or identified with some discourse. Seen in terms of identification, rhetoric is not a fixed or predictable process, but it refers to the possibilities that humans beings have of becoming consubstantial through language. I would be also assuming that there is transcendental subject if I claim that all audiences or interlocutors are always active.

From Burke’s standpoint, rhetoric consists of individuals’ identification with textual positions which generate discursive effects that induce human cooperation (Charland, 1987). Thus, identification is a symbolic process that occurs within language because it is through language that different individuals become substantially one when they identify (Burke, 1969). Nonetheless, by defining rhetoric in terms of identification with textual positions, I do not want to reduce or to ignore the role that speakers have in the rhetorical process. Unlike perspectives such as semiotics and speech acts (Austin, 1975), I do not consider that, by itself, the selection and organization of words make a statement performative –to use Austin’s vocabulary. A rhetorical perspective asks us to
consider both language and the human beings who use that language. To put it differently, they are not words, by themselves, which provoke identification, but those words enunciated by particular speakers.

As Charland (1987) points out, the very act of addressing is rhetorical because it entails the presence of an individual who wants to be heard and respected by another. Addressivity is also rhetorical in the sense that communicative acts require the connection between speakers so that they can co-construct the meaning of their utterances. In order to achieve identification and what Burke (1969) calls human cooperation, speakers employ rhetorical strategies so that they can identify with their interlocutors. Thus, the addressivity condition of oral language that I discussed in the previous section becomes a rhetorical dimension of communication insofar as speakers use and interpret their words always thinking of their addressees. We can claim that insofar as rhetoric seeks identification, it does not only limit to passively re-representing the world, but to present it in a certain way according to some interests, perspectives, backgrounds, and ends. As I have repeated many times, individuals not only communicate in order to exteriorize their thoughts, but they do so in order to achieve what Bourdieu (1982, 1985, 1999) calls symbolic efficacy.

Considering Bourdieu’s (1982, 1985) work, the notion of symbolic efficacy is related to the speakers’ need that their ideas are valued and accepted. As Bourdieu explains, signs are not neutral entities objectively produced by individuals. Rather, the production of signs, and, therefore, the use of language, depend on the market and have symbolic power as its main purpose. Bourdieu’s notion of linguistic market can be related to Bakhtin’s notion of addressivity insofar as speakers seek that their ideas are valued,
accepted, and even obeyed. However, unlike Bakhtin, Bourdieu uses the economic category of market to highlight that the production of discourses is not neutral, but that it depends on interests and it is also determined by the field to which agents belong and by the habitus they have incorporated.

Bourdieu (1985) also helps us to understand that rhetoric not only works in the realm of signs, but also in relation to the speakers who use those signs. As he claims, “symbolic efficacy is to be founded on the relationship among the properties of a given discourse, the properties of the person who produces that discourse, and the properties of the institution that allows that person to produce a discourse” (p. 71). More specifically, rhetoric might be defined not only as an identification process with certain textual positions, but also with the speakers who author those positions. It is important to include and highlight the role of individuals in the production of language, since addressivity and symbolic efficacy are constitutive elements of oral communication, which is the kind of language that I study in this dissertation.

Finally, some authors have listed and described different rhetorical strategies used by speakers to achieve this symbolic power or efficacy. I did not employ all of them in my analysis, but I cite them here to give an idea of the different rhetorical strategies that speakers use: Potter (1996, 2003, 2005) for example, describes rhetorical mechanisms used both in everyday conversations and scientific discourses. These mechanisms include: category entitlement, footing, neutrality, alignment, consensus, corroboration, details, narratives, minimization, normalization, and abnormalization, among others (see also Potter, Wetherell, & Chitty, 1991; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Goffman (1979) explains how footing allows speakers to speak from different alignments and standpoints.

In this chapter I have presented a review of the literature that shows the way in which radio has been studied in different geographies of the world over the last decades. I also discussed the main concepts and theories that allowed me to study the role of secondary orality in the production of factual discourses about Colombian corruption. In the next chapter, I describe the methodological approach that I embraced in order to study this research problem.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In the last chapter I discussed the main concepts involved in my research question. In this chapter, I will describe the main methodological guidelines that allowed me to answer that research question. In the first section of this chapter, I describe *Hora 20*, the specific radio program in which I analyzed the role of secondary orality in the production of factual discourses about Colombian corruption. In the last section, I will explain the characteristics of cluster and rhetorical analysis since these are the methods that I employed in order to perform the analysis of *Hora 20*.

*Hora 20* and Corruption

To study the way in which the secondary orality of radio makes possible the construction of factual discourses, I studied Colombian radio and, specifically, *Hora 20*, a Monday-to-Friday Colombian radio program in which journalists, politicians, and scholars discuss current issues on economics, politics, and society. The host of the program is always the same journalist, Néstor Morales, but his guests are different every day. Although they are always invited to more than one broadcast of the program, the combination of guests varies. These guests are politicians (usually congressmen and former government officials), widely known journalists in the field, or scholars with high positions in important universities. Listeners also participate in the program even though their calls are not aired. Through Facebook, Twitter, and the *Hora 20*’s website, listeners make comments that Morales often summarizes and asks his guests to respond.

*Hora 20* is broadcast live from the most prestigious and heard radio station of the country, *Caracol Radio*, to all cities in the country (AICM, 2011). Over one hour and a
half (7:30 PM to 9:00 PM), the host asks questions to his guests about one topic that has been relevant during the day, often the most controversial political topic in the last 24 hours. Every program includes guests from different political parties and worldviews. Discussions are always active, not only because the guests’ viewpoints are different, but also because Morales often asks controversial and direct questions. The opinions and topics discussed in *Hora 20* are sometimes broadcast again by other programs on *Caracol Radio* or by other radio stations, newspapers, and televisions channels.

*Hora 20* is one of the most important journalistic programs of opinion among all kinds of Colombian media, which explains its large audience (Duzán, 2011). This claim is empirically difficult to support because getting studies about media consumption is not only complicated, but also expensive. The producer of *Hora 20* has told me that the audience of the program is over one million of listeners, which makes *Hora 20* the most important radio program of opinion and news information in Colombia (C. Torres, personal communication, July 15, 2011). This data, of course, is not entirely reliable because it comes from the producer of the program. However, the general idea among citizens and media producers is that *Hora 20* is the most important program of opinion in the country because of the depth of the analysis and discussion that it offers (Duzán, 2011). *Hora 20* is consumed across many social classes and regions of the country. As Morales –host of the program– explained when interviewed by Duzán (2011):

*Hora 20* started as an opinion program for an elite of citizens who did not watch *telenovelas* but who cared about the country. The experience has shown that now the audience belongs to all levels and regions; today, we compete with *telenovelas* while talking about very serious issues.
I decided to analyze my research problem in a program like Hora 20 for four reasons. First, the conversational nature of the program allows the study of the role of dialogue, genre, and addressivity in secondary orality. These discussions between speakers constitute a fertile corpus to explore the characteristics of secondary orality because they are product of spontaneous conversations and not the result of scripts as often happens on other news radio programs. Second, unlike other shorter programs, the duration of Hora 20 allows journalists, scholars, and politicians not only to present their diverse points of view, but also to develop their arguments about them. During one hour and a half it is possible to gain some depth in the analysis of a topic. Third, because of their diverse backgrounds and standpoints, speakers are compelled to create factual discourses about the phenomenon they are discussing. Every guest uses different rhetorical strategies to support his/her own ideas and to undermine others’. This competition of claims compels speakers to achieve some symbolic efficacy in their discourses, so that audiences and interlocutors can adhere to their standpoints or, at least, so that those views are not undermined. Finally, the opponent radio station, RCN, has a more or less similar program, but there is no active dialogue and interaction between speakers in it.

As I mentioned, several kinds of topics are discussed in Hora 20. These topics include issues such as educational reforms, local elections, presidential political problems, international diplomacy, and analysis of conflict, among many others. Among all of these topics, I focused on analyzing those that have to do with Colombian corruption. To narrow down the spectrum of topics to examine, I studied the broadcasts whose main topic was corruption. In the Introduction of this dissertation I explained the
characteristics of corruption in Colombia and the magnitude of this phenomenon. Here I will summarize the reasons why I decided to focus on the study of this topic. First, according to Transparency International (2010), Colombia is one of the most corrupt countries of the world. Second, corruption has been a long-term problem in Colombia; it has plagued the country for several decades (Carbonell & Vásquez, 2003; Cepeda, 1997). However, in the last months the journalistic agenda has been full of scandals of political corruption in different national sectors such as health, military, security, agriculture, and education (Semana, 2010). Third, corruption is a controversial topic which allowed me to analyze how factual discourse is constructed in the context of competing claims (Restrepo, 2005). Finally, the review of the literature shows that Colombian corruption has been a rarely studied topic, especially in relation to the role that mass media play in the denunciation, explanation, formation, and analysis of scandals of corruption. Beyond critiques that demonize mass media, we need actual research that explores the relationship among communication, corruption, and citizenship.

Since March 2011, I recorded all Hora 20’s broadcasts whose main topics had to do with corruption. Since then, major scandals of corruption appeared and Hora 20 covered them through the analysis of their causes and implications. From March to October 31, 2011, I recorded a total of 23 broadcasts whose main topic was corruption. I stopped recording it on October 31, 2011 considering that local elections were held on this date. This end date was chosen for two reasons. First, after the election, the topics of discussion were likely to shift to what the new office holders would do. Second, election time works as a good time criterion because corruption scandals are often associated with elections even if these scandals are not scandals of electoral corruption as such (Cepeda,
1995). Even though I did not analyze specific cases of electoral corruption, the
Colombian electoral system may be considered as one of the causes that generate most
events of corruption in sectors like health, land, and education. Finally, the denunciation
of cases of corruption significantly decreased after October 31. In fact, after this date a
very few episodes of *Hora 20* were devoted to issues of corruption.

Because of the several kinds of scandals of corruption that Colombia had over
2011, I selected a subset of topics that allowed me to explore the coverage of this
phenomenon. The following table describes the specific topics about corruption that were
discussed in *Hora 20* in this time period:

Table 1

*Hora 20’s broadcasts about corruption*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics of corruption</th>
<th>Number of broadcasts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military corruption</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy and security</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral corruption</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political corruption: Case of Bogota’s mayor.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in the health system</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in the agriculture sector</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in general</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other related topics (impunity, international perception of Colombia)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on this set of broadcasts, I focused on those that had to do with corruption in the health system, corruption in the agriculture sector, and corruption in general. I analyzed the four broadcasts that approach corruption as a general phenomenon because they provide some perspective about the context and general characteristics of corruption without concentrating on specific cases. I also studied the cases of corruption of both the health and the agriculture systems for four reasons. First, these broadcasts represent cases of corruption of national scope. Second, these are the most discussed cases of corruption as the numbers of broadcastings show. Third, both cases represent a different kind of corruption; while corruption in the agriculture sector alludes to political corruption, the case of health refers to combined corruption between the government and the private sector. Fourth, the cases of corruption in the health and the agriculture sectors have been considered the most serious instances of Colombian corruption over the last decades in the history of the country (Pizano, 2011).

Adding the broadcasts about these two scandals to those that refer to corruption in a more general sense, I had 13 episodes of Hora 20 and, therefore, about 20 hours of spoken discourse that allowed me to explore the role of secondary orality in the construction of factuality in Colombian corruption. Next, I will provide a very brief summary of both cases of corruption; however, I will explain them in much more detail when I present the analysis of the different broadcasts.

Secure Agricultural Income

As a way to prepare the economy for a possible free trade agreement between Colombia and the United States of America, the Colombian Minister of Agriculture, Andrés Felipe Arias, created in 2007 the Secure Agricultural Income program [Agro
Ingreso Seguro, AIS] whose main objective was to protect small farmers and to ensure their participation in the international market (Agro Ingreso Seguro, 2007). Specifically, the main purpose of the program was to provide subsidies to smallholding farmers so that they could invest the money in projects of irrigation and drainage for their lands. Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture would promote productivity and competitiveness of the Colombian agriculture in the frame of the free trade agreement with the United States (Agro Ingreso Seguro, 2007). An important magazine denounced –and then the institutions of justice confirmed– the fact that a very big part of these subsidies (about 34 million dollars out of 60 million) was given to some of the wealthiest families in the Colombian Caribbean Coast (Programa Agro, 2009). Through illegal maneuvers such as falsification of documents and subdivisions of land, politicians and businessmen obtained the subsidies that were aimed at smallholding farmers (Programa Agro, 2009).

Beyond the acts of corruption committed by the wealthy families of the Caribbean cost to access to the subsidies, Colombian judicial institutions are currently investigating whether there was a prior agreement between the Minister of Agriculture, Andrés Felipe Arias, and his subordinates, to favor these families so that they would finance Arias’ presidential campaign in the future (Andrés Felipe, 2011). In fact, the Prosecutor General accused Arias of using the Secure Agricultural Income program as a platform for his presidential campaign (Boyd, 2011). Arias is currently in jail for embezzlement and misappropriation of state funds. Although Arias has not yet been judged, the Prosecutor General decided to imprison him after determining that Arias was trying to manipulate his ex-subordinates’ testimonies in order to favor his own process with the Colombian justice (Andrés Felipe, 2011).
Health Insurance Companies

After 1993, the Colombian government allowed the private sector to provide health services to Colombian citizens (Sistema Seguridad, 1993). In this scenario, citizens could choose and pay the health care provider that they prefer. The main objective of the government with this reform and, therefore, with the creation of Health Insurance Companies [Entidades Promotoras de Salud, EPS], was to avoid the State’s monopoly over the health sector and to incorporate healthcare into the private market (Sitema Seguridad, 1993). Under this system, patients who do not receive adequate medical coverage might ask support from the government in order to get the service that they deserve (Cawley, 2011). In March, 2011, the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, claimed that Health Insurance Companies misappropriated about 20 million dollars through different illegal procedures. These companies inflated the number of services, generated fees for services that they never provided, and falsified documents to get resources from the government (Exministro, 2011).

Unlike Secure Agricultural Income, the case of corruption within these Health Insurance Companies is still being researched. Although several administrators from these institutions –especially from the Health Insurance Company Saludcooop– have been arrested, the Attorney General as well as other judicial institutions, is still in the initial phases of investigation (Supersalud, 2011). Interestingly, the impetus of the government, the judicial institutions, and mass media to denounce and judge the responsible individuals for this millionaire theft has decreased over the last months, which is surprising considering that all Health Insurance Companies (34 out of 34) were
implicated in this case of corruption. To date, this is one of the biggest scandals of corruption that is still under investigation.

Both Secure Agricultural Income and Health Insurance Companies constitute enormous cases of corruption in the Colombian history. Such is their magnitude that ordinary citizens and analysts still wonder how they came to light. Mass media played an important role in this process of denunciation (Pizano, 2011). Among these media, *Hora 20* devoted many days to analyze the causes and consequences of these two scandals that will continue being investigated for many more years.

In the next section, I will explain how I analyzed the broadcasts related to these cases of corruption.

**Rhetorical Criticism and Cluster Analysis**

Once I transcribed these 13 broadcasts of *Hora 20* (about 750 pages), I performed an interpretative work on this material. In general terms, I performed a rhetorical analysis of the *Hora 20* broadcasts about corruption. Although it may seem obvious, I consider it important to differentiate the two ways in which the notion of rhetoric can be understood in the context of my dissertation. In one sense, rhetoric can be understood as discursive choices used by speakers to achieve identification and, therefore, symbolic efficacy. On the other hand, rhetoric can be approached as a method of analysis, that is, as rhetorical criticism. Rhetorical criticism has been often defined as a process of evaluating persuasive language (Campbell & Burkholder, 1997), as the evaluation of rhetorical acts (Foss, 1989), or as the interpretation of persuasive discourses (Black, 1978).
In some ways, most definitions restrict the role of rhetorical criticism to the analysis of persuasive discourses. However, as I discussed in the last chapter—following Brummett’s (1991) ideas—rhetoric does not necessarily need to be reduced to the production of persuasive discourses, but it can be approached as a function of discourse or as a dimension of language which is constitutive of all communication practices. According to this line of thought, rhetorical criticism does not need to focus on the study of persuasive discourses, but it can be applied to explore any kind of communicative practice. Considering the fact that rhetoric goes beyond the idea of persuasion and includes diverse symbolic processes, I embrace Condit and Bates’ (2009) definition of rhetorical criticism according to which the main objective of this method “is to study the ways in which symbolic components of particular discourse shape or constitute beliefs, attitudes, and actions” (p. 109). In addition, as I will explain later, more than the evaluative dimension of rhetorical criticism, I considered this method as an epistemic tool that allowed me to explore how language is used to generate and reproduce knowledge about the world (Brummett, 1984).

Among the different kinds of rhetorical criticism, I conducted a cluster analysis. This method helped me to identify the main clusters of terms through which radio speakers define and describe Colombian corruption. In Attitudes toward history (1959) and Permanence and change (1954), Burke presents some preliminary ideas about cluster analysis that are later applied and developed by communication scholars and rhetoricians with the purpose to study how speakers use terms to communicate about a certain idea. The ultimate purpose of these studies is to learn how certain terms reflect individuals’ motives and, therefore, their attitudes toward action. Clusters are defined by Burke
(1941) as “what goes with what” (p. 20). In this sense, cluster analysis allows the researcher to explore “what subjects cluster about other subjects” (Burke, 1959, p. 232).

Through cluster analysis, other scholars have studied American racial politics (Lynch, 2006), the question of women priests in the Episcopal Church (Foss, 1984), and Kennedy’s speech (Berthold, 1976). In general, these studies sought to understand how “language and symbols ground our perception of reality, as well as our motives for acting in certain ways” (Sellnow, 2010, p. 84). In the particular case of this dissertation, I used cluster analysis to explore the terms through which speakers describe corruption and the rhetorical strategies that they employ when using these terms. It is important to notice that these terms work as terministic screens, that is, as vocabularies that speakers use to define and understand the world. As Burke (1966) points out,

> We must use terministic screens since we cannot say anything without the use of terms; whatever terms we use, they necessarily constitutes a corresponding kind of screen; and any such screen necessarily directs the attention to one field rather than another. (p. 50)

To conduct this analysis, I followed four traditional steps of cluster analysis (Berthold, 1976; Burke, 1959; Lynch, 2006). First, I began by establishing corruption as the a priori key term that guided the consecutive search for other terms. That is, I explored the main terms that radio speakers use to define and describe corruption. While I predetermined corruption as the key term, other terms emerged a posteriori from the analysis of the text.

For the second step of cluster analysis, I identified the terms often used by speakers when referring to corruption. As Lynch (2006) observes, at this stage of the
analysis it is necessary to identify “terms that appear in the same context as the key
term(s) and rank them according to frequency of appearance and the intensity or power of
the term” (n.p.). Terms of high frequency are those that repeatedly appear in a text and
terms of high intensity are those charged with special meaning and connotations in the
sense that they are used to define, describe, or undermine key terms (Foss, 1984). These
terms can be classified by following Burke’s (1959) ideas about frames of acceptance and
rejection. In this sense, I explored the ideas that radio speakers accept and reject through
the analysis of the terms that they employ to construct frames of acceptance and rejection
in relation to corruption. Thus, different terms show the practices, characteristics, and
dimensions that are included and excluded in radio discourses about corruption.

In these acceptance and rejection frames, I identified the agons or terms in
opposition to corruption. This agonistic relationship, as Lynch (2006) calls it, is
developed “through some form of contraposition which includes direct opposition and
negation, description of a potential competition between terms, imagery portraying,
opposition or struggle, indirect opposition vis a vis a third term, and enumeration” (n.p.).
By identifying these agonistic relationships, I found the terms that speakers use in
opposition to corruption. These oppositions are interesting, especially considering, as I
explained in the introduction of this dissertation, not only that corruption can be
considered as a positive or negative practice according to the context, but also that there
is no consensus about its definition. In other words, to perform this agon analysis of *Hora
20*’s broadcasts was interesting in the sense that it is not easy to identify the term that
constitutes the antithesis of corruption. This is not only a controversial issue in the
scholarship about corruption, but also a difficult task for common sense knowledge. One
could think that the opposite of corruption is transparency, legality, or morality. However, these terms are still polemical, vague, and imprecise. In chapter 4, I will show in contraposition to which terms radio speakers construct the notion of corruption.

The third step to conduct the cluster analysis consisted of identifying the clusters of terms that showed patterns of meaning insofar as they referred to broad and more complex narratives about corruption. These patterns of meaning referred to similar ideas or narratives that speakers often convey when describing and analyzing corruption. Thus, every cluster of terms that emerged after the analysis explains particular ways to approach Colombian corruption. However, I did not limit myself to analyze these clusters in terms of their content. Beyond that, I analyzed the rhetorical strategies that radio speakers employ when using these terms. Because one of the main purposes of my dissertation was to analyze how radio speakers construct factual discourses about Colombian corruption, I explored the rhetorical devices that speakers employ in order to present the idea that corruption (or its causes, consequences, or characteristics) is fixed and objective.

Thus, I had two main units of analysis: key terms which work as terministic screens and utterances which work as broader units of meaning that allowed me to analyze the rhetorical devices used by speakers to construct factual discourses. Bakhtin (1981) defines the utterance as a unit of speech which can only be understood in relation to dialogue. While the sentence is a unit of a system constituted by morphemes and words, the utterance is the starting point of dialogue. Unlike the sentence, the utterance does not belong to a pure system, but is “territory shared” by speakers. That is why Bakhtin (1981) affirms that “the word in language is half someone else’s” (p. 293).
Approaching utterances as units of meaning, I analyzed them by paying special attention to the way in which language is used to communicate factual discourses about Colombian corruption. At this point, it is important to explain that even though I used some of the conventions of conversational analysis (Drew, 2005), I did not employ all the transcription symbols suggested by this methodology, since my unit of analysis was beyond turn-taking and small syntactic units.

The fourth and final stage of cluster analysis consisted, as Foss (1989) explains, of “naming the rhetor’s motives on the basis of the meanings of the key terms” (p. 367). Unlike a psychological approach, it is important to notice that these motives are not related to the speakers’ intentions or to their mental states. According to Burke (1954, 1959, 1969) motives are systems of interpretation that work as frames of orientation through which individuals perceive the world. Thus, motives exist in the realm of meaning and, therefore, in the specific vocabularies that individuals use to define the world. As Jasinski (2001) explains, “motives, in short, appear to be cultural principles embodied in vocabularies that shape human perception and action” (p. 370). Motives not only shape individuals’ perceptions, but also individuals’ actions in the sense that particular programs of action underlie the vocabularies that we use (Burke, 1959). That is, through the terms that we use, we not only communicate meaning, but also refer to particular attitudes and actions over the world. To use Burke’s (1954) simple example, “To call a man a friend or an enemy is per se to suggest a program of action with regard to him” (p. 177).

My purpose of exploring radio speakers’ motives when discussing corruption did not aim at establishing their intentions, but to examine the systems of interpretation and
the frames of orientation through which they construct their discourses about corruption. Ultimately, the study of these motives allowed me to explore the grammar of radio and, therefore, the role that secondary orality plays in the construction of these motives. Because the nature of motives is discursive, I explored the influence of secondary orality in radio speakers’ motives when discussing corruption. After applying the steps of cluster analysis that I described above, I was able to examine these motives and to analyze how they reflect—and are influenced—by the language of radio.

The cluster analysis that I conducted can also be understood as a hermeneutic work whose purpose was to interpret utterances in order to know how they are constructed, used, and received to create the idea of a fixed reality. As any work of interpretation, my analysis of Colombian radio constitutes a particular interpretation specifically guided by the theoretical framework from which I listened to the *Hora 20* broadcasts and by my own position as a Colombian citizen. As Ricoeur (1976) points out, “The text as a whole and as a singular whole may be compared to an object, which may be viewed from several sides, but never form all sides at once” (p. 77). It is in this sense of multiple interpretations that we can claim with Bakhtin that all understanding is dialogical (Todorov, 1984).

In addition, the purpose of this rhetorical and hermeneutic work was not to establish the accuracy or falsehood of the radio speakers’ claims, but to analyze how these claims are constructed. In this sense, I adopted what Potter (1996) calls methodological relativism, which means that the analysis is not starting with a set of assumptions about what is true and false in any particular social setting and then trying to work out what led
some people to get it wrong (...). Truth and falsity can be studied as moves in a rhetorical game, and will be treated as such rather than as prior resources governing analysts, to avoid subordinating the analyst to a current scientific orthodoxy. (p. 40)

By adopting this methodological relativism (Potter, 1996), I avoided evaluating the extent to which the facticity of discourses about corruption was or was not accurate. Rather, my aim was to analyze how corruption is represented through the language of radio. Thus, more than evaluative and critical, the rhetorical analysis that I present here has an epistemic objective of exploring how language is used to generate knowledge about the world (Brummett, 1984).

Finally, because I established one a priori term for the cluster analysis and also because I did not predetermine the rhetorical devices and the terms that speakers used, I consider it important to point out that my study was neither entirely deductive nor inductive. Even though I had a theoretical frame that explained the concepts of secondary orality, factuality, and rhetoric, other ideas emerged after I analyzed the actual radio data. In this sense, using Atkinson, Delamont, and Housley’s (2008) concept, I may claim that this dissertation is abductive in the sense that I started the research process from considering a conceptual framework; then I confronted that theoretical frame with actual radio data; and, finally, I went back to redefine and discuss some concepts and emerging notions. In other words, I approach this research as a process in which the researcher continually interrelated theory and phenomena in order to connect abstract and concrete dimensions of communicative experiences.
In this chapter I have described *Hora 20*, the Colombian radio program in which I analyzed the role of secondary orality in the construction of factual discourses about corruption. I have also argued why this radio program as well as the topic of corruption constituted interesting practices to study. Finally, I discussed the methods of rhetorical criticism and cluster analysis in order to support why I considered them as the most appropriate methods to answer my research question.
CHAPTER 4: CLUSTERS ANALYSIS OF COLOMBIAN CORRUPTION

The main purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the role of secondary orality in the construction of factual discourses about Colombian corruption. In the previous chapters, I described in detail this research problem, the theoretical framework employed to study this phenomenon and the methodological guidelines used to answer the research questions. In the remaining chapters, I will present the main findings of the cluster analysis that I performed on 13 different episodes of the Colombian radio program *Hora 20*. The main purpose of this cluster analysis was to understand the ways in which different agents discursively construct the idea of corruption, the motives behind these constructions, and the influence of radio language in the communication of these perspectives on corruption.

As I explained in the previous chapter, I transcribed 13 episodes of *Hora 20* (about 750 pages of transcription) whose main topic was corruption and, specifically, corruption in the health sector, in the agricultural sector, and corruption as a long-term problem in Colombian politics. I followed the four traditional steps of cluster analysis (Berthold, 1976; Burke, 1959; Lynch, 2006) and performed different kinds of analysis within each step. Thus, I analyzed the main clusters of terms used by the *Hora 20*’s guests to define corruption, the rhetorical strategies employed to construct factual ideas of corruption, the structure of the different episodes, and the influence of secondary orality in the way in which they communicate their perspectives on corruption via radio. As I describe and analyze the radio data in this chapter, I will provide more details about the methodological steps that I followed in order to interpret different excerpts of discourse.
The following three chapters of this dissertation are structured as follows: In the fourth chapter I describe the main clusters of terms employed by *Hora 20*’s guests to describe corruption as well as the rhetorical devices through which they present their own perspectives as factual. In the fifth chapter, I explain how the communication of these terms and perspectives about corruption are influenced by the discursive characteristics of secondary orality and, especially, are influenced by the nature of dialogue and rhetoric in oral exchanges. In the last chapter, I provide the main conclusions of this dissertation and strive to offer some preliminary answers to the research question that motivated this study.

To begin with the analysis, I consider it important to explain the format that I will use to present specific fragments of the radio programs analyzed: First, following the APA citation style, in-text citations will provide the name of the speaker and the date of the broadcasting of the program; the reference list will offer more complete information related to the name of episode, the role of the speaker, and the website where these podcasts were downloaded. In addition, I will enumerate longer excerpts in order to recall them later in the analysis.

Second, I will not use the system of transcriptions of Conversational Analysis because of the reasons that I already explained in the previous chapter. Since I focus on broader units of analysis, I have decided to employ the following few and simple symbols when presenting long radio excerpts:

[...] This symbol means that I decided to omit some part of transcription because it was not important for the specific idea that I will analyze or the argument that I will present.
-- This symbol means that another speaker interrupted the conversation and the original speaker could not find his/her statement.

; This symbol means that the dialogue (exchange between two more speakers) continues, but the specific statement from the speaker being cited has finished.

Finally, and most important, the author of this dissertation, a native Spanish speaker, made all the translations since Hora 20 is obviously broadcast in Spanish. Once translated into English some quotes might sound weird and readers might even find grammatical imprecisions, syntactic inconsistencies, or punctuation mistakes. These inconsistencies, however, are not the product of a poor translation, but they correspond to the original utterances made by the speakers. Because of the spontaneous nature of secondary orality, that I explained in the second chapter, radio speakers in a live program tend to make what we, in the world of writing, consider grammatical errors, but which are perceived as correct in oral contexts. Since secondary orality is one of the objects of study, I will respect the original sense and form of every message as much as possible. Because readers are used to encountering proofread and clean documents, I will ask them to be patient and to notice that it is precisely that disorganized and unclean nature of secondary orality that is the object of my research.

In terms of the cluster analysis, it is important to explain that Hora 20’s guests seldom explicitly define how they understand corruption because the purpose of the program is not to discuss abstract definitions (as might happen in an academic conversation). However, after performing the rhetorical analysis on the radio transcriptions, it is possible to deduce how speakers approach corruption. In fact, one of
the main advantages of cluster analysis is that it allows the researcher to approach the vocabularies used by speakers as terministic screens (Burke, 1966), that is, as key and partial terms that carry particular ways to see the world. In this sense, the vocabularies used by *Hora 20*'s guests when talking about corruption communicate their own perspectives about this phenomenon.

Interestingly, corruption is not always approached in the same way since its definition varies according to the phenomenon being analyzed during the different episodes of *Hora 20*. When radio guests analyze corruption as a general and long-term problem of Colombian politics, they approach corruption as an invasive decay that attacks Colombian citizens and institutions. When they analyze corruption in the agricultural and health sectors, they approach it as an illegal practice, an irregular action, an unethical behavior, a piñata, or a business. These perspectives vary according to the speaker and to the phenomenon discussed in every episode.

Obviously, these representations of corruption are much more complex than these brief perspectives show. However, I wanted to point them out not only as a preview of the analysis that this chapter offers, but also as an opportunity to illustrate the polysemic nature and the ambiguous condition of a phenomenon such as corruption. The lack of scholarly consensus about the definition and characteristics of corruption is also present in the political and journalistic fields where agents disagree about the causes and consequences of corruption and even about what makes an event an act of corruption. As I explained in the review of the literature, scholars disagree about corruption being an ethical and/or an illegal practice. While some of them consider illegality the fact that makes an event an act of corruption, others claim that legal, but unethical practices might
be also corrupt. Interestingly, radio guests add other dimensions to this discussion. Some of them, for example, consider an irregular practice as a corrupt act and others go beyond and characterize corruption as a business, an invasive decay, a piñata, a cartel, or a gift.

As I mentioned, since the approaches to corruption vary according to the phenomenon analyzed by radio speakers, I organized this chapter into three sections, which correspond to the three main topics addressed in the different episodes of *Hora 20*. First, I will present the cluster of terms that emerged when radio guests talked about corruption as a long-term problem, then the cluster of terms related to corruption in the agricultural sector, and finally the cluster associated with health corruption. Figure 3 is a graphic presentation of these main three topics and Figure 4 summarizes the main cluster of terms that emerged after the analysis.

![Figure 3. Cases of Corruption.](image)
Corruption as a Long-Term Colombian Problem

As I explained in the previous chapter, besides *Hora 20*’s episodes that discuss problems of corruption in the health and the agricultural sectors, I also decided to study those that analyze corruption as a long-term problem in Colombian politics. In this section, I will describe this first subclusters of terms related to corruption as a long-term problem in Colombia.

*Approaches to Corruption as a Long-Term Problem*

This group consists of four episodes in which radio speakers talk about corruption within political parties; reforms needed to avoid corruption; corruption as a cultural, national, and world problem; and the nature and scope of convictions for corruption and
other crimes. The common characteristic among these programs is that corruption is analyzed as a general problem and not in relation to a specific scandal. The main purpose of these programs, as the host explains several times, is to try to understand why Colombia has high levels of corruption and why several events of corruption have been denounced over the last months in sectors as diverse as the military, health, agriculture, education, political elections, and even justice, among others.

Throughout these four episodes, corruption is approached as an invasive decay that invades, corrupts, and captures the State and the Colombian political system. Sometimes speakers characterize this decay as a corroding agent, like rust or rot, which destroys or damages certain structures. Other times, radio speakers frame this invasive decay as a virus that infects a system and that, paradoxically, needs this system in order to live and reproduce. In other words, corruption is an agent of undefined identity that affects both individuals and institutions and, as a virus, rot, or rust, it is an external agent that invades institutions and corrupts people and reproduces through them. For these reasons, the guest speakers of these four episodes do not make clear and explicit statements regarding the attribution of responsibility in cases of corruption. As I will show, both everybody and nobody seem to be the agents responsible for corruption because they are both victims and victimizers of this phenomenon. In addition, in the same sense that the causes of the existence and spread of virus, ruts, and rot are difficult to establish because they vary according to the case, the causes of corruption differ from speaker to speaker and in relation to specific phenomena. Finally, like a virus or a corroding material that needs to be eliminated or destroyed justice and cleanliness are sometimes presented as tools to prevent and punish acts of corruption.
Based on this description, I identified three main clusters that group around this understanding of corruption as a virus: responsible agents, causes of corruption, and justice. Even though justice sometimes works as an agon term, there is not a clear agon term that stands against corruption. Figure 5 illustrates these main clusters as well as the subclusters of related terms that emerge from each of them.

Figure 5. Corruption as Invasive Decay.

The following brief radio excerpts show the terministic screen of corruption as invasive decay: “Many institutions that are fundamental to the State are today gnawed”
(Santos, 2011, March 15), “Corruption is the plague of the Colombian State” (Nieto, 2011, March 15), “So, according to what you all have been saying, the diagnosis is that we are corroded by corruption” (Morales, 2011, March 15), “Corruption has captured the State” (Touffou, 2011, May 13), “There has to be a purge against corruption in order to improve Colombian institutions” (Uribe, 2011, March 14), and “Corruption is corroding the soul of Colombians” (Esguerra, 2011, March 14). Insofar as corruption is presented as an invasive decay in the form of plague, rot, rust, or virus, the identity of corruption is ambiguous and unclear: It is not an illegal practice or an unethical behavior, but a vague entity that attacks institutions and individuals. As I mentioned, radio speakers refer to three dimensions of this invasive decay: agents responsible for corruption, causes, and justice. Next, I will explain these three subclusters of terms in some detail.

**Agents Responsible**

Approached as an element that invades a system, the agents responsible of corruption are vague. In fact, when talking about the agents responsible for corruption, radio guests adopt an ambiguous position according to which neither and both individuals and institutions are responsible for corruption, and also everybody and nobody can be directly accused of it. This attribution leads to a rhetorical duality between institutions and individuals according to which either structures or people are responsible for corruption. Although almost all of the analyzed episodes of *Hora 20* reproduce this duality, the March 15 broadcast spends more time addressing this issue because the purpose of this specific episode is to discuss whether or not the decision made by the Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos to re-structure and eliminate several of the most corrupt institutions will contribute to avoiding corruption. Because the Colombian
Congress, through a Constitutional Reform, has allowed President Santos to reform the institutions that he considers as the most corrupt, the radio guests of this episode discuss the extent to which the transformation (i.e. changing the name of the institution, or the head), elimination, and reformation (i.e. replacing the institution by a new one) of these institutions will help to reduce corruption:

1. Bejarano: “The solution for DAS [Administrative Department of Security4] is not to re-structure it […]. Even if Mother Teresa of Calcutta had been its director, it would have happened exactly the same” (Bejarano, 2011, March 15).

In this excerpt, for example, Bejarano refers to Mother Teresa of Calcutta to argue that even one of the most renowned persons in the world of religion and charity would not have been immune to corruption because individual’s agency is limited once corruption has rotted a system.

Later in the same episode:

2. Nieto: “Let’s say: The discourse of the reform against corruption is not coherent because they pretend to maintain the same people in the institutions. If one had reached the conclusion that these entities should be reformed, that was precisely to avoid those people involved in corruption. If one believes that the problem of corruption in Colombia has to do with the heads of the entities, one is wrong. I could give names of qualified people in charge of these entities who simply could not handle an entity that was structurally rotten […]. In DAS

---

4 The Administrative Department of Security, DAS, was the service security agency of Colombia until October 2011 when it was dissolved because of the many scandals of corruption in which politicians and journalists accused DAS of having alliances with both guerrillas and paramilitaries as well of conducting illegal surveillance on members of the government opposition.
[Administrative Department of Security], for example, you appointed the Pope and the Pope could not have fixed the problem, that’s my point--;

Morales: No, well, he has failed with the Vatican;

(laugh)

Nieto: My point is that one cannot fight corruption while maintaining the same people in the institutions that one knows to be corrupt. In INCO [National Institution of Concessions⁵], for example, there is a set of people, I’m not talking about the head, Maria Inés Agudelo, who is a very good person and deserves all respect--;

Morales: Indeed;


This excerpt presents corruption as an external element that invades institutions and leaves them structurally rotten regardless of the person in charge of them. The rhetorical resource of presenting extreme cases such as Mother Teresa de Calcutta or the Pope in charge of DAS show how some radio speakers frame corruption as a problem of structures where individuals can do little or nothing to avoid institutions rotting. As excerpts 1 and 2 –and most episodes– show there is a tension between corruption being an attribute of an individual’s behavior or a structural problem rooted in institutions. Radio guests disagree when discussing whether individuals or structures are the agents responsible for corruption. This tension continues throughout different episodes and

⁵ The National Institution of Concessions, INCO, is the government agency in charge of planning and funding all kinds of projects of transportation in the country. President Santos’ decision was to change its name and its hierarchical structure in order to avoid corruption.
according to the phenomenon analyzed. While excerpt 2 attributes corruption to institutions, in the episode broadcast on March 14, some radio guests tend to point out the opposite, that is, that corruption is a problem lying in individuals:

3. Esguerra: “Evil has never been in parties, but in people. Sure, it’s when people--;
Uribe: Is it in people?--;
Esguerra: Sure, it’s in people. It’s when people decide to spoil and when they decide to release the brakes of morality and the verticality of correction; that’s when these things begin to happen” (Esguerra, 2011, March 14; Uribe, 2011, March 14).

Excerpts 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the lack of consensus about the kinds of agents responsible for corruption. While fragments 1 and 2 seem to characterize corruption as a problem or, more precisely, as a virus or corrosive agent that attacks structures and, therefore, the rules of operation of a given system, fragment 3 is an example of those occasions when radio speakers consider corruption as a virus that attacks people because their ethical systems of defense against corruption are not strong enough to avoid being affected by this plague.

Thus, regarding the agents responsible for corruption, radio speakers reproduce the idea that either structures or human beings can be attacked by the virus of corruption. Whether or not corruption is a deliberate act is an issue that takes us to the causes of corruption, that is, to the second subcluster of terms that group around the understanding of corruption as invasive decay.
Causes of Corruption

The lack of consensus regarding the agents of corruption is also notorious in relation to the causes of this phenomenon. Insofar as corruption is approached here as an invasive element whose nature is ambiguous, there is not agreement about the elements that make corruption to emerge. All four episodes analyzed in this section discuss causes of corruption. However, the main goal of the May 13 broadcast is to analyze, with international guests, the causes of corruption in Colombia:

4. Morales: “I want to be more specific. When you talk with your families back in your countries, how do you describe the scandals of corruption that Colombia has had over the last years? How do you explain the magnitude of this phenomenon?; Ferrari: I don’t think that this is a DNA problem. I think it is a problem related to the abuse of power and this usually happens when a ruler remains too long in the government” (Ferrari, 2011, May 13; Morales, 2011, May 13).

Radio speakers agree that the cause of corruption is not internal, as it would imply a metaphor related to the DNA. On the contrary, the causes of corruption are external, like different sicknesses whose consequences are always negative. Even though speakers do not agree on a final or major cause, their representations allude to different kinds of sicknesses whose way of attacking are also distinct. Thus, once guests agree that corruption is not intrinsic to the “Colombian DNA,” they begin to present different historical, political, economic, and social causes that may explain this phenomenon. Re-election, popular election of mayors and governors, funding of political campaigns, drug trafficking, lack of ethics, lack of education, poverty, authoritarian leaders, institutional
design, abuse of public power, among others are presented as the main causes of corruption. Here are some examples:

5. Ángel: “There is a historical component related to the fact that the Colombian republic was made by oligarchies which took advantage of the resources of the State” (Ángel, 2011, May 13).

Later in the episode

6. Ferrari: “I think that I could explain this [the levels of Colombian corruption] from three points of view: authoritarianism, the desire to stay in power. Second, the confusion between public and private, which comes from a very old time. And the third one is related to institutional designs that permit corruption. For example, in the case of health, the institutional design of the system allows people to be corrupt. It’s the design of the system which invites corruption” (Ferrari, 2011, May 13).

Later in the episode:

7. Touffou: “I was going to say that drug trafficking was a huge corrupt power” (Touffou, 2011, May 13).

In other episodes, radio guests mention causes such as:

8. Mejía: “Today, in Colombia, the everyday common way of doing politics is in itself corrupt. The way in which votes are motivated in most areas of the country is corrupt” (Mejía, 2011, March 14).

With the exception of excerpt 6, most radio guests defend one as the main cause of corruption. While the literature shows that Colombian corruption is a multi-caused phenomenon (Cepeda 1997, 1999), most radio speakers tend to consider one historical
episode or one attribute of Colombian culture as the cause that explains why corruption has increased over the last years.

In a different episode:

9. Santos: “Corruption has always existed, here, in Mexico, in Brazil, and over there, in the countries of the first world […]. Corruption exists, but it’s evident, let’s say, that what unleashed [Colombian] corruption is the topic that everybody is talking about: re-election;\textsuperscript{6}

[…]

Nieto: I disagree with Alejandro’s [Santos] perspective: Of course re-election generated a huge problem, I am absolutely convinced that this is true. Let’s say, what re-election did was to lower the protection against clientalism and corruption;

Roux: To low the barriers is to open the gate to corruption--;

Nieto: A gap opened and everything entered through it. […] That’s the point that I want to make: problems of corruption –and here I disagree with Alejandro [Santos]. We have had problems of corruption before the possibility of re-election existed, it’s possible that problems of clientalism have exacerbated, but problems of corruption have always existed” (Nieto, 2011, March 15; Roux, 2011, March 15; Santos, 2011, March 15).

Excerpt 9 also illustrates the approach to corruption as a virus that attacks the country. This can be noticed in the usage of expression such as “re-election lowered the

\textsuperscript{6} The option for a Colombian President to be re-elected exists since 2006 when the former President Alvaro Uribe Vélez reformed the Political Constitution in order to stay in office for another term. Politicians and journalists have denounced many acts of corruption orchestrated by the Uribe Vélez and his followers in order to get this constitutional reform.
protection against clientalism or a gap opened and everything entered through it” (Nieto, 2011, March 15; Santos, 2011, March 15). Once gates were opened, the virus entered the system and corrupted the country. It is interesting to notice the tacit way in which this idea of corruption is rhetorically constructed as “something” that enters and affects Colombian society. The use of third person in the utterance “a gap opened and everything entered through it” (Nieto, 2011, March 15) confirms this passive characterization of corruption as a virus that attacks innocent individuals and institutions.

Excerpt 9 also presents corruption as a monocausal phenomenon. Like excerpts 5, 6, and 8, and many other fragments that are not cited here, most radio guests strive to present one cause as the reason or motive that incites corruption. In excerpt 9, Santos claims that re-election explains the increase of corruption over the last years. Nieto, on the other hand, undermines this claim by normalizing corruption and pointing out that it has always existed. Interestingly, the guests’ interests of presenting corruption as a monocausal phenomenon fails because of the dialogical nature of Hora 20 – which will be explained in detail in the next chapter – that not only allows speakers to disagree, controvert, and add causes, but also allows the host of the program to enumerate the different causes that speakers mention and to present them as interrelated elements that motivate corruption.

*Justice*

One of the ways to combat corruption as a virus or rust is justice, which, paradoxically, is also one of the causes of its reproduction. Justice constitutes the third subcluster of terms associated to the understanding of corruption as invasive decay.

---

7 Which is actually, in Spanish grammar, a tacit subject, that is, a subject that is not directly mentioned and can be omitted.
Apparently, there is not a direct connection between justice and the understanding of corruption as a virus, rot, or rust. If corruption is an invasive element, it is not clear what justice can do to avoid this invasion. However, radio speakers do present justice as both a barrier and a cure. Justice is represented as an alternative to solve problems of corruption but, at the same time, injustice—as its agon term—is shown as a motivation to be corrupt. Although the term justice normally has a positive connotation, at least from its definition in the dictionary, radio speakers use this term privileging a negative connotation in which justice is equivalent to punishment. In other words, justice is presented as the process through which judicial authorities punish guilty individuals for their corruption. Thus, justice is presented as a punishment and as a barrier against the virus of corruption, but the lack of it is pictured as the reason why this virus spread. Some excerpts illustrate the usage of this term: on August 25 a judge sentences a person found guilty of counterfeiting a 50 thousand pesos bill (about 25 dollars) to three years in jail. The host of Hora 20 invites his guests to analyze the proportions of convictions in Colombia and, specifically, to compare convictions for corruption and for other crimes.

10. Charry: “Well, I really feel sorry about unfair penalties, but I think that the issue goes much further in the sense that justice is very wrong and I would start by saying that we have very high rates of impunity, I mean, justice is not working. Second, when it works, it works slowly, malfunctioning, and in some cases, when a sentence arrives, it is unfair. Thus, there is no justice” (2011, August 25). Later in this episode:
11. Estrada: “… and that [impunity] ends up encouraging the maxim that crime pays because with all these reductions in convictions crime ends up being profitable--;

Morales: That is, that is perhaps one of the most important reflections of the audience tonight, that is the message, I repeat, I’m here reading tweets and chatting on Facebook and the message from the audience is that crime pays! That’s the message that corrupts give to society, that is justice today” (Estrada, 2011, August 25; Morales, 2011, August 25).

The usage of the term *justice* is interesting because it is presented as a solution for the problems of corruption, but at the same time, the lack of justice might be its motivation. In fact, impunity becomes one of the most used terms when radio guests define and refer to Colombian justice. The levels of impunity stimulate corruption because there is no punishment. This discursive construction reproduces the idea that there is neither cure nor prevention for the plague or virus of corruption. As Estrada points out in excerpt 11, impunity is the key element that encourages corruption because justice is not too strong to avoid the spread of this virus or to stop its reproduction. Thus, justice could be the solution for corruption, but radio speakers also claim (excerpt 10) that “justice is wrong” and that “there is not justice” (Charry, 2011, August, 24).

In this context, justice ends up being presented as an ideal and a value that Colombia lacks, which reproduces the idea that the country is not prepared to fight corruption. Radio speakers point out that justice –approached as punishment– only works for poor people, that is, for ordinary individuals who have been accused of minor crimes such as counterfeiting a bill:
12. Morales: “So, let’s imagine two people in jail and one of them asks to the other: ‘How many years are you going to be here? What did you do?’ and the other answers: ‘I stole the money for Colombians’ health, and you?’ And he answers: ‘I counterfeited a 50 thousand pesos bill’;

Estrada: The point is that there is no proportionality over other behaviors which have hurt the country much worse and perpetrators deserve a much more exemplary punishment” (Estrada, 2011, August 25; Morales, 2011, August 25).

The previous excerpt shows that justice is approached by radio speakers as punishment and particularly, as a punishment that only works for poor and marginalized people. In other words, justice is reduced to convictions and penalizations. Finally, because of this double nature of justice as barrier and cure, and also because of the use of the term justice as a way to express the lack of it, in some cases justice works as an agon term for corruption.

*Relationships among Clusters*

When the radio guests of *Hora 20* analyze Colombian corruption at an abstract level, that is, without relating it to any particular scandal, they present it as an invasive element that is corroding the State. Radio speakers reproduce the idea that corruption lies either in individuals or institutions, which creates a dichotomy between agents and structures that forces us to choose from a false duality. However, as Giddens (1979) points out, agency should not be analyzed separately from structure because both elements are often interrelated. While a focus on agents privileges a behavioral approach to corruption, an emphasis on institutions reduces the problem to an arid structural perspective in which structures dominate individuals.
Throughout this set of episodes of *Hora 20* corruption is also approached from a deterministic point of view according to which corruption is the effect of another phenomenon (drug trafficking, poverty, violence, etc). As any deterministic point of view, this approach reduces the problem of corruption to a unidirectional cause-and-effect relationship in which just one cause creates an effect of corruption without any kind of reciprocity. Every speaker strives to defend one historical event or one characteristic of the Colombian State as “The” reason that explains why corruption exists. Finally, the ambiguous way in which justice is approached as an agon terms but also as a cause of justice contributes to the polysemic condition of this term. I am not claiming that radio speakers should agree on one final cause of corruption as well as on its responsible agent, its solution, and its agon. The problem is not that radio speakers disagree because, as the literature shows, corruption is a complex and multi-caused phenomenon. The problem, I think, lies in the representation of corruption as a virus, rust or rot and, therefore, as a phenomenon of ambiguous and uncertain nature. Even though the use of these terms is metaphorical, this transfer of terms has discursive and political consequences in the sense that it is difficult to take control and to accuse an external and undefined agent that takes advantage of individuals and institutions. In fact, this approach privileges the representation of individuals and institutions as victims of an entity whose nature is uncertain.

One final clarification: when I use the word *problem*, I do not want to communicate the idea that the approach to corruption as a virus should be changed because, as I pointed out in the last chapter, more than critical the purpose of this rhetorical analysis is epistemic.
Agon Term

There is not a clear and outstanding agon term that speakers use or imply in relation to corruption as invasive decay. To some extent, justice can be considered as an agon term insofar as it can cure or stop corruption. Other times, cleanliness and pureness are presented as the elements that allow people and institutions to avoid being infected with the virus, rot, and rust of corruption. For example, when discussing the reform that will allow President Santos to eliminate and transform the most corrupt institutions, radio guests claim that in order to eliminate corruption, the new institutions must be clean. A short example illustrates one of the occasions when terms associated with cleanliness are used:

13. Morales: “If the government creates a new agency for infrastructure to replace the INCO [National Institution of Concessions] with some changes to the recruitment systems, won’t we have a clean, efficient, and tidy system of infrastructure?” (Morales, 2011, March 15).

Pureness is presented as an agon of corruption. Those individuals and institutions that are not corrupt, are clean and pure. Cleanliness is approached as the antidote of corruption. However, how to achieve this cleanliness is not explained either.

Rhetorical Strategies used to Frame Corruption as a Long-Term Problem

As I explained in the third chapter of this dissertation, the method of cluster analysis consists of four steps: selection of an a priori term, search of posteriori terms, classification of clusters of terms, and identification of rhetorical strategies through which those terms are communicated and the motives behind them. In this section, I will present some of the rhetorical strategies that radio speakers use when talking about corruption as
a long-term problem in Colombia. I will present a similar section when I analyze corruption in the agricultural and the health sectors. Regarding corruption as a long-term problem, three main rhetorical strategies are used by radio speakers: First, generalization to particularization to individualization; second, normalization; and, third, comparatives.

*From Generalization to Particularization to Individualization*

As I explained, radio speakers do not mention specific agents responsible for corruption. Rather, one of their rhetorical strategies consists on moving from generalization, to particularization to individualization. This strategy is present in most episodes of *Hora 20*, but especially on the March 14 broadcast in which the main purpose of the host is to analyze whether or not corruption is exclusive responsibility of the Conservative Party since several members of this political party have been recently involved in scandals of corruption in different sectors. Nestor Morales –the host of the program– begins the episode of March 14 asking his guests why so many conservatives are implicated in cases of corruption and the extent to which corruption comes from the Conservative Party. Despite the fact that many conservatives are being investigated, guests’ answers do not point directly to the Conservative Party:

14. Hernández: “What I meant is that everything happens in waves, right? Right now the wave is the Conservative Party. I really don’t like one party more than another, I don’t see differences between them, but I do see that there exists an intention to blame the Conservative Party and to show that the liberals are now the good guys of the movie, that they are going to restore the moral of this

---

8 Historically, both the Conservative and the Liberal parties have been the most important political parties in Colombia. Recently some new parties have been created (Democratic Alternative Pole, National Unity, Radical Change, Green Party, etc.) and almost all of them have been somehow involved in cases of corruption.
country. The Lord has mercy. So, what do you want me to tell you? These are fights between them […]. All of them are the same, all the same thing”
(Hernández, March 14).

Later in the episode:

15. Esguerra: “Nestor, I think that part of the problem is that things are confusing. I think that in order to solve the problem we should begin by saying as the Scholastic philosophers said when they answered any question: I distinguish. So, here we have to distinguish. One thing is the alliance between the government and the Conservative Party and how they agree with the proposals of the government […] that is one discussion, another very different discussion has to do with the fact that there are some members of the Conservative Party, as it might happen in any other party, that are involved in certain investigations […]. And I think this can’t become politicized by saying that all investigations are against conservatives. Not, investigations are and have to be absolutely personal”
(Esguerra, 2011, March 14).

Later in the episode:

16. Morales: “We started by talking about the conservatives and I said yes, there are also liberals involved in corruption. We also have people from the Democratic Pole [Party]. Why all politicians? Why all politicians are involved in scandals and why all parties end up being in all scandals? (Morales, 2011, March 14).

---

9 As I mentioned, this translation could be more polished in terms of repetition of words, punctuation, subjects, etc., but I have tried to respect the original message as much as possible in order to keep the nature of secondary orality. Even though some details are inevitably lost in the translation, I will take into accounts these details when doing the analysis of the language of radio in the next chapter.
These are just a few excerpts on the discussion between radio speakers about who is responsible for the acts of corruption in Colombia. Even though it seems paradoxical, their rhetorical strategy consists of generalizing by claiming that all politicians are corrupt and by later explaining that not all of them can be accused of corruption, since corruption is an individual act. Thus, sometimes radio guests particularize corruption as a problem of a particular political party or group (excerpts 15 and 16), other times they generalize corruption as a problem of the entire political class (excerpts 14 and 16), and finally they individualize corruption as a problem of concrete individuals who are being investigated by judicial institutions (excerpt 16). Surprisingly, they do not mention specific names nor do they include citizens as a part of the corrupt individuals in society. Throughout the different episodes analyzed, corruption becomes inseparable with politics and it is represented as a problem of the political field and not in terms of white corruption, that is, as minor practices of corruption performed by ordinary citizens.

This rhetorical move from particularization to individualization to generalization (regardless of the order) is interesting because it reproduces the ambiguous nature of corruption as an invasive decay whose responsible agent cannot be determined. To particularize corruption keeps the ambiguous nature of the virus, rot, or rust insofar as some groups or parties are accused, but the names and characteristics of this “some” are not specified either. In a similar sense, to claim that only specific individuals who have been accused in court are corrupt is also problematic because radio speakers rarely provide names of these politicians or mention their legal processes. In excerpt 15, for example, Esguerra points out that investigations are personal and corruption cannot be attributed to an entire political party. However, he does not refer to any particular
individual who can be responsible for the recent scandals. Finally, to claim that the whole political class is corrupt implies, somehow, to normalize corruption because it is presented as an attribute that all politicians share and it also works as a way to close the discussion about who is responsible for these acts. One might deduce from Hernández’s claim (excerpt 16) that because all politicians are “the same thing” that is an attribute that we should expect from them, that is, a normal condition of the political class.

Normalization

As the previous excerpts show, some speakers attempt to normalize corruption, that is, to decrease the negative connotations of this phenomenon or to show that this is a generalized phenomenon. The extent to which the levels of corruption are particularly discussed are in the May 13 episode in which Morales asks his guests—all of them from different countries—why corruption has increased over the last months:

17. Morales: “I would like to ask you all, foreigners who have lived in Colombia for many years, how do you see all these topics of corruption? What impression do you have about it? Why do we have all these cases of corruption in Colombia? I begin with you, José Ángel;

Ángel: This issue is not surprising for me at all. We all know the levels of corruption in Colombia and it’s positive that all these issues come to light, it’s positive that mass media denounce them” (Angel, 2011, May 13; Morales, 2011, May 13).

In this excerpt Ángel claims that some level of corruption will have positive consequences, but Antonio Alibaina claims: “I oppose to say that Colombian corruption is normal.” The adjective normal is one of the most important terms through which
corruption is described because it helps speakers to construct usual or typical levels of corruption. All the guests agree that some level of corruption is not only necessary, but may be positive in certain contexts. The following excerpt also illustrates how speakers present corruption as a normal or abnormal practice:

18. Alibaña: “Colombia is experiencing a change of time. Colombia is living something that the former Colombian President Turbay described. He said that we should keep corruption at its right level, that is, a normal corruption. But with the economic progress of the country, some corruption is intolerable [...] I oppose to say that Colombian corruption is normal--;

Morales: No, clearly it’s not normal;

Touffou: Normal in relation to what? How do you measure normality? Is it normal because it happens in other countries?

Alibaña: People say that corruption is everywhere, so there is nothing we can do;

Ángel: I want to say that, in this moment, we are in the zenith of corruption in Colombia” (Alibaña, 2011, May 13; Ángel, 2011, May 13; Morales, 2011, May 13; Touffou, 2011, May 13).

This lack of consensus among Hora 20’s guests about what is normal, abnormal, positive, and negative regarding corruption is not only a matter of disagreement between radio speakers. The literature on corruption shows how corruption differs within countries (Rønning, 2009). As I mentioned, the normalization of corruption constitutes a rhetorical strategy through which guests present corruption as something expected, typical or usual. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss in much more detail the consequences of this normalization of corruption.
Comparisons

Comparisons constitute the third rhetorical mechanism that radio speakers often use in this first set of radio episodes. Comparisons are specially used when radio speakers discuss the causes of corruption. As I explained above, because most speakers approach corruption as a mono-causal phenomenon they use comparisons in order to show that one cause is more plausible or weaker than another. The following excerpts are examples of these comparisons:

19. M. Touffou: “One of the things that have always amazed me about Colombia is that white corruption, the little corruption, is relatively low. Many of my friends who live in Mexico or Africa do not believe me when I say that in 25 years being here in Colombia, I have never paid a bribe because I do not need to do so in order to get what I need. Colombian corruption is related to the high status politicians” (Touffou, 2011, May 13).

By comparing Colombian behaviors with the culture and practices of other countries, speakers construct the meaning, connotation, and scope of Colombian corruption. Comparison becomes an important rhetorical device since there is not agreement on the definition of corruption. Comparisons allow speakers to construct the scope of corruption not only because the definition of corruption varies from country to country, but also because Colombian radio guests approach corruption in different ways, and, once again, they normalize it by showing the accepted level of white corruption. For example, by comparing countries and claiming that corruption exists even in the first world (excerpt 15), Nieto normalizes the scope of corruption as a phenomenon that happens everywhere, including the first world. Finally, comparisons allow speakers to
make value judgments since they have referents (the compared element) to support their claims. Thus, they may claim, for example, that Colombian corruption is worse or better than the corruption in other country or that one cause is more significant than another when explaining the levels and origins of Colombian corruption.

Radio speakers also appeal to comparisons in order to explain why corruption has increased over the last years. For example, some radio guests claim that, in the past, the levels of corruption were significantly lower because of the morality of public employees:

20. Esguerra: “Not long ago, over the times that Juan Gabriel Uribe\textsuperscript{10} mentions [30s and 40s] and even earlier times, people with the best values and principles were the people who represented society, those were engaged in politics--; Morales: But, tell me an example because, are we talking about, to extrapolate, are we talking about Alberto Lleras\textsuperscript{11}?; Esguerra: Put the names that you want. Just give a look at what was the list of senators and representatives in the 20s, 30s, and 50s and all of them came from different parties and hegemonies, but the list was very different, people with values” (Esguerra, 2011, March 14; Morales, 2011, March 14).

21. Ferrari: “Now we are experiencing a loss of the ethics of work;

Touffou: “Yes [a loss of the] ethics of work as well as an ethic of public service, that is, an ethics that considers that [the public servant] serves the State. But there

\textsuperscript{10} Another radio guest.
\textsuperscript{11} An important Colombian politician during the 30s.
is a crisis of vocation and also a loss of values” (Ferrari, 2011, May 13; Touffou, 2011, May 13).

The previous excerpt illustrates the recurrent idea according to which the past was a time of pure politics in which good individuals with the highest values led Colombia and the present is a time of corrupt politics in which people with no values rule the country. As Esguerra suggests (excerpt 20) values and principles shield leaders from corruption. In addition, when trying to understand why corruption is a common practice among Colombian current politicians, radio speakers compare Colombian corruption with corruption outside this country and claim that, unlike individuals from other countries, Colombian citizens do not feel ashamed with regard to their corrupt practices:

22. Ángel: “In Japan, a country that is extremely corrupt –yet very developed– when people are accused of corruption, they commit suicide because of the magnitude of the embarrassment. In Colombia, when people are accused of corruption, they are shameless and they do not care” (Ángel, 2011, May 13).

23. Albiñana: “Here in Colombia someone who is corrupt is seen like a hero, a very intelligent person, and a nice guy. In Sweden, someone who does not pay taxes, for example, is seen as a criminal by his friends. If you are having a coffee with your friends and you tell them that you did not pay the taxes they will judge you and even accuse you because that is a very bad action. Here it is heroism” (Alibaña, 2011, May 13).

Shame –and the lack of it– is presented as an ethical dimension according to which if a person has good values and strong ethical principles, she would not commit corrupt acts because of the social embarrassment that these acts would make her feel. From a
rhetorical standpoint, the idea of shame is constructed through different discursive devices. In order to judge a corrupt behavior of a Colombian individual, the guests compare his/her behavior with what is considered normal in other cultures. Mechanisms of generalization and maximization are also used by speakers as happens in excerpt 22 when Angel shows the Colombian as an entire shameless culture by generalizing that individuals accused of corruption do not feel ashamed at all regarding their acts.

After presenting the main clusters of terms that emerged in the analysis of the radio programs in which speakers discuss corruption as a long-term Colombian problem, in the next section I will describe the clusters of terms and rhetorical strategies that they use when talking about corruption in the agricultural sector.

Corruption in the Agricultural Sector

Unlike the previous one, in this section I provide more information about the Colombian context to help readers understand the scenario in which scandals of corruption emerge in the agricultural sector. Even though I will provide those details throughout the chapter, I will begin this section by explaining how the scandal emerged and developed over the last years.

Secure Agricultural Income

As a way to prepare the economy for a possible free trade agreement between Colombia and the United States of America, the Colombian Minister of Agriculture, Andrés Felipe Arias, created in 2007 the Secure Agricultural Income program [Agro Ingreso Seguro, AIS] whose main objective was to protect small farmers and to ensure their participation in the international market (Agro Ingreso Seguro, 2007). Specifically, the main purpose of the program was to provide subsidies to smallholding farmers and to
bigger landlords so that they could invest the money in projects of irrigation and drainage for their lands. Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture would promote productivity and competitiveness of the Colombian agriculture in the frame of the free trade agreement with the United States (Agro Ingreso Seguro, 2007). In order to become a Law, the Secure Agricultural Income program had to be discussed and approved by the Colombian Congress and even though it ended up being funded by the government, some senators and representatives expressed disagreements with the program because they considered it unfair and poorly designed.

About two years later, on October 15, 2009, an important Colombian magazine denounced—and then the institutions of justice confirmed—the fact that a very big part of these subsidies (about 13 million dollars out of 60 million) was given to some of the wealthiest families in the Colombian Caribbean Coast (Programa Agro, 2009). Through illegal maneuvers such as falsification of documents and subdivisions of land, renowned individuals in the Caribbean Coast obtained millions of pesos in subsidies (Programa Agro, 2009). From these acts of corruption committed by the wealthy families of the Caribbean Coast to access the subsidies, Colombian judicial institutions began to investigate the officials in the Agriculture Ministry to determine their involvement in the fraudulent grant of subsidies. Specifically, authorities sought to establish whether officials knew of and were complicit in the illegal maneuvers (i.e. fragmentation of land, falsification of documents) that the wealthiest families in the Caribbean Coast made in order to access the subsidies.
The Office of the Attorney General of Colombia\textsuperscript{12}, the Office of the Prosecutor General\textsuperscript{13}, and the Office of the Comptroller General\textsuperscript{14} opened investigations against the officials of the Agriculture Ministry as well as against officials of the Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute, IICA. IICA is an affiliated body of the Organization of American States, OAS, whose main purpose is to make agriculture competitive in the Americas and to offer technical cooperation and specialized knowledge to improve the agricultural sector of its member countries (IICA, 2012). It is important to understand the role that IICA played in the execution of the AIS program because this institution is used both by politicians and journalists to accuse and defend the Ministry of Agriculture of any judicial responsibility. In Colombia there are basically two models of contracting: Public bidding and direct contracting. In the former, the government makes a public call in order to guarantee equality, quality, and to avoid favoritism and cronyism; in the latter, entities directly contract without making public calls. In the case of AIS, IICA, was contracted by the Agriculture Minister to select the beneficiaries of the subsidies because of its specialized knowledge on agriculture. Because of the irregularities in the granting of the subsidies, judicial authorities also decided to investigate IICA officials.

Besides the illegal maneuvers made by the wealthy families in the Caribbean Coast and the probable complicity of the Agriculture Minister and IICA officials, judicial institutions also opened an investigation against the Agriculture Minister, Andrés Felipe Arias, to determine whether there was a prior agreement between him and his

\textsuperscript{12} The Office of the Attorney General of Colombia belongs to the judicial branch of the government and is responsible for penal sanction in the case of a criminal incident.

\textsuperscript{13} The Office of the Prosecutor General of Colombia belongs to the judicial branch of the government. This office oversees and sanctions public employees who do not perform adequately their functions.

\textsuperscript{14} The Office of the Comptroller General of Colombia is an independent institution whose main function consists on overseeing the execution of public spending and exerting fiscal control on public institutions.
subordinates, to favor these families so that they would finance Arias’ presidential campaign in the future (Andrés Felipe, 2011). In fact, the Prosecutor General accused Arias of using the Secure Agricultural Income program as a platform for his presidential campaign (Boyd, 2011). Arias is currently in jail accused of embezzlement and misappropriation of state funds. Although Arias has not yet been judged, the Attorney General decided to imprison him after determining that Arias was trying to manipulate his ex-subordinates’ testimonies to favor his own process with the Colombian justice system (Andrés Felipe, 2011). The Prosecutor General also disqualified him from public office for 16 years. It is important to mention that Andrés Felipe Arias has been one of the main political allies of the former president Alvaro Uribe Vélez. In fact, when the Colombian Constitutional Court denied Uribe the possibility to be re-elected for a third term, Uribe considered Arias as his best successor and publicly supported his presidential campaign. Because Arias espouses the same political ideas as former president, he is popularly called –even by other politicians and journalists– “little Uribe” (Uribito).

Range of Approaches to Agricultural Corruption

Although the Congress billed AIS in 2007 and the denunciation of irregularities began in 2009, it was not until 2011 that judicial authorities imputed charges against Arias and imprisoned him. Considering this chronology, the set of six Hora 20’s broadcasts analyzed in this section include the discussion of topics such as, the responsible agents for corruption in AIS, the imprisonment of middle range Ministry officials, the imputation of charges against Arias, the imprisonment of Arias, and the expiration of terms in the process against middle range Ministry officials. As Figure 6 shows, several clusters of terms emerged after analyzing these six episodes of Hora 20.
Unlike the previous set of episodes in which only one understanding of corruption prevailed – corruption as invasive decay –, corruption in the agricultural sector is approached in various ways according to the speakers’ positions in the political or the journalistic field as well as based on their ideology, cultural capital, and trajectory. Thus, corruption in the AIS program is considered an illegal practice, an irregular action, an unethical behavior, and even a piñata created by the Agriculture Minister to hand out benefits to potential future funders of political campaigns. In some occasions, speakers combine these approaches, but most of the time, they choose one of them and, therefore, they describe AIS as an illegal, an unethical, an irregular, or even a normal program. Because all of these approaches to corruption are different and sometimes contradictory, speakers use certain rhetorical strategies in order to present their own understanding of corruption as the most accurate and objective. Next, I describe the cluster of terms that speakers use when talking about corruption in the AIS program.
We can also imagine a spectrum that represents the different approaches to corruption according to different levels of severity that radio guests attribute to AIS corruption. Unlike Figure 6, Figure 7 represents the cluster of terms of this section in the form of a spectrum in which the negative connotations of corruption degrade from left to right. Thus, the perspectives of the speakers who consider AIS an illegal program are closer to the left while those who claim that there was no corruption whatsoever are closer to the right. From the standpoint of cluster analysis this set of episodes of *Hora 20* can be seen as a dispute among different perspectives of corruption in which speakers discursively fight to present AIS as an illegal, irregular, unethical, and a normal program.
Through the usage of different rhetorical strategies all radio speakers strive to present their own accounts of AIS as factual and, therefore, as accurate and objective.

![Figure 7. Severity of the Connotations of Corruption.](image)

Because there is a significant difference between considering AIS an illegal, an irregular, or a regular program, speakers need to make a rhetorical work in order to create accounts that present this agricultural program as they consider it. This rhetorical work consists on presenting, at some point of the episode, an apparently neutral description of AIS. However, as the cluster and rhetorical analysis show, all of these descriptions are based on speakers’ own interests. It means that no account is disinterested, impartial or neutral. All of them are constructed to seem factual and, therefore, objective, but each description strives to present a particular perspective on this agricultural program. Radio speakers use facts, figures, legal terms, and narratives as rhetorical devices to construct factual discourses on AIS. What is constructed by speakers as a factual description of corruption in AIS is rather a rhetorical performance of oral language with the purpose to support some claims and undermine others.\(^{15}\)

\(^{15}\) I acknowledge that my own account of AIS presented at the beginning of the section is not the extent of rhetorical work. Even though I strove to take distance and to present as many arguments as possible, the
Corruption as an Illegal Practice

In order to determine the level of corruption within AIS, speakers construct different accounts about this agricultural program. The most severe account consists of framing AIS either as an agricultural program whose execution motivated illegal procedures (i.e. subdivisions of land made by families) or as an illegal program which was designed to embezzle from the State. The following claim made by Congressman and radio guest of Hora 20, Jorge Enrique Robledo, constitutes an example of this approach to AIS as a program that brought corruption with itself:

24. Robledo: “AIS is a regressive and backward looking program based on favoritism. It’s horrible from anyway you look at it. It is regressive, but it could have been legal, moreover, I remember that during those days [in which the program was approved by the Congress] Daniel Samper Pizano\footnote{A very well-known columnist.} coined a phrase saying that, with AIS, corruption had reached regulatory forms and that was somehow what I said in the debate of AIS at the Congress” (Robledo, 2011, July 26).

Claudia López, a journalist and researcher for the United Nations, goes beyond and frames AIS as a program whose design was itself illegal:

25. López: “I do believe, I have no doubt, I think that is common sense to think that taking advantage of the money that we Colombians pay in taxes in order to support some campaign funders is not only unethical, but it’s clearly a crime of favoritism and an abuse of public office […]. And there is an aggravating factor
that Senator Robledo strongly showed in his discussion at the Congress a few years ago: AIS helped to pay two presidential campaigns, the 2006 Uribe’s campaign and the 2010 Arias’ campaign. So, let’s say that there was double crime, double wrongdoing” (López, 2011, July 26).

By presenting it as an illegal practice, radio speakers give a severe and very negative connotation to corruption. A corrupt action constitutes an illegal act insofar as it violates the law so that a few people can gain some private benefit. As I showed in the second chapter of this dissertation, defining corruption in terms of legality and illegality is a matter of controversy in the scholarly literature on corruption because some scholars consider that what makes an event an act of corruption is not its condition of illegality, but the violation to ethical principles of justice. In other words, some authors consider that law does not determine whether or not an event is corrupt, but the ethical systems of different cultures do. While it is still controversial to claim that corruption is an illegal act, some radio speakers embrace this approach and argue that, for example, AIS does constitute a case of corruption because it was designed to illegally finance two political campaigns (excerpt 25) or because it allowed some individuals to perform procedures forbidden by law (excerpt 24). I will analyze more consequences of this approach once I have described the entire cluster of terms that group around agricultural corruption so that I can compare the different understandings in order to present a more detailed examination.

---

17 The campaign for the re-election of the former President Alvaro Uribe Vélez.
Corruption as a Piñata

Closely related to this approach to corruption as an illegal practice, there is a description of AIS as a piñata in which politicians give gifts to particulars. The descriptions made by the lawyer and columnist Álvaro Forero is an example of this approach to corruption in AIS:

26. Forero: “We are talking about giving public resources to private individuals without making any public bidding and many times those individuals didn’t have to return those resources.”

Later in the same episode, Forero is more direct and claims:

Forero: “Through AIS [the government] created a very dangerous piñata that produced incentives for corruption--;
Rangel: A piñata?!

Forero: If AIS had been very well regulated, I wouldn’t use that word--;
Rangel: A piñata? Is it a piñata a program that helped 316 thousand families?
Please!;

Forero: AIS is an example of those kinds of policies that permit abuses like this--;
Rangel: In total, AIS helped 316 thousand families, the irrigation [program]
helped 33 thousand families, 5 families\(^{18}\) cheated and you are talking about a piñata!;

Forero: And does that exempts AIS?--;
Rangel: I think so!, but please--;” (Forero, 2011, June 13; Rangel, 2011, June 13).

\(^{18}\) These 5 families refer to the wealthy families in the Caribbean Coast who received millions of pesos for their lands.
This approach to corruption as a piñata is closer to its understanding as an illegal
action, but it is not exactly the same. Rather than being an action that violates the law,
corruption seen as a piñata refers to contexts of celebration and feast. Likewise, a piñata
is a container filled with treats and gifts, which are given to the guests of a party. Finally,
a piñata refers to an opportunistic scenario where every person strives to use his/her skills
to collect as many treats as he/she can.

Some radio speakers frame AIS as a piñata in the sense that this agricultural
program was designed as a system of gifts according to which quick-witted individuals
could appropriate “treats” that were in fact large amounts of money. AIS was a piñata
that wealthy families and politicians used to gain particular benefits. For example, Forero
(excerpt 26) points out that subsidies were given to private individuals without any
process of public bidding or corroboration of information, which stimulated corruption.
Thus AIS and, therefore, corruption is represented as extravagance, wastefulness, and
squandering.

Corruption as an Irregular Action

Besides considering the problems of AIS as illegal actions and piñata gifts, other
radio guests approach corruption in a less severe way, that is, as an irregular practice.
This cluster includes many other terms such as deviation, trick, cheat, abuse, and taking
advantage. Many radio speakers’ statements can be placed under this cluster according to
which AIS was neither an illegal nor a complete “normal” program. The following claim
made by the journalist Ricardo Ávila is an example of this understanding of corruption as
an irregular practice:
27. Ávila: “I don’t agree with the Attorney General who said that AIS has been the worst scandal of corruption in the history of Colombian agriculture. I don’t discuss that AIS had problems, but I don’t think that AIS was a ploy to steal the State money. Indeed there were abuses and people who committed these abuses, if they did so outlaw, they have to pay, but I think that in the concrete case of the those people arrested today¹⁹, I think that arresting them was excessive, I don’t know them personally, but I have heard good comments about some of them and for that reason I think that the Office of the Attorney General overdid it” (Ávila, 2011, April 11).

Speakers like Ávila specify their understandings of corruption by stating, for example, that there are some differences between illegal and improper practices in the sense that some behaviors might be unconventional but not necessarily illegal. Speakers argue that even though abuses, tricks, and cheats are improper actions, they are not intrinsically illegal practices. Most of the times, law is used as the main criterion to frame corruption as an irregular practice: AIS is involved in corruption not because it was designed as an illegal program, but because it had some irregularities in its application. In this context, the magnitude of corruption is not as severe as it is in previous understandings of the term because it does not refer to violations of law, but to procedures that are legal even though they might be dishonest or misleading.

Excerpt 27 also illustrates the rhetorical strategy through which the magnitude of corruption is minimized: By implying that abuses made outlaw are more serious than

¹⁹ The main topic of this broadcast is the arrest of the first officials accused of corruption in the AIS program.
those that are not necessarily illegal, Ávila minimizes the severity of the millionaire subsidies given to the wealthiest families of the Colombian Caribbean Coast. As I will explain in the next subcluster, discourses like these create a false dichotomy between corruption as an illegal practice and as an unethical behavior.

**Corruption as an Unethical Behavior**

As Figure 7 shows, the understanding of corruption as an unethical behavior constitutes one of the less severe approaches to corruption. This is also the subcluster of terms less used by radio speakers. Contrary to some of the theoretical discussions that I presented in the second chapter of this dissertation, radio speakers rarely define corruption in terms of ethics and the few times that they do so, the understanding of ethics is so ambiguous that it is difficult to notice the way in which they approach this relationship between ethics and corruption. The next excerpt of the General Editor of *Semana* [magazine], Luz María Sierra, is an example of the few times that radio speakers refer to ethics:

28. Sierra: “The money lost is about 15 thousand million [pesos], 20 thousand million, or 30 thousand million, nobody knows, even less taking into account that some families already gave the money [of their subsidies] back. So, the question is whether or not the fragmentation of land was illegal, because the law doesn’t. Is this where you got the idea above? This person was wrong, too. Fragmentation of land can be illegitimate, but is not illegal” (Sierra, 2011, August 30).

As it happens with other understandings of corruption, radio speakers discuss whether or not corrupt events associated with AIS are in fact illegal or an unethical behavior. Approaches to corruption closer to the cluster of corruption as an irregular
action are often associated to the ethical dimension of the agents’ behaviors. Thus, speakers minimize the scope and magnitude of corruption by claiming that certain events do not constitute violations of law, but they are just unethical actions. When defining corruption as a problem of lack of ethics, radio speakers frame corruption as the attribute of an action in which the values of a given individual come into conflict with the broader system of values of a society. Unlike law, this system of values is intangible and may become very entangled to the culture of a given society. As Mockus (2004) explains—and I pointed out in the review of the literature— even though some behaviors are forbidden by the system of law of a given society, they might be also valid within the cultural systems of that society. In other words, what is forbidden by law might be allowed by culture. This conflict between law and culture might explain why some radio speakers reject corruption as violation of law, but speakers are less radical when defining corruption as the lack of ethics. Finally, while law is—to some extent— an objective, tangible, and institutionalized system, values are intangible, subjective, and less institutionalized.

Corruption as a Normal Practice

This last subcluster of terms refers to the least radical approaches to corruption. In fact, there are also some radio guests who minimize the acts of corruption attributed to AIS and downplay the accusations made by their interlocutors. For them, the design and execution of AIS did not involve any corrupt practices, but normal actions that do not represent violations of law, unethical behaviors or major irregularities. I will spend some time describing this subcluster of terms since it is interesting to notice that events like those that occurred in AIS are defended by some speakers and excluded from the
umbrella of corruption. One excerpt that illustrates this case is made by the economist and researcher Alfredo Rangel who, in the middle of a debate about the nature of AIS and the granting of subsidies to big landlords, says:

29. Rangel: “Well, it’s necessary to make two basic clarifications: AIS was not Arias’ invention or whim, it was a law discussed and approved by the Congress. Even political parties in the opposition approved that law whose purpose was to promote agriculture and to improve the countryside with respect to the Free Trade Agreement with the United States. AIS was a public policy as any other policy of subsidies that has been formulated in the country over the last decades. Many countries, most countries in the world, in the civilized world, have policies like this to promote the agricultural sector” (Rangel, 2011, July 26).

This excerpt constitutes an example of what I call the normalization of corruption. Through their statements, some radio speakers strive to show that what happened in relation to AIS was normal and there is no need to frame those events as corrupt practices. This normalization of corruption is accomplished in different ways. For example, the number of times than a probable corrupt event occurs may be an indicator that the event is not perceived as corrupt anymore, but perceived as normal. In other words, how often a practice is performed contributes to the normalization of that practice. For example, when the former Minister Arias is imprisoned after being accused of exerting improper influence over potential witnesses, the lawyer and journalist Andrés Mejía claims:

30. Mejía: “The fact that an accused person meets with other accused individuals in the same process, not only is not illegal, but I will tell you: It’s pretty normal.
All accused individuals who are in a same process meet to talk about the process. Now, is that illegal? No, it’s illegal just if they meet to agree on falsifying testimonies” (Mejía, 2011, July 26).

As I will show, this “normality” constitutes one of the agon terms used to describe what the opposite of corruption is. For now, it is important to mention other contexts and episodes in which radio speakers normalize corruption. In the following excerpt professor and politician Juan Carlos Flores discusses with lawyer and journalist Rafael Nieto about this issue:

31. Flores: “But Rafael [Nieto], the fact that we have accustomed to do so doesn’t mean that it’s ok. The fact that we have done so for years doesn’t mean that is legal (…). Rafael Nieto’s argument is very dangerous: We have been doing so for years, what is the problem that we do it now? Amazing Rafael! I’m stunned, the truth, I confess--; (Flores, 2011, July 21).

In this excerpt Flores problematizes Nieto’s argument according to which some practices have become normal because they have been done so for a long time. Another important scenario where the normalization of corruption takes place has to do with the role of the Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute, IICA, whose function, as I previously explained, consists of providing technical cooperation and specialized knowledge to improve the agricultural sector of its member countries on the American continent. In general terms, the Colombian Agriculture Minister contracted IICA to select the beneficiaries of the subsidies according to the fulfillment of certain requirements. Contracts like these have been done many times in Colombia. However, when accusing the former Minister Andrés Felipe Arias, one of the main arguments of the Attorney
General was to condemn the role of IICA in AIS and to argue that this institution was used to avoid public bidding and to serve the interests of the former Minister to finance his presidential campaign. This issue is a subject of frequent dispute among radio speakers:

32. Lafaurie: “What said the Attorney General today? She said three things: that IICA’s contracts are invalid, that those were made in an irregular way, but we have always made these kinds of contracts with IICA--;

Zuleta: But not irregular ones--;

Lafaurie: Excuse me, but she sustains that the contracts are illegal per se and Cecilia [López], we also did it that way20--;

López: No, no, no, I won’t let you accuse me of that!--;

Lafaurie: Let me finish, don’t get upset, take it easy--;

López: Of course I get upset because I didn’t, I mean, if you want to accuse yourself, it’s ok, but I’m aware that when I used IICA, I did it well--;

Lafaurie: I mean, there have been always contracts like these, that’s my point”


Like excerpts 30 and 31, excerpt 32 illustrates the normalization of corruption by pointing out that some actions have always been done in the same way and that justifies those practices. However, the previous conversation is interesting because Lafaurie argues that because one of his interlocutors has done the same practice, then the procedure is valid. Lafaurie presents López’s persona in this way in order to show not

---

20 Cecilia López and José Félix Lafaurie were vice Ministers of Agriculture at different points of time.
only that making contracts with IICA is normal, but also that even his interlocutors have done it in the same way.

IICA’s function of proving scientific and technical advice in the granting of the subsidies is precisely the object of controversy among radio speakers who abnormalize the corrupt events of AIS by claiming that there was no need to use IICA as an intermediary institution since no expertise on agriculture was involved in the granting of subsidies. On the other side, those who normalize corruption argue that AIS did demand the intervention of a specialized institution in the field of agriculture:

33. Robledo: “[The Minister] evaded the calling for a public bidding with the pretext of a pseudoscientific issue; but Dr. Rangel: there is nothing scientific in an irrigation program, that has nothing to do with the developments of science--; Rangel: Irrigation is not a technological and scientific issue? Please!---; Robledo: Yes, picks and shovels are too scientific; you’ve really let us down saying that” (Rangel, 2011, July 26; Robledo, 2011, July 26).

While Rangel claims that the Minister contracted IICA to have an specialized institution in the field of agriculture to advise the Ministry about the granting of the subsidies, Robledo argues that the Minister used IICA to avoid public bidding and, therefore, to have more autonomy in the selection of the beneficiaries of the subsidies. Thus, radio speakers appeal to the need to use scientific knowledge in order to justify or criticize the role of IICA and, therefore, to support their own approaches to corruption.

All Hora 20 episodes that analyze the case of AIS devoted some part of the broadcasts to discuss the role of IICA in the events of corruption associated to this agricultural program. Usually, speakers who defend less radical approaches to corruption
are those who bring the topic of IICA to the table because they use this institution to rhetorically construct the notion of transparency within AIS. The discussion tends to follow the same pattern: critics of AIS accuse the Minister of having designed a very poor and unregulated program and, sometimes, of having used that program to gain electoral capital; then, supporters of AIS claim that there was no corruption involved since an international organization served as a guarantor of transparency; finally, critics argue that being an international institution does not absolve IICA of being implicated in corruption:

34. Nieto: “The agriculture Minister contracted IICA’s intervention and supervision, for people who don’t know what IICA is, IICA is an organism with a great reputation, it’s the Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute--; Morales: But some of the accused people work for IICA; the Agriculture Ministry is also an institution with a great reputation and that is not guarantee of--; Nieto: The question is, you, you as a public employee, you contract an organism like IICA, with a great prestige, can they [The Attorney General’s office] impute charges against you?” (Morales, 2011, April 11; Nieto, 2011, April 11).

From the fact that IICA belongs to the Organization of American States, OAS, and, therefore, an international organization, radio speakers construct the idea that this organization may not be contaminated with corruption. Because of its international affiliation, speakers frame IICA as an organization with a very good reputation, which would not be involved in corruption. In excerpt 34, for example, by framing IICA as a very prestigious organization, speakers build up the idea that an organism like this would not have allowed corruption to occur. As it happens with other rhetorical mechanisms,
this accreditation of institutions is also used by some speakers to undermine the idea that just because an organization has a very good reputation – since it is international –, it is exempted to participate in corruption. Finally, to use IICA’s role to claim that “things have always been done so” contributes to the minimization of corruption and, therefore, to its normalization.

**Relationships among Terms**

After presenting the different clusters of terms that group around agricultural corruption, in this section I provide a brief analysis about the relationships among those subclusters. While Robledo describes AIS as a regressive program based on favoritism (excerpt 24), Forero defines it in term of piñata (excerpt 26), and Ávila approaches it as a program that was abused (excerpt 27). While Sierra frames it as a program that was victim of unethical behaviors (excerpt 28), Rangel sees it as a public policy whose purpose was to improve the countryside (excerpt 29).

These different approaches to corruption are closely related to the way in which speakers refer and point to the agents responsible for the problems of AIS. Andrés Felipe Arias (excerpt 25), the government (excerpts 24 and 25), and the wealthy families in the Colombian Caribbean Coast (excerpts 27 and 28) are pointed out as the main responsible agents for corruption in AIS. The level of responsibility that every speaker attributes to each of these potential responsible agents is related to his/her own accounts of AIS. While radio speakers who frame AIS as an illegal program tend to consider the government (the Colombian president and the Agricultural Ministry officials) as the corrupt agents, those who describe AIS as a program that was abused tend to accuse particular individuals as the agents responsible for corruption. While the former group of
speakers could be placed toward the left end of the spectrum represented in figure 7, the latter could be located at the right end. This dispute among radio speakers to establish the agents responsible for corruption reproduces the scholarly distinction between political and private corruption. Once again, as the previous excerpts show, political corruption is represented as an illegal practice, while private corruption is framed as an abuse made by particulars.

These excerpts not only illustrate the different clusters of terms that are used to refer to corruption in the agricultural sector, but also show that, in order to construct factual discourses, speakers first construct a particular account of AIS that corresponds with their perspectives. The point is not just to say that AIS is or is not a corrupt program, the main rhetorical work consists of describing AIS in a such a way that it will correspond to the approach to corruption that speakers embrace. In this sense, it is highly complicated to find a neutral account of AIS, which could offer an “objective” understanding of corruption. Even the ways in which Morales, the host of *Hora 20*, presents the topic of the day constitutes a particular way to approach AIS. More than embracing a particular approach to corruption, Morales’ role in the program consists of questioning others’ approaches and showing weaknesses in the arguments provided by his guests. Even so, his rhetorical work usually consists on maximizing the events related to AIS and on framing them as scandals of corruption:

35. Morales: “Welcome, we start this program of opinion and analysis, our topic today, of course, is this bomb that the Attorney General dropped in the sense that her office is going to impute charges against the former Agriculture Minister, Andrés Felipe Arias, because, as they argue, the former Minister committed two
crimes. […]. Anyway, this is the news and it’s a bomb, eh, a former Minister like Arias about going to jail, well, of course this is huge news” (Morales, 2011, June 13).

Descriptions like these are common throughout many episodes. Because Hora 20 is structured under the genre of opinion, it is not surprising that Morales explicitly presents an introduction that does not pretend to be neutral or objective. What is important to notice is the fact that even the host of the program, from the very introduction of the episode, offers a particular perspective on AIS which also requires a special rhetorical work that allows him not only to determine what is the most important news of the day, but also to construct its magnitude by using adjectives such as bombs and huge.

Rejecting the metaphor according to which language works as a mirror of nature, we can see that these different accounts of AIS work as particular ways to frame corruption. More than neutral re-presentations of the history and the events associated with AIS, these accounts strive to construct what Potter (1996) calls out-there-ness, that is, the idea that descriptions are factual and independent from the agent who produces them. In this sense, speakers use diverse rhetorical repertoires to reify their own accounts of AIS and to undermine others’ by accusing them of being partial, defective, or interested. In fact, the broadcasts analyzed can be heard as rhetorical fights among different approaches to corruption and perspectives on AIS.

Agon Terms

Having presented the subclusters of terms that group around agricultural corruption, I shall now refer to the agon terms that speakers use in contraposition to corruption, that is, the expressions that are negatively related to corruption. It is important
to say that in this set of episodes that discuss corruption in AIS there is no explicit agon term that speakers use in contraposition to corruption. However, even though speakers do not refer to a specific term, a close analysis shows that there are two main ways through which speakers implicitly construct the terms that are contrary to corruption. The first mechanism refers to radio speakers’ attempt to present some meanings of corruption as agon terms and the second one consists of speakers’ attempts to present justice as the solution to corruption. I will briefly explain both of them.

Because of the polysemic nature of the word *corruption*—as it is framed in relation to AIS—there are not explicit agon terms that emerge in direct opposition to this phenomenon. However, we could consider that some of the multiple meanings of corruption work as agons when compared with other meanings. In other words: the different understandings of corruption may become contradictory and, therefore, some of them can originate oppositional relationships. For example, framing corruption as an irregular practice might be approached as an agon way of framing it as an illegal practice. That is, when defining corruption, the term irregular stands against the term *illegal* because of the implications, connotations, and meanings that speakers give to both terms in the context of their statements. More importantly, speakers’ attempts to present as normal the events that their interlocutors consider as illegal, also generates an oppositional relationship between the understanding of corruption as an illegal practice and a normal or usual event.

Several of the excerpts cited above constitute examples of this agonistic relationship between two different approaches to corruption insofar as they represent different standpoints on corruption, which may become even contradictory. For instance,
approaching them together, excerpts 25 and 29 generate an oppositional relationship about two different understandings of corruption. While López frames corruption in AIS as a crime of favoritism and abuse of public office, Rangel normalizes the events and frames them as another public policy whose purpose is to improve the countryside. Both understandings may be reduced to a binary of agonistic nature. Thus, most of the attempts to minimize corruption can be considered as agons insofar as they strive to reduce the negative and severe understandings of corruption. This rhetorical move explains why “normal practice/no corruption” is a cluster included in Figure 7 as another cluster of terms positively related to corruption and not as an agon: it may be positively or negatively associated to corruption according to the context and the speakers’ motives.

The second term that speakers negatively and implicitly associate with corruption is justice. As it happens with the previous set of episodes, the use of the term justice is highly ambiguous not only because it is presented as both cause and consequence of corruption, but also because it is not clear how radio speakers understand corruption. While the consequences of this will be analyzed at the end of this chapter, for now, I will present a very few ideas that illustrate the use of justice as an agon and related term to corruption. As I mentioned, the way in which the idea of justice is presented in this set of episodes is practically equal to the previous set. Justice is approached as a tool to punish corruption against those who took advantage of AIS or tried to benefit from this program.

Radio speakers also continue reproducing the idea that justice—as punishment—works just for some individuals, but interestingly, this time some speakers even claim that it works only for politicians (i.e. former Minister and Ministry officials) and not for the private individuals who are also implicated in the scandal of AIS (i.e. families of the
Caribbean Coast). In addition, as I explained above, justice is shown as the institution that has the monopoly of truth because, through the gathering of evidence, judicial institutions discover the “real” responsible agents for corruption. Radio speakers who do not share the decisions made by the judicial institutions do not criticize the power and nature of those institutions, but the extent to which justice is sometimes vulnerable to the pressure of media and to impartiality. Finally, those who define corruption as an illegal practice defend these decisions and consider that justice helps to punish corruption.

Rhetorical Strategies used to Frame Agricultural Corruption

So far, I have described the different clusters of terms through which radio speakers refer to corruption in the agricultural sector. Now I will explain other rhetorical strategies that they use when employing these terms. As I previously mentioned, in order to construct factual accounts about AIS, radio speakers use figures, facts, legal terms, and narratives as rhetorical devices to support their own standpoints about this agricultural program. Next, I will describe each of these devices and provide some excerpts that illustrate them. The selection of these fragments was a very difficult process considering that I have about 300 pages of radio transcriptions of this set of episodes and all of them are full of examples about the use of these rhetorical strategies.

Use of Facts and Figures

The two most frequent rhetorical resources used are “facts and figures.” Speakers use figures (i.e. numbers) to construct a specific account of AIS and to support their own approach to corruption. Figures are used to both support and undermine arguments related to the percentage of poor and wealthy people who received AIS subsidies, to the amount of stolen money, and to the budgets that the Agriculture Ministry has managed.
over the last years. In addition, figures are often used to construct the magnitude of AIS: The higher the stolen funds, the more severe corruption and vice versa. Excerpts 36 and 37 show how figures are used to construct the magnitude of AIS:

36. Rangel: “No, no, no, don’t say that Néstor [Morales], there are many controls and everybody cheats--; Forero: But this is a very serious case--; Rangel: But 316 thousand families didn’t cheat!--; Morales: But what you are saying is demagogy, Alfredo [Rangel]; Rangel: No, no, no, no Néstor, that is a fact and you can corroborate it!--; Morales: What you mean is: they just stole a little bit, so there is no problem” (Forero, 2011, June 13; Morales, 2011, June 13; Rangel, 2011, June 13).

As this excerpt shows, to minimize corruption and to present it just as an abuse or an irregularity, speakers claim that the stolen money was in fact too little. Some radio guests claim that it is a sin to have designed a program as unregulated as AIS when the budget for Colombian agriculture had not been as high, reaching about 3 trillion pesos (López, 2011, April 5). Others claim that while 316 thousand families were benefited with the program, just 5 cheated (Rangel, 2011, June 13).

There is not consensus about figures because, as I have explained, they are used to explain and support particular standpoints and not to present neutral and disinterested representations of AIS as speakers pretend:

37. Nieto: “That’s [the subsidies granted to the wealthy families in the Caribbean Coast] worth 14 thousand million pesos--; Morales: No man--;
Nieto: I’m trying to establish the magnitude of the problem--;
Morales: We are talking about the families and that’s 37 thousand million pesos--;
Nieto: 14 thousand million pesos--;
Morales: 37 thousand million pesos” (Morales, 2011, April 11; Nieto, 2011, April 11).

Discussions like these occur in all episodes and more than once. Even if speakers refer to the same figures they use them with different interest and are always framing them according to the purpose of a given particular account. Thus, figures are used to minimize and maximize the scope of corruption in AIS. When speakers maximize they usually claim that the budget for AIS was very high and, therefore, that the magnitude of corruption was very significant. On the other side, speakers minimize corruption when they claim that the stolen money was very little and, therefore, that the event of corruption was insignificant (excerpt 36).

From a more general perspective, the citations of figures as well as the references to “facts” are rhetorical strategies used to construct empiricist repertoires (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984) about AIS. As excerpt 36 shows, speakers refer to the term “fact” to give the idea that they are mentioning something that really occurred, that is, they are telling the truth and not making mere speculations. As I explained in the second chapter, empiricist repertoires work as rhetorical games to construct the idea of factuality, in this case, the idea about what really happened in AIS and the “real” scope of corruption within this agricultural program. Facts are rhetorically constructed by radio speakers as precise descriptions with the same status as figures.
Speakers support their own ideas by claiming that they are referring to “the facts” and undermine others’ claims by accusing their interlocutors of speculating. Indeed, radio speakers have different discursive mechanisms to undermine facts and figures presented by their interlocutors: they accuse them of not providing sufficient evidence, misinterpreting the facts, trusting unreliable sources, and being naïve and partial. The following excerpts are examples of these accusations:

38. Rangel: “That is not real, that is not real, those are not the facts--;  
López: You are presenting the facts version Alfredo Rangel--;  
Rangel: No, I am telling the facts” (López, 2011, July 26; Rangel, 2011, July 26).

39. Uribe: “But Cecilia [López], you are giving data that is cynical--;  
López: But this is the official data--;  
Lafaurie: That’s the problem, mine are technical--" (Lafaurie, 2011, April 5;  
López, 2011, April 5; Uribe, 2011, April 5).

Even distinguishing between official and technical data constitutes a way to undermine others’ figures.

Use of Legal Terms

Discussing the nature of data, figures, and facts is not the only rhetorical resource to undermine other speakers’ claims. To judge the interlocutors’ claims as “interpretations” is also a common practice among radio speakers. Because in 2011, many of the individuals involved in AIS began to be investigated by the judicial authorities, a significant proportion of episodes of Hora 20 is devoted to analyze the judicial processes of the accused individuals as well as the future legal consequences of their actions. When radio speakers talk about these judicial processes they accomplish
two functions: First, they explain to the audience the meaning of the different charges and, more broadly, they explain the nature of the judicial oral system which is relatively new in Colombia; and, second, they construct a particular account about these judicial procedures that support their own perspectives on corruption in AIS. Like facts and figures, the reference to legal procedures also has a rhetorical use of supporting speakers’ own standpoints and undermining others’:

40. Nieto: What the Attorney General says is: this agreement [the granting of subsidies] should have been done through public bidding and not through direct contracting because through that agreement with IICA, the Minister Arias committed embezzlement. The Attorney General never said that Andrés Felipe Arias has used the money [of AIS] for his private benefit, she never says that Andrés Felipe Arias participated in the granting of subsidies to the big landlords” (Nieto, 2011, July 21).

Sometimes radio guests explicitly express their opinion about the decisions made by the judicial authorities. In this sense, they express opinions such as: “I celebrate this decision [Arias’ imprisonment] because I think it is an act of elemental justice” (López, 2011, July 26), or, “I think that this decision [Arias imprisonment] is arbitrary and exaggerated” (Rangel, 2011, July 26). Other times, as happens in excerpt 40, radio speakers volunteer to explain to the audiences these decisions and the judicial vocabulary, but many times present partial accounts about them. Nieto, for instance, uses his statement not only to explain the charge of embezzlement, but also to highlight that the Attorney General did not say that Arias is guilty, which corresponds to Nieto’s interest to defend Arias throughout all the episodes to which he is invited. By saying
“What the Attorney General says is,” Nieto gives the idea that he is paraphrasing her, but a close reading shows that more than a disinterested recapitulation; his is a partial account with the specific interest of defending Arias’ reputation.

Thus, radio guests offer interpretations of the judicial processes, but as it happens when they reference facts and figures, their interlocutors accuse them of presenting partial interpretations of the facts and not the facts themselves:

41. López: “It’s clear that Alfredo doesn’t share the Attorney General’s decision [about Arias’ imputation of charges] and it’s all right to express his opinion, but he can’t distort the facts. The Attorney General said that there was solid evidence to prove--;

Rangel: But she didn’t present that evidence;

López: Of course she did!--;

Morales: But the trial hasn’t begun yet!--;

Mejía: [Arias]’s visits to the Picota [prison] is the main evidence--;

López: Fortunately, the Attorney’s General’s declaration is public so that you can’t distort the facts. She presented evidence about those visits to the Picota and those people that Arias visited said that they were trying to agree on a version that could favor Arias--;

Rangel: You lie--;

López: That was what the Attorney General textually said--;

Rangel: That’s her interpretation--;

López: Textually--;
Robledo: Of course, that’s the Attorney General’s interpretation, but here is a fact
[...]” (López, 2011, July 26; Mejía, 2011, July 26; Morales, 2011, July 26; Rangel, 2011, July 26)

Excerpt 41 constitutes just one example of the many occasions in which radio
speakers not only interpret the decisions made by the judicial authorities, but also claim
to have the correct and true interpretation. There is often controversy over who
adequately understands the criminal proceedings, penalties, charges, etc. The correct
interpretation is usually associated to factual references according to which facts speak by
themselves and radio speakers who misinterpret them have particular interests in
defending or attacking AIS. In addition, the correct interpretation comes from an
objective reading of the evidence. Evidence is ultimately the element that proves that a
claim is false or true. In other words, evidence is the element that allows speakers to
support what they claim and to deny what their opponents say.

Radio speakers not only criticize their interlocutors’ opinions, but also the judicial
authorities’ claims. By arguing that these authorities do not have enough evidence or that
they also fail to correctly interpret the facts, radio speakers accuse them of being partial
and missing the truth. In excerpt 41, for example, Rangel criticizes the Attorney
General’s decision and claims that she did not offer evidence to support her case. It could
seem contradictory but, interestingly, radio speakers also reproduce the idea that the
judicial branch is the only agent that can discover the truth after conducting a careful
investigation that reveals evidence to punish the guilty. Underlying this perspective is the
idea of a factual reality, which can be neutrally represented through language. In this
sense, the judicial branch has the monopoly of truth in the sense that this is the only agent
that can reveal the truth as long as it does not allow wrong interpretations and media to obscure justice. When justice becomes mediated and politicized, it ceases to have the monopoly of truth because evidence cannot speak by itself.

*Use of Narratives*

The last rhetorical strategy used by radio speakers to build up factual discourses on corruption consists of presenting narratives as a way to establish what really happened in relation to AIS:

42. Riveros: “It seems that people have forgotten the origin of AIS: It was a law of the Republic, a law, it was approved by the Congress in 2007, you can’t forget that--;

Ávila: But I think that, with all respect, that is what confuses people because that is, let’s say, to say that is to defend AIS and, conceptually, AIS could have all kinds of positive attributes, it was addressed to the people, etc.; but what has been proved, and you can’t ignore that, is that some money ended up where it shouldn’t. And that money ended up in the hands of people who had some relationship with the former Minister Arias, they financed his political campaign, you can’t ignore that! Now, whether or not that is a crime, I am not the appropriate person to claim that” (Ávila, 2011, April 11; Riveros, 2011, April 11).

More than using narratives to recapitulate the history of AIS, speakers use narratives to present a reified vision of the past. Many times the strategy to minimize the magnitude of corruption consists of going back to the genesis of AIS in order to show that this program did not emerge to benefit Arias’ private interests, but with the purpose to improve the Colombian agriculture sector and to prepare it to compete in the
international market. By claiming that they are recapitulating the history, speakers reproduce the idea that that they are telling the events exactly as they happened.

When the radio guests of *Hora 20* analyze corruption in the agricultural sector and, specifically, in relation to the AIS Colombian program, they frame corruption as an illegal practice, an irregular action, an unethical behavior, and as a piñata. The use of narratives as well as the reference to figures, facts, and legal procedures are the main rhetorical mechanisms through which speakers contribute to the construction of factual accounts on AIS and the magnitude of the events of corruption that occurred within this program. In the next section I analyze the cluster of terms that emerge when radio speakers discuss corruption in the health sector.

Corruption in the Health Sector

Even though the Colombian health system is highly complex and confusing, I must explain some of its characteristics so that readers have a better understanding of the clusters of terms that emerge in relation to health corruption. I am aware of the complexity of the system and I ask readers for their patience when reading the following explanations. Even for me, a Colombian citizen, it is difficult to understand how health works in my country and, moreover, to write an explanation for foreigner readers is very hard also.

*The Colombian Health System*

In order to avoid corruption and to generate more efficiency, since 1993 healthcare in Colombia is no longer in State hands and became managed by the private sector. For many decades the monopoly of health was in hands of the *Instituto de Seguros Sociales* (Social Security Institute), but after 1993, the Colombian government allowed
the private sector to provide health services to Colombian citizens (Sistema Seguridad, 1993). The main objective of the government with this reform was to avoid the State’s monopoly over the health sector and to attenuate the levels of corruption associated with the Instituto de Seguros Sociales. Law 100, through which this new health system is set up, had three main points: citizens may choose the health care provider that they prefer, health providers have administrative autonomy, and health insurance is compulsory for all individuals.

Although private companies provide health care services, the State remains responsible for ensuring coverage and for financing the system. In this sense, we can approach this new health model as a mixed system in which both the State and private companies are involved. Hence, this is a government-controlled and yet privatized model of healthcare in which the State subsidizes, citizens pay contributions by themselves and through their employers, and the private sector provides the service. The private sector provides these services of health care through Health Insurance Companies (Entidades Promotoras de Salud, EPS), which are the core of this new system of healthcare. While the EPS are administrative units, the actual hospitals, clinics, and care facilities are called Health Providing Institutions (Instituciones Prestadoras de Salud, IPS). As happens in any scenario of free competition, EPS compete among themselves in order to get more affiliated individuals to increase their profits.

Besides the money that EPS receive from payments made by the citizens, and the EPS employees, these companies also receive money from the government from what is called Capitation Payment Unit (Unidad de Pago por Capitación, UPC), which is an annual fee that the government pays for every affiliated person to any health insurance
company (EPS). These fees are managed by and paid through the Fund of Solidarity and Guarantees (Fondo de Solidaridad y Garantía, FOSYGA), which is an affiliated institution aligned with the Ministry of Social Protection. In addition, with the Ministry of Social Protection, FOSYGA is also in charge of designing the Compulsory Plan of Health (Plan Obligatorio de Salud, POS), which contains the list of medicines and medical services that compulsorily, EPS must provide to their users. Finally, when EPS provide users medicines or medical services that are not covered in the Compulsory Plan of Health, these companies ask FOSYGA for a reimbursement to recover the money of those medical services.

In May, 2011, the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, claimed that Health Insurance Companies, EPS, misappropriated about 20 thousand million dollars through different illegal procedures. These companies inflated the number of services, generated fees for services that they never provided, and falsified documents to get resources from the government (Exministro, 2011). Health Superintendency, which is the institution responsible for supervising EPS, had previously denounced these companies for illegally fixing prices, falsifying information, making irregular dealings, performing double billing, and limiting access to services. Although some administrators from these institutions –especially from the Health Insurance Company Saludcoop– have been arrested, the Attorney General as well as other judicial institutions are still in the early stages of investigations (Supersalud, 2011). Interestingly, the impetus of the government, the judicial institutions, and mass media to denounce and judge the responsible individuals for this millionaire theft has decreased over the last months, which is surprising considering that all Health Insurance Companies (34 out of 34) were
implicated in this case of corruption. I will provide more details about those charges when I cite some radio excerpts in order to facilitate their understanding and to offer a broader context.

Range of Approaches to Health Corruption

Because the denunciations made by the Colombian President and the Superintendent were made in May, 2011, during this month three episodes of *Hora 20* were devoted to analyze corruption in the health sector. This set of broadcasts includes the discussion of topics such as, origins of the so-called health cartel, agents responsible for health corruption, and government’s intervention in EPS. Unlike the previous set of broadcasts fewer terms emerged when analyzing corruption in the health sector. Figure 8 shows the clusters of terms that emerged after analyzing this set of episodes: Corruption in this sector is approached as a criminal and illegal business, as an irregular practice, and as an unethical behavior. In the remaining pages of this section, I will describe those clusters in detail.
Figure 8. Corruption in the Health Sector.

Figure 9 shows the relationship between these clusters according to the severity that radio speakers attribute to these different approaches. Perspectives that consider health corruption as an illegal business are closer to the left end of the spectrum while those that consider it less severe are closer to the right.

Figure 9. Severity of the Connotations of Corruption.
As happens in the case of AIS, radio speakers also perform rhetorical work in order to present specific accounts that correspond with their approaches to corruption. Through rhetorical mechanisms such as the use of figures, the reference to facts, comparisons, and positionality, speakers construct factual accounts about health corruption.

*Corruption as a Criminal and Illegal Business*

The most severe approach to corruption has to do with framing it as a criminal and illegal business through which the managers of the EPS, with the complicity of some middle range officials from the Ministry of Social Protection, organized themselves as a cartel in order to restrict and take advantage of the free market. Along with the Superintendency of Health, professor and Congressman Jorge Enrique Robledo have investigated the events of corruption associated with EPS. As a radio guest in *Hora 20*, Robledo frames these events as follows:

43. Robledo: “Yes, a cartel in the economic sense. Economically, a cartel is a group of companies that collude to agree and create the fiction of competition, I mean, they create monopolistic practices to increase their profits. The main purpose of this cartel was to collectively decide what medicines and treatments should be included in POS [Compulsory Plan of Health] and what should be excluded from it so that they could ask [Fund of Solidarity and Guarantees] FOSYGA to pay back for them[^21^], for example, acetaminophen, which is an

[^21^]: According to the Law, if a medicine or a treatment is not included in the Compulsory Plan of Health (POS), EPS can provide that medicine or treatment to patients and then ask the government (through FOSYGA) for a reimbursement. According to Robledo and the Superintendency of Health, EPS deliberatively agreed on excluding some medicines and treatments from POS, so that they could ask for the money from the government and thus they could increase their profit.
exaggeration, but let’s continue: acetaminophen is originally in POS, but all EPS agree to say no, it is not included, so FOSYGA had to pay for it. So FOSYGA ended up paying twice, twice for the same medicine!  

In a different episode of *Hora 20*, Cecilia López, former Director of the Social Security Institute makes this claim:

44. López: “There is a cartel that inflates figures and make agreements with the EPS, which has generated a tremendous source of corruption, and also the lack of regulation has caused a catastrophe. EPS have to inform to the government about what they do, the government doesn’t have its own information, and I think that that’s the problem: the government doesn’t have figures, EPS control figures!” (López, 2011, May 5).

As these excerpts show, corruption is framed as a business that allows its participants to increase their profit. However, two factors increase the negative connotation of this representation. First, radio speakers use the term *business* to refer to a public service, which, according to the Colombian Constitution, must be universal; and, second, the usage of the term *cartel* brings the connotation of an illegal activity. Even though cartel is indeed an economic term that refers to a group of firms that get together to agree on price decisions, this word also has other connotations in the Colombian history and, particularly, in the context of drug trafficking in which the most important drug suppliers organized themselves as a cartel in order to agree on prices and procedures to send cocaine to the United States of America and Europe.

---

22 The Fund of Solidarity and Guarantees, FOSYGA, ended up paying twice because it had already provided a fee for every user through the Capitation Payment Unit (UPC) that I previously explained.
Although the word *cartel* is not originally coined by radio guest Robledo— but by the Superintendent of Health—, it is interesting that he uses it to explain the events of corruption in the health sector precisely because of the connotations that it brings. In fact, one of the few times that a radio speaker suggests a solution to the problems of corruption has to do with Medellín’s idea of applying to health cartels the same measures taken in the past with drug cartels:

45. Medellín: “A long time ago some people said that the only way to fight the drug cartels was attacking their pockets, their goods. At that time some colleagues and I created the Forfeiture Law which had many problems, but also many achievements because we avoided big drug traffickers’ heirs’ access to big fortunes […]. [Judicial institutions] should give the same treatment to people involved in corruption, when we created the Forfeiture Law, we also said that it should be applied in cases of corruption” (Medellín, 2011, May 2).

Through statements like these (excerpts 43-45), radio speakers place the corrupt practices in the health sector at the level of drug cartels’ practices. The fact that Medellín suggests to solve health corruption by applying the same procedures as drug trafficking shows that corruption in the health sector can be compared with the severity and illegality of drug trafficking.

In general, this first cluster of terms approach corruption in a very severe way. Among all clusters this includes the most negative connotations and practices, which can be noticed in the use of nouns and adjectives such as, fraud, embezzlement, theft, delinquency, criminal mind, and illegal.
Corruption as an Irregular Action

However, not all speakers embrace perspectives as radicals as this. As figure 9 shows, some of them have a less severe approach according to which corruption in the health sector consists of some irregular practices that might be illegitimate, but not illegal:

46. Gaviria: “To say that there is a cartel is exaggerated. Here, I mean, EPS are not a cartel. I think that, in an opportunistic way, EPS tried to complement their profit and they began to ask the government for reimbursements, why? Because that is a way to go beyond their traditional income” (Gaviria, 2011, May 5).

What is interesting is that all radio speakers are referring to the same events, but they assess them in a different way. In the case of agricultural corruption, radio speakers refer to different events associated to AIS in the sense that they highlighted, added, or omitted specific events in order to present their own account about corruption within this agricultural program. Here, all speakers refer to the same events (i.e. reimbursements, prior agreements among EPS), but they differ on how severe those actions are. While Robledo (excerpt 43) frames the association of EPS as a cartel with criminal purposes, Gaviria (excerpt 46) represents it as an opportunistic association. The main difference has to do with the extent to which radio speakers frame these events as illegal practices. The former Minister of Social Protection, Diego Palacio, is invited to the May 5 broadcast of Hora 20 to talk about this scandal of health corruption since he was the Minister when these events occurred. When asked about the magnitude of these events he starts by framing them as irregularities and abuses:
47. Palacio: “I think that one has to analyze two or three things understanding that there are problems with the [health] service and understanding that there are problems of lack of control. But I think that one has to separate what is abuse from what is corruption, these are different things” (Palacio, 2011, May 5).

Throughout the episode, Palacio seeks to show not only that these events are legal, but also that they do not constitute corruption. By claiming that it is necessary to differentiate abuse from corruption he tries to reproduce the idea that the activities performed by EPS in order to increase their profits are not corrupt acts, but abuses. Once again, what is legal does not constitute corruption even if we are referring to illegitimate and unethical practices.

Corruption as an Unethical Behavior

This understanding of corruption as irregular action takes us to the third cluster of terms according to which corruption is defined as an unethical behavior:

48. Charry: “I think we have a serious problem in the health sector and what it hurts me is the lack of ethics of many of the individuals who took advantage of [the lack of] legal circumstances. I’m a bit surprised because, as far as I understand, what is happening is not corruption itself, but unethical investments” (Charry, 2011, May 12).

Excerpt 48 is an example of the many times that speakers define corruption in terms of a false dichotomy in which corruption is either an illegal act or an unethical behavior. Thus, not punishable practices fall outside the definition of corruption and are left to the realm of ethics. Throughout all Hora 20 episodes analyzed for this dissertation there is perhaps no other term that speakers construct in a more ambiguous way than
ethics. All practices that cannot be included under legal categories are left to the realm of ethics, which, as I showed in the first section of this chapter, is described as an attribute of an action. In other words, while defining corruption as an illegal practice places the problem at a collective and systemic level with legal consequences, defining it as an unethical behavior that reduces corruption to an individual conduct whose worst punishment is a guilty conscience. At the end of this chapter I will discuss the implications of the inclusion and exclusion of these different clusters of terms in the understanding of corruption.

*Relationships Among Clusters*

Among the different subclusters of terms emerges an interesting dichotomy that speakers reproduce in relation to the agents responsible for corruption in the health sector. The dichotomy between agents and structures discussed in the first set of episodes is also present when radio speakers talk about the responsible agents for corruption in the health sector. For most radio speakers, corruption is either a problem of individuals or the health system. Thus, the cause of health corruption is to be found either on the individuals’ misbehaviors or in the design of the health system. Radio speakers who consider that corruption is to be found in agents blame the executives of the EPS for getting together and planning a strategy to ask the government for illegal reimbursements. As Charry (2011, May 12) points out, “the Colombian health system fell victim to the corruption of some criminals.” On the other hand, those radio speakers who consider that corruption is a problem of structures affirm that the design of the law 100

---

23 Through the law 100 the private health system is implemented in Colombia.
brought corruption with itself. For example, Sergio Isaza, president of the Colombian Medical Association, accuses the system of inciting corruption:

49. Isaza: “The system is a corrupt system and I am going to tell you Dr. Diego [Palacio] and you know this very well: this is a system that motivates corruption because if the [EPS]’s administration forces you to provide only some medicines and treatments, so your professional ethics is in jeopardy” (Charry, 2011, May 12).

By claiming that the system motivates corruption, Isaza attributes to the structure the causes of corruption. In order to support this standpoint, radio speakers like Isaza point out that the design of the law 100 is the main factor that incites corruption. Insofar as this law leaves health services in hands of private companies, they can use any kind of mechanism –if legal– to increase their profits. Corruption happens as a consequence of a poor design of the structure. In a similar way other radio guests attribute the cause of corruption to the health system, but this time, to its complexity. The Dean of Economics Universidad de los Andes, Alejandro Gaviria, says:

50. Gaviria: “I think that Néstor is right and one of the problems of the Colombian health system is its complexity, it’s almost impossible to understand it and I sympathize with our listeners, there are many agents involved, acronyms, procedures. This is an impossible gibberish. I think that many of the problems come from this complexity” (Gaviria, 2011, May 12).

Finally, a few radio guests go beyond this dichotomy and claim that both agents and structures are responsible for corruption. Generally, speakers who embrace the most

---

24 Former Minister of Social Protection.
severe definitions of corruption are those who argue for a multi-caused explanation of corruption. Usually their argument follows like this: With the complicity of some middle range State officials, particular individuals with criminal minds organized themselves as a cartel in order to create a system of fraud, taking advantage of the lack of regulation and control from the State. Framing it like this, the events of corruption in the health sector are presented as a multi-causal phenomenon in which both political and private corruption are involved and both the structure and its agents have some responsibility in the events of corruption.

*Agon Terms*

Unlike the case of agricultural corruption, there is a clear and recurring agon term that speakers use in contraposition to health corruption. *Control* is this agon term that becomes negatively associated with corruption. If there is control, corruption does not occur. The lack of control is the genesis of corruption and, for some speakers this lack of control is a direct consequence of the neoliberal ideology that underlies law 100 and, therefore, the current Colombian health system. Because the new system allows private companies to compete among themselves without regulation, they can exercise any kind of practice in order to increase their profits. In this context in which any type of control goes against the philosophy of the free market, radio speakers refer to control using expressions such as, “control here is a joke,” “defrauding the public sector is extremely easy because there isn’t any regulation.” “Here’s an absolute licentiousness.” Finally, this lack of control, characteristic of neoliberal ideologies, is approached by speakers as one of the causes of corruption.
Speakers who are not necessarily against the neoliberal ideas behind the current health system also approach control as an agon term for health corruption. However, the problem lies in the fact that the few instances of control (i.e. Superintendency of Health, Ministry of Social Protection) fail, which allows corruption to emerge:

51. Llorente: “I think the big question was that asked by Dr. Medellín about supervisory authorities, I mean, what do these authorities do? Indeed, supervisory authorities in the health sector are insufficient, what are they doing? How is that we have institutions as inefficient as the Public Ministry? They always come after the theft!” (Llorente, 2011, May 2).

In any case, control is often negatively associated with corruption and, therefore, approached as the remedy against corruption.

*Rhetorical Strategies Used to Frame Health Corruption*

So far I have described the cluster of terms that emerged after analyzing those broadcasts devoted to discussing health corruption. Next, I will explain some of the rhetorical devices employed by radio speakers when using these terms. The reference to figures, facts, and narratives as well as comparisons and positionality are the most used rhetorical strategies by speakers to present factual accounts about health corruption. As it happens in the case of AIS, speakers use figures for two main reasons: to give the idea that their accounts are objective and precise, and to determine the magnitude of the scandal of corruption (i.e. the bigger the amount involved in the fraud, the most severe the corrupt act).
Use of Figures, Facts, and Narratives

As it happens in AIS, radio speakers use figures to undermine others’ accounts by questioning the source where these figures come from and the way in which they are interpreted. In the following dialogue Isaza, president of the Colombian Medical Association claims that health in Colombia works as a financial system in which the government has used its revenues to buy domestic public debt bonds. To undermine this claim and, therefore, this framing of health as a business, the former Minister of Social Protection, Diego Palacio, claims:

52. Palacio: “But Sergio [Isaza], just a clarification, you have said here that only 20% of the resources are devoted to health, but let me tell you, you said that we spent 38 trillion of pesos in domestic public debt bonds, but we spent just 5 trillion, so we are talking about more than 20%--;

Isaza: Ok, you are who knows the figures --;

Palacio: I think one must be very careful when giving figures --;

Morales: 5 trillion in domestic public debt bonds, that’s a financial structure!--;

Palacio: No Néstor, no, the topic is not whether or not we had that money invested, but the fact that we paid about 300 million pesos for reimbursements--;

Gaviria: Much more than 300 million!--;

López: 2 trillion for the No-Pos25, right?--;

Palacio: 2 trillion and 700 million per year--;

25 Radio speakers use the expression No-Pos to refer to the medicines and treatments that are not included in the Compulsory Plan of Health (POS) and for which the government has to pay reimbursements to the EPS.

This excerpt illustrates the rhetorical use of figures to support particular accounts of corruption. Palacio’s answer to Morales’ comment is an example of this usage of figures to highlight specific ideas and downplay others: By highlighting how much money the Ministry paid to EPS, Palacio shifts the topic of discussion from what was spent outside the health sector to what was invested in this sector. In addition, the controversy about amounts and the warning of some speakers about the need to be careful with figures also show how figures are used to undermine others’ perspectives because the sources are not reliable enough.

Facts are also used here to construct factual accounts on health corruption. Radio speakers use the term fact to show that they are referring to something that really happened and is indisputable. Interestingly, within this set of episodes there is a particular radio speaker whose construction of his persona is based on the reference to facts. The former Minister of Social Protection, Diego Palacio, is invited to one episode of Hora 20 to analyze the scandal of corruptions in the health sector, which began during his appointment as Minister. Rather than assuming what Potter (1996) calls a defensive rhetoric, Palacio’s persona is rhetorically constructed as an objective guest who comes to the program to bring figures, remind others of facts, and present data. Hence, Palacio uses expressions such as, “Let me remind you about some data,” “But Sergio, just a clarification,” “I just want to bring data to the discussion,” “Let me give you these figures so that the audience can think about it” (Palacio, 2011, May 12). By constructing this
persona, Palacio presents himself as the person who brings the objective data, and not as the former Minister who wants to defend himself from the offensive rhetoric of his interlocutors.

Narratives are also employed as a rhetorical mechanism, not only to prove that something happened, but as a proof that a certain account is true. The following Nieto’s narrative, for example, is used to prove his point according to which the scandal of health corruption is severe:

53. Nieto: “Well, on Easter, I was taking vacations outside the country and my child got an infection so we had to buy [the antibiotic] Clauvulin. Over there Clauvulin cost 7 times less, 7 times less, I mean 7! I brought the receipt with me because I thought that you wouldn’t believe me. I tell you this anecdote just to tell you that I think that we have a very serious problem, a big problem of corruption” (Nieto, 2011, May 12).

As I explained in relation to AIS, narratives are used as proofs that help speakers to support their own perspectives on corruption. Nieto’s story about his son’s antibiotics is used to show how expensive medicine in Colombia is and, therefore, to support his perspective according to which corruption in the health sector is a very serious problem. Through the use of maximizations and comparisons, Nieto constructs his narrative and presents it as one more fact that proves his point.

Comparisons

Besides the prices of medicines, many other elements are compared by speakers with the purpose of highlighting or downplaying certain characteristics of the Colombian health system. However, the comparison between the old health system and the new one
implemented through law 100 is indeed one of the most discussed comparisons among radio speakers. From a rhetorical standpoint what is at stake when speakers engage in this discussion is a discursive fight to frame one system as more corrupt than the other. As I pointed out at the beginning of this section, through law 100 a new system of health was implemented in Colombia in which health care was no longer offered by the public institution called Instituto de Seguros Sociales (Social Security Institute), but it was in the hands of the private sector and, specifically, in the hands of Health Insurance Companies, EPS. The main reason that led the government to switch from a public to a private system had to do with the scandals of corruption in which the Instituto de Seguros Sociales was often involved. In order to avoid this corruption, the government left the administration of the health care services to the private sector. Considering this historical context, radio speakers often compare which one of both systems of health, public or private, is the most corrupt and why. In the following excerpt, the Dean of Economics of Universidad de los Andes, Alejandro Gaviria, and the former director of the Instituto de Seguros Sociales, Cecilia López, discuss these systems:

54. Gaviria: “I never saw so much corruption in my life like in the [Instituto de] Seguros Sociales. We can turn back; I think it’s worth remembering when Guillermo Fino was its director over 2001 and 2002. Do you remember him?--;
Morales: Of course!--;
Gaviria: That was basically a criminal organization--;
López: That’s not true and I’ll defend the Seguros Sociales, I’m very sorry but--;
Gaviria: [The government] gave him 1 trillion pesos and it was like a black hole. There was no corruption Cecilia [López]? excuse me, there wasn’t?--;
López: Yes, there was corruption, but not at these levels, I’m sorry, but I fought against corruption, there was corruption, but I was able to decrease it!” (Gaviria, 2011, May 5; López, 2011, May 5; Morales, 2011, May 5).

When comparing the Instituto de Seguros Sociales with the current health system, radio guests use different terms to frame them as extreme cases. Through the use of expressions such as black hole and criminal organization, for example, Gaviria normalizes corruption in the Instituto de Seguros Sociales in order to present it as more severe than the current events of corruption in the private companies. The level of corruption is then rhetorically constructed through comparisons, which strive to show either public or private corruption as the worst option.

Speakers’ Positionality

The last rhetorical mechanism consists of radio speakers’ self-presentation and, specifically, on radio speakers’ positionality. By positionality, I mean the personal, ideological, political, and professional place from which speakers claim to produce their discourses. In fact, most of the time speakers make explicit the position from which they are going to talk as a way to present themselves. Positionality is a common discursive practice among all the episodes of Hora 20 analyzed for this dissertation. However, it is more common among those broadcasts devoted to health corruption. Usually, the first time that the host of the program asks a question to the guests, they begin their statements by stating the place from which they speak. From a professional standpoint they claim that they are going to talk as lawyers, scholars, congressmen, judges, journalists, etc. From an ideological perspective, they do not explicitly name the political party to which they belong, but some of them say whether or not they support the government and,
therefore, the political parties that it represents. Finally, sometimes they express from the beginning of the episode that they will be assuming radical or different perspectives compared with those of their interlocutors.

Rhetorically, this public acknowledgment of their positionality contributes to the speakers’ construction of their persona insofar as it seeks to accredit them as experts in a given field. For example, before having the discussion presented in excerpt 54, Alejandro Gaviria presents himself as a scholar who has published articles about the Colombian health system, which accredits him as an expert and makes it seems more factual his claim according to which the Instituto de Seguros Sociales is more corrupt than the current system. Cecilia López, on the other hand, presents herself as a former director of the Instituto de Seguros Sociales which also accredits her as a person who personally helped to avoid corruption in this institution. Both present themselves as the most credible and appropriate persons to decide which system is more corrupt.

There is one particular episode in which positionality and construction of one’s own and the other’s persona play a very important role in the presentation of arguments. In the May 5 broadcast, the host of the program invites Cecilia López, former director of Instituto de Seguros Sociales; Sergio Isaza, President of the Colombian Medical Association; Alejandro Gaviria, Dean of Economics of Universidad de los Andes; and Diego Palacio, former Minister of Social Protection, to discuss the recent scandal of corruption in the health sector. Because the events of corruption occurred when Palacio was still Minister he is supposed to assume a defensive role. However, as I pointed out a few pages above, Palacio assumes the persona of an “objective” guest who comes to the program to bring figures, remind others the facts, and present data. The other guests
present themselves as the physician who has been affected by law 100, the scholar who has studied this phenomenon, and the representative of a previous and less corrupt health system. Although Palacio tries not to assume a defensive rhetoric, toward the end of the episode his interlocutors begin to ask “accusing” questions about his role as Minister. The following excerpt illustrates one of these questions:

55. “López: Let me ask you something Diego [Palacio]: Why didn’t you create a rule that was obvious? Why did you leave the door open for free pricing of medicines? Why did you implement the free pricing system?²⁶;

Palacio: Cecilia [López], in 2006 free pricing is declared […];
Morales: EPS and laboratories saw there an opportunity to increase profit!—;
Gaviria: Indeed, I have no doubt about it;
Palacio: When I was leaving my position [as Minister], I told [the new Minister] Ricardo Santamaría that the country needed to think again about free pricing;
López: But, why did you allow free pricing?;
Palacio: Because there was a study that showed us some data—;
Isaza: Fedesarrollo’s study—;
López: Ah, no, no, no—;

Directly, López asks Palacio about free pricing, a decision that was made under his position as a Minister. Interestingly, Palacio does not answer using first person, but by claiming that free pricing “is” declared and by later saying that “the country” needs to

²⁶ Because of this free pricing, EPS and drug companies have no restriction to decide the price of medicines.
rethink this free pricing. Insofar as Palacio adopts a passive voice and selects a noun that is not his (the country), he takes distance from the decision and does not present himself as the person who made it. This is just an example on how speakers position themselves in order to construct a persona which corresponds with their accounts of corruption. Finally, excerpt 55 constitutes a good fragment to summarize some of the different rhetorical mechanisms used by radio speakers to support their accounts of corruption: the importance of data, the questioning of the sources where this data comes from, and positionality.

Concluding Thoughts

Radio speakers’ statements in Hora 20 can be approached as oral performances to normalize and abnormalize corruption. While some speakers seek to minimize the severity of certain corrupt events, others strive to maximize that severity. Speakers are able to do so by performing a rhetorical work according to which they frame corruption in different ways. Insofar as they embrace different understandings of corruption they are able to normalize and abnormalize corruption according to their motives, to put it in Burke’s (1954) terms. The cluster analysis that I performed shows these different approaches, which group around several clusters of terms. The lack of consensus and the ambiguity that scholars attribute to the academic study of corruption is also present in radio discussions about this phenomenon. The complexity of the term corruption has to do with two main reasons: the polysemic use of the term and the lack of an explicit agon that stands against it.

As the analysis of general, agricultural, and health corruption shows, corruption is a very polysemic term whose meanings include terms such as invasive decay, illegal
practice, irregular action, unethical behavior, piñata, and criminal business. Radio speakers do not define corruption by grouping and combining all of these elements, but by choosing and reproducing only one approach. In order to defend their own approach and undermine others’, speakers’ primary rhetorical work consists of presenting these different terms as different and even contradictory actions. The creation of a discursive binary between corruption as an illegal practice or an unethical behavior is an example of the speakers’ effort to embrace one definition and elaborate it in contraposition to another. In this context, corruption is either an illegal act or an unethical behavior, but not both. The former approach places corruption at a legal and collective level, while the latter takes it to a moral and individual instance. In the same way, the severity of corruption defined as an unethical behavior is much less significant than considering it an illegal act.

However, some radio speakers go beyond this binary relationship and include a third element whose connotation of corruption is neither as severe as considering it a piñata or an illegal act, nor as lax as defining it as an unethical behavior or a virus or rust. These speakers define corruption as an irregular practice associated with deviations, tricks, cheats, and abuses. Thus, what the cluster analysis shows is a term with multiple definitions, which can become contradictory but which allows readers to support their own points of view. In addition, these approaches attribute different levels of agency to the individuals implicated in events of corruption as long as they highlight either the structure or the individuals as the agents responsible for corruption. As I showed, while an approach to corruption as invasive decay exempts individuals from any responsibility,
to define corruption as a criminal and illegal business focuses attention on those individuals.

Besides this polysemic use of corruption and the ambiguity of the terms that positively relate to it, there is not a direct and explicit term that stands against corruption. What the agon analysis shows is the lack of phenomena that speakers use in contraposition to corruption. Unlike other cluster-agon analyses (Berthold, 1976; Foss, 1984; Lynch, 2006) in which authors present a term or group of terms that directly relate negatively to corruption, in the case of radio conversations about Colombian corruption the agon terms work according to the context because of the multiple meanings of the word corruption. While the term “control” appears as an important agon to health corruption, this term is not present when speakers analyze other cases of corruption. In addition, the use of the words justice and ethics is so ambiguous that it is hard to say if both of them are positively or negatively associated with corruption. In conclusion, agon terms emerge according to the way in which radio speakers approach corruption. For example, as I explained in the case of agricultural corruption, when speakers define corruption as an illegal practice, normality emerges as an agon; however, it does not happen when they define it an as irregular practice because what is irregular is many times presented as normal. Thus, we should not claim that corruption has a very particular agon or group of terms that stand against it, but that the polysemy of the word as well as the context of the conversation originate different agon terms that work according to the context (i.e. ethics or justice).

This polysemic and contextual use of the word corruption exemplifies the approaches to rhetoric and language that I discuss in the second chapter. Words do not
have a single and definitive meaning but, through their use, speakers choose and shape meanings. As Bakhtin (1981) points out, it is through their use by actual speakers that words and utterances receive a meaning. The word corruption is a perfect example of Bakhtin’s idea of the dialogic condition of language according to which words are populated by multiple meanings that speakers create and recreate through dialogue. As I will explain in more detail in the next chapter, the role of rhetoric within these multiple dialogues (between the multiple meanings of a word; between the word and its context; between the word and its speaker; and, between speakers) is to help speakers to shape, frame, and mold the preferred meanings and connotations of a given word or utterance. Through the rhetorical work that I previously explained, radio guests shape the meaning of corruption that corresponds with their motives as speakers.

Before concluding this chapter, it is worth doing a short reflection about the material consequences of this dialogic condition of words and, specifically, about the plasticity that a word such as corruption has. Because I have not conducted an audience study about the consumption of Hora 20, it is difficult to make claims about the ways in which audiences understand and approach corruption. However, I think we should reflect about the fact that a phenomenon as serious as corruption may be normalized because of the plasticity of words. Beyond the complexity of the events of health and agricultural corruption, the discursive construction of corruption is also complex insofar as radio speakers present opposite perspectives about corruption. As I showed, much of the speakers’ rhetorical work consists of normalizing corruption in order to show that the government is not involved in these scandals. Further research should examine the material consequences of this rhetorical work in the sense of exploring, for example, the
consequences on normalizing corruption and showing it as an irregular, common, or normal phenomenon.

Before discussing other interesting conclusions about the rhetorical construction about factual discourses on corruption, I will describe how the grammar of radio and, particularly, the language of secondary orality influences these discourses. Thus, in the following chapter, I analyze the characteristics of radio orality in relation to Colombian corruption discourses.
CHAPTER 5: SECONDARY ORALITY OF RADIO

In the previous chapter I explained the different clusters of terms that emerge when radio speakers talk about Colombian corruption as well as the rhetorical mechanisms through which they construct factual accounts about corruption. In this chapter, I analyze how the language of radio influences these representations of corruption. As I explained in the second chapter of this dissertation, the language of radio can be approached as secondary orality, that is, as a set of communicative conditions inherent to mediated and oral interactions that occur in societies that already have writing. Even though radio is an oral-based mass medium, the context of production of its medium, as well as the background of its producers, is influenced by the world of writing.

The analysis of actual radio conversations shows that, more than a language, secondary orality refers to an event of interaction and, specifically, to a particular rhetorical situation of addressivity. The spoken word creates a rhetorical situation of addressivity not only because words are always said to someone else, but also because specific intentions underlie the act of saying those words. Evidently, the oral word has a primary function of representing the world: it works as a signifier that represents a given signified (Saussure, 1970). However, the role of the spoken word is not limited to representing the world, but its richness consists of its ability to relate and connect individuals. Unlike the written word that is written for a future and unknown reader, the oral word is said to a known interlocutor who is present in the interaction. The spoken word is the raw material from which individuals interact and it is the very reason for that interaction. I will further develop these ideas once I have explained in detail the kinds of interactions that secondary orality generates. For now, it is important to take into account
that secondary orality is fundamentally a rhetorical situation of addressivity which manifests at different levels of communication.

After analyzing thirteen episodes of *Hora 20* whose main topic is corruption, it is possible to claim the secondary orality in radio manifests in three levels of communication: emphatic, grammatical, and dialogic. Each of these levels also has different characteristics or sublevels. I designed Table 2 to graphically represent these levels and sublevels of secondary orality. Even though this table returns to some concepts suggested by different authors (e.g. Jakobson, Bakhtin), the identification and organization of the levels and sublevels of secondary orality is the result of the analysis that I performed on *Hora 20*’s episodes on corruption. This table, in other words, has not been taken from any author, but it corresponds to my own analysis of secondary orality.

Table 2:  
*Secondary Orality in Radio*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Sublevel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphatic level</td>
<td>Phatic function of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prosody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical level</td>
<td>Flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spontaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enumeration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redundancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogic level</td>
<td>Parallel dialogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confrontational dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the case of radio, secondary orality manifests at three levels of communication: emphatic, grammatical, and dialogic. First, the emphatic level which includes phatic and prosodic functions of language through which speakers establish contact and engage with the addressee through the use of interjections, rhythm, and tone. Second, the grammatical level in which speakers express their ideas through the use of certain rules such as flow, spontaneity, genre, enumeration, and redundancy. And third, the dialogic level refers to the ways in which speakers engage in different forms of dialogue in the context of a rhetorical situation. Even though I enumerate them, these levels are simultaneous and not consecutive because, in a given interaction, they all occur at the same time. However, from an analytical standpoint, it is important to distinguish them in order to examine how secondary orality works in micro and macro units of communication. While the emphatic level refers to a micro dimension of communication, the dialogic level is related to broader and more pragmatic aspects of communication. In this chapter, I will describe in detail these three levels because they constitute the characteristics of secondary orality.

The Emphatic Level

From a micro perspective, secondary orality works at an emphatic level that includes units such as interjections, tone, and rhythm, through which speakers communicate intentions and maintain interaction. Although this level focuses on small units of language, I have grouped them under the name of emphatic level because of the etymology of the word empathy. Coming from the Greek *empatheia*, empathy refers to the ability to understand the feelings of another person (Oxford, 2012). In the context of this dissertation, empathy is used to mean the speakers’ awareness of another’s presence,
with whom speakers try to establish rapport. Incorporating pathos from its etymological history, the word empathy also brings the rhetorical connotation of emotion, which is characteristic of verbal and oral interactions. The use of a particular tone, for example, is not only sign of pathos, but it is also a way to address the other and to establish a relationship with him or her.

This emphatic level includes two main sublevels: the phatic and the prosodic. I will explain both using particular radio excerpts to illustrate how secondary orality works at this first level.

*Phatic Function of Language*

Following Jakobson (1981), I refer to the phatic function of language to point out that speakers use certain expressions to ensure that there is interaction and there are no problems with the channel of communication. Thus, speakers use words to let their interlocutors know that communication is proceeding without any problems. Interjections include expressions like *uh, er, um* which are spelled differently in English, but sound similar in Spanish. Interjections are frequently used among radio guests of *Hora 20* who employ them in order to demonstrate to their interlocutors that they are paying attention and listening to each other. The host of the program, Néstor Morales, often uses interjections while listening to the answers of the questions that he asks. The use of these interjections reproduce the idea that speakers engage in dialogue and they listen to others’ points of view in order to inform their own perspectives. Thus, more than using radio to reproduce monologues, this first level of communication shows that speakers talk and listen to one another. It is in this sense that I claim that addressivity is present across all levels of communication regardless of how small the units of communication are.
Interjections are also used as linguistic resources that give speakers time to choose the words that they are about to say and to organize their ideas before expressing them. In a radio context, interjections allow speakers to avoid silence, which could be interpreted by the audience as a technical failure in the radio transmission. In the following statement, journalist and political scientist Maria Jimena Duzán often uses interjections while she thinks and organizes her ideas:

1. Duzán: “I, I, uh, I want to, I have read almost everything about the topic, uh, about how the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Prosecutor General have managed this issue and I would start by mentioning another topic, I mean, uh: What was the problem? The problem, what was the problem here? Um, that some land was divided, uh, uh, um, uh, um, divided, fragmented, uh, we don’t know whether or not that was illegal because uh, um, that is not explicit [in the law], that is not explicit, it doesn’t say that it’s prohibited, it’s not explicit” (Duzán, 2011, July 21).

This excerpt illustrates the use of interjections when communicating an idea. Interjections are characteristic of orality because of the simultaneity between thinking and speaking that leaves little time for speakers to prepare or edit their ideas. While reading these interjections might generate “noise,” this is a natural component of radio that help audiences to remember that Hora 20 is a live program and that it is not based on prior scripts.

Prosody

The first level of communication also includes other micro units of language through which speakers engage with their addressees and rhetorically present their ideas.
I use the category *prosody* to group the linguistic elements tone and rhythm. In fact, as a realm of linguistics, prosody focuses on the study of intonation, stress, tone, and rhythm in order to examine how these elements contribute to the construction of meaning especially in oral exchanges. In the same way that interjections are important characteristics of secondary orality, so are tone and rhythm. The analysis of *Hora 20* shows that tone is not a neutral element, but it plays a fundamental role in the construction of the rhetorical situation that speakers want to construct. The use of a specific tone constitutes for speakers a particular way to address the listeners. In a medium like radio where it is impossible to read non-verbal language, tone provides listeners the opportunity to “read” intentions through the way in which speakers communicate. This transcodification (Micheti, 2005) allows speakers to substitute gestures and nonverbal language for tone and rhythm to construct meaning.

Since this dissertation is a written text, it is very difficult to illustrate the use of tone in *Hora 20*. However, I will provide the necessary explanations to exemplify how tone works. In the April 5th episode, journalist, politician, and lawyer, Felipe Zuleta, claims:

2. Zuleta: So, IICA [Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute] is [the institution] responsible [for corruption] and 33 thousand Colombians are responsible too!” (Zuleta, 2011, April 5).

Through this claim, Zuleta literally states that IICA and the 33 thousands Colombians who received subsidies from Secure Agricultural Income (AIS) are responsible for the acts of corruption related to this agricultural program. However, a close interpretation of the tone that he uses when making this claim shows that Zuleta is being ironic with his
interlocutor Alfredo Rangel. Although Zuleta literally claims that IICA is responsible for corruption, he instead means that neither IICA nor the 33 thousand Colombians who received subsidies are responsible for that corruption. Many times tone is the prosodic element that allows us to infer speakers’ intentions.

This sublevel of prosody also includes rhythm as another characteristic element of secondary orality that speakers use rhetorically to communicate their intentions and to establish different forms of interactions with their interlocutors. In the context of the radio programs analyzed for this dissertation, rhythm can be described as the pattern of movement of the flow of words that speakers communicate. This pattern varies according to the topic, the speakers, and their intentions. There are three main kinds of patterns of rhythm in Hora 20. The first rhythm corresponds to a rapid pace of turn taking in which speakers interrupt their interlocutors or make brief statements, in order to keep a dialogue rich in the number of exchanges. Talking about the differences between the United States and the Colombian penal systems, radio guests of the April 5th episode engage in a conversation that illustrates this type of fast rhythm:

3. Uribe: “That happens under the Anglo thesis that says that it’s better to catch the big fish rather than keeping small fishes in jail. And Colombia adopted that approach, but here we reduce convictions up to 40 and 50%. In the U.S. they reduce them up to a 15%;

Morales: Yes, yes;

Uribe: 15!, 15!

Zuleta: And in the U.S. they take the money away [from the convicted];

Uribe: And they also add up all the penalties--;
Morales: Uh, well, here people spend 7 years in jail and then, they are free with the money in their pockets;

Uribe: In the U.S. they add up all the penalties and they sentence people to 200 or 300 years of prison--;

López: And if they [judges] decide to take away 100 years, nothing happens;

Lafaurie: But the discussion here is whether or not this situation is comparable…”

(Lafaurie, 2011, April 5; López, 2011, April 5; Morales, 2011, April 5; Uribe; 2011, April 5; Zuleta, 2011, April 5).

This exchange establishes a fast rhythm in which radio speakers make short statements and create a fast arrangement of the flow of dialogue. All four radio guests as well as the host participate in a collaborative effort to explain and analyze the penal systems in the United States and Colombia. Every speaker offers a short claim which adds to the exchange a fast rhythm.

Other statements are a little slower, but they still keep a fast pace. The following excerpt by journalist and lawyer Rafael Nieto constitutes an example of this rhythm:

4. Nieto: “I will probably have a very solitary position in this program tonight, but I still think that it’s worthwhile even though it’s unpopular. Look, I think that this is a wrong scandal and I’m going to explain why: the AIS program is a program that has managed about 2 trillion pesos in 4 years, that is, 500 billion pesos per year. Out of those 2 trillion pesos, 300 thousand million pesos went to irrigation that is where problems emerged. Out of those 300 billion pesos, most of it was to a program called Irrigation Districts and a smaller part was to a program called Irrigation Intra-Property, that is, to irrigation within specific farms. It is within the
Irrigation Intra-Property program where problems emerged and it is within that program that families fragmented their lands in order to access to more subsidies. That cost 14 billion pesos, 14 billion!” (Nieto, 2011, April 11).

I have selected this long example to show a statement that has a fast rhythm because of the way in which it is organized. Unlike many statements, Nieto’s uses short and complete sentences, separated by pauses, which follow a clear line of thought. It does mean that other radio speakers are not clear in their arguments, but many of them present many ideas at the same time and those ideas—as it happens in excerpt 1– are often subordinated and combined into one statement. Nieto’s explanation has a lot of pauses that help listeners to easily follow his point. In fact, when transcribing the radio programs, I rarely used periods to separate speakers’ sentences; I often used commas considering the length of the pauses and the connection between ideas. Nieto’s case is interesting because the pauses among sentences did correspond to periods which is more characteristic of the grammar of writing. Again, this particular rhythm also generates a rhetorical situation that can be interpreted as Nieto’s attempt to present a factual and historical account about the magnitude of corruption within AIS in the sense that he is presenting one fact or point at a time. His historical and almost deductive account can be heard as the description of what really happened with AIS.

Nieto’s statement is very different from Duzán’s (see excerpt 1) insofar as they adopt different rhythms. Unlike Nieto’s (excerpt 4), Duzán’s statement has many interjections, subordinations, and ideas within a single fragment. Excerpt 1 constitutes an example of these kinds of statements in which the rhythm is slow because the speaker
takes more time to think before speaking and because she combines many ideas in a single statement.

Finally, we can place excerpts 3, 4, and 1 on a continuum that represents different degrees of orality. Statements like Duzán’s (excerpt 1) share many of the psychodynamics of orality that I explained in the second chapter of this dissertation such as enumerative, additive, redundant, and situational thinking. On the other hand, Nieto’s explanation (excerpt 4) incorporates elements of writing such as rhythm, organization, and abstraction. However, despite the differences, all of these excerpts are examples of secondary orality in the sense that they all show the extent to which secondary orality shares elements with both orality and literacy. To further analyze this claim, I will explain the different characteristics of the grammar of radio that I found after analyzing *Hora 20* episodes.

**Grammatical Level**

The second level of communication of the secondary orality of radio corresponds to the grammar of this medium. Obviously, what I offer here are preliminary characteristics of this grammar since further research would be necessary in order to talk about a specific grammar. However, considering the little research on secondary orality and radio, I hope to contribute some preliminary ideas which might build upon this scholarly endeavor. The rhetorical analysis performed both on the audio and the transcription of *Hora 20*’s episodes about corruption show five rules that seem to be structural to the language of radio or, at least, to the genre of opinion that *Hora 20* embraces. Because they all describe the grammar of radio, I will refer to these rules as
sublevels of the grammatical communication level. Next, I will explain and illustrate each of these five sublevels:

Flow

Orality in radio can be seen as flows of information with particular rhythms. However, unlike the prosodic level, the grammatical level approaches radio conversations as statements where speakers combine different ideas using different grammatical resources. I have decided to use the word flow to describe this condition of language in which words move along in a very dependent relationship with time. As time passes, so do words. In addition, this flow has an amorphous character since units of meaning and language vary according to the kind of dialogue or conversation. In fact, it is difficult to establish the different units of oral language. Unlike writing that has units of meaning such as the sentence, the paragraph, or the chapter, orality does not have clear units like these. There is no clear equivalent to the sentence and the paragraph in orality. In addition, because orality is not based on the same punctuation system of writing, the distinction between sentences and paragraphs becomes even more complicated. Sometimes speakers take three minutes to make their point, while others do so in seconds. Moreover, speakers do not always use their statements to make one point, but to make several or even none. In this sense, I consider important to return to Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of utterance that I explained in the second chapter of this dissertation. By embracing Bakhtin’s approach we are not limiting meaning to sentences and we are not reducing communication to an exchange of signifiers, but we are including less structured units of meaning and thus acknowledging the complexity of the communication process itself.
All the excerpts that I have presented in this dissertation constitute examples of radio as a flow. However, I would like to offer one more excerpt to illustrate the way in which orality seems to have its own system of organization based on utterances rather than sentences or paragraphs. Talking about corruption in different countries of the world, professor and historian José Ángel claims:

5. Ángel: “there is corruption in the developed countries too, the case of Japan that we mentioned, [Japan] is always in the rankings of corruption, with a tremendous mafia, the Yakusa, that is certainly the institution that helped citizens over the last Tsunami, right? There is corruption everywhere, that’s something we all know, but the minimum conditions that Antonio pointed out which are education, health, welfare, and access to loans are provided by the States, the problem is that that doesn’t happen here, here one person dies because he doesn’t have access to medicine, he doesn’t know how to ask for a service, or he doesn’t have money to pay a lawyer, this is like a wheel where the citizen gets affected” (Ángel, 2011, May 13).

This statement continues for a little longer. However, this excerpt is long enough to show how meaning, organization, and punctuation are different in radio. I have chosen this confusing excerpt precisely to illustrate the fact that some ideas might seem confusing in writing, but they are clear in orality. The problem of confusion does not lie in the translation, but in the very act of transcription (for example, I did not include any periods because the length of the few pauses was not long enough). Confusion might come from the transcription and, therefore, from the intention of trying to make readable
a text that was orally performed. As an oral text, it combines several ideas within one statement and uses punctuation and pauses in a different manner from that of writing.

Finally, even though I refer to this characteristic of the grammar of radio as flow, it does not mean that this kind of communication does not follow rules or that it is difficult to understand by the radio audience. I acknowledge that I use this category in contraposition to writing where units of meaning, organization of ideas, usage of verbal tenses, and systems of punctuation are more rigid and hypercodified. However, it is not that the orality of radio violates these systems of rules, but that secondary orality appeals to specific modes of communication that are still valid and understandable. In fact, this is the way of communication that sounds natural in radio exchanges not only because of the way of presenting ideas, but also because oral conversations may take unexpected paths.

**Spontaneity**

Spontaneity is a second element that describes the grammar of secondary orality. It manifests on practices such as laughing, in comments that does not seem directly related to the main topic of analysis, or in actions that remind listeners about the live nature of the program. For example, throughout different episodes, it is common that radio speakers laugh, not making fun of another speaker, but as the result of the interaction between them. Considering the serious nature of *Hora 20*, it is interesting that laughter spontaneously arises and changes the tone of the episode for a brief period of time. On the other hand, regarding the live nature of the program, on a few occasions, the host of the program respectfully interrupts his guests to let them know that there are technical problems with microphones or with the quality of broadcast. These comments are made live and they are a spontaneous part of the conversation. In addition, it is not
uncommon that Morales changes the topic of the day, minutes before of the beginning of the program. Even though the topic of the day is announced through the radio station and social media after noon, if more important news happened before the broadcast—which is very common in Colombia– Morales changes the topic and explains why at the beginning of the program.

It is also common that, when introducing his guests, the host of the program starts brief and informal conversations with each guest about their jobs, the weather, or their political affiliations. For example, in the April 11th episode, Morales opens the show by announcing the topic of the day and before presenting the guests for that night, he claims:

6. Morales: “Uh, um, they’re telling me that there is brutal traffic jam around 5th street, in the north of Bogota, ok, let me present the panelists or at least those who have come so far: Héctor Riveros is a lawyer, consultant, he runs an online newspaper called Palabra Digital [Digital Word]. Héctor [Riveros], good evening!;

Riveros: Néstor and listeners, good evening!;

Morales: Where exactly is the traffic jam? 5th with?;

Riveros: Well, I don’t know, 5th with 62, I think, the street that you take to come to Caracol27, streets are blocked over there;

Morales: A listener tells me that the congestion is on the 70th. 7:42 PM, Ricardo Ávila is the director of [the newspaper] Portafolio, [he is also a] journalist, Ricardo [Ávila] good evening, how are you doing?;

---

27 Caracol is the name of the radio station that produces Hora 20.
Ávila: Good evening Néstor, I’m very happy to be here, and the truth is that I don’t report traffic problems;
Morales: Ok, well, let’s begin while the other two guests for tonight, Maria Jimena Duzán and Rafael Nieto, come; they are stuck in this traffic jam, or well, not, I hear that they are just in the elevator, ok, let’s start, Ricardo, I begin with you, what is your opinion about the carcelazo [capture of some officials] involved in AIS?” (Ávila, 2011, April 11; Morales, 2011, April 11; Riveros, 2011, April 11).
This excerpt shows many characteristics of secondary orality in radio. First, it illustrates how utterances are more flexible than sentences in the sense that they might be easily combined regardless of the relationship among them. For example, Morales easily moves from one subject to another, which (when listening) does not affect the understanding of his statements. Second, spontaneity manifests in the fact that Morales brings to the table the topic of the traffic jam and let his listeners know that two of his guests have not yet come even though the program has already started. Third, this fragment illustrates the vocabulary used by radio guests such as the word carcelazo for which I have not found an exact translation. The use of slang is very common throughout the episodes. However, it does not mean that speakers do not use categories or elevated vocabulary when they support their ideas. In fact, radio speakers are capable of doing both: they employ situational expressions in addition to abstract vocabulary, which also shows how secondary orality is a mode of interaction that draws on orality and writing, as discussed in chapter 2.
Fourth, this excerpt also illustrates another common characteristic that I will mention here, and further develop later, that has to do with the multiple and parallel
dialogues that both the host and the guests have with their audiences and/or the technical support team during the broadcast of the program. In excerpt 6, an example of parallel dialogues happens when Morales claims that one of his listeners told him—probably via Twitter or Facebook—where exactly the traffic jam has occurred or when he announces that the two other guests are in the elevator—probably because his producer told him via an internal microphone. Dynamics and exchanges like these, which would be eliminated from other radio or television programs, are deliberatively left in Hora 20 as a part of the spontaneous language of this radio program.

**Genre**

Even though secondary orality in radio stimulates spontaneity, it does not mean that there is no structure behind radio conversations. As I explained in the second chapter of this dissertation, genres always underlie communication encounters and, therefore, systems of rules somehow determine the organization of discourses as totalities and the types of relationships that these discourses establish with their audiences (Bakhtin, 2005). Extrapolating this claim to the radio episodes that I analyzed, I can argue that although Hora 20 stimulates spontaneity, that does not imply that everything in the program is improvised. Hora 20 embraces—and creates—a particular genre of talk radio in which the same format, formulas, and communicative devices occur every time and, as Bakhtin points out, the fulfillment of these expectations constitute a genre. In terms of this genre, Hora 20 follows five stages:

- Greeting: In the introduction, the host of the program, Néstor Morales, says the time, greets the audience, mentions the topic of the night, and invites the audience to participate through Facebook, Twitter, and Hora 20’s website. These elements
are always present at the beginning of the program, but they do not always occur in the same order. They are communicated by following the nature of secondary orality that I previous explained, that is, combining all of these elements with short pauses and the lack of an obvious order. Interestingly, sometimes the host of the program –as well as some of his guests– greet the hostages that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has kidnapped. They have even coined the expression *cambuche* to refer to kidnapped individuals and formally acknowledging them at the beginning of the program.

- **Presentation of panelists:** After the host greets his guests and the audience and sets the topic for the night, he presents the panelists that will analyze that topic. The presentation, as excerpt 6 shows, is informal and consists of providing the names of the guests, individually greeting them, and telling the audience their occupations and some interesting information about their background.

- **Presentation of the topic:** Although Morales mentions the topic at the beginning of every episode, after presenting the panelists, he gives a more detailed presentation of the topic, sometimes, providing his own point of view about it. As I explained in the last chapter (see excerpt 35), Morales is not objective in the sense that he also rhetorically constructs his discourse to present corruption in a particular way.

- **Body of discussion:** About 5 minutes after the program starts, radio guests begin the analysis of the topic of the day. At the beginning, Morales decides the order in which the radio guests participate and each one intervenes in a very orderly manner. However, after everyone has presented one first and general opinion about the topic, the conversation becomes much less organized. The guests talk
when they want, set or change the topic, monopolize time, interrupt, and ask questions among themselves without waiting for the host to guide the conversation. About an hour later (about 8:30 PM), there is a break for commercials and an update of the latest news. This break, however, occurs at different times every day and its duration is not always the same.

• Closing: Closing varies from episode to episode, but it basically consists of rapidly saying good-bye to the audience. Generally, radio speakers are so engaged in the conversation and debate, that Morales starts closing the episode, but guests do not pay attention and continue with their discussion. One or two minutes before the programs ends, everybody says good-bye and there is rarely time for a conclusion. The program often ends suddenly leaving open many subtopics.

One common element throughout all these stages of *Hora 20* is the reference to time. As I have explained, time is a very important element in radio language, and, in the case of *Hora 20*, it is supported by the fact that Morales constantly mentions the time as a way to organize the debate, try to balance the duration of the statements between each speaker, change subjects, and calm speakers when they become too excited or irritated.

Even though *Hora 20* leaves a lot of room for spontaneity, the existence of these different stages shows a structure underlying the program which tells us about the genre of this opinion program. As Furniss (2004) explains, genre is related to the expectations that audiences have. Paradoxically, in the case of *Hora 20*, these expectations have to do with spontaneity, but also with the fulfillment of the structure described above.
Enumeration

The fourth sublevel of the grammatical level is enumeration, that is, speakers’ attempt to list the topics that they will mention in relation to a specific question and/or the arguments that they will provide in order to support their ideas. Typically, radio guests proceed in the following way:

7. Roux: “No, I think it’s worth noting at least three points: First, it is important to ask for clarity about the scope of the reform…” (Roux, 2011, March 15).

8. Nieto: “Let me be the voice of dissent, I have five points to explain it…” (Nieto, 2011, March 15).

It is important for radio speakers to enumerate the points that they will present in their statements. However, they sometimes preview the enumeration of a certain number of points, but they just mention a few, or just one and forget the others. Other times, they begin the enumeration on point number two. Finally, they forget which point they are listing and, for instance, they move from point one to point three forgetting that they have not mentioned point number two. In excerpt 7, for example, although Roux announces that it is important to consider at least three points, he only explains one and does not even refer to the other two. In excerpt 8, Nieto is often interrupted by his interlocutors, but he is able to recall the point that he is making and the number to which that point corresponds, in order to continue developing his argument.

As Ong (2002) explains, pure oral thinking is additive and aggregative because these psychodynamics help speakers remember the ideas that they want to present. Writing, on the other hand, privileges subordination. Secondary orality draws on enumeration insofar as this technique allows radio speakers to organize and remember
their ideas. However, because it happens in an oral context, this enumeration is not as polished and precise as it would be in writing, as I showed in the analysis of excerpts 7 and 8.

**Redundancy**

The final grammatical level of secondary orality manifests in the redundancy of speakers’ statements. No rhetorical analysis allows researchers to “discover” the speakers’ “real” communicative intentions. It is not possible to know what they think and why they make certain discursive decisions. However, based on the discursive patterns of *Hora 20* and the scholarly literature on orality, redundancy can be explained by the speakers’ need to avoid silence. Radio punishes silence because it can be understood by the audience as a technical problem with the broadcast. Redundancy gives them time to think of a new idea while speaking. In addition, because thinking and speaking constitute a simultaneous process that leaves no time to go back and edit, speakers may repeat the same idea without noticing it. Finally, as Ong (2002) explains that pure orality, redundancy helps audiences to remember the main points that a speaker wants to communicate and, especially, helps audiences to understand complex claims.

In the case of *Hora 20*, speakers’ statements are often redundant when explaining how the Colombian health system works or the role of the Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute, IICA. However, this redundancy is necessary and helps the audience to understand a health system that is highly complicated and an international organization whose role in Secure Agricultural Income, AIS, is not easy to understand given the cooperative nature of this institution. Redundancy occurs both within a single statement and across several statements. Some radio speakers are very redundant and
repeat the same two or three ideas throughout different episodes or even within the same episode. Finally, redundancy also manifests throughout different episodes that analyze the same case of corruption (e.g. all episodes related to health corruption) in the sense that the general approaches to corruption become repetitive after listening to more than three episodes. Once again, this redundancy may help audiences to improve their understanding of corruption and may, at the same time, reproduce the different approaches to this phenomenon.

These are the identified sublevels that describe the grammar of secondary orality for *Hora 20*. As I have striven to show, these forms of communication share elements with both orality and literacy. For this reason, the grammar of secondary orality does not constitute an autonomous or independent system because it draws on the grammars of pure orality and writing. Finally, this grammar of secondary orality is highly influenced by the dialogical condition, which I will explain in the next section.

**Dialogic Level**

Secondary orality of radio is an event of interaction with two kinds of addressees: the interlocutors who are in the radio studio and the audience who listen to radio by using a radio device or the Internet. Even though different types of conversation emerge among them, addressivity is a common element that they all share: emphatic, grammatical, and dialogic decisions are made based on the addressee. While the other two levels of secondary orality focus on syntactic, semantic, and even phonetic dimensions of language, this level emphasizes a more pragmatic issue related to the interactions that emerge when speakers communicate. These interactions are not simply the contexts (e.g. space, time) in which communication takes place, but they are the very essence of the
communicative act. To some extent it is possible to claim that emphatic and grammatical
decisions are made considering the types of dialogues that speakers undertake. Because I
studied the particular forms of interaction that emerge between radio speakers (and not
between them and the audiences), in this section I present a typology of four kinds of
dialogues that describe the interactions among these radio speakers. These types of
dialogues are: parallel, pedagogical, collaborative, and controversial.

However, before presenting this typology, it is important to mention one
characteristic that is common across all types of dialogue: the speakers’ need to speak. As
I explained, at the beginning of every episode, the host of the program decides who
speaks first and then dialogue occurs in a very organized fashion. However, when that
first round of questions is over, speakers do not follow any organization. Morales
sometimes changes the subject, intervenes, or decides who should speak, but most of the
times, the dynamic of conversation is spontaneous and corresponds to the nature of the
topic of the day. The length of speakers’ statements is always different. Every speaker
often tends to monopolize conversations, but they are interrupted by their interlocutors.
Expressions like the following are common throughout all episodes: “I want to be the
next one [speaking]” (López, 2011, April 5); “Let me finish, let me finish my idea, let
me” (Lafaurie, 2011, April 5); “Please, don’t talk over me” (Benedetti, 2011, June 13);
“Rangel didn’t allow me to speak! He changed my adjectives and insulted me!”
(Benedetti, 2011, June 13).

The literature describes this struggle for having the opportunity to speak as a lack
of power because the hosts of talk radio programs decide who speaks and for how long
(Hutchby, 1996; Pinseler, 2008). The case of Hora 20 is different. There are obviously
issues of power because power is a constitutive element of any interpersonal encounter. However, as a host, Morales does not have absolute control over who speaks, when, and for how long. He works as moderator, but regardless of this role, he sometimes lets dialogues take their own course. In cases when a speaker has monopolized the conversation for a long period of time, or when speakers become very irritated, he does intervene to ask for calm or for a turn change. A final example illustrates this struggle for the opportunity to talk:

8. Flores: “How could you think so? Forgive me!, but I think that the Attorney General presented very serious evidence--;
Morales: Let’s finish the topic of--;
Flores: And very solid--;
Morales: Let’s finish the topic and then I’ll come back to you. Dr. Gómez Méndez also wants to talk and he hasn’t, he is silently waiting--;
Nieto: But you haven’t let me finish my thought--;
Duzán: You [Nieto] have talked for an hour!--;
Nieto: One hour!? Every time I start talking somebody interrupts me!--;
Flores: Nieto has been talking all the time--;
Morales: I’m going to moderate, so, now, let’s go back to the topic of--;

This excerpt illustrates how speakers strive to talk and monopolize conversation. Fights to speak are not always as explicit as this, but speakers often strive to have long turns to tell their ideas. At the same time, their interlocutors interrupt them in order to
speak. It is important to note that this dynamic of statement-interruption-statement does not make the program difficult to understand. Even though sometimes two speakers talk at the same time, as a listener, it is not difficult to follow one radio speaker while others are interrupting him or her and still understand what is going on. This is maybe one characteristic of the sense of hearing according to which the ear can isolate some sounds in order to concentrate on others.

Having explained this common element across all four dialogues, I will explain the complete typology in detail:

**Parallel Dialogues**

I use the expression parallel dialogues to describe those conversations that radio speakers have not only among themselves, but also with their listeners at different moments of the program. One would imagine that dialogues only occur among radio speakers in the studio and that audiences are passive listeners. However, listeners of *Hora 20* also interact with radio speakers through social media such as the website of *Caracol*, Twitter, and Facebook. Listeners use these media options to directly interact with a particular radio speaker or with the host of the program. Many times Morales reads specific tweets so that listeners’ comments add elements of analysis, set a new subject of discussion, make a clarification about an event, or present an opinion on a particular dimension of corruption.

The following brief excerpts illustrate this option of participation that listeners have: “I’m touched by the high amount of messages that I’ve received today and the episode just started” (Morales, 2011, May 5); “One listener has corrected us, we were wrong about…” (Morales, 2011, April 11); or Morales: “A listener just sent me a tweet
saying: ‘penal justice is the daughter of social injustice, populism doesn’t let legislative
initiatives change the judicial system” (Morales, 2011, August 25). The following and
last excerpt is a little longer, but it is interesting in the sense that it shows a parallel
dialogue between a radio guest and a listener in which the latter corrects a comment made
by the former:

9. Zuleta: “Before the program ends, um, I have to rectify something: I said that
never in the recent Colombian history a minister has been judicially investigated, but a
listener made me realize that there was a case, I was wrong, thanks to the listener, she
told me via Twitter, um, I apologize” (Zuleta, 2011, June 13)

Comments like these might constitute examples of parallel dialogues, but it does
not mean that listeners’ comments are not integrated into the program. They are parallel
in the sense that they do not occur in the studio, but are brought to the program and,
therefore, incorporated and not just ignored (at least some part of them). In other words, it
is not only that listeners give their opinion, but their comments may have real
consequences in the way in which the program goes by.

Moreover, there is a second level in which parallel dialogues occur and it is
related to the conversations that listeners of the program have among themselves through
the use of social media. Listeners interact with each other in order to debate or agree on a
certain opinion. In the July 26th episode, for example, Morales claims there is a
confrontation among listeners who, through Facebook and Twitter defend or attack
Andrés Felipe Arias’ role on AIS. This confrontation shows that the program is not
limited to the conversations in the studio, but that audiences engage and even establish
dialogues among themselves beyond the radio space of the program.
This dynamic of including and integrating listeners’ comments in the program is interesting not only because it challenges the idea of radio as an unidirectional medium, but also because it shows other ways of incorporating writing in a medium that is primarily oral. First, the fact that listeners’ comments are heard and reproduced by the host of the program—and sometimes by his guests—makes radio a medium that allows participation and invites the audience to be active and critical in response to what they hear. Audiences might also participate on this dialogic event. Second, it is interesting to notice that listeners’ comments are written to be read which contributes to the intersections of orality and writing that Hora 20 makes possible. The incorporation of written texts through the use of social media also influences the nature of secondary orality because it adds more elements to the language of radio. I will further analyze these ideas in the last chapter of this dissertation. For now I close this section by highlighting the importance that these parallel dialogues have in the context of Hora 20 because they allow the audience to participate and to be part of the dialogues that radio generates.

Pedagogical Dialogue

Some dialogues—regardless if they are parallel or not—focus on explaining specific concepts or processes to the audiences or to other radio speakers. This pedagogical function is performed by both the host of the program and his guests. Because of the complexity of the issues discussed in Hora 20, radio speakers feel the need to explain terms and procedures that might be too difficult to understand. These pedagogical dialogues help audiences to be more familiar with issues like the Colombian health system, the Secure Agricultural Income program, the judicial accusatory system, in addition to other issues that are difficult to understand even for a lawyer. The following
excerpt constitutes an example of this pedagogical dialogue whose main purpose is to educate the audience:

10. Morales: “The Attorney General said that this [Secure Agricultural Income] was the worst scandal of corruption in the history of Colombia (...) because the embezzlement was about 300 thousand million [pesos]--;

Uribe: But Néstor [Morales], do people know what embezzlement is? You should explain that--;

Morales: Ok, Uribe, please explain that--;

Uribe: Ok, well, um, I mean, embezzlement is a very rare word, embezzlement means misuse or misappropriation of taxes or public money” (Morales, 2011, April 5; Uribe, 2011, April 5).

In this excerpt Morales and Uribe explain to the audience what the meaning of embezzlement is and how this practice may constitute an act of corruption. Explanations like this help people understand the vocabulary and the different contexts in which acts of corruption occur. However, it is important to note that, from a rhetorical standpoint, these explanations are not entirely disinterested in the sense that they are also part of the speakers’ attempts to present factual accounts about corruption. Some explanations not only seek to clarify a term or a procedure, but they help radio speakers to reify reality and to present phenomena as they “really happened.” For example, when speakers repeatedly want to have the opportunity to speak in order to explain what the Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute, IICA, is, they not only want the audience to be familiar with the role and function of this organization, but they use their explanations to favor their own accounts of corruption. As I explained on the previous chapter, those who
have a less radical approach to agricultural corruption define IICA as an organization whose role is to directly contract with agricultural institutions or private individuals, whereas those who have a more radical approach to corruption define IICA as an institute whose only mission is to supervise agricultural programs. Radio speakers define and explain to the audience the role of this institute, but they use this opportunity to construct an account that rhetorically aligns with their own accounts of corruption.

**Collaborative Dialogue**

*Hora 20’s* radio speakers engage in collaborative dialogue when they work together in order to analyze an issue or to express a point of view. It does not mean that they have to agree, but at least they help each other and collectively engage in a type of dialogue that is constructive and inclusive. This kind of dialogue occurs when radio speakers assume an attitude of respect and they listen to their interlocutors not with the aim to criticize, but to understand another’s point of view and to continue to build from that point. On a very basic level, collaborative dialogue occurs when radio speakers remind each other about particular names, dates, and procedures that one speaker suddenly forgets. On a broader sense, collaborative dialogue manifests when radio speakers respectfully and carefully listen to their interlocutors in order to complement their ideas.

On some occasions, it is the host of the program who turns an entire episode into a scenario of collaborative dialogue. For example, the main purpose of the May 13 broadcast was to discuss the causes of Colombian corruption and even though every speaker wanted to defend one cause as the main and the only cause of corruption, Morales did not choose one of the causes and, therefore, he did not align with a particular
speaker. Instead, throughout the program he created a list of causes and, therefore, approached corruption as a multicausal phenomenon. More interestingly, he also took into account listeners’ comments to add to this list of causes. The following is a brief excerpt from this episode:

11. Morales: “I continue getting messages from listeners and I will read some other causes of Colombian corruption that they consider important, but that you [guests] have not mentioned: citizenship, education and drug trafficking (…). So, we have how many? Ten causes so far? Twelve?” (Morales, 2011, May 13).

This episode, as a whole, constitutes an example of collaborative dialogue promoted and led by the host of the program in which he uses speakers’ and listeners’ comments to analyze the different causes of corruption in Colombia. In other episodes collaborative dialogue does not manifest as the preferred dialogue of the entire program, but it occurs over brief moments of the broadcast. In other words, it is not that every episode corresponds with a specific kind of dialogue, but different kinds of dialogues are present in the same episode. In these cases, collaboration happens among particular radio speakers and over specific periods of time.

Even though inclusive and constructive dialogue occurs with some frequency, there is one particular case when a radio guest explicitly accepts that he has changed his mind as a result of the arguments presented by his interlocutor. While speakers sometimes change their opinions about a given issue after having listened to the other guests, they rarely admit it. In the thirteen episodes analyzed for this dissertation, I only found one occasion in which a speaker did so, which is interesting because it does not imply that collaborative, constructive, or inclusive dialogue does not occur in Hora 20.
On the contrary, what it shows is that speakers do not explicitly admit that their interlocutors have persuaded them to the point of changing a prior opinion. This receptivity considerably decreases when speakers engage in confrontational dialogue.

**Confrontational Dialogue**

In order to analyze a controversial phenomenon, some radio and television shows invite two individuals who represent very different positions on an ideological spectrum. Debate is the most common outcome of this encounter where two individuals embrace very different positions. The case of *Hora 20* is different not only because there are four guests every night, but also because some of them do not represent extreme ideological positions. Contrary to what happens in a television show when the host wants confrontation between two radical perspectives, radio guests in *Hora 20* embrace perspectives that are not always extreme, which invites them to have a more productive dialogue. Collaborative dialogue is possible because the program does not consist on the confrontation of “two teams” who represent two radical perspectives. However, because not all guests embrace the same ideologies and opinions, confrontational dialogue does emerge. The difference here is that confrontation is not the product of just two extreme positions, but an interlocution from several positions on an ideological spectrum. There is debate, but, unlike many talk radio programs, confrontation does not consist of listening to just two opposite interpretations or opinions about the same phenomenon. The fact that corruption is framed in more than five ways is an example of this dynamic where controversy is not as predictable as it can be in other talk shows.

Unlike collaborative dialogue when disagreement might occur, in confrontational dialogue, radio speakers might not listen to each other or they interrupt in order to
express their opinion. In the following excerpt, professor and politician Juan Carlos
Flores discusses with lawyer and journalist Rafael Nieto about the Attorney General’s
decision to accuse former Minister, Andrés Felipe Arias, of using Secure Agricultural
Income for his own benefit:

12. Nieto: “So, what is the [Andrés Felipe Arias’] crime?;
Flores: The crime is that the Attorney General is imputing him!;
Nieto: What is [that crime]?;
Morales: Illegal contracting!;
Nieto: Where is the illegal part?--;
Flores: In the arguments! Nieto, you are supposing that we don’t know anything
about this case, it was broadcast live on TV today, I saw it!--;
Nieto: (inaudible) different crimes--;
Flores: Here with us is Dr. Gómez who is a very well-known criminal lawyer, he
can explain it to you--;
Nieto: Juan Carlos [Flores]: Illegal contracting--;
Flores: But Rafael [Nieto]--,
Nieto: We have to distinguish desire from--;
Morales: Quiet, please!--;
Flores: To defend Andrés Felipe Arias is legitimate, you have the right to defend
him, but--;
Nieto: You want him [Andrés Felipe Arias] convicted, but this is not about what
you want, your desire, it’s--;
Flores: No, no, I’m not the judge!--;
Nieto: Me neither!--;
Morales: Well, ok--;
Flores: But you do seem to be his lawyer!--;
Nieto: No, no, no--;
Flores: Of course--;
Morales: Ok, I’ll interrupt you both--;
Flores: But you seem to be his lawyer, honestly--;
Nieto: And you seem the Attorney General--;
Morales: Juan Carlos [Flores], please!--;
Flores: No, the Attorney General is Dr. Vivian Morales, not me--;
Nieto: And Andrés Felipe’s lawyer is Dr.--;
Morales: Each one has 30 seconds to finish! No more, enough!” (Flores, 2011, July 21; Morales, 2011, July 21; Nieto, 2011, July 21).

Beyond the disagreement between Flores and Nieto about Andrés Felipe Arias being accused of embezzlement, this exchange is confrontational in the sense that they attack each other’s persona in order to undermine their arguments. Not only does the discussion become personal, but there is no intention of listening, understanding, and sharing. In exchanges like this, the predominant intention is to criticize, confront, and deny rather than to understand, share, and construct.

Having explained these four kinds of dialogues, it is important to make a final clarification about the meaning of dialogue itself. As discussed, in the second chapter of this dissertation dialogue does not imply an I – Thou encounter in which there is a profound respect between speakers and the desire to become one through language.
(Buber, 1958). The analysis of *Hora 20* shows that even when there is no agreement among radio speakers, dialogue does exist because there is addressivity and words are always said in relation to a specific interlocutor. Thus, addressivity is present across all levels of communication and becomes a core characteristic of secondary orality as I will explain in the next chapter.

In this chapter I have described the characteristics of secondary orality by suggesting three main levels through which this secondary orality manifests in *Hora 20*: emphatic, grammatical, and dialogic. In this sense, I have examined how the use of elements such as interjections, rhythm, tone, flow, spontaneity, genre, enumeration, redundancy, as well as, parallel, pedagogical, collaborative, and confrontational dialogues, define the language of talk radio. I have also claimed that all three levels and corresponding sublevels of secondary orality create a particular rhetorical situation of addressivity in which speakers connect with their addressees in particular ways. The formulation of these levels of secondary orality might contribute to our understanding of the language of talk radio. Indeed, more research is necessary to examine whether all radio communication follows the characteristics of secondary orality that I described here. However, this dissertation constitutes an initial attempt to explore the language of talk radio. In the following chapter I will discuss how this language of talk radio works in the particular context of conversations about Colombian corruption.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

In the first chapter of this dissertation I explained the characteristics and the importance of radio in Colombia as well as the dynamics and scope of corruption in this country. Finally, I provided the rationale for this dissertation. In the second chapter, I presented a review of the literature produced on talk radio. In addition, I explained the concepts of orality and secondary orality as well as important characteristics of secondary orality such as addressivity, dialogue, and genre. Finally, I discussed the problem of factuality and its related terms, such as rhetoric and symbolic efficacy. In the third chapter, I described *Hora 20* and explained why I selected this program to analyze the role of secondary orality in the construction of discourses about corruption. I also explained the method of cluster analysis and describe each of the stages that I followed in order to perform a rhetorical analysis of *Hora 20*.

In the fourth chapter, I described the different clusters of terms that speakers use to frame Colombian corruption. These main clusters approach corruption as invasive decay, an illegal practice, an irregular action, an unethical behavior, a piñata, and a criminal business. Even though there are not clear agon terms that stand against corruption, the ideas of control, normality, and pureness/cleanliness are sometimes employed by speakers to explain what the opposite of corruption is. In chapter 4, I also described different rhetorical strategies that radio speakers use to construct factual discourses of corruption. These rhetorical devices include particularization, normalization, generalization, as well as the use of comparisons, facts and figures, narratives, and positionality.
In the fifth chapter, I described *Hora 20*’s episodes on corruption in terms of their language. I suggested three levels of secondary orality: the emphatic, grammatical, and dialogical. Each of levels has different sublevels which refer to both micro and macro units of communication such as interjections, rhythm, tone, flow, spontaneity, genre, enumeration, redundancy, as well as, parallel, pedagogical, collaborative, and confrontational dialogues.

In this final chapter, I will present a more detailed connection between chapters 4 and 5, and, therefore, between radio representations of corruption and secondary orality. Then, I will summarize how this dissertation advances our understanding of corruption, radio, and cluster analysis. Lastly, I will suggest some directions for future research.

Secondary Orality and Corruption

To make more explicit the relationship between the clusters of terms described in chapter 4 and the characteristics of the secondary orality of radio discussed in chapter 5, in this section, I will offer a preliminary answer to the research question that guided this dissertation. This answer will be preliminary in the sense that further research will be needed in order to characterize the language of radio. However, the rhetorical analysis performed on *Hora 20*’s episodes on corruption are enough to provide an initial discussion about this research problem. To remind readers, the research question that motivated this study was: how does secondary orality contribute to the construction of factual discourses about Colombian corruption? In general terms, I can claim that secondary orality leads to a highly polysemous understanding of corruption in which different approaches to this phenomenon correspond with particular terministic screens. The invitational nature of secondary orality –and, specifically, of radio– makes possible
the co-existence of various terministic screens in which different factual discourses of corruption are represented through language. These different factual discourses on corruption emerge in the context of what we might call dialogic rhetoric. Beyond the realm of discourse, this polysemy of corruption has material consequences resulting on what I called the normalization of corruption.

Because this short answer above contains many claims that require further explanation and analysis, I will develop the three main ideas included in this statement in order to explicitly present the relationship between secondary orality and radio representations of corruption. These three ideas include: the invitational nature of secondary orality, dialogic rhetoric, and normalization of corruption.

**Invitational Nature of Secondary Orality**

Because it is based on dialogue, a talk radio program like *Hora 20* offers a variety of voices, which communicate similar or different approaches regarding a particular issue. When invited to analyze Colombian corruption, *Hora 20*’s radio speakers express their different approaches to this phenomenon and talk radio allows them—and the audiences— the possibility to share these different understandings. The polysemous nature of the understanding of corruption leads to six main terms that speakers use to frame corruption: invasive decay, illegal practice, irregular action, unethical behavior, piñata, and criminal business. Each of these terms constitute what Burke (1966) calls a terministic screen, that is, a frame of interpretation from which speakers define and reproduce specific approaches to corruption. Connotations of corruption vary according to the terministic screen that is used to analyze a particular corrupt event. For example, seen from the terministic screen that considers corruption as a criminal business, corrupt
events are illegal practices through which individuals attempt to increase their capital (i.e. political, economic, symbolic, or social). The severity of corruption is far higher here than in the terministic screen that approaches corruption as an irregular behavior which might be illegitimate, but not necessarily illegal.

This polysemous nature of secondary orality complicates Burke’s (1959) classification of positive and negative terms as frames of acceptance and rejection. As I explained in the third chapter of this dissertation, according to Burke, negative terms stand against positive terms insofar as the latter contradict the former. Specifically, the co-existence of various terministic screens of corruption complicates Burke’s categorization in the sense that rather than having a dialectic relationship between positive and negative terms which rotate around a shared ultimate term, the analysis of Hora 20 shows six different understandings of corruption operating simultaneously. In other words, the analysis of radio conversations show that there is not one term that clearly stands against another, but six different terms whose nature is not always entirely positive nor negative. For example, the way in which radio speakers frame corruption as an irregular practice is neither positive nor negative, but stands between both values. In addition, the fact that there is not a clear agon term illustrates the complexity of the kinds of relationships that emerge among the terms that speakers use to describe corruption. Finally, unlike many of the clusters analysis that have been done (see, for example, Berthold, 1976; Burke, 1959; Lynch, 2006), in this dissertation I did not find two main clusters of terms which relate to each other in a dialectic manner, but six different clusters of terms that represent corruption in a diversity of ways.
Each terministic screen can be considered as a set of specific vocabulary, rhetorical resources, and figures of language that works as a particular system of interpretation about corruption. The conversational character of talk radio allows speakers the possibility to present, argue, and reproduce their own terministic screens on corruption. The agonistic tone that Ong (2002) attributes to pure orality is indeed present in the secondary orality of radio where speakers confront their own terministic screens and undermine others’. Whether or not Hora 20’s dialogues tend to be collaborative or confrontational, the tone of the program is agonistic itself since we have six different perspectives on corruption, each of which struggles to be accepted as “the one” correct perspective. In this sense, the understanding of corruption is polysemous but attempts to be monosymous. Talk radio reproduces an agonistic tone not so much because there might be verbal confrontations between radio speakers, but especially because talk radio becomes a scene of dispute or competition among different terministic screens that present corruption in very different ways.

In the context of a live conversation that is broadcast to millions of listeners, speakers perform rhetorical work that helps them to present their accounts on corruption not like one more approach among five others, but as “the” correct and appropriate approach to corruption. As I showed, this rhetorical work consists of using language to create factual accounts on corruption and, therefore, on presenting a particular interpretation of this phenomenon as the only valid and real. Even though dialogue in talk radio gives speakers the opportunity to construct factual accounts of corruption, the very same nature of dialogue allows them to undermine others’ factual accounts.
Although some sociologists (see, for example, Latour, 1987 and Woolgar, 1988) consider that it is the process of writing that turns ideas into facts, the analysis of *Hora 20* shows that factuality is also present in secondary oral discourses. Even through orality radio speakers strive to present their accounts as independent from their interests, and their claims as real, valid, and exempt of subjective desire. Further research might compare how the rhetorical construction of factuality manifests in secondary orality and writing. In this dissertation, I have found the use of many rhetorical devices for the construction of that factuality in secondary orality, such as, particularization, generalization, normalization, positionality, as well as the use of comparisons, facts and figures, and narratives.

The use of these rhetorical strategies show that ideas or objects do not need to be written in order to become factual, but they may acquire their factual character even when communicated orally. Moreover, beyond the field of sociology of science where the scholarship about factuality has been produced, we can claim that the oral language also allows speakers to present as facts non-scientific issues about which they communicate. Corruption, for example, is not a subject that belongs to the field of sciences and I found that the discourse on corruption strives to appear factual. Interestingly, the invitational nature of talk radio where different speakers and listeners participate makes them use rhetorical strategies of factuality so that other speakers do not undermine their accounts or think that these accounts are interested. In other words, it is precisely the agonistic tone of radio what makes speakers present factual accounts about the terministic screens of corruption that they embrace.
In this context, the polysemy of corruption emerges as a consequence of the
dialogic nature of secondary orality, which invites many speakers to present similar or
different perspectives about this phenomenon. As a result of this dynamic, it is possible to
track six different terministic screens on corruption in *Hora 20*. Insofar as terministic
screens function in the realm of language, their reproduction requires a rhetorical work
that, in the context of talk radio, is performed through dialogue. Next, I explain this
dynamic that I call dialogic rhetoric.

*Dialogic Rhetoric*

As discussed in chapter 2, rhetoric can be approached as a theory, a method, or a
practice. We can also consider rhetoric as an attribute of certain speeches or as a
dimension of all discourses regardless of their purpose (e.g. pedagogical, informative),
nature (e.g. oral, written), or audience (e.g. one person, a large public). Following a
constitutive approach to rhetoric, I embraced Brummet’s (1991) definition of rhetoric
according to which it is a “function of managing meaning within social arrangements and
is thus a dimension of countless acts and objects” (p. 74). In the context of this
dissertation, rhetoric becomes a dimension or component of radio speakers’ discourses
about corruption. As I showed in chapter 4, in order to compete with other terministic
screens and, therefore, with different understandings of corruption, speakers need to
rhetorically construct their claims so that these claims seem factual and thus more
plausible than others. For instance, to argue that corruption is an irregular action and not
necessarily an illegal practice, speakers perform rhetorical work that consists of the use of
comparisons, facts and figures, narratives, particularizations, generalizations,
normalizations, and positionality.
I use the specific label of *dialogic rhetoric*\(^{28}\) not only because it highlights the role that dialogue plays in the rhetorical choices that these speakers make, but also because it focuses on the characteristics of rhetorical situations that are particularly oral. This label also allows me to describe the rhetorical performance that I observe among *Hora 20*’s radio speakers which includes the following characteristics: high agonistic tone, the physical presence of the addressee, and the instance of dialogue. These three components make the oral rhetorical work a performance highly tied to the world of dialogue. The speakers’ struggle to support their own terministic screens regarding corruption and to undermine others’ give *Hora 20* a highly agonistic tone in which several definitions compete, and which generate confrontation among radio guests. In addition, the physical presence of interlocutors who also have the opportunity to participate, makes speakers to anticipate criticism and to answer to direct accusations or compliments from those interlocutors. Finally, talk radio is an instance of dialogue in which different perspectives on corruption co-exist. As described in chapter 4, these dialogues may take the form of parallel, pedagogical, collaborative, or confrontational dialogues. That speakers do not necessarily achieve any kind of agreement or that no terministic screen of corruption “triumpsh” over the others, does not make them non-dialogic; the interplay among those terministic screens over the meaning of corruption is precisely what makes them dialogic.

\(^{28}\) Evidently, I am not the first person using the label dialogic rhetoric. Authors such as Cisna & Anderson (2002) as well as Czubaroff (2012) have described a dialogic approach to rhetoric. However, while I focus on the rhetorical work that speakers accomplish when having dialogues in the contexts of secondary orality, these scholars approach dialogic rhetoric from a more general standpoint. Czubaroff, for example, draws on Foss and Griffin’s notion of invitational rhetoric to claim that a dialogical model of rhetoric is grounded on values of equality, respect, self-determination, and appreciation. Cisna and Anderson draw on Buber’s ideas on dialogue to point out that a rhetorical approach to dialogue highlights the importance of confirming each other’s presence rather than achieving agreement. As I argue later in the chapter, I use label dialogic rhetoric to describe the characteristics of rhetorical situations that are particularly oral and therefore characterized by a high agonistic tone, the physical presence of the addressee, and the instance of dialogue.
Here two clarifications are necessary. First, I am not implying that these three elements—agonistic tone, presence of the addressee and dialogue—are not present in other rhetorical contexts (e.g. writing, digital communication). Since I have not studied any other medium, I do not have elements to describe how rhetoric works beyond radio contexts. Second, I am aware that not all kinds of addressees are physically present in the broadcast of talk radio programs like *Hora 20*. Even though they have the opportunity to participate and some of them do so, radio audiences are still unknown and they are located in a variety of places. Unlike the radio speakers who are physically invited to the show, audiences are unknown addressees. They are what Ong (2002) calls a fiction in the sense that they exist, but they do not seem to be real since we cannot see them and we do not know how they read and interpret messages. A research study about radio consumption would be necessary to determine the terministic screens on corruption that audiences prefer, oppose, or negotiate (Morley, 1990). However, the study of the interactions among radio guests that I provide here sheds light not only in the way in which speakers construct factual discourses about Colombian corruption, but also regarding the role of rhetoric in secondary oral contexts.

The *dialogic* condition of rhetoric also emphasizes the influence that dialogue has in the way in which speakers communicate. When communication takes the form of dialogue—as it happens in talk radio—rhetoric underlies, fundamentally, the way in which the addressers relate to the addressees. As I explained in chapter 5, this relationship between addressers and addressees works at three levels: the emphatic, the grammatical, and the dialogic. In other words, a dialogic rhetoric highlights the role of addressivity and, therefore, the way language is used in relation to the other. The different levels of
secondary orality are also different levels of addressivity through which speakers engage with their interlocutors: Speakers address the other not only through the interjections, tone, and rhythm that they use, but also through the kinds of dialogues that they perform and the grammatical decisions that they make. Although these decisions might become somehow unconscious (Ong, 2002; Potter, 1996; Tolson, 2006), they are still rhetorical decisions that speakers make according to the addressee that they have before them. To put it in Bakhtin’s (1981) terms: “the word is directed toward an answer. It is determined by that which has not yet been said” (p. 280). That is why the core of dialogic rhetoric lies in the addressivity of language and not in the word itself as Austin’s (1975) speech act theory would suggest.

The radio programs analyzed also show that communication–at least in secondary oral contexts–is rhetorical because it goes beyond its function to re-present the world in isolation, as if this representation did not occur in a specific context, and before and for a specific person or group of people. In this sense, a dialogic rhetoric articulates Bakhtin’s (1981, 1990) and Burke’s (1969) ideas to claim that it is because of this condition of addressivity of language that speakers may become consubstantial. If “the word in language is someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293), it is because the meaning of that word is not exhausted in the relationship between signifier and signified, but it is achieved through the joint efforts of the individuals who produce, listen, and interpret that word. Hora 20 illustrates dialogic rhetoric not because it broadcasts exchanges between two or more people, but because each speaker’s statement is rhetorically designed according to what speakers expect their interlocutors to respond. Each one of the six terministic screens of corruption is designed not only to provide a particular
description of this phenomenon, but also to counteract or undermine the other five
descriptions. These terministic screens emerge in the context of dialogue as the result of
the unexpected paths that communication may take in oral contexts.

Because of these reasons, I claimed that the analysis of talk radio shows that,
more than a language, secondary orality refers to an event of interaction and, especially,
to a particular rhetorical situation of addressivity whose levels I described in chapter 5.
Hence, the unit of meaning of secondary orality is not the sentence, but the utterance. As
Todorov (1984) explains, the utterance represents a social structure and not a syntactic
one. The utterance is a social unit in the sense that meaning emerges from the interaction
between speakers that takes place within a specific socio-historical context. Because it is
based on dialogue, secondary orality is an instance of utterances where meaning is
mutually constructed and where “integral understanding is actively responsive” (Bakhtin,
2001b, p. 1233). Insofar as dialogue is constituted by utterances, secondary orality
acquires the invitational nature that I described in the previous section. Through
utterances, radio speakers construct and communicate the terministic screens of
corruption that they embrace. Evidently, this invitational nature has some material
consequences that I explain next.

Normalization of Corruption

The nature of secondary orality in radio allows the co-existence of different
terministic screens of corruption. Each terministic screen exists in the vocabularies and
rhetorical strategies that speakers use to define corruption and to frame it according to
specific characteristics. However, beyond reproducing different understandings of
corruption, terministic screens also suggest diverse programs of action. I return to
Burke’s (1969) notion of program of action to explain how the frames of orientation through which individuals perceive the reality not only ground their perception of the world, but also reflect speakers’ motives for acting. To recall Burke’s (1954) example, “To call a man a friend or an enemy is per se to suggest a program of action with regard to him” (p. 177). In a similar sense, the six different terministic screens that radio speakers use to frame corruption suggest distinct programs of action with respect to this phenomenon. For example, to define corruption as an unethical act suggests a program of action centered on an individual’s behavior and, specifically, on his or her system of values. On the other hand, to understand corruption as an illegal practice suggests a different program of action that is focused on the legal system of a Nation-State.

The polysemy that secondary orality motivates has material consequences beyond the realm of language. One of the main consequences of this polysemy has to do, precisely, with the lack of agreement on the definition of corruption. This lack of consensus is somewhat surprising considering that corruption has been one of the most serious problems in Colombian recent history (Cepeda, 1997, 1999). Despite a great deal of analysis, consensus is also lacking about the nature, causes, and consequences of this phenomenon, which is evident in the fact that, for example, according to one terministic screen corruption represents an invasive decay of unknown nature while, according to another, it is a deliberate illegal business created with the purpose to obtain various kinds of capital. In the context of several competing approaches to corruption, several programs

---

29 From an ontological standpoint I do not embrace a radical constructionism according to which reality does not exist outside language. However, I do not embrace either an ontological realism (Ibáñez, 2001) in which reality exists outside us and the characteristics of that reality are fixed and can be measured. I consider Berger and Luckman’s ideas (1991) more plausible in the sense that language plays a very important role in our understanding of reality but it does not construct that reality by itself.
of action also compete, even those where there is nothing to do against some practices of corruption because they have become normal, and therefore, legitimate.

The second—but very related—material consequence of this polysemy is the normalization of corruption that I explained in chapter 4. For instance, some radio speakers argue that the practices that occurred within Secure Agricultural Income or within Health Insurance Companies are normal and should not be framed as corrupt events. In addition, the number of times that a probable corrupt event occurs may become an indicator that this event does not constitute corruption anymore. In this sense, because they are culturally accepted, these practices become legitimate even though law forbids them as it happens in the case of the contracts made by Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute, IICA, or in the case of the free pricing of medicines undertaken by the Health Insurance Companies. This hiatus between law and culture\textsuperscript{30} is a main consequence—and cause—of the normalization of corruption. In addition, this hiatus is maintained by the reliance on particular terministic screens. Speakers claim that the fact that some actions have always been done in the same way justifies their practice.

I described how speakers rhetorically normalize and abnormalize certain practices of corruption in order to support their own terministic screens and undermine others’. The fact that there is not a definitive and explicit term that stands against corruption as its main agon term also confirms how vague and polysemous the notion of corruption is. The most striking case is the speakers’ use of the term normal to both define what corruption is and to describe what its opposite action is. That is, they use the notion of normal both as a cluster term and as an agon term. Some radio guests minimize the acts

\textsuperscript{30} For a more complete description of this divorce between law and culture in the Colombian culture see Mockus (2004).
of corruption attributed to Secure Agricultural Income and Health Insurance Companies because they consider that there were not corrupt practices involved, but normal actions that do not represent violations of law, unethical behaviors or major irregularities. Speakers’ use of the notion of control as an agon term is also interesting in the sense that this expression might be considered as a solution or a measure to avoid corruption, but not as the opposite of this phenomenon.

To the various terministic screens of corruption also correspond several agon terms. Ultimately, we are still uncertain about which the opposite of corruption is. It might be values, ethics, cleanliness, control, normality, and legality, among others. In this context of dispute among different agon terms, it is also difficult to find a solution to corruption since there is not a clear place to begin: while some speakers attribute corruption to particular individuals, others blame entire social structures, and there are others who even attribute corruption to an unknown agent whose nature might be compared with that of a virus. The existence of competing terministic screens of corruption and agon practices imply the existence of competing programs of action against corruption, which makes more complex and uncertain the decision that the Colombian society, the government, or the individuals might take in relation to this problem. Programs of action are different when corruption is approached as an illegal, an unethical, an irregular, or even a normal practice.

This scenario of dispute among programs of action against corruption might seem daunting or challenging, to say the least. However, knowing the different vocabularies constitutes a very important step in the fight against corruption. As I discussed in chapter 2, while some scholars think that communication plays a very important role in this fight
(Jarso, 2011; Yusha’u, 2009; Mockus, 2004), most of them accuse mass media of trivializing issues of corruption and turning them into a spectacle (Breit, 2010; Giglioli, 1996; Pásara, 2003). Rather than approaching Hora 20 as a program that turns corruption into a spectacle, we can consider this talk radio show as a scenario where speakers analyze issues of corruption and help Colombian audiences to understand the way in which these events occur. The lack of agreement about corruption does not make of Hora 20 a weak program. On the contrary, it provides a kind of radiography about how Colombians understand corruption. The different terministic screens embraced by radio speakers reveal Colombians’ cultural perceptions of this phenomenon. Moreover, it illustrates the programs of action that each of these terministic screens carry with them.

In addition, talk radio shows why some scholars claim that communication represents the first step against corruption. To have a dialogue in which some Colombians discuss whether or not corruption is an illegal, unethical, irregular, or normal practice constitutes the first—and one of the most important—steps to decide how to deal with this phenomenon. To already have public dialogues on corruption broadcast to millions of listeners constitutes an important initial measure. Insofar a society can have a dialogue that allows it to share and confront its different understandings of corruption, this society might more easily know what programs of action undertake because competition of terms allow negotiation of meaning, whereas in the absence of terms it is impossible to negotiate among them. Hora 20, for example, not only shows that Colombians do not agree on what a corrupt even is, but also that a large hiatus separates culture from law so that illegal actions that seek to benefit private interests may be

31 Evidently, this dialogue could be more inclusive in the sense of involving more individuals or being more pedagogical. However, it is an attempt to talk about corruption.
considered legitimate. Once Colombians realize that even though corruption is one of the
most serious problems of the country, there is no agreement on what it is and how to
avoid it. It might be easier for the Colombian society to decide the kinds of cultural,
economic, legal, and political measures required to decrease this phenomenon if they
begin to seek a shared vocabulary. Thus, communication becomes the key strategy to
decide and implement different programs of action against corruption.

Now that I have striven to provide a preliminary answer for the research question
that guided this dissertation, in the next section I will highlight some of the contributions
that this study makes to the field of communication.

Contributions to the Field of Communication

In this section, I will briefly mention the contributions that this dissertation makes
to the subfields of corruption, radio and secondary orality, and cluster analysis.

Corruption

The lack of consensus among Hora 20 speakers about the definition of corruption
is also present within the academic field where scholars do not agree in the definition,
types, causes, and consequences of this phenomenon. Most definitions of corruption seem
to restrict it to an action performed by an isolated individual. The analysis of Hora 20’s
conversations shows that corruption—at least in the Colombian context—can be
considered as a collective enterprise in which several individuals unite and, as a group,
seek a way to increase their capital. The case of corruption in Health Insurance
Companies, for example, shows an association of individuals in the form of cartel with
the purpose to make agreements about prices of medicines, health services, and
administrative documentation so that these companies can increase their income beyond the subsidies provided by the State and the payments made by the users.

In addition, the distinction between State, political, private, and non-governmental corruption might not be valid in certain contexts where corruption is performed by all of these kinds of agents. Secure Agricultural Income, for instance, is a case of corruption where politicians (Andrés Felipe Arias), private individuals (wealthy families from the Caribbean Coast), and non-governmental institutions (IICA) are involved. In a similar sense, the kind of result that corrupt agents seek is not either political or economic but both. To follow Bourdieu’s (2000) classification of capitals, we may claim that, by performing corrupt acts, agents seek an increase of their economic, political, symbolic, or social capitals, all at the same time. In the case of corruption in Secure Agricultural Income, for example, Minister Andrés Felipe Arias obtained social (future funders of his political campaign), symbolic (political recognition), and political (electoral capital) capitals.

Finally, the lack of consensus among scholars about the theoretical frameworks that explain corruption seems to suggest that this phenomenon can be explained by articulating –rather than choosing– behavioral and structural approaches so that corruption can be understood not only as a behavioral problem, but also as a structural one. Moreover, the analysis of Hora 20’s episodes, as well as the revision of the scholarship on Colombian corruption would imply that corruption has a strong cultural component in the sense that it might be approached as a cultural characteristic of Colombians’ identity (de la Calle, 1999). The fact that radio speakers do not agree on what a corrupt act is and, specifically, the fact that some of them frame some corrupt
practices as normal could suggest that, because it is a dimension of Colombian culture, corruption is not radically condemned or homogeneously defined. I want to be extremely clear here: I am not claiming that all Colombians are corrupt. I claim that Colombian history has had many episodes and factors that have somehow led to the normalization of corruption. These episodes, as I explained on chapter 2, include drug trafficking, a climate of easy enrichment, violence, absence of a strong political opposition, impunity, and existence of guerrillas (Cepeda, 1999). The historical co-existence of all of them may have created an environment favorable to corruption causing it to be incorporated into Colombians’ cultural identity. This incorporation does not imply that all Colombian perform corrupt acts by themselves, but that they might tolerate them or approach them as normal as it happens with some radio speakers.

Radio and Secondary Orality

As I showed, there is much of research on Colombian community radio, but not that much on Colombian news and talk radio. From a rhetorical standpoint, this dissertation explores the genre of talk radio and shows the important role that dialogue plays in the construction and reproduction of different terministic screens on corruption. It also challenges the idea of radio being a unidirectional medium that broadcasts information to passive audiences. Even though I did not conduct an audience analysis, the integration of listeners’ comments in Hora 20’s episodes illustrates both the audiences’ opportunity to participate in this dialogue about corruption and the audiences’ active readings about the information that they listen to.

Moreover, in response to the lack of research on secondary orality, in this dissertation I suggested three levels –emphatic, grammatical, and dialogic as well as
several sublevels—can help us to understand how speakers communicate and use the oral language in radio contexts. I show that more than a language, secondary orality refers to an event of interaction characterized by addressivity. I articulate Burke’s (1969) and Bakhtin’s (1981, 1990) ideas to suggest a rhetorical approach that emphasizes the role of dialogue in mediated oral exchanges. In this sense, I use the label dialogic rhetoric to highlight the role that dialogue plays in the rhetorical choices made by radio speakers when communicating their terministic screens and also to describe the characteristics of secondary oral rhetorical situations.

_cluster analysis_

From a methodological standpoint, this dissertation also represents a contribution to the field of rhetoric and, specially, to cluster analysis. Considering the few studies that have embraced this methodology, this dissertation constitutes an example of how cluster analysis might become useful not only to identify key terms through which a broad topic is addressed, but also the rhetorical strategies that speakers employ to communicate those terms. As shown in this study, Burke’s (1966) ideas on terministic screens might be useful to better understand the clusters of terms that group around a broad topic. Finally, this dissertation strives to connect the fields of media studies and communication studies by studying a phenomenon from the former field by employing a theoretical framework and a methodology from the latter. Thus, the usage of rhetorical analysis to analyze talk radio shows that more connections can be established between media studies and communication studies.

Having mentioned some of the contributions that this dissertation makes to the field of communication and, specifically, to the study of corruption, radio, secondary
orality, and cluster analysis, in the final section of this chapter I will suggest some ideas for future research on these subjects.

Future research

Despite being a highly consumed medium, there is very little research about the language of radio. This dissertation offers a preliminary exploration about the characteristics of this language, but more research is necessary to examine the extent to which this grammar replicates in other radio genres where talk radio is addressed in a different way. Thus, it would be interesting to notice if the three levels of secondary orality suggested here – emphatic, grammatical, and dialogic – are also present when radio speakers discuss different topics such as sports, culture, violence, economy, and so on. Moreover, it is necessary to analyze whether the secondary orality of radio works in the same ways across different cultures. One would think that the grammar of secondary orality is not transnational, but it corresponds to the forms of communication characteristic of every culture. However, we need more research to support this claim and to describe how the language of radio is used in other cultures.

Future research should also explore listeners’ participation in talk radio programs and, specially, the way in which social media such as Twitter and Facebook transform secondary orality and influence the language of radio. As I explained above, through social media, listeners share written messages which are later read and broadcast to millions of listeners. This intersection between radio and social media not only changes the unidirectional nature of radio, but also might transform secondary orality into what some scholars have started to call third orality, that is, the orality of emails, blog posts, list-servers, and text messaging (Logan, 2010).
The issue of corruption also deserves more attention and not only from economic, historical, and political perspectives. Communication scholars might also explore the extent to which corruption constitutes an internalized practice, which, to follow Berger and Luckman’s (1991) ideas, becomes institutionalized after a long process of externalization, internalization, and objectivation. If there is going to be any agreement about what corruption is and how individuals can transform this practice, these agreement and transformation should begin in the realm of language. *Hora 20* can be seen as an example of a dialogue where some Colombians discuss corruption. Beyond this radio space, other dialogues could help society to understand what corruption is, to deconstruct its different approaches, to identify its agon, and to begin material interventions in order to decrease it.
REFERENCES


238


*Sistema de Seguridad Social Integral, 1993, Ley 100*


Podcast Reference List


