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# ARTICLE

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## Informalization in UK party election broadcasts 1966–97

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### Abstract

This article uses a novel, quantitatively based method to assess the extent to which UK party election broadcasts in the 31 years between 1966 and 1997 became more 'informal'. Using the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, I identify 28 linguistic 'markers' which are salient in the assessment of formality, and count their frequencies in the 37,000-word corpus. My quantitative findings reveal a general increase in informalization over time, which corresponds with judgements made in critical discourse analysis (CDA). But I also discover an anomaly in the broadcasts from 1987, which I explain with reference to the influence of the Conservative party leader, Margaret Thatcher.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis; informalization; party election broadcasts*

### I Introduction: Fairclough on language change in the public sphere

The impetus behind this study of diachronic variation in a corpus of British election propaganda is Norman Fairclough, a critical discourse analyst whose work is centrally concerned with the connections between contemporary change in public language and the broad systemic realignments of power and capital which he calls the 'new capitalism'. Fairclough (2000b: 1–2) suggests that

capitalism is being re-organised on the basis of important new technologies, new modes of economic coordination, and the reduction of social life to the market. Buzzwords include: the 'information economy', the 'knowledge-based economy', 'globalization', 'flexibility', 'workfare' ('welfare-to-work'), the 'learning economy', the 'enterprise culture'.

He identifies two key discursive effects of the new modes of economic organization: *marketization* and *informalization*. In marketization, public (and even private) discourse is 'colonized' by the discourses of 'enterprise' and the marketplace; in informalization, language practices more typically associated with everyday life are strategically deployed in public discourse (these processes, of course, often occur simultaneously). Fairclough uses the metaphor of a 'border crossing' to describe the negotiation and restructuring that occur within and between social domains:

The engineering of informality, friendship and even intimacy entails a crossing of borders between the public and the private, the commercial and the



domestic, which is partly constituted by a simulation of the discursive practices of everyday life, conversational discourse. (1996: 7)

Fairclough suggests that the ‘engineering of informality’ has two strands: conversationalization and personalization. Conversationalization – as the term implies – involves the spread into the public domain of linguistic features generally associated with conversation. It is usually accompanied by ‘personalization’: the construction of a ‘personal relationship’ between the producers and receivers of public discourse. Fairclough has produced a series of qualitative studies which explore the strategic function of informality in a variety of contexts: newspaper articles (1992: 105–13); university prospectuses and job advertisements for academic posts (1995a: 130–6); BBC Radio 4’s *Today* programme (1995b: 142–9, 1998); and political interviews on radio and television in the UK and Finland (Fairclough and Mauranen, 1997). Two of Fairclough’s studies of informalization have a diachronic orientation. His analysis of university prospectuses compares texts from 1967–8, 1986–7 and 1993, and shows how the ‘personalization’ of the relationship between text producers and receivers is part of a functional shift in the genre of prospectus from ‘informational’ to ‘promotional’ (1995b). In a later study, Fairclough and Mauranen compare broadcast interviews with Finnish prime ministers in 1962 and 1992, and British prime ministers in 1958 and 1983. They conclude that, while ‘local traditions and conditions . . . “inflect” global tendencies’, in both cultural contexts there is a general shift over time from ‘a distant, impersonal, formal public discourse towards conversation and personalized discourse’ (1997: 117–18).

Although Fairclough’s readings are compelling and thought-provoking, they are based on the detailed analysis of a limited set of features in short texts or textual extracts. The problems associated with such an approach can be seen in Fairclough’s account of the *Daily Mirror* headline: *Di’s butler bows out . . . in sneakers*. He describes this as a simulation of conversational discourse, which ‘uses not only conversational vocabulary but also a graphic device – the dots – to simulate “dramatic” pausing in speech’ (1992: 204). Presumably, by ‘conversational vocabulary’ Fairclough means words more usually associated with speech than with writing. But which of the six words in the headline can be confidently identified as ‘conversational’? Is *bows out* more conversational than *resigns*? Is *sneakers* more conversational than *trainers*? Is *Di* more conversational than *Diana* or *Princess Diana*? Fairclough is relying on his own intuition here about what is or is not conversational. But a plausible argument can also be constructed which shows that the language of this newspaper headline is actually quite different from ‘conversation’ (or even simulated conversation). Everyday unmarked conversation does not generally manipulate levels of sound and meaning to the extent that this headline does. Here the choice of *bows out* over *resigns* or *retires* is motivated by the desire to tie the subject and the action of the clause together through the repetition of the initial voiced plosives. *Bows out* is also preferred because this idiomatic expression has links not only with theatrical

exits but also with the popular stereotype of the deferential servant, and in turn, *bows out* is linked to the choice of *sneakers* over *trainers* or *running shoes*, since *sneakers* has a secondary meaning related to the conventional notion of how a butler might move around Kensington Palace. A further reason for the use of US English *sneakers* is revealed in the rest of the story (Fairclough, 1992: 111), in which we learn that the butler used to work for Bing Crosby and is planning to return to the USA, where 'the informality of life' appeals to him. As well as the careful manipulation of sound and meaning, the headline contains a further 'non-conversational' feature. The *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE)* points out that the simple present is often used to refer to a future event which is 'felt to be fixed and certain at the time of speech'. However,

nearly all occurrences of present tense referring to future time occur in one of two related grammatical contexts – either with an accompanying time adverbial that explicitly refer to the future, or in a conditional or temporal adverbial clause that has future time reference. (Biber et al., 1999: 455)

It would be unusual for someone in conversation to report an event which is about to happen or has happened using this tense, as occurs in the headline (*bows out*).

It might be argued that I am labouring the point by picking apart Fairclough's analysis like this, but it does show the problems associated with such 'intuitive' interpretations of text. This aspect of CDA has been subjected to a number of critiques in recent years, the most sustained of which has been mounted by Widdowson (1995, 1996, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2002). While commending CDA's 'responsibility' and 'commitment to social justice' (1998: 136), Widdowson argues that its claim to be a systematic application of a theoretical model is not borne out by a close analysis of the work. Instead he sees an '*ad hoc* bricolage' of theory and methodology, a 'careful selection and partial interpretation' by its practitioners 'of whatever linguistic features suit their own ideological position' (1998: 137). Widdowson claims that their approach generates readings which, while they may be astute and compelling, suppress textual features inconvenient to the pre-conceived notions of the analyst. For Widdowson, this 'interpretative ingenuity' (1998: 136) is reminiscent of literary criticism: and as with literary critics there is a tendency for critical discourse analysts to find only what they are looking for. Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 36) restate this criticism in less polemical terms. For them, discourse analysis

is a committedly *qualitative* orientation to linguistic and social understanding. It inherits both the strengths and the weaknesses associated with qualitative research. As weaknesses, there will always be problems in justifying the selection of materials as research data. It is often difficult to say why a particular stretch of conversation or a particular piece of written text has come under the spotlight of discourse analysis, and why certain of its characteristics are attended to and not others. If discourse analysis is able to generalise, it can normally only generalise about process and not about distribution. This is a

significant problem for research projects which assert that there are broad social changes in discourse formations within a community – e.g., Fairclough’s claims about increasing technologisation [Fairclough, 1996]. A claim about change over time – and Fairclough’s claims are intuitively convincing – needs to be substantiated with time-sequenced data, linked to some principled method for analyzing it, able to demonstrate significant differences. The point is that qualitative, interpretative studies of particular fragments of discourse are not self-sufficient. They need support from other traditions of research, even quantitative surveying.

I maintain that Fairclough’s claims about change in public discourse seem ‘intuitively’ correct. But like Jaworski and Coupland I believe that such potentially significant changes should be tested ‘empirically’. Consequently, I have devised a methodology which I hope will demonstrate diachronic variation in a time-sequenced corpus of British party election broadcasts produced by the two main political parties, without laying itself open to the charge that ‘inconvenient’ textual features have been overlooked or suppressed.

Fairclough himself has acknowledged that because ‘much work in CDA so far has been theoretical and programmatic’ there is now room for the ‘systematic analysis of large, representative bodies of texts, including the use of quantitative and computational methods, which could actually give a firmer linguistic grounding to its social claims about discourse’ (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 152). My approach is part of a recent development in CDA, which has seen analysts seeking this ‘firmer linguistic grounding’, by taking advantage of new computer software for text analysis and the publication of grammars and dictionaries derived from large corpora of naturally occurring language (see Mautner, 1995; Stubbs, 1996; Fairclough, 2000a; Piper, 2000a, 2000b; Piper and Kenner, 2000; Goatly, 2002; Mulderrig, 2002; Steen, 2003). Section 3 gives an outline of my methodology, but first I describe the data.

## 2 Data

This study is based on a diachronic corpus of British party election broadcasts (PEBs) produced by the Labour and Conservative parties at the general elections of 1966, 1979, 1987 and 1997 (see Table 4 in Appendix A for a breakdown of the corpus).<sup>1</sup> In the UK, the first television party political broadcasts (PPBs) appeared in the early 1950s. Due to the technical difficulties of live television broadcasting, they mostly took the form of an individual politician giving a talk. Even today, the straight talk to camera by an important politician – often the party leader – is widely regarded as the prototypical discourse type of the PPB. However, as technology improved and expertise grew, the parties began to experiment with the representational resources of television, at a time in the history of the medium in Britain when new genres were rapidly being established and new techniques

developed. Throughout its history the PPB has responded to changes in televisual style and genre. In 1959, for example, the Labour broadcasts were consciously designed (by Tony Benn) to resemble the BBC's *Tonight* – a fast-moving news and current affairs programme. In 1997, the Labour party adopted the techniques of 'celebrity-documentary' in its 'biopic' of Tony Blair, at a time when this form was becoming extremely popular (see Pearce, 2001). This makes them sensitive registers of social, political and cultural change.

PPBs are also important political documents. The main parties expend a great deal of effort on making sure that their broadcasts are as slick and professional as possible. Since the 1970s, they have routinely used advertising agencies, and even employed the talents of highly respected film directors. Consequently, PEBs are sometimes so memorable or controversial that their influence is felt throughout an election campaign. This happened, for example, with 'Jennifer's Ear' (a Labour PEB from 1992) and Kinnock's 1987 'biopic' (see Pearce, 2002). Contemporaneous accounts by those involved reveal the care that went into their making (for a historical overview of the genre, see Rosenbaum, 1997: 41–77). It is likely, therefore, that a great deal of attention is paid to a factor as potentially significant to the reception of the broadcast as levels of formality.

### 3 Methods

What is (in)formality in language? Although Fairclough identifies several features which he regards as implicated in assigning levels of formality to a text, nowhere does he give a systematic account of how informality in language might be identified. Admittedly, this is not a straightforward task. The following definitions come from standard linguistic reference books and suggest some of the difficulties associated with judging levels of formality.

**INFORMAL** [16c: see FORMAL]. A term in linguistics for a situation or a use of language that is common, non-official, familiar, casual, and often colloquial, and contrasts in these senses with formal. (McArthur, 1992: 516)

**formality** A dimension of social behaviour, ranging from the most strictly regulated to the least regulated, and reflected in language by varied linguistic features. Highly formal language involves carefully organized discourse, often with complex syntax and vocabulary, which closely follows the standard language, and which is often sensitive to prescriptive judgements. Highly informal language is very loosely structured, involving a high level of colloquial expression, and often departing from standard norms (such as by using slang, regionalisms, neologisms, and code mixing). (Crystal, 1992: 142)

#### **formality, degrees of**

In sociolinguistics and STYLISTICS formality refers to the way in which the STYLE or TONE of language will vary in APPROPRIATENESS according to

the social CONTEXT: the SITUATION and the relationship between ADDRESSER and ADDRESSEE(S).

There is not a simple choice between formal and informal, but linguists generally recognize a scale or continuum ranging from very formal to very informal. Joos (1962) specifically identifies five 'degrees' or KEYS or styles, which he labels frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate, each correlated with certain linguistic features. It is fairly easy to distinguish the frozen style of (written) legal documents, with their latinized DICTION and impersonal SYNTAX, from the intimate style of (spoken) interchanges between close friends, with their SLANG and ELLIPTICAL syntax. But it is not so easy to categorize neatly the intervening degrees, or relate them to DISCOURSE types or formal features. So advertising language can be formal and informal; and the PASSIVE sentence, often associated with formality, is not uncommon in everyday speech.

But certainly (in-)formality is an important factor in everyday USAGE, perhaps more important than choice of MEDIUM. Writing in many situations has become less and less formal, approaching the informality of 'casual' or colloquial speech . . .

All in all, factors such as public v. private occasion; size and status of audience; degree of acquaintance, etc. are important social constraints on formality: sometimes giving rise to CODE- or DIALECT-SWITCHING. (Wales, 2001: 160)

From these entries we can devise a composite 'basic definition' of formality as a *dimension* of social behaviour. There is no binary opposition between 'formal' and 'informal'; rather, there is a scale or continuum ranging from 'very formal' to 'very informal'. At one end of the continuum we have a cluster of behaviours which might be described as organized, complex, rehearsed, based on precedent, public, frozen, 'writing-like', monologic; at the other they are 'disorganized', casual, simple, spontaneous, private, fluid, 'speech-like', dialogic.

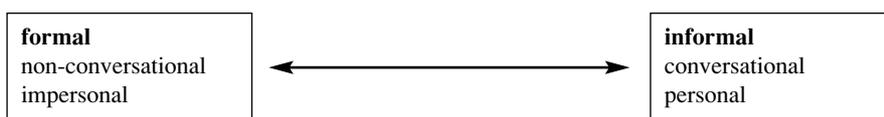
Language is one of the most important 'social behaviours', and language use can be placed on this continuum. Any 'level' of language may be implicated as a marker of formality (lexis, syntax, phonology, graphology etc.). External 'triggering' factors of degree of formality in language include field (subject matter/type of activity), tenor (relationship between participants in situation, their roles and status) and mode (the medium of communication and degree of preparedness and feedback).

From such a definition it is possible to make some assumptions about where particular kinds of language use might tend to occur on the notional formality continuum. A spontaneous conversation between 'equals' in a private setting is likely to contain more informal language than a job interview, with its power differentials and pre-arranged format; a love letter will probably be expressed in more informal terms than a letter from a solicitor. However, as Wales acknowledges, although it can be relatively straightforward to identify texts at the

extremes of the continuum, ‘it is not so easy to categorize neatly the intervening degrees’ (2001: 160).

In this article I provide a robust means of classifying texts according to their degree of formality, which by assigning them a relative formality ‘score’ is able to deal with texts which do not occupy extremes of the continuum. Rather than relying on my own intuitions to devise a checklist against which the degree of formality in a text might be measured, I assume that *in general* ‘conversation’ is the most informal of registers; therefore any text (spoken or written; written to be spoken) which contains features of language associated with conversation is probably more informal than one which contains fewer of these features. A key aspect of conversation is its ‘interpersonal’ function – its concern with relations between participants – and certain linguistic features can be identified as ‘carriers’ of this function.

The implication of this is that the formality continuum may be glossed like this:



But what are the linguistic markers which enable me to assume one text to be more conversational and/or personal than another? My methodology is based on the findings of linguists tracing lexicogrammatical patterns in large corpora of naturally occurring language. The *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE)* is based on a 40-million-word corpus of texts drawn from four registers: conversation, fiction, news and academic prose. According to the authors (Biber et al.), these registers were selected because they ‘span much of the range of situational and linguistic variation in English’ (1999: 25). Of particular interest to me is that one aspect of situational variation – degree of formality – can be mapped onto the register differences discovered in the grammar, so that the registers can be placed on the informal–formal continuum as follows:



This is not to suggest that *every* conversation is necessarily more informal than *every* fictional text, or that *every* piece of academic prose is more formal than *every* news text. Rather, these are general tendencies, so that conversation

has more in common with fiction than with news and academic prose . . .  
 [N]ews and academic prose are more remote from conversation, with academic prose being the most distant, given its global and specialist nature . . . [I]n

many cases . . . the frequencies of grammatical features rise or fall consistently from left to right across these four registers, reflecting the influence of these situational characteristics. (*LGSWE*: 16–17)

This means that if features which, according to *LGSWE*, are associated with the informal register of conversation occur more frequently in Text A than in Text B, Text A might be regarded as *more informal* than Text B. Conversely, if features associated with more formal registers such as academic prose occur more frequently in Text B than in Text A, Text B is possibly *more formal* than Text A.

As we have seen, ‘formal’ language tends to be non-conversational and impersonal; informal language is conversational and personal. Therefore, I maintain the distinction introduced by Fairclough, and propose two ‘sub-processes’ which together make up informalization. These are conversationalization and personalization. Table 5 in Appendix B shows the features I count, which fall into five broad categories. I assume that a conversationalized text will have a tendency to score highly for non-elaboration of meaning (B); stereotyped verbal repertoire (C); online/interactional features (D); it will have a low score for elaboration of meaning (A). A personalized text will score highly for verbal and adverbial expressions of stance, and the expression of stance through complement clauses (E).

Because my data are stored electronically, commercial software can be used for quantitative textual analysis. I used the *WordList* and *Concord* functions of *WordSmith Tools* for this purpose (Scott, 1999). *Concord* produces a concordance which allows words or phrases to be seen in their contexts. This was my main tool for identifying the use and distribution of target words, affixes, suffixes, phrases and grammatical constructions. *WordSmith* also allows the calculation of normed frequency counts. All my frequencies are normed to occurrence per 1000 words of text.

#### 4 Findings

In this section I present a range of lexical and grammatical markers which might be used to assess levels of formality. I should point out that these markers are *indices* of informalization: they direct us towards the *possible* presence of language which could be interpreted as ‘informal’. At the moment, I am not making any claims about the links between the presence (or absence) of these features and the extent to which a reader or listener might actually judge one text to be more informal than another. In section 4.3 I consider the relationship between the markers and readers’ perceptions of levels of formality.

##### 4.1 Frequency scores for markers of informalization

Conversation, with its reliance on context, draws heavily on implicit meaning and

‘foregoes the need for the lexical and syntactic elaboration commonly found in written expository registers’ (LGSWE: 1044). This means that a text with *low* lexical and grammatical elaboration is perhaps more conversationalized than one with *high* elaboration. Long words and a noun-heavy style are often associated with written, non-conversational language; short words and a looser verbal style are associated with more conversational language. Tables 6 and 7 in Appendix B list the features I count as markers of high and low elaboration of meaning, together with an explanation of how these were identified and selected (where this is not immediately obvious from the description of the feature).

Figure 1 – like all the graphs in this article – gives a snapshot of change over time, and also reveals party differences. When we compare the PEBs of both parties at the extremes of the time period, we see that the 1966 texts contain more of these features per 1000 words than the 1997 texts. (See Tables 12 and 13 in Appendix C.) The reduction in articles and words containing nine or more letters is particularly noticeable. Interestingly, the graph reveals the Conservative PEBs of 1987 as an anomaly in the general pattern of decline. This pattern is repeated in the other markers of conversationalization and personalization.

When we turn to features associated with the non-elaborated noun phrase, and focus once again on the 1966 and 1997 results (Figure 2), we see an increase over time for all markers of informalization (with the exception of common adverbs in the Conservative PEBs). In the Labour PEBs there is a particularly sharp increase in personal pronouns and primary verbs (although there is a decline in these features between 1966 and 1979). When we consider the frequencies of these two markers in the Conservative PEBs, we see that 1987 is once again anomalous.

Conversation is generally restricted and repetitive compared with written registers. In other words, we might describe its verbal repertoire as *stereotyped*. This is evident in its reliance on prefabricated sequences of words (lexical

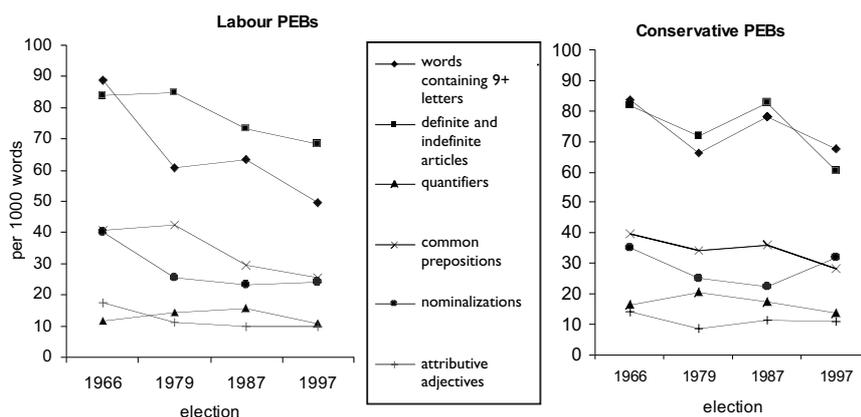


Figure 1 Features associated with the elaborated noun phrase

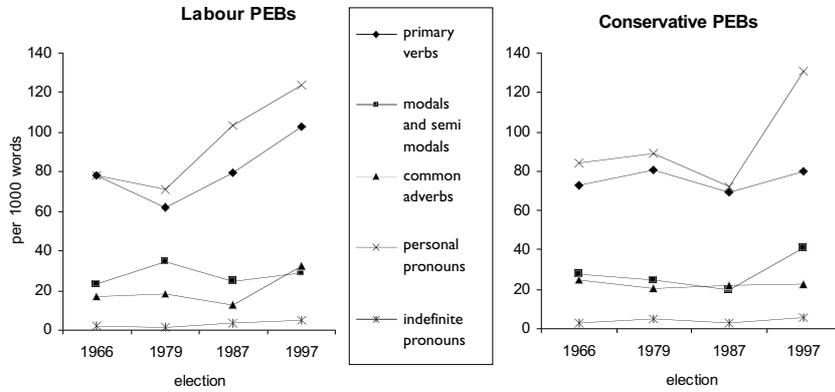


Figure 2 Features associated with the non-elaborated noun phrase

bundles) and in the fact that high frequency vocabulary items tend to dominate in particular syntactic roles. For example, the high frequency of modal verbs in conversation is due to the dominance of *will*, *can*, *would* and *could*. Similarly, of the common verbs controlling *that*- and *to*-complement clauses, six verbs – *think*, *say*, *know*, *want*, *try* and *seem* – occur much more frequently than the rest (LGSWE: 1049–50). Other instances of the dominance of high-frequency items which I consider as markers of conversationalization are common linking and circumstance adverbs and common lexical verbs. (See Table 8 in Appendix B for information about what was counted in each feature category.)

If we compare the earliest and latest Labour PEBs, we see that in 1997 there are consistently more features associated with stereotyping in the verbal repertoire than in the 1966 PEBs (Figure 3). The same can be said for the Conservative

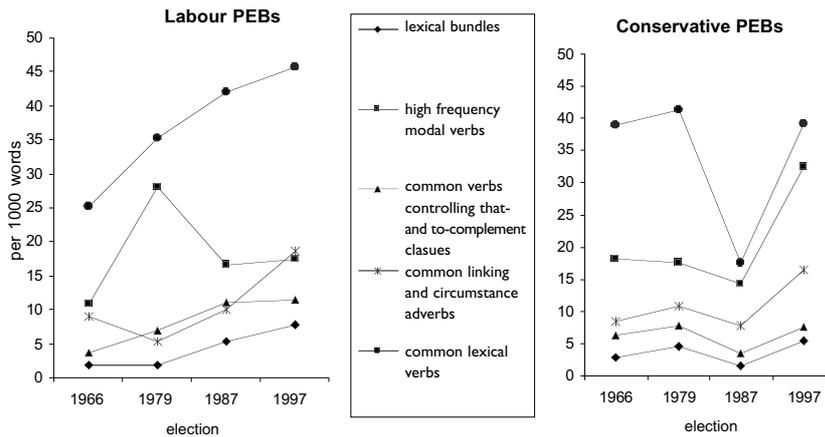


Figure 3 Stereotyped verbal repertoire

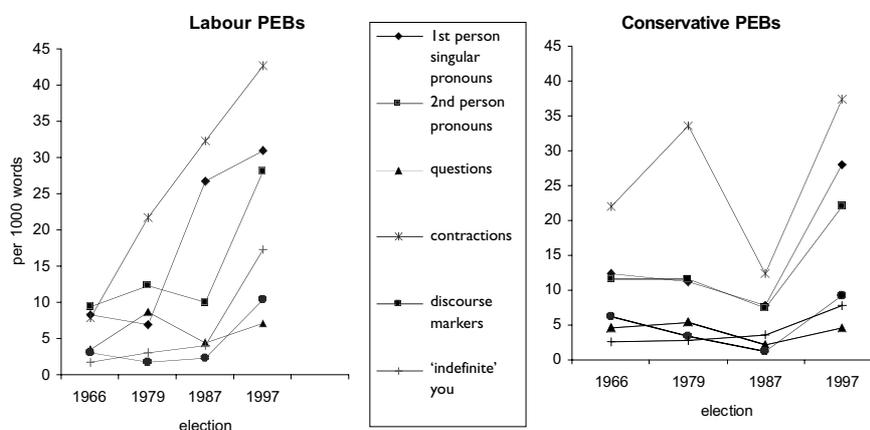


Figure 4 Interactional and on-line features

PEBs, apart from common stance adverbs, which occur more often in 1966. As with elaboration and non-elaboration of meaning, the Conservative PEBs from 1987 seem to buck the general trend of increasing informalization over time.

As we have seen, conversation in English – compared with writing – is generally marked by less lexical and grammatical elaboration, and a more restricted verbal repertoire. A third way to assess conversationalization is to look at the extent to which a text incorporates linguistic features associated with interaction and on-line production. I look at first and second person personal pronouns, questions, contractions, and discourse markers. (See Figure 4, and Table 9 in Appendix B.)

A comparison of the Labour PEBs from 1966 and 1997 reveals a sharp increase in the frequency of these markers. For example, the later broadcasts contain nearly four times as many first person pronouns and three times as many second person pronouns as the earlier ones. There are five times as many contractions in 1997, and over eight times as many 'indefinite' *yous*. The differences are less marked in the Conservative PEBs, but they are still clear (although we must once again note the dip in 1987).

So far we have been considering lexical, grammatical and structural items which might give a text a conversational 'flavour'. I now turn to the second strand making up the process of informalization: those linguistic features which might be regarded as conveying or referring to the personality of both producer(s) and notional receivers of a text. 'Speakers and writers commonly express personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments; that is, they express a "stance"' (LGSWE: 966). LGSWE groups stance markers into three semantic categories: epistemic, attitudinal and style of speaking. Epistemic stance markers 'are used to present speaker comments on the status of information in a proposition' (LGSWE: 972); attitudinal stance markers 'report personal attitudes or feelings' (974), and style of speaking stance markers present the speaker or

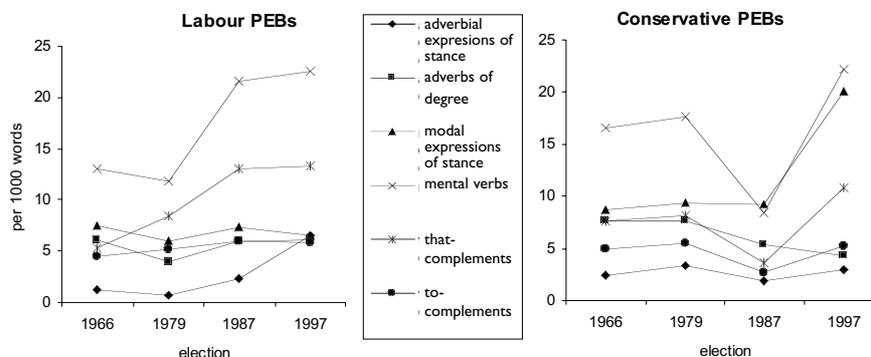


Figure 5 Expressions of stance

writer's comments on the communication itself (975). All three categories of stance can be regarded as markers of personalization, since each refers – sometimes directly but often implicitly – to the human agency 'behind' the text. A wide range of grammatical structures is used to express stance and this makes mechanical searching difficult. However, it is possible to recover some revealing information about stance by devising searches targeted at particular lexico-grammatical features. (See Figure 5, and Tables 10 and 11 in Appendix B.)

In the Labour PEBs, mental verbs and adverbial expressions of stance increase over time, whereas adverbs of degree and modal expressions of stance remain quite steady. In the Conservative PEBs, adverbial markers either remain steady or decline over time, whereas verbal markers increase (but note the dramatic dip in mental verbs marking stance in 1987). In the Labour PEBs, the increase is steeper for *that*-complements than it is for *to*-complements. In the Conservative PEBs, we see the 'expected' decline in 1987 for both categories of complement clause.

#### 4.2 Overview of findings

Figure 6 provides an overview of the findings. The results of each marker were ranked. The highest score (or in the case of markers of elaboration of meaning, the lowest score) was ranked 4 (most informal); the lowest score (or in the case of markers of elaboration of meaning, the highest score) was ranked 1 (most formal). These scores were conflated and the mean was derived, giving each batch of PEBs an average overall rank score. There is evidence here of continuous informalization over time for the Labour PEBs. There is also evidence of this in the Conservative PEBs, although the 1987 PEBs are clearly anomalous. I will explore these patterns in section 5.

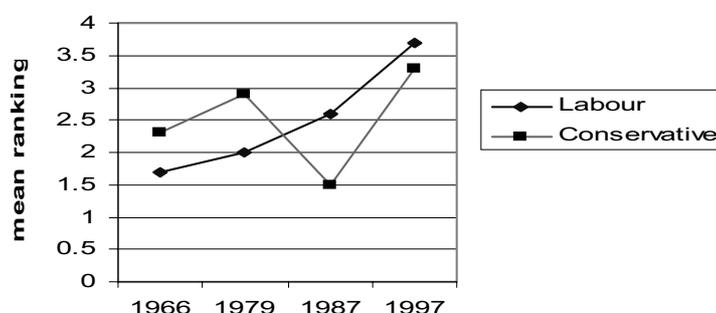


Figure 6 Overall rank scores for the PEBs

#### 4.3 Checking the validity of the markers

As I suggested earlier, these quantitative findings alone cannot tell us much about the relationship between the frequency of a particular marker and its effect on a reader's perception of formality levels in a text. In order to check the validity of the markers, we have to look at the texts themselves, rather than concordance lines. For this purpose, I have selected two 'talking heads' – the prototypical and most commonly occurring PPB discourse type – from the batches of PEBs which, based on my quantitative findings, appear to be at opposite ends of the formality continuum: Conservative 1987 and Labour 1997 (Table 1 – see also Table 14). In order to see whether there is a relationship between my scores and people's perception of levels of formality, I carried out a test in which 28 first-year UK students enrolled on an English language and literature degree course were asked to identify the text they felt was the most informal (I should point out that they had access only to the transcripts, and that all references to political parties were removed to prevent the possibility of this influencing their decisions). All but 2 (92.9%) chose Text B. The informants were asked to comment briefly on the reasons behind their decisions. Of those who chose Text B and made comments, 15 (78.9%) mentioned the prevalence of features associated with on-line/interaction (first person singular pronouns; discourse markers; questions; contractions). The comments of 8 (42.1%) informants related to Text B's lower elaboration of meaning (shorter words, colloquial vocabulary), while 2 (10.5%) identified stereotyping in the verbal repertoire in their references to 'repetition' in Text B. These comments do suggest a relationship between the markers I identify as salient in assessing levels of formality, and people's responses to a text. Furthermore, the fact that informants commented on a wide range of linguistic features confirms that formality is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and that my focus on a broad range of features is justified.

*Table 1* Two talking heads*Text A – Margaret Thatcher 1987*

In the past eight years something has changed in Britain, perhaps the most important change for a generation. Quite simply it is a change in the spirit. People all over Britain are finding a new confidence, a new pride. The Conservative government didn't create that spirit, it's the true spirit of the British people. What we did was to set it free. We were determined to give people back the incentive to work and the confidence to save. That's why we had to cut inflation, that's why we were determined to take power from the trade union bosses and give it back to union members, and that's why we abolished a whole mass of controls. And we stopped government trying to run businesses, which is something politicians have never been much good at, so we privatized them. The managers managed, the workers shared in the ownership, and the industries turned from losses into profits. As a result of all this the living standards in this country are the highest they've ever been. Britain really is a great country again and this prosperity is spreading steadily through the community. Thirty years ago only 30 people in 100 owned their own homes. Today it's 65 in every 100. It's always been the dream and the ambition of the Conservative party that what used to be the luxuries of the few should become the daily experience, indeed the necessities, of the many. It's happening with homes, it's happening with shares and it's happening with savings, and the result has been greater prosperity. It's not only our standard of living that has increased. It means we've been able to put greater resources in health and social security. But you can only do that when you've first created the prosperity. And all this has been achieved by government and people together: the government running things well like any good housekeeper, and the people responding. And that partnership is even more vital in keeping the law – yes, this government has increased the numbers of police and we will increase them still further. There are more bobbies on the beat, but crime is not a matter for the police alone. It never was. Police need support from all of us, indeed the enemies of the British bobby are the enemies of liberty itself. The police serve the rule of law impartially, they need our support, they deserve our trust. And

*Text B – Tony Blair 1997*

Look, the Tories didn't get everything wrong in the 80s, let's just be honest about that, admit it. But Britain can be better, we can make this country better than it is.

The Tories today are no longer the party of low taxes. The fact is they broke their word on tax, they raised taxes 22 times. Ordinary families have had massive tax rises under the Conservatives, the largest in peace-time history. Now, I don't want to add to the burden of those families, they're hard-working. I'd like to see them get their tax burden down; that's why we said that we're not going to raise the basic or top rate of income tax.

Ask yourself this question; if these Tories get back in for another five years, will we even have a National Health Service in the way that we've known it, and grown up with it? Now we've got to rebuild the National Health Service, and as a start we will spend a hundred million pounds by cutting that bureaucracy, and putting it into cutting waiting lists.

Why should people in this country have to put up with these levels of crime? The fear, the abuse, the hassle. Elderly people often afraid to go out of their own homes, sometimes afraid to be in their own home. The Labour party will take on this issue in every single aspect of it. Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime.

I'm a British patriot, and I want the best out of Europe for Britain, and we need a government that is going to lead in Europe, shape Europe, not just follow along behind the Europe that's been shaped by others, and a divided Conservative party with weak leadership fighting itself cannot fight for Britain.

Education is the future for this country. If we don't give our kids the right education they don't succeed, Britain doesn't succeed. That's why I've said, for a Labour government, its top three priorities: education, education, education. And again we can make a start, for example by reducing class sizes for all five, six and seven year olds in our primary schools to 30 or under.

*Text A – continued*

there's only one thing that government can and must do: it must secure the country's defences, and in a nuclear age that means we must have a nuclear deterrent. Winston Churchill, who knew so much about the dangers of weakness and appeasement, warned us 35 years ago. He said be careful above all things not to let go of the atomic weapon until you are sure and more than sure that other means of preserving peace are in your hands. For a government to surrender our nuclear deterrent would be an unprecedented act of folly that would put the nation in jeopardy.

*Text B – continued*

That we will do in the five years of a Labour government.

Britain can be better. We can make this country better than it is, and I am not going to promise anything that I can't deliver, but I do tell you that today's Labour party, transformed as it is with the strength of leadership and the strength of unity behind it, can make this country better.

## 5 Discussion

As Figure 6 shows, the PEB batches – with the exception of the Conservative one from 1987, which I consider below – grow more informal over time. Levels of elaboration of meaning decline, the verbal repertoire becomes more stereotyped, the language becomes more interactional, expressions of stance increase. Tables 2 and 3 give illustrative extracts from the Labour 1966 and 1997 PEBs. The Labour 1966 text scores highly for elaboration of meaning (particularly in words containing nine or more letters, nominalizations and attributive adjectives). These features suggest high levels of lexical elaboration in the noun phrase, and the PEBs contain many instances of this (see Table 2). Conversely, the 1997 PEBs contain high frequencies of features associated with stereotyping, interactivity and stance (see Table 3).

Table 2 Elaboration of meaning in the Labour 1966 PEBs

1. <i>An adequate parliamentary majority to overcome time-wasting obstructions.</i>	Heavy pre-modification in the noun phrase; nominalization ( <i>obstructions, determination, activity</i> ); words containing 9+ letters ( <i>parliamentary, time-wasting, obstructions, unconquerable, determination, government, increased, industrial</i> ).
2. <i>The unconquerable determination of this government.</i>	
3. <i>Increased industrial activity.</i>	

Table 3 Stereotyping, interactivity and stance in the Labour 1997 PEBs

1. <i>Gordon Brown <u>is going to be an</u> iron chancellor.</i>	Lexical bundles ( <i>is going to be a; do you know what</i> ); common linking and
2. <i>You got a sense of urgency into your life – <u>do you know what I mean?</u></i>	circumstance adverbs ( <i>just, so</i> ).
3. <i>I mean you <u>just</u> have to do it.</i>	
4. <i><u>So</u> you better get on, you better get things done</i>	

Table 3 continued

1. <i>Well, for the first 24 hours we weren't sure whether he was going to live or not.</i>	Discourse markers ( <i>well</i> ); indefinite <i>you</i> ; first and second person pronouns; contractions.
2. <i>Taking a situation that <u>you</u> have now and changing.</i>	
3. <i>They thought that if they arrived, and did well, then <u>you</u> became a Tory.</i>	
1. <i>My mother <u>of course</u> she nursed him for three years.</i>	Adverbial expressions of stance ( <i>of course, really</i> ); mental verbs ( <i>want, feel</i> ); <i>that</i> -complement clauses ( <i>understand things can change</i> ).
2. <i>When I started <u>really</u> being Labour.</i>	
3. <i>If all you <u>want to do</u> is do your job, you <u>want to sit in the office behind a desk signing papers.</u></i>	
4. <i>I just <u>feel</u> people have got to <u>understand things can change.</u></i>	

So far then, I have established that there is some evidence for informalization over time in the corpus. What might we ascribe this to? The television PPB, as a media genre, 'has failed to achieve a standard format'. Instead, PPBs selectively borrow 'from other genres, ranging from political speech, the television commercial, the current affairs programme and even soap opera' (Allan et al., 1995: 372). This means that the PPB will inevitably reflect broader changes in the media, and in the public sphere more generally, including a tendency towards the use of more informal language (see Steen, 2003 for a quantitative study of 'conversationalization' in editorials from *The Times* newspaper).

As well as PPBs reflecting prevailing trends in public discourse and broadcast media aesthetics, changes in the way politics gets done also seem to have affected levels of formality in the corpus. For example, since the 1960s a centralized, pseudo-presidential system has developed in the UK at the expense of cabinet government and collective responsibility. The extent of the shift towards the leader can be seen in the corpus. In 1966, for example, 10.1 percent of the words in the Conservative broadcasts were spoken by Edward Heath, but in 1997 63.2 percent of the words came from the lips of John Major. A telling Labour statistic is that in the February 1974 broadcasts, 13 members of the shadow cabinet appeared alongside Wilson; in 1997 the only Labour politician to feature was the party leader, Tony Blair. The more we hear from a particular individual, the greater that individual's contribution to formality scores. This helps to explain both the high level of informality in the Labour 1997 broadcasts, which are dominated by Blair, and the apparently 'anomalous' Conservative results from 1987.

Blair's strategic use, in public contexts, of a style of speech which contains 'conversational' elements has been widely noted (see, for example, Montgomery, 1999; Fairclough, 2000a; Pearce, 2001). Blair is also well known for his appearances on 'magazine'-style television programmes. In February 1999 he

chatted about his holiday plans and discussed who might be the next manager of the English football team with Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan, the presenters of ITV's *This Morning* show. Such behaviour is part of a broader strategy, designed to give the appearance of openness and approachability, in which the government presents itself as seeking the advice and opinions of those it governs. The latest manifestation of this is Labour's 'Big Conversation', launched in November 2003. This is a web-based consultation exercise which, in the words of Tony Blair, 'is part of a conversation with you about the big issues for our country' (Blair, 2003). However, the 'rules' of this conversation suggest that this is 'apparent' rather than 'substantive' dialogue (Fairclough, 2000a: 124). One page on the site gives us 'the chance to ask the politicians your burning questions'; but if we submit a question it will only be forwarded (by unnamed mediators) if it is not 'irrelevant, abusive, or too long'. In order to stand a chance of being answered, the question should also be 'popular, pertinent, and articulate'. Clearly, with such constraints in place about the content and manner of contributions, the dialogicality here is asymmetrical and ultimately spurious.

Blair's language contrasts sharply with that of Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative party leader between 1975 and 1990. Unlike Blair, who was quick to grasp that intimacy and informality could work well in the format of the PPB, Thatcher was uncomfortable about deploying aspects of her personality and biography in political propaganda. We might put this reluctance down to her almost total inability to appear 'folksy' and relaxed in public. This stiffness was widely remarked upon, and in its 1987 broadcasts Labour specifically attacked her 'regal' demeanour. In the same election, Labour also employed an actor who adopted her hectoring tone to deliver lines such as: *No, you can't come to this school, your parents can't afford it; no, there are no nursery schools for you; no you two, it's not your turn for the book*, and so on. In the 1987 PPBs, Thatcher's personal appearances are always formal and conventional: she appears as a 'traditional' talking head, or in full cry in a speech extract. Occasionally, we see her in news footage, looking active and competent. We never see her in private or domestic settings (unlike Kinnock in 1987 and Blair in 1997). All her speech seems to be scripted and rehearsed, so that even her 'asides' sound rather stilted. A flavour of her delivery can be gleaned from the extract in Table 1. As well as the high levels of formality (see section 4.1), we might also note the rhetorical style, with its abundance of parallel grammatical structures, lists of three, and antithesis (e.g. *the incentive to work and the confidence to save; the managers managed, the workers shared in the ownership, and the industries turned from losses into profits; it's happening with homes, it's happening with shares, and it's happening with savings; the luxuries of the few . . . the daily experience, indeed the necessities, of the many; the enemies of the British bobby are the enemies of liberty itself*). Such carefully wrought rhetorical patterns are far removed from everyday spontaneous speech. Thatcher's language refers back to an earlier tradition of political discourse; one represented, perhaps, by Winston Churchill, whom she directly invokes.

## 6 Conclusion

In this article I have shown how the frequency of selected linguistic ‘markers’ in a text can be used as an index of that text’s level of formality. My findings reveal a broad overall increase in informalization over time in the corpus of party election broadcasts (with the exception of the 1987 Conservative PEBs – an anomaly I ascribe to the influence of the party leader). This increase corresponds to widely held beliefs about change in public discourse, and accords with the more qualitatively based judgements of ‘mainstream’ critical discourse analysis. The validity of my chosen markers was tested by asking 28 readers to assess the level of formality in texts which my findings had identified as occupying extremes of the formality continuum, and to comment on the linguistic features which influenced these judgements. Their assessments of each text’s overall level of formality coincided with my quantitatively based findings, and the linguistic features my informants cited to support their judgements corresponded with many of those features I had identified as potentially salient in ascribing levels of formality.

## Note

- 1 My Party Election Broadcast transcripts are available online at: Richard Kimber’s Political Science Resources site (<http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/peb.htm>).

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### Appendix A: data

Table 4 The PPB sub-corpus: number of transcripts and word counts

	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
1966	5 (8,583)	3 (6,073)
1979	2 (2,859)	4 (5,310)
1987	3 (3,000)	5 (4,774)
1997	5 (3,394)	5 (3,044)
Totals	15 (17,836)	17 (19,201)

Note: Throughout the period represented in the corpus, broadcasting regulations allowed the main political parties a maximum of five PEBs per election.

### Appendix B: markers of informalization

Table 5 The five domains of informalization

<i>Conversationalization</i>	<i>Personalization</i>
A Elaboration of meaning ( <i>words containing 9+ letters; definite and indefinite articles; quantifiers; common prepositions; nominalizations; attributive adjectives</i> ).	E Verbal and adverbial expressions of stance ( <i>adverbial expressions of stance; adverbs of degree; modal expressions of stance, mental verbs</i> ); complement clauses ( <i>that-complement clauses; to-complement clauses</i> ).
B Non-elaboration of meaning ( <i>primary verbs, modals and semi-modals; common adverbs, personal pronouns, indefinite pronouns</i> ).	
C Stereotyped verbal repertoire ( <i>lexical bundles; high frequency modal verbs; common verbs controlling that- and to-complement clauses; common linking and circumstance adverbs; common lexical verbs</i> ).	
D On-line/interactional ( <i>1st person singular pronouns; 2nd person pronouns; questions; contractions; discourse markers; indefinite you</i> ).	

Table 6 Conversationalization: elaboration of meaning

Words containing 9+ letters	
Definite and indefinite articles	
Common prepositions	<i>About, above, across, after, against, along, alongside, amid, among, around, as, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, besides, between, beyond, by, despite, down, during, for, from, in, inside, into, of, off, on, opposite, outside, over, past, round, since, than, through, throughout, till, to, toward(s), under, underneath, until, up, via, with, within, without.</i> Because many of these forms can also be used as adverbial particles, I only count common prepositions where they occur directly preceding the definite or indefinite article in the following noun phrase.
Nominalizations	Nouns ending in <i>-tion/-sion, -ness, -ment, -ity</i> , and their plurals.
Attributive adjectives	I count the 37 adjectives which occur attributively more than 200 times per million words in at least one register: <i>best, big, black, dark, different, economic, final, full, general, good, great, high, human, important, international, large, little, long, low, main, major, national, new, nice, old, political, public, red, right, same, single, small, social, special, white, whole, young</i> (LGSWE: 512).
Quantifiers	The six most commonly occurring quantifiers in the LGSWE corpus ( <i>all, many, more, some, any</i> and <i>no</i> ).

Table 7 Conversationalization: non-elaboration of meaning

Primary verbs	<i>Be, do, have</i>
Modals and semi-modals	Permission/possibility/ability ( <i>can, could, may, might</i> ); obligation/necessity ( <i>must, should, have to, have got to, need to</i> ); volition/prediction ( <i>will, would, shall, be going to</i> ).
Common adverbs	<i>Actually, again, ago, always, ever, just, like, maybe, never, now, of course, perhaps, probably, quite, really, sort of, still, then, today, too, very, yesterday, yet</i> (LGSWE: 560–2).
Personal pronouns	
Indefinite pronouns	<i>Everybody/everyone, everything; somebody/someone, something; anybody/anyone, anything; nobody/no-one, nothing.</i>

Table 8 Conversationalization: stereotyped verbal repertoire

Lexical bundles	<i>I don't know what, well I don't know, I don't know how, I don't know if, I don't know whether, I don't know why, I don't want to, oh I don't know, have a look at, let's have a look, going to be a, going to have to, going to have a, was going to say, thank you very much, do you know what, do you want to, do you want a, do you want me, are you going to, are we going to, what are you doing, what do you mean, what do you think, what do you want, at the end of, at the end of the, it's going to be, know what I mean, if you want to.</i>
High frequency modal verbs	<i>Will, can, would, could.</i>
Common verbs controlling <i>that-</i> and <i>to-</i> complement clauses	<i>Think, say, know, want, try, seem.</i>
Common linking and circumstance adverbs	<i>Just, now, then, here, there, so, though, anyway.</i>
Common lexical verbs	<i>Say, get, go, know, think, see, make, come, take, want, give, mean.</i>

Table 9 Conversationalization: interactional and on-line features

1st person pronouns	
2nd person pronouns	
Questions	
Contractions	Verb contraction and <i>not</i> contraction.
Discourse markers	<i>Well, right, now, I mean, you know and you see.</i>
'Indefinite' <i>you</i>	

Table 10 Personalization: verbal and adverbial expressions of stance

Adverbial expressions of stance	<i>According to + NP, actually, certainly, definitely, generally, in fact, kind of, like, maybe, of course, perhaps, probably, really, sort of (LGSWE: 869).</i>
Adverbial expressions of degree	Amplifiers: <i>completely, entirely, extremely, fully, highly, more, perfectly, quite</i> (in the sense 'to some extent'), <i>really, so, too, totally, very</i> ; downtoners: <i>a bit, almost, barely, fairly, far from, hardly, less, nearly, pretty, quite, rather, relatively, slightly, somewhat.</i>
Modal expressions of stance	Occurrences of the nine central modals ( <i>will, would, can, could, shall, should, may, might, must</i> ) with a personal pronoun in subject position.
Mental verbs	<i>Assume, believe, consider, determine, expect, feel, find, hear, hope, know, like, listen, love, mean, need, read, remember, see, suppose, think, understand, want, wonder (LGSWE: 368–9).</i>

Table 11 Personalization: expression of stance through complement clauses

<p>That-complement clauses</p>	<p><b>1. Post-predicate that-clauses controlled by verbs:</b> occurrences of the most commonly occurring verbs controlling a complement <i>that</i>-clause in the LGSWE corpus. These are all mental verbs, mainly of cognition: <i>think, say, know, see, find, believe, feel, suggest, show, assume, conclude, decide, doubt, expect, hear, hope, imagine, mean, notice, read, realize, recognize, remember, suppose, understand, wish</i> (LGSWE: 663).</p> <p><b>2. That-clauses controlled by adjectival predicates:</b> A. Adjectival predicates taking post-predicate <i>that</i>-clauses: <i>certain, confident, convinced, positive, right, sure, afraid, adamant, alarmed, amazed, amused, angry, annoyed, astonished, (un)aware, careful, concerned, depressed, disappointed, distressed, disturbed, encouraged, frightened, glad, grateful, (un)happy, hopeful, hurt, irritated, mad, pleased, proud, reassured, relieved, sad, (dis)satisfied, sensible, shocked, sorry, surprised, thankful, uncomfortable, upset, worried</i>. B. Adjectival predicates taking extraposed <i>that</i>-clauses: <i>accepted, apparent, certain, clear, correct, doubtful, evident, false, inevitable, (un)likely, obvious, plain, (im)possible, probable, right, true, well-known, (un)acceptable, amazing, anomalous, annoying, appropriate, astonishing, awful, (in)conceivable, curious, disappointing, dreadful, embarrassing, extraordinary, (un)fortunate, frightening, funny, good, great, horrible, incidental, incredible, indisputable, interesting, ironic, irritating, (un)lucky, natural, neat, nice, notable, noteworthy, noticeable, odd, okay, paradoxical, peculiar; preferable, ridiculous, sad, sensible, shocking, silly, strange, stupid, sufficient, surprising, tragic, (un)typical, unfair, understandable, unthinkable, unusual, upsetting, wonderful, advisable, critical, crucial, desirable, essential, fitting, imperative, important, necessary, obligatory, vital</i>.</p>
<p>To-complement clauses</p>	<p><b>Verbs controlling to-clauses in post predicate position:</b> LGSWE (700–5) identifies the verbs which most commonly occur in the verb + to-clause pattern and groups them into 10 major semantic categories. Aspects of personalization might be marked by verbs in the following three categories: cognition verbs (<i>e.g. expect, forget, learn, pretend, remember</i>); verbs of desire (<i>e.g. [cannot] bear, care, dare, desire, dread, hate, hope, like, long, love, need, prefer, regret, [cannot] stand, wish, want</i>); verbs of intention or decision (<i>e.g. agree, aim, choose, consent, decide, hesitate, intend, look, mean, plan, prepare, refuse, resolve, threaten, volunteer, wait</i>).</p> <p><b>Adjectives taking post-predicate to-clauses:</b> <i>apt, certain, due, guaranteed, liable, (un)likely, prone, sure, (un)able, anxious, bound, careful, competent, determined, disposed, doomed, eager, eligible, fit, greedy, hesitant, inclined, keen, loath, obliged, prepared, quick, ready, reluctant, (all) set, slow, (in)sufficient, welcome, (un)willing, afraid, amazed, angry, annoyed, ashamed, astonished, careful, concerned, content, curious, delighted, disappointed, disgusted, embarrassed, free, furious, glad, grateful, happy, impatient, indignant, nervous, perturbed, pleased, proud, puzzled, relieved, sorry, surprised, worried, awkward, difficult, easy, hard, (un)pleasant, (im)possible, tough, bad, brave, careless, crazy, expensive, good, lucky, mad, nice, right, silly, smart, (un)wise, wrong</i>.</p>

## Appendix C: results

In the following tables, frequency counts are per 1000 words.

Table 12 Frequency counts for markers of conversationalization

	<i>Labour</i>				<i>Conservative</i>			
	1966	1979	1987	1997	1966	1979	1987	1997
Elaboration of meaning								
Words containing 9+ letters	88.9	60.86	63.33	49.5	83.48	66.1	78.13	67.67
Definite and indefinite articles	84.0	84.99	73.33	68.35	81.67	71.56	82.53	60.44
Quantifiers	11.65	14.34	15.67	10.9	16.3	20.53	17.38	13.8
Common prepositions	40.54	42.32	29.67	25.34	39.85	34.46	36.03	28.25
Nominalizations	40.31	25.53	23.33	24.16	35.23	25.05	22.41	32.19
Attributive adjectives	17.31	11.13	9.67	9.95	14.0	8.47	11.52	11.16
Non-elaboration of meaning								
Primary verbs	77.95	62.25	79.33	102.82	72.6	80.41	69.34	80.16
Modals and semi-modals	23.3	34.63	24.67	28.58	27.51	24.86	19.9	40.74
Common adverbs	17.01	18.54	12.33	32.7	24.7	20.34	22.2	22.34
Personal pronouns	78.41	71.35	103.67	124.04	83.81	89.26	72.27	131.08
Indefinite pronouns	2.09	1.6	3.26	5.11	2.8	4.71	2.72	5.58
Stereotyped verbal repertoire								
Lexical bundles	1.87	1.92	5.34	7.7	2.76	4.65	1.52	5.35
High frequency modal verbs	10.95	27.98	16.67	17.38	18.11	17.51	14.24	32.52
Common verbs controlling <i>that</i> - and <i>to</i> -complement clauses	3.61	6.94	11.14	11.5	6.31	7.77	3.37	7.49
Common linking and circumstance adverbs	8.97	5.25	10.0	18.56	8.4	10.92	7.75	16.42
Common lexical verbs	25.28	35.33	42.0	45.67	39.02	41.43	17.59	39.09
Online and interactional features								
1st person singular pronouns	8.27	6.99	26.67	30.94	12.35	11.11	7.75	27.92
2nd person pronouns	9.44	12.24	10.0	27.99	11.53	11.68	7.33	22.01
Questions	3.38	8.74	4.33	7.07	4.61	5.46	2.3	4.6
Contractions	7.92	21.68	32.33	42.72	22.06	33.52	12.36	37.45
Discourse markers	2.99	1.74	2.26	10.3	6.2	3.35	1.22	9.19
'Indefinite' <i>you</i>	1.75	3.15	4.0	17.38	2.63	2.82	3.56	7.88

Table 13 Frequency counts for markers of personalization

	<i>Labour</i>				<i>Conservative</i>			
	1966	1979	1987	1997	1966	1979	1987	1997
Verbal and adverbial expressions of stance								
Adverbial expressions of stance	1.16	0.7	2.33	6.48	2.47	3.39	1.88	2.96
Adverbial expressions of degree	6.08	3.92	5.93	6.12	7.66	7.63	5.34	4.31
Modal expressions of stance	7.46	5.95	7.33	6.48	8.73	9.42	9.22	20.04
Mental verbs	13.06	11.8	21.6	22.49	16.55	17.66	8.46	22.19
Expression of stance through complement clauses								
<i>That</i> -complements	5.35	8.38	13	13.26	7.57	8.1	3.56	10.84
<i>To</i> -complements	4.46	5.23	6.0	5.89	4.94	5.46	2.73	5.26

Table 14 Frequency counts for Thatcher and Blair talking heads

	<i>Thatcher 1987</i>	<i>Blair 1997</i>
Elaboration of meaning		
1. Words 9+ letters long	100.0	39.35
2. Articles	105.88	74.07
3. Nominalizations	37.25	20.83
4. Attributive adjectives	9.80	11.57
5. Quantifiers	13.73	2.31
6. Common prepositions	37.25	25.46
Non-elaboration of meaning		
7. Primary verbs	100.0	62.5
8. Modal verbs	19.61	46.30
9. Adverbs	23.53	13.89
10. Personal pronouns	49.02	62.5
11. Indefinite pronouns	3.92	2.31
Stereotyped verbal repertoire		
12. Lexical bundles	0	2.31
13. High frequency modals	9.8	23.15
14. High frequency verbs controlling <i>that</i> - and <i>to</i> -complement clauses	0	2.31
15. High frequency adverbials	1.96	0
16. Common lexical verbs	15.68	37.04
On-line and interactional features		
17. First person singular pronouns	0	18.52
18. Second person pronouns	7.84	4.63
19. Questions	0	4.63

*Table 14* continued

	<i>Thatcher 1987</i>	<i>Blair 1997</i>
20. Discourse markers	0	4.63
21. Indefinite 'you'	5.88	0
22. Contractions	29.41	39.35
Expressions of stance		
23. Adverbial expressions of stance	3.92	0
24. Adverbial expressions of degree	1.96	0
25. Modal expressions of stance	9.80	16.20
26. Mental verbs	3.92	11.57
27. <i>That</i> -complements	1.96	0
28. <i>To</i> -complements	5.88	6.94