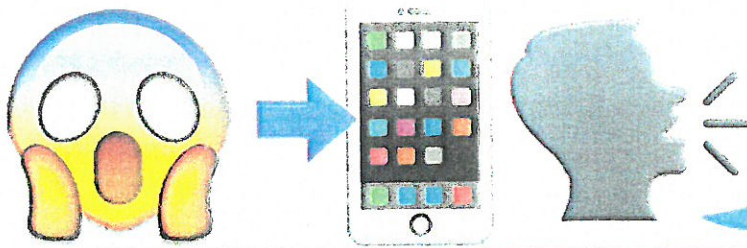


How Technology Affects the Dynamics of a Conversation

By Sophie Earl
Supervisor: Diane Crimp



Introduction

This investigation looks at the effects of technology in the dynamics of a conversation, in comparison with a face-to-face conversation.

Literature Review

- ▶ Petrie (1999): "Emailisms" are grammatical features used in technology which may be unnecessary
- ▶ Noughton (1999): communication in technology as resembles "stream of consciousness narratives, the product of people typing as they can think"
- ▶ John Sutherland (2002): "[Texting] masks dyslexia, poor spelling and mental laziness."
- ▶ John B. Newman and Milton W. Horowitz (1965): "...Written utterance can help bring about the very elegance of style and standard of expression"

Methodology

There were two pairs of people that I used to receive four pieces of data. The first pair are an opposite-gendered married couple (Bob and Linda), while the other group are female friends and colleagues (Sal and Sophie P). From each pair I received a text message conversation which was a page long, and a recorded spoken conversation which was one minute long. In the data I observed structure and purpose, grammar and lexis, and issues around mode.

Sources

- ▶ Peter Lang, 2008. *Cont. Petrie (1999). Print. Linguistic Insights, Studies in Language and Communication.*
- ▶ Crystal, David. *Language and the Internet. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2001. Cont. Noughton (1999). Print.*
- ▶ Newman, John B., and Milton W. Horowitz. "Writing and Speaking." *College Composition and Communication* 16.3 (1965): 160-64. <http://www.jstor.org/>. Web. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/355730?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents>.

Analysis: Structure and Purpose

In the text messages between the couple, there are notable gaps of time between the messages:

Today @ 7:20 am
Lo love?
Today @ 18:18 pm
On the plane X

Either they didn't feel the need to communicate throughout the day, or they could have had a Skype call. Since Skype was mentioned later on in the text, this could indicate that they were simply making small talk until they could have a face-to-face interaction. In terms of turn taking and structure in their face-to-face transcript, Linda appears to be a dominant participant, while Bob responds with feedback:

- 10 Linda: Well come on he didn't even have his own toilet he had to share a communal toilet
- 11 Bob: Neither did I when I was at uni (.) but carry on??
- 15 Sophie P: I think I'm gonna cry (laughs)
- 16 Sal: Yep (.)
- 17 I'm taking it with me
- 18 Sophie P: I never realised they were yours
- 19 it was just always there
- 20 Oh what are we gonna do??

However, despite their face-to-face conversation including features such as real-life emotional expression, the conversation is less detailed than the text message conversation.

The colleagues group sent multiple messages at once in a "stream of consciousness" style:

Lol I watch reality shows tbh. Like...
Animal planet stuff
Travel channel. I don't watch bitchy girls like the Kardashians xD
And as you know I watch soap operas.
And cartoons and anime

They used abbreviations in order to type quickly:

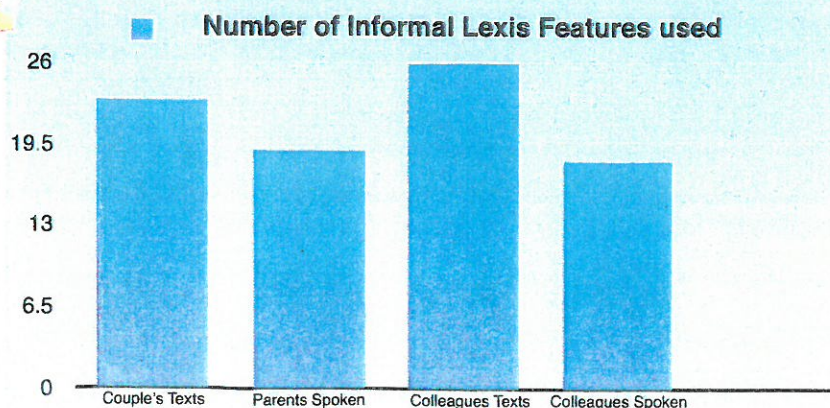
Yeah idk

They also sent long texts with lots of information in them:

Mostly cartoons really although recently I've been watching the old Star Treks. Rn I'm rewatching the first season of Digimon though cause I never got around to watching all of it when I was younger haha

Analysis: Grammar and Lexis

I created a graph to demonstrate the large amount of informal lexis used in each script. The features that I measured in each script were; ellipses, clippings, abbreviation, contractions, elision, and non-standard English/misspellings. The graph that I constructed shows how informal lexis is more likely to be used in text message format.



Analysis: Issues around Mode

In both of the text message conversations, the participants incorporate and mimic spoken features. The colleagues used the following emoticons to mimic real-life emotion; XD, :D, :D, :D, :D. However, in the couple's text messages, they did not always use emoticons to portray emotion. Instead they used emoticons in a random fashion in an act of humour. For example: :D :D :D. I think that, because they're older, they find it entertaining to play around with this new technology feature. Furthermore, the participants also typed in ways to try to mimic sound:

You beat me hmmm!! So pants habah

However, there are some written features which appear in the couple's spoken transcript as well:

- 18 Linda: They kept saying oh I didn't know you felt that way and I remember last year when it was happening to me and Louise didn't know anyone and Gene had left for uni and they were just going oh chin up Linda(!) and now they're saying they don't even remember me feeling that way??

The detailed, fluent, extended description that Linda uses is similar to that of a story-telling genre. This demonstrates that issues around mode is present in both written and spoken texts.

Conclusions

- ▶ When texting, participants used features such as emoticons to mimic face-to-face conversation or speech.
- ▶ Text-messaging conversations can sometimes be more expressive and personal than face-to-face ones.
- ▶ The face-to-face conversations had less informal lexis features
- ▶ Different forms of communication are unique in their own way and are convenient and useful in different ways.

Future Development

Recording more conversations could have allowed me to prove that my data was more valid and reliable. I decided to use a graph in my grammar and lexis section of my analysis, because I thought that the use of quantitative data would allow me to analyse and measure my data while being objective about the findings. I feel this approach has allowed me to form original theories that are based on an objective analysis of a piece of data.





How does the language of politicians vary when discussing the EU?

A language investigation by Tristan Skelley

Student No: 153349



Introduction and Literature Review

This investigation will consider the ways in which a politician will use language when talking about the European Union. I have chosen spoken language as my form of communication, and contextual factors such as location, audience or date will be key to a successful analysis. This investigation has been divided into three sections – prosodics, rhetorical schemes and rhetorical tropes. Theorists I have used include:

- Adrian Beard (1999) and his study into the language of politics, especially figurative.
- The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (1956) and how it influences thought
- George Orwell (1946) and the use of “ready-made” political phrases”
- Samuel Gyasi-Obeng (1997) and the lack of explicitness in political language
- Cam Barber (2012) and the relation of pauses to a political speech

KEY THEORY

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (1956) – This theory suggests that language can determine thought (linguistic determination) or greatly influence it (linguistic relativity). It links to the language of politics as many speeches aim to influence their audiences.

Methodology

I have transcribed a selection of speeches from famous politicians since our acceptance into the European Union in 1975. This data, in chronological order, is from:

- Ted Heath (Blackpool speech, 1973)
- Margaret Thatcher (Bruges speech, 1988)
- Boris Johnson (EU Great Debate speech, 2016)



I gathered my data from a set of audio recordings and speeches on the internet, and then I transcribed them to use them for analysis.

From these transcripts I will divide my investigation into three different sections.

1. Prosodics - this is the study of pauses, emphasis and rhythm during a speech.
2. Rhetorical schemes – these are features that link to sentence structure, mainly including things like repetition
3. Rhetorical tropes – these are different to schemes, focusing on figurative language and ideas such as abstract nouns as well as similes, metaphors and other interesting word choice.

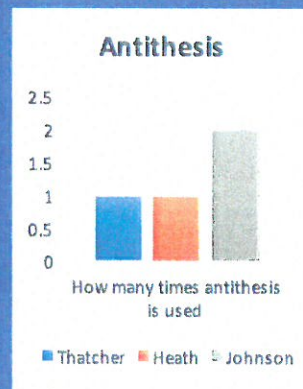
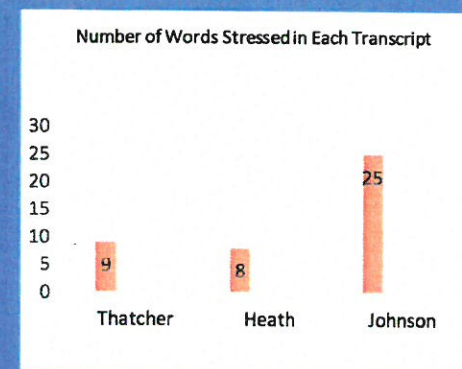
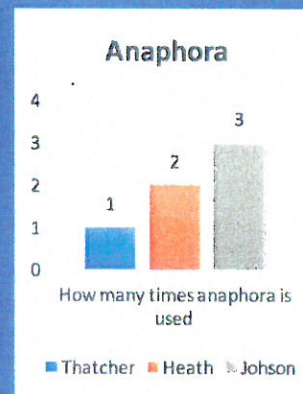
I made sure to make my data fair by creating transcripts of politicians from both sides of the EU debate –those who are in favour of it, and those who are against it.

References

- Barber, C. (2012). 'The Power of the Pause in public speaking'. Online article, accessed at: <http://vividmethod.com/the-power-of-the-pause-in-public-speaking/>
- Beard, A. (1999). 'The Language of Politics'. Routledge 1999
- Obeng, S-G. (1997), 'Language in Politics: Indirectness in Political Discourse'. Sage Journals: Vol. 8, Issue 1.
- Orwell, G. (1946), 'Politics and the English Language'. Penguin Classics 2013
- Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (1956), best explained in: Whorf, B-L. (1956). 'Language, Thought and Reality'. MIT Press 2012

Data

Anaphora: The repetition of words at the beginning of a phrase or sentence.
 Antithesis: Parallel phrases, with one being positive and one being negative.
 Abstract noun: A noun for an idea, quality or state instead of an object.



Thatcher's Speech	Heath's Speech	Johnson's Speech
"we have looked to wider horizons"	"this is what other parties would throw away"	"rubbishing our country, running it down"
"Britain does not dream of some cosy, isolated existence"	"like a child discarding a borrowed toy"	"but to bow down to Brussels"
	"the community is on the move"	"if we stand up for democracy"

	Thatcher (Bruges Speech)	Ted Heath (Blackpool Speech)	Boris Johnson (EU Speech)
Examples of words stressed during the transcript	"all"	"they"	"hope"
	"security"	"most certainly"	"prosperity"
	"prosperity"		"our"
			"we"



Analysis of the data

From our data, we can draw some conclusions as to the variation of political language when talking about the EU.

- Johnson uses **more rhetorical schemes** to structure his speeches, for example **repetition** in the two graphs on the left – I would suggest that this is because of his charismatic approach to politics.
- All politicians **tailor their speeches** in order to persuade or **influence** the public, supporting the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (see KEY THEORY).
- Pauses are used for effect, and can create gaps between information that is meant to be remembered. It also makes the speaker seem **in control**.
- Personification is used by Thatcher effectively, describing Britain as though it is a person – “Britain does not dream”.
- Positive and negatives next to each-other (**antithesis**) are common in even short speeches, and these **convey emotion** to the audience.
- **Johnson's transcript** has far **more stressed/emphasised words** – this is because of the context of his speech, right before the voting stages of the EU referendum in 2016. He is trying to rally support one last time.
- Sometimes politicians **will avoid explicitly saying their point**, and would rather that the audience infer it. This means that they can avoid accountability for everything that they say. (Gyasi-Obeng, 1997).

Conclusion

Overall, this investigation confirmed my beliefs that politicians will adapt their language about the European Union depending on the side they support. For example:

- Heath uses the word “community” to describe the EU
 - Johnson will only refer to it as “Europe”, not even as the “European Union”
- This is because the word “union” suggests friendship and equality, and Johnson believes that it is only a negative influence on us.
- From the data, it is also clear that politicians will use rhetorical devices such as emotive language to connect with their audience, as well as pronouns like “we” to support this. Contextual factors did also play a part, with the recipients of Johnson's rousing speech to be more likely to take it in, as the referendum was one of the largest political events recently.

Future Development

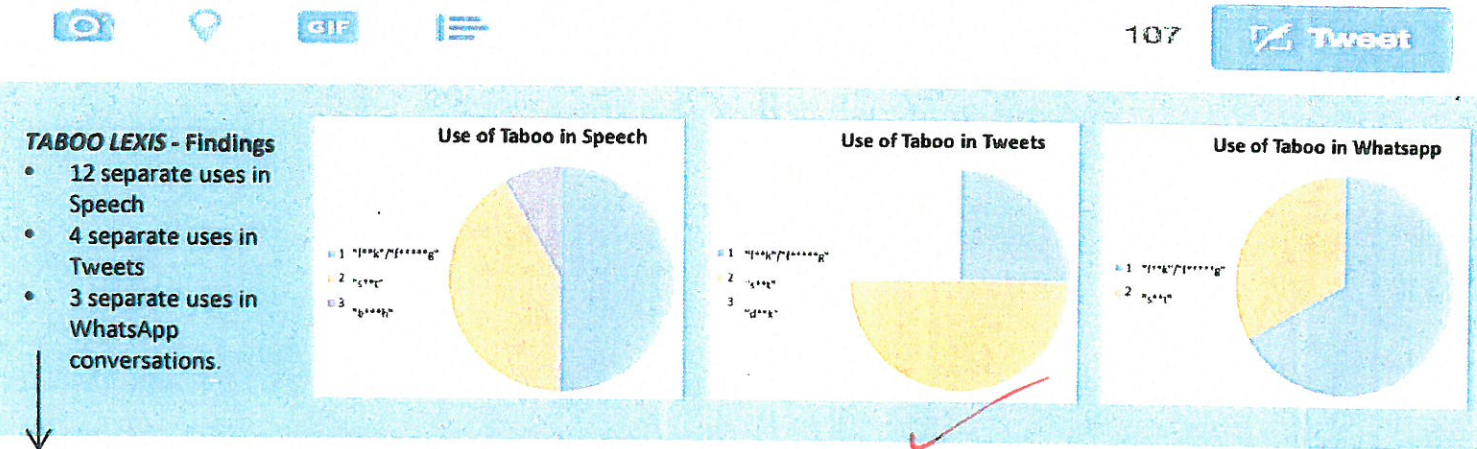
This investigation proved to be challenging, as the topic was one with a very specific focus. There was also a lack of research in this field, specifically with the EU as the subject. If I was to continue this investigation further, I would:

- Add a 4th piece of data to even out the numbers, and this would also provide me with a more reliable analysis.
- Choose another section to analyse. I think something that would be interesting to look at would be lexis, and exactly why politicians choose the words that they say.
- Future work on this investigation might also consider time as a more important factor – has the view of the general population changed?

@thefemales

TWEETS: 11.3K | FOLLOWING: 714 | FOLLOWERS: 43K

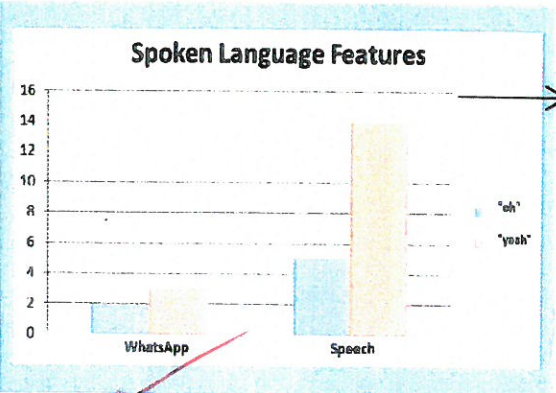
How does the Language of Females differ on Social Media compared to their Language in Conversation?



Analysis – Within the data there was a predominate use of taboo language within real life conversation; 3 times more than use in Tweets and 4 times more than use in WhatsApp. This may have occurred due to the unity of the social group created by the comfortable environment. This contradicts Kramer's (1979) findings, which suggests that such language tends to appear within a male group rather than a female group.

SPOKEN LANGUAGE FEATURES - Findings

- As expected, spoken language features (SLF) was apparent in speech much more than forms of social media.
- 19 features of 'back-channelling': a form of verbal feedback e.g. "yeah" in speech
- 5 of the same features found in WhatsApp conversation and none in Tweets.



Analysis – This data clearly shows the methods females adopt in order to maintain and encourage relationships with fellow speakers when in a conversation. It is apparent that previous suggestions from e.g. Deborah Jones which stated that females share their knowledge (or 'gossip') whilst encouraging one another with back-channelling to build these various relationships.

GRAMMAR – One of the main grammatical findings was the consistent use of incomplete minor sentences in 6/10 Tweets. 5/10 of these tweets neglected the subject of the sentence e.g. "I" or "I'm" and the 6th incomplete minor sentence contained ellipsis (...). The 140 character limit enforced by the site may spur this behaviour as despite the use of unconventional sentence structure, all Tweets can be understood without any difficulty.

References; Lakoff, R. (1975). Language and the Woman's Place. Kramer, C. (1974). Stereotypes of Women's Speech: The Word from Cartoons. Jones, D. (1980). Gossip: Notes on Women's oral culture. Women's Studies International Quarterly. Crystal, D. Txting: The gr8 db8. Werry, C. (1996). Linguistic and interactional features of Internet Relay Chat. In S. Herring, Computer-mediated communication: Linguistic, social and cross-cultural perspectives. Goddard, A., & Geesin, B. (2011). Language and Technology. Routledge.

Introduction

As social media usage begins to grow, as does the language of the teenagers using such sites. In the later years of adolescents, the importance of professionalism becomes more apparent and the language they may use online may no longer be appropriate for the working world. The purpose of this investigation was to establish whether the language of these teens, females specifically, differs between social media and real life conversations.

Methodology

- 7 individuals were investigated.
- All of those analysed were students at Godalming College, female and of the same social group
- This selection allowed the reduction of any external variables.
- 5 Tweets each from 2 individuals were collected.
- Two real life conversations were transcribed
- Two sections of WhatsApp group conversations.

Lexis, spoken language features and grammar were analysed in this investigation.

Hypotheses

The participants will adopt the 'typical' female talk proposed by Lakoff's (1975). However, due to a rise in female empowerment, linguistic stereotypes may no longer apply to aspects of female language today.

Literature Review

The language of females has been investigated thoroughly in the past, as has language and technology. However; the language of females within technology accompanied by a direct comparison is not so common.

- David Crystal: suggested that there is a potential that text speak/informality has begun to leak into real talk. "Txting: The Gr8 Db8" (2008)
- Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory: says that those who wish to identify with their social group will mirror their interlocutor's habits. (Goddard and Geesin, 2011).
- Deborah Jones (1990): chatting is the "most intimate form of gossip". Females now use this to inform one another of their knowledge whether that is public in e.g. a tweet or private in a WhatsApp conversation/ real life conversation.
- Werry (1996): alternatively suggested that the tendency to display emotion on social media is hyper-gendered as a new sub-culture.

- Conclusions**
- Today, females may tend to adopt a more 'masculine' discourse via use of e.g. Taboo Lexis in order to portray themselves as more dominant.
 - There is a reduced expectation for females to conform to 'lady-like' stereotypes.
 - Similarities between language within social groups come from the desire to affiliate with members and mirroring language/behaviours will often lead to success in doing so.

- Future Directions**
- Although there are some features that many females will still adopt e.g. a co operative approach to speech, rather than a competitive one, many females will appear more masculine in speech.
 - Lakoff's suggestion that "a girl is damned is she does, damned if she doesn't" highlights the stereotypes expected of females (despite living in the 20th Century). Yet the findings of this investigation show the change in female behaviour from the 1970's in their language.
 - Female language choices in particular have changed largely, and there is a gap in research focussing on these changes.
 - Females and Males are commonly compared in research but the investigations of females in contexts may provide and insight into lexical/grammatical choices.