The Distribution of Pronominal Selection of Political Speeches : Pragmatic Implications

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Abstract:

The present paper tackles the problem of the pragmatic manipulation of pronouns within various political contexts. It deals with the selectional choices made by different politicians in referring to themselves and to others.

The paper aims at showing how ideological differences display themselves in pronominal selection.

It is hypothesized that each politician may operate with different scale or continuum, of pronominal referencing, and that differences will be generated by various aspects of the context; the speakers, the topic, etc. It is thought that such differences are pragmatic indicators of shifts in meaning. Thus, the proportional use of certain pronouns may itself affect the interpretation (meaning) of certain pronouns for certain speakers.

In order to explore this possibility, our study will present the results of the analysis of a number of speeches of two selected British politicians namely Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock. The analyses focused on the way in which a broad range of personal pronominal choices were indicative of how each politician viewed the world, and how he manipulated the meaning of pronouns in order to present a specific ideological perspective.

The analysis of the data is based on the system of pronominal distribution developed by Rees (1983).

The paper concludes that the selection of pronouns is a socio-pragmatically discrete tool in the hands of politicians. The analysis provided in this work not only highlights the significance of pronominal referencing, but also provides a potentially new, ideologically sensitive linguistic tool. The ideological orientation of a speech, it is suggested, could in part be mapped by assessing quantitatively the selection of particular pronominal types.

The pronominal claims of this paper undoubtedly include issues of power, status and social identity.

توزيع اختيار الضمائر في الخطابات السياسية: مضامين تداولية

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ملخص البحث :

يتناول البحث إشكالية المعالجة التداولية للضمائر في إطار سياقات سياسية مختلفة حيث يتعامل مع الاختيارات المنتخبة لسياسيين عدة عند الإشارة إلى أنفسهم أو غيرهم.

يهدف البحث إلى إظهار الاختلافات الإيديولوجية للسياسيين في مجال اختيار الضمائر.

تفترض الدراسة أن لكل سياسي طريقة معينة في استعمال الضمائر وتحكم هذه الاختلافات عوامل متنوعة كالسياق والمتكلم والموضوع والخ. ويُعتقد أن مثل هذه الاختلافات إنما هي مؤشرات تداولية لاختلاف المعنى وعليه فإن استعمال ضمائر معينة قد يؤثر على تأويل معنى الضمائر بالنسبة لمتحدثين معينين.

ولاكتشاف هذه الاحتمالية، تعرض الدراسة نتائج تحليل عددٍ من خطابات سياسيين بريطانيين وهما السيدة تاتشر والسيد كينوك (رئيس حزب العمال السابق). وركز التحليل على اختيار السياسي للضمائر حسب رؤيته للعالم وكيفية توظيف كل سياسي للضمائر وفق منظارٍ ايديولوجي معين.

واعتمد التحليل على نظام التوزيع الضمائري الذي طوره العالم (ري) عام ١٩٨٣.

واستنتج البحث بأن اختيار الضمائر هو وسيلة تداولية بيد الساسة. وأظهرت نتائج التحليل أهمية الضمائر في الإشارة إلى أنفسهم وغيرهم علاوة على كونها أداة لغوية حساسة على نحوٍ ايديولوجي.

Introduction :

Linguists, among others, frequently describe the pronominal system of English in terms of categorical divisions such as person, number and sex. Recently, however, pragmatic considerations of the way in which the pronouns of English are actually used in context indicate that pronouns are far from categorical, and, indeed, their interpretation is mediated by a range of social and personal factors producing a range of possible uses and interpretations (Maitland, 1988). Most of us are aware,

for example, that while '***she***' is designated as a sex-specific pronoun (dependent on the sex of the person or animal talked about; Quirk et al., 1985:342), it may also be used to refer to '***things***', for example cars or ships. Equally, and significantly more controversially, it is claimed that where sex is not determined '***he***' or '***they***' can be used as an unmarked pronominal form. The problem here is that authors, such as Quirk et al., who support the position of '***he***' as an unmarked form, also argue that gender in English is 'natural' (semantic) as opposed to grammatical (formal) (as in a language like French). Cameron (1985) quite correctly asks why, if gender is '***natural***' within English, the masculine form is, chosen as the unmarked alternative and not the feminine? The reality is argues Cameron, that 'gender in English is not fixed entirely by sex reference but also reflects a variety of ideologically motivated prescriptive practices and folk-linguistic beliefs' (ibid.: 26).

This implies that pronouns may be selected according to the interaction of aspects beyond those bases on purely formal or categorical reckoning; they may function communicatively to reveal various aspects of the speakers attitude in so far as social standing, sex and motivation go. In this sense one might question Harre's claim that the English pronominal system suffers, from a 'social impoverishment', (Harre, 1988: 166). Certainly English does not seem to have an overt system of social ranking and social relations marked within the pronominal system, of the formal kind one would find in Arabic for example (Devitte and Sterelny (2003: 118). Nevertheless, it may be argued that social relationships and attitudes are marked within the use of the pronominal system, not so much in terms of individual pronominal choice, but rather within the overall distributional use of pronouns by specific groups or individuals.

Building on the preceeding argument one would predict that politicians would be particularly sensitive to the use of pronouns in

developing and indicating their ideological position on specific issues. This paper will explore the way in which politicians select and distribute pronouns for political and personal reasons.

Data and Procedure:

In order to explore such options in the real world the study will consider the pronominal scaling of two major figures within the British political scene in the eighties of the last century; Mrs Margaret Thatcher (the ex-leader of the Conservative party and the ex-Prime Minister) ; and Neil Kinnock (the ex-leader of the opposition Labour Party). A series of six pre-scripted speeches from the period 1982-1984 will be considered, three for each of the selected politicians. We are concentrating on pre-scripted speeches for the following reasons. The first, and main reason, is that in a per-scripted speech the politician is consciously involved in the organization and selection of each lexical item and each syntactic construction in an effort to achieve the maximum required effect on the audience.

A second, and indirect reason for focusing on pre-scripted speeches relates specifically to the individual politicians we are considering. Atkinson (1984: 38) points out that Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock rely heavily on male script writers; and further they tend to adhere very closely to their scripts when delivering their speeches. This makes any comparison that much more significant. It also reduces any difference in sex-based pronominal use (as indicated by Laberge and Sankoff, 1980), since the concentration is focused on script content rather than individual delivery.

In selecting speeches for analysis an effort has been made to make the speeches both representative and comparable (See Appendix, table A .1), the majority being taken from party conferences.

In the Appendix, table A.2, the overall distribution of pronouns within the text of each speech is outlined. Within this analysis 'they'/ 'them' is included only where the referent was human, or accepted as the personification of an entity. Where 'it' occurred as a dummy subject it was not counted, nor when it was used to refer to inanimate objects or abstract concepts; it was counted, however, where the context indicated that 'he'/'she'/'they' could be substituted for 'it'. In more political terms, 'it' is counted when it is used to refer to the government, since in this case it would have been possible to employ 'they' in such referencing. What this indicates is that the speech writer has a choice of form in such a context; consequently, any actual selection may be seen as carrying, potentially, an ideological loading within the framework of a specific presentation.

Building on the above argument, the analysis proves that politicians of different political persuasions would operate with modified scales which they use to represent their distinct ideological position. In order to consider this possibility, we will consider three main areas when looking at the speeches of our selected politicians:

1. **Self-referencing**: the way in which the speaker chooses to portray himself/herself in relation to the topic and addressee(s).
2. **Relations of Contrast**: this refers to the way in which speakers make use of the pronominal system to compare and contrast others on a negative/positive scale. For example, in political debate instead of referring to your opponent by name, you may simply pinpoint them as 'him' or 'her'.
3. **Other Referencing**: this indicates the use of pronouns to refer to individuals and groups outside the roles of speaker and addressee.

Model:

The analysis adopts basically the pronominal scale developed by Rees (1983). The basic principle of this scale is that in considering personal pronouns we begin from the most fundamental and subjective form, ‘it’ (and its variants, ‘me’, ‘my’ or ‘mine’)and then progressively move outwards, or away from this deictic centre. This position can be represented for the individual speaker in terms of the scale shown in example (i):

Example (i):

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I	ME	YOU	ONE	YOU	IT	SHE	HE	THEY
	direct address		indefinite					

(adapted from Rees, 1983:16)

For Rees this scale represents the generic position for all speakers. He suggests that speakers may shift the relative position of each pronoun in order to signify some information beyond that of simply referencing one’ s self, or any other individual under discussion.

The formation of Rees’ scale is dependent on how the speaker perceives particular pronominal uses. For example, if the speaker perceives ‘those’ as more negative than ‘it’, with ‘those’ associated with facelessness, and ‘it’ being treated as a ‘neutral’ term, then ‘those’ will be placed further away from ‘I’.

On the other hand, if ‘it’ is perceived as sub-human, with ‘those’ being perceived simply as not present, then, in this case, it may be placed further away from the ‘I’.

In this system ‘you’ has been allocated to first and third person, as well as to the more conventional second person; ‘one’ is also given a first-and third person designation.

What this kind of model offers us, in political terms, is a pronominal window into the thinking and attitude of politicians towards particular political topics and political personalities.

1. Self-Referencing:

Indicating self-reference by means other than 'I' or 'we' is said to represent a distancing strategy on the part of the speaker because the choice of pronoun indicates how close/distant the speaker is to the topic under discussion, or to the participants involved in the discussion (Bull, 2002: 41). We noted above that this can be represented by a distancing scale of the type developed by Rees (1983), where, as one moved along the scale away from 'I' (and the variants me/my/mine) towards forms like he/it/they, one showed that one was distancing oneself from the issue/individual/subject of the talk.

In analyzing the speeches of our selected British politicians we find that Mrs Thatcher employs the first-person singular pronoun as a means of establishing rapport with her audience (Lwaitama, 1998: 38 makes a similar argument for the African politicians).

(1) "**We** have a policy unit and that their job is to think. **I** understand that this has caused some degree of shock in some quarter". (speech B).

We also find the use of first-person singular forms (supported by mental-process verbs, for example, 'think', 'want', 'wish') in reflecting intrinsic attitudes, particularly in the communication of sincerity:

(2) "**I** am prepared to defend to utmost the things in which **I** believe and **I** wish to hand on to our children as our forefathers handed them on to us. Of course, **I** want to see nuclear disarmament. Indeed, **I** should like to see general disarmament as well. Wouldn't **we** all. **I** shrink from the horrors of war… Should **we** more easily get the Soviet side

to the table if -**we** had already renounced our nuclear weapons? Of course not". (Speech A)

Analysis of this text displays how Mrs Thatcher makes use of a block[1] of '**I**' forms to express her sincerity and personal belief in freedom and dignity. Mrs Thatcher seems to use the fervent phrases so loved by many politicians, 'I believe' and 'I wish' (Geis, 2004: 38). Her attitude to war is presented as perfectly natural and reasonable, an attitude supported by a favorite phrase 'wouldn't **we** all'. As the text develops there is a noticeable shift from the personal voice, encoded in '***I***', to the institutionalized voice encoded in '**we**'. It is suggested that Mrs Thatcher excluded Russia from any broad inclusive use of '**we**' (see Uyeno, 1971: 16). Her use of the institutionalized '**we**' is ambiguous[2]. Does she mean here only '**we**' as Britain? In the context this seems plausible; on the other hand, while Britain may have a nuclear capability it is hardly of the strength necessary to bring the Soviets to the negotiating table. It makes more sense, then, to see the use of '**we**' as '**we**' the West, or '**we**' the Allies. Seen in this way Mrs Thatcher's point is basically an 'us' against 'them' attitude, where '**we**' inclusive is basically everyone but 'them' (the Soviets).

The aim of the shift to the institutionalized voice, therefore, is to separate out the individual from the Government, and possibly the individual government from the Western Alliance. At a personal level the shift from '**I**' to '**we**' separates out Mrs Thatcher the peace-loving individual, from the resolute leader who must work with the West as a whole to bring about and maintain peace through negotiation; but negotiation from strength, where one accepts, and does not shrink from, the possibility of war.

As well as employing the pronominal system to distribute responsibility and to distinguish the individual view from the necessary

governmental and global view, Mrs Thatcher also makes use of first-person plural pronouns to signal positive associations. By this is meant that Mrs Thatcher reserves particular pronominal forms to reference those groups, countries or individuals who support her general perspective on specific political issues. '**We**', for example, is used to reference the Government, Britain, the Central Council of the Conservative Party, President Reagan, NATO and the EEC:

(3) "Mr chairman, **we** are determined that Britain should not tread that path. **We** shall fight to defend those qualities of tolerance and fairness and courage which have sustained **us** for so long. **We** shall fight for our freedom in time of peace as fiercely as **we** have fought in time of war". (Speech B).

In this text we see the shifting distribution of '**we**'. At the beginning '**we**' is restricted to the government, however by the time we get to, '**we have fought in times of war**', there has been a shift to '**we**' Britain. For Mrs Thatcher it is almost as if the Government and Britain are one and the same.

This equation between the government and Britain as a whole is further reflected in Mrs Thatcher's use of the first-person plural possessive pronoun '**our**' to refer to organizations, persons or concepts that we might normally expect to be marked by the definite article; for example:

Our schools ——— the schools
Our forces ——— the forces
Our police ——— the police

(4) "What are **we** (the government) doing because **we** all want genuine disarmament with safety and security for **our** people and **our** way of life". (Speech A).

Interestingly, while Mrs Thatcher may employ the first-person plural possessive to refer to the young in the following extract:

(5) "**Our** children are fed on a daily diet of violence" (Speech A).

When the occasion arises to discuss juvenile crime, there is no attempt to claim either the children involved (or the parents) as '**ours**'. Instead what we find is the use of third-person possessive as a distancing strategy:

(6) "Moreover it strengthens the provisions where by parents may have to pay **their** children's fines". (Speech A)

Mrs Thatcher also makes use of '**you'**[2]**, 'you'**[3] and '**one**' for distancing purposes, sometimes in a very rapid shift within the process of self-referencing:

(7) "Indeed if **one** wants enough resources to do everything **we** wish to do, **you** have to be resolute about other matters too". (Speech A)

It is extremely doubtful, considering that this extract comes from a pre-scripted speech, that what we are witnessing is a production error. What Mrs Thatcher seems to be trying to do is perform a kind of juggling trick. She wants to convey an image of tough resoluteness in the face of problems like high unemployment and issues of poverty, but at the same time she wants to indicate a legitimate concern for those who are disadvantaged. In (7) '**one**' indicates the distancing role of authority; however, as we shift to '**we**' there is an attempt to present the human face of government, or the Government's position ('**we**' has strong self-referencing connotations when one wishes to convey a desire to help). But despite any sympathetic concerns, when we shift to '**you**', Mrs Thatcher indicates that she has no option available to her other than to be resolute and to stick to her policies.

In Rees' system (1983) 'you' has been allocated to first and third person, as well as to the more conventional second person; 'one' is also

given a first-and third-person designation. It can be argued that you is what is referred to as a 'situational insertion'[2], the conversion of one' s own personal experience into experiences which might be, or can be, shared by the addressee; as in the following example:

(8) "But isn't it amazing how when **you** bring down inflation to a level far below what they said was possible they take it for granted that **any one** could have done it".

Although Mrs Thatcher is describing her own achievements, she is speaking to a specific audience, the Central Council of the Conservative Party. Consequently, any overt attempt to explicitly attribute responsibility to herself as an individual (by adopting the use of 'I'), as opposed to attributing responsibility to the Government as a whole (of which, of course, she is the senior member), seems inappropriate. Nevertheless, the subtle employment of 'anyone 'does suggest that 'you' was actually intended to refer to Mrs Thatcher herself.

In this example one can also see the clear pragmatic nature of pronominal selection at this level. As it is known, pragmatics is mainly concerned with implicative relations, and it is stated that implications are not facts but inferences which can, in most cases, be cancelled. Mrs Thatcher's use of 'you in this context, invited the implication that it is she herself she is talking about. However this cannot be guaranteed, Mrs Thatcher could quite easily have added on to the end of her statement the following clause:

I am of course referring to the Government's achievements, a government I am proud to be a part of.

When we turn to the distribution of pronominal forms in the speeches of Mr Kinnock, it is worth bearing in mind that as a socialist, from a working-class background, Kinnock, not surprisingly, does not employ the pronoun '**one**' for either definite or indefinite reference.

Kinnock places a greater stress on the use of '**I**' and he tends to avoid making use of '**you**' as a distancing mechanism.

Interestingly, Kinnock makes a limited use of the first-person plural pronoun '**we**'[3]. The distribution of '**we**' seems to be constrained mainly to reference to the Labour Party; it is also, however, (but less frequently) used for reference to the people of Britain.

(9) "**We** cannot therefore afford to weaken ourselves by divisions even though our mood is one of outrage and frustration at the ruthless assertion of the central government dictate". (Speech E)

Considering the general internal turmoil of the British Labour Party in the 1980s, it is not surprising to find that Mr Kinnock wishes to stress '**we**' for Party referencing. Political commentators have frequently questioned Mr Kinnock on the divisive elements within the Labour Party, on the image of what seems to be a never ending internal struggle between the left and right wings of the Party. It is perhaps not surprising, then, to find Mr Kinnock making a positive use of '**we**' in his efforts to present a view of the Labour Party as a united forces. In 1984 'we the Labour Party 'as a concept was particularly central, and it was repeatedly linked to images of strength within the ongoing battle with the Conservative Party. In a speech delivered to the Labour Party Conference in the summer of 1984 the pronoun '**we**' is directly linked with the word 'power' 24 times.

The distribution of '**we**' is also linked to the use of the first-person possessive '**our**'. Unlike Mrs Thatcher, Mr Kinnock uses this form principally for referring to abstract concepts such as ideals, strength, justice and beliefs. These concepts are projected as being possessed by the Labour Party, or as being part of a general socialist doctrine. This is not to suggest that Mr Kinnock, like Mrs Thatcher, does not also use **'our'** to talk positively about Britain or the nation as a whole:

(10) "Action that recruits and mobilises new people in **our** cause". (Speech F)

It is the case, however, that Mr Kinnock does not distribute his use of '**our**' as liberally (political pun intended as Mrs Thatcher. Returning to **'you**', the designation of this form is derived from the use of what has been called the 'formulation of morals and truisms' (Labour and Sankoff, 1980: 33). Quite simply what this means is that occasionally we will employ '**you**' to reflect upon a kind of conventional wisdom as opposed to actual experience as in the following example by Mr Neil Kinnock:

(11) "Of course money can't buy you a loving family, but it can buy you a separate bedroom for the children". (Speech)

In this example '**you**' is employed for indefinite reference, since Mr Kinnock is speaking about people in general. Any reference to self, or to addressee, occurs only in so far as they are members of the wider category mentioned.

2. Relations of Contrast:

Within that British political scene, and initiated by what have become known as the 'Thatcher year', the difference between those elements on the left and right of the political divide within Britain is much greater than it has been for some considerable time. Within that atmosphere of conflict one thing seems abundantly clear; despite the fact that one might consider politics to be based upon the arguments put for different policy solutions to similar problems, much of that political rhetoric revolves around individuals and their respective competencies and personalities.

It is clear, for example, that Mr Kinnock frequently projects the conflict between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party as being

between himself and Mrs Thatcher. We can see this in the way he organizes the presentation of I/she constructions in his speeches.

(12) "That is what makes **me** different from Margaret Thatcher. **I** don't have **her** double standards. **I** do not have **her** selective and blinkered view of life". (Speech F)

Government ministers and the Tory Party[4] in general are frequently referred to as 'hers'.

(13) "And in similar slanderous style **her** Treasury Ministers blame their failure". (Speech E)

The reason behind this is twofold: first, it can be argued that Kinnock is attempting to rival Thatcher's personal following as a strong leader, which would in turn gain him support from those who follow personalities rather than policies, and at the same time provide a central focus on continuing efforts to unite the Labour Party. Second, and more controversially, what we have in Mr Kinnock's use of I/she/her patterns may be a case of chauvinistic politics[5]. It has been noted that Kinnock has what might be termed as typical male 'working class mentality' (Harris, 1984: 67). It might be argued, therefore, that references such as 'her treasury ministers', reflect not only a personal attack on Mrs Thatcher, but also on the ministers themselves, as they allow a woman to dominate them.

Unlike Mr Kinnock, Mrs Thatcher tries to keep the arguments between Labour and Conservative to the Party level. This may be seen in the way she distributes her use of **we/they** constructions.

(14) "And that's exactly what Labour's economics would do. **They'd** destroy the foundation **we** have fought so hard to build". (Speech B).

Mr Kinnock uses the pronoun '**we**' to refer only to the people of Britain or the Labour Party. However, the two referents are not always entirely separated and may occur within the same utterance.

(15) "I am deeply ashamed that **we** have permitted that power to rest with such a Government as **we** have in Britain at this time". (Speech E)

In this example Mr Kinnock is discussing the failure of the Labour Party to win the election. The first occurrence of '**we**' refers to the Labour Party, while the second refers to the British people.

Example (15) also illustrates another device frequently used in the speeches of Mr Kinnock, the functional contrast of '**I**' and '**we**'. This allows Mr Kinnock to simultaneously present himself as part of the Labour Party and/or people of Britain, while at the same time being seen as detached or outside of the group. This device is used to good effect in his final speech as leader of the Labour Party, where he is able to personally accept the 'guilt of defeat', leaving the party to move forward undaunted (Hiz, 2001:126).

Mr Kinnock employs contrastive pronoun patterning using both **she**/**we** constructions and **they/we** constructions. However, when the pronoun '**we**' is used in syntactic opposition to either '**she**' or '**they**', '**we**' is frequently used to refer to the British people. Thus, Mr Kinnock does not present the political situation within Britain as being between two individual leaders, or between two parties, but rather he presents it as a fight between Thatcher and the Tories against 'The people'. This represents a very traditional socialist ideology:

(16) "If the reports about the so called Think Tank are correct **they** have chastised **us** with whips, and all **they** have done at recent cabinet meeting is to prepare the scorpions". (Speech F)

3. Other Referencing:

In terms of other referencing, the use of pronouns to reference to groups and individuals other than speaker and addressee, Mrs Thatcher favours 'they' as a distancing strategy. By employing '**they**' Mrs Thatcher aims to distance herself and her Government from other specified groups. Clearly, '**they**' is not always used to convey direct contrast or opposition, but there can be little doubt that it is not simply employed in a neutral manner. As well as allowing Mrs Thatcher to distance herself from certain specified groups, the use of 'they' is also employed to designate vaguely defined group. The general pragmatic utility of this strategy will be discussed below.

In terms of what is called the 'deictic centre' (Levinson, 1983: 68), '**those**' is a deictic marker of furthest distance from the speaker. In the case of Mrs Thatcher, '**those**' is for the projection of negative connotations. The general effect of using '**those**' to refer to groups is to provide a kind of sinister image. In many cultures that which is abhorrent is marked by namelessness (Gamson, 2005: 121):

(17) "There are **those** who for sinister political reasons wish to undermine the institutions and values upon which we depend. **Those** who call for extra parliamentary action and the sacking of judges and chief constables; **those** who viciously attack the newly appointed commissioner of Police for the Metropolis before **he** has even taken up **his** appointment-there are some teachers, teachers of all people, who go on strike in pursuit of a pay claim". (Speech A)

This text is preceded by a '**we**' Britain strategy. The result of this is that '**those**' are distanced from both speaker and addressee. This, coupled with the use of strong negative forms like 'vicious', 'sinister', 'undermine' increases the sense of menace, allowing Mrs Thatcher to build to a climax where the group are identified (in this instance, the

teachers). In this example, the teachers' pay claim does not merely go against government policy, it is an attempt to undermine the very fabric of society.

Because we are dealing with an example of pragmatic manipulation, however, the above assessment is based on those implications which follow from Mrs Thatcher's text, and as they are implications they can be denied or cancelled. Mrs Thatcher can always claim that she was using forms like 'those' in generic terms, without any intention of specifically identifying any particular group. But, in this example, there does seem to be a link between her criticisms of certain unnamed individuals, or groups, and the teachers.

The implication type employed in this context is an invited inference (Crigler, 2006: 137), since the implication is based on general (knowledge of a default type which links unidentified elements with identified elements in a text[6].

For the audience listening to Mrs Thatcher there is a problem of pronoun resolution; who exactly is being referred to by 'those'? In processing terms the best link is with the teachers, since this is the only available noun phrase. Further, it has also been noted that the resolution of anaphoric pronouns is influenced by general knowledge. (Halliday & Hasan, 1986: 59ff). Therefore, since Mrs Thatcher is making her statement at a time of conflict and disagreement with the teachers' unions, it seems reasonable to conclude that the invited assumption is that she is designating teachers' groups under the heading of '**those**'.

The pronouns '**they**' and '**those**' are neutral constructions for Mr Kinnock, although as might be predicted, they are used with negative connotations when referring to the Tory Party, and with positive connotations when referring to the trade unions and the British people.

For Mr Kinnock it is not ‘those’ which is the chosen form for negatively designating groups, but rather ‘it’. This form is used to depersonalize government departments as faceless and threatening.

(18) "This was the year when the government banned trade unions at GCHQ, Cheltenham. Why? In order to demonstrate **its** view that security, patriotism and commitment to national interest is incompatible with trade unions". (Speech F)

This type of use of ‘**it**’, taken along with the general lack of the use of ‘**our**’ in reference to organizations such as the police, may reflect Mr Kinnock ‘s political position; he is, after all, a politician in opposition. As a politician in opposition he is in conflict not only with the government itself, but with all the branches of government. It cannot be that Mr Kinnock is against the police, the Home Office, or any other governmental institution per se, they will, after all, be the very same institutions that he will be working with should the Labour Party come to power. Rather, what Kinnock is against is the groups and institutions as manifestations of the present government’s policy.

Interestingly, this claim about a type of opposition mentality towards all aspects of the government finds its inverted image in the government’s own position. The aim of the opposition is to criticize and question the actions of the government and all its branches at every available opportunity; not surprisingly, it is the job of the party in power to support and defend all branches of government. Consequently, we find that Mrs Thatcher, as would be predicted from the above argument, personalizes all the organizations and branches of government.

(19) "Any high technology firm with a suitable invention can get a grant from the Department of Industry to cover one-third of the cost of **his** new products to the market. And that’s very good. **He** might not be able to finance it all himself". (Speech B)

It is worth noting that Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock both make direct appeals to their audience by making good use of the form '**you**'.

(20) "I don't want to bore **you**". (Mrs Thatcher, Speech B)

(21) "What we ask **you** is to come and help us rebuild Britain and help us stop all that". (Mr Kinnock, Speech E)

Pronominal Scaling and Politics:

Applying the pronominal scale developed by Rees (1983) shows that such scale allows the speaker to indicate his/her relative distance to a subject or individual under discussion.

The analysis of the speeches of our selected politicians proves that the relative distribution and location of pronouns at particular points on the scale can vary depending on the individual. In this way, however, the scale, with its 0 point representing any selectional choice closest to self, and 9 representing any selectional choice furthest from self, is a useful device for representing idiosyncratic variation in pronominal selection. In political terms, we would predict, for example, that individuals who construe the world in similar ways, i.e. they have the same ideology and belief system, would exhibit similar patterns of pronominal choice; and of course, where individual ideologies differ we might predict different patterns of pronominal choice.

Drawing on the analysis of the speeches of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock given above, it is possible to draw up an individualized pronominal scale for each leader which reflects their own idiosyncratic style in the projection of their political ideologies. For Mrs Thatcher the scale would look something like example (ii).

Example (ii): Scale of distancing from self for Mrs Thatcher.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I	WE	YOU	ONE	YOU	SHE	HE	THEY	IT	THOSE
		(direct)		(indefinite)					

On this scale 'it' is employed as a more powerful distancing strategy than 'she'/'he'/'they', as they are scaled by Rees. The increased negative strength of 'it' for Mrs Thatcher is reflected in her refusal to use this form to refer to government departments, for example. In many contexts using 'it' to refer to institutions would seem innocuous enough. However, the fact that Mrs Thatcher avoids such a use indicates the distancing strength she associates with the pronoun 'it'. As we have already noted in our discussion of Mrs Thatcher's pronominal use, she reserves the form 'those' for referring to those groups which might be considered potentially subversive. For this reason 'those' scores the highest on a scale of distancing for Mrs Thatcher.

The scale of distancing strength for Mr Kinnock is given as example (iii).

Example (iii): Scale of distancing from self for Mr Kinnock.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I	WE	YOU	YOU	THEY	THOSE	HE	SHE	IT
		(direct)	(indefinite)					

The first thing to note about the scale for Mr Kinnock is that '**one**' is absent. Further, unlike Mrs Thatcher, Mr Kinnock uses '**they**' and '**those**' in a neutral fashion. However, for Mr Kinnock the scale indicates that '**she**'/'**he**' becomes a significant focus of contrast with '**I**'. This reflects the way in which Mr Kinnock views the battle between the

Conservative and Labour Parties, i.e. as one between individuals. For Mr Kinnock '**it**' carries the greatest distancing potential.

The interesting thing about these scales is the way in which they reflect, for each of the politicians, a particular approach and attitude. This suggests that scaling may be an effective way of objectively assessing the tenor of specific political speeches, and also, over a period of time, assessing the ideological position of individuals with regard to a range of topics. It is also interesting to note that these scales are not simply reflections of ideolected differences between the speakers, at least in the sociolinguistic sense. It is not simply that Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock distribute their use of pronouns in a probabilistically distinct way, it is that they create different meanings from the same pronouns in relation to the context in which the pronouns are used, and in this sense we are dealing with a pragmatic phenomenon.

The relevance of this kind of pragmatic analysis is clear. For politicians, for example, a greater awareness of pragmatic concepts would be useful in clarifying response given to specific political questions, and of course in constructing such answers. For political analysts the importance of going beyond the surface form of what is said is also significant. In this case, the analyst is provided with arguments which are simply based on intuitions about ideological beliefs, but facts about language processing and interpretation. And for the public, it is important to be able to evaluate the political product being offered. In all cases some awareness of the pragmatic aspects of political talk would prove invaluable.

The analysis shows that any distributional choice provides evidence for pragmatic assessment. What is meant here is that an individual's choice and distributional range of pronouns indicates how they treat the meaning of each pronoun. In order words the proportional

use of certain pronouns may itself affect the interpretation (meaning) of certain pronoun for certain speakers.

Findings:

In analyzing the selected speeches several interesting aspects emerged.

1. The number of pronouns occurring in the analyzed speeches indicates a significant increase in the use of pronouns generally.

Our selected politicians succeeded in making use of blocks of pronouns. Such blocking techniques, frequently found in the speeches of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock, serve to stress key points within a speech, to mark issues of contrast, and to give the speech its own individual flavour.

When the scores for pronouns as a percentage of total word output are averaged for each speaker over the speeches of our data (see Appendix, table A. 2), we find that Mr Kinnock scores higher percentage than Mrs Thatcher.

Mr Kinnock 5.20 %

Mrs Thatcher 4. 85 %

2. The pronouns are also used differently by different politicians. Where Mr Kinnock retains the form '**it**' to refer to the faceless nature of governments departments, Mrs Thatcher uses the form to refer to government departments which would seem for her innocuous enough.

Another example, while Mrs Thatcher uses the pronoun '**one**', for distancing purposes, this pronoun is entirely absent in the speeches of Mr Kinnock. This difference in the use of the pronoun would mark an ideological difference.

3. In the speeches we examined there were no examples of self-referencing using '**you**'[2] or '**one**'[2]**,** and there was no attempt to make use of either indefinite '**you**'[2] or '**one**'.

4. Our selected politicians used none of the devices associated with spontaneity such as tags like 'you know', although these are frequently found in the written forms of many politicians speeches (Wood, 2000: 138).

5. The pragmatic implications of the pronouns may be summarized as follows:

1. The first person singular pronoun (I) is used to:
   (a) establish rapport with the audience as in example (1);
   (b) to reflect intrinsic attitudes particularly in the communication of sincerity as in example (2).
2. The first person plural pronoun (WE) is used to:
   (a) signal positive associations as in example (2)
   (b) to convey a desire to help as in example (7)
   (c) to refer to abstract concepts such as ideal, strength, justice and beliefs as in example (10)
   (d) to equate as in example (2)
3. 'You' is used to:
   (a) reflect upon a kind of conventional wisdom as opposed to actual experience as in example (11).
   (b) make direct appeals to the audience as in example (20) and (21).
4. 'You' and 'One' are used for distancing purposes as in example (7).
5. 'Those' is used for the projection of negative connotations to provide a kind of sinister image and to mark that which is abhorrent as in example (17).
6. They is utilized to
   (a) distance the speaker from certain specified groups as in example (16).

(b) to designate vaguely defined groups as in example (16).

(c) to convey direct contrast or opposition as in example (16).

7. (IT) is used to depersonalize department as faceless and threatening as In example (18).

Conclusion:

In the present paper some comments were offered on the organization and distribution of pronominal selection in the speeches of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock. The work adopted basically the pronominal scale developed by Rees (1983). The analysis was mainly comparative and revealed how ideological differences display themselves in pronominal selection.

In this attempt the ways in which aspects of the pronominal system of English can be manipulated for political effect have been examined. When one looks at language use, the pronouns of English do not form neat categorical divisions; 'we' can be used to designate a range of individuals moving outwards, from the speaker him /herself to the speaker plus hearer and the whole of humanity. Equally, 'I' can be used to refer to the hearer and not the speaker, as well of course as being available for the designation of speaker only. With such manipulative possibilities provided by the pronominal system as it operates in context, it is not surprising to find that politicians make use of pronouns to good effect: to indicate, accept, deny or distance themselves from responsibility for political action; to reveal ideological bias; to encourage solidarity; to designate and identify those who are supporters as well as those who are enemies; and to present specific idiosyncratic aspects of the individual politician's own personality. All this is revealed through the distribution of specific pronominal types within particular contexts of presentation.

The meanings of selected pronouns shift and change depending on the way in which they are textually employed. This is a manipulation of pronominal meaning within context, yet another example of the potential range of pragmatic effects operating within the field of politics.

Appendix

Table A. 1 Speeches used in this study

Thatcher	Kinnock
Speech A Central Council 27 March 1982	Speech D Party Conference 6 October 1983
Speech B Central Council 26 March 1983	Speech E Party Conference 3 February 1984
Speech C Small Business Bureau Conference 8 February 1984	Speech F Party Conference 16 June 1984

Table A. 2 Numbers of pronouns found in speeches A to F

	Thatcher			Kinnock		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Approx. total no. words	5540	6230	3300	1440	2160	6400
Total no. of pronouns	310	346	117	92	113	258
Pronouns %of total words	5.6	5.5	3.5	6.4	5.2	4.0
No. of I/ME in speech	38	37	10	16	3	39
% of pronouns	12.3	10.7	8.5	17.4	2.6	15.1
We/Us	150	141	40	25	30	89
% of pronouns	48.4	40.7	34.2	27.2	26.5	34.5
Our/Ours	58	62	15	8	15	33
% of pronouns	18.7	17.9	12.8	8.7	13.3	12.8
You	12	13	15	12	8	5
% of pronouns	3.9	3.8	12.8	13.0	7.1	1.9
One²+ You²	4	2	1			
% of pronouns	1.3	0.6	0.8			
One³+ You³	1	23	9		5	5
% of pronouns	0.3	6.6	7.7		4.4	0.8
He/She	11	16	3	10	11	14
% of pronouns	3.5	4.6	2.6	10.9	9.7	5.4
It			1	2	3	5
% of pronouns			0.8	2.2	2.6	1.9
They/Them	28	51	20	19	35	67
% of pronouns	9.0	14.7	17.1	20.5	31.0	26.0
Those	8	1	3		3	4
% of pronouns	2.6	0.3	2.6		2.6	1.5

Endnotes

(1) block here means the repetition of the pronominal form three or more times in the same syntactic position in consecutive sentences (Lwaitama, 1998:29)

(2) 'situational insertion' has been implicitly noted in the work of Laberge and Sankoff (1980).

(3) inclusive 'we' is the term used where there is a clear case of personal commitment.

(4) Tory (pl. Tories) (informal) a member of the British Conservative Party. The Tories (= the Tory Party. Toryism (noun). See (Hornby, 2004: 1373).

(5) Chauvinistic/chauvinism: an aggressive and unreasonable belief that your own country is better than all others.

Hornby A. S. (2001): Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Oxford: OUP.

(6) Textual cohesion is normally maintained through structural processes such as anaphora and cataphora. Anaphora refers to the way in which elements link backwards within a text, and cataphora indicates the way in which elements may refer forwards as in A and B respectively:

A. John is late, he always is. (anaphora)

B. He is always late, John. (cataphora)

For further details see Halliday & Hasan (1986).

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