

The Determiners Choices in Public Speech

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ABSTRACT

This study involved the choices of determiners in public speech via the collection of data from the Internet and the analysis of the data with A Part-Of-Speech tagging, and the AntConc. The result is that people prefer a high degree of focus determiners versus a medium degree of focus. This result may provide insight for teaching in a classroom when the teacher needs to pick up their words more carefully.

Keywords: *determiners, high degree of focus, medium degree of focus*

1. Introduction

Teaching in class and giving a public speech share the same purpose of passing along information and involving the audience in the process. Because a sample of speech is much easier to view on the Internet, this paper examines open speech collected randomly from the Internet to analyze the determiner choices of various speakers.

Different determiners capture the attention of different hearers. According to Strauss[1], one reason for speakers to choose the determiners of this and these is to “draw the hearer’s attention most strongly to the item being referred to with a high degree of focus or designating the referent as ‘new’ information. If a speaker chooses to use two other similar determiners, the outcome will be different. Still, based on the theory by Strauss [1], the determiners of that and those are used when “the speaker is drawing the hearer’s attention to the item being referred to with a medium degree of focus, and designating the referent as ‘shared’ information” [1].

Based on this theory, this data analysis specifically focuses on the speaker’s choices of the determiners of this, these, that, and those.

2. Data Analysis

2.1. Methodology

This report’s aim is to answer the following question by analyzing a certain corpus with selected data: Do speakers choose more high-focus determiners, such as this and these, than middle-focus determiners, such as that and those, in their speech?

This paper highlights two corpora with 40 pieces of speech for obtaining the answer to the above question. Each corpus contains 20 pieces of speech from the same gender but different people. In this paper, I attempt to control the lengths of the pieces of speech in each corpus, but because this is all oral speech instead of written data, the number of words and sentences are hard to make similar. The topics of these pieces of speech are varied, except for the category of telling about a personal story, which is a less representative topic for both public speech and the classroom.

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses are used in the report. For the qualitative analysis, this report involves the use of POS tagging, similar to Endang Suryawati, Devi Munandar, Dianadewi Riswantini, Achmad Fatchuttamam Abka, Andria Arisal’s studies about POS tagging for twitter data have been performed using statistical based approaches [2]. For the quantitative analysis, this report introduces the AntConc, because it can retrieve basic data related to the text and extract them with understandable edit menu and convenient operation by using its basic index tool, such as Concordance, Concordance Plot, File View, Clusters, Collocates Word List, Keyword List [3].

2.2. Results

Following the POS-tagging of the two corpora, the AntConc is used to count for the specific times that *this*, *these*, *that*, and *those* appear. Table 1 shows the number of different determiners used in each piece of speech. Table 2 shows the number of genders and the numbers of choices of each determiner. Graph 1 shows how many times in total that the high-focus determiners and middle-focus determiners appeared. Graph 2 shows the ratio of the appearance of high-focus determiners and middle-focus determiners.

Table 1 The Times of Using Four Determiners in Each Speech

Name	Gender	This	These	That	Those
Amy Cuddy	Famale	64	16	27	3
Bel Pesce	Famale	7	0	10	3
Alison Killing	Famale	11	2	6	3
Dame Stephanie	Famale	3	1	6	1
Laura Boushnak	Famale	1	2	3	1
Cristina Domenech	Famale	3	0	12	1
Asha de Vos	Famale	5	9	2	0
Erin McKean	Famale	15	4	5	1

Carol Dweck:	Famale	12	0	7	3
Catherine Crump	Famale	17	1	3	0
Kare Anderson	Famale	7	2	19	4
Nancy Frates	Famale	16	2	11	3
Susan Etlinger	Famale	21	2	6	3
Myriam Sidibe	Famale	14	4	8	5
Meaghan Ramsey	Famale	25	6	5	1
Uldus Bakhtiozina	Famale	4	0	2	0
Isabel Allende	Famale	4	0	0	0
Jill Shargaa	Famale	9	1	9	0
Meera Vijayann	Famale	25	4	9	0
Sara Lewis:	Famale	20	27	3	0
Christopher Soghoian	Male	30	3	13	3
Gary Haugen	Male	6	1	3	0
Paul Tudor Jones	Male	14	0	13	4
Barat Ali Batoor	Male	7	2	1	3
Dan Ariely	Male	11	3	1	3
Bill Gates	Male	8	4	9	4
Sangu Delle	Male	4	1	1	0
Jon Gosier	Male	7	12	4	1
Andy Yen	Male	49	7	8	0
Angelo Vermeulen	Male	13	5	11	0
Jaap de Roode	Male	13	21	4	0
Tom Wujec	Male	12	8	4	1
Fredy Peccerelli	Male	9	5	16	5
Aziz Abu Sarah	Male	10	0	4	2
Daniele Quercia	Male	4	1	10	2
Dave Troy	Male	10	1	7	4
Will Marshall	Male	21	5	6	0
David Grady	Male	11	4	5	1
Jeff Iliff	Male	22	8	5	1
Francis de los Reyes	Male	13	11	4	0

Table 2 The Total Number for Using Four Determiners for Each Gender

Gender	This	These	Total	That	Those	Total
Female	283	83	366	153	32	185
Male	274	102	376	129	34	163
Total	557	185	742	282	66	348

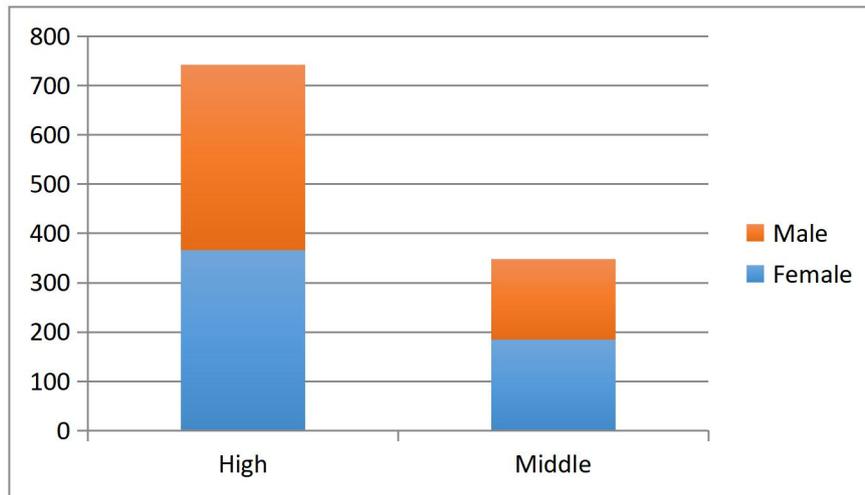


Figure 1 The Total Number for High Focus Determiners and Middle Focus Determiners

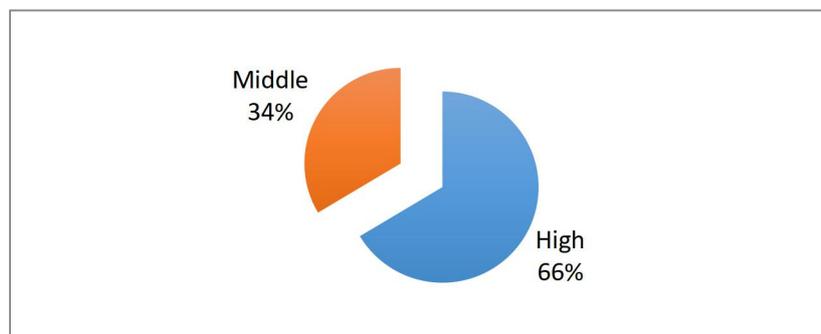


Figure 2 The Ratio between High Focus Determiners and Middle Focus Determiners

2.3. Discussion

From Table 1, we can see that in most cases, the speakers prefer to use the determiner of *this* over the other three choices. From Table 2, we can see that there are not many differences between the males and females when they are choosing determiners. The most popular choice is *this*, and the second is *that*. From Graph 1 and Graph 2, we can clearly see that the number of high-focus determiners is larger than the number of middle-focus determiners is.

Even though the choice of the high-focus determiner of *these* is less frequent than that of middle-focus determiner *that*, from a total-number perspective, the high-focus determiners in speech are still the most preferred choices, and this is true for the different genders. Strauss's theory is that the aim of high-focus determiners is to draw audiences' attention. This indicates that speakers in public speech are more likely to use high-focus determiners to attract audiences' attention. That is to say, choosing different kinds of determiners in public speech is a very important strategy, as different choices may result in different levels of attention and focus from audiences.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, speakers are more willing to choose high-focus determiners, such as *this* and *these*, than middle-focus determiners, such as *that* and *those*, in their public speech. This choice could draw more audiences' attention and thus be helpful for relaying important information. The same technique is

helpful for teaching in class because the teacher also needs to draw students' attention

There are some limitations in this report. First, the number of pieces of speeches in this corpus is not high, even though the paper contains 40 of them, and they can be representative to certain degree. Third, public speech may have some sentence fragments, which may not be generated during the automatic annotation process, and it does not being taken into account in this report.

References

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