

The Language of Inequality in the News

Why in the early 1970s does *The Times* reject the idea of a national lottery, as rewarding luck rather than merit and effort, but then warmly welcomes one by the 1990s? Why in the 1970s do the *Daily Mail's* TV reviews address serious contemporary themes such as class and race relations, whereas forty years later the reviews are largely concerned with celebrities, talent shows, and nostalgia? Why does the Conservative Chancellor in the 2010s mention 'Britain' so very often, whereas the Conservative one in the 1970s scarcely did so at all? Covering news stories spanning forty-five years, Michael Toolan explores how wealth inequality has been presented in centre-right British newspapers, focusing on the way that changes in the representation may have helped present-day inequality seem justifiable. Toolan employs corpus linguistic and Critical Discourse Analytic methods to identify changing lexis and verbal patterns and gaps, all of which contribute to the way wealth inequality has been represented in each of the decades from the 1970s to the present.

MICHAEL TOOLAN is Professor of English Language at the University of Birmingham. He has been conducting research in literary linguistics and discourse analysis for many years, and has published extensively on stylistics and narrative. He is editor of the *Journal of Literary Semantics* and is currently Chair of the Poetics and Linguistics Association.

The Language of Inequality in the News

A Discourse Analytic Approach

Michael Toolan

University of Birmingham



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-47433-7 — The Language of Inequality in the News
Michael Toolan
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108474337
DOI: 10.1017/9781108565172

© Michael Toolan 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-47433-7 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
1 Analysing the Evolving Press Discourse of Contemporary UK Inequality	1
1.1 Increased Wealth Inequality in the United Kingdom	1
1.2 Why Does Increasing Wealth Inequality Matter?	4
1.3 Facts, Discourse, Myths	6
1.4 ‘Ethical’ Differentiation	9
1.5 Inequality as ‘British’ Once More	9
1.6 Why <i>The Times</i> and the <i>Daily Mail</i> ?	10
1.7 Spreading the Word about the New Inequality: The News Media	13
1.8 Landmarks in the Politics of Language Tradition	14
1.9 Language-Oriented Critical Discourse Analysis: A Brief Survey	15
1.10 Corpus Linguistic Methods for Exploring the Ideology in Discourse	21
1.11 Theoretical and Methodological Assumptions of This Study	28
1.12 Brief Outline of the Chapters	35
1.13 Political Affiliations	37
2 What’s <i>Fair</i> and <i>Unfair</i> in <i>The Times</i>	39
2.1 The Language of Fairness	39
2.2 Why Concentrate on <i>Fair</i> and <i>Unfair</i> ?	40
2.3 The 1971 and 2011 Selections of <i>Fair</i> + <i>Unfair</i> Stories	41
2.4 A National Lottery	44
2.5 Industrial Relations in 1971: Strikes and Unfair Dismissal	46
2.6 Industrial Relations in 2011: The Burdens of Employment Law and ‘Abuse’ of Tribunals	51
2.7 Mr Marples’s Manifesto for the Control of Fair Incomes	55
2.8 The Squeezed Middle and Fair Pay in 2011	56
2.9 Fair Rents, Fair Housing	61
2.10 Pensions ‘Reform’ in 2011	63
2.11 <i>Fair</i> and <i>Unfair</i> in Other Contexts	66
2.12 Conclusions	67

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
3	Budgets and <i>Burdens</i> , from Barber to Osborne	71
3.1	Introduction	71
3.2	Style and Genre Differences between Barber 1971 and Osborne 2011	73
3.3	Lexical Contrasts	75
3.4	<i>We</i> in Osborne	77
3.5	<i>Fair</i> and <i>Help</i> in Osborne More Than Barber	82
3.6	Taxation	88
3.7	The Disappearing Burden of Taxation	89
3.8	Chancellors' Metaphors and the Stories They Tell: <i>Ruts</i> and <i>Dust</i> versus <i>the March of the Makers</i>	95
3.9	The Editorial Reception of the Barber and Osborne Budgets in <i>The Times</i> and the <i>Daily Mail</i>	106
4	Peter Black, Christopher Stevens, <i>Class</i> , <i>Britain</i> and Last Night's TV	113
4.1	The TV Reviewer as Spokesperson of Everyday Ideology: Peter Black and Christopher Stevens	113
4.2	General Topics in Black and Stevens Compared	119
4.3	Methodology	120
4.4	Peter Black on <i>Class</i>	121
4.5	Class and Other Values in Christopher Stevens, 2013	133
4.6	<i>Equal</i> and <i>Fair</i> in CS and PB	140
4.7	<i>Coronation Street</i> , <i>Sex</i> and <i>Race</i> , Then and Now	141
4.8	Key Semantic Domains in Black's and Stevens's Journalism: A Comparative Analysis	142
4.9	The Meanings of <i>Britain</i> and <i>the British</i> Then (in PB) and Now (in CS)	148
4.10	Conclusion	150
5	Forty-Five Years of <i>Luddite</i> Behaviour	154
5.1	Ned Ludd and Robin Hood	154
5.2	The Luddites	156
5.3	<i>Luddite</i> and <i>Luddites</i> : Grammar, Meaning and Frequency	159
5.4	<i>Luddite/s</i> in the Early 1970s in <i>The Times</i> : A Preliminary Survey	163
5.5	<i>Luddite/Luddites</i> Used Politically in <i>The Times</i> and the <i>Daily Mail</i> during the First Thatcher Term	166
5.6	<i>Luddite/s</i> after June 1983	174
5.7	The Miners' Strike of 1984–85	176
5.8	<i>Luddite/s</i> in the Last Three Decades	179
5.9	Concluding Remarks: The <i>Luddite</i> Narrative	181
6	Forty-Five Years of <i>Robin Hood</i>	186
6.1	Powerful Names	186
6.2	<i>Robin Hood</i> in <i>The Times</i> : Preliminary Profile	186
6.3	<i>Robin Hood</i> in the <i>Daily Mail</i> : Preliminary Profile	188
6.4	<i>Robin Hood</i> in the 1970s	189
6.5	Grunwick	193
6.6	<i>Robin Hood</i> in Mrs Thatcher's 1980s and John Major's 1990s	195
6.7	Keynes, not Robin Hood	200

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-47433-7 — The Language of Inequality in the News
Michael Toolan
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	vii
6.8 Bishops More Progressive than Labour	204
6.9 Gordon Brown as (Nearly) Robin Hood: The New Labour Years (1997–2010)	206
6.10 <i>Robin Hood</i> since 2010	211
6.11 Conclusion	213
7 Conclusion	216
<i>Bibliography</i>	225
<i>Index</i>	239

Figures

3.1	The dominant pattern of <i>help</i> in Osborne’s 2011 budget	<i>page</i> 85
3.2	Frequency of <i>burden*</i> in budget speeches, 1971–2016	90
4.1	Graphic accompanying Peter Black TV reviews in 1971	114
4.2	Sample Peter Black TV review in 1971	116
5.1	IBM ‘You Can’t Stop Time’ advertisement	167
5.2	Cartoon of Arthur Scargill as ‘Trojan Horse’ Dove of Peace	178

Tables

3.1	Top Keywords in the Barber and Osborne Budgets of 1971 and 2011	<i>page</i> 76
3.2	Relative Frequencies for <i>Fair</i> , <i>Help</i> and <i>New</i> in Various Budget Texts and BNC Written Sample	82
4.1	Key Semtags in the PB and CS Corpora, in Order of Keynes, with Outliers Bolded	143
5.1	<i>Luddite</i> + <i>Luddites</i> Tabulated by Year (1971–2011) in Selected Editorial and News Sections in <i>The Times</i>	162

Acknowledgements

I have presented versions of parts of the following chapters at a number of conferences and seminars over the past few years and under different linguistic associations' auspices, in diverse cities (Santiago de Compostela, Heidelberg, Delhi, Cardiff, Genoa, and Florianopolis). I am grateful for comments and suggestions from colleagues at all those meetings. I want particularly to thank Wolfgang Teubert for his continual advice and wisdom. Researchers with whom I have discussed this work and from whose responses I have also benefitted include Rukmini Bhaya Nair, John Douthwaite, Malcolm Coulthard and Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard, Beatrix Busse, Viola Weigand, Michaela Mahlberg, Melvyn Westlake, Lesley Jeffries, Brian Walker, Ruth Page, Joe Bennett, Jai Mackenzie, Nicholas Groom, Chris Heffer, Eva Maria Gomez-Jimenez, Teun van Dijk, Sebastian Brun and Julianne Statham.