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     | Female | 64   | 16    | 27   | 3     |
| Bel Pesce     | Female | 7    | 0     | 10   | 3     |
| Alison Killing| Female | 11   | 2     | 6    | 3     |
| Dame Stephanie| Female | 3    | 1     | 6    | 1     |
| Laura Boushnak| Female | 1    | 2     | 3    | 1     |
| Cristina Domenech | Female | 3    | 0     | 12   | 1     |
| Asha de Vos   | Female | 5    | 9     | 2    | 0     |
| Erin McKean   | Female | 15   | 4     | 5    | 1     |
| Name                      | Gender | This | These | Total | That | Those | Total |
|---------------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Carol Dweck               | Female | 12   | 0     | 7     | 3    |       |       |
| Catherine Crump           | Female | 17   | 1     | 3     | 0    |       |       |
| Kare Anderson             | Female | 7    | 2     | 19    | 4    |       |       |
| Nancy Frates              | Female | 16   | 2     | 11    | 3    |       |       |
| Susan Etlinger            | Female | 21   | 2     | 6     | 3    |       |       |
| Myriam Sidibe             | Female | 14   | 4     | 8     | 5    |       |       |
| Meaghan Ramsey            | Female | 25   | 6     | 5     | 1    |       |       |
| Ulus Bakhtiozina          | Female | 4    | 0     | 2     | 0    |       |       |
| Isabel Allende            | Female | 4    | 0     | 0     | 0    |       |       |
| Jill Shargaa              | Female | 9    | 1     | 9     | 0    |       |       |
| Meera Vijayann            | Female | 25   | 4     | 9     | 0    |       |       |
| Sara Lewis                | Female | 20   | 27    | 3     | 0    |       |       |
| Christopher Sogoian       | Male   | 30   | 3     | 13    | 3    |       |       |
| Gary Haugen               | Male   | 6    | 1     | 3     | 0    |       |       |
| Paul Tudor Jones          | Male   | 14   | 2     | 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     | 4     | 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   | 4     | 16    | 2    |       |       |
| Daniela 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   |
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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