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Wiegand, Viola

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**VIOLA WIEGAND**

University of Birmingham

v.wiegand@bham.ac.uk

Jeffries, L., & Walker, B. (2018). *Keywords in the Press: The New Labour Years*. London: Bloomsbury; 224 pages; 9781441162229; £95 (hbk).

The book under review builds on Raymond Williams's (1983) concept of capturing the zeitgeist of a particular period with 'keywords'. Jeffries and Walker use corpus linguistic methods coupled with their framework of 'critical stylistics' to identify and analyse a set of 'sociopolitical keywords' for the "New Labour Years" under British prime minister Tony Blair. The authors have chosen this period because it marked important changes in British politics when the two major parties increasingly assimilated and "the language of certain aspects of post-Thatcherite Britain produced a new and inescapable set of ideological absolutes" (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 2). Unlike previous critical discourse studies on New Labour discourse that have concentrated on texts produced by the Labour Party in comparison to other sources (e.g. Fairclough 2000; L'Hôte 2010), Jeffries and Walker's study focuses on the coverage of New Labour politics in broadsheet newspapers. Their rationale is to investigate the linguistic effects of the New Labour politics on the media (and therefore the wider public). The authors' approach also pays particular attention to any potential 'emergent meaning' that a keyword may develop as it is used more widely by journalists (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 12).

*Keywords in the Press* consists of nine chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. The introductory chapter outlines the theoretical background that situates the study within critical stylistics and corpus stylistics. Chapter 2 describes the methodology in terms of the corpus compilation and the concordance analysis. The authors have compiled two corpora, each containing around 15 million words of broadsheet news articles. The analytical focus is on the "Blair Corpus", which spans all full years of Tony Blair being prime minister (1998–2007). The reference corpus contains a comparable set of articles from the previous government term that was headed by John Major ("Major Corpus"; 1991–1996). The articles were sampled from three British national broadsheet newspapers – *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Independent* – using a newspaper database. The search terms consisted of the prime minister of the period (*Blair/Major*) and/or their respective party

(*Labour* for the Blair Corpus; *Conservative* for the Major Corpus) and/or *government* (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 25). In order to sample the periods evenly, roughly equal numbers of words were collected for each newspaper per year.

Using AntConc (Anthony 2014), the authors identify statistical keywords, i.e. words that are unusually frequent in the coverage of the Blair years compared to that of the previous government. From this list, Jeffries and Walker (2018: 29) qualitatively determine a small set of words considered “likely to be ideologically or conceptually important” based on concordance lines and a process of elimination – for example starting with the exclusion of proper nouns and grammatical words. The central tenet of the book is that these sociopolitical keywords are “important indicators of the ideology and culture of the Blair years” (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 4). The selection process from the long list of statistically identified ‘candidate’ keywords to the short list of the six sociopolitical keywords (*spin*, *choice*, *reform*, *global*, *terror* and *respect*) is described at length in Chapter 2.

The bulk of the book is formed of six analysis chapters (Chapters 3–8) each focusing on one particular keyword. These chapters follow a similar structure, starting with a dictionary definition of the given keyword and moving on to a discussion of the results. Each of the six sociopolitical keywords undergoes a detailed concordance analysis in the Blair Corpus (and to some extent also in the Major Corpus). The analysis orientates on ten ‘textual-conceptual functions’ (TCFs): “Naming and Describing”; “Representing Actions/Events/States”; “Equating and Contrasting”; “Exemplifying and Enumerating”; “Prioritizing”; “Assuming and Implying”; “Negating”; “Hypothesizing”; “Presenting Speech and Thoughts of other Participants”; and “Representing Time, Space and Society” (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 9). These functions originate from the first author’s framework of critical stylistics (Jeffries 2010), which combines aspects of stylistics and critical discourse analysis with a particular emphasis on ideology.

Although the TCFs can be realised by a variety of linguistic forms, “many of them may well have stereotypical or ‘normal’ features associated with them” (Jeffries 2010: 16). For example, the TCF “Negating” can be realised by the simple negation of a verb, but also lexically, as in “There is a *lack* of respect in your attitude” (see Jeffries 2010: 106). One way in which Jeffries and Walker adjust concordance analysis to their critical stylistic purposes is by focusing on the immediate syntactic co-text rather than a word-based span to the left and right (which is a common approach in corpus linguistics). For instance, the analysis of a nominal node might investigate whether the node acts as a head noun instead of modifying other nouns – for the “Naming and Describing” TCF – or analyse the transitivity processes in which the noun is involved for the “Representing Actions/Events/States” TCF (see Jeffries & Walker 2018: 9, 39). The authors argue that the syntactic approach helps them “understand the sociopolitical significance of any purely statistical result and pattern” (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 16). For some of these syntactic analyses they consult part-of-speech-tagged versions of the corpora.

Based on the concordance analysis, Jeffries and Walker report that all six keywords show political senses in the Blair Corpus related to but more “specialized” than their senses in “everyday” usage (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 196) as attested in the dictionary definitions or the British National Corpus. Whereas some of these specialized senses have been extended from the usage in the Major years, others are new in the Blair Corpus (see Jeffries & Walker 2018: 187). The authors refer to this process as “a very specific kind of lexical development that happens in particular discourses” (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 196) involving the ‘naturalization’ of the emerging new senses that are repeatedly used in new co-textual patterns, but still maintain their links to the everyday meaning (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 196–197). For example, Jeffries and Walker find that the keyword *spin* is used more frequently as a noun than a verb in the Blair Corpus. This political sense tends to have a negative connotation, related to the politicians “spinning” a tale, and is used creatively by journalists in derivatives and compound forms such as *spinnable* and *spin-doctor* (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 191–192). Similarly, the development of *terror* is mapped from its original emotional meaning (related to fear) to a vague concept that is often associated with terrorism in the Blair Corpus. When these nominal keywords are used as mass nouns, they contribute particularly to the authors’ overall conclusion that the sociopolitical keywords have a “paradoxical capacity to appear to both mean very little and at the same time be a shorthand for a bundle of semantic features that speakers are expected to understand” (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 188).

The book’s main contribution to the field is its integration of critical stylistics and corpus linguistic methods to provide a detailed linguistic analysis. The authors reflect on how critical stylistics can benefit from the insights of corpus linguistic (also see Tabbert 2015). Accordingly,

concepts relating to co-occurrence, including collocation, semantic prosody and semantic preference could be helpful alongside the TCFs to account for certain patterns of behaviour and particularly in organizing large numbers of examples into data-driven categories. (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 190)

At the same time, Jeffries and Walker put forward suggestions for corpus linguistic studies (of discourse) to report analytical procedures more transparently. They argue that although many studies describe the data collection in detail, “the next stage – how to look at great quantities of concordance lines – is often vague and largely under-explained” (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 197). Another aspect of the transparency and rigour that the authors seek is trying to account for the entirety of the instances for each keyword in the corpus via detailed concordance analysis. With respect to the results, the book contributes to the linguistic description of political press coverage. The concept of ‘emergent meanings’ also appears to have further potential for future discourse studies beyond political discourse. Through its integration of work from various traditions, the book has potential methodological and theoretical implications for the relevant fields including corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and stylistics. These implications would become even clearer with more direct links to existing work on corpus linguistics and discourse analysis (e.g. Baker 2006; Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery 2013) and corpus stylistics (e.g. Mahlberg 2014). Insights from

Baker et al. (2013) would appear specifically relevant as they also focus on British newspapers using a critically motivated corpus linguistic approach.

The book is written in an accessible style, structured around the close and informative analysis of the individual keywords. Thematically, this way of presenting the results is insightful. Methodologically, each chapter follows the same approach of reporting on patterns in sorted concordance lines. The difference lies in the discussion of the TCFs that are relevant to the given keyword in the chapter. For the reader it can at times be a little challenging to follow how the TCFs work together in the complete framework. Accordingly, those readers who are looking for a detailed introduction to the critical stylistic framework itself are advised to refer to Jeffries (2010) alongside the book under review.

In summary, *Keywords in the Press* provides a refreshing contribution to the body of research at the interface of stylistics, discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. The book is a particularly good reminder that corpus analysis involves decisions that should be transparently reported so that the reader can evaluate the outcome and replicate the study if desired. The authors suggest that the book is aimed not only at linguists, but also readers from other disciplines (Jeffries & Walker 2018: 21); this linguistic approach to ideology and New Labour may, accordingly, also be of interest to political scientists and sociologists.

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