

# THE TEXTUAL REPRESENTATION OF A POLITICAL PARADIGM SHIFT: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TWO ELECTION MANIFESTOS

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the language used by two British political leaders of the 1990s in their election manifestos. This examination aims to explore how each leader's language reflects their, and their party's, political stance at each election and what social, economic, technological, and above all, political influences are apparent from the language used. In doing this the intertextuality of both manifestos will be closely examined to ascertain how each party leader makes use of other texts within their own discourse. Differences in the content and language used in the two documents are found, and this is seen to stem from the prevailing conditions in each of the two election years. However, while the 1992 manifesto reflects the stereotypical left-right divide of British politics, making positive reference to class struggle and state direction, the 1997 document has tempered or jettisoned such notions. By 1997 a new way had been charted between the traditional extremes of left and right politicking, citing the need for rights balanced with duties for an inclusive citizenry. For language learners and teachers this paper offers a means of not just reading between the lines, but heightens our awareness of the need to avoid taking texts at face value.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, text analysis, British cultural studies, political discourse

## 1 Introduction

What follows, while not immediately pertinent to Applied Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, serves to provide a context for the language phenomena under examination. This is substantiated by Fowlers's (1996) reference to the necessity and relevance of "full descriptions of context and its implications for beliefs and relationships" (p. 10). Fairclough (1992) meanwhile cites a specific example, the "shift, or apparent shift, in power from producers to consumers" (p. 109) reflecting a more general paradigm shift as discussed by Giddens (1998). However, for fear of the paper mutating into amateur political analysis this section will be pared back to the minimum necessary.

### 1.1 Context description

By 1997, 18 years of Conservative one-party government theoretically meant Labour was facing its fifth electoral defeat. The 1979 and 1983 elections, and, to an extent that of 1987, were all fought, and lost, along the traditional capitalist – socialist dividing lines. However, by 1992, following the collapse of Soviet-style state communism/socialism in Central and Eastern Europe a number of years previously, the post-war certainties of division had given way to an era of disintegration and collapse across vast swathes of Euro-Asia, and to an era of integration and unification across Western Europe. As the Soviet Union collapsed and various states in Central and Eastern Europe disintegrated, the European Community

(EC) was in the process of becoming the European Union (EU), forging ahead towards the goals of ever greater economic, monetary and political union.

As a member of the EU, and, additionally, of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and as a permanent member of the United Nations' Security Council, the United Kingdom found herself in a new world, facing new challenges. The old and comfortable assumptions no longer held. Since the departure of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in late 1990, the acting Prime Minister, John Major, had begun to take steps to dilute the ideological content of his predecessor's achievements. Similarly, Labour was increasingly aware that their old *modus operandi* was fast losing relevance. The 1992 election campaign, while won by the Conservatives on the issue of the economy, and principally on tax, marked a watershed: Labour realised it had to change.

This process was begun by John Smith, Labour's new leader in 1992, and continued by Tony Blair following Smith's sudden death in 1994. Blair seemed to be a mould-breaker from the very beginning. He pushed through changes to the Party Constitution (see Appendices C and D) and cast himself as a new player on the political scene. He likewise cast Labour as 'new Labour', asserting, sometimes loudly, sometimes tacitly, that what had gone before was 'old'.

## 2 Data

The choice of leaders, Labour's Neil Kinnock and Tony Blair, is deliberate, as is the period between 1992 and 1997 which saw considerable change in many areas of life in Britain and the world (Fairclough, 1996; Kress, 1996).

The data comprises two texts, each a party political election manifesto from the UK's Labour Party for the 1992 and 1997 general elections respectively. Since these are both copious documents, textually and visually, only a small part of each is analysed. The particular part chosen was common to both, namely the address from the leader of the party, Kinnock in 1992 and Blair in 1997. This data choice is explained more fully in Sections 4 and 5.

## 3 Literature review

The following literature review is divided into two sections. An examination of the term Critical Discourse Analysis is followed by a consideration of the phenomenon of intertextuality.

### 3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

According to van Dijk (1998, p. 1) CDA "is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context." What is more, "critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose and ultimately to resist social inequality." Similar to Fairclough (1995), van Dijk (1998) emphasises the necessity of the CDA analyst's adoption of "a different 'mode' or

‘perspective’ of theorizing, analysis and application” (p. 1), moreover the critical discourse analysts need “explicit awareness of their role in society” (pp. 1-2). In relation to power van Dijk (1996) maintains:

that there should generally be a rather close interdependence between power (and hence access to valid social resources), on the one hand, and access to – control over – the conditions, structural properties and consequences of discourse, on the other hand. In other words, if discourse is a measure of power, Critical Discourse Analysis becomes an important diagnostic tool for the assessment of social and political dominance. (p. 90)

A problem arises, however, in so much as “CDA is not a specific direction of research” and so “does not have a unitary theoretical framework” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 3). As a result, “most kinds of CDA will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are parts of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts” (p. 3). This reflects Fairclough (1995), who refers to the need for a “synthesis” between the insights of social theorists and text analysts within the field of language studies (pp. 130-131). CDA has, therefore, “to theoretically bridge the well-known ‘gap’ between micro and macro approaches” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 4), where language and its use inhabit the micro level, while the macro level is home to the likes of power, dominance and social inequality. Van Dijk (1985) cites numerous ways and examples of how DA can be critically applied, in particular how DA “provides us with rather powerful, while subtle and precise, insights to pinpoint the everyday manifestations and displays of social problems in communication and interaction” (p. 7). Such insights reveal the crucial role discourse plays in the “ideological formulation, [...] communicative reproduction, [...] social and political decision procedures, and [...] institutional management and representation of macrosociological patterns that characterize our societies” (p. 7).

### 3.2 Intertextuality

For de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) intertextuality is one of seven standards of textuality which define a text as “a communicative occurrence” (p. 3). Intertextuality “concerns the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts” (p. 10). Consequently, intertextuality can be construed as “responsible for the evolution of TEXT TYPES as classes of texts with particular patterns of characteristics” (pp. 10-11), and “depending on text type, intertextuality plays a more or less dominant role” (p. 11) (capitals in the original).

Fairclough (1992) sees intertextuality as pointing “to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones” (p. 102). He describes the concept as one entailing “an emphasis upon the heterogeneity of texts, and a mode of analysis which highlights the diverse and often contradictory elements and threads which go to make up a text” (p. 104).

Intertextuality has several dimensions, the most notable, after Fairclough (1992), being:

- *Discourse representation* describes a situation where “parts of other texts are incorporated into a text and usually explicitly marked as such” (p. 106). Discourse representation “captures the idea that when one ‘reports’ discourse one necessarily chooses to represent it in one way or another [...] and what is represented [...] is also discursive organisation [...] its

circumstances, the tone [...] etc.” (p. 118). This dimension is further sub-divided *into direct discourse representation*, where the words of the original are (often) used and marked as such by quotation marks, and there is a clear distinction between the reporter and the reported, or into *indirect discourse representation*, where the quotation marks disappear and the discourse is subordinated grammatically to the reporting clause, leading to the blurring of the distinction between reporter and reported. Added to these is *ambivalence of voice*, which makes use of vocabulary and metaphor, and leads to the *ambiguity of linguistic form*, where the distinction between represented discourse and original is no longer clear, and, ultimately, to the *merging of voice*, where one text represents another as if it were that text. However, texts can be delineated via *boundary maintenance*, by placing certain words or expressions in quotation marks, known as “scare quotes” (p. 119).

- *Manifest intertextuality* refers to “the case where specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text” (p. 117). This type of intertextuality differentiates between *sequential intertextuality* with its alternating text or discourse types (p. 114) and *embedded intertextuality* where one text or discourse type contains another. The category of *mixed intertextuality* sees a complex merging of texts or discourse types.
- *Presuppositions* “are propositions which are taken by the producer of the text as already established or ‘given’” (p. 120). Used for ideological purposes they are termed *manipulative presuppositions*. See Stubbs (1983, pp. 214-217) for a fuller discussion of presuppositions.
- *Negation* involves “incorporating other texts only in order to contest and reject them” (p. 122).
- *Metadiscourse* “implies that the speaker is situated above or outside her own discourse, and is in a position to control and manipulate it” (p. 122).
- *Irony* involves using “an ironic utterance [to echo] someone else’s utterances” (p. 123). Leech and Short (1981, pp. 277-280) offer further discussion on the use of irony.
- *Intertextuality and transformations* are situations where “practices within and across institutions have associated with them particular ‘intertextual chains’, series of types of texts which are transformationally related to each other in the sense that each member of the series is transformed into one or more of the others in regular and predictable ways” (p. 130).
- *Intertextuality, coherence and subjects* – “in order to make sense of texts, interpreters have to find ways of fitting diverse elements of a text into a coherent, though not necessarily unitary, determinate or unambivalent, whole” (p. 133).

These dimensions of intertextuality given above will be used in Section 5.2 where the verbal content of the two chosen texts is examined in detail.

## 4 Method

According to Hodge and Kress (1993), CDA is “like palaeontology, which scrutinizes fossils and reconstructs vanished forms of life from their traces left in stone” (p. 193). This quotation will serve well the following examination of intertextuality using two recently produced political texts. The scrutiny entered into here is one that does, indeed, go in search

of life, yet it is no longer apt to describe this life as fully evolved. Rather it is life that is evolving, for neither of these texts can, nor their antecedents or successors, in any way be construed as final and permanent. Rather than being traces left in stone, these texts are writ in clay. This analysis seeks to highlight this ephemeral nature of texts whilst simultaneously drawing attention to their heterogeneity. For, as Fairclough (1992) emphasises, the notion of intertextuality “entails an emphasis upon the heterogeneity of texts, and a mode of analysis which highlights the diverse and often contradictory elements and threads which go to make up a text” (p. 104).

#### **4.1 The nature of text**

In defining intertextuality, Fairclough (1992) provides dimensions to the phenomenon which allow for a closer linguistic analysis of text. Such close analyses are able to go beyond the limited approaches Fairclough (1995) criticises for concentrating solely on form (p. 4), or for focussing “just on particular levels” thereby resulting in “a one-sided emphasis on either repetitive or creative properties of texts” (p. 7). In effect “any level of organization may be relevant to critical and ideological analysis” (p. 7). Analysis of text should be an analysis of their texture, in other words of “their form and organization” (p. 4). McCarthy and Carter (1994) reiterate this sentiment: “the larger-scale phenomena of discourse [...] cannot be properly understood without examining the effects of lexical and grammatical choices at a very delicate level” (p. 89). This “integrated view of discourse” (p. 89) will be utilised here, especially in terms of intertextuality, or the “ability to refer across discourse worlds” (p. 115).

#### **4.2 Caveat**

Given that the criticism potentially levelled at any critical analysis of discourse concerns the fundamental presumption of an over-reliance on subjectivity on the analyst’s part, and on their possible recourse to intuition, it will be necessary to clearly state the method of analysis to be used.

However, limitations of space preclude any detailed discussion of many of the elements that go to make up the framework used (see Section 4.4). For example, texture, is explored by Brown and Yule (1983), and further by Halliday (1994) who provides a thorough account of texture and how it is created. Stubbs (1983) has already been mentioned, as have Leech and Short (1981). We must also acknowledge that a text is a convenient “unit for purposes of analysis, but it is important to recognize how arbitrary that unit is. The decision to declare something a text depends to a greater or lesser degree on particular motives of the reader or the analyst” (Hodge & Kress, 1994, pp. 166-167). This has been done here.

#### **4.3 Research questions**

It is pertinent at this juncture to clarify the aims of this paper in terms of two research questions:

- (1) How does each party leader’s language use reflect their own, and their party’s, political stance at each election?

(2) To what extent does each party leader's discourse utilise other texts within their own?

#### 4.4 Methodological framework

The method used here will be to replicate Fairclough (1992), and, in doing so, refer to the framework mentioned, and made use of, in Fairclough (1995). Fairclough (1995) adopts a three-dimensional method of discourse analysis based upon a three-dimensional conception of discourse itself:

Discourse, and any specific instance of discursive practice, is seen as simultaneously i) a language text, spoken or written, ii) discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), iii) sociocultural practice. Furthermore, a piece of discourse is embedded within sociocultural practice at a number of levels; in the immediate situation, in the wider institution or organization, and at a societal level. (p. 97)

However, Fairclough (1995) is acutely aware of the need to maintain a link between the discursive practices described above and linguistic analysis:

The method of discourse analysis includes linguistic *description* of the language text, *interpretation* of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and *explanation* of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes. (p. 97) (italics in the original)

It is in this way that the two texts chosen for analysis here will be treated. Based on the above the analysis proceeds in the next section.

### 5 Analysis of texts

While the focus is primarily on the written text, it will be pertinent to briefly consider the texts to be examined, and their larger manifestations in the form of each manifesto: as Fairclough (1995) points out "texts do not need to be linguistic at all" (p. 4).

Sole concentration on the physical non-textual elements is, however, fraught with the particular danger of blurring the concept of what (a) text is. Nevertheless, Fairclough (1995) is aware that "texts in contemporary society are increasingly multi-semiotic; texts whose primary semiotic form is language increasingly combine language with other semiotic forms" (p. 4); this is well displayed by, and in, the texts chosen here, especially in that of The Labour Party (1997). It is for this very reason that Section 5.1 is included.

## 5.1 Characteristics – visual representation

Kress (1996) is explicit on the role of the physical appearance and visual representation of text. The contemporary preoccupation with the visual at the expense of the verbal is explained as follows:

All texts have always been multimodal, that is, are always, have always been constituted through a number of semiotic modes. The current period is one where this is now impossible to overlook, not only because the visible is so visible, but also because I wish to suggest that we are in the centre of a major hysterical move in so-called technology developed (western) societies which is re-ordering the public, social weighting of the various media of expression. The visual is becoming increasingly dominant, as the verbal is becoming less so in many areas of public communication – and this is not simply the effect of technology. (p. 21)

Other social forces are also at work, see Section 1, as are such phenomena as the “technologisation of discourse” (Fairclough, 1996, pp. 71-83) and “the discourse of ‘flexibility’” (Fairclough, n.d., pp. 1-4).

The chosen texts exhibit a number of similarities and differences. While the texts are given in Appendices A and B, it has not been possible to reproduce the original layout.

- *Manifestos* – both texts form part of a larger text, a party political manifesto for a general election, and both manifesto texts are of differing page lengths. The 1992 manifesto is composed of 32 pages, including covers, while that of 1997 is composed of 40 pages excluding covers.
- *Covers* – the 1992 manifestos has five flags, the Union Flag and those of the four constituent parts of the UK; the 1997 cover has a full-page colour portrait of Blair. Why Kinnock does not figure on the cover is open to speculation and outwith the scope of this paper.
- *Choice of texts* – the chosen texts are those which approximate in each manifesto to an address or introduction, a piece of writing bounded, in both cases, by an introductory phrase or statement at the beginning and a signature at the end. For 1992 this was indicated as such ‘Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock Leader of the Labour Party’ (The Labour Party, 1992, p. 7). For The Labour Party (1997) the chosen text is referred to as an introduction only once in the text proper but nowhere else is this indicated (p. 1).
- *Length* – the 1997 text, at 2386 words, is over twice the length of the 1992 text with its 1045 words.
- *Layout* – excluding covers, the 1992 manifesto begins with a poem (see Appendix E), followed by a contents page, with the address beginning on the seventh page, and is preceded by a full-page, black and white portrait of Kinnock. The address proper is two pages in length of continuous text, divided into paragraphs, some being short one-sentence paragraphs, over one and a half pages. In contrast to this, the 1997 manifesto launches straight into text, which takes up approximately 50% of the first page, bottom two-thirds, left, leaving space for an introductory phrase plus signature, and a black and white portrait of Blair, top third of page, underneath of which is a quotation (not finished with a comma) in bold blue taken from the introduction, and a blank space occupies approximately 25% of the rest of the right side of the page. Text and photography and various textual highlighting features are intermingled in the

introduction. Unlike the 1992 address, which adheres to the expected characteristics of such a piece of writing (Sager, Dungworth, & McDonald, 1980, pp. 131-132), the 1997 is a text-visual composite.

- *Colour* – each manifesto text makes different uses of colour. The 1992 text has a very colourful front cover, as described, but otherwise uses black and white print and photography throughout the rest of the document. The 1997 text makes use of black and white and colour photography. Black and white photography, however, is used only twice, an individual portrait of Tony Blair (The Labour Party, 1997, p. 1) and a double portrait of Blair and his deputy-to-be, John Prescott (p. 3), all other photography is colour. Colour is also used to highlight and divide up different sections of the manifesto and various bold type face lettering functions variously as titles, bullet points, sub-section headings or to highlight certain key words. The 1992 text employs some of these features, such as section titles, paragraph headings, as well as using italics for section summaries or abstracts, but all, as mentioned, are in black and white.

Therefore, as well as their verbal content, examined below, the different physical and visual appearances of the two manifestos are of great significance. That the two differ in the way they look is not without reason. The recasting of Labour as new Labour clearly had its influence on the physical and visual manifestation of its 1997 election manifesto. The verbal content of the two chosen texts will now be considered.

## 5.2 Characteristics – intertextual

Bakhtin, in Emerson and Holquist (1986), refers to the non-original way we use language:

When we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means always take them from the system of language in their neutral *dictionary* form. We usually take them from *other utterances*, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is in theme, composition, or style. (p. 87) (Italics in the original)

This illustrates significant characteristics of intertextuality as referred to by Fairclough (1992, 1995). Similarly, lexis is referred to in a way that echoes the discussion of McCarthy and Carter (1994) of intertextuality in terms of the role played by idiom and culture in discourse:

Therefore, one can say that any word exists for the speaker in three aspects: as a neutral word of a language, belonging to nobody; as an *other's* word, which belongs to another person and is filled with echoes of the other's utterance; and, finally as *my* word, for, since I am dealing with it in a particular situation, with a particular speech plan, it is already imbued with my expression. (p. 88) (Italics in the original)

It is these levels of choice, whether conscious or not, along with certain of the dimensions of intertextuality posited by Fairclough (1992) which are used here.



### 5.2.1 Metadiscourse

This is considered first since the surface features of the discourse, i.e., the grammar and the lexis, allow for easy recognition. Page numbers are not provided for the numerous examples which follow, instead, the reader is referred to Appendices A and B respectively.

The 1992 manifesto address (see Appendix A) adopts a non-personal stance, although it is described as coming from Kinnock and bears his signature. Significantly there is no single use of the first person singular, rather Kinnock adopts the first person plural, and uses it to speak on behalf of the Labour Party in his capacity as leader. He uses ‘we’ and ‘our’ throughout in this function. Mention is made in the text of other protagonists, namely ‘*(the) (British) people*’, but only in this third person referential framework, never directly in the second person (singular or plural), and similarly ‘*(the) Conservatives*’ or ‘*they*’, perform the function of providing a convenient binary opposition. The text constructs, displays and takes a clearly antagonistic stance: a Labour ‘we’ versus a Conservative ‘they’ with a peripheral ‘*(British) people*’ called in when expedient. The tone is accusatory, heaping negative stock epithets upon the failed record of the Conservative government of 13 years. There is little of Kinnock present.

Different in almost every respect is the address in the 1997 manifesto (see Appendix B). The “conversationalization of public discourse” of Fairclough (1995, p. 19) is clearly in evidence. Moreover, Blair, unlike Kinnock, is making simultaneous use of multiple registers, or “mixed language” as described by Fairclough (2000, p. 7). He switches between the formal, semi-formal, intensely personal and colloquial. He likewise mixes the language of politics, economics, business and religion in quick succession. He weaves a web of language set to entrap as many people as possible. Kinnock’s appeal was to a preconceived, recognisable constituency, and in addressing them Kinnock was sure he was adopting the right (distant) tone via his choice of lexis and grammar. Blair, given the changes characterising the intervening five years, is no longer certain of any constituency; a constituency as Kinnock and the Labour Party of 1992 understood the term, no longer existed for Blair (Giddens, 1998). As rhetorical as his use of language is, by 1997 Blair could be bold enough to conceive of new Labour as the ‘*political arm of none other than the British people*’. He may have miscalculated, but the binary world of 1992 was in the process of disappearing.

Blair’s tone is altogether different and diverse. Gone are the open accusations of 1992; he admits that certain ‘*things the Conservatives got right*’, and no longer are they the monolith of 1992. While referring to ‘*Conservative government*’, Blair is careful to stress the existence of ‘*the Conservative right*’, a device to be used for further purposes of differentiation from his own party, his opponents and the wider political landscape. Blair goes so far as to personalise the text via reference to ‘*Mr Major*’, his political opposite number, and by doing so highlights the latter’s personal culpability.

What is most remarkable, however, is his use of pronouns. As both Brown and Gilman (1960) and Brown and Levinson (1978) discuss in regard to the use of pronouns to demonstrate power and solidarity or inclusiveness and exclusiveness respectively, Blair is adept at using personal pronouns for his own clear purposes.

His approach is highly personal, bordering on the colloquial on numerous occasions. None of Kinnock’s reticence and tentativeness is evident: a clear statement ‘*I believe in*

*Britain* opens the text proper. This first person singular dominates the discourse and becomes ever more conversational, and in the frequent and consistent use of *'I want...'* ever more demanding. Blair is making his very own personal appeal. Reference to Labour as a political grouping, despite two previous textual references to *'new Labour'*, appears only later with the use of *'us'* and *'our'* placed opposite *'you'*, that is the British people, the constituency, the electorate, to whom Blair makes *'a limited set of promises'*. Whether Blair is speaking only for himself or also representing new Labour is unclear. However, what is clear is that Blair's appeals and promises are of a very more personal nature than those of Kinnock in 1992.

It is only in the fifth paragraph that we learn that it is not Blair speaking for himself. In the first section, up to *'A new politics'*, the first person singular is used 13 times as opposed to four occurrences of *'we'*, three of *'our'* and two of *'us'*. Interestingly it is the various uses to which these pronouns are put that emphasises the difference in approach between Blair and Kinnock.

While Kinnock's *'we'* and *'our'* were unmistakably Labour, Blair's pronouns are less transparent. Blair's use of *'we'* (including the instances of *'our'* and *'us'*) could refer to new Labour, the potential new government and/or cabinet, or the British people. Alternatively it could refer to *'we'* as opposed to *'they'*, that is the Conservative party, distant social, political, intellectual, cultural and economic élites, or specific groups which may or may not be part of the *'we'*.

In employing this strategy Blair is able to move freely between various roles. Like Kinnock he can stand outside the discourse, but unlike Kinnock he can become very much (personally) involved with, and in, the discourse and so can control and manipulate it. Blair makes full use of the technologisation of discourse described by Fairclough (1996) and skilfully exploits the shifts between "those in higher and lower positions within hierarchies" and "between institutions and their 'publics', in the media and advertising" (p. 76). As Leader of the Opposition in parliament Blair has a high institutional and hierarchical position, and though election manifestos are produced for the electorate they are also very much products for the media public. Yet, Fairclough (1996) warns of the "pathological consequences" of such strategies as "a crisis of sincerity – a disorienting uncertainty about whether these culturally valued qualities are real or simulated in any given instant" (p. 77). For Kinnock this is less of an issue since his distance precludes him from such accusations of insincerity on this level. For Blair, despite people's cynical or knowing assumption that such texts are not written by politicians, this is a major concern: his textual involvement is too deep.

### 5.2.2 Discourse representation

This is an altogether more difficult category to analyse. The orthography used in both the addresses indicates that we are dealing with indirect discourse representation; boundary maintenance is not in evidence. The result is a clear merging of voice in both texts, particularly in that of the 1997 manifesto. Again page numbers are not provided for the numerous examples which follow, instead, the reader is referred to Appendices A and B respectively.

A few examples from the 1992 text would be *'recession'*, *'building recovery'*, *'to get Britain working again'*, *'liberty'*, *'commitment'*, *'community'*, *'consumers'* and *'a fresh start'*. None of these items are particular to Labour, and used interchangeably by all other parties

they have various shades of meaning which can be played upon by the producers (and consumers) of this and similar texts. Wallace (1997), Willetts (1997) and Wright (1997) are suitable examples of this phenomenon and well represent what Fairclough (1992) terms “interdiscursivity” (p. 124).

The 1997 introduction draws its intertextuality from a wider range of other texts. The political lexis is very much similar to the preceding examples, but the method is different, given that the longer text is able to discuss the issues in greater detail, drawing on more illustrations and thus more intertextual sources than Kinnock did, or perhaps wished to. This is no longer bi-polar politics, this is political revolution: ‘*National renewal*’, ‘*build a better Britain*’, ‘*renewing this country*’, ‘*a new and revitalised Labour Party*’, ‘*new Labour new life for Britain*’, ‘*New Labour is the political arm of none other than the British people as a whole*’. The latter phrase is a clear example of new Labour attempting to take “a more ‘participatory’ egalitarian direction” (Fairclough, 1996, p. 76).

In addition to the language of revolution and renewal Blair draws on that of business: ‘*equipping ourselves for a new world economy*’, ‘*successful entrepreneurs*’, ‘*material wealth*’, ‘*the dynamism of the market*’, and ‘*flexible working hours and practices*’. The likes of industrial policy, health, crime and education are dealt with in a similar fashion, drawing on the texts of previous Labour parties, and frequently on those of the opposition Conservatives.

### 5.2.3 Manifest intertextuality

What differentiates the 1997 text from that of 1992 is the quasi-religious overtones of the language. Here discourse representation gives way to manifest intertextuality (sequential, embedded and mixed, see Section 3.2) as Blair marshals the canon of Biblical lexis and phraseology. We find ‘*ten specific commitments*’ closely followed by ‘*our covenant with you*’: here the clear allusion to the Ten Commandments is mitigated only by a more technologised ‘*commitments*’. The sequential nature of the intertextuality leaves space for other texts, as described above, until we find ‘*ten commitments that form our bond of trust with the people*’, and before the ten are spelt out at the end of the text, we have ‘*This is our contract with the people*’. This use of language demonstrates what Fairclough (1992) refers to as intertextuality and transformation, displaying such “intertextual chains” so as to make use of the religious allusions. Blair demonstrates this in his echoing of the words of The Old Testament.

### 5.2.4 Presuppositions

The 1992 text, while referring to a clear ‘*choice between a Conservative government paralysed by recession, and a Labour government determined to get on with building recovery*’, presupposes the existence of only two diametrically opposed groups. In the 1997 introduction this no longer holds. An alternative is suggested, something new: ‘*New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern*’. While assuming that his readership understands the complex language, Blair assumes that they are also clear what ‘*new Labour*’ means, since despite numerous references to the term, nowhere is it defined. We are told that ‘*new Labour is new*’ because in ‘*each area of policy a new and distinctive approach has been mapped out, one that differs from the old left and the Conservative right*’, but again leaving

these terms undefined relies on considerable knowledge on the part of the reader, or to the circularity of Blair's argument.

Given that a part of the electorate who voted in 1997 did so for the first time, many voters had no, or only very limited, experience of a government other than a Conservative one. As a result, such language would have had little relevance to them. Blair also supposes that his readers subscribe to the view that Labour is now *'new Labour'*, brought about not least by the Party's rewriting of Clause IV, (see Appendix C and Appendix D for the replacement), in its *'commitment to enterprise alongside the commitment to justice'*. This could be seen as a clear use of manipulative presupposition (Fairclough, 1992). As Turner (1990, p. 217) makes clear, this use of *'new'* is in no way novel or original on Blair's part, he merely takes it for granted that his readers are unaware of this. Blair would most likely not wish the readers of the 1997 manifesto to know that Hugh Gaitskell, a Labour leader in the 1950s, and thus a predecessor of Blair, had attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, "to expunge Clause Four from the Labour party constitution" (Bradley, 1981, p. 13).

## 6 Conclusion

If Orwell (1957), writing in 1946, was correct in asserting that "political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness" (p. 153), our only defence is to adopt a critical awareness and carry out critical analyses. This paper has demonstrated that such a critical analysis is possible and that the means are available to those who wish to scrutinise and reconstruct texts.

What follows are the key findings of the present paper which serve to show how the Blair text (The Labour Party, 1997) differentiates itself from that of Kinnock (The Labour Party, 1992) in terms of the research questions given in Section 4.3.

(1) How does each party leader's language use reflect their own, and their party's, political stance at each election?

- Blair's verbal choices clearly indicate that his discourse is very much intertwined with that of the political world he inhabits, especially in terms of the personal beliefs he espouses and thus sets forth in the introduction to Labour's 1997 manifesto.
- However, in making such choices Blair adheres to the characteristics of the phenomena described by Bakhtin that "any speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree" (as cited in Emerson & Holquist, 1986, p. 69).
- Blair's language choices indicate his acute awareness of how far the political debate has changed and, as a result, shifted more towards the centre. It is important to note that this shift is in no small part due to Blair's own efforts.

(2) To what extent does each party leader's discourse utilise other texts within their own?

- It should now be clear that Blair "is not, after all the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe" (Emerson & Holquist, 1986, p. 69).

- In addition, Blair “presupposes not only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances – his own and others’ – with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another” (p. 69).
- In order to achieve this Blair very obviously “builds on them, polemicises with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener” (p. 69).
- Consequently, as original and iconoclastic as Blair’s 1997 manifesto may be perceived, this paper has shown that it is far from being so.

As a result of these findings, it would appear that no-one’s words are entirely their own and that any text they care to assemble is in its turn an assemblage of other and others’ texts. For readers this implies that the skill of gleaning meaning solely from the reading of texts is not sufficient. As well as adopting the familiar method of reading between the lines to win meaning, readers will also need to read between the texts, to become the linguistic palaeontologists as described by Kress and Hodge (1993). Moreover, when the same readers become writers they also need to be acutely aware that what they write, type or key in is very probably not wholly their own.

There are, nevertheless, real world practical implications of such a heightened awareness of the phenomenon of intertextuality. For language teachers and applied linguists this is of particular importance in terms not just of the role and ownership of voice in writing as already mentioned, but also in terms of student reading comprehension on the one hand, and plagiarism on the other. Moreover, use of critical discourse analysis as outlined above engenders a critical awareness of language, what it does and where it comes from, very much akin to the suggestions of Ivanič (1990) as well as those of Pennycook (1994) and Phillipson (1992).

While attempting to consider the three-dimensional approach of Fairclough (1992) this analysis has suffered from a number of limitations, the more significant being its general and brief nature, as well as its lack of delicacy, to use a term from McCarthy and Carter (1994). Any subsequent approaches would be better advised to make a choice between a broad sweep across one or more texts or a narrow concentration on a smaller piece of text. However, Stubbs (1983) reveals that even these two approaches may be faulty: “if a detailed linguistic analysis shows anything, it is that language is so amazingly complex that new levels of meaning can be found in it” (p. 201), or that a “formal analysis of any complete text of more than a few hundred words is so complex that probably no-one would ever read it” (p. 214). For us all, teachers, students, applied linguists and critical discourse analysts alike these are, indeed, stiff warnings.

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## APPENDIX A

### Foreword to The Labour Party Manifesto 1992

#### Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock Leader of the Labour Party

This general election is a choice between a Conservative government paralysed by recession, and a Labour government determined to get on with building recovery.

Gripped by the longest recession since the war, Britain needs a government with a clear sense of direction and purpose. A government with the people and the policies to get Britain working again and to achieve sustained recovery - *strength with staying power*.

Labour will be such a government.

But this election is not only a choice between policies, important though both are. It is also a choice between values.

At the core of our convictions is belief in individual liberty.

We therefore believe:

First, that for liberty to have real meaning the standards of community provision must be high and access to that provision must be wide.

Second, that those rights of the individual must, like all others in a free society, belong to all men and women of every age, class and ethnic origin and be balanced by responsibilities of fair contribution and law-abiding conduct.

Third, that for rights and responsibilities to be exercised fully and fairly, government in Britain, as in other industrialised democracies, must work to build prosperity by properly supporting research, innovation, the improvement of skills, the infrastructure and long-term industrial development.

Our vision for Britain is founded on these values. Guided by them, we will make our country more competitive, creative, and just; more secure against crime, aggression and environmental danger. We want government to serve the whole nation - using its power to realise this vision.

Labour will be such a government.

These are our convictions and we will work to fulfil them. They are also down-to-earth aims - essential objectives in a country hit by recession, suffering run-down public services and facing the intensifying pressures of European and global economic competition.

All of those realities require that the government provides: a stable economic environment; education and training that fosters the abilities of all young people and adults; a firm emphasis on productive investment in both the public and private sectors.



Labour will implement and maintain those policies. They are vital for prosperity, for consistently low inflation and for continuous improvement in economic performance and living standards. They are also fundamental to improving the quality and quantity of provision in health and social services, and to combating poverty. We have absolute commitment to a high-quality National Health Service, free at time of need and not fractured and weakened by underfunding and a commercialised contract system. We will get on with fulfilling that commitment from the moment of our election - by strengthening and modernising the NHS, by extending care in the community and by establishing the National Health Initiative to prevent illness.

Our pledges to increase the income of pensioners and families with children will urgently be fulfilled. Our undertakings to stop the perpetual experiments in schools and to raise standards of investment and achievement in education will be kept in full.

These policies - like those to increase house-building, improve transport and protect the environment - are not only important to the well-being of the British people now. They are vital preparations for the future. In that future, we are determined that Britain will be a leader in the New Europe, setting higher standards and not surrendering influence by opting out. We have confidence in our country and in the qualities and potential of its people. We want to nourish their artistic, scientific, sporting and other abilities. And we want to enhance their democratic power too. We shall therefore make constitutional and other changes that will give renewed vitality to our democracy. We shall empower people as citizens and as consumers of public and private services. We will strengthen equality before the law and equality of opportunity for the majority of the population -women. Neither their legal status nor their chances in education, training and employment are full or free. We will ensure that the barriers to fairness are removed.

These policies, like many others, manifest our practical commitment to freedom. That purpose is not confined to the shores of our country. In an age where liberty has made great advances in the world, there is still conflict, instability and want, causing great misery and inhibiting the peace and co-operation which we want to help to build. We shall, therefore ensure that our country has the defence capacity, the strength of alliance and the peace-making commitment necessary to safeguard the United Kingdom, to participate in international negotiations for disarmament, to deter aggression and to contribute to constructing a New World Order, now feasible through the strengthened United Nations.

In our relations with the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe as well as with the poverty-stricken peoples of the South, we will work from the principle that political freedom needs the sure foundation of economic security. In this increasingly inter-dependent world there are no distant crises. The Labour government will therefore, as a matter of moral obligation and in the material interests of our country, foster the development and trade relationships necessary for the advance of economic security, political democracy and respect for human rights.

The United Kingdom has been through 13 years in which unemployment has more than doubled, irreplaceable assets have been wasted, markets at home and abroad have been lost, manufacturing investment has fallen, poverty has increased, the crime rate has rocketed, and talents have been neglected.

Now our country faces clear alternatives.

A Conservative government would mean a repeat of the same, stale policies which brought economic insecurity, privatised and underfunded public services and increased social division. The Conservatives have no policies which would mean sustained recovery, higher health care or improved educational standards. The arrogance remains which brought us the poll tax, centralisation in Britain and isolation in Europe.

If they can't get it right in 13 years, they never will.

The Labour government will mean a fresh start for Britain. It will mean strong and continued emphasis on investment for economic strength. It will mean action to help families, fair taxation, incentives for enterprise and support for essential community services.

It will mean greater freedom, security and opportunity. It will mean change for the better.

It's time to make that change.

It's time for Labour.

Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock Leader of the Labour Party. In *The Labour Party*. (1992). *It's time to get Britain working again* (pp. 7-8). London: The Labour Party.

## APPENDIX B

### Introduction to The Labour Party Manifesto 1997

#### Britain will be better with new Labour

I believe in Britain. It is a great country with a great history. The British people are a great people. But I believe Britain can and must be better: better schools, better hospitals, better ways of tackling crime, of building a modern welfare state, of equipping ourselves for a new world economy.

I want a Britain that is one nation, with shared values and purpose, where merit comes before privilege, run for the many not the few, strong and sure of itself at home and abroad.

I want a Britain that does not shuffle into the new millennium afraid of the future, but strides into it with confidence.

I want to renew our country's faith in the ability of its government and politics to deliver this new Britain. I want to do it by making a limited set of important promises and achieving them. This is the purpose of the bond of trust I set out at the end of this introduction, in which ten specific commitments are put before you. Hold us to them. They are our covenant with you.

I want to renew faith in politics by being honest about the last 18 years. Some things the Conservatives got right. We will not change them. It is where they got things wrong that we will make change. We have no intention or desire to replace one set of dogmas by another.

I want to renew faith in politics through a government that will govern in the interest of the many, the broad majority of people who work hard, play by the rules, pay their dues and feel let down by a political system that gives the breaks to the few, to an elite at the top increasingly out of touch with the rest of us.

And I want, above all, to govern in a way that brings our country together, that unites our nation in facing the tough and dangerous challenges of the new economy and changed society in which we must live. I want a Britain which we all feel part of, in whose future we all have a stake, in which what I want for my own children I want for yours.

#### A NEW POLITICS

The reason for having created new Labour is to meet the challenges of a different world. The millennium symbolises a new era opening up for Britain. I am confident about our future prosperity, even optimistic, if we have the courage to change and use it to build a better Britain.

To accomplish this means more than just a change of government. Our aim is no less than to set British political life on a new course for the future.

People *are* cynical about politics and distrustful of political promises. That is hardly surprising. There have been few more gross breaches of faith than when the Conservatives under Mr Major promised, before the election of 1992, that they would not raise taxes, but

would cut them every year; and then went on to raise them by the largest amount in peacetime history starting in the first Budget after the election. The Exchange Rate Mechanism as the cornerstone of economic policy, Europe, health, crime, schools, sleaze - the broken promises are strewn across the country's memory.

The Conservatives' broken promises taint all politics. That is why we have made it our guiding rule not to promise what we cannot deliver; and to deliver what we promise. What follows is not the politics of a 100 days that dazzles for a time, then fizzles out. It is not the politics of a revolution, but of a fresh start, the patient rebuilding and renewing of this country - renewal that can take root and build over time.

That is one way in which politics in Britain will gain a new lease of life. But there is another. We aim to put behind us the bitter political struggles of left and right that have torn our country apart for too many decades. Many of these conflicts have no relevance whatsoever to the modern world - public versus private, bosses versus workers, middle class versus working class. It is time for this country to move on and move forward. We are proud of our history, proud of what we have achieved - but we must learn from our history, not be chained to it.

## **NEW LABOUR**

The purpose of new Labour is to give Britain a different political choice: the choice between a failed Conservative government, exhausted and divided in everything other than its desire to cling on to power, and a new and revitalised Labour Party that has been resolute in transforming itself into a party of the future. We have rewritten our constitution, the new Clause IV, to put a commitment to enterprise alongside the commitment to justice. We have changed the way we make policy, and put our relations with the trade unions on a modern footing where they accept they can get fairness but no favours from a Labour government. Our MPs are all now selected by ordinary party members, not small committees or pressure groups. The membership itself has doubled, to over 400,000, with half the members having joined since the last election.

We submitted our draft manifesto, new Labour new life for Britain, to a ballot of all our members, 95 per cent of whom gave it their express endorsement.

We are a national party, supported today by people from all walks of life, from the successful businessman or woman to the pensioner on a council estate. Young people have flooded in to join us in what is the fastest growing youth section of any political party in the western world.

## **THE VISION**

We are a broad-based movement for progress and justice. New Labour is the political arm of none other than the British people as a whole. Our values are the same: the equal worth of all, with no one cast aside; fairness and justice within strong communities.

But we have liberated these values from outdated dogma or doctrine, and we have applied these values to the modern world.

I want a country in which people get on, do well, make a success of their lives. I have no time for the politics of envy. We need more successful entrepreneurs, not fewer of them. But these life-chances should be for all the people. And I want a society in which ambition and

compassion are seen as partners not opposites - where we value public service as well as material wealth.

New Labour believes in a society where we do not simply pursue our own individual aims but where we hold many aims in common and work together to achieve them. How we build the industry and employment opportunities of the future; how we tackle the division and inequality in our society; how we care for and enhance our environment and quality of life; how we develop modern education and health services; how we create communities that are safe, where mutual respect and tolerance are the order of the day. These are things we must achieve together as a country.

The vision is one of national renewal, a country with drive, purpose and energy. A Britain equipped to prosper in a global economy of technological change; with a modern welfare state; its politics more accountable; and confident of its place in the world.

### **PROGRAMME: A NEW CENTRE AND CENTRE-LEFT POLITICS**

In each area of policy a new and distinctive approach has been mapped out, one that differs both from the solutions of the old left and those of the Conservative right. This is why new Labour is new. We believe in the strength of our values, but we recognise also that the policies of 1997 cannot be those of 1947 or 1967. More detailed policy has been produced by us than by any opposition in history. Our direction and destination are clear.

The old left would have sought state control of industry. The Conservative right is content to leave all to the market. We reject both approaches. Government and industry must work together to achieve key objectives aimed at enhancing the dynamism of the market, not undermining it.

In **industrial relations**, we make it clear that there will be no return to flying pickets, secondary action, strikes with no ballots or the trade union law of the 1970s. There will instead be basic minimum rights for the individual at the workplace, where our aim is partnership not conflict between employers and employees.

In **economic management**, we accept the global economy as a reality and reject the isolationism and 'go-it-alone' policies of the extremes of right or left.

In **education**, we reject both the idea of a return to the 11-plus and the monolithic comprehensive schools that take no account of children's differing abilities. Instead we favour all-in schooling which identifies the distinct abilities of individual pupils and organises them in classes to maximise their progress in individual subjects. In this way we modernise the comprehensive principle, learning from the experience of its 30 years of application.

In **health** policy, we will safeguard the basic principles of the NHS, which we founded, but will not return to the top-down management of the 1970s. So we will keep the planning and provision of healthcare separate, but put planning on a longer-term, decentralised and more co-operative basis. The key is to root out unnecessary administrative cost, and to spend money on the right things - frontline care.

On **crime**, we believe in personal responsibility and in punishing crime, but also tackling its underlying causes - so, tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime, different from the Labour approach of the past and the Tory policy of today.

Over-centralisation of **government** and lack of accountability was a problem in governments of both left and right. Labour is committed to the democratic renewal of our country through decentralisation and the elimination of excessive government secrecy.

In addition, we will face up to the new issues that confront us. We will be the party of **welfare reform**. In consultation and partnership with the people, we will design a modern welfare state based on rights and duties going together, fit for the modern world.

We will stand up for Britain's interests in **Europe** after the shambles of the last six years, but, more than that, we will lead a campaign for reform in Europe. Europe isn't working in the way this country and Europe need. But to lead means to be involved, to be constructive, to be capable of getting our own way.

We will put concern for the **environment** at the heart of policy-making, so that it is not an add-on extra, but informs the whole of government, from housing and energy policy through to global warming and international agreements.

We will search out at every turn new ways and new ideas to tackle the new issues: how to encourage more flexible working hours and practices to suit employees and employers alike; how to harness the huge potential of the new information technology; how to simplify the processes of the government machine; how to put public and private sector together in partnership to give us the infrastructure and transport system we need.

We will be a radical government. But the definition of radicalism will not be that of doctrine, whether of left or right, but of achievement. New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern.

So the party is transformed. The vision is clear. And from that vision stems a modern programme of change and renewal for Britain. We understand that after 18 years of one-party rule, people want change, believe that it is necessary for the country and for democracy, but require faith to make the change.

We therefore set out in the manifesto that follows ten commitments, commitments that form our bond of trust with the people. They are specific. They are real. Judge us on them. Have trust in us and we will repay that trust.

Our mission in politics is to rebuild this bond of trust between government and the people. That is the only way democracy can flourish. I pledge to Britain a government which shares their hopes, which understands their fears, and which will work as partners with and for all our people, not just the privileged few. This is our contract with the people.

**Over the five years of a Labour government:**

***1: Education will be our number one priority, and we will increase the share of national income spent on education as we decrease it on the bills of economic and social failure***

***2: There will be no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax***

***3: We will provide stable economic growth with low inflation, and promote dynamic and competitive business and industry at home and abroad***

***4: We will get 250,000 young unemployed off benefit and into work***

***5: We will rebuild the NHS, reducing spending on administration and increasing spending on patient care***

***6: We will be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, and halve the time it takes persistent juvenile offenders to come to court***

***7: We will help build strong families and strong communities, and lay the foundations of a modern welfare state in pensions and community care***

***8: We will safeguard our environment, and develop an integrated transport policy to fight congestion and pollution***

***9: We will clean up politics, decentralise political power throughout the United Kingdom and put the funding of political parties on a proper and accountable basis***

***10: We will give Britain the leadership in Europe which Britain and Europe need***

We have modernised the Labour Party and we will modernise Britain. This means knowing where we want to go; being clear-headed about the country's future; telling the truth; making tough choices; insisting that all parts of the public sector live within their means; taking on vested interests that hold people back; standing up to unreasonable demands from any quarter; and being prepared to give a moral lead where government has responsibilities it should not avoid.

Britain does deserve better. And new Labour will be better for Britain.

Britain will be better with Labour. In The Labour Party. (1997). *New Labour because Britain deserves better* (pp. 1-5). London: The Labour Party.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Clause IV (4)**

“To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.

In *Labour Party Constitution Clause IV (4)*. (1918). Other details unknown.



## **APPENDIX D**

“New Labour is a democratic socialist party. It believes that by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we can achieve alone, so as to create for each of us the means to realise our true potential and for all of us a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few, where the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe, and where we live together, freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect.”

Source: reverse of *Labour Party Membership Card* (2001)

## APPENDIX E

### Winter Ending

'A cold coming we had of it'  
huddled together in cardboard cities,  
crouched over shared books in leaking classrooms,  
crammed into peeling waiting-rooms,  
ice stamped into crazy-paving  
round polluted streams.

Winter ending:

paintings, poems bud hesitantly,  
tentative chords behind boarded facades;  
factories open like daffodils,  
trains flex frozen rheumatic joints,  
computer-screens blink on  
in the sudden daylight.

As the last cardboard boxes  
are swept away beneath busy bridges,  
the cold blue landscape of winter  
suddenly alive with bright red roses.

*AdrianHenri*

March, 1992

Winter Ending. In *The Labour Party* (1992). *It's time to get Britain working again* (p. 1). London: The Labour Party.