

Speech – some linguistic theories

In their book, *English Grammar for Today*, Leech, Deuchar, and Hoogenraad discussed features of 'typical' speech and 'typical' writing:

Typical speech	Typical writing
Inexplicitness	Explicitness
Lack of clear sentence boundaries	Clear sentence boundaries
Simple structure	More complex structure
Repetitiveness	Non-repetitiveness
Normal non-fluency	Fluency
Monitoring features	No monitoring features
Interaction features	No interaction features
Features reflecting informality	Features reflecting formality

They came up with the idea of a continuum from 'typical' speech to 'typical' writing

Typical speech

Conversation in a pub
 Seminar
 Telephone conversation
 Personal letter
 Job interview
 Radio discussion
 Television advertisement
 Lecture
 Sermon
 Script of a play
 Television news
 Newspaper
 Business letter
 Textbook

Typical writing

Linguistic theory: Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

They distinguish between:

- **negative politeness strategies:** strategies that are performed to avoid offense through deference
- **positive politeness strategies:** strategies that are performed to avoid offense by emphasizing friendliness

Linguistic theory: Robin Lakoff – features of women's language

Lakoff argued that women's and men's language use differed.

She identified features of women's language that included:

- The adverb 'so' (e.g. I like him so much)
- Tag questions (e.g. she's very nice isn't she?)
- 'Women only' adjectives (e.g. divine, cute, nice, wonderful, sweet)
- Rising intonation on declaratives so that they sound like questions (e.g. it's really good?)

A Level English Language summer homework

Choose a topic – it might be an interest that you have or a recent news event, for example.

Find three social media posts about the topic – try to choose different sorts of social media accounts e.g. official / government, news reporter, comedian, member of the public...

Analyse the Tweets, considering:

- typical features of speech and writing evident
- the attitudes they express.

Aim to write between 300 – 500 words.