

Parliamentary Records as Data for Linguistic Discourse Studies

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Aims of this presentation

Research questions

- How are Finnish plenary speeches modified in the making of written record?
- How do these changes affect the use of plenary records as data for linguistic discourse studies?

Data

- Written records of Finnish plenary sessions 2008–2014
- Audio and video recordings of Finnish plenary sessions 2008–2014
- Official guidelines for the Records Office of the Finnish Parliament (Kirjo 2016)

Methods

- Conversation analysis (e.g. Sidnell 2010)
- Linguistic text analysis (e.g. Halliday 2003)
- Participant observation (2010–)



Theoretical perspectives on reporting

- **Transcription** (cf. Jenks 2011)
 - From vocal action to visual object
- **Intermodal translation** (e.g. Kress 2009)
 - From one mode of communication to another
- **Recontextualization** (e.g. Linell 1998)
 - From one genre and context to another
- **Reported speech** (e.g. Holt & Clift 2010)
 - From speech event to direct quotation
- **Representation** (e.g. Knuuttila & Lehtinen 2010)
 - From act to enactment

(Voutilainen 2015; Tiittula & Voutilainen 2016)



Linguistic reporting practices: What is changed?

- Systematic standardization of **dialect** in phonological features
mä, mää, mie → *minä* 'I'
- Some modifications in **non-standard morphology**
vaikutus jollekin → *vaikutus johonkin* 'effect on something'
- Moderate editing of **spoken syntax**
e.g. "redundant" verbs or NP's, utterance-initial particles, word order
- Exclusion of some minor "**mannerisms**" (*todellakin* 'really')
- Deletion of **planning expressions** (*niinku* 'like, kind of') and evident **slips-of-tongue** (*sukupuoli* 'sex' > *sukupolvi* 'generation')
- Implementation of **self-corrections** ('thanks, or, congratulations')
- Exclusion of **so-called technical talk, routine turns by the chairman and "non-relevant" interjections**



Linguistic reporting practices: What is **not** changed (anymore)?

- regional and social variation in word-choices
 - *pönttö* 'podium', *pruukaa* 'is used to', *kafferi* 'cupboard'
- complex and obscure style
 - e.g. complicated syntax and ambiguous word choices
- Inappropriate conduct
 - e.g. casual forms of address, swearwords
- wrong claims
 - e.g. incorrect figures, names and facts (unless interpreted as blunders)
- False citations
 - e.g. inaccurate wordings or missing words (unless interpreted as blunders)

(See Voutilainen et al. 2013; Voutilainen 2014; 2016; cf. Cortelazzo 1985; Slembrouck 1992; Hughes 1996; Mollin 2007; Cucchi 2013; La Rocca 2015)



From speech to written record: overview

1) Ideational level: content

- Very few significant changes
- Modifications on the borderline between content, style and appearance

2) Interpersonal level: social relations

- Transformations in social styles
- Monologization of interaction

3) Textual level: discourse structure

- Alterations in discourse processing
- Changes in information structure

(Cf. Halliday 1978; 2003; Slembrouck 1992; Haapala 2016)



Reliable data for linguistic discourse studies on parliamentary speeches?

Topic analysis

Corpus analysis

Cognitive discourse analysis

Linguistic stylistics

Variation analysis

Propositional analysis

Rhetorical analysis

Discursive psychology

Interactional sociolinguistics

Macro-structural analysis

Critical discourse analysis

Conversation analysis

Minor
methodological
challenges

Considerable
methodological
challenges

