Addressing Australia's Stolen Generations: An Analysis of Two Prime Ministerial Speeches

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Abstract

In this paper two landmark speeches by former Australian Prime Ministers Paul Keating and Kevin Rudd addressing the history of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are analysed. A systemic functional linguistic (SFL) framework incorporating contextual and linguistic analyses is used to reveal how similarities and differences in the style and communicative functionality of the two speeches results from the dynamic relation between text and context. The similarities in the two texts emerged from their sharing similar situational contexts. Differences in the general style and communicative function of the two texts were shown to have emerged from differences in other contextual factors such as purpose, setting and sociocultural context. It is demonstrated how the relationship between text and context is systematic and two-way and that exploring these dynamic relations in a systemic functional framework can lead to a better understanding of texts and their purposes. Keywords: systemic functional linguistics (SFL), political rhetoric, stolen generations, discourse analysis

1. Introduction

This paper analyses two speeches by former Australian Prime Ministers Paul Keating and Kevin Rudd that address the troubled history of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Both speeches were made in the spirit of what Barkan (2000) describes as a "new international morality", reflecting an increasing willingness of nations to apologise for past historical injustices. Using the tools of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) this paper will compare the style and communicative functions of the two speeches. It will reveal how the similarities and differences in the style and communicative functionality of the speeches, realised by their experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings, result from the dynamic relation between text and context. First, I will provide a brief review of previous relevant studies and describe the analytical framework. I will then present analyses of the two speeches, before discussing their key similarities and distinctions.

2. Literature Review

There have been several SFL-informed studies of speeches by recent Australian Prime Ministers on Indigenous issues. A speech by former Australian Prime Minister John Howard

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in 1997 was the subject of several SFL-informed analyses (Augoustinos, Le Couteur & Soyland, 2002; Le Couteur, 2001; Luke, 1997) broadly situated in the field of critical discourse analysis. Martin (2004), in response to what he considered an overemphasis on critical discourse analysis, discussed Paul Keating's 1992 Redfern Park speech in proposing a shift in focus from critical to positive discourse analysis. Building on this work, this paper will present a comparative systemic functional analysis of the style and communicative functionality of two speeches by former Australian Prime Ministers Paul Keating and Kevin Rudd in a further exploration of the relationship between text and context in politically sensitive texts.

3. Analytical framework

The analytical framework used in this study is adapted from So (2005) and includes both contextual and linguistic analyses. Table 1 shows the framework.

Table 1: Framework for Contextual and Linguistic Analysis of a Text

Contextual analysis	
1. Genre type and subtypes	What is the name of the genre of which the text is an exemplar? Are there any subtypes or subsets in this genre?
2. Context of situation	
a. Mode	What is the channel of communication?
b. Tenor	What roles may be required of the speaker and hearers? Do they have equal status and how is their affect and contact?
c. Field	What subject matter is the text about?
3. Purpose	What are the communicative purposes of the text? How are they achieved? How are they related to the rhetorical functions of the text?
4. Institutional practice	In what institution is this kind of text typically produced? What constraints and obligations does this discourse community impose on speakers and hearers? Do the production and hearing processes influence its structure and language?
5. Sociocultural context	Are there any social, historical or cultural factors that make the text appear the way it is?
Linguistic analysis	
1. Linguistic features	What are the lexico-grammatical features for realising the metafunctions of language: experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings? How are they related to context?
2. Intertextual analysis	Is there anything drawn from other texts? Is information attributed to sources and how?

Source: "From analysis to pedagogic applications: using newspaper genres to write school genres" by B.P.C. So, 2005, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 4*, p. 70.

The framework also incorporates the notion of the metafunctions of language (Halliday & Hasan, 1989) in order to examine relations between language use and context of situation. This allows for an account of both contextual and linguistic factors, thus enabling a comprehensive analysis of the relations between language use and context. The relation of context and metafunction is shown in Figure 1.
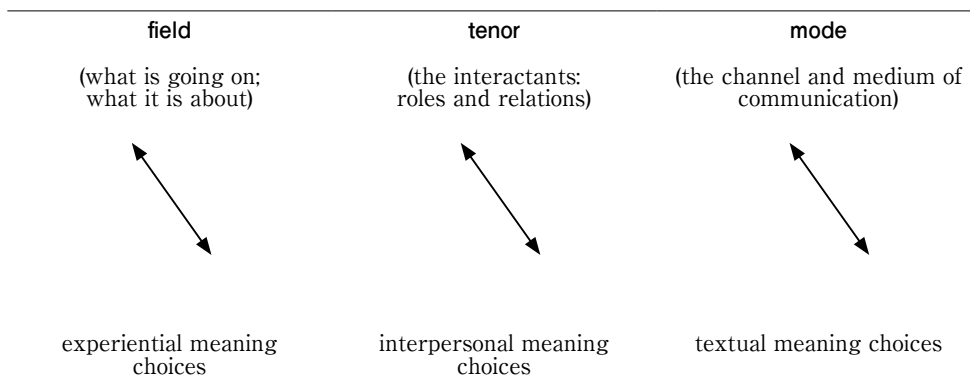
field	tenor	mode
(what is going on; what it is about)	(the interactants: roles and relations)	(the channel and medium of communication)
↕	↕	↕
experiential meaning choices	interpersonal meaning choices	textual meaning choices

Figure 1: The Relation of Context and Metafunction
Source: "Understanding Genre and Register: Implications for Language Teaching" by C. Painter, 2001, *Analysing English in a Global Context*, p. 178.

4. Addressing the Stolen Generations: An Analysis of Two Speeches

This section presents the results of the analysis of the two speeches. As discussed, both speeches address Indigenous issues, especially reconciliation and the "Stolen Generations" – the term used to refer to those children of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who were removed from their families by Federal and State government agencies and church missions during the 20th century. The first speech was given by Prime Minister Paul Keating at the Australian Launch of the International Year for the World's Indigenous People at Redfern Park, Sydney on 10 December 1992. The second speech was given by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in Parliament House, Canberra on 13 February 2008.

4.1 Contextual analysis of the Keating and Rudd speeches

1. Genre type and subtypes

The Keating speech is an Exposition. It belongs to the subtype of Hortatory Exposition as it attempts to persuade people to do what it argues. The Rudd speech is a formal apology.

2. Context of situation

a. Mode

The Keating text is spoken discourse in the mode of a speech given at the Australian Launch of the International Year for the World's Indigenous People. Rudd's text is also spoken discourse in the mode of a parliamentary speech.

b. Tenor

The Keating speech: Prime Minister of Australia (speaker) → Audience (hearers), in the first instance, but in reality the speaker is addressing all Australians. Although as national leader the speaker has more institutional power than his hearers, as an elected leader he is also expected to adopt a suitably humble and respectful tone, especially given the sensitive subject matter. The speaker here adopts an appropriate tone and level of formality on the basis of this relationship.

The Rudd speech: Prime Minister of Australia (speaker) → Members of the Parliament of Australia and attending public and media in the first instance, however the apology is addressed to the Indigenous Peoples of Australia (hearers). The speaker is speaking on the behalf of the Parliament of Australia which strongly influences the tone he adopts.

c. Field

Both texts are concerned with the history of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Rudd speech is especially concerned with the practice of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

3. Purpose

Keating's speech is intended to acknowledge past and present problems and to persuade its hearers to carry out some suggested solutions to existing problems. Rudd's speech is intended to acknowledge the past mistreatment of Indigenous Australians and to offer a formal apology for that mistreatment on behalf of the Australian Federal Parliament.

4. Institutional practice

Speakers are expected to follow certain linguistic conventions while addressing audiences in specific contexts and this is reflected in the language and structure of both speeches. The Keating speech is less formal than a parliamentary motion, but more structured than an off-the-cuff media interview. The Rudd text was produced under constraints imposed by the institution (the Australian Parliament) and the expectations of the addressees. The formal Parliamentary setting imposes constraints on the speaker, such as the use of situationally specific language and an expected conventional structure.

5. Sociocultural context

The Keating speech was produced in response to events such as the release of The Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in the same year and the landmark Mabo High Court judgement, which paved the way for the granting of land rights to Indigenous Australians. Both events prompted widespread debate on Indigenous issues in Australia. The setting of the speech is also significant as it is delivered in Redfern, a suburb of Sydney with a large Aboriginal population, to an audience celebrating the launch of the International Year For the World's Indigenous People.

Rudd gave his speech shortly after winning government. While there was majority public support for the apology, its exact nature and wording was the subject of public debate. One commonly raised fear was that an official apology might lead to expensive compensation claims. Another concern was that some Australians felt that they should not be made to feel responsible for things that had happened in the past, which had been a criticism of the Keating speech.

4.2 Linguistic analysis of the Keating and Rudd speeches

1. Linguistic features

a. Experiential meanings

Process types and participant roles

Material processes (verbs/verbal groups of doing things) are the most common process type in the Keating text, followed by mental processes (which denote ways of thinking, perceiving and feeling), relational processes (which denote existence or states of being or having), and verbal processes (ways of communicating something).

In Rudd's speech, material processes constitute approximately 55% of all verb groups in the text. Verbal, mental and relational processes occur at similar frequencies (15% each). Process types as a percentage of total verbs/verbal groups are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Process Types as Percentage of Total Verbs/Verbal Groups in the Keating and Rudd Speeches

Process type	Approximate %	
	Keating speech	Rudd speech
Material (e.g. *provide, make, inflict*)	50	55
Relational (e.g. *is, are, have*)	20	15
Mental (e.g. *see, know, imagine*)	20	15
Verbal (e.g. *say, tell, show*)	10	15
Total	100	100

Participants

The pronoun *we*, referring to all non-Indigenous Australians including the speaker, is by far the most common participant in Keating's speech. It is most frequently employed as an Actor in material processes, as in the following examples:

We *We*	took brought committed	the traditional lands the disasters the murders
Actor	Process: material	Goal

The next most common participants in the text are variations of *Indigenous Australians*, the most frequent being the pronoun *they* which appears most often as an Actor in material processes:

they they they	have made have shaped helped build	remarkable contributions our knowledge of this continent and of ourselves this nation
Actor	Process: material	Goal

The association of Indigenous Australians with positive processes and non-Indigenous Australians with negative ones is highly significant, realising a version of events more suited to arguing the speaker's position, which appears to be: "we" non-Indigenous Australians need to acknowledge that we did these things, so we can try to put things right.

In the Rudd speech, the most frequently occurring participant is the first person plural pronoun "we" whose referent is the Australian Parliament, which occurs about four times more often than the next most frequent participant, "all Australians." Its role is mostly as Senser in mental processes and Sayer in verbal processes as in the following examples:

We	reflect	on their past mistreatment
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind,	we	say	sorry
Circumstance: matter	Sayer	Process: verbal	Verbiage

Significantly, almost all of the material processes in the text are metaphorical in nature. It is also significant that the Parliament is only employed as Actor in positively evaluated processes, as seen here:

We today <u>take</u> this first step by acknowledging the past and <u>laying</u> claim to a future that embraces all Australians

A future where **we** <u>harness</u> the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to <u>close</u> the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity

Similarly, when "the nation" is chosen as Actor it is in positively evaluated processes which are impossible to actually do in any concrete sense:

The time has now come for **the nation** <u>to turn a new page</u> in Australia's history by <u>righting the wrongs</u> of the past and so <u>moving forward</u> with confidence to the future.

When negatively evaluated processes are presented, the text employs discursive strategies to avoid implicating either the government or the nation as a whole. One strategy the text

employs to do this is the choice of an inanimate or abstract entity as Actor:

> We apologise for **the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments** that <u>have inflicted</u> profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

By making such an abstract entity as "the laws and policies" of past Parliaments and governments responsible for "inflicting" such terrible things Rudd avoids implicating the current Parliament or government. The purpose behind choosing the Parliament as Actor in only positively appraised processes throughout the text is perhaps to emphasise the point that while it is "righting the wrongs of the past" by apologising for them, it is not in any way responsible for them.

Agentless passives

Another strategy employed in Rudd's speech to avoid implicating any particular group in negatively evaluated processes is the use of the agentless passive. Here is an example:

> And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

Butt et al. (2000, p. 53) write that agentless passives enable the "losing" of the Actor of a process, adding that whenever you encounter one "it is worthwhile asking just why the Actor has been omitted – is it because nobody knows who did the action, or because everybody knows, or because it is unimportant, or because the writer is purposely not mentioning it for some reason?" A reason for doing this in the above clause from the Rudd speech could be to mitigate responsibility or to avoid blaming another person or group for inflicting such things. This particular use of the passive voice stands in stark contrast to the almost exclusive choice of active voice with positively evaluated processes.

<u>Nominalisation</u>

Nominalisation – the use of a nominal form to express a process meaning (Thompson, 2004) – plays a significant part in realising the persuasive function of the text. One role of nominalisation is to restrict the arguability of statements, which it does by fully packaging propositions as "things" (Thompson, 2004, p. 213). The Keating text uses nominalisation to "establish" the existence of certain propositions before presenting claims that are definitely arguable in themselves, but because they are directly linked to what has just seemingly been established are harder to contest.

A closer look at the clauses in question reveals how this is achieved. First, Keating's use of "the starting point" in the following clause signals the existence of a problem that requires attention from now on; that the problem exists cannot be disputed, perhaps only how to approach it:

> And, as I say, **the starting point** might be to recognise that the problem starts with

us non-Aboriginal Australians.

Keating develops this line of argument with further nominalisations:

> It begins, I think, with **the act of recognition**. **Recognition** that it was we who did **the dispossessing**.

The nominalisation of the mental process of recognising after careful modalisations ("the starting point *might* be" and "It begins, I *think*") changes an arguable process into something whose existence is more difficult to question and appears calculated to make the controversial claims that follow less contestable. The choice of the nominal "the dispossessing" again presents a proposition as a truth: that dispossession did take place and all that is required now is to recognise who did it. Keating then delivers, in definitely arguable clauses, his version of events with a clear verdict on who was responsible for them:

> **We** <u>took</u> the traditional lands and <u>smashed</u> the traditional way of life. **We** <u>brought</u> the disasters. The alcohol. **We** <u>committed</u> the murders. **We** <u>took</u> the children from their mothers. **We** <u>practised</u> discrimination and exclusion.

Keating and his advisers would have been very aware that these statements would generate a lot of controversy, which the speech may be trying to negate by establishing in the preceding clauses that these things *had* occurred and all that was needed now was to acknowledge them, a point made with further nominalisations:

> It was **our ignorance** and **our prejudice**. And **our failure** to imagine **these things** being done to us.

Like passive clauses, nominalisations allow the removal of human involvement or agency from the activities they refer to (Thompson, 2004, p. 243). In the Rudd speech, this can be seen in all of the following:

We reflect on their past **mistreatment**

We reflect in particular on **the mistreatment** of those who were Stolen Generations— this blemished chapter in our nation's history

We apologise especially for **the removal** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country

For **the pain, suffering and hurt** of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and

for their families left behind, we say sorry

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

In all of these statements there is no mention of who did these things, only of those who suffered their consequences. As van Leeuwen (1996, p. 38) points out, representations "include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended." Here the nominalisations make it possible for the speaker to avoid implicating the government or any other social actor in the events. However, as van Leeuwen (p. 39) adds, when activities are included (for example, the removal of Indigenous children from their families), but some or all of the social actors involved in them are excluded it is possible to ask questions like "but who removed the children?" or "but who mistreated them?" even though the text does not provide the answers.

b. Interpersonal meanings

Interpersonal meanings – the opinions, attitudes and evaluations adopted and expressed regarding the information contained in the text – are revealed in several ways.

Mood Block

The Mood Block consists of three elements – Finite, Subject and Polarity. The Finite is the part of the verbal group which encodes primary tense or the speaker's opinion. The Subject is the nominal group that interacts most closely with the Finite (Butt et al., 2000). Polarity indicates if the clause contains some form of negation. The Mood Block plays a central role in the arguability of a clause as it is this element which will be passed back and forth in any debate. In this text, subject choice helps reveal the speaker's position on the described events. The choice of Subject in the following clauses clearly establishes Keating's evaluation of who is implicated in the events:

We *We* *We*	*brought* *committed* *took*		*the disasters* *the murders* *the children from their mothers*
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood Block		Residue	

As discussed, this inclusive "we" refers to all non-Indigenous Australians. Wodak argues that an "essential function of the 'we discourse' is the denial of personal responsibility and its displacement on to the group as a whole in the sense that what many people believe cannot be wrong" (1996, p. 116). However, in this case many of the group concerned resented this, which was to have a huge social and political impact.

By contrast, when Indigenous Australians are chosen as Subjects they are associated with positive events. For example:

they they	have made helped build		remarkable contributions this nation
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood Block		Residue	

The interpersonal meanings of the text are also realised by the use of interrogative clauses:

Didn't Isn't	Australia it	provide opportunity and care for the dispossessed Irish? reasonable to say that if we can build a prosperous and remarkably harmonious multicultural society in Australia, surely we can find just solutions to the problems which beset the first Australians – the people to whom the most injustice has been done?
Finite	Subject	Residue
Mood Block		

These rhetorical questions involve the audience at some level and create a sense of shared understanding between speaker and hearers as like-minded "reasonable" people. Augustinos et al. (2002, p.135) write how many rhetoricians

> advise speakers to mobilize and deploy arguments with which an audience can readily identify with, and which are predicated on the values and common-sense understandings shared by a speaker and his/her audience. It is through the routine deployment of such commonplaces that speakers can engender support from, and identification with their chosen audience.

An example of this advice comes from Billig (1996), who argues that speakers "should try to slide their controversial views into categories which are familiar and well-valued by the audience" (p. 224). It is possible to see such discursive strategies at work here. However, beyond this rhetorical function, interrogative clauses such as these give the text a more interactive and personal tone.

In Rudd's speech, the pronoun "we" is chosen as Subject in about 50% of clauses. This reflects the main communicative purpose of the text: for the Parliament to apologise for the past mistreatment of Indigenous Australians. Here are some examples of this function:

> **We** apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

> **We the Parliament of Australia** respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

Unlike the Keating speech, there is no use at all of "I" as a Subject, which again reflects the purpose of the text and its context. Here, Rudd is speaking for the Parliament, not for himself,

and the formal parliamentary context places further constraints on subject and person choices. The extensive association of the Parliament with positively evaluated activities may also be seen as serving Rudd's rhetorical purposes, as an attempt to present the actions of his government very positively.

Modality

Modality – the expression of probability, obligation and the like – is, according to Halliday, "grammar's way of expressing the speaker's or writer's judgement, without making the first person 'I' explicit" (2001, p. 182). In this text, it is especially used to express Keating's position on what is needed for reconciliation to take place. In the following passage modalisations expressing obligation and certainty in contrast to a phrase expressing the (un)likelihood of an alternative possibility present Keating's judgement very clearly:

> We simply <u>cannot</u> sweep injustice aside. <u>Even if</u> our own conscience allowed us to, I am <u>sure</u>, that in due course, the world and the people of our region <u>would not</u>. There <u>should</u> be no mistake about this - our success in resolving these issues <u>will</u> have a significant bearing on our standing in the world.

While sure of his opinions, Keating is also careful at times not to be too direct and modalises accordingly:

> We non-Aboriginal Australians <u>should perhaps</u> remind ourselves that Australia once reached out for us

> And, as I say, the starting point <u>might</u> be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians

> <u>Perhaps</u> when we recognise what we have in common we <u>will</u> see the things which <u>must</u> be done - the practical things

Modality is most powerfully used in the conclusion of the speech, expressing the speaker's evaluation of both the obligations of non-Indigenous Australians and the likelihood of those obligations being met:

> There is one thing today we <u>cannot</u> imagine. We <u>cannot</u> imagine that the descendants of people whose genius and resilience maintained a culture here through 50000 years or more, through cataclysmic changes to the climate and environment, and who then survived two centuries of dispossession and abuse, <u>will</u> be denied their place in the modern Australian nation. We <u>cannot</u> imagine that. We <u>cannot</u> imagine that we <u>will</u> fail. And with the spirit that is here today I am confident that we <u>won't</u>. I am confident that we <u>will</u> succeed in this decade.

In the Rudd speech, there is some use of modality to realise Rudd's position on certain representations. For example, the use of "must" and "never" in the following clearly indicates his stance on past events:

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past **must never, never** happen again.

Modality is also employed to realise Rudd's judgement on the capacity of the nation to do something, albeit metaphorically:

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent **can** now be written.

Evaluative lexis

Evaluative lexis is used extensively to present a negative evaluation of past events: "this blemished chapter in our nation's history", "inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss", "the indignity and degradation thus inflicted", "injustices of the past", "old approaches have failed." Rudd's positive appraisal of Indigenous Australians is also realised by evaluative lexis: "the oldest continuing cultures in human history", "a proud people and a proud culture." Lexical choice also helps create a positive evaluation of the Australian nation: "our great continent", "this great country, Australia." Such realisations serve to position the speaker favourably with all sections of his audience – Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

c. Textual meanings

Theme

Theme, the "point of departure for what the speaker is going to say" (Halliday, 1994), is concerned with the particular approach the writer/speaker takes to the content of a text in its development. The Themes in Keating's speech reveal that it is mostly concerned with people. The pronoun "we" is a repeated Theme throughout the text, being employed in some of its most persuasive clauses.

Augoustinos et al. (2002) write that the categorisation of an inclusive "we" at the level of the nation is a common linguistic strategy in political rhetoric, arguing that such discursive practices emphasise the shared community of all citizens and produce an image of consensus while helping reinforce the speaker's position as spokesperson for the nation. The strategy allows the speaker to build up the feeling of consensus by "seeking to establish a sense of communality and shared values with the audience" (p.115). Keating's extensive use of "we" as a Theme helps construct an image of consensus and plays an important role in realising his speech's persuasive function.

The Themes in the Rudd speech reveal that it is mostly concerned with communicating

the actions of the government. The pronoun "we" (the Parliament) is the most common topical theme in the text, which is not surprising given its main purpose. More significant is the use of Marked Themes where negatively evaluated events are represented without causal agents, as seen here:

> For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, [Theme] we say sorry [Rheme]

> To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, [Theme] we say sorry. [Rheme]

> And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, [Theme] we say sorry. [Rheme]

Placing the events and not the Subject/Actor in the Theme position has significantly altered the message conveyed in these statements. If the order is reversed, a very different message emerges and the Subject/Actor seems more implicated in events:

> We [Theme] say sorry for the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind. [Rheme]

> We [Theme] say sorry to the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities. [Rheme]

> And we [Theme] say sorry for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture. [Rheme]

However, this is clearly not the message Rudd wants to convey. Therefore, he has chosen Themes more suited to realising his intended message in order to help achieve his overall aims.

2. Intertextual analysis

In Keating's speech, there is explicit reference to two external texts: The Report of the Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody and the Mabo High Court judgment. The judicial source of these texts adds great weight to Keating's arguments as they can be viewed as both highly authoritative and free of political bias. Previous studies analysing political rhetoric (Augoustinos et al. 2002; Dickerson, 1997; Le Couteur et al., 2001) have identified the citing of apolitical and expert others to claim a consensus warrant for a particular position as a linguistic device speakers use to present their versions of events.

Making the cited texts themselves Subjects and Participants (Sayer and Actor) adds

further authority as it is they – the highly authoritative and apolitical Royal Commission report and High Court judgement – and not the speaker "showing" and "establishing" the way things supposedly are:

> **The Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody** [Sayer] showed with devastating clarity that the past lives on in inequality, racism and injustice, in the prejudice and ignorance of non-Aboriginal Australians, and in the demoralisation and desperation, the fractured identity, of so many Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders

> By doing away with the bizarre conceit that this continent had no owners prior to the settlement of Europeans, **Mabo** [Actor] establishes a fundamental truth and lays the basis for justice.

Keating's speech cleverly interweaves some evaluative lexis into these clauses – "devastating clarity", "injustice", "demoralisation and desperation", "fractured identity", "bizarre conceit", "fundamental truth" – which otherwise may have been seen as overly dramatic or emotional. However, by directly linking these evaluations to the authoritative texts Keating makes some very strong, emotive arguments appear as objective observations rather than just his own, possibly more subjective, personal opinions.

The Rudd speech contains no explicit citation of external texts. There is, however, one interesting use of a rather euphemistic phrase used in a speech by Kevin Rudd's predecessor as Prime Minister, John Howard. In that speech, Howard referred to the mistreatment of the Indigenous Australians as a "blemished chapter" in Australia's history (Howard, 1997). As seen above, Rudd uses the identical phrase in a similar way in his speech. However, unlike Rudd's speech, Howard's speech was not an apology. In fact, it argued vehemently why an apology to Indigenous Australians was *not* necessary. Examples such as these demonstrate, as Martin (2004) points out, how language in the service of power can be used to suit a variety of interests.

5. Similarities and differences of the two speeches
5.1 Similarities
There are several areas where the two speeches overlap, as might be expected of texts sharing a similar Mode, Field and Tenor. The similarities in the two texts are seen in the following aspects.

Subject matter

Both texts discuss the same issue: relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They both acknowledge and discuss the past mistreatment of Indigenous Australians as well as problems currently facing Indigenous Australians.

Structure

Both texts are highly structured, prepared speeches consisting of an introduction, a discussion of the issues and a conclusion which focuses on the future. Where they differ is in their purpose, with the Keating speech being more argumentative, and thus containing more arguments than the Rudd text.

Interpersonal meanings

Both texts abound with interpersonal meanings. Mood choice, modality and evaluative lexis play an important role in realising the interpersonal meanings of both texts. Evaluative lexis is used in both to present a positive appraisal of Indigenous Australians and a negative appraisal of their past treatment in order to realise the communicative and rhetorical purposes of each text.

Participants

Most participants in both texts are groups, not individuals (for example, Indigenous Australians, non-Indigenous Australians). The first person plural pronoun "we" is the most common participant in both texts, a typical feature of political speeches.

Nominalisation

Nominalisation has a very important role in realising the purposes of both texts. Although used to achieve different overall purposes, both texts use nominalisation to help make representations of events more difficult to contest.

5.2 Differences

There are some very significant differences between the two texts as they belong to different genres and are produced in different settings and sociocultural contexts. These differences emerge from the following aspects.

Purpose

The texts have different communicative purposes. The Keating speech has a persuasive function and exhorts people to do what its arguments propose. The Rudd text is an apology. It acknowledges that changes are necessary, but does not specify what these changes are or who should make them. On the other hand, the Keating text is more specific, arguing that all Australians need to take certain practical actions.

Formality

The Rudd text has a much more formal style. Its structure and some of its lexis (e.g., "We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request" and "this Parliament resolves") reflects the highly formal nature of its purpose and setting. The Keating speech is less formal and more interactive, making use of involvement strategies, rhetorical questions and ellipsis.

Personal tone

Due to the differing contexts the Keating speech has a more personal tone than the Rudd speech. Keating makes frequent use of the first person singular ("I think", "I am sure", "that seems to me"). This gives his speech a considerably more personal tone. The Rudd speech uses an exclusive "we" throughout, distancing its hearers and making it seem very impersonal.

These factors are most obviously related to the settings in which the speeches are made. However, the tones adopted also reflect each speaker's communicative purposes, with Keating trying to persuade people to accept his arguments and Rudd offering an apology on behalf of the institution to which he belongs.

Involvement of hearers

Keating directly involves his audience in representations. The inclusive "we" Keating uses involves his audience directly in the processes represented, both negative ("We took the children from their mothers") and positive ("I am confident that we will succeed in this decade"). The Rudd speech however, makes no attempt to involve its hearers directly in its representations.

Attribution of responsibility

Related to the above point, the Keating text attributes responsibility directly to human agents for the mistreatment of Indigenous Australians, whereas the Rudd text does not. Instead, the Rudd speech uses lexico-grammatical strategies such as nominalisations, agentless passives and inanimate agents to avoid attributing agency to any social actor. This could be related to the sociocultural environment in which the text is produced and the political purposes of its speaker – with fears related to the legal ramifications of apologising and the potential political fallout of being seen to "blame" all Australians for past events – a factor stemming from reaction to the "we discourse" of the Keating speech, a discursive strategy which in the intervening years had come to be viewed as politically suicidal.

6. Conclusion

This paper has shown how similarities and differences in the style and communicative functionality of two speeches resulted from the dynamic relation between text and context. Analysis of the experiential, interpersonal and textual meaning choices of the texts has revealed how these similarities and differences were realised. The similarities in the two texts emerged from their sharing similar situational contexts, namely having a similar Mode, Field and Tenor. Likewise, differences in the general style and communicative function of the two texts emerged from differences in other contextual factors such as purpose, setting and sociocultural context. This analysis has demonstrated the systematic and two-way relationship between text and context and that exploring these dynamic relations in a systemic functional framework can lead to a better understanding of texts and their purposes.

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