

# DOES GENRE INFLUENCE THE CHOICE OF EVALUATIVE LEXICOGRAMMATICAL PATTERNS IN BRITISH ONLINE NEWSPAPER DISCOURSE?

---

*Petra Peldová*

<https://doi.org/10.5817/CZ.MUNI.P210-9767-2020-9>

**Abstract:** This paper aims to analyse the use of evaluative adjectival lexicogrammatical patterns in selected British online newspaper discourse in terms of genre specification. It focuses both on the normalised frequency of the patterns as well as on the evaluative semantic groups of the adjectives embedded in the patterns analysed. The genres chosen for the analysis are politics and crime. 282 articles from six national British online newspapers (the Sun, the Mirror, the Express, the Guardian, the Telegraph, and the Independent) were downloaded to create the corpus. These were then analysed via Sketch Engine for the evaluative adjectival patterns introduced by Bednarek (2009). The adjectives found in the patterns were further examined and manually divided into semantic groups introduced by Collins COBUILD. The data were then compared in an attempt to identify discourse patterns and contrasts, and valuable insights were gained into the lexicogrammatical features studied. The analysis indicated that evaluative adjectival patterns are indeed embedded in newspaper stories and both the tabloids and the broadsheets employ these patterns more or less equally for the same genres. Both types of newspaper mainly embed patterns ‘v-link ADJ’ and ‘v-link ADJ prep’ in both genres. However, when broadsheets report on politics, the use of the ‘it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite’ pattern, can be considered marked.

**Keywords:** evaluative language, newspaper discourse, lexicogrammatical patterns, crime, politics

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This article builds on a doctoral analysis of evaluative language in British online newspapers. It researches British online tabloids and broadsheets in terms of evaluation and adjectival lexicogrammatical patterns in the context of specific genres, namely crime and politics. The whole paper draws on the Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005), adjectival evaluative patterns introduced by Hunston and Sinclair (2000) and Bednarek (2009), and categorisation of adjectives put forward by Collins COBUILD (Grammar Collins). The paper aims to identify what evaluative adjectival patterns (EAPs) are used in the two different newspaper discourse genres, and whether these patterns are in any respects restricted to a given genre. Further, it seeks to examine whether the adjectives and patterns used in both types of newspaper vary or not. This is achieved by detecting the patterns analysed via the Sketch Engine tool, manually selecting the suitable items, and calculating and comparing the type-token ratio (TTR) for each pattern. The research questions concerning this paper are formulated as follows:

- RQ 1 Is there a significant difference in the use of evaluative adjectival patterns in different kinds of newspapers, namely broadsheets and tabloids?
- RQ2 Is there a significant difference in the use of evaluative adjectival patterns in different genres, namely crime and politics?
- RQ3 Is there a significant difference in expressing ‘opinion’ and ‘emotion’ in the newspapers and genres?
- RQ 4 Is there a significant difference in the use of adjectives in the evaluative patterns? Do the broadsheets and the tabloids embed more or less the same semantic groups in the crime genre and the political genre or do they differ?

## 2 THEORY

### 2.1 Evaluative language

Evaluative language employs expressions of stance whereby both personal attitudes and epistemic stance towards a given entity, situation or phenomena are expressed. Martin and White (2005: 42) view appraisal/evaluation as a ‘system of meanings’ which the speaker or writer uses to approve or disapprove of something. Hoey (2001) looks at evaluation from the text point of view, where text patterns (not just words, phrases, and grammatical categories which are analysed by corpus linguists) construe evaluation, e.g. the opportunity-taking pattern, the problem-solution pattern, or the gap in knowledge-filling pattern.

As this paper focuses on newspaper discourse, evaluative language will be discussed in this context. Bednarek (2006) has shown that newspaper discourse comprises different expressions of stance. These different expressions can include overt stance, which can be expected in reviews as the aim of such articles is to give a personal evaluation of an event, a book, a movie, etc., or epistemic stance in news on scientific issues as the scientists report on the validity and generalization of their research.

However, a typical report of a news event should not include overt expressions of stance as it should simply state what happens (Biber & Conrad 2009: 46). Nonetheless, individual newspapers try to pursue a certain ideology and communication pattern and thus they embed expressions of stance into their articles; this fact is supported by “a general shift in cultural norms: speakers and writers are more willing to express their personal attitudes and evaluations” (ibid.: 173). There are various means by which stance can be expressed i.e. lexically (Thompson & Hunston 2000: 14–17), grammatically (Biber & Conrad 2009: 135), or textually (Hoey 2001: 159). This paper focuses on the lexical expressions of evaluation, namely adjectives.

Martin and White (2005) view expressed personal attitude as conveying one’s feelings, and these feelings fall into their semantic mapping category ‘affect’ (e.g. *We are delighted to announce<sup>1</sup>...*); however, the feelings can be transformed into making judgement on human behaviour or phenomena and then Martin and White define the semantic mapping categories ‘judgement’ (e.g. *He has been irresponsible for his action*) and ‘appreciation’ (e.g. *The situation was complicated to assess...*). For the purposes of this study, ‘appreciation’ and ‘judgement’ are joined under the term ‘opinion’ and ‘affect’ is represented by the term ‘emotion’, see Figure 1 and Figure 2 for detailed visualisation of the original subcategorisation by Martin and White (2005) and the adapted version.

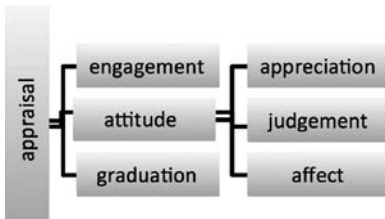


Figure 1: Martin and White’s appraisal system (2005)

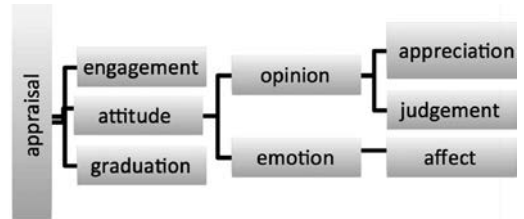


Figure 2: Adapted, Martin and White’s appraisal system used in this paper

## 2.2 Patterns and adjectival lexicogrammatical patterns

According to Hunston and Francis (2000: 49) a pattern is a word with its complementation. However, some elements are excluded as they appear with “almost any word of the same class” such as adverbials of manner, place and time. Thus, in the case of adjectives, *I was angry in the evening<sup>2</sup>* can be read as ‘v-link ADJ adv’ but is not considered a pattern as such, since *in the evening* can occur with almost any adjective in the predicative position. However, *He was responsible for coming late* can be read as ‘v-link ADJ prep’ as the preposition *for* accompanies only some predicative adjectives. Hence, when ‘patterns’ are referred to (in this paper), what is meant is ‘grammar patterns’. Francis (1993: 141) notes that grammar patterns tend to take advantage of lexical items of certain semantic word categories. She discusses three patterns: introductory *it* as object, appositive *that*-clause qualifiers, and restricted adjectives interlinked with these constructions. Since

the publication of Francis' work the Collins COBUILD team has introduced more related data on that issue (Grammar Collins: online). For example, the pattern '*it* v-link ADJ *to-inf*' occurs with adjectives of the 'accurate, easy, selfish, exciting, surprising, important, legal, funny or enough' semantic meaning (Grammar Collins: online). Another pattern such as '*it* v-link ADJ *when/if*' tends to embed adjectives of the 'awful, frustration, difficult, good, exciting, or strange' meaning (Grammar Collins: online). From these categories, it is obvious that such patterns are often evaluation loaded. Based on this finding, Hunston and Sinclair (2000) introduced six basic adjectival lexicogrammatical patterns which are typical for carrying out evaluation. Bednarek (2009) elaborated more detailed versions of their patterns, upon which this paper will rely in order to support its research questions. The adapted patterns used in the analysis are listed in Table 1 below along with their examples. Pattern 5 was added even though it was stated earlier (section 2.2) that this is not a true pattern; nonetheless, the decision to include it was made as Bednarek (2007) also used it in her research.

Pattern	Examples	
1a	<i>it</i> v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause	it is essential to inform the audience.
1b	<i>it</i> v-link ADJ for/of n to-inf	it is important for them to understand.
1c	V <i>it</i> ADJ finite/non-finite clause	I find it interesting to speak publicly.
1e	V <i>it</i> as ADJ	I see it as clever.
2	<i>There</i> v-link something/anything/nothing ADJ about/in/with/ing-clause/n	There is nothing wrong with his question.
3a	v-link ADJ to-inf	He is likely to come late.
3b	v-link ADJ <i>that</i>	They are afraid that they will miss the bus.
4	v-link ADJ prep	The people are sorry about the situation.
5	v-link ADJ	We are excited.
6	Cleft	What is certain is that they want to leave.
7	Graded	He is clever enough to pass the exams.

Table 1: Adjectival evaluative patterns and their examples

### 2.3 Collins COBUILD categories

As already mentioned in the previous sections, lexicographers at Collins COBUILD and the University of Birmingham experts carried out corpus research; from their findings they created a list of lexicogrammatical patterns used in English. These patterns also include information on the semantic grouping of words restricted to the given patterns. These are used in the analyses.

### 3 CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

The corpus POCRI<sup>3</sup>, which was used to conduct this comparative study, was created from a corpus of British daily online tabloid and broadsheet newspapers (the Sun, the Mirror, the Express, the Guardian, the Telegraph, and the Independent) which had been specially designed for a dissertation thesis.<sup>4</sup> POCRI was created by selecting all articles annotated as politics and crime from the dissertation corpus. Thus, two subcorpora were created: the subcorpus POLITICS and the subcorpus CRIME. The subcorpora were further subdivided into the tabloid subcorpus and the broadsheet subcorpus. The quantitative characteristics of POCRI are displayed in Table 2, where the number of tokens of each subcorpus is presented as well as the number of articles.

Corpora	Tabloids		Broadsheets		Total	
	No of tokens	No of articles	No of tokens	No of articles	No of tokens	No of articles
Politics	24,787	33	130,333	125	155,120	158
Crime	61,365	80	39,516	44	100,881	124
Total	86,152	113	169,849	169	256,001	282

Table 2: Quantitative description of POCRI

Table 2 reveals that there is a substantial difference in the number of tokens between the broadsheets and the tabloids in the POLITICS subcorpus, as well as in the CRIME subcorpus. The difference in the size of the subcorpora is not necessarily a drawback as all raw frequencies were normalised to 10, 000 words. Indeed, the numbers of word tokens were not reduced so as to achieve the same size of subcorpora to allow a complete description of the adjectival evaluative patterns in the two given genres.

Once the POCRI corpus was compiled, it was analysed with the help of a Sketch Engine tool for the patterns under scrutiny. A basic CQL query for the analysed patterns was created i.e. [lemma="be"] []? [tag="J\*"]. However, to find more detailed patterns, extra information had to be added, such as [lemma="be"] []? [tag="J\*"] [lemma="to"] or [lemma="be"] []? [tag="J\*"] [word="h.\*"]. Linking verbs such as *become*, *seem* and *feel* were also included in the queries but other linking verbs were left out as the original corpus study showed them to be infrequent (Peldová 2016: 17). Following this, the results were manually checked and it was decided that the instances of the quasi modal verb *to be able to* would be excluded from the analysis. The results were then further analysed in terms of pattern frequencies, the emotion/opinion categories, and the semantic categories of the detected adjectives. Plus, the type token ratio (TTR) was intended to be calculated for each genre and subcorpus. However, it was realized that since the tabloid and the broadsheet subcorpora were of different token size, the comparison of TTR would be misleading. Since it proved impossible to normalise the finding as the instances

of types and tokens were infrequent, a different approach was followed. It was decided to calculate the percentage representation of each semantic group, both in terms of types and tokens, in a given pattern, within a particular subcorpus. Once these three steps had been carried out, the findings were processed and compared, and possible conclusions were drawn.

## 4 ANALYSES

### 4.1 General findings

The Sketch Engine detection of the patterns yielded 841 instances of the adjectival evaluative patterns: 273 in the CRIME subcorpus and 568 in the POLITICS subcorpus. For a clearer comparison, Table 3 presents the quantitative results in normalised frequency per 10, 000 words.

Corpora	Tabloids	Broadsheets	Total
Politics	42	36	37
Crime	29	27	28

Table 3: Quantitative representation of the yielded instances of patterns analysed

Table 3 displays a relative balance in the use of EAPs in both the tabloids and the broadsheets. Log likelihood (LL) calculations were run and showed  $p > 0.05$ , revealing that the use of EAPs is almost equal in both tabloids and broadsheets. When it comes to the use of EAPs in different genres, the tabloids show a higher tendency to embed EAPs in politics and crime genres than the broadsheets. All in all, EAPs in particular are more frequently employed in politics than in crime. This may be because newspapers aim to popularise political news (Umbricht and Esser 2016) and show politicians as “media stars who act beyond the borders of politics” (Hallin and Manchini 2004: 278). The log likelihood calculations prove ( $p < 0.0001$ ) that there is a significant difference in the use of EAPs in the crime and politics genres. EAPs are more frequently employed in the politics genre than that of crime.

### 4.2 Emotion vs opinion

The total findings were further analysed to obtain more detailed information concerning evaluation in terms of ‘opinion’ and ‘emotion’ (described in section 2.1). Table 4 below represents the distribution of the two semantic mappings across the analysed corpus. The statistical calculations of LL indicate that there is significantly more opinion expressed in the broadsheets than in the tabloids, and there is a statistically important difference in the distribution of emotion, where the tabloids predominantly employ this compared to the broadsheets.

Corpora		Tabloids	Broadsheets	Total
Politics	emotion	11	4	5
	opinion	31	32	32
Crime	emotion	10	2	7
	opinion	19	25	21

**Table 4: Emotion and opinion in POCRI**

A closer look at Table 4 further reveals that the distribution of opinion in the broadsheets and the tabloids in the POLITICS subcorpus is almost equal. The almost identical number of instances of opinion might be due to the fact that British tabloids have a tendency to speak “for the common citizen and common sense” (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 211) and they aim to inform readers on political issues in a more expressive way. Similarly, contemporary British broadsheets “employ an interpretative style of writing” (ibid.). The reasons for these findings may well be because there is a high degree of politicization of British society as whole (ibid.: 215), and a cultural shift from “institutional narratives to personal ones” has made its impact on news on politics (Wardle 2007: 528). The corpus examples of opinion and emotion are listed below.

- (1) *...disruption next week was inevitable. (B\_03\_May)*
- (2) *It is wrong to make sweeping generalisations about any race, ... (B\_05\_Jan)*
- (3) *...It is right to suspend sanctions... (T\_13\_April)*
- (4) *It's important to have a safety net for people... (T\_26\_Sept\_11)*
- (5) *...Redknapp was unhappy with that figure... (B\_8\_Feb)*
- (6) *I am grateful to the Ecuadorian ambassador and the government... (B\_20\_Jun)*
- (7) *...her family were desperate and urged anyone with information to... (T\_3\_Oct\_12)*
- (8) *Both sets of grandparents were yesterday too grief-stricken to comment (T\_13\_Dec)*

Examples 7 and 8 support Wardle’s finding that newspapers nowadays report on ‘the emotive drama surrounding the grieving family’ (2006: 523). The distribution of opinion within the two subcorpora is statistically significant, in favour of the POLITICS subcorpus, while the distribution of emotion is almost equal within the subcorpora.

### 4.3 Adjectival evaluative patterns

Section 2.2 introduces the adjectival evaluative patterns that were searched for and analysed in the POCRI corpus. Figure 3 presents an overview of the patterns’ occurrences in the corpus in normalised frequencies. It shows that ‘v-link ADJ’ is the most frequently embedded pattern in both CRIME and POLITICS subcorpora, both in the tabloids and broadsheets. The second most frequent pattern is ‘v-link ADJ to-inf’ in the POLITICS subcorpus, and ‘v-link ADJ prep’ in the CRIME subcorpus. A notable finding is the occurrence of ‘it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause’, which seems to play an important role in the POLITICS subcorpus, though it is rarely used in the CRIME subcorpus. The figure further indicates that the POLITICS subcorpus employs more EAPs than the CRIME subcorpus (cf. chapter 3.1). The total numbers reveal that the POLITICS

subcorpus relies on EAPs more than the CRIME subcorpus. While it may not be surprising that there is a higher occurrence of EAP patterns in the tabloids than in the broadsheets, what is of interest is the high number of EAPs in POLITICS broadsheets. The individual patterns are discussed in detail below.

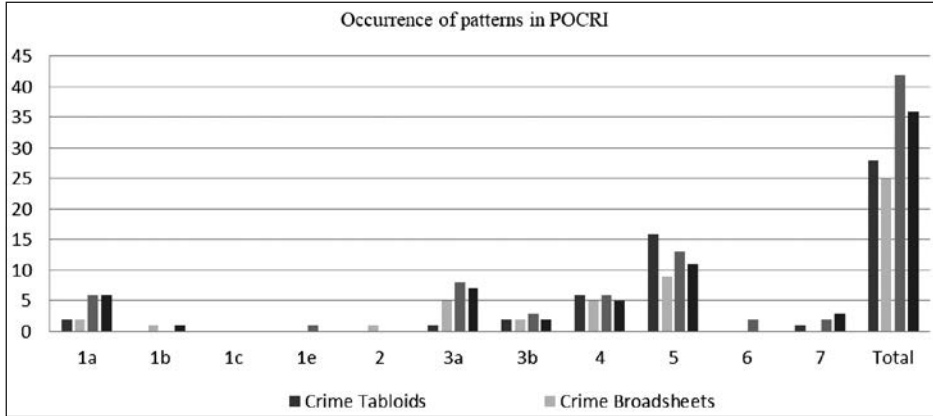


Figure 3: The occurrence of the patterns in the POCRI corpus (normalised frequency per 10,000 words)

### 4.3.1 Pattern 5: v-link ADJ

The whole POCRI corpus indicates that the ‘v-link ADJ’ pattern is the most frequent one with a slight overuse compared to other subcorpora in the tabloid CRIME subcorpus. Examples of the v-link ADJ pattern can be seen below.

- (9) *In the early days I would be angry, ... (T\_3\_Jan)*
- (10) *They were very friendly... (T\_7\_sep\_12)*
- (11) *The last two weeks have been particularly difficult... (B\_8\_Feb)*
- (12) *The detail is important (B\_27\_Oct\_11)*

The most frequent adjectival categories used in this pattern can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Figure 2 suggests that when the tabloids write about crime using this pattern, there is a higher chance of finding an adjective belonging to the semantic group ‘intelligent’ than in the broadsheets. The probability is almost twofold. The CRIME subcorpus also demonstrates that the lexical variety of adjectival types is much wider (24 types) than in the broadsheets (15 types). The broadsheets make use of only five types of adjectives which cannot be found in the tabloids. By contrast the tabloids embed fifteen types of adjectives which cannot be found in the broadsheets.



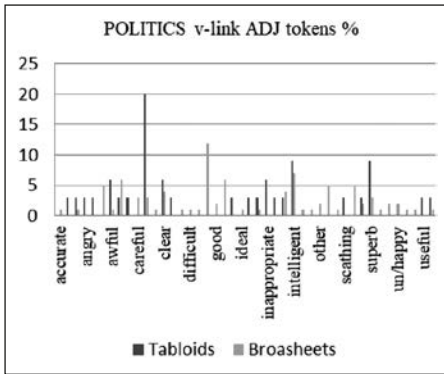


Figure 4: Pattern v-link ADJ POLITICS subcorpus, semantic groups

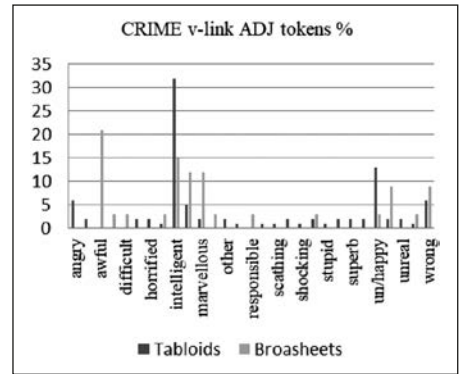


Figure 5: Pattern v-link ADJ CRIME subcorpus, semantic groups

The POLITICS subcorpus makes use of 44 types of adjectives. The tabloids embed 22 of them and the broadsheets 33. When comparing the CRIME subcorpus, the findings are the very opposite: the broadsheets use a much wider variety of adjective types than the tabloids do. There are 21 semantic groups of adjectives which do not appear in the tabloids, and only twelve which do not appear in the broadsheets. Within a particular pattern and the adjectives embedded in it, the tabloids are most likely to use adjectives of the certain group, almost five times more frequently than the broadsheets. The tabloids point at things being ‘superb’ while the broadsheets do not. The group ‘intelligent’ is used slightly more frequently in the tabloids than the broadsheets. Compared to the tabloids, the broadsheets rely on expressing fairness via this pattern.

#### 4.3.2 Pattern 4: v-link ADJ prep

The second most frequently used pattern by all the subcorpora in POCRI is ‘v-link ADJ prep’. All the subcorpora employ this pattern more or less equally. Within the COBUILD GRAMMAR PATTERNS (Grammar Collins: online), the transcription ‘v-link ADJ prep’, which is used for the purposes of this paper, is too broad/general. COBUILD GRAMMAR PATTERNS further divides this pattern into the following: ADJ *about*, ADJ *against*, ADJ *at*, ADJ *between*, ADJ *by*, ADJ *for*, ADJ *from*, ADJ *in*, ADJ *of*, ADJ *on*, ADJ *over*, ADJ *to*, ADJ *towards*, and ADJ *with* patterns. Each pattern then embeds different groups of adjectives, however since the detected results would have been too scattered, all these patterns are listed under the one heading **v-link ADJ prep**.

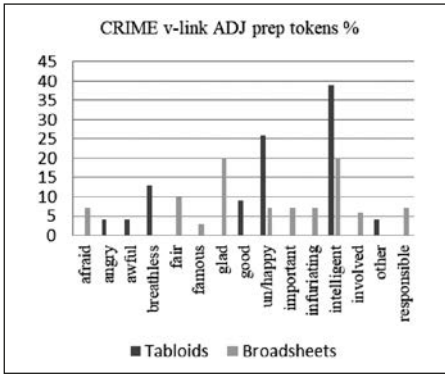


Figure 6: Pattern v-link ADJ prep CRIME subcorpus, semantic groups

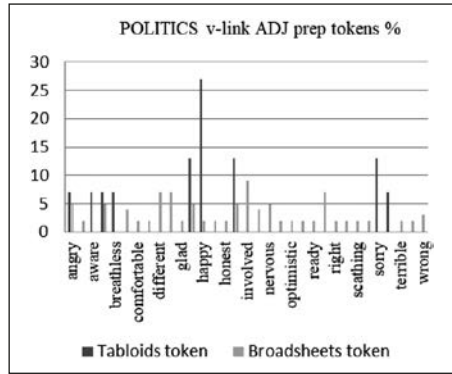


Figure 7: Pattern v-link ADJ prep POLITICS subcorpus, semantic groups

Figure 6 indicates that the pattern ‘v-link ADJ prep’ is much more modest in the utilisation of various semantic groups than the pattern ‘v-link ADJ’. The CRIME subcorpus employs only fourteen semantic groups: ten in the broadsheets and only seven in the tabloids. Similarly, in the pattern ‘v-link ADJ’, the tabloids are twice as likely to use adjectives from the group ‘intelligent’ (the most frequently represented semantic group in this pattern) than the broadsheets, while the broadsheets rely on the ‘glad and fair’ group. The tabloids also outweigh the broadsheets in expressing un/happiness (26% vs 7%). Figure 7 shows that the POLITICS subcorpus is lexically denser than the CRIME subcorpus, which reflects the situation in the pattern ‘v-link ADJ’. Thirty-three types of adjectives are used with the broadsheets significantly dominating: twenty-nine groups compared to nine in the tabloids. The tabloids only employ two groups absent in the broadsheets (sorry, sympathetic) whereas the broadsheets use twenty-four groups not found in the tabloids. When making use of the same adjectival groups, tabloids dominate in expressing happiness (27%: 2%), intelligence (13%: 5%), and goodness (13%: 5%). All in all, it seems that broadsheets express political issues in more diverse ways via this pattern than the tabloids.

**4.3.3 Pattern 3: v-link ADJ to-inf**

The third important pattern is ‘v-link to-inf’. The information displayed in Table 5 shows that this pattern is rarely used in the CRIME tabloid subcorpus; however, it occurs in the remaining subcorpora. The semantic groups used in this corpus reveal that this pattern is frequently associated with the expression of ‘(un)certainly’ and the newspapers further use it to express epistemic modality (Peldová 2017: 128) via the semantic group ‘un/likely’. The whole POLITICS subcorpus uses 38 semantic groups of adjectives. The tabloids show a wider linguistic diversity than the broadsheets (31 groups: 18 groups). The most noticeable difference can be seen in the expression of likelihood. When the broadsheets use this pattern, they are ten times more likely to use the ‘un/likely’ group than the tabloids. The tabloids dominate in asserting being sorry and being right. The group ‘intelligent’ again plays an important role in expressing politics in the tabloids.

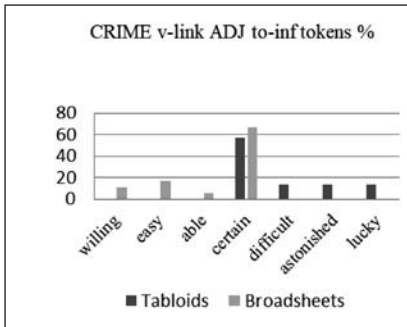


Figure 8: Pattern v-link ADJ to-inf CRIME subcorpus, semantic groups

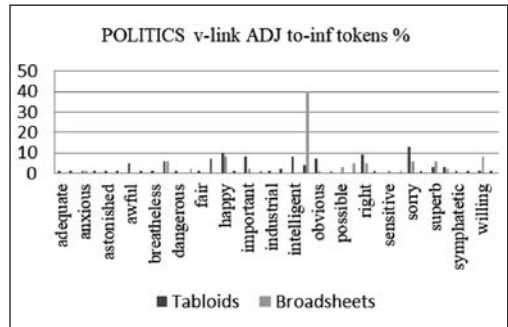


Figure 9: Pattern v-link ADJ to-inf POLITICS subcorpus, semantic groups

#### 4.3.4 Pattern 1a: *it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clauses*

The final pattern is ‘*it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clauses*’, the use of which can be regarded as marked in the POLITICS subcorpus unlike in the CRIME subcorpus. The use of this pattern in the CRIME subcorpus is thus dissimilar to the political one, cf. Figure 9 for more details. Newspapers employ this pattern only to express opinion. The use of complementation clauses is remarkably different; the corpus reveals that the CRIME subcorpus relies on *that* dependent clauses, while the POLITICS subcorpus exploits more means of dependent clauses such as *to-inf*, *wh*-clause, *if*-clause.

COBUILD grammar divides this pattern into six subcategories: *it v-link ADJ that*, *it v-link ADJ to-inf*, *it v-link ADJ wh*, *it v-link ADJ what/how*, *it v-link ADJ when/if*, *it v-link ADJ -ing*. Only the first category will be further discussed in terms of all the analysed subcorpora. The second pattern – ‘*it v-link ADJ to-inf*’ provides information only on the broadsheet and the tabloid POLITICS subcorpora; the CRIME subcorpus cannot be thoroughly analysed as the number of tokens and types is very low.

##### 4.3.4.1 *it v-link ADJ that*

According to COBUILD Grammar Patterns, this pattern includes adjectival semantic groups: ‘likely’, ‘obvious’, ‘marvellous’, ‘awful’, ‘important and necessary’, ‘surprising and interesting’, ‘relevant’, and ‘others’. The CRIME subcorpus tends to express obviousness via this pattern both in the tabloids and the broadsheet subcorpora (cf. Figures 10 and 11). However, ‘obviousness’ is more typical of the tabloids than the broadsheets. The choice of adjectives in the pattern is noticeably more varied in the broadsheets than in the tabloids.

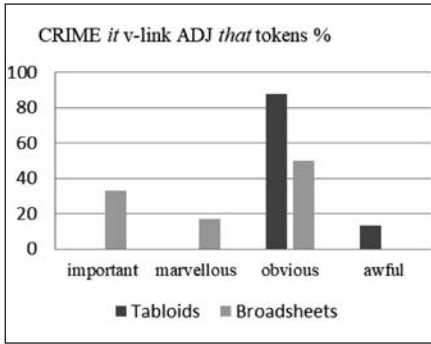


Figure 10: Pattern *it v-link ADJ that*, CRIME subcorpus, semantic groups

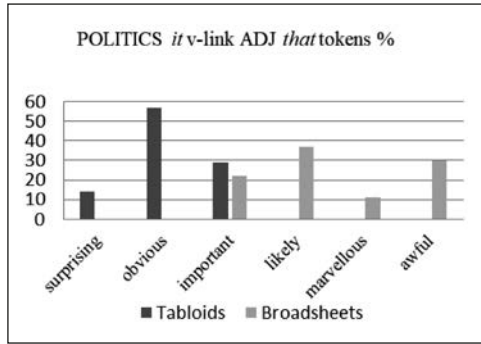


Figure 11: Pattern *it v-link ADJ that*, POLITICS subcorpus, semantic groups

The POLITICS subcorpus shows that the choice of semantic groups is wider than in the CRIME subcorpus. However, the tabloids still (in this genre and pattern) tend to express ‘obviousness’, while the broadsheets tend to express ‘likelihood’ via the adjectival group ‘likely’. Notably, the tabloids do not rely on this semantic group in this pattern. The common semantic group ‘important’ is commonly used by both the tabloids and broadsheets. The findings indicate that the tabloids tend to inform readers about important issues which are obvious, while the broadsheets hedge more when it comes to stating that something is important. The tabloids seem to be more direct in presenting their news than the broadsheets. Further, both the tabloids and the broadsheets use this pattern to express something positive (via the groups ‘surprising’ (tabloids), ‘marvellous’ (broadsheets)). However, the broadsheets also employ this pattern to express something awful. Overall, the broadsheets show a wider usage of lexical variety.

**4.3.4.2 *it v-link ADJ to-inf***

This pattern comprises the following semantic groups: ‘accurate and illogical’, ‘easy and difficult’, ‘selfish’ and ‘dangerous’, ‘exciting and safe’, ‘surprising and interesting’, ‘important’, ‘legal’, ‘funny’, and ‘enough’. As mentioned above, only the POLITICS subcorpus is discussed due to insufficient information from the CRIME subcorpus.

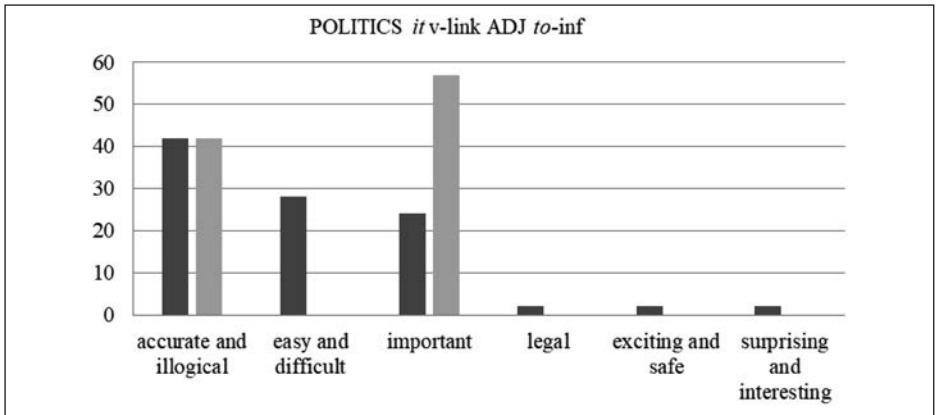


Figure 12: Pattern *it v-link ADJ to-inf* POLITICS subcorpus, semantic groups

Figure 12 strongly suggests that when the tabloids employ this pattern they make use of a wider variety of adjectives than the broadsheets (the tabloids employ adjectives from six semantic groups, while the broadsheets only rely on two groups). The broadsheets use this pattern to express the importance of the information transmitted, mainly supported by the adjectives from the ‘important’, and ‘accurate’ and ‘illogical’ groups, such as *right*, *wrong*, or *obvious*. The tabloids, compared to the broadsheets, further rely on the adjectives from the ‘easy’ and ‘difficult’ group, as well as the ‘legal’, ‘exciting’ and ‘safe’, ‘surprising’ and ‘interesting’ groups.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the research was to investigate the influence of genre on the occurrence of evaluative adjectival patterns in British online newspaper discourse, namely on a sample corpus of crime and political news. It further analysed the semantic variability of the adjectives embedded in the patterns in terms of frequency in the broadsheets and the tabloids. The findings, which are presented in this paper, show that there is no significant difference in the use of evaluative adjectival patterns between the tabloids and the broadsheets (RQ1). However, there is a significant divergence in the use of evaluative adjectival patterns in different genres. The political genre is more likely to embed EAPs than the crime genre (RQ2). As regards expressing opinion, the broadsheets show a higher tendency to state a particular viewpoint than the tabloids do. The tabloids, on the other hand, make considerable use of EAPs to convey emotion. As far as the genres are concerned, the political genre compared to the crime genre prevails in expressing opinion, and emotion is distributed almost equally within the two genres (RQ3). To answer RQ4, Figures 13–16 were created.

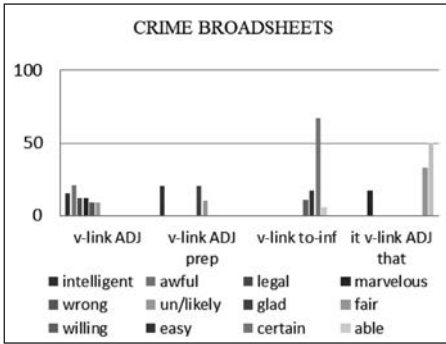


Figure 13: Adjective semantic groups embedded in the CRIME broadsheet subcorpus

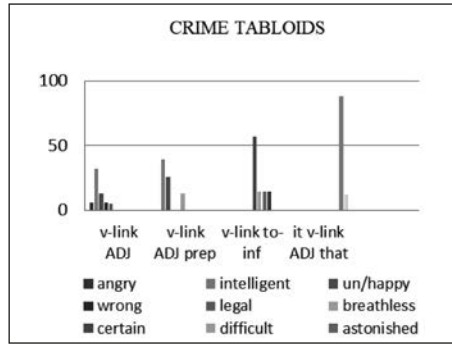


Figure 14: Adjective semantic groups embedded in the CRIME tabloids subcorpus

In the tabloids, the CRIME subcorpus indicates (Figures 13 and 14) that the adjectives from the semantic groups ‘certain’ and ‘obvious’ play a key role in construing crime reports. The broadsheets follow a similar pattern. It could thus be concluded that both the tabloids and the broadsheets express the main ideas of criminal reports, especially via the expressions: *it is clear that*, *I/he was sure that*, and *...is un/likely*. Research into the nature of the corpus reveals, however, that the tabloids differ in embedding the adjectives of the semantic groups ‘intelligent’, which indicates a quality of a person such as beauty, intelligence, courage and generosity (Grammar Collins: online) and ‘un/happy’, while the broadsheets use adjectives from the semantic group ‘important’.

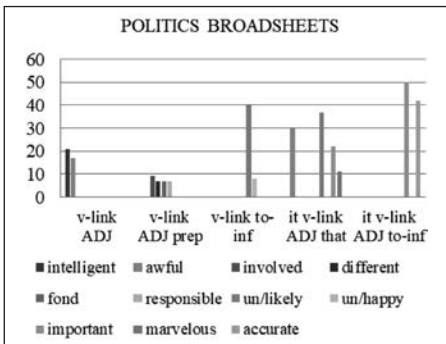


Figure 15: Adjective semantic groups embedded in the POLITICS broadsheet subcorpus

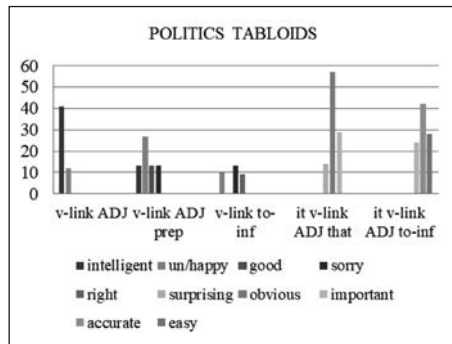


Figure 16: Adjective semantic groups embedded in the POLITICS tabloid subcorpus

The POLITICS subcorpus shows that the broadsheets, in this case, embed the semantic groups ‘important’, ‘un/likely’, and ‘awful’. The tabloids embed adjectives of the semantic groups ‘obvious’, ‘important’, ‘un/happy’, and ‘intelligent’. Therefore,

we can see that both the tabloids and the broadsheets, apart from leaning on politically correct facts via ‘un/likely’, ‘important’, ‘obvious’ and ‘accurate’, also embed adjectives that humanise the political genre (via the semantic groups ‘awful’ and ‘un/happy’). However, is there a significant difference in the use of adjectives within the newspapers and the genres? This question is difficult to answer as the data were limited and the corpora were not of the same size. In order to approach a satisfactory answer as to whether genre does indeed influence the choice of evaluative lexicogrammatical patterns in the discourse of online tabloids and broadsheets it would be necessary to conduct a similar study on a far larger set of data.

## Notes

1. The examples of affect, judgement and appreciation are mine.
2. Examples are mine.
3. POCRI is an acronym of Politics and Crime.
4. The dissertation thesis corpus comprises 261,197 word tokens from the tabloid newspapers and 273,014 word tokens from the broadsheet newspapers. The “front-page” online articles were downloaded between September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 (Peldová 2017)

## References

- Bednarek, M. (2009) ‘Language patterns and ATTITUDE.’ *Functions of Language* 16(2), 165–192. <https://doi.org/10.1075/fof.16.2.01bed>
- Bednarek, M. (2007) ‘Polyphony in Appraisal: typological and topological perspectives.’ *Linguistics and Human Science* 3.2.107–136. <https://doi.org/10.1558/lhs.v3i2.107>
- Bednarek, M. (2006) *Evaluation in Media Discourse: Analysis of a Newspaper Corpus*. London: Continuum.
- Biber, D. and Conrad, S. (2009) *Register, Genre and Style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511814358>
- Francis, G. (1993) ‘A corpus-driven approach to grammar: principles, methods and examples.’ In Baker, M. et al. (eds) *Text and Technology: in honour of John Sinclair*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 137–156. <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.64.10fra>
- Grammar Collins. (2019). *Cobuild Grammar Pattern | Collins Education*. [online] Available at: <<https://grammar.collinsdictionary.com/grammar-pattern>> [Accessed 3 July 2019].
- Hallin, D.C. and Manchini, P. (2004) *Comparing Media Systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790867>
- Hoey, M. (2001) *Textual Interaction. An introduction to written discourse analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Hunston, S. and Francis, G. (2000) *Pattern Grammar. A Corpus-Driven Approach to the lexical Grammar of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.4>
- Hunston, S. and Sinclair, J. (2000) ‘A local grammar of evaluation.’ In: Hunston, S. and Thompson, G. (eds) *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 74–101.

- Martin, J. R. and White, P. R. (2005) *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. New York: Palgrave.
- Peldová, P. (2017) *Evaluation and attitude in British online newspaper discourse*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis) Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.
- Peldová, P. (2016) 'Fundamental Evaluative Adjective Patterns in British Broadsheet and Tabloid Newspaper Discourse.' *ACC Journal, Liberec*, Technická univerzita, 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.15240/tul/004/2016-3-002>
- Thompson, G. and Hunston, S. (2000) 'Evaluation: An Introduction.' In Hunston, S. and Thompson, G. (eds) *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–26.
- Umbricht, A. and Esser, F. (2016) 'The Push to Popularize Politics', *Journalism Studies* 17(1), 100–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.963369>
- Wardle, C. (2006) 'IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU', *Journalism Studies* 7(4), 515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700600757951>

**Petra Peldová** is Assistant Professor of English Linguistics at the Technical University of Liberec, the Czech Republic. She specialises in corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics, focusing on newspaper discourse and learner corpora.

**Address:** Petra Peldová, English Department, Faculty of Science, Humanities and Education. Studentská 1402/2, Liberec 1, 46117, Czech Republic. [e-mail: [petra.peldova@tul.cz](mailto:petra.peldova@tul.cz)]