# *The Language of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Gerry Adams vs. Ian Paisley*

by Kim Grego

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this article[1] is the language of conflict in Northern Ireland and, in particular, a comparison between the discourses of two major local politicians: Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley. These names may not be known at world level, as they are linked to a very specific local situation, but anybody with an interest in Northern Ireland's past, present or future is certain to be familiar with them. Gerry Adams is the President of the extremist Republican party Sinn Féin. Over the years, his name has been widely associated to the Republican terrorist organisation IRA (Moloney 2002); the victims of Republican paramilitary violence between 1969 and 2001 were 2058 (Sutton 2001). Rev. Dr. Ian Paisley founded the extremist Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in 1971 and led it until his retirement in 2008. Over the years, his name has been associated to 18 different Loyalist paramilitary groups;[2] the victims of Loyalist paramilitary violence between 1969 and 2001 were 1018 (*ibid*.). In November 2003, the DUP and Sinn Féin came in first and second, respectively, in the Northern Ireland Assembly election, thus starting a long period of difficult talks in order to form a joint government between two traditionally enemy — not just opposed — parties. In May 2007, when a second general election confirmed the 2003 results, a government was eventually formed with Ian Paisley as First Minister and Martin McGuinness, then Gerry Adams' second in command as Sinn Féin's vice-president, as Deputy First Minister.

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[1] This paper reports selected aspects of a wider study that was first presented as a doctoral thesis: Grego, K. (2005), *The Language of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Gerry Adams vs. Ian Paisley*, Doctoral Dissertation in 'English for Special Purposes', Department of Statistics, Language Section, University of Naples. A monographic volume reproducing and expanding the original thesis is forthcoming.

[2] The Belfast-based Italian journalist Silvio Cerulli (2003) has counted up to 18 paramilitary organisations with which Ian Paisley has apparently been involved.

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AIMS OF THE STUDY

This work falls within a recognized field of research that investigates conflict and the multiple and multidisciplinary issues that lie behind it (Ryan 2003), in which both academic and non-academic, profit and non-profit research institutions have been active for several decades now.[3]

The contribution offered by linguistics to the field goes by the label of "language(s) of the conflict" (Gotti, Heller and Dossena 2002). It is well known that the conflict in Northern Ireland went on for almost forty years, reaching its peak between 1969 and 1993 during the so-called 'Troubles', when not even temporary solutions could be found, and armed fight raged on almost uninterruptedly. In 1993, however, something began to change: secret talks between the opposed factions began, paving the way to a peace process that eventually led to London restoring devolution to the Six Counties in 2007. After almost 20 years from then, the armed fight has almost exclusively become a political one, thus moving from weapons to words.

This paper will consider how the conflict was transferred into the linguistic dimension. The issue will be approached through a critical analysis based on Fairclough (2003) of the political discourse of Northern Ireland. In particular, it will pose and discuss the following questions: a) how has the language of conflict in Northern Ireland evolved during the first decade since the beginning of the peace process; and b) how have language, politics and society influenced each other in the course of action? It is hoped that the outcome of this analysis will, as well as support the research on political discourse in Northern Ireland, also offer a potential contribution, although exclusively linguistic in nature, to interpreting in which ways the move to a linguistic level has influenced the efforts towards the solution of the conflict.


THE ADAMS-PAISLEY CORPUS

The material for the analysis was challenging to select, as it had to meet several conditions: it had to include political texts, obviously about and originating from Northern Ireland, it had to be homogeneous and comparable across political positions and over time, and it had to cover the span of the peace process. The choice eventually fell on 9 speeches given by Gerry Adams and 9 by Ian Paisley to the

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[3] Examples of which are: the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation (SCICN), Stanford University (academic); the Research Centre on Languages for Specific Purposes (Centro di Ricerca sui Linguaggi Specialistici or CERLIS, University of Bergamo (academic); the Canadian organisation Mediation Services: A Community Resource for Conflict Resolution (non-profit); the United Nations' Department of Peacekeeping Operations (non-profit); the Texas-based company Chorda Conflict Management Services (for-profit).

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annual conferences of their respective parties from 1993 to 2004.[4] Gerry Adams, President of the Sinn Féin (SF) party and Ian Paisley, then Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), two major local politicians at the furthest ends of the left-right continuum and with an outstanding past and present status in Northern Ireland politics, were thought to be excellent representatives of the language of the local conflict. The speeches they gave annually between 1993 and 2004 are deemed to meet all the required conditions: they are political texts by two leading Northern Ireland politicians; they are homogeneous and comparable, since they were produced for and on the same type of communicative event over different years; and they cover the whole decade since the beginning of the peace process, during which the political situation of Northern Ireland underwent the most important changes of the past forty years. The actual retrieval of the transcribed speeches proved very easy in some cases and very hard in others. While some were immediately found online, most others had to be fetched in Belfast, specifically — at the suggestion of several experts consulted[5] — at Belfast's Linen Hall Library, which is reputedly the world's largest source of texts about the conflict in Northern Ireland. Table 1 lists all the speeches in each sub-corpus, with partial and total word counts. Although the annual nature of the speeches makes it a quantitatively small corpus, the density of each speech, condensing the balance of the previous year and laying out the action plan for the following one, is believed to make it qualitatively relevant.

| Gerry Adams' *Presidential addresses to the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis* | | Ian Paisley's *Leader's speeches to the DUP annual conferences* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| File size | 442,796 | File size | 86,398 |
| Tokens in text | 75,151 | Tokens in text | 32,954 |
| Tokens used for world list | 74,716 | Tokens used for world list | 32,741 |
| Types | 7,199 | Types | 4,424 |
| Type/Token Ratio | 10 | Type/Token Ratio | 14 |
| 1984 | 6448 | 1984 | 3,664 |
| 1993 | 9057 | 1993 | 4,620 |
| 1994 | 14,251 | 1994 | 5,058 |
| 1995 | 3,007 | 1995 | 3,552 |
| 1996 | 8,297 | *1996 | 1,051 |
| 1997 | 4,820 | 1997 | 3,559 |
| 1998 | 2,296 | *1998 | 1,110 |
| 1999 | 7,318 | *1999 | 1,016 |
| 2000 | 6,191 | 2000 | 4,687 |
| 2001 | 7,994 | 2001 | 2,677 |
| 2004 | 5,522 | 2004 | 1,960 |
| Total | 75,151 | Total | 32,954 |

* Extracts

Table 1. The Adams-Paisley Speech Corpus

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[4] Also included in the corpora were one speech by each politician from 1984, added as a sort of 'control elements', as they are exactly from a decade before the beginning of the peace process, when no one could foresee even the beginning of negotiations. The speeches from 2002 and 2003 are missing because in 2002 the SF conference did not take place, and neither did the DUP conference in 2003, so the existing ones could not be compared.

[5] Among whom there are Prof. Ivar McGrath of Dublin's University College, Sinn Féin Belfast County Councillor Tom Hartley, and the Rev. Dr. Paisley.

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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE ADAMS-PAISLEY CORPUS

To see how the language of conflict in Northern Ireland has evolved over the years, this corpus may and should be looked at from several perspectives. Two of these perspectives are syntax and text analysis. Table 2 sums up the syntactical and textual structures of each sub corpus. For reasons of brevity, extracts and data from only 3 years have been included here: the beginning of the peace process (1993), halfway through it (1997), and the first substantial peace talks since its start (2004). Samples of these 6 speeches (3 by each politician) are included at the end of this paper in Appendixes 1 and 2.

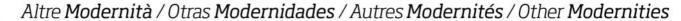| Adams Corpus (AC) | | Paisley Corpus (PC) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1993: | short periods<br>+ medium paragraphs | 1993: | long periods<br>+ long paragraphs |
| 1997: | short periods<br>+ short paragraphs | 1997: | medium periods<br>+ medium par.s with short 1 period par. |
| 2004: | very short periods<br>+ no paragraphs | 2004: | short periods<br>+ verse |

Table 2. Evolution of argumentation: syntactical / textual organization

It is clear, even from these very few and short extracts, that Adams' and Paisley's personal styles differ enormously, and while Adams tends to use short, plain sentences, Paisley, as a consumed religious preacher, prefers very long and very rhetorical periods. This said, it should be pointed out that Adams started out with short periods and medium-length paragraphs, to get to very short periods and no paragraphs at all. Paisley, on the other hand, started out with long periods and paragraphs, and only lately changed to short periods and even verse.

Another aspect that has been taken into consideration to check the evolution of language are the rhetorical structures employed. The topic is wide and complex, and what follows in Table 3 below is only a small selection, restricted to rhetorical questions, reported speech and enumeration.

| Adams Corpus (AC) | | Paisley Corpus (PC) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1993 | · rhetorical questions: 4<br>· reported speech: 4<br>· enumerations: 3 | 1993 | · rhetorical questions: 14<br>· reported speech: 27<br>· enumerations: 0 |
| 1997 | · rhetorical questions: 6<br>· reported speech: 5<br>· enumerations: 0 | 1997 | · rhetorical questions: 14<br>· reported speech: 13<br>· enumerations: 0 |
| 2004 | · rhetorical questions: 12<br>· reported speech: 4<br>· enumerations: 0 | 2004 | · rhetorical questions: 3<br>· reported speech: 6<br>· enumerations: 0 |

Table 3. Evolution of argumentation: rhetorical organization

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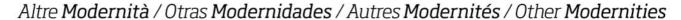Dipartimento di Scienze del Linguaggio e Letterature Straniere Comparate - Sezione di Studi Culturali

The occurrences of these rhetorical means are as reported. Generally speaking, it must be noted that the use of rhetoric is much more frequent in Paisley than in Adams.[6] To provide just a tentative interpretation of the partial data reproduced here, it should be considered that 1993 was the beginning of the secret talks: on both sides there was uncertainty, and the need and difficulty to convince the respective audiences; therefore, an abundance of rhetoric is justified by the moment's criticality. 1997 was the year before the Good Friday Agreement, both sides saw it coming, both were making their greatest efforts to reach it (SF) or to avoid it (DUP), and both were worried about how their audiences would react to it. In other words, this was as crucial a moment as 1993, and even the usually plain-speaking Gerry Adams felt the need to ask more rhetorical questions than customary, even more than in 1993. On the other hand, 2004 was the year of political victory for both parties; therefore, it was a moment of self-celebration and cautious disclosure on both sides: both speakers started to change their usual trends, with Adams strikingly asking four times the number (12) of rhetorical questions asked by Paisley that year (3), who instead resorted to celebratory verse.

A further perspective shedding light on the evolution and influences of the language of conflict is offered by lexico-semantic analysis. Frequency lists were determined using *WordSmith Tools 4.0*. As is well known, a keyword in Corpus Linguistics may be defined as a word that occurs in a text or corpus more often than it would be expected when the text or corpus is compared against another, 'standard' text or corpus. Table 4 reports the first 10 keywords retrieved comparing each sub corpus against the *Guardian 1990-1994* Corpus as an instance of standard written English.

| Keywords in Adams Corpus (AC) | | | Keywords in Paisley Corpus (PC) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Keyword | Keyness | | Keyword | Keyness |
| 1. | SINN | 3390,4 | 1. | UNIONIST | 1640,2 |
| 2. | FÉIN | 3169,4 | 2. | IRELAND | 1366,1 |
| 3. | IRISH | 2402,2 | 3. | IRA | 1133,3 |
| 4. | OUR | 2305,9 | 4. | ULSTER | 1084,7 |
| 5. | PEACE | 1989,9 | 5. | NORTHERN | 848,1 |
| 6. | BRITISH | 1632,3 | 6. | FEIN | 749,7 |
| 7. | IRELAND | 1524,0 | 7. | TRIMBLE | 715,8 |
| 8. | WE | 1358,6 | 8. | SINN | 714,0 |
| 9. | REPUBLICANS | 1173,7 | 9. | UNIONISTS | 690,2 |
| 10. | AGUS | 1039,0 | 10. | DUBLIN | 452,6 |

Table 4. Keywords vs. the *Guardian 1990-1994* Corpus

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[6] Other aspects that were analysed, but have not been reported here, are hypotaxis / parataxis, similes, metaphors, prefixes, infinitives, and more.

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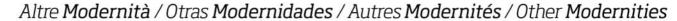
Though limited in number, the keywords in Table 4 appear especially relevant for the discourse of conflict. It would just suffice to point out the frequent use by Paisley, but not by Adams, of ULSTER, which is a word of Protestant usage and almost a stereotypical way of distinguishing between Republican-Catholic and Loyalist-Protestant speakers.[7] As clearly evident is also the presence of Irish Gaelic words in Adams' speeches (FÉIN, SINN, AGUS[8]) which, of course, never feature in Paisley's. Of these Gaelic words, SINN and FÉIN collocate together in the name of Adams' party, apparently frequently quoted by its own President. Paisley, on the other hand, does not frequently mention his own party, although he does mention Sinn Féin often. OUR and WE are frequently used by Adams who, as the leader of a traditionally left wing party, always insists on social aspects and participation by party members, but not by Paisley, who by profession tends to be the 'spiritual' kind of leader, the one who actually leads while his audience follow. The adjective IRISH is one and a half times more frequent than BRITISH in Adams, as could be expected of any Northern Ireland politician, but it is not in Paisley, who does not frequently mention the word PEACE either, as opposed to Adams. Coming to the Paisley Corpus (PC), UNIONIST, ULSTER and UNIONISTS are of course frequent words. IRELAND and NORTHERN are also frequent, and they often appear together in the phrase NORTHERN IRELAND. However, the higher frequency of IRELAND, seen in context, indicates that Paisley actually talks about the *Irish Republic*. This is confirmed by the presence of DUBLIN among the first ten keywords of the PC. As a matter of fact, Paisley's long lasting hostility towards Éire and its government, at least until the end of the peace process, was well known, therefore this result was only to be expected. Adams, whose party has historically enjoyed the support of many in the Irish Republic, does not mention it or its capital city as frequently. The IRA and its political wing Sinn Féin are also, expectedly, two of Paisley's historical enemies, and as such he frequently mentions them. And, not surprisingly for those who are familiar with the Reverend and his party policies, amongst his adversaries also feature fellow Unionist-Protestant parties, including the United Unionist Party (UUP) and its then leader David Trimble, whose name is also often mentioned by Paisley. Looking in detail at the contexts in which IRA, SINN FÉIN, TRIMBLE, DUBLIN and IRELAND occur, it is easily confirmed that Paisley does actually speak in negative terms about them.

It is also worth focussing on some context keywords that were manually selected from the corpora's frequency lists for their unexpected presence or frequency: IRELAND, FRIDAY, CONFLICT, WAR, LANGUAGE and GOD. The terms and their frequencies are reported in the following Table 5.

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[7] Republicans are historically associated to the Catholic Church, just as Loyalists are to Protestant ones. This division, excluding few exceptions, is still largely valid. To get a clear perspective on Northern Ireland's demography, see NISRA (2001) for the most recent census report; a new one will take place in 2011.

[8] "Sinn Féin": "We (Ourselves) Alone"; "agus": "and".

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| Adams Corpus (AC) | | | Paisley Corpus (PC) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Keyword | Freq. | Freq. % | Keyword | Freq. | Freq. % |
| CONFLICT | 79 | (0.11%) | CONFLICT | 0 | (0.00%) |
| FRIDAY | 53 | (0.07%) | FRIDAY | 0 | (0.00%) |
| GOD | 1 | (0.00%) | GOD | 40 | (0.12%) |
| IRELAND | 280 | (0.37%) | IRELAND | 210 | (0.64%) |
| LANGUAGE | 21 | (0.03%) | LANGUAGE | 6 | (0.02%) |
| WAR | 39 | (0.05%) | WAR | 13 | (0.04%) |

Table 5. Select keywords' occurrences

Keywords in the Adams Corpus (AC) of course reflect the Republican view, revealed for example by the use of Gaelic words, while of course keywords in the PC reflect the Loyalist one, for instance preferring to call the region ULSTER rather than NORTHERN IRELAND. While IRELAND is expectedly very frequent in both corpora (though, as seen earlier, indicating both the Six Counties and the Republic), FRIDAY was also curiously discovered to be among the most frequent terms. Checking the contexts in which it is used, it was easily determined that it exclusively appears in the phrase GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT (the 1998 first landmark talks in Northern Ireland's peace process), thus it is not at all as unexpected as it seemed at first. Adams, who worked towards this agreement for years, would often mention it, but Paisley, strongly opposed to it, never once does. Both speakers use the word LANGUAGE; however, while in the AC all 21 occurrences of LANGUAGE refer to the Irish (Gaelic) language, a key policy pursued by the Sinn Féin, none of the 6 occurrences of LANGUAGE in Paisley refer to Gaelic, but generically to either spoken or body language. The word GOD is pronounced 45 times by the Presbyterian Reverend Paisley, both in various rhetorical invocations and in quotations from the Bible; in Adams, although the Catholic Irish too traditionally share the social practice of a strong community faith, it only appears once, in a generic rhetorical invocation (GOD HELP US). Finally, very interesting to see is the use of the very word CONFLICT. It occurs 59 times in the AC but, surprisingly, it does not appear at all in the PC. However, Paisley does use the word WAR 13 times, which is also used by Adams as often as 39 times. In particular, Paisley uses it 11 out of 13 times to talk about Northern Ireland present and past, and twice (once each) about the two World Wars, but never about any *other* war. Adams, on the other hand, uses it 10 out of 39 times to talk about different wars, like that in the Balkans, for example. This could be seen as proof of SF having or showing to have so wide a perspective as to include foreign policy into their annual programmes. Moreover, in the AC, the occurrence of WAR is concentrated in the early 1990s' texts, especially in the 1993 and 1994 ones. CONFLICT, instead, is used throughout the 1993-2004 decade with more or less the same frequency, which is what happens with the word WAR in the PC. True to their different political views, then, to describe their country's situation Adams refers either to a WAR (implying one side will win and the other will lose) or to a CONFLICT (something that can be resolved), but with a tendency to drop the first in more recent years in favour of the second. On the other hand, until 2004, for the DUP leader the struggle was never anything but a WAR, although latest developments

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have seen Paisley soften his attitude, if not towards the IRA, at least towards Éire[9] and the Republicans.


INTERPRETING THE RESULTS: TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

In the ten years covered by the Adams-Paisley Corpus, the DUP, from targeting "perhaps the narrower range of the two major [Unionist] parties" (Miller 1994: 105), became the first party of Northern Ireland; the SF, from being a semi-legal entity, became its second political force; and peace became a reality. Northern Ireland's intricate social and political situation can hardly be summed up in a few paragraphs or explained by a linguistic analysis; still, a few conclusions may nonetheless be drawn, at least about the political figures considered.

Considering the aims set out in paragraph 2, the analysis of the Adams-Paisley Corpus, considered a significant sample of Northern Irish political discourse, verifies that the language of conflict in Northern Ireland has indeed undergone evolution in the course of the decade examined, with each speaker offering different contributions to this difficult process. Paisley's oratorical style has apparently "not moved an inch" — in his own words — in the first ten years of the peace talks, or in his entire career, for that matter. With only slight changes in their quantity and arrangement, his syntax, semantics and the contents of his messages show a rare consistency over the decades, marking his personal style as highly peculiar and definitely unmistakable. And his crystallised messages and oratory are precisely what won him the support of the majority of Unionist voters who, disappointed by the UUP's undecided tones and shaken by the early 1990s' economic crisis, looked to the Reverend as the upholder of their traditional values, beliefs and certainties, and returned the DUP as Northern Ireland's first party both in the 2003 and in the 2007 general elections. What his voters perhaps failed to see clearly is that Paisley's change lay not in his flamboyant words, but more subtly in his actions: proof to this is that, while keeping drilling his followers with his usual "no surrender" preaching, he formed a government with an allegedly ex-IRA Republican as his deputy. Evidently, to do this, he must have surrendered something at some point but, as he never admitted to it, he never seemed to. In his case, then, the language of conflict in fact became the language of agreement, but without ever changing its surface verbal realization.

Adams' greatest and recognized communicative skill is "his adroit handling of the media" (O'Leary 2004: 38), while the most prominent feature of his oratory is the plain clarity of his rhetorical structures, semantics and syntax. Combining both, he managed to seduce his local as well as his international audience by laying out plain, sensible ideas — and by changing them completely when u-turning proved necessary. Contrary to Paisley, the gradual change in his politics is well reflected in his choice of words: year after year, his annual speeches never show dramatic alterations, but repeat formal concepts and structures, while constantly showing slight yet meaningful modifications, re-definitions, or the subtlest form of change of all, omission. Adams' style is completed by the scattered but consistent use of bits of

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[9] On 30 September 2004, Paisley flew to Dublin to meet the then Taoiseach Bert Ahern — officially talking to the Irish government for the first time in 30 years — and said it was "a useful exchange of views" (BBC News 2004).

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Gaelic which, though quite folkloric, actually serve the serious scope of helping him do what Ian Paisley's charisma achieves naturally: create identity and establish inclusiveness out of its mere presence. Adams' consumed ability to adjust his views and actions to best suit the times and events, and to communicate the change to his audience plainly and reassuringly by gradually omitting the out-of-date and introducing the new, gained him, if not a reputation as a fascinating orator like Paisley, recognition as the one who ferried the Sinn Féin over from being the political wing of a terrorist army to sitting rightfully in Parliament.

As regards how language, politics and society have influenced each other in the course of the peace process, political discourse, obvious as it may seem, once again has proved a perfect representation of a country's — in this case comprising two nations — social, political and economic context. Politics and its language were also confirmed to influence each other in space and time, with specific words used by each of the two politicians that were passed on to their supporters, the media, and eventually the world: e.g. Adams is the *President* of Sinn Féin, delivering his *addresses* to his party and talking mostly about *conflict* in *Northern Ireland*, while Paisley is the *Leader* of the DUP, and in his *speeches* to his followers he talks about *war* in *Ulster*. Phrases like PEACE PROCESS and GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT, too, have passed into everyday English[10], although some are specific of this conflict and others are not: anyone who sees or hears the expression GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT knows or will find out it relates to the Northern Irish situation alone, while the expression PEACE PROCESS is now adopted to refer to any conflict currently going on in the world, whether in Northern Ireland or in Israel-Palestine, and has become the standard phrase commonly used to describe such situations worldwide.

Finally, about the question of whether the new verbal conflict has contributed positively, negatively or at all to the peace process, although it took the DUP and Sinn Féin four years' talks and another general election from when they both triumphed in the Assembly election of November 2003 to come to an agreement over the designation of a First Minister of Northern Ireland, the current Unionist and Republican cooperation proves that the move to political fight, even if very slowly, has produced the practical effects desired. This indicates that when politicians like Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley, who used to have one foot set deep in terrorism and the other in Parliament, eventually chose to stand in Parliament only, then the closer correspondence between their words and their deeds led to increasingly frequent steps forward in the peace process, of which the historic meeting of Ian Paisley with the then Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern in September 2004, the announcement of total IRA disarmament in September 2005, and the eventual formation of a joint Unionist and Republican executive in May 2007 were the conclusive milestones.

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[10] The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s online version (draft-revised as of December 2009) lists PEACE PROCESS among the compounds / collocations of PROCESS, while GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT features, explained in detail, under the entry GOOD FRIDAY.

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APPENDIX 1. EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES BY GERRY ADAMS

1. Presidential Address to Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, 1993

This is the 88th Ard Fheis of our party. It is also the centenary year of Conradh na Gaeilge. We extend solidarity and best wishes.
When Conradh na Gaeilge was founded the Irish language was still a living language in very large areas, but the decline was already well advanced — the language having been devastated by political, social and economic oppression throughout the 19th Century. The credit for arresting this decline and starting the fight-back goes to Conradh. The Irish people were alerted to what was being lost, and the complete extinction of the language was averted.
[…]

2. Presidential Address to Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, 1997

I want you to take a journey with me over the next short time, a journey of imagination, a journey of vision, a journey of time, a journey into the future.
I want you to imagine what Ireland will be like on that day when a lasting peace is established.
I want you to imagine where you will be, where our nation will be. I want you to imagine what it will be like as we cross that extraordinary moment into a new beginning.
Imagine an Ireland in which the guns are silent. Permanently. An Ireland in which all of the people of this island are at peace with each other and with our neighbours in Britain.
Imagine an Ireland united by a process of healing and national reconciliation.
[…]

3. Presidential Address to Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, 2004

I want to welcome all of you here to this very unique gathering, the Ard Fheis of the only all-Ireland political party on this island.
I want to greet our international visitors, our delegates, members and activists and our Friends of Sinn Féin visitors from the United States, Australia and Canada who do such a great job for us.

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I want to extend a particular céad míle failte to our team of MLAs, those men and women newly elected to represent Sinn Féin in the Assembly in the North - if we had an Assembly in the North. WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU.

I also want to extend, on behalf of the Ard Fheis, a warm greeting to two people who cannot be here today but who are watching on RTE. BLESSINGS AND GREETINGS to Joe and Annie Cahill.

The process of change has been set to one side

A lot has happened since our last Ard Fheis.

Sinn Fein has become the largest pro-Agreement party in the North.

[…]

APPENDIX 2. EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES BY IAN PAISLEY

1. Leader's Speech to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Conference, 1993

When I was a boy and watched the Orange men march past on the 12th of July I was impressed by banner which portrayed a Biblical scene - the Incident of Ruth the Moabitess and her faithful pledge to her distressed mother-in-law Naomi.

It was entitled "The Pledge of Loyal Ulster".

 "And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

(Ruth 1: 16 & 17)

 Over and over again Ulster paid the price of the redeeming of that pledge.

 […]

2. Leader's Speech to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Conference, 1997

The majority of the people of Northern Ireland want the naked truth from the Unionist leaders. History has a habit of repeating itself. During the British Government capitulation to the IRA in the South of Ireland, which led to the bringing into being of what was called the Irish Treaty. Lord Carson of Duncairn, our founding father had this to say: "The terms of this treaty were passed with a revolver pointed at your head and you know it." This was a speech in the House of Lords. "You know you passed them because you were beaten. You know you passed them because Sinn Fein with the army of Ireland has beaten you. Why do you not say so?" […]

*Altre Modernità / Otras Modernidades / Autres Modernités / Other Modernities*

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3.  Leader's Speech to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Conference, 2004

The majority of Ulster's unionists have given the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party the custodianship of our Province. They have charged us with the trust deeds of our future.
We have a solemn and terrifying responsibility. Every evil force which seeks the destruction of our Province, the betrayal of our heritage, the abolition of the Union and the final victory of our enemies, is united to achieve that goal.
This is war, war waged in every sphere. It is a fight to where no Queensbury Rules are honoured. It is a battle where no international agreements are upheld. It is a struggle for the very existence of democracy. Every evil force is harnessed to the chariot of the vilest treachery and diabolical deception.
Destruction of Ulster is the aim and the IRA is the instrument of the entire Judas Iscariot strategy. Treachery is their order of the day.
[…]


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