

LEXICAL CHANGE IN THE PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF
UK FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE MINISTERS, 1989-2015:
A CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores lexical change in the parliamentary contributions of the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office ministers between 1989 and 2015. It focuses on words and phrases that display large changes in frequency during that period, suggests factors driving those changes and considers what they indicate regarding the evolving scope of the UK's foreign policy. The source material for this thesis is a corpus of 16.5 million words drawn from the 'Hansard' transcripts of the UK parliament. Methodologically, the research is highly data-driven and descriptive. It may be considered an example of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies. To avoid the limitations of existing interfaces and tools, the corpus was assembled and analysed using scripts written specifically for the purpose.

The analysis focuses on 47 words, each of which displays a particularly large rise, fall or spike in frequency. Nine of these are grammatical words; the remainder relate to the content of foreign policy discourse and their grouping into themes is informed by data on their co-occurrence in the same parliamentary contributions. The changing context of each word's use is analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. This analysis shows a net increase in the scale and scope of the UK's foreign policy discourse, with particular growth in discussion of human rights; matters of security and intelligence; and Europe. Ministers increasingly discuss matters affecting women and this change is accompanied by a rise in the use of feminine pronouns. The frequency of modal verbs and words of negation declines.

A range of factors are identified as drivers of these changes. In addition to the priorities of ministers, the discourse is shown to be strongly driven by world events, the influence of opposition and backbench members and changes in how the government structures and organises its work. The thesis proposes a framework for categorising such influences which could be applied to the study of other types of parliamentary discourse.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on lexical change in the discourse of the ministers attached to the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1989 and 2015. It is motivated by a curiosity to identify and understand linguistic clues as to how and why that discourse changed over time. Using a data-driven approach, this thesis seeks to answer three research questions:

1. In the parliamentary contributions of UK government ministers attached to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1989 and 2015, which words display the largest changes in frequency?
2. What factors cause or contribute to these changes in frequency?
3. What do these changes indicate regarding the scope and focus of UK foreign policy discourse during the period studied?

In focusing on lexical change, this study looks at an area of language which can be observed with a large degree of objectivity. A word or phrase is either present or not in a given set of texts and its frequency can be established with confidence, provided misspellings are rare and a consistent approach is taken to dealing with varying grammatical forms. As such, the motivations for the research, the focus on lexical change and the data-driven approach are interconnected and combine in this thesis aiming to provide a rigorously evidence-based treatment of the subject.

The source material for this research is drawn from the 'Hansard' transcripts published by the UK Parliament (UK Parliament 2019). They provide the official and authoritative record of the contributions (speeches, statements, questions and answers) made by members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The contributions analysed in this thesis are those of the Foreign Secretary and other ministers attached to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Comments made outside of parliamentary proceedings are outside the scope of the research, as are the contributions

of other ministers and back-bench and opposition members. The time period, 1989 to 2015, has been chosen on the basis that it is long enough to see a change of generation in the individuals appointed as Foreign Office ministers and to look beyond short-term fluctuations in language use, focusing instead on longer-term trends. It includes periods during which the Conservative party and the Labour party held office as well as a period in which the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats governed as a coalition.

The first of three chapters of the literature review situates this thesis in relation to existing areas of linguistics research. In studying language change in a real-world discourse, it belongs to the field of Applied Linguistics (Groom and Littlemore 2011). In harnessing computer processing power to analyse that change, it uses the techniques of Corpus Linguistics (Sinclair 1991). In using corpus techniques to study the chosen type of discourse, and combining this with qualitative interpretation, it follows the approach of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (Partington et al. 2013). It consciously avoids the overtly political objectives associated with Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2013), but could be considered an example of Political Discourse Analysis in the broad sense suggested by van Dijk (1997) of studying the language of political actors. The second and third chapters of the literature review focus respectively on the historical context for the UK's foreign policy during the period studied and on using Hansard as a resource for academic research.

The methodology used in the research is presented in two chapters, the first of which focuses on how the relevant transcripts were identified and assembled into a corpus. The second describes the approach taken to analysing the corpus. Quantitative techniques are used to identify words and phrases that display a particularly large change in frequency, responding to Research Question 1. Quantitative data is also used to inform decisions about which words to analyse in greater depth, how to group them into themes and to explore changes in the context of their use. Interpretation of the evidence provided by this data, including discussion of why particular themes became a greater

or lesser part of ministers' discourse as the period progressed, answers Research Questions 2 and 3. The methodology is intended to be transparent and reproducible, using open source data and software and running scripts that were written specifically for this research but are freely available online. The techniques used could be applied to other forms of discourse in politics and outside where suitable source material is available in textual form.

The Analysis section of this thesis begins with a chapter reviewing changes in the use of some common grammatical words which display particularly large changes in frequency. Each of six further analysis chapters then focuses on words which may be considered to express the content of foreign policy discourse. The selected words again display large changes in frequency and are grouped into themes, each of which forms the focus of a chapter. These themes are:

1. Human rights;
2. Issues affecting women (itself a matter of human rights, but a change of such scale and significance that it forms a chapter of its own);
3. International Development and the environment;
4. The United Nations;
5. Matters of security and intelligence; and
6. How ministers talk about their country and its relationships with Europe and the Commonwealth.

The Discussion chapter reflects on the methodology used in the research, including how it could be improved and applied to other types of discourse. The Conclusions chapter returns to the research questions, summarising the lexical changes observed and evaluating evidence that the scale and scope of Foreign Office ministers' discourse increased during the period as new areas of focus emerged. It identifies six drivers of lexical change that affected this discourse and suggests that they could be used as a model through which to consider lexical change in other forms of political

discourse. In addition to its intended contribution to linguistics, this thesis seeks to offer insight into changes in political language that will interest specialists in other fields such as political science and international relations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: APPROACHES TO ANALYSING POLITICAL DISCOURSE

2.1 Introduction

The literature review for this thesis is divided into three chapters. This chapter focuses on linguistic theory and research, exploring a range of approaches to analysing political discourse. It evaluates the merits of the different approaches as theoretical and methodological frameworks for this thesis. The next chapter situates the research in its historical context by drawing on material from political science, international relations and the writings of politicians themselves and discusses the implications of this material for the time period to be studied. The last of the three chapters considers literature relating to the use of Hansard transcripts as a resource for academic research. To evaluate the suitability of Hansard as source material for this thesis, it also includes a section analysing three transcripts in detail.

Three linguistic approaches to the analysis of political discourse form the focus of this first chapter of the literature review: Critical Discourse Analysis; the related approach of Political Discourse Analysis; and approaches using corpora (notably Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies). Each of these approaches has a distinct body of work associated with it. However, not all linguistic analysis of political discourse fits neatly into these categories, either because it draws on more than one approach, or because it is situated in another area of linguistic theory altogether. Therefore while the categorisation of approaches used here is imperfect, the same criticism could be made of any alternative approach; and it would be odd not to offer any categorisation when many leading analysts of political discourse associate themselves with a particular school.

A range of other approaches from academia and beyond are discussed more briefly, including the contributions of individuals working in cognitive linguistics, sociology, classics and journalism. Before

turning to these various approaches, however, we must first consider the meanings of some terms relevant to this thesis: 'word', 'lexical change', 'discourse', 'politics', and 'political discourse', and establish how these terms will be understood in the current thesis.

2.2 Defining key terms: 'lexical change', 'word', 'discourse', 'politics', and 'political discourse'

The term 'lexical change' describes change in "those aspects of a language which relate to words" (Singleton 2000: 1). To carry out a study of lexical change, it is necessary to define what a 'word' is. In written language, the most basic sense of the term is an orthographic word, which Plag (2003: 4) defines as "an uninterrupted string of letters which is preceded by a blank space and followed either by a blank space or a punctuation mark."

The orthographic definition of a word provides clarity and simplicity. One disadvantage, however, is that it results in homographs – words with the same spelling but different meanings – being treated as identical. One of the words analysed in this thesis, *aid*, is such a case. Treating the verb *aid* as identical to the noun inevitably results in a loss of insight into the differing grammatical functions and meanings that the word possesses. Furthermore, a word does not necessarily equate to a unit of meaning. The term 'lexical item' has a usefully broader sense in this respect as a lexical item may straddle spaces or punctuation marks to include phrases and sentences with "meanings that are unpredictable" such as idioms or proverbs (Carstairs-McCarthy 2002: 12). Looking beyond written language, the orthographic definition of a word does not lend itself to the analysis of speech. An anthropological linguist researching a language that exists only in spoken form will think instead of a 'phonological word' – a speech sound or series of speech sounds that convey a unit of meaning (Crystal 1990).

A range of other techniques are used in linguistics to classify words as objects of study. These include the morphological approach of 'lemmatisation', whereby inflectional variants of words are reduced

to their respective 'lemma' as shown in dictionary entries (McEnery et al., 2010). For example, *corpus*, *corpora* and *corpuses* each have the lemma *CORPUS*. Focusing on the lemma enables the linguist to consider changes in the frequency of these words together. Another approach is to annotate each word to show the part of speech that it belongs to (referred to as POS tagging or grammatical tagging) as a way of preserving grammatical information.

In corpus linguistics, with its focus on written source material, a word is generally conceptualised in the orthographic sense. Hunston and Francis (2000: 14) define a word in very similar terms to Plag (2003) as "a sequence of characters bounded by spaces" and this forms the basis of the approach used in this thesis¹. Whilst techniques including lemmatisation and parts of speech tagging are used in corpus linguistics, the additional sophistication afforded by these techniques is not necessary for the purposes of the present research. This thesis focuses on linguistic changes that have an external significance, indicating shifts in the scope and focus of foreign policy, rather than on changes internal to the workings of the language itself. The methodology used is flexible enough to consider related forms of the words selected for analysis. For example, in chapter ten, changes in the frequency of *project* are analysed even though only *projects* met the original criteria for investigation. The fact that the analysis includes discussion of longer excerpts from Hansard also provides opportunities to consider the various grammatical forms and uses of the selected words.

Lexical change may take a number of forms: changes in the lexis (the total list of words used) through the introduction of new words and the loss of others; changes in the frequency of their use and how widespread their use is (their distribution); and changes in their form or meaning. Lexical change may be considered in relation to a language as a whole or, as is the case in this thesis, in relation to a particular discourse type.

¹ Methodological considerations relating to the implementation of this definition are discussed in section 6.4 of this thesis.

Lexical change forms part of the wider study of language change, which also includes sound change, morphological change, syntactic change and semantic change (McMahon 1994). Labov (1994: 9) defines language change as involving “a disturbance of the form/meaning relationship so that people affected by the change no longer signal meaning in the same way as others not affected”. As with other aspects of language change, the fact of lexical change occurring is natural and inevitable (Aitchison 2012) and has a range of causes. Broadly these may be categorised as causes internal to a language such as the tendency of speakers to drift towards invariable forms of words, or external such as changes caused by contact with other languages, although in many cases there are both internal and external factors at work (Jones and Singh 2005: 52). This causes of lexical change discussed in this thesis are primarily external. The word ‘external’ is interpreted here in a broad sense that includes the influence of world events, the workings of parliament and the priorities of politicians other than the ministers whose discourse is analysed. The content of ministers’ contributions and the availability of contextual literature both provide indications of external influences on lexical change. The role of civil servants, special advisers and speechwriters in shaping the language that ministers use is not discernible here. Some specific cases discussed, such as a decline in the use of *shall*, may however be caused by internal factors.

In principle all forms of lexical change in the parliamentary discourse of UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office ministers are relevant to this thesis. Lexical changes that provide indications of a shift in the scope or focus of UK foreign policy are, however, of particular interest. Through the use of corpus linguistic techniques, the starting point to identify potential shifts of this kind will be changes in ministers’ lexis and in the frequency of words within it. The words selected for detailed analysis in this thesis are all of the latter type: they are present in ministers’ discourse in each year of the period studied, at a higher frequency in some years than others. In this sense, this thesis conceives language change slightly more broadly than the definition offered by Labov (1994),

because a change in frequency that does not signal a change in meaning may still be of interest. Its conception of lexical change is, however, consistent with that of Singleton (2000).

The term 'discourse' has been defined in a variety of ways reflecting broader and narrower views of its meaning. In the broadest terms, it signifies "language in use" (Brown and Yule 1983: 1) or "language-in-action" (Blommaert 2005: 2). More tightly, it has been defined as "Language above the sentence or above the clause" (Stubbs 1983: 1) and as "a unit of language larger than a sentence and which is firmly rooted in a specific context" (Halliday and Hasan 1990: 41). For Brown and Yule and for Blommaert, the key characteristic that distinguishes discourse from language is the fact of it being in use, while for Stubbs, the determining factor is the grammatical or other context in which it is situated. Foucault (1972: 80) acknowledges that, even in his own writing, he has treated discourse "sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements".

For Wodak (2009: 39), 'discourse' implies "patterns and commonalities of knowledge and structures" which one might describe as being akin to a world-view or ideology. She distinguishes discourse from 'text', which is "a specific and unique realization of a discourse", text here encompassing language created in the medium of speech as well as writing. This concept underpinning this distinction can usefully be applied to this thesis because the collected contributions of the ministers responsible for the UK's foreign policy will be expected to have commonalities of the type Wodak describes, while each speech, statement or answer to a question is a 'text' in its own right with identifiable boundaries. For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, the contributions of Foreign and Commonwealth Office ministers as a whole may be considered to be their discourse, as may subsets of that discourse such as the contributions of ministers belonging to a particular government or the contributions of an individual minister. Viewed in this way, the boundaries of the discourse are clearer than might be the case for other types of discourse. However, instead of referring to a 'text',

it is perhaps more useful to refer to a 'contribution' when describing parliamentary discourse. This is the term conventionally used in the UK parliament and avoids any potential confusion between speech and text, or between the delivery of a contribution in speech and it being transcribed in textual form.

In the title of a book discussing the methods by which individuals and classes obtain and keep political power, the American Political Scientist Harold Lasswell defined politics as "Who Gets What, When, How" (Lasswell 1936). Others, including linguists studying political discourse, have offered definitions that reflect their own view of politics. Fairclough describes politics as "an ongoing struggle to achieve dominance of one political party over others" (2000: 3), while Dunmire suggests that politics is "the actions and practices of professional politicians, formal political institutions, and citizens who participate in the political process" (2012: 737). As Partington and Taylor point out, "It is possible to define politics narrowly as the working of institutions of governance or, more broadly, as the interrelations of social groups, some with more power than others, within a given society" (2018: 1).

It follows that 'political discourse' may be considered to be any communication that takes place through the medium of language and is associated with any matters that are political in nature. With a narrow definition of politics, the boundaries are relatively clear: political discourse (or 'the language of politics') is "the language used by institutions of governance to conduct their business, to communicate with other institutions and the rest of society" (Partington and Taylor 2018: 1). With the broader definition, it is possible to argue that all discourse within a society is political. There are many ways in which language "functions to position people relative to one another" (Joseph 2006: 19) and there is a political and socioeconomic dimension to differences of how people speak, which language they speak and who has the ability to make choices where language is concerned. Seidel argues that discourse of any kind is political, because discourse is a place of struggle; a "semantic

space in which meanings are produced and/or challenged” (1985: 44). These differing interpretations reflect the interplay between language and politics. As Chilton and Schäffner put it, “It is surely the case that politics cannot be conducted without language, and probably the case that the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what we call ‘politics’ in a broad sense” (1997: 206).

Neither the broad nor the narrow definitions of ‘political discourse’ are without problems. If one considers that all discourse is political, then it follows that the term ‘political discourse’ is redundant, as ‘discourse’ will suffice. Defining ‘political discourse’ broadly also risks leaving the discourse of the institutions of governance without a convenient name. On the other hand, constraining the definition “excludes the everyday discourse of politics which is part of people’s lives” (Wilson, 2001: 411). Both interpretations of ‘politics’ and ‘political discourse’ are defensible, and while this thesis studies the discourse of professional politicians, given in institutions of governance, on a political subject matter, it recognises that other discourses may also be considered political.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The term ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’ (Fairclough 1993) is concerned with “analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 2). For Fairclough, Wodak and other pioneers of CDA such as van Dijk and Chilton, their work is not ‘just’ language analysis; it is language analysis with a social and political purpose and a conscious breakaway from established conventions of sociolinguistics which they believe lent legitimacy to existing power relations. Fairclough’s approach to CDA reflects the perspective he has maintained in other writings:

“I write as a socialist with a generally low opinion of the social relationships in my society and a commitment to the emancipation of the people who are oppressed by them.” (Fairclough, 2001: 4)

Wodak and Meyer (2001) take a similar stance, arguing that:

“For CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it. This explains why CL [Critical Language study] often chooses the perspective of those who suffer, and critically analyses the language of those in power, who are responsible for the existence of inequalities and who also have the means and opportunity to improve conditions” (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 10).

Both the explicit social agenda of CDA and the linguistic practices associated with it have been the source of criticism. If CDA starts from a belief that social conditions are poor and seeks to improve them, that implies that the interpretations of texts offered by its practitioners are “politically rather than linguistically motivated” (Stubbs 1997: 2). From this standpoint, political discourse is seen as suspect by nature. CDA “seems to presume political oratory to be merely a cover for dubious interests and is fixated on exposing evasions and omissions” (Finlayson 2007: 553).

Methodologically, CDA has been criticised for not being informed by a coherent theory (Widdowson 1998), using samples that are too small to be representative (Garzone and Santulli 2004: 352), failing to make systematic comparisons between a selected passage of text and norms in the language (Stubbs 1997) and being selective in its analysis – even to the point of discarding evidence that does not fit the ‘pretext’ for the analysis (Widdowson, 2004). Critics of CDA argue that, by building elaborate theories and interpretations on “the frailest of text-linguistic foundations” (Toolan 1997: 93) and being “resolutely uncritical of its own discursive practices” (Widdowson 1998: 150), CDA has been too quick to come to critical conclusions. As a result of the social agenda and methodological

practices associated with CDA, it has been argued that its approach is circular (Stubbs 1997): its adherents know what they expect to find, look for it, and report that they have found what they expected.

In analysing the discourse of the Labour government that took power in 1997, Fairclough (2000) is the work of CDA that is closest to the subject matter of this thesis. Foreshadowing van Leeuwen (2008), Wodak (2009) and Reisigl and Wodak (2009), it also goes some way towards addressing the criticisms of CDA as it includes quantitative data comparing New Labour speeches both with older material from the party and with material from outside. One topic that Fairclough finds to be a growth area in New Labour's discourse – human rights – is also identified as such in the data presented in this thesis. Corpus analysis, however, forms a relatively small part of the work and the political intent of Fairclough's work is evident in a set of recommendations he offers to the then government in his conclusion.

A second work that partly overlaps with the focus of this thesis, and against which several of the criticisms of CDA could be levelled, is Krzyżanowski (2009). His paper investigates discourses in the European press at eight 'times of crisis' from 1956 to 2006, one of which is the period around the fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of Germany. Krzyżanowski claims to have analysed articles from ten newspapers from the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and Greece (but none from Germany) and this part of his article contains no material directly quoted from the news articles. Despite this, he observes the existence of a 'national filter', claiming that UK newspapers reported on the event from a Eurosceptic perspective. This leaves the reader unable to follow a trail of evidence from source material to conclusions, and unclear whether Krzyżanowski is making these observations as the result of linguistic analysis or as an expression of his own political perspective.

Even if one disagrees with the worldview, aims and certain practices associated with CDA, the fact that it has had an impact on the field of discourse analysis is beyond dispute. Blommaert and Bulcean

(2000: 447) acknowledge that CDA has become “one of the most influential and visible branches of discourse analysis”. In proposing that discourse analysis should be regarded as an interdisciplinary undertaking, informed by and informing other disciplines and seeking to answer questions asked by individuals other than linguists, Fairclough (2009: 225) has influenced the design of this study. Ultimately, however, the explicitly politically committed stance of CDA is at odds with the descriptive approach of this thesis and as such CDA cannot be central to its theoretical or methodological foundations.

2.4 Political Discourse Analysis

Political Discourse Analysis – capitalised and often abbreviated to PDA – is described by van Dijk (1997: 11) as an “ambiguous” term used most commonly to refer to the analysis of political discourse, but also as a political approach to discourse analysis akin to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The first definition is broad and inclusive and allows many works may be considered to be PDA even if they are not explicitly identified as such, including the overwhelming majority of the works reviewed in this chapter. The second definition aligns PDA closely with CDA, and van Dijk’s paper even combines the labels:

“critical-political discourse analysis deals especially with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance.” (van Dijk 1997: 1)

This second definition may appear to be only minimally differentiated from CDA, given that the exercise of political power expressed through discourse is a major focus of CDA (for example in Fairclough 2000 and 2001 and Wodak 2009). Fairclough and Fairclough’s description of PDA as “a new approach to analysing political discourse as a contribution to the development of critical discourse analysis” (2012: 1) indicates they too view it as a branch of CDA rather than as something

more distinct. However, the 'PDA' banner has served as a launch pad for a distinctive methodology for the analysis of political discourse. Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) present an approach that views political discourse as a deliberative and argumentative activity, and that draws on argumentation theory (particularly McBurney et al. 2007) to propose tools and methods for analysing this discourse. They argue that, up to that time, analysis of political discourse had not been focused in a systematic way on the deliberative and argumentative nature of political discourse.

From Fairclough and Fairclough's perspective, argumentation theory offers an effective way of helping CDA (and by extension PDA) to focus on both 'normative' critique, i.e. evaluating social realities against a perceived standard for a 'good' society; and explanatory critique, i.e. explaining why social realities are as they are. Drawing on approaches associated with argumentation theory, they believe, enables the critical discourse analyst to challenge "powerful arguments that are not easily challenged" (2012: 81), and to consider fundamental concepts of CDA such as ideology and power in a new way. They illustrate how this approach could be used through case studies of UK government statements and the time of the economic crisis that began in 2008; the public debate around bankers' bonuses that arose from the crisis; and a parliamentary debate on the subject of university tuition fees.

Fairclough and Fairclough's application of argumentation theory brings a new approach to the analysis of political discourse, but it also presents a narrow view of the field by being explicitly 'critical' in outlook and by focusing on argumentation to the exclusion of other aspects of the nature of political discourse. Furthermore, it is surprising that a method first published in 2012 does not contain greater discussion of the use of corpora, nor any discussion of the merits or otherwise of incorporating quantitative methods. Fairclough and Fairclough refer to their set of four Pre-Budget and Budget reports as a 'corpus', but the analysis that follows does not exploit the potential of having such a corpus. Their analysis of the debate around bankers' bonuses draws on comments by

an MP, a senior banker, Guardian newspaper reporting and comments left by readers of the reporting. This is not described as a corpus and Fairclough and Fairclough offer no explanation of why they chose these sources rather than others. However, their analysis of the Guardian readers' comments illuminates argumentation theory by showing how aspects of the theory may operate in public debate. Their approach adds to the set of tools that may be used to analyse political discourse, but it is not a complete toolkit in its own right. As Hay (2013) argues in his review of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), what is needed is not "methodological absolutism" but a broad spectrum of approaches to analysing political discourse.

The gap between the aims and methods of PDA is problematic, not least because van Dijk argues that "PDA should be able to answer genuine and relevant questions and deal with issues that are discussed in political science" (van Dijk 1997: 11). To make such a contribution, one might view PDA as a source of specialist insight. The knowledge that political scientists have of language is typically that of a (potentially highly skilled) practitioner, not of a specialist linguist. In the same way as a political scientist might draw on insights given by an economist, sociologist, historian or constitutional lawyer, a linguist may offer a perspective that enriches the understanding of politics. There is a tension, however, between the need to demonstrate to other disciplines the linguistic rigour of PDA and the overtly extralinguistic aims of the 'critical' form of PDA. For the purposes of this thesis, that tension is relieved in two ways. Firstly, it sets aside the 'critical' element of PDA in order to focus squarely on the descriptive analysis of political discourse. Secondly, it seeks to demonstrate linguistic rigour by employing the methods of corpus linguistics, which will be discussed in the following section of this chapter. In short, this thesis analyses discourse from the world of politics, rather than carrying out discourse analysis for a political purpose.

2.5 Use of corpora in the analysis of political discourse

A corpus is “a collection of naturally-occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of language” (Sinclair 1995: 171) that is machine readable and “usually of a size which defies analysis by hand and eye within any reasonable timeframe”(McEnery and Hardie 2012: 1). By using a corpus, obtaining concordances from it which are examples of utterances that individuals have actually made, and investigating the collocation of words, Sinclair argues that researchers have “access to a quality of evidence that has not been available before” (1995: 4). In this way, as Stubbs (1997) and Baker and McEnery (2015) point out, corpus-based techniques address some of the criticisms of other approaches such as CDA which rely on a linguist’s intuitions and subjective judgement about language use. They suggest, however, that the use of a corpus does not exclude the use of intuition: the key is to find the balance between the two.

The quantitative dimension that corpus techniques bring to language analysis is similarly viewed as a positive development by Baker (2006) and Partington (2006), both of whom argue that there is no need to make an either/or choice between quantitative and qualitative methods. As Partington puts it:

“Complementing the qualitative with a more quantitative approach, as embodied in Corpus Linguistics, not only allows a greater distance to be preserved between observer and data but also enables a far greater amount of data to be contemplated. In addition, it can identify promising areas for qualitative forms of analysis to investigate.” (Partington 2006: 268)

It is notable that Partington refers to a “greater” distance between observer and data. He is not suggesting that corpus techniques make it possible to for research to be entirely objective, a point which Baker (2012) also emphasises. As the sociologist Vivien Burr argues, we all encounter the world from some perspective and, in her view, this makes objectivity impossible (Burr 1995).

However, corpus approaches can make language research more empirical and more rigorous than it might otherwise be, not least because the software used simply identifies features which occur frequently and/or statistically significantly in a corpus. It is then the researcher's task to report and account for these observations, irrespective of whether they fit comfortably with their own personal political views and biases.

The use of corpora in the analysis of discourse is referred to by several names including Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) (Partington et al. 2013), Corpus-Assisted Approaches to Discourse Analysis (Sealey 2020) and Corpus-Based Discourse Studies (Cameron and Panović 2014). Among those using corpora in discourse analysis, some align themselves with critical approaches while others consciously avoid this. Baker and McEnery, whilst identifying themselves as taking a critical perspective, argue that both approaches are valid:

“Corpus analysis does not need to critically evaluate its findings, and we argue that ‘curiosity’-based (as opposed to ‘action’-based) research has an important role to play in linguistics.” (Baker and McEnery 2015: 3)

Duguid (2007: 457) describes CADS as a “hybrid” of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, where corpus techniques “provide the methodology for identifying significance in terms of comparative frequency” and discourse analysis “is concerned with meaning in context and the qualitative interpretation of units of discourse. CADS has “no overarching political agenda” (Partington et al. 2013: 10), Instead, “the CADS researcher is like a picaresque adventurer: s/he knows from where s/he sets off, may know roughly where s/he wants to end up, but all sorts of wonderful discoveries can lie in wait along the way” (Partington 2007: 301).

CADS and similar methodologies have been applied widely, not only to political discourse but also to discourse types as diverse as news reporting (for example in Rääkkönen 2022), patient feedback in

healthcare settings (Baker et al. 2019) and academic journal articles regarding the environment (Thompson and Hunston 2019). Among the research focusing on political discourse, Duguid (2007) investigates the discourse of 10 Downing Street during the Prime Ministership of Tony Blair; Partington (2014) explores exchanges between the press and White House spokesmen; Partington and Taylor (2018) is a study of how persuasion (or ‘rhetoric’) is used in political discourse on both sides of the Atlantic; and Appleton (2021) applies the CADS methodology to parliamentary discourse from the UK. The widespread application of corpus techniques in discourse analysis illustrates both the flexibility and the power of the methodology.

The analyses carried out in Sealey and Bates (2016) and Bates and Sealey (2019) are of particular relevance to this thesis as both papers examine a corpus assembled from *Hansard* transcripts, in their case focusing on transcripts of Prime Minister’s Questions sessions between 1979 and 2010. The 2016 paper focuses on answers in which the Prime Minister reports on his or her own actions, while the 2019 paper considers the representation of women. Although Sealey and Bates do not explicitly associate themselves with the CADS ‘school’, their methodology closely resembles that described in Partington (2007) and combines quantitative and qualitative analysis.

At the methodological cutting edge of corpus linguistics, Clarke and Grieve’s work on stylistic variation in U.S. President Donald Trump’s tweets (Clarke and Grieve 2019) is an example of corpus linguistic research into political discourse that has attracted public attention, including via articles in the *Washington Post* (Gebelhoff 2019) and *Scientific American* (Stix 2019). This research has three characteristics of data-intensive analysis that are also seen in disciplines outside linguistics. Following the terminology of Data Science (see for example Alonso-Betanzos et al. 2017), these characteristics are:

1. Volume – The research draws on a large dataset (although by no means exceptionally large by the standards of corpus-based linguistic research), made possible by increasing public

availability of source data via the internet, and ever-lower costs of storing and processing data;

2. Velocity – The time taken from the source texts being created to the dataset being assembled and the research findings published (in total, eight days) is much faster than would have been possible previously; and
3. Variety – The research uses a corpus drawn from social media, a context of language use that barely existed twenty years earlier. At the same time as the discourse of private individuals, commentators and politicians has ballooned in social media, the availability of official records such as parliamentary transcripts has also greatly increased. This opens up new possibilities for contrastive studies of different types of political discourses.

The methodology used by Clarke and Grieve combines corpus linguistics with computational linguistics, “the study of computer systems for understanding and generation of natural language” (Grishman 1986: 4). The two disciplines are “closely related” (Dipper 2008: 68), with computational techniques being used in corpus linguistics and corpora in computational linguistics. However, as its name suggests, computational linguistics is the field more associated with the use of advanced computational techniques including artificial intelligence and machine learning.

A number of limitations and challenges have been identified in the use of corpus techniques. These include:

1. Ensuring that the data is sufficient and is representative (Biber 1993). In the case of political discourse, it might be relatively straightforward to obtain transcripts of a politician’s utterances in a parliament, but much less so to obtain a record of their comments in other settings where the parameters of their discourse may have been different.
2. Maintaining visibility of the context in which the discourse took place. Hardt-Mautner, (1995: 6) warns that making discourse machine readable for use in a corpus may result in “semiotic

impoverishment” where, for example, visibility is lost of what section of a newspaper an article appeared in, or who the different speakers were in an interactive discourse.

3. Ensuring that the tools available do not dictate the type of analysis carried out. Gries (2015: 93) notes that corpus linguists have a high reliance on a small number of off-the-shelf analytic tools and there is a danger that “we miss things merely because they cannot be captured easily by the software we have at our disposal” (Mautner 2019: 7).
4. Avoiding misinterpretation of findings. With much linguistic research seeking to shed light on connections between language use and social structures, there is a risk of making “overambitious claims” (Mautner 2019: 9) about causal links.

Rather than pointing to inherent weaknesses in corpus techniques, these observations suggest areas requiring a researcher’s attention as they determine their approach. Mitigations include being transparent about the data used and any limitations arising from data collection choices; tagging data to maintain visibility of its context or identifying a route to re-establish the context of passages selected for detailed analysis; using bespoke scripts to avoid the limitations of off-the-shelf tools; and validating findings through means other than corpus linguistic techniques.

This validation may take place in two ways: either by drawing on other linguistic techniques or by connecting with other disciplines outside linguistics. As Egbert and Baker (2019) note, it has become increasingly common to ‘triangulate’ insights gained from the use of corpus techniques with those provided by other areas such as discourse analysis, applied linguistics and psycholinguistics, and they argue that this approach “has proven to be a highly effective means of explaining linguistic phenomena” (2019: 1). Other benefits may be seen in collaboration beyond linguistics, as in the case of the research already discussed by Sealey (a linguist) and Bates (a political scientist). As Schäffner observes, linguists focus on “the linguistic structures used to get politically relevant messages across”; while political scientists concentrate on “the consequences of political decisions and actions

for a society” (1997: 1). By contrast to the rich variety of insight offered by Sealey and Bates, a purely linguistic approach may seem more limited. Wilson (1990: 26) discusses a question in the House of Commons about the US administration’s support for a group which the UK government considered to be a terrorist organisation, offering a detailed linguistic examination of implicature, pragmatic assumptions and presuppositions in the Minister’s contorted response. He does not, however, discuss the possibility that this was a (perhaps clumsy) attempt to avoid appearing critical of an ally and/or soft on terrorism. With input from a political scientist, Wilson might have been able to unpack this exchange more fully.

The literature reviewed in the paragraphs above suggests a number of key areas to consider when conducting discourse analysis using corpus techniques. The first of these is the importance of drawing on verifiable evidence. A review by Sampson (2013) of the methodologies used in a sample of articles in the journal *Language* finds that the percentage of articles that were empirically-based rose from around 30% in the early 1970s to over 80% in 2011. This suggests that Sinclair’s call for linguistics researchers to find “explanations that fit the evidence, rather than adjusting the evidence to fit a pre-set explanation” (1995: 36) is increasingly being heeded.

A second consideration is the potential to gain greater depth of insight by combining quantitative and qualitative methods, with these being viewed as complementary rather than competing or conflicting approaches. In reviewing recent directions of research into political discourse using corpus techniques, Taylor (2022) notes a wealth of research that combines quantitative and qualitative methods. In a third area for consideration – that of interdisciplinary collaboration – she is less upbeat. Taylor observes that there is “a lack of uptake of corpus linguistics methods among non-linguists who work on political discourse” and, in existing corpus work, “relatively low engagement with significant theoretical concepts developed in political sciences” (2022: 610). She does not suggest reasons why it is not more common for researchers to cross these boundaries between

disciplines, but if her observation is correct, it suggests an area in which corpus linguists may need to further develop their approaches.

2.6 Other approaches

Beyond the approaches described so far, individuals working in many other disciplines have applied their skills to the analysis of political discourse. In Cognitive Linguistics, the work of George Lakoff (1996, 2004) explores mental frameworks that he believes differentiate liberals and conservatives in American politics, anchoring this in analysis of how the two groups use the same words (for example, 'family') in different ways. Lakoff's work has been influential in US politics and his argument that conservatives were more effective than liberals at using metaphors to motivate voters attracted considerable attention in the Democratic party, with the Chair of the Democratic National Committee observing that "This book is the blueprint for how to do better" (2004: i). Another notable example of a work by an academic that has influenced how politicians communicate is Atkinson (1984). A sociologist and speechwriter, Atkinson uses a systematic analysis of video and audio recordings of political speeches as a basis for his observations on what makes for effective political discourse.

Classical scholars (for example van der Blom 2016 and 2020) continue to investigate the role of oratory in Greece and Rome. Analysis of modern political discourse as rhetoric draws heavily on classical notions of what rhetoric is. According to Finlayson, "Rhetoric is not language that is vague, verbose or manipulative. It is, as Aristotle famously put it, the ability to identify in any particular situation the available means of persuasion" (2014a: 28). Finlayson has argued for the development of 'Rhetorical Political Analysis' (RPA) as a discipline, arguing that the study of political arguments is not well developed within political science. Although other disciplines including linguistics offer useful insights (Finlayson 2007: 552), Atkins and Finlayson (2013: 163) observe that there is no single,

overarching research programme focused on political discourse in the UK, and argue that RPA should assume this position, such that it “connects studies of political communication and leadership style with the theoretical analysis of political ideas and ideologies”. RPA has proved itself adaptable to changing contexts or ‘rhetorical situations’ in which political discourse is given, for example in analysis of political discourse on online platforms such as YouTube (Finlayson 2022).

In other academic disciplines, political scientists have examined, for example, how language is conceived within political science (Dallmayr 1984) and the role language and language policy have played in developing the modern nation state (Bugarski 2004). Kayam (2018), drawing on her work on learning disorders, uses measures of readability to analyse the relative simplicity of the language used by Donald Trump, while Docherty (2019) is the work of an academic in English and argues that there has been a degradation of political language that is intimately connected to an equally degraded political culture.

Outside academia, the nature of contemporary political discourse is discussed by the journalists Collins (2018), Parris et al. (2007) – Parris also being a former MP – and a former Director-General of the BBC (Thompson 2017). Popular works describe the oratory skills of Martin Luther King (King and Washington 1992), Winston Churchill (Churchill and Gilbert 2014) and others. Whilst not providing methodological suggestions for this research, these other writings serve as a reminder that linguistics does not have a monopoly on the analysis of political discourse and indicate the breadth of academic and popular interest in the field.

2.7 Conclusions

The approaches to analysing political discourse described above are each distinctive in their aims and methods, from the overt social critique of CDA to the analytical and descriptive approach of CADS. However, they are not mutually exclusive. Research into political discourse conducted from a ‘critical’

perspective may be considered to be both a work of CDA and PDA. The use of corpora, whilst central to CADS, also features in some more recent CDA. The influence of rhetorical studies can be observed in CDA, PDA and CADS. Therefore rather than regarding the different approaches as mutually exclusive, one might view them as overlapping circles. It is unsurprising, therefore, that common threads can be observed between the different approaches. The importance of understanding the context in which political discourse is created and delivered is recognised by practitioners of all of the approaches described here. Interdisciplinary approaches are advocated by practitioners of CDA, RPA and corpus-based approaches, including in Fairclough (2013), Finlayson (2014b) and Sealey and Bates (2016). Detailed textual analysis also features in all of the approaches.

The closest alignment of this thesis with the approaches discussed is with CADS. The descriptive and analytic approach associated with CADS accords with the aims of this thesis, and the methodologies used by its adherents are applicable here. As this thesis analyses the discourse of politics rather than carrying out discourse analysis for a political purpose, it also aligns with van Dijk's first definition of PDA. However, the association of PDA with 'critical' approaches brings a risk that any work identified as PDA may be assumed – rightly or wrongly – to be written from a 'critical' perspective. Following the example of Partington, Sealey and others, I therefore choose not to describe this research as PDA.

CDA has been highly influential. Its adherents have been transparent about their social agenda, with the result that to associate oneself with CDA is to associate oneself with this agenda. To the extent that CDA is linguistic research with a social and political aim, this thesis cannot be CDA, because it does not have such an aim. Where CDA "presupposes that people could have, and usually should have, used language differently" (Spencer-Bennett 2018: 154), this thesis does not. However, whilst not adopting any particular sociological or party-political position, it will draw on CDA practitioners' approaches to discourse analysis where these are relevant to and compatible with the aims of this

research. It will do this with the simple aim of providing new insight into the UK government's foreign policy discourse during recent history.

Approaches based on the classical notion of rhetoric offer thought-provoking insights which may help inform the qualitative aspects of the analysis carried out for this thesis. However, although Atkins and Finlayson have shown their techniques to be suitable for small-scale diachronic research, they would not provide an efficient model for the analysis of a multi-million word corpus such as that assembled for this research.

Linguistics has been defined as "the scientific study of language" (Lyons 1968: 1). A necessary characteristic for a discipline to be considered 'scientific' is that its adherents allow for the possibility of their discoveries being disproven and their views altered as a result of new evidence emerging; and indeed embrace this constant renewal. Russell (2004: 129) argues that "Every man of science whose outlook is truly scientific is ready to admit that what passes for scientific knowledge at the moment is sure to require correction with the progress of discovery". What, therefore, can this thesis offer that existing research does not?

In respect of its subject matter, no known existing research focuses on lexical change in the UK government's foreign policy discourse. In respect of methodology, it aims to build on the strengths of existing research whilst avoiding the weaknesses. For the purposes of this study, that means adopting an empirically-based approach which makes extensive use of quantitative data, but not to the exclusion of qualitative analysis of the discourse. It also means that a guiding principle is to maintain a complete chain of evidence from the source material to the conclusions of the research. The detail of how this will be approached is discussed in the Methodology chapters.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to illuminate the political and historical context of the UK government's foreign policy discourse between 1989 and 2015. It will not attempt to give an exhaustive account of the period, as that is not the purpose of this thesis and could not be achieved in any meaningful way in a single chapter. Instead, it briefly explores the nature and scope of foreign policy as conceived by successive UK governments; explores some theories and models from International Relations and beyond that are relevant to this thesis; and highlights world events and developments in policy during this period which might be considered significant, recognising that any such list is necessarily subjective and incomplete. Drawing on this spread of material, it will conclude by explaining why this thesis focuses on the period from 1989 to 2015. A timeline of showing the key events discussed is included at the end of the chapter as Figure 3.1.

3.2 The nature and scope of foreign policy

There are differing conceptualisations of what foreign policy is, with variation between individuals and changes over time. In broad terms, however, definitions typically describe foreign policy as being about how one country approaches its relations with the rest of the world. This may comprise not only the policies which that country chooses, but also the actions that it takes. Breuning (2007: 1) takes such an approach, defining foreign policy as "the totality of a country's policies toward and interactions with the environment beyond its borders". For alternative perspectives, an advisor to Margaret Thatcher suggested that "Foreign policy is about power, about getting our way in an unhelpful world" (Cradock 1997: 199), while the late nineteenth century Foreign Secretary Lord

Salisbury is reported to have said that “My definition of foreign policy is that we ought to behave as any gentleman would who wishes to get on with his neighbours” (Steele 2014: 244).

Notwithstanding these differences of emphasis and tone, the role of the Foreign Secretary² as the senior government minister responsible for foreign policy is clear. The Foreign Secretary is responsible for the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office³ and the post is considered to be one of the four ‘great offices of state’ in the United Kingdom government, along with those of the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary (Loughlin 2013).

According to its mission statement at the end of the period studied, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was responsible for “protecting and promoting the UK’s interests around the world” (HM Government 2015: 6), including by safeguarding the UK’s security, building its prosperity, promoting sustainable growth and supporting UK nationals abroad. This statement alludes to some of the interdependencies between areas of government policy: promoting a country’s interests is inextricably linked with protecting those interests, and hence with matters of defence and security. Building prosperity touches on industrial and trade policy; promoting sustainable growth is connected to the environment and development policy; and support for citizens abroad connects with matters of justice and health. More broadly, any government’s policy decisions are constrained by economic conditions and this factor was particularly significant following the onset of the global financial crisis in 2007 (Riley and Chote 2014).

Partly as a consequence of these interdependencies, policy regarding the UK’s place in the world is not only shaped by the Foreign Secretary and their team of ministers, and nor is it articulated solely

² Formally known as the ‘Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs’ throughout the period studied. For brevity this thesis uses the short form ‘Foreign Secretary’.

³ This department of the UK government was known as the ‘Foreign and Commonwealth Office’ throughout the period studied, but was renamed as the ‘Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office’ in 2020 following its merger with the Department for International Development. Following the practice of ministers, ‘Foreign and Commonwealth Office’, ‘Foreign Office’ and ‘FCO’ are all considered acceptable names to use in this thesis.

by them. Beyond the interests and concerns of other Cabinet members, Prime Ministers have taken varying degrees of control of the UK's relations with the world. These interventions have not always been perceived as welcome: Sharp (1997: 224) argues that Thatcher's foreign policy was "undone by her persistent failure to understand the nature of diplomatic influence", while Tony Blair "attached great store to his own abilities to resolve foreign policy dilemmas" and delivered many key foreign policy speeches himself (Alasdair Blair 2015: 142). The interrelationships in ministers' portfolios present challenges over what material to include in a corpus such as that required for the present research. The decisions taken over which ministers' contributions to include and the rationale for those decisions will be discussed in chapter five.

Institutional changes have also affected the role of the Foreign Secretary. During the period covered by this study, perhaps the most significant such change was Blair's decision in 1997 to remove overseas aid and development from the Foreign Secretary's responsibilities and to create a Department for International Development⁴. This "marked a sea change in British policy on aid and development because it was headed by a member of the Cabinet and because of its focus on reducing poverty in the developing world" (Alasdair Blair 2015: 139). Through the emphasis which Gordon Brown later put on policies such as debt relief and alleviating poverty overseas, international development arguably became a still more prominent part of the UK's approach to the world, but one which remained outside the ministerial accountability of the Foreign Secretary. Similarly, changes in portfolios meant that Foreign Secretaries had varying degrees of responsibility for international trade between 1989 and 2015. In 2010, a 'National Security Council' was created, chaired by the Prime Minister and with the Foreign Secretary as a permanent member. This innovation was driven by a "desire to rationalise the way that foreign and defence policy is made" and to improve coordination between the ministers and departments involved (Sanders and

⁴ A decision reversed in 2019.

Houghton 2017: 26). Although changes such as these alter the boundaries of the responsibilities of the Foreign Secretary, the core issues that Breuning identifies remain central to the role.

3.3 Theories and models from International Relations and beyond

International Relations is the study of the international dimension of world politics. World politics can be conceived in a number of ways, covering the relationships between states; the functioning of international organisations; and the ways in which states and international organisations address challenges that do not map to state boundaries, such as climate change. By extension of Lasswell's (1936) definition of politics, International Relations is concerned with "who gets what, when and how across the world" (Booth 2014: 7).

This thesis focuses on the discourse of a state, but as scholars of International Relations point out, the global system of sovereign states is a relatively recent innovation, having only come into being as historic empires broke apart during the twentieth century (Reus-Smit 2020: loc 1219). This historical perspective is important for this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, the significance of the state in recent times provides a justification for focusing on a state discourse. Secondly, however, it serves as a reminder that the UK government's foreign policy discourse must be analysed with an awareness of the history of the British Empire and of the important role played by international institutions during the period studied.

International Relations has been approached from a range of theoretical perspectives which animate academic disciplines more widely (Reus-Smit 2020: loc 1350). From a realist perspective, International Relations is – as Craddock (1997) viewed it – a struggle for power. It has been argued that realism or 'realpolitik' has been the default approach to British foreign policy since 1945, an approach which "emphasises the primacy of the national interest and the need to maintain regional and global balances of power" (Sanders and Houghton 2017: 4). However, there have also been

elements of idealism - the perspective that a state's approach to international affairs should be determined by its internal political philosophy. An example of this is found in the 'ethical foreign policy' announced by the Labour government that came to power in 1997, which claimed to "put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy" (Cook 1997). Other theories including liberalism, constructivism, Marxism and feminism have also been applied to foreign policy. Although this thesis is not approached from a perspective of adherence to any one of these theories, having some understanding of them may assist the interpretation of data derived from the corpus.

Some theories and models more specifically connected with foreign policy are also relevant to this thesis. The 'English School' of International Relations theory is founded on the idea that the international system, international society and world society all exist simultaneously (Buzan 2010). From the perspective of the English School, shared interests lead states to agree on shared rules such as mutual recognition of sovereignty and principles of non-intervention and self-determination.

Beyond the academic discipline of International Relations, a view of the UK's place in the world that has attracted sustained interest is that of the 'Three Circles'. This model is attributed to Winston Churchill, who claimed in 1948 that Britain had a unique place in the overlap of the Commonwealth circle, the Anglo-American alliance, and the European circle (Sanders and Houghton 2017: 1). The idea of the UK being in such an overlap continues to be seen during the period studied, for example in a 1999 speech in which Tony Blair argued that the UK's future was "not as a super power but as a pivotal power, as a power that is at the crux of the alliances and international politics which shape the world" (BBC News 1999). A diachronic study using corpus linguistic techniques could provide valuable insights into ministers' changing discourse in relation to each of the three circles, identifying areas both of continuity and of change. However, as a model for exploring UK foreign policy without a pre-determined starting point, the three circles model has limitations. Large parts of the world including China – a major rising power during the period studied – fall outside any of the circles.

Blair's claim of the UK being a pivotal power may be interpreted as him emphasising continuity in the country's position in the world: in his view, the UK still has power. An alternative perspective, however, is that the UK's place has declined post-1945 as a result of the gradual loss of its empire and its relative economic decline. These themes of continuity and change are noted more widely in histories of UK foreign policy. Sanders and Houghton (2016) observe continuity in the UK's sense of exceptionalism and in its geopolitical position as an island nation, but note the emergence of a foreign policy narrative about spreading British values and changes of emphasis within the three circles. This idea of continuity and change occurring simultaneously, along with the other theories and models discussed, provides a useful lens through which to view the results of corpus linguistic analysis.

3.4 Overview of world events affecting UK foreign policy, 1989 to 2015

The following overview of developments in and affecting the UK's foreign policy between 1989 and 2015 attempts to highlight major events and themes which one might expect to feature in the foreign policy discourse of UK government ministers. It does not describe every foreign policy challenge during that period and there is inevitably subjectivity over which events one considers significant. However, I anticipate that readers will recognise each event described here as being to some extent significant, and my selection of significant events has been informed by the available literature. The overview has two parts, the first focusing on developments in Europe, and the second looking at the wider world, though there are of course connections between the two.

In Europe, the period covered by this thesis began with momentous changes east of the Iron Curtain. Following the policies of 'perestroika' (restructuring) and 'glasnost' (openness) which Mikhail Gorbachev had introduced in the USSR from the mid-1980s, there were growing calls for similar reforms in the communist states of eastern Europe which, like the USSR, were experiencing

economic difficulties. Protest movements spread during the spring and summer of 1989 and, in September, Hungary opened its border with Austria. This created a route through which east Europeans could travel west. In November, the Berlin Wall fell as peaceful democratic revolutions swept across eastern Europe.

Douglas Hurd, who became the UK's Foreign Secretary in October 1989, has commented that "My first months at the Foreign Office overflowed with good news" (Hurd 2004: 381). However, although the UK had long supported German unification in principle, the prospect of that becoming a reality alarmed Margaret Thatcher, who was concerned that "unification would unbalance Europe by adding fifteen million disciplined Saxons and Prussians to what was already Europe's leading economic power" (Hurd 2004: 381). Hurd thought Thatcher's view was "deeply mistaken", and with America supporting unification and Russia not objecting to it, the UK government settled in February 1990 on a policy of not opposing unification, provided its concerns were addressed. An American proposal to deal with external aspects of unification through a group which became known as the "2+4", comprising the leaders of East and West Germany, and of the USA, USSR, France and the UK, provided reassurance (Hurd 2004: 385). However, this and other episodes damaged Thatcher's relationships with other European leaders and her foreign policy adviser, Sir Percy Cradock, noted that "during my time with Mrs Thatcher I recall no meeting examining our long-term aims in Europe" (Cradock 1997: 117).

Although the changes in most eastern Europe states were peaceful, Yugoslavia fractured in 1991 and a series of conflicts erupted. Ethnic cleansing took place, most infamously in 1995 in the town of Srebrenica, which was supposedly protected by UN forces. After military interventions by countries including the UK, peace largely returned to the Balkans by 2001. By 2006 Yugoslavia had broken into six new internationally recognised countries while Kosovo began to seek recognition as an independent state in 2008.

The unification of Germany in October 1990 brought the former East Germany into the European Economic Community (EEC), marking the first expansion of this group during the period covered by this thesis. Further expansion came in 1995, when Austria, Finland and Sweden joined what was by then the European Community (EC). Eight former Communist states joined in 2004 along with Cyprus and Malta; Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007; and Croatia joined the further renamed European Union (EU) in 2013. All of these former Communist states also joined NATO, despite Russian opposition.

In addition to growing in size, the EEC / EC / EU gained additional powers through a series of treaties that its member states approved⁵. The first treaty during this period was the Treaty on European Union of 1992, commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty. It resulted in the EC gaining powers in respect of Justice and Home Affairs which had previously been the competence of member states and enabled the creation of a 'Common Foreign and Security Policy'. It also paved the way for the adoption of a single currency, but gave the UK an opt-out. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown set five economic tests for the UK's membership of European Monetary Union, but only four were ever assessed to have been met. In view of this, and faced with hostile opinion ever since the UK had crashed out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992, the UK did not join the Euro. Instead, at its launch in 1999, 11 member states adopted the single currency. The European Single Market was also completed in 1992, enabling free movement of people, services, capital and goods.

The Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997 resulted in the transfer of additional powers from national parliaments to the European Parliament, including over immigration; created a post of High Representative for Foreign Policy; and enabled the reform of European institutions in anticipation of an expanded membership. The Treaty of Nice of 2001 brought further institutional reform but was

⁵ In this section, the years given indicate when each treaty text was signed by the Heads of Government of the member states. The entry into force of each treaty took place 1-2 years later when each national parliament had given its approval or, in the case of the Constitutional Treaty, never took place.

initially rejected by voters in a referendum in the Republic of Ireland. A second referendum in the country resulted in it being approved and it was subsequently enacted.

National referenda in France and the Netherlands resulted in the rejection of the 'Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe' of 2004, to the relief of Tony Blair, who had promised a similar referendum in the UK and "knew at once I was off the hook" (Blair 2011: loc 10247). The Constitutional Treaty was intended to consolidate all of the previous treaties into a single document; to introduce a long-term President of the European Council; to create a legal footing for political, social, and economic rights of EU citizens; and to introduce Qualified Majority Voting in areas where previously the unanimous agreement of member states was required. Ultimately many of these changes were introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007, which amended existing treaties rather than replacing them. Despite a newspaper campaign for a referendum on the treaty (Brown 2017: loc 3769), Blair did not feel bound to take this step as his commitment had only been to hold a referendum on a Constitutional Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty gained the approval of the UK parliament and of each other member state and was enacted in late 2009.

Scepticism about closer European integration and about the transfer of powers from national parliaments to a European group already existed in 1989. When appointing Douglas Hurd as Foreign Secretary, Margaret Thatcher warned him "You won't let those Europeans get away with too much, will you, Douglas?" (Hurd 2004: 375). By the time John Major became Prime Minister in 1990, two of his immediate concerns were "to gain greater credibility among his fellow European leaders and to maintain unity with a Conservative Party that had become increasingly divided by European issues" (Alasdair Blair 2015: 132). Although Tony Blair claimed the UK would be a leading member of the EU, he and Brown have been criticised for failing to do this and – like previous governments – lacking a coherent strategy for their European policies (ibid: 157).

Faced with a rising tide of euroscepticism among the press, public and his own party, David Cameron pledged in 2011 not to transfer any further powers to the EU without public approval via a referendum and the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government enshrined this in UK law. Cameron went a step further in 2013, when he announced that if the Conservatives won the next general election, they would seek reform of the EU and then hold a referendum on the UK's membership (Cameron 2013), a policy which Cameron has continued to defend (Cameron 2019). As the Conservatives won the 2015 election with an outright majority, they were bound by this commitment and the strategic direction of the country's European policy was now to be determined not by the government, but by the public.

Beyond Europe, the beginning of the period saw pro-democracy protests in China which were violently suppressed in June 1989. Before this, the UK had agreed that it would hand over Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1995, based on a joint UK-Chinese declaration that guaranteed the territory's capitalist system and the election of its legislature for 50 years (Alasdair Blair 2015: 100). After his appointment by John Major as Hong Kong's last Governor, Chris Patten accelerated the introduction of greater democracy, which the Chinese government saw as a breach of the agreement. Relations between the UK and China remained strained up to the handover, which nonetheless went ahead in July 1995 (ibid: 121) and is widely viewed as marking the "sunset" of the British Empire (Chan 1997: 1). China's Gross Domestic Product grew from under \$0.5 trillion in 1989 to over \$11 trillion in 2015 (World Bank 2020) and, as with other countries, trade became an increasing focus of the UK government's engagement with China (Ayres 2014).

Russia by contrast experienced relative decline during the period covered by this thesis, beginning with a period of absolute economic decline as communism collapsed and the country moved to a more market-based economy. In December 1991, the USSR was formally dissolved. After an initial period in which relations between Russia and the west warmed, events such as the poisoning of

Russian defector Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006 and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 caused strains. In September 2015, Russia intervened militarily in the Syrian civil war.

In Africa, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the end of 'apartheid', the policy of racial segregation in South Africa. Frederik Willem de Klerk became the country's president in 1989 and was someone who Margaret Thatcher believed "like Gorbachev, was serious about real change" (Waldegrave 2015: 255). De Klerk embarked on a series of reforms which led to the repeal of apartheid laws; the release from prison of Nelson Mandela in 1990; and a general election with universal suffrage in 1994. Mandela's African National Congress party won and he became the first black president of South Africa.

South Africa's transition was not without bloodshed, but it was spared the scale of violence seen elsewhere in Africa during the period. Among many other conflicts affecting the continent, a series of wars took place in Somalia; Burundi; Rwanda, where a genocide in 1994 is estimated to have resulted of the deaths of 0.5 to 1 million people (BBC News 2011); Zaire (later renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo), where ongoing conflict was estimated to have killed 5.4 million people by 2010 (Voice of America 2010); Uganda and Sudan. The events in Rwanda led to particular criticism of the international community, where the UN was accused of failing to respond adequately to the genocide.

Following a civil war which a UN force had been unable to end, Sierra Leone faced the prospect in 2000 of rebels taking control of the whole country and President Kabbah asked the UK for help. UK armed forces deployed to the country in May of that year; the UN force was bolstered and the rebels collapsed. A programme of disarmament followed and former rebel soldiers were gradually absorbed back into Sierra Leone society (Blair 2011: loc 5162). The UK's intervention was widely regarded as successful and influenced Blair's thinking regarding later deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq (Penfold 2012: 192).

In 2011-2, protests against low living standards and corruption led to the overthrow of governments across north Africa and into the Middle East. Known as the 'Arab Spring', these events reflected the hope of many for a peaceful and democratic future. However, regime crackdowns, the growth of militia and extremist groups exploiting power vacuums and the instability that followed meant that in many cases these hopes were disappointed. In particular, Syria descended into a civil war that continued beyond 2015. The UK took part in two military interventions prompted by these events: a NATO-led campaign of air strikes in Libya in 2011 and action against the 'Islamic State' (IS) group from 2014. In the case of Libya, the reason given for the action was to protect civilians, and David Cameron "knew too well what happens when the West drags its heels as an aggressor decides to 'cleanse' a country" (Cameron 2019: loc 5203). With an advantage handed to the rebels, Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi was ousted, but civil war ensued. US President Barack Obama later commented that his handling of the aftermath of Gaddafi's overthrow was the worst mistake of his presidency (Fox News 2016). In August 2013, Cameron sought parliament's support for the UK to intervene militarily in Syria but the motion was rejected. However, parliament voted in favour of UK airstrikes against IS in northern Iraq in September 2014 and extended the area of these operations to include Syria in December 2015.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 before its forces were ejected during the 'Gulf War' that followed by an international coalition including the UK. Despite this defeat, Saddam Hussein remained Iraq's president. Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction and materials for them were destroyed under UN supervision and sanctions were applied with the intention of preventing the country regaining such weapons. However, faced with obstruction by the Iraqi regime, UN weapons inspectors were absent from Iraq between 1998 and 2002.

In 2001, the al-Qaeda group used hijacked airliners to carry out the '9/11' terrorist attacks in the United States, killing almost 3,000 people. Al-Qaeda was based in Afghanistan, and after that

country's Taliban government refused to hand over the group's leader, Osama bin Laden, a US-led coalition including the UK occupied the country. Although the Taliban were deposed, they launched an insurgency which severely hampered the rebuilding of the country and ultimately led to them regaining power in 2021. The 9/11 attacks also contributed to the US administration of President George W Bush viewing Saddam Hussein a threat who needed to be removed. In March 2003, a US-led coalition again including the UK invaded Iraq amid controversy over both the legal basis for the action and the intelligence which the coalition claimed justified it. The operation toppled Saddam Hussein and brought greater democracy to Iraq but intense sectarian and anti-coalition violence followed. In July 2005, the '7/7' suicide bombings took place on the London transport system, with the attackers claiming that the UK's actions in Afghanistan and Iraq were a reason for their attacks. Combat operations in Iraq continued until 2011 for the UK and 2015 for the US. The UK's participation in this conflict affirmed Blair's close relationship with Bush, but strained ties in the European circle and was highly controversial domestically.

On the other side of the Persian Gulf, Iran was rarely far from policymakers' minds during the period studied. Diplomatic relations between the UK and Iran were intermittent, with the relationship being marked by events including Iran's call for the killing of British author Salman Rushdie in 1989; tensions over Iran's influence in Iraq after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein; the capture by Iran of Royal Navy personnel in disputed circumstances in 2004 and 2007 and the ransacking of the UK embassy in Tehran in 2011. The most serious issue in the relationship, however, remained unresolved at the end of the period: Iran's alleged programme to acquire nuclear weapons, in response to which the UK and other countries imposed severe sanctions on Iran. On this issue, there was perhaps greater unity between the European and Atlanticist circles than on any other. In July 2015, the US, Russia, China, France, Germany, the UK and the EU reached an agreement with Iran to limit the country's nuclear activities. However, the US later withdrew from this agreement and Iran

withdrew from compliance with its terms. North Korea – another state involved in diplomatic tensions – gained nuclear weapons during the period, carrying out tests from 2006 onwards.

Lastly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continued unresolved throughout the period 1989-2015. A set of US-backed peace accords was signed in 1993, but after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by an Israeli right-wing extremist in 1995, the process ground to a halt and Palestinian suicide attacks against Israeli targets followed. The 2000s saw several rounds of talks instigated by the US and a 'Road Map' for peace in 2002 backed by the US, Russia, France and UK which envisaged a two-state solution (i.e. with Israel and Palestine to be separate and sovereign states). A conflict between Palestinian factions in 2007 resulted in the militant Hamas group taking control of the Gaza strip, and although a reconciliation took place in 2014, this issue significantly complicated attempts to reach a peace agreement during the latter part of the period. In 2012, the Palestinian Authority gained the status of 'non-member observer state' in the United Nations but it remained unrecognised by western countries including the UK.

3.5 Conclusions

To define the time period for a study such as this, one might consider moments of revolutionary change as start or end points. If the study focused on the foreign policy of a country in eastern Europe which had fundamentally changed from alignment with Russia to alignment with western Europe and north America, such an approach might be possible. In the case of the UK's recent foreign policy history, however, change has been evolutionary and overlapping. Whilst the result of the 2016 referendum on the UK's relationship with the EU signalled a radical change of direction in one area of foreign policy, it was apparent that the implications would take time to play out.

Recognising that at any point in time there are many unended chapters in foreign affairs, I have

based my choice of start and end points on four criteria rather than on any single event. These criteria are as follows:

1. To cover a period of at least 25 years, in the expectation that this would be long enough to reflect any 'generational' change in foreign policy discourse⁶;
2. To include at least two changes of governing parties, in order to compare their discourses;
3. To cover the period of office of a number of successive Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries; and
4. For the period covered to be relatively recent, but not so recent that its history has barely begun to be written.

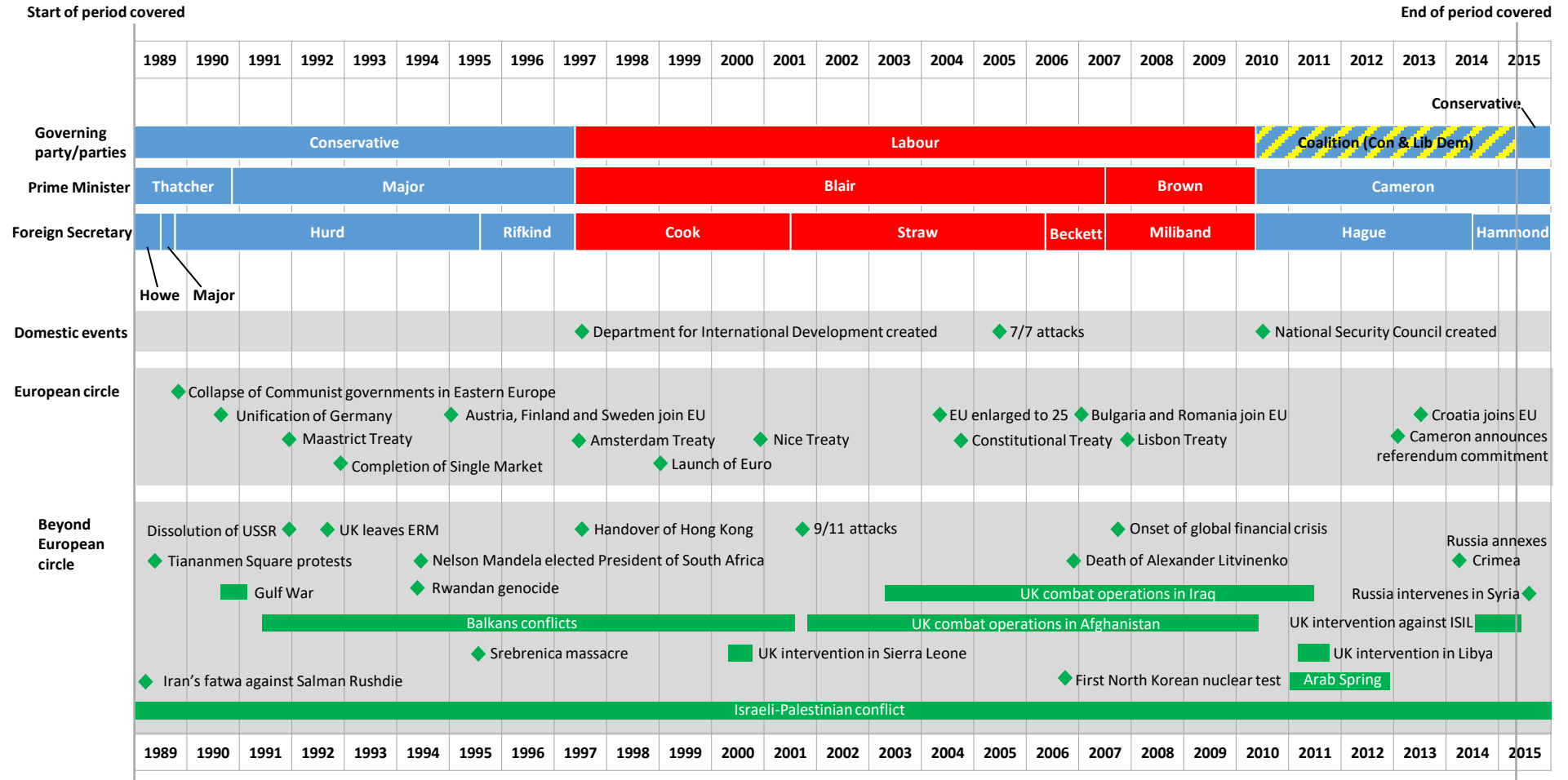
Initially, I anticipated that my choice might also be limited by the availability of Hansard transcripts in a suitable format, but as I explain in a separate chapter, I was able to overcome this apparent constraint.

The period from 1989 to 2015 satisfies these criteria. It includes eight years of Conservative rule, thirteen years of Labour, and five years with a coalition government formed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. There were five Prime Ministers (three Conservative and two Labour) and ten Foreign Secretaries (six Conservative and four Labour) during this period. Whilst I could have chosen a start date which corresponded to a change of Foreign Secretary (an event which happened twice in 1989), a change of Prime Minister (1990) or a general election (1987 or 1992), I have instead opted for 1 January 1989, to include the Tiananmen Square protests in China and the lead-up to the collapse of communism in eastern Europe. I considered setting the end date exactly 25 years later, but finally chose 26 March 2015, the last date on which parliament sat before the 2015 General

⁶ The length of time represented by a 'generation' may be defined in a number of ways. The first Foreign Secretary whose contributions are included in the corpus was Geoffrey Howe, born in 1926. The last, Phillip Hammond, was born in 1955. With a 29-year gap between them, and over 26 years of data included in the corpus, the period covered seems a reasonable approximation of a generation.

Election. To an extent, the period chosen is therefore bounded by two significant developments in the 'European circle': a series of events outside the UK government's control at the beginning, and a choice to allow the voting public to determine the UK's future relationship with the EU at the end. For the purposes of this thesis, however, all foreign policy discourse is equally of interest and data from the corpus will inform the focus of detailed analysis.

Figure 3.1: Timeline of events, 1989-2015



4. LITERATURE REVIEW: HANSARD AS A RESOURCE FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

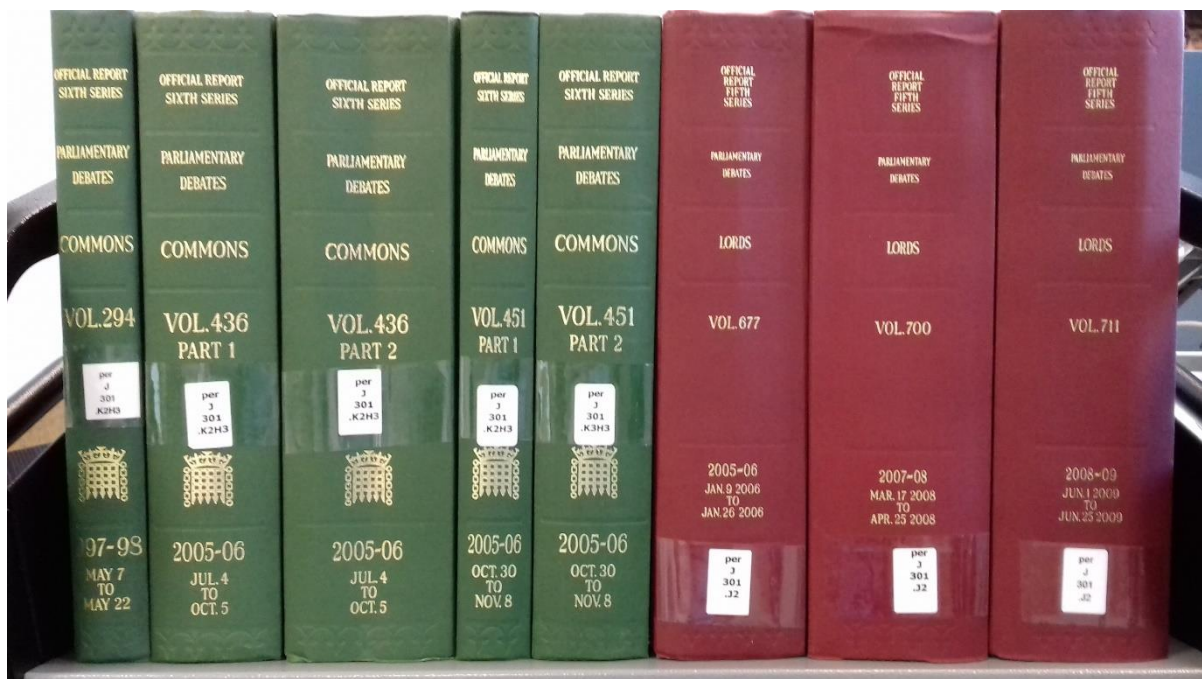
4.1 Introduction

In the UK parliament, 'Hansard' is the official report on proceedings in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Reporting on parliamentary proceedings has been a continuous feature of political life in the UK since reporting restrictions ceased in the late seventeenth century. Then, as now, reporters from outside organisations were permitted to observe proceedings in parliament and to publish their accounts. The accounts produced by William Cobbett, his printer Thomas Curson Hansard and their successors gained pre-eminence over their rivals and, in 1909, Hansard reports gained 'official' status (Vice and Farrell 2017). Today, hard copy volumes of Hansard such as those shown in image 4.1 continue to be printed, but transcripts are also freely available online⁷. The Hansard office publishes the text of proceedings online the same day, with each speech being made available about three hours after a member has finished delivering it (UK Parliament 2020). The Hansard model was exported to a number of British colonies and the parliamentary reports of many of these still bear the Hansard name, as do those of devolved assemblies and parliaments in the UK and elsewhere⁸.

⁷ The formats of the transcripts available online will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁸ In this thesis, 'Hansard' is taken to refer to the official report of the UK parliament unless otherwise indicated.

Figure 4.1: Volumes of Hansard from the Commons and Lords



(Author's own photograph)

This chapter begins by exploring ways in which Hansard transcripts have been used in academic research in linguistics and other disciplines. It then takes a closer look at characteristics of Hansard transcripts from the UK parliament that are pertinent to their use in corpus linguistic research. The key consideration here is that the transcripts are – for sound reasons – not entirely verbatim records of the words delivered in parliament. The scale and nature of the differences between the words delivered and recorded is then assessed in two ways: by reference to existing academic literature on the matter; and through a comparison between videos of parliamentary proceedings and Hansard transcripts.

4.2 Academic research using Hansard

UK Hansard transcripts have been used in a wide range of academic research, including in political science (for example Willis 2017; Häkkinen and Kaarkoski 2018), law (Greenberg 2008), history

(Anderson 1997), business studies (Perren and Dannreuther 2013) and informatics (Rheault et al. 2016). In linguistics, it has been used for corpus-based studies focusing on a single debate or a small number of debates (for example Bachmann 2011; Vukovic 2014); corpus-based diachronic studies (Bachmann and 2018), and non-corpus based research (Ilie 2003). As noted in a previous chapter, collaboration between a corpus linguist and a political scientist has produced two papers presenting diachronic analysis of Prime Minister's Questions (Sealey and Bates 2016; Bates and Sealey 2019). Corpus techniques have also been used to compare the language recorded in Hansard transcripts internationally (for example Kruger et al. 2019; Kotze and van Rooy 2020).

These papers point to a range of reasons why a researcher might use Hansard transcripts as source material: it is a very large set of English language data; it is free to access; transcripts are available in electronic format for the period from 1803 to the present day; it is suitable for use in a range of disciplines; and the existing body of research provides insights into how the data might be approached and what limitations it has.

The studies that employ corpus methods demonstrate a range of approaches. The corpus used by Vukovic (2014) consists of the transcripts of a single debate, the budget debate in the House of Commons in March 2010. She analyses use of a single type of linguistic feature, 'epistemic modality' (the certainty or evidence a speaker has for the proposition they express) and finds that the language recorded in Hansard displays a greater use of this feature than is seen in the British National Corpus (BNC Consortium 2015). Bachmann (2011) uses transcripts from both Commons and Lords debates regarding a single piece of legislation, the Civil Partnership Act 2004, and explores a variety of linguistic features in order to contrast the discourses of different parties.

Others take a diachronic approach. For example, Perren and Dannreuther (2013) look at the changing use of a single term, 'entrepreneur' and its derivatives, in parliamentary debates between the 1940s and the 2000s. They identify a number of significant developments, including the growth from zero

of references to female entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs. Archer (2017 and 2018) also takes a diachronic approach, exploring two areas of MPs' recorded language use from the early 1800s to the early 2000s: how they choose their words to avoid being found to have used 'unparliamentary language' (2017); and how they seek to express disagreement whilst respecting politeness (2018), making use of the concept of 'face' (Brown and Levinson 1987). She observes that politicians of the past were as linguistically creative as those of today in navigating the prohibition on 'unparliamentary language' and that transcripts display a range of behaviour from face enhancement to face aggravation. Sealey and Bates' approach is again diachronic, using corpus methods to analyse transcripts of one type of parliamentary business, Prime Minister's Questions, between 1979 and 2010. Their first paper (Sealey and Bates 2016) focuses on Prime Ministerial self-reported actions, while their second (Bates and Sealey 2019) considers the representation of women during Prime Minister's questions.

Surprisingly, not all of these articles discuss the impact of Hansard being less than 100% verbatim. This absence seems particularly important in the case of Vukovic, whose discussion of words and phrases giving emphasis (for example, 'of course', 'frankly' and 'must') would benefit from consideration of whether forms such as these would be represented unaltered in the transcripts. It is surely better to acknowledge – as Sealey and Bates do – that differences exist and explain why Hansard is nonetheless considered an acceptable source.

As a later section of this thesis will show, assembling a small corpus from Hansard is relatively straightforward. This approach has advantages in respect of how quickly research can be progressed and is satisfactory for a tightly-focused research paper, particularly where a larger reference corpus such as the BNC is also used. Assembling a corpus that allows for diachronic analysis is more complex. Perren and Dannreuther report (2013: 608) that they downloaded over 4,000 webpages to assemble their set of transcripts. Even with this, their decade-by-decade analysis uses extrapolated

figures for the 2000s, as their chosen source of transcripts, the Millbank Systems interface (Millbank Systems 2018) only covered the period to 2004. Archer (2017 and 2018) uses extrapolated figures for the 2000s for the same reason, and this inevitably means that the researchers' findings in relation to this decade need to be treated with caution. Sealey and Bates' two papers are notable for spanning the period pre- and post-2004 without using extrapolated data by copying the missing material manually from the Hansard website. I will describe in a separate chapter how I assembled a corpus containing large quantities of pre- and post-2004 data as this was one of the most complex aspects of my research.

4.3 Characteristics of UK Hansard transcripts relevant to corpus linguistic research

In the words of the body responsible for its publication, Hansard is "substantially verbatim". The qualification "substantially" is important for linguistic research. Members' words are "recorded and then edited to remove repetitions and obvious mistakes, albeit without taking away from the meaning" (Hansard 2017). The effect of these practices is analysed in Slembrouck (1992) and Mollin (2007). Slembrouck investigates how Hansard's published transcripts differ from a strictly verbatim transcript that a linguist might produce. In addition to describing elements of language required by protocol (e.g. 'Mr. Speaker'), he identifies three sets of changes:

1. Filtering out 'spokenness', including disfluency, repetitions (even when used deliberately), half-pronounced words, incomplete utterances, unfilled pauses, false starts, reformulations and grammatical 'slips';
2. Translation into formal, standard English, including by not representing an accent or a regional variety, replacing contracted verb forms with full forms and avoiding informal variants, especially where they would be felt to be 'inappropriate' for written language; and

3. Ensuring 'explicitness' and 'well-formedness', including the 'repair' of obscure messages and inelegant formulations (Slembrouck 1992: 104).

Slembrouck argues that the editorial processes display "an orientation towards a 'normal' set of representational practices" (ibid.: 107), where the relevant norms are both those of formal English and those of parliamentary protocol.

Mollin's paper gauges the accuracy of the transcripts, emphasising the need for linguistic researchers to treat Hansard with caution. She adds granularity regarding the editing processes identified by Slembrouck, identifying changes to a wider set of modal verbs, amplifiers including *very*, *really* and *absolutely*, changes between singular and plural, and changes of tense. She concludes that:

"The picture conveyed to the reader is one where MPs speak orderly (sic) one after the other without any apparent meta-comments on how and when to speak" (Mollin 2007: 208).

The overview that Slembrouck and Mollin provide of how transcription procedures change the representation of parliamentarians' words is highly valuable for a linguistics researcher. The impact of these changes will vary according to the nature of the research being carried out. For example, Mollin's observation on the transcription of modal verbs would have serious implications for a researcher considering using Hansard in an investigation into this type of verb, but might be much less problematic for someone concerned with how questions are constructed in parliament. As such, the impact of the changes requires consideration on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the research being carried out.

Beyond the recording of members' words, Hansard provides contextual metadata indicating who spoke, when, where, and in what type of parliamentary business. A reader of a transcript has limited insight, however, into what one might call the 'theatre' of parliament surrounding members' contributions. The word 'Interruption' in square brackets offers only a modest perspective on what

may have happened in the chamber and, as Vice (2020) points out, a transcript may not capture a moment of intense irritation on the part of the Speaker, a tear in the eye of a Prime Minister, or the use of a prop to bring an argument to life. This loss of non-verbal information resulting from the transcription process is described as 'semiotic impoverishment' by Hardt-Mautner (1995: 6) and is relevant to the use of Hansard transcripts in corpus linguistic research. The availability of video recordings of some more recent material provides a way of regaining an understanding of the context in which a contribution was made, but the time-consuming nature of this approach means it is only likely to be used sparingly. As such, a degree of semiotic impoverishment is inevitable when working with a corpus of Hansard transcripts.

4.4 Comparison of videos of parliamentary proceedings with Hansard transcripts

To test whether the changes introduced by Hansard were tolerable for the purposes of this research, I transcribed MPs' exact words from three video clips of parliamentary proceedings and compared my transcripts with the corresponding Hansard texts. The three items cover a variety of types of parliamentary business and are as follows:

1. The 'Loyal Address' given by Conservative MP Ian Gow on 21 November 1989 (Commons vol. 162) (YouTube subscriber 'thatcheritescot' 2012). The Loyal Address – a response to the Queen's Speech that had taken place immediately before – is in some ways not a typical speech, in that it is heavy on protocol, light on argumentation and may display much improvisation and theatre. However, it presents a transcriber with challenges that would be common with other speeches in parliament, including interruptions, repetitions and inelegant turns of phrase. This was also the first speech given in the House of Commons by an MP that was televised.

2. Tony Blair's answers to questions by the then leader of the opposition, Michael Howard, at Prime Minister's Questions on 6 April 2005 (Commons vol. 432) (YouTube subscriber 'thatcheritescot' 2014). By the nature of this weekly session, Blair would not have known Howard's questions in advance. His responses were therefore unscripted, albeit drawing on key points that he and his advisers would have prepared in anticipation of likely question topics. This was the final session of Prime Minister's Questions before the 2005 general election, making it a particularly boisterous occasion.
3. An oral statement made by Foreign Secretary William Hague on 6 June 2013 (Commons vol. 563) (Channel 4 News 2013). This announced a legal settlement the UK government had reached concerning the claims of Kenyan citizens who had lived through the 'Mau Mau insurgency' in 1952 to 1963, when Kenya was a British colony. The exact wording of this statement would have been prepared in advance.

Table 4.1 below presents the results of comparing my transcripts with those found in Hansard. Each difference is categorised following the sets of changes identified by Slembrouck and any differences that fall outside those categories are also noted.

Table 4.1: Results of comparison of videos of parliamentary proceedings with Hansard transcripts

Proceedings	Instances of changes arising from						Net impact on word count
	Requirement of protocol	Filtering out spokenness	Translation into standard, formal English	Ensuring explicitness and well-formedness	Other	TOTAL	
Loyal Address – Ian Gow (1989)	21	6	15	15	5	62	Reduced by 3.8% (From 1,452 to 1,397 words)
PMQs - Tony Blair (2005)	12	11	18	9	3	53	Reduced by 0.1% (From 994 to 985 words)
Mau Mau Claims settlement - William Hague (2013)	2	0	1	4	1	8	Increased by <0.1% (From 947 to 951 words)

All of the editorial processes identified by Slembrouck are evident in the three transcripts reviewed here. Where Gow refers to other MPs as “you”, Hansard records this as “hon. Members”, following the convention that all remarks in the Commons must be addressed to the Speaker. Where Hague refers to “the court”, Hansard makes it explicit that this is the “High Court”, reiterating what Hague had said in the previous sentence. Blair’s relatively informal delivery is recorded in more formal language, with the transcriber for example removing the entire phrase “and I tell him on immigration”, presumably on the grounds that it was superfluous. As one would expect, Hague’s highly prepared statement, which he read from paper, was transcribed with far fewer changes than the contributions of Gow and Blair.

Whilst Slembrouck’s description of the editorial processes has provided a useful starting point for this research, the application of his observations as a system of categorisation has limitations. Perhaps the most obvious is that ‘Filtering out spokenness’ and ‘Translation into standard, formal English’ are closely related and potentially overlapping concepts. This has inevitably resulted in subjectivity over which category a given change should be assigned to. Similarly, there is an overlap between the latter category and ‘Ensuring explicitness and well-formedness’; and one can only speculate as to whether certain changes reflected the transcriber’s view of correct English, or were small inaccuracies of transcription.

The net effect of the changes on the word counts gives an insight into the nature and purpose of Hansard: the transcripts exist for parliamentary, legal and historical purposes, not as exact records of individuals’ use of language. If one was studying MPs’ adherence to the protocols of parliament, these extracts suggest that Hansard would not be a reliable source. Similarly, for research into MPs’ use of grammatical constructions, the transcripts in Hansard would require validation and correction.

However, the key themes and arguments articulated by Gow, Blair and Hague are as distinct in the Hansard transcript as they are in the MPs’ exact words and most of the lexical changes appear to

have been made for good reason. Where Gow refers to the village of Alfriston, Hansard records it as Friston. Both villages lay within Gow's constituency, and from the context of Gow's remarks, he almost certainly intended to name Friston. Blair predicts that a Conservative government would "have cuts in public services", which Hansard records more conventionally and more readably as "make cuts in public services". Despite the existence of a style guide, other changes are more subjective and the transcribers' practice of referring to a political party as a singular or plural entity is no more consistent than MPs' practice.

4.5 Conclusions

The literature reviewed in this chapter identifies a range of considerations that need to be taken into account when working with Hansard as source material for academic research. It provides an understanding of what types of changes to members' contributions take place through the process of transcription and why these changes are made: in essence, to make the formal record of parliamentary proceedings more readable. It identifies non-verbal characteristics of members' contributions that may be lost through the process of transcription and highlights some complexities that a researcher may encounter.

For some types of linguistic research, it might be desirable to have access to verbatim transcripts of parliamentary proceedings. For the purposes of this thesis, however, the types of changes identified by Slembrouck and Mollin, and those observed in the comparison between transcripts and video recordings, do not make Hansard unsuitable as source material. On the contrary, the analysis of the transcripts gives confidence that Hansard provides a reliable record of the lexical choices that express key themes and arguments articulated in parliament.

5. METHODOLOGY: CREATING THE CORPUS

5.1 Introduction

This first of two methodology chapters describes the creation of a corpus containing the words that Hansard attributes to the ministers attached to the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1 January 1989 and 26 March 2015. Although all of the data required was freely available online, there were three major challenges associated with creating the corpus:

1. Volume of data. Compiling the corpus entailed downloading and processing over 100,000 files from the UK Parliament website. The equivalent hard copy transcripts amount to over 700 bound volumes.
2. Identification of members. Accurately identifying the contributions of the relevant ministers was far from straightforward as the markup of the source data was inconsistent. For example, one minister was identified in 48 different ways.
3. Completeness of contributions. A speech may be interrupted by questions, points of order or interventions by the Speaker. The transcripts presented in Hansard are also interrupted by page and column numbers and paragraph breaks. Piecing together these fragments, and ensuring extraneous material was not included, was a complex undertaking.

These challenges are discussed in the following sections, which set out the methodological choices made over how to access Hansard; in what format(s) to acquire the data; how to identify the relevant ministers and their contributions; and how to compile the data into a clean, consistent format for inclusion in the corpus. It describes how the integrity of the corpus was verified and identifies data included or excluded in error.

5.2 Means of accessing Hansard: UK Parliament website vs. third party interfaces

Hansard can be interrogated online, either directly via the UK Parliament website (UK Parliament 2020), or through other websites such as the ‘Hansard at Huddersfield’ interface (Jeffries et al. 2020), its predecessor the ‘Hansard Corpus’ (Alexander and Davies 2015) and the ‘ProQuest’ interface (ProQuest 2022). The UK Parliament website gives users access to transcripts and excerpts of transcripts that match their search criteria and makes this material available to download. The Hansard at Huddersfield and Hansard Corpus interfaces were created by linguistics researchers and enable users to carry out corpus analysis without holding copies of the transcripts themselves. ProQuest’s interface is aimed at a wide audience of researchers and as such does not offer features tailored to linguistics research, nor – for the purposes of this research – any advantage compared to accessing the material via the UK Parliament website.

The Hansard Corpus gives access to material up to 2005 only. At the time of compiling the corpus, this was also the case with the Hansard at Huddersfield interface, although more recent material has since been added. As such, neither website offered the full set of source material required for this research. There were also conceptual reasons why this research needed a bespoke approach.

Hansard at Huddersfield aims to “help policy-makers, researchers and teachers to highlight, visualise and interpret trends of parliamentary debate that they cannot readily find using the official Hansard website” (Jeffries et al. 2022). Its users can search Hansard by specifying a combination of search terms, a member’s name and a date range, and the site offers visualisations through which users may explore the material and obtain word frequency data. This simplicity of approach undoubtedly contributes to Hansard at Huddersfield’s goal of opening up Hansard to a non-specialist audience. However, as the explicit intention of this research is to start with no assumptions about what words merit investigation, it requires a different methodology to that supported by Hansard at Huddersfield.

The fact that Hansard transcripts for the period from 1803 to 2005 are available online at all is thanks to a project led by the Commons and Lords libraries (Millbank Systems 2018) in which a set of bound volumes of Hansard was cut apart, digitised and made available online. More recent Hansard material is also available on the UK Parliament website having been created in digital form from the outset. Differences of format mean, however, that it is not entirely straightforward to collate Hansard transcripts into a corpus including both pre and post-2005 material. As the literature review highlights, little corpus-based academic research has been published that crosses this time-boundary, which suggests that ease of access to data has influenced the questions that researchers have sought to answer. To establish whether it was possible to assemble a bespoke corpus covering the period from 1989 to 2015, a closer look at the availability of Hansard transcripts via the UK Parliament website was needed.

5.3 Formats and availability of Hansard material on the UK Parliament website

Hansard is divided first into material from the Commons and Lords, then into Series, each covering many years of material, then into Volumes, each covering a few days of parliamentary proceedings. The time period of this study falls within the sixth series of Commons Hansard and the fifth series of Lords Hansard. The material needed for this study is available electronically on the UK Parliament website in the formats shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Formats in which Hansard transcripts are available via the UK Parliament website

Format		House of Commons	House of Lords
1	.XML files downloadable from hansard-archive.parliament.uk, each corresponding to one bound volume of Hansard	To volume 424, ending 4 October 2004 (except vols. 200, 399 and 423 Part 2 missing)	To volume 670, ending 17 March 2005
2	.HTML files accessible via hansard.parliament.uk search interface, each file corresponding to part of one day's proceedings	To vol. 424 and from vol. 447, beginning 5 June 2006	To vol. 670 and from vol. 684, beginning 3 July 2006
3	.HTM (and some .HTML ⁹) files accessible via the publications.parliament.uk legacy website, each file corresponding to part of one day's proceedings	Entire period	Entire period

An initial examination of the material revealed advantages and disadvantages to each format. Based purely on coverage of the time-period, the .HTM files (format 3) appeared to be the most suitable for this research. However, they are also the most fragmentary, with a volume of Hansard often consisting of over 1,000 files. The .HTML files (format 2) are less fragmentary but typically still consist of over 100 files per volume, while the .XML files (format 1) are provided in the form of 1-2 files per volume.

In each format, indexing is provided for each volume of Hansard:

- In format 1, the final section of each .XML file is a hyperlinked index.
- In format 2, the index itself is not viewable by a user of the parliament.uk website, but a search interface allows the user to identify the material they require. For the volumes from Commons vol. 447 and Lords vol. 684 onwards a unique identifier is assigned to each member. This makes it possible to run searches that return only that member's

⁹ There is no apparent logic to why the majority of files offered in this format have the file extension .HTM while a minority have the extension .HTML. For ease of reference, all of the files available in format 3 will be referred to in this thesis as .HTM files.

contributions. For the earlier volumes (to Commons vol. 424 and Lords vol. 670), a search for any given surname will return any passage in which that word appears. This includes contributions by the individual of interest, but also contributions by others in which the individual of interest was named, and contributions in which the same word appears, for example as the name of a place or company. The HTML markup includes tags which identify by name the member to whom each contribution is attributed.

- In format 3, the files belonging to each volume of Hansard are indexed in one of two ways (or, in a few cases, both ways). In the first case, the index pages are organised by date, type/topic of parliamentary proceedings and members' names. A volume of Hansard in format 3 may have up to 100 index files associated with it. In the second case, the index pages are organised by date and type of parliamentary proceedings (e.g. debates, written answers etc.), but there is no indexing using members' names.

The initial examination showed that in each format the markup of the transcripts would provide a starting point to identify the relevant contributions. However, it also became clear that the markup had not been applied clearly or consistently in any of the formats. Later sections will explore the challenges arising from this.

After experimenting with data in the various formats, I concluded that the .XML files (format 1) would be the simplest to process. I ruled out using the .HTML files (format 2) as, with no direct access to the index, I could not verify (other than by comparing with hard copy Hansard or another electronic format) that I had obtained all of the relevant contributions. There was also much more extraneous markup to remove from these files than from the .HTM files in format 3. Working with format 3 would entail processing a large number of files, but I considered that this was manageable. In any case, there was no option but to use format 3 for part of the time-period covered by this

research. As a result, I used the following three methods to compile the corpus, designing each one such that the output files were in a common format:

Method A: To use the .XML files (format 1) for Commons vols. 140 to 424 and Lords vols. 500 to 670. With XML tagging and the convenience of having a whole volume of Hansard in each input file, this promised to be the format from which I could extract the required contributions most efficiently.

Method B: For Commons vols. 425 to 509 and Lords vols. 671 to 686, to use the .HTM files (format 3) offered via publications.parliament.uk, downloading all of the transcripts files belonging to each volume and extracting the relevant contributions from them.

Method C: For Commons vols. 510 to 594 and Lords vols. 687 to 760, to use the .HTM files (format 3) offered via publications.parliament.uk, using the index pages to identify and download only those transcript files containing the contributions of the relevant ministers.

To ensure consistency of outputs from the three methods, I set the following requirements:

- a. The data must be presented as a single .TXT file for each volume of Hansard; and
- b. Each contribution must be tagged to show¹⁰:
 - The House in which the contribution was made;
 - The volume of Hansard;
 - The date on which the contribution was made; and
 - The name of the member to whom the contribution is attributed.

To compile the corpus from the varied formats of source data and to tag it consistently, I considered using either a corpus-building tool such as SpiderLing (Suchomel and Pomikálek 2012) or writing code

¹⁰ As this research focuses on lexical rather than grammatical change, it was not necessary to tag the words within each contribution to indicate their Part of Speech.

tailored to the task. Davies (2011: 77) suggests that coding is a necessary skill for linguistics researchers who wish to create their own corpora, while Gries warns that “inflexible software creates inflexible researchers” (Gries 2011: 93). Through some initial experimentation I concluded that writing scripts in the Python programming language (Python Software Foundation 2018) would enable me to compile a corpus meeting the specific requirements of this research with relative ease, refining the corpus iteratively through improvements to the scripts.

5.4 Identification of ministers

In the hard copy and in .XML formats of Hansard, the ‘front matter’ of each volume includes a list of ministers in post during the period covered by that volume, irrespective of whether they sat in the Commons or the Lords. For the purposes of this research, I considered the ministers responsible for the UK’s foreign policy to be the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Ministers of State and Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State attached to the Foreign Office. Prime Ministers have delivered some of their governments’ most significant foreign policy speeches, for example when Tony Blair made his case for the Iraq war (Commons vol. 401, 18 March 2003). However, as they also speak on a wide range of other topics, I considered that including their contributions would dilute the focus of the corpus on matters of foreign policy. For this reason, the contributions of Prime Ministers are not included. For the period to 2004/5, I obtained the names of the Foreign Office ministers from the front matter of each electronic volume of Hansard. For the later period, I gathered the information from hard copy volumes of Hansard. The resulting list of relevant ministerial appointments is shown as Appendix A.

During the period covered by the .XML files, there were occasional changes in the responsibilities of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The most significant change took place after the 1997 general election, when responsibility for overseas aid passed from FCO to the newly-created

Department for International Development. As a result, contributions relating to this topic only feature in the corpus up to that date. Similarly, responsibility for international trade has sometimes resided with the Foreign Office, sometime with other departments and has sometimes been the responsibility of ministers attached jointly to more than one department. Contributions of trade ministers are only included in the corpus where Hansard lists them solely or jointly as Foreign Office ministers.

The tagging schema used in both the .XML and .HTM source material provided the basis on which to identify the contributions of these ministers. However, the application of the tagging was inconsistent and each minister's contributions were tagged in multiple ways. In an extreme case, a Foreign Office minister in the House of Lords, Baroness Symons, was identified in 48 different ways as shown in Appendix B.

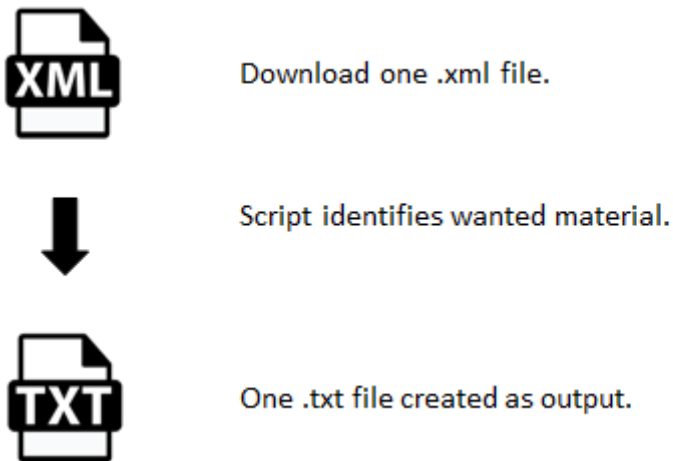
After experimentation, I concluded that the most reliable way of identifying the wanted contributions was to search for any instance in which the ministers' surnames appeared between the relevant tags. This meant running wildcard searches, which inevitably returned extraneous material. For example, searching for *Howe* returned not only the contributions attributed to the first Foreign Secretary of the period, Geoffrey Howe, but also those of other MPs with the surnames Howell and Howells. These unwanted contributions remained in the corpus until I standardised the tagging of members' names at a much later stage.

5.5 Compilation of data - Method A (Commons vols. 140-424 and Lords vols. 500-670)

Each .XML file for this period (except the missing volumes vols. 200, 399 and 423 Part 2) was available to download from the 'Hansard Archive' sections of the UK Parliament website, which provides a separate index of files for the Commons UK Parliament website (UK Parliament, n.d.) and Lords (UK Parliament, n.d.). From these pages, I compiled a list of URLs for the volumes I wished to

download. Conceptually, the script¹¹ used to process these .XML files was simple, as Figure 5.1 below shows.

Figure 5.1: Conceptual approach for Method A



In each .XML file, a mark-up schema identifies different elements of the text. For example, an MP or Peer's name is framed by the tags <member> and </member> and their contributions by <membercontribution> and </membercontribution>. For the displayed extract of text (a), the .XML source is (b).

(a) Mr. Hurd: May I turn to the enlargement of the Community—

(b) <member>Mr. Hurd</member> <membercontribution>: May I turn to the enlargement of the Community—</membercontribution>

(Douglas Hurd, Commons vol. 180, 8 November 1990)

In practice this schema had not been applied consistently in the volumes of Hansard relevant to this study. Whilst the <member> and </member> tags were almost always present, the <membercontribution> tag and particularly the </membercontribution> tag were missing more

¹¹ The 'Codebase' or set of scripts used in this research is available to view online as indicated in the front matter of this thesis.

often. As examples (c) and (d) below show, this makes no difference to the text displayed. However, for the purpose of compiling the corpus, it meant that I could not rely on the <membercontribution> tags to frame the text of a contribution.

(c) Mr. Hurd: The Foreign Affairs Council met in Brussels on 12 November.

(d) <member>Mr. Hurd</member>: The Foreign Affairs Council met in Brussels on 12 November.

(Douglas Hurd, Commons vol. 180, 14 November 1990)

I therefore took an alternative approach that where a relevant member's name appeared between the <member> and </member> tags, the following text is assumed to be their contribution until a tag indicates either another member's name or the title of a new section of Hansard.

The mark-up also indicates the structure of the text. For example, the beginning of a new column numbered 151 is shown in the format <col>151</col>; a line break is marked as <lb/>; and the crest that appears on every page of hard copy Hansard is reflected in the tagging, for example as <image src="S6CV0180P0I0097"/>. Obtaining extract (e) below from the source text (f) illustrates the challenges presented by this material:

(e) [...] the threats that NATO could face are less predictable. However, a cohesive and collective defence through NATO is essential for Britain and for Europe even though in future a lighter more mobile, more multinational force structure [...]

(f) [...] the threats that NATO could face are less predictable.

<lb/>

However, a cohesive and collective defence through NATO is essential for Britain and for Europe even though in future a lighter more mobile, more multinational force

<image src="S6CV0180P0I0097"/>

<col>151</col>

structure [...]

(Douglas Hurd, Commons vol. 180, 8 November 1990)

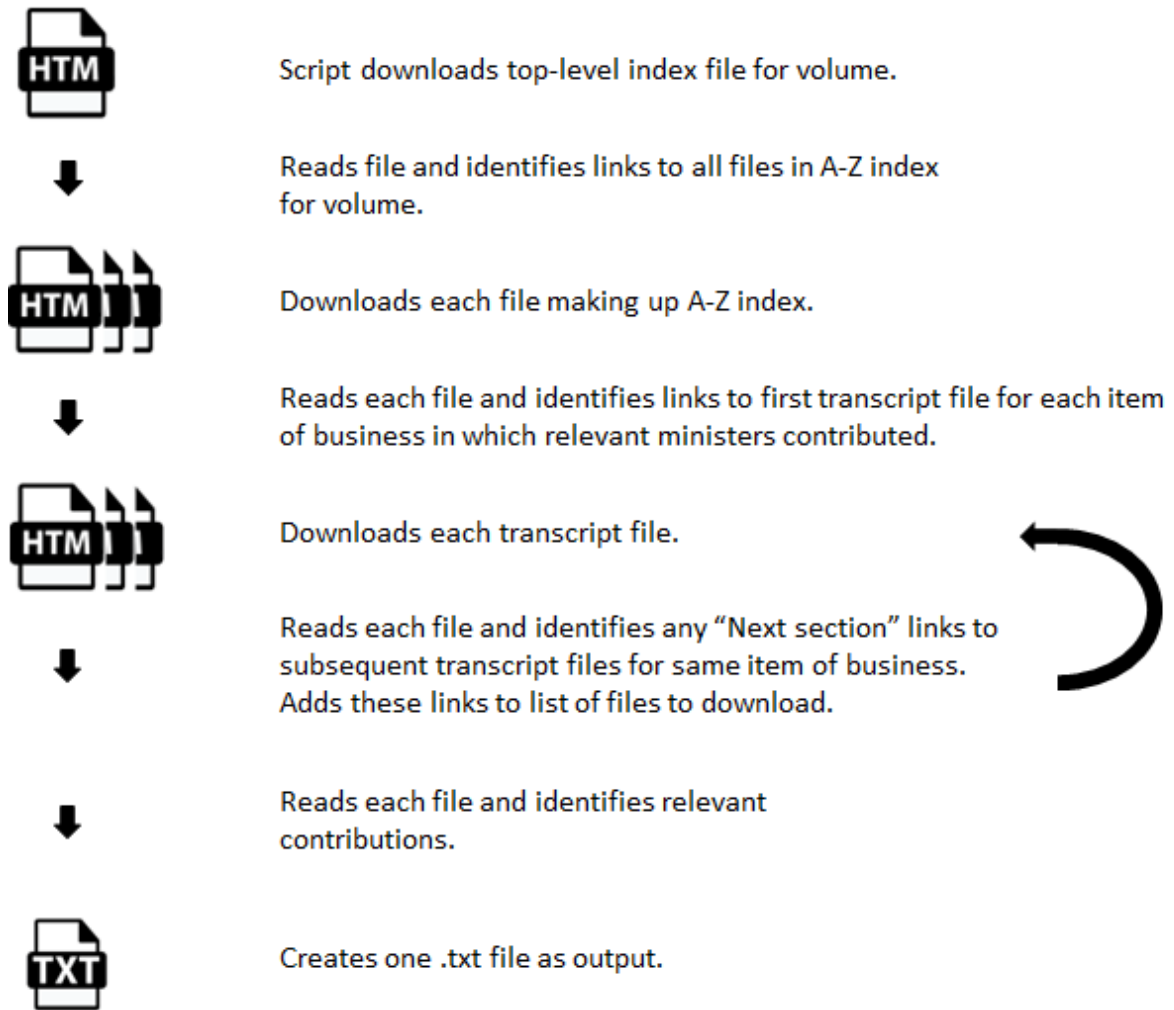
Simply removing unwanted tags would not have produced the desired result as the column number would have been included in the corpus. To overcome the difficulty of the column numbers, the script defined four categories into which every line was placed: Member's name, Member's Contribution, Column Number and unwanted material. It also applied the most recently seen date tag to each contribution. The script used for method A was a 'parser' script, meaning that it searches the text for passages that conform to pre-determined criteria.

During the period to which the .XML files relate, there were many occasions on which individuals took up or left the ministerial posts responsible for foreign policy. I therefore processed the .XML files in batches, updating the script each time to specify which ministers were in post. It would have been possible to further develop the script to avoid the need for multiple versions, but as the changes were minimal, this would have been unlikely to result in a net time saving.

5.6 Compilation of data - Method B (Commons vols. 425-509 and Lords vols. 671-686)

Of the three methods used, method B was conceptually the most complex. As Figure 5.2 below shows, I needed my script to download multiple index files, identify links to transcript files, and from these identify links to further transcript files.

Figure 5.2: Conceptual approach for Method B



The ‘loop’ represented by the curved arrow in the diagram was a crucial feature for this method to work: without it many contributions would have been truncated or missed entirely. A typical index page from this period is shown as Figure 5.3 below; each part of the index beginning ‘A’, ‘Al’, ‘Ap’ etc. is a separate webpage.

Figure 5.3: Example of an index page from Commons vol. 428



Whilst it would have been possible to use a 'parser' technique for method B, I considered it was likely to be simpler to use a 'regex' technique. This works by searching for 'regular expressions' within a file, which can then be extracted or have other processes performed on them. For example, in order to process the index files, I could identify a common string of characters found in the hyperlinks to transcript files and extract a list of these hyperlinks. In the same way, I could identify the beginning of a member's contribution by the character strings associated with it.

The markup schema used in the .HTM files had been applied much more consistently than that in the .XML files. This provided a sufficient basis to identify when a member's name or contribution would occur. For the displayed text (g), the page source (h) has the tags `` immediately before the member's job title and name. A colon and tag `` then separate his name from the beginning of his contribution:

(g) **The Minister for Trade and Investment (Mr. Douglas Alexander):** I am grateful for the opportunity [...]

(h) `<p><!--meta name="Colno" CONTENT="215"-->The Minister for Trade and Investment (Mr. Douglas Alexander): <!--Mr. Douglas Alexander--> I am grateful for the opportunity [...]`
(Douglas Alexander, Commons vol. 428, 24 November 2004)

By removing all existing line breaks from the text and inserting a new one before each instance of the tags ``, I was able to create a file in which each contribution formed one line of text. From this, I could then select the contributions of the relevant ministers. The string `<!--Mr. Douglas Alexander-->` was much less straightforward to isolate and I therefore chose not to use it as my means of identifying members.

As with the .XML files, there was considerable variation in how members were introduced. I again used a wildcard search for the surname of each Foreign Office minister, knowing that I would later need to remove some unwanted contributions. Tagging each contribution by date was straightforward as the filename for each transcript file included the date of the proceedings covered by that file. The script therefore captured that date and applied it as a tag before each contribution.

With the large number of files to download using methods B and C, there was a risk that my activity could be blocked by systems protecting the UK Parliament website¹². To mitigate this risk, I staggered the downloading of the files over several weeks and allowed a short pause after each volume. The time taken to download and process the files associated with a single volume of Hansard was – unsurprisingly – longer in method B than in method A. However, at around 2-3 minutes on a high-

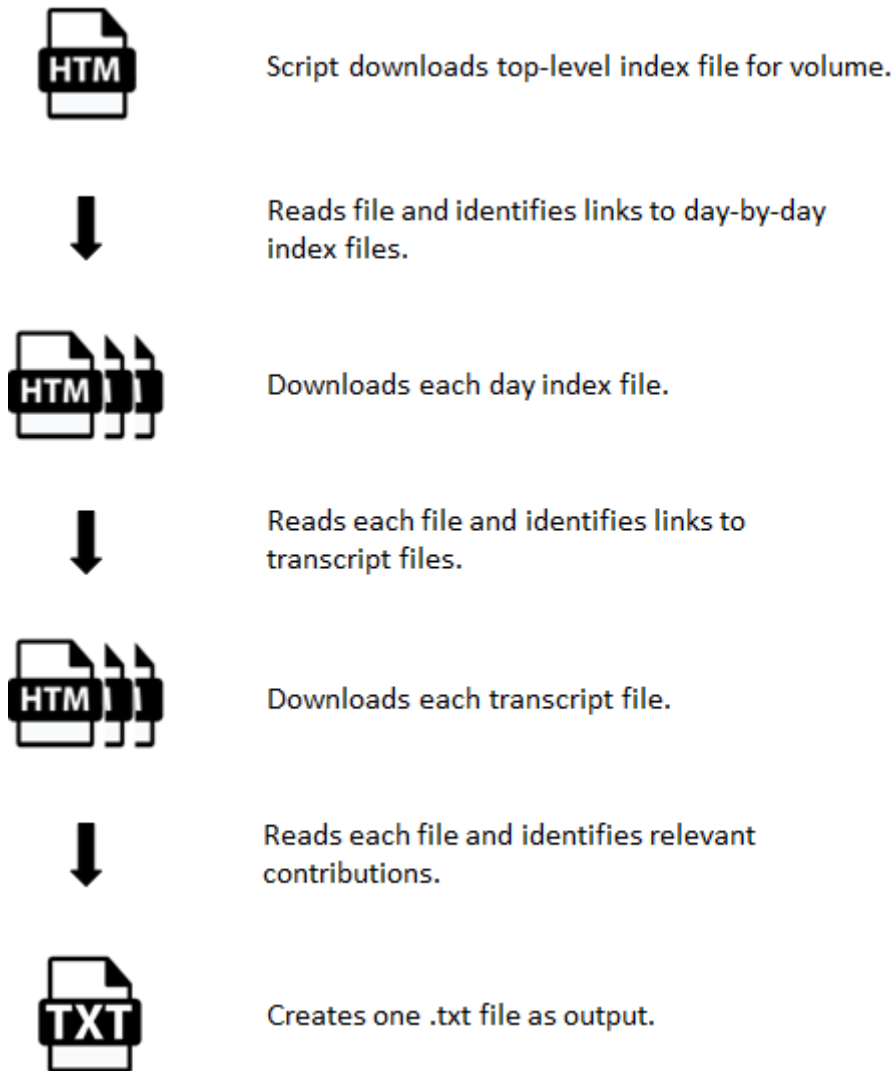
¹² By the time this research was completed in summer 2022, the automated downloading of files from the UK Parliament website in the manner described had indeed been blocked. The implications of this are discussed in chapter 14.

speed connection or 6-9 minutes on a domestic connection, the method was efficient enough for the purposes of this research.

5.7 Compilation of data - Method C (Commons vols. 510-594 and Lords vols. 687-760)

Method C was conceptually similar to method B: it used a regex technique to download index files and identify links to transcript files, which it then downloaded and processed into a single output file, as figure 5.4 shows.

Figure 5.4: Conceptual approach for Method C



The .HTM source files used the same mark-up schema as those processed by method B. However, a typical transcript file from this time period was larger than those from the previous period, with the result that there were fewer files to process per volume, and the indexing was organised first by date and type of parliamentary business, then by item of business. Figures 5.5 and 5.6 show typical index pages from this period.

Figure 5.5: First-level index page for Commons vol. 520

House of Commons Debates - | X +

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmvol520.htm

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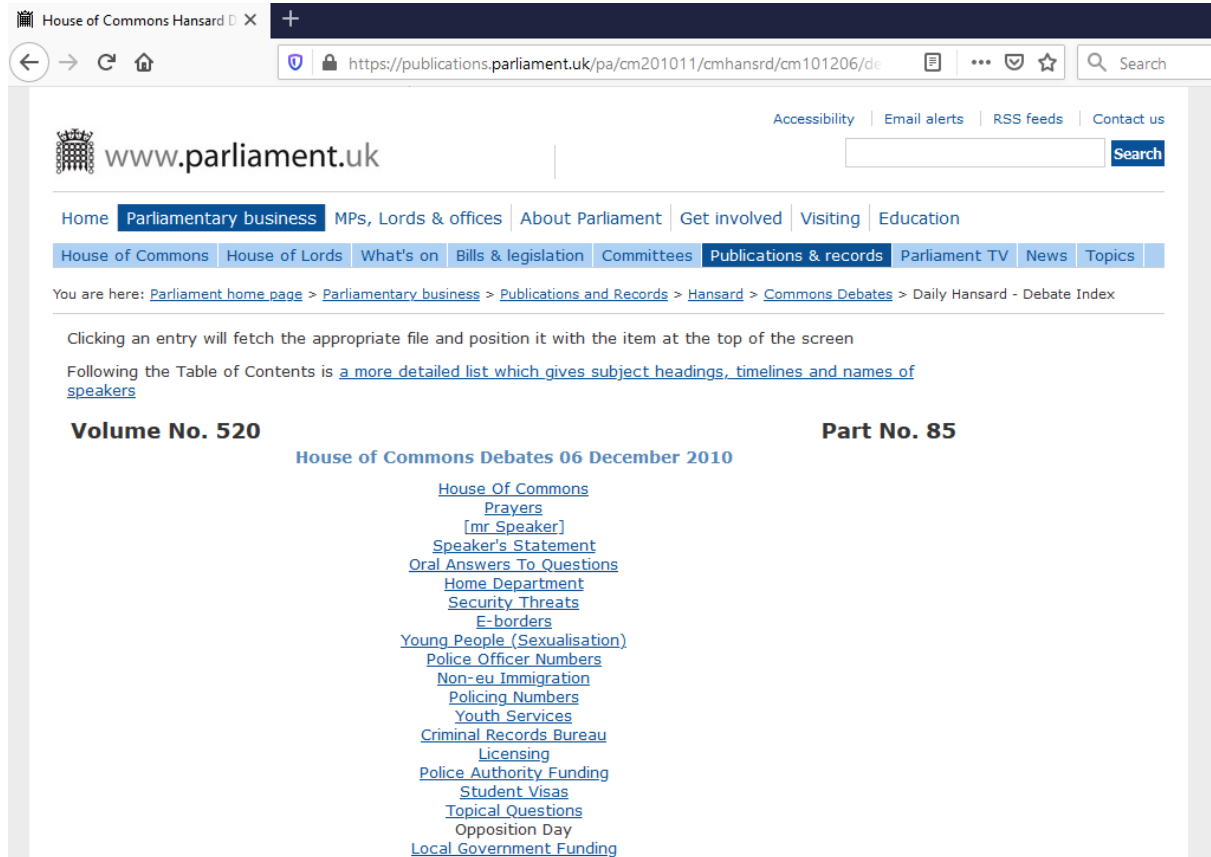
Session 2010-12
Publications on the internet

House of Commons Hansard (House of Commons Daily Debates)

Below is the list of the editions of Hansard for volume 520 that are available for browsing on the Internet. They are arranged in reverse date order. You can also access all other editions of Hansard from here. Clicking on the relevant entry will bring you a list of the contents for that day, from which the full text can be retrieved. If you are unsure of the date use the search engine.

◆ Monday 6 December 2010				
Debates		Written Ministerial Statements	Written Answers	
Oral Answers Debates Contents		Written Ministerial Statements Index	Written Answers Index	
◆ Tuesday 7 December 2010				
Debates	Westminster Hall	Written Ministerial Statements	Written Answers	Petitions
Oral Answers Debates Contents		Written Ministerial Statements Index	Written Answers Index	Petitions Index

Figure 5.6: Second-level index page for Commons vol. 520



With the larger transcript files and detailed index, there was no need for this script to search for and download 'Next section' pages. The time taken to process a volume of Hansard using method C was similar to that for method B.

5.8 Exceptions to methods A-C

When working with a large volume of digital archive data, it was inevitable that there would be anomalies that required some data to be processed in non-standard ways. Where I encountered an anomaly, I considered first whether I could modify the script to overcome it. As such, my scripts were subject to a process of continual refinement throughout the time I worked with them. This enabled me to overcome the following exceptions:

- A character encoding error which interrupted the processing of a volume;
- URLs for index and transcript files for a small number of volumes being in non-standard formats;
- ‘Internal Server Error’ messages where the UK Parliament website was – for unexplained reasons – unable to provide a small number of files I had requested; and
- Variation in date formats between time periods and between Commons and Lords Hansard.

Other cases required more manual intervention to ensure that I obtained the required data wherever possible. These were:

- An indexing anomaly where running the standard script for one volume instead returned index and transcript files for several other volumes. I overcame this by writing a bespoke script;
- Hyperlinks being missing from some index entries for one volume. This was less significant than it first appeared, as many of the missing hyperlinks were present elsewhere in the index;
- .XML files being missing for three volumes, with the result that I had to use alternative methods to compile the data; and
- Ministers’ written answers to questions being missing from nine volumes. The answers were available via another part of UK Parliament website.

Full details of each exception and how they were resolved are given in Appendix C.

5.9 Cleansing and tagging of data

Two main steps were needed to make the outputs of methods A-C ready for inclusion in the corpus: to cleanse them of unwanted contributions and to tag the data in a way that would facilitate analysis.

The presence of unwanted contributions was a consequence of inconsistency in how members' names were presented in Hansard. The solution, therefore, was to standardise their names such that there was a single name tag for each member, in the form of <Member: William Hague>. I approached this by writing a script to list every existing unique member tag in the corpus. A second script then replaced each non-standard tag attached to wanted contributions with the standard version and produced a new output file for each volume containing only those contributions.

It was not necessary to standardise the tags of members whose contributions were not wanted, but a peculiarity of Hansard's naming convention meant that I had to take care not to truncate the contributions of wanted members. The following extracts illustrate this:

- (i) <Date: 2003-02-26> <Member: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mike O'Brien)> <Contribution:> This has been a fine debate [...]
 - (j) <Date: 2003-02-26> <Member: Mr. O'Brien> <Contribution:> If I may proceed for a moment [...]
 - (k) <Date: 2003-03-05> <Member: Mr. Stephen O'Brien (Eddisbury)> <Contribution:> If he will make a statement on the number of parish councillors [...]
 - (l) <Date: 2003-03-05> <Member: Mr. O'Brien> <Contribution:> The Minister's answer is proof [...]
- (Commons vol. 400)

This volume contains contributions from three MPs with the surname O'Brien: Bill, Mike and Stephen. Only Mike O'Brien is a Foreign Office minister and therefore only his contributions are wanted. When each of the three makes their first contribution, Hansard identifies them by their first name and surname. In subsequent contributions they are introduced by their surname only, until either another O'Brien speaks or that item of parliamentary business ends. As a result, some contributions tagged as <Member: Mr. O'Brien> are wanted and others are not. I overcame this by

removing the line breaks before the contributions where no first name was given, to append these lines to the line in which it was given. I then removed the redundant tags that appeared in the middle of these lines. This meant that, for example, Mike O'Brien's answers to questions on a range of topics would appear as if they were a single contribution. I considered this a minor compromise compared to omitting any wanted contributions or including any that were unwanted.

To complete the tagging of the output files, I added tags indicating the House in which the contribution was made and volume of Hansard in which it was found. The information required for these tags was derived from the filename of each output file. With these additions, every contribution in the corpus was tagged in the following way:

(m) <House: Commons> <Volume: cmvol400> <Date: 2003-02-25> <Member: Denis MacShane>

This country does not have a tradition of plebiscites that allow populists to range over plebiscitary politics, using their weekly magazines to pump out endless anti-European propaganda.

In total six scripts were used to cleanse the corpus:

- Corpus Cleansing Scripts 1 and 2 standardise the format of name tags for ministers in the Commons and Lords respectively;
- Corpus Cleansing Scripts 3 and 4 extract the final selection of contributions for inclusion in the corpus for the Commons and Lords respectively;
- Where Hansard divides a volume into more than one Part, Corpus Cleansing Scripts 5 combines these parts into a single file; and
- Corpus Cleansing Script 6 corrects character encoding errors.

5.10 Integrity of the corpus

In view of the complexities noted in this chapter, capturing 100% of wanted contributions in their entirety and without errors is not a realistic aim and nor is it necessary in order to identify long-term change in ministers' lexical choices. Instead, the standard sought is as follows:

1. At least 95% of wanted contributions are included in the corpus;
2. At least 95% of contributions included are complete, free from typographic inaccuracies, and are tagged correctly; and
3. No more than 5% of contributions included in the corpus consist of extraneously material, such as contributions of members other than Foreign Office ministers.

Following the terminology of Perry et al. (1955), the first of these criteria equates to 95% recall, while the third equates to 95% precision. The second criterion overlaps both categories and is essentially a measure of the quality of the data. Errors in contributions include both those which are present in Hansard and those introduced during the creation of the corpus. Each time an error was discovered, I assessed its impact and decided either to correct or to tolerate it, balancing the seriousness of the issue with the complexity of making the correction.

The corpus passed through nine iterations before I was satisfied that it met my criteria and this became the final version on which the analysis presented in this thesis is based. During the process of analysis some further errors emerged, but I judged that these did not necessitate the creation of a tenth iteration of the corpus as there was no serious violation of the criteria specified above. Tables 5.2 to 5.4 show the errors known to exist in the corpus as analysed and the rationale for tolerating them.

Table 5.2: Wanted material omitted from the corpus

No.	Issue	Impact	Response
5.2.1	Volumes processed using method A contain misspellings, probably as a result of characters being misread when these volumes of Hansard were digitised.	Where a member's surname/title is affected (e.g. Geoff Hoon is identified as Geoff 'Hocn' at one point) their contribution is missing from the corpus. Also results in some contributions containing typographic inaccuracies - see impact noted in Table 5.3.	No simple way of correcting these errors so they are tolerated. Manual verification of corpus presented later in this chapter suggests the impact is small.
5.2.2	In method B, some index entries do not link to the first file associated with that item of business.	Some material associated with that item of business could be missing from the corpus.	No actual cases identified, so no action taken.
5.2.3	In method C, approx. 25 transcript files missing as the UK Parliament server returned an 'internal server error' message.	Affects part of one volume of Hansard only. If any of these transcripts included contributions from Foreign Office ministers, these would be missing from the corpus.	Could be overcome by checking against hard copy Hansard and digitising any missing material. However, quantity of any missing material likely to be very small so no action taken.
5.2.4	Contributions of Douglas Alexander from 21 September 2005 to 6 May 2006 are omitted in error.	Material missing from corpus, mainly relating to Europe. During same period in previous year, Alexander's contributions totalled approx. 12,000 words.	Discovered at a late stage of analysis. Adding the missing material to the corpus would have required extensive re-running of frequency calculations. Caused by an error in the script. No action taken.

Table 5.3: Material included in the corpus that is incomplete, contains typographic inaccuracies or is incorrectly tagged

No.	Issue	Impact	Response
5.3.1	Volumes processed using method A contain misspellings, probably as a result of characters being misread when these volumes of Hansard were digitised.	Where a Word selected for analysis is misspelt, this token will not be included in frequency count data.	No simple way of correcting these errors so they are tolerated. Manual verification of corpus presented later in this chapter suggests the impact is small.
5.3.2	For volumes processed using method B, some speeches span two or more transcript files, but Hansard does not always restate the member's name at the beginning of the new transcript file.	Some contributions intended for inclusion in the corpus are truncated, but in practice only one instance of this observed.	In principle could amend code to include first contribution in each file unless marked with the name of a member whose contributions are not wanted. In practice the additional complexity this would bring is not justified by the number of cases in which the issue may occur.
5.3.3	Some (but not all) volumes created using method C contain character encoding errors which result in some apostrophes and less common punctuation marks being rendered incorrectly.	<p>May cause inaccuracies in frequency data. For example, <i>UK's</i> would normally be counted as a token of <i>UK</i> as the frequency analysis script replaces each punctuation mark with a space. This change is not applied to the incorrectly rendered form <i>UKâ€™s</i>, which is therefore not counted as a token of <i>UK</i>.</p> <p>Most instances affect words that were not selected for analysis and would not have been selected even in the absence of this error. However, for selected words that can be followed an apostrophe, approx. 8% of otherwise valid tokens are not counted because of this error¹³.</p>	A new iteration of the corpus could be produced with relative ease to correct these errors but re-running the frequency calculations would be much more time-consuming. As all of the words selected for analysis display a much larger change in frequency than the difference caused by the errors, this would be unlikely to materially change the findings of this research. For this reason the only action taken is to correct affected contributions where they are given as examples of ministers' discourse.
5.3.4	Rare instances of character encoding errors affecting punctuation marks in volumes created using methods A and B.	As above but on a much smaller scale.	As above.

¹³ Based on a check of all contributions containing *regime*, *women* and *uk* in 2014. In total 5,252 tokens of these words were counted correctly and 441 were omitted.

Table 5.4: Extraneous material included in the corpus

No.	Issue	Impact	Response
5.4.1	Approx. 105,000 words of contributions by Ian Pearson wrongly included in corpus between 10 May 2006 (after he had left the Foreign Office) and 21 June 2007.	In his subsequent role at the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, Pearson's contributions do not contain as many 'foreign policy words' as his FCO contributions. Their inclusion reduces the frequency values for foreign policy words in 2006-7. This causes a visible drop in the frequency data for some of the words discussed in the analysis chapters.	As the error affects data from two years only and occurs around the middle of the period studied, it has little impact on the long-term lexical trends that this thesis focuses on. No action taken.
5.4.2	Approx. 148,000 words of contributions of opposition MP Jeremy Browne wrongly included in corpus between 25 June 2007 and 30 March 2010.	Smaller impact than in the case of Pearson as Browne's extraneous material is spread over four calendar years. Approx. 10,000 words of Browne's extraneous material are from 2007 and this further contributes to the drop in data for that year noted above.	Caused by partial match against surname of Gordon Brown, whose contributions as Prime Minister I initially intended to include in the corpus. As above, little impact on long-term trends so no action taken.
5.4.3	Approx. 14,000 words of contributions of opposition MP Kim Howells from 1989 wrongly included in the corpus.	Modestly reduces the frequency values for foreign policy words in 1989.	Caused by a partial match against surname of Geoffrey Howe. No action taken.
5.4.4	Contributions of Foreign Office ministers in vol. 554 but are duplicated in vols. 555-559, tagged with those new volume numbers. Duplicate contributions total approx. 14,000 words.	Modestly increases the frequency values for words that appear in the duplicate contributions.	Caused by an error in the script. No action taken.
5.4.5	Approx. 3,000 words of contributions of Gillian Merron wrongly included in corpus from the day of her move from the Department for International Development to FCO (6 October 2008).	Minimal impact due to the low word count of the extraneous contributions. Error occurred as a result of DfID publishing several written answers in Merron's name on the day she moved to FCO.	No action taken.

The errors noted above, while undesired, are not of great concern. The data suggests that the integrity of the corpus is well within the specified tolerance in respect of the inclusion of wanted material as the 12,000 words of missing contributions identified represent less than 0.01% of the total. Extraneous or duplicated material is more prevalent but again within the tolerance as the 248,000 words amount to 1.7% of the total size of the corpus. The presence of character encoding errors may mean that typographic errors are present in more than 5% of contributions in the corpus as a whole and they are certainly present in more than 5% of contributions in some years later in the period. This error could have been identified at an earlier stage through closer manual checking of the corpus files and the error could then have been corrected or reduced relatively easily. However, as it was not detected until part way through the analysis of the corpus, there would have been a considerable time cost in updating all of the frequency data obtained up to that point.

To gain further assurance of the integrity of the corpus, I selected ten volumes of Hansard in which I thought there was likely to be a higher rate of errors, either because they had not been straightforward to process, or because the output files were unusually small. This included volumes from Commons and Lords Hansard, produced using methods A, B and C. I manually checked a sample of 520 contributions from these volumes against hard copy editions of Hansard. The results of this exercise are given in Table 5.5 and show that 99% of wanted contributions were included in the corpus and 97% were complete and were tagged correctly. Reassuringly, none of these contributions contained typographic errors. The number of extraneous contributions found amounted to just over 5% of the total. Taken together with the evidence already discussed, this gives confidence that the corpus is of sufficient integrity for the purposes of the research.

Table 5.5: Results of verification of corpus against hard copy editions of Hansard

House	Vol.	Contribs. checked	Contribs. omitted	Contribs. complete	Typographic errors	Tags correct	Extraneous contribs.
Commons	294	97	3	94	0	94	0
	436	10	0	10	0	10	1
	437	10	0	10	0	10	0
	451	24	0	24	0	24	1
	499	16	0	15	0	16	0
	592	31	0	31	0	31	14
Lords	500	26	0	26	0	17	0
	686	51	0	49	0	51	0
	700	172	0	170	0	172	0
	711	83	0	79	0	83	11
TOTALS	-	520	3	508	0	508	27

5.11 Overview of the corpus

The resulting corpus brings together a subset of Hansard data in a unique way and provides the basis for highly focused analysis of foreign policy discourse. The tagging applied to each contribution also facilitates forms of analysis that would be difficult or impossible to carry out if accessing Hansard transcripts via existing routes. To create the corpus, 111,405 files totalling 8.8GB of data were downloaded from the UK Parliament website. After filtering out unwanted material and cleansing and tagging the data, the size of the corpus is 108MB or 16,552,917 words. It contains 62,468 unique words (including proper nouns and versions of words containing typographic errors but excluding tags). As Table 5.6 shows, approximately two thirds of the corpus is made up of material from the Commons and one third from the Lords.

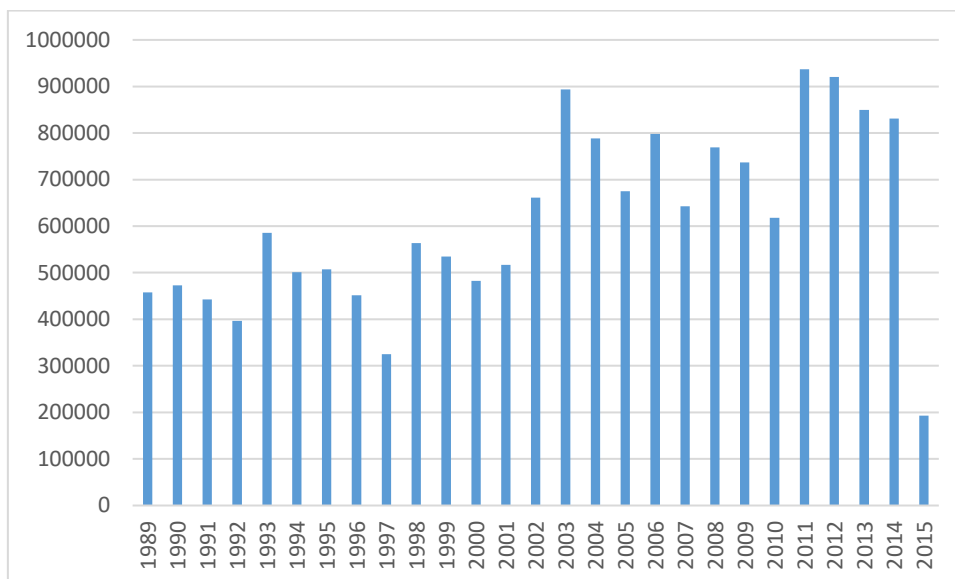
Table 5.6: Breakdown of corpus between Commons and Lords Hansard material

	Commons	Lords	Total
Contributions	95,866	29,865	125,731
Words	11,896,421	4,656,496	16,552,917
Files¹⁴	451	258	709
File size	78MB	30MB	108MB

The word count of ministers' contributions follows a rising trend over the period studied, increasing from less than 500,000 words per year at the beginning of the period to over 800,000 words per year at the end. In years in which a General Election takes place and parliament consequently sits for fewer days, there is usually a dip in the word count, as seen in 1992, 1997, 2005 and 2010 (but not 2001). Figure 5.7 shows the word count for the contributions included in the corpus in each year.

¹⁴ In the corpus, one file equates to one numbered volume of Hansard. Some volumes of Hansard are published in two bound volumes due to their size, but these are combined into a single file in the corpus.

Figure 5.7: Word count of contributions included in the corpus, 1989-2015¹⁵



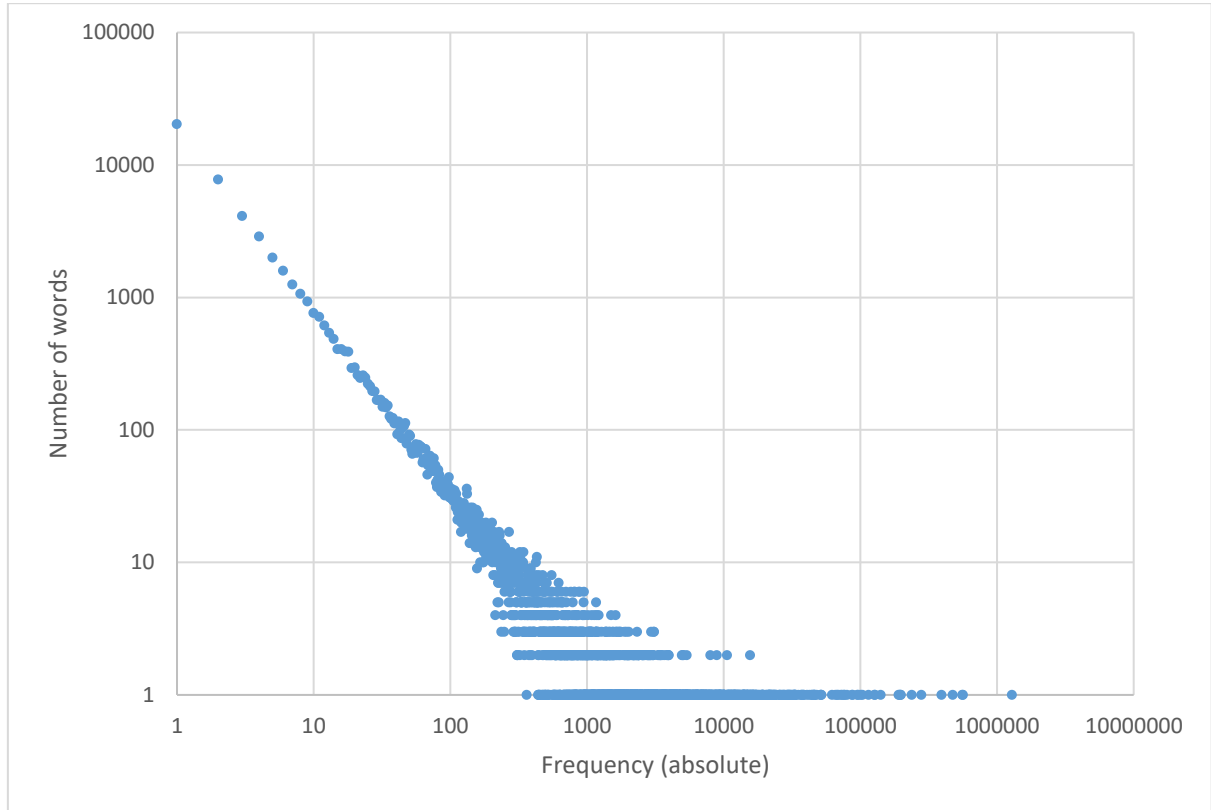
Of the 62,468 unique words contained in the corpus, words with very low absolute frequencies are much more common than words with very high absolute frequencies. As such the word frequency data for the corpus follows Zipf's law, which states that for many types of data studied in the physical and social sciences, there is an inverse relationship between rank and frequency. This inverse relationship has been observed in word frequency data (Thurner et al. 2015) and its existence in the present corpus is shown in Figure 5.8 and the data table for the present chapter¹⁶. In total 20,355 words are found once only in the corpus (represented by the data point closest to the top left corner of Figure 5.8). By contrast, only 765 words are found ten times and only 31 words are found 100 times. The data point furthest to the lower right corner of the figure represents the word *the*, which is by far the most frequent word in the corpus with 1,286,685 tokens.

¹⁵ The word count for 2015 is lower than in any other year due to only part of that year's data (up to the general election) being included in the corpus.

¹⁶ Data tables relating to this and other chapters of this thesis are available to view online as indicated in the front matter.

Figure 5.8: Distribution of absolute word frequencies in the corpus

Shown using a logarithmic scale on the vertical and horizontal axes



6. METHODOLOGY: ANALYSING THE CORPUS

6.1 Introduction

The analysis carried out in this thesis seeks to answer the research questions via a data-driven and descriptive methodology, focusing on statistically large changes in the frequency of words used by ministers during the period studied. This focus on data is embedded more deeply into the methodology than is the case in some corpus linguistic research. However, obtaining data on lexical frequency change is not the sole aim. The results of the data analysis are also seen as indicators of factors driving lexical change and, by extension, the scope and focus of UK foreign policy discourse. Qualitative analysis of ministers' discourse and discussion of possible reasons for the changes observed therefore also form part of this thesis.

This chapter describes the methodological choices made in relation to analysing the corpus. In particular, it sets out:

1. The conceptual approach adopted, including the use of three 'perspectives' to gain varied insights into lexical change;
2. Why the use of an external reference corpus is largely limited to one chapter of the analysis;
3. Methodological considerations in defining a 'word';
4. The method used to calculate the frequency of words;
5. What analytic software was selected and why;
6. Why and how a small number of words were selected for detailed analysis;
7. Why and how the selected words were grouped into themes;
8. What analytic tests were used; and
9. Errors and issues identified during analysis.

The results of the analysis are set out in chapters 7-13, after which a further chapter reflects on methodological issues arising from carrying out the analysis (chapter 14).

6.2 Conceptual approach

As this thesis seeks to identify what lexical change took place in ministers' discourse during the period, it does not make any prior assumptions about what words should be analysed. Instead, words are selected for analysis on the basis that they display a large statistical change in frequency over time. The starting point for this approach is to divide the data into time-sequential parts and compare one part with another. With the corpus used in this research, this could be done in a number of ways: for example by calendar year, parliamentary session, or at the point when ministers or an entire government change. Each approach has its merits, and each would be likely to result in the identification of a different set of words and phrases which have risen or fallen in frequency when comparing one period with another.

Rather than selecting words for analysis in a single way, three distinct approaches are used and will be referred to as three 'perspectives':

1. In Perspective One, the frequency of every Word is calculated for the first and last five complete years covered by the corpus, i.e. 1989-1993 and 2010-2014. From this, I produced a list of the 100 words that displayed the greatest rise in frequency, and the 100 that displayed the greatest fall. Comparing five-year periods instead of single years means that short-term fluctuations in word frequency have less effect on the selection.
2. Perspective Two focuses on the lexical choices of the ten individuals who held the post of Foreign Secretary between 1989 and 2015, with the contributions of all other Foreign Office ministers excluded. In this perspective, the frequency of each Word in the discourse of each individual Foreign Secretary is compared with the overall frequency of that item across the

discourse of the ten Foreign Secretaries. This makes it possible to identify the words which display the highest variance in one individual's discourse compared to the group as a whole.

3. In Perspective Three, the contributions of all Foreign Office ministers are included but the corpus is divided where a change of governing party or parties occurs. This perspective identifies words with the highest variance in frequency between the periods of office of any one government and the corpus as a whole.

Table 6.1 summarises these three perspectives.

Table 6.1: Overview of the three perspectives from which the corpus is analysed

Perspective	Purpose	Subcorpus	Comparison corpus	Notes
1. Lexical change between beginning and end of period	To understand how the lexis of the UK government's foreign policy discourse has changed over time	First five years (1989-1993)	Last five full years (2010-2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcorpus and Comparison corpus extracted using Date tag • Part-year's data from 2015 excluded • Data points for every full year (x26) used in detailed analysis
2. Lexis of each Foreign Secretary	To understand what is lexically distinctive in each Foreign Secretary's discourse	Each individual FS's contributions (x10)	Contributions of all FSs combined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcorpora extracted using Member tag • For the first and last holders of the post during the period covered by the corpus (Howe and Hammond), only part of their period of office is included
3. Lexical change by governing party/parties	To understand distinctive lexical characteristics of the foreign policy discourse of the Conservative, Labour and coalition governments	Contributions made by ministers belonging to each government (x3)	Contributions of ministers belonging to all governments combined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcorpora extracted using Volume tag as Hansard begins a new volume after each election

Millar (2009) warns that diachronic studies based solely on two data points may present an inaccurate picture as trends in language change are often not unidirectional. Having only two data points also offers only limited insight into the range of frequencies that any word may have, as the word's highest and lowest points of frequency may occur at points other than those chosen for the diachronic comparison. Furthermore, diachronic analysis does not reveal how widely dispersed a word is in a corpus, nor whether a large change in the frequency of a Word is simply the result of 'burstiness' (Church and Gale 1995), where a word has a much higher frequency in one or more parts of a corpus than it does in the whole.

The use of the three perspectives mitigates the risks described above. A word which displays a large rise in frequency followed by an equivalent fall would not be selected for analysis through perspective one but could be through perspectives two or three. For each selected Word, 26 data points are used for the detailed analysis, giving a clearer picture of the range and dispersion of the word, and allowing long-term trends to be distinguished from short-term peaks in frequency and cyclical changes.

The approach to analysis is the same for all three perspectives and comprises the following steps:

1. To create subcorpora of the type needed for that perspective (one subcorpus per year, per Foreign Secretary, or per period of office of a governing party/parties);
2. To create a word list from the complete set of contributions included in that perspective;
3. To carry out frequency analysis for every word in the word list, calculating the frequency of each word in each subcorpus and in total;
4. To identify a small number of words which show a large change in frequency and which I judge to be significant in the articulation of foreign policy (the basis for which is explained below); and
5. To carry out in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of these items.

The interpretation of results has also benefitted from discussion with informed individuals in linguistics and beyond. In academic circles, these included my peers and supervisors at the University of Birmingham and delegates at conferences at which I presented aspects of the work (the Corpora and Discourse conference in 2020, the ICAME corpus linguistics conference in 2021 and the Political Studies Association conference in 2022). Beyond academia, discussions with John Vice (House of Lords Hansard Editor) increased my understanding of Hansard's transcription practices and the workings of parliament. Later in the project, meetings with the Historians of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office helped me to set my emerging conclusions in context. They also gave me the opportunity to present and discuss the findings of chapter 12 to an audience of over 100 FCDO staff in the form of a lunchtime lecture. Engaging more widely than is sometimes the practice of corpus linguists proved valuable in refining and validating my work.

Due to the size of the corpus, the first three steps above require computer processing of the data. In these steps, there is no element of human judgement involved as to which words have a particular significance. In step four, the data produced in the earlier steps is subject to human judgement to identify which words to analyse in depth. Informed intervention is essential here as the fact that a word may show a large rise or fall in frequency does not necessarily mean it has a particular significance in ministers' foreign policy discourse. For example, the word *internet* rises in frequency, reflecting the growth of the internet during the period. This development might be considered incidental, or it might have a greater significance if, for example, ministers described using the internet as a channel through which to exert diplomatic influence. The list of words which display the greatest rise or fall in frequency is therefore treated as a shortlist from which to make informed decisions about which words to take forward for detailed analysis. The ability to produce more detailed frequency data for items of potential interest is therefore essential when making these decisions.

Step five entails detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the selected words, both individually and in the bigrams, longer strings and wider context in which they occur. The results of this analysis provide the starting point for interpretation of their significance in the UK government's foreign policy discourse.

6.3 Use of external reference corpora

This study tracks lexical change within a single discourse type by comparing subsets of data from the corpus. It does not, for example, aim to contrast political discourse with media discourse, or the discourse of parliamentarians in two different countries. As such, there is no need to use an external reference corpus in order to answer the research questions. As well as being unnecessary, such an approach could produce misleading results where words in general use have a more specialised meaning in foreign policy discourse. However, as a later section of this chapter will explain, nine of the words selected for detailed analysis are common grammatical words such as *and* and *will*. These words display a large change in frequency but are assumed not to have a specialised meaning. In the case of these words, a comparison is made with the British National Corpus (BNC Consortium 2015) to establish whether their frequency pattern in foreign policy discourse mirrors or differs from that seen in general usage. Data from the Hansard at Huddersfield interface is also used in a small number of cases to shed additional light on changes in lexical frequency observed in this thesis.

6.4 Methodological considerations in defining a 'word'

This thesis follows Hunston and Francis' definition of an orthographic word being "a sequence of characters bounded by spaces" (2000: 14), as discussed in section 2.2. Methodologically, there are choices to be made about how to implement this definition, with all possible approaches having undesired consequences. As Gries (2009: 1236) notes, it is "far from clear how to define to a

computer what a word is". If a single letter is not classed as a word, 'a' is excluded despite its high frequency in the English language. Conversely if a single letter is permitted, it is classed as a word when denoting an item in a list, even though one might not consider it to have the function of a word in that case. If all characters are permitted as part of the sequence making up a word, two otherwise identical words are treated differently simply because one is followed by a full stop. Furthermore, where Hansard transcribers use a dash to introduce a parenthetical statement, there is not always a space to either side¹⁷. If a sequence containing a numerical character is not permitted, the name of the 'G7' group of industrialised countries is not considered to be a word.

Pragmatism is therefore needed, and for the purposes of this research, the following approach is taken:

- (i) Every non-alphanumeric character is replaced with a space. This creates some anomalies such as 'didn't' being rendered as 'didn t', but avoids other difficulties such as that of the dash;
- (ii) Every alphanumeric character is permitted;
- (iii) Any single alphanumeric character or string of alphanumeric characters is classed as a word; and
- (iv) The boundaries of a word are considered to be the beginning or end of a line of text or a space.

¹⁷ For example, a contribution by David Miliband is reported as "In Canada, there is a similar degree of unity about the Afghan mission as there is in this country-except in Canada the unity is against the participation of Canadian forces" (Commons Hansard, volume 501, 23 November 2009).

6.5 Method of calculating frequency

The simplest form of frequency analysis to use in this research would be absolute frequency, i.e. to count the number of times a given word is used in a year, in the contributions any one Foreign Secretary, or during the period of office of a government. However, as there is an upward trend in the word count of ministers' contributions over the period, this would show a rise in the frequency of many words simply because the overall scale of the discourse has increased. Instead, a more satisfactory approach is to normalise frequencies, by calculating the frequency of each word relative to the word count of the set of data in which it is found. For example, if a word occurs 50 times in a given year, and ministers' contributions in that year total 500,000 words, the frequency of the word can be expressed as 10 tokens per 100,000 words, 100 tokens per million words or any other equivalent ratio. For the words analysed in this thesis, expressing data as tokens per million words produces mainly two and three-figure values that are easy to read. Values are therefore expressed in this form and will be referred to as tokens per million or 'tpm'.

The change in tpm value of a Word can be expressed in absolute or percentage terms. For example, a word that has a frequency of 50 tpm during the first five years of the period and 75 tpm during the last five years can be described as having risen in frequency by 25 tpm, or by 50%. Each of these methods produces different results in respect of which words are identified as having the largest change in frequency. Using the absolute method, a word which rises in frequency from 50 to 75 tpm displays a larger change in frequency (+25 tpm) than one which rises from 5 to 10 tpm (+5 tpm). However, the reverse is true when using the percentage method: the first word increases in frequency by 50%; the second by 100%. For the purposes of this thesis, a large change is of greater interest than a large percentage change as it points more consistently to a major lexical shift in ministers' discourse.

Using the absolute method also avoids the difficulty identified by Kilgarriff (2009) of how to treat words with a value of zero, such as a word that has a frequency of 0 tpm at the beginning of the period and 100 tpm at the end. No percentage value can be calculated for this change unless the zero – and for consistency every value in the dataset – is increased by a pre-determined figure. However, a large percentage change in frequency may indicate an area of rapid growth in ministers' discourse, and zero values may be of interest if they relate to the first appearance or the disappearance of a word. As such, these types of changes will also be discussed in the analysis chapters where they provide a particular insight.

In corpus linguistics, tests of statistical significance may be used to measure how likely it is that the differences between two corpora have arisen by chance (McEnery et al. 2010: 55). A word is considered to be statistically significant or 'key' if it "occurs with unusual frequency in a given text [...] by comparison with a reference corpus of some kind" (Scott 1997: 236). For the present research, I considered using two common measures of keyness – the chi-square test and the log likelihood test¹⁸. Either of these tests could be used to identify words with a statistically significant change in frequency by comparing two subsets of data from the corpus. These techniques would be particularly useful if the research aimed to rank the keyness of words in the corpus as a means of determining which met a stated threshold value. However, that is not the case here. The purpose of the frequency analysis carried out in this thesis is (i) to provide a shortlist of the words with large changes of frequency as a basis on which to select a relatively small number for detailed analysis; and (ii) to track the changing frequency of those words over the period. As such, using keyness analysis would add to the mathematical complexity of the research and make it less accessible to non-specialists without offering any clear advantages over simple measures of frequency change.

¹⁸ The chi-square and log-likelihood tests are both null-hypothesis tests, meaning that they test whether two hypotheses are the same, and therefore whether any observed difference is due to chance alone. The results of either test express as a probability whether this is the case or not.


6.6 Analytic tools


The size of the corpus created for this research requires capable analytic tools, either in the form of 'off the shelf' corpus linguistics software in which frequency analysis, collocate analysis and the production of concordances could be carried out through a series of button presses; or by creating bespoke scripts to automate these functions. Three 'off the shelf' packages were evaluated: AntConc (Anthony 2022), WordSmith Tools (Scott 2020) and Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2020); while Python (Python Software Foundation 2018) and R (R Project 2022) were considered for the bespoke approach. As Table 6.2 shows, this evaluation took into account ten factors relating to the functional capability of the software; whether the size of the corpus would overload the software; and whether additional costs would be incurred as a result of needing to buy a software licence or new hardware.


Table 6.2: Evaluation of analytic software

Evaluation factor	AntConc	WordSmith Tools	Sketch Engine	Python	R	Comments
1. Requires writing of code	N	N	N	Y	Y	
2. Ability to select rows from files by tag	N	Y	Y	*	*	
3. Ability to produce word list	Y	Y	Y	*	*	
4. Ability to produce frequency analysis for each word in list and longer strings	N	Y	Y	*	*	AntConc unable to produce frequency analysis for strings longer than one word
5. Compare data on subcorpus and reference corpus	Limited	Limited	Y	*	*	AntConc and WordSmith: Data comparison in tool limited to keyword analysis only
6. Produce data tables to export	Limited	Limited	Y	*	*	AntConc: Data export is by copying and pasting only
7. Computes data without holding complete dataset in memory	N	N	Y	*	*	
8. Produce data visualisations to export	N	N	Y	*	*	AntConc and WordSmith have very limited data visualisation capabilities
9. Requires payment for software	N	N	Y	N	N	
10. Requires specialist hardware or operating system	N	N	N	N	N	

*Function is not built in but can be created by writing code.

 Characteristic which makes the tool unsuitable for the requirements of this research

 Characteristic which may be considered a disadvantage but can be overcome

 Characteristic which is advantageous for this research

This evaluation revealed a number of limitations with off-the-shelf analytic packages. AntConc and WordSmith Tools both hold the user's corpus file(s) in the memory of the user's computer whilst performing analysis. This is a satisfactory model when working with a small corpus, but is less suited to a larger dataset as when the computer's memory capacity is full, the processing of the data slows dramatically and the system may freeze. Along with some functional limitations, this meant that AntConc and WordSmith Tools did not meet the needs of this research.

The more sophisticated capabilities of Sketch Engine would have made it a more suitable package, and it avoids the problem of memory overload as the researcher's data is uploaded for analysis on the company's servers. It would almost certainly have been possible to carry out the kind of analysis required for this thesis using Sketch Engine, either exclusively or in combination with other off-the-shelf packages. However, the size of the corpus used in this research would necessitate paying a subscription.

Using off-the-shelf tools also brings the risk that the software package "largely dictates what corpus linguistics research methods are available to a researcher" (Anthony 2013: 1). Where tools dictate methods, this inevitably introduces some compromises into the research. The alternative approach of writing scripts allows the researcher the freedom to design bespoke tools for the task at hand, subject to them having or developing the necessary coding skills. This was a significant factor in favour of using Python or R, and although writing scripts required a substantial initial investment of time, it offered advantages later as it was possible to continuously refine and rerun the analysis until a late stage in the research. Both Python and R are free to download and run on the user's machine. Provided the scripts are written appropriately, there is no need for the whole corpus to be held in memory at any time.

There are also considerations of research transparency which are central to the growth of the 'open science' movement in academia. The 'Transparency and Openness Promotion Guidelines' of the

Center for Open Science (Center for Open Science 2022) advocate researchers taking steps such as publishing their data and analytic code in a trusted repository, to make their research replicable and verifiable. This is straightforward to achieve if the analysis is carried out using Python or R as another researcher could run the same scripts against the same data and examine it for any faults. To achieve similar transparency with any of the other packages, the researcher would have to provide a lengthy click-by-click description of how they had used the tool, and even then it might not be clear exactly how the package was processing the data. Balancing all of these factors, the investment of time required to write analytic code appeared justified. R might have achieved the required results in fewer lines of code, but my existing familiarity with Python meant I could write them faster, and I therefore chose to use Python for my analysis.

6.7 Criteria for selecting words for analysis

To allow for detailed investigation, the number of words selected for analysis in this thesis is deliberately small. These words have been selected on the basis that they display a large change in frequency in the data from one or more of the perspectives described earlier in this chapter, i.e. by identifying differences in frequency between the first five and last five full years of the period; between the contributions of each of ten Foreign Secretaries; and between each of three governments.

I selected a Word for investigation if (i) I judged the word to be significant in the articulation of foreign policy; and (ii) it met any one of the following criteria:

- A. In Perspective One, it was among the 100 words which displayed the greatest rise in frequency.
- B. In Perspective One, it was among the 100 words which displayed the greatest fall in frequency.

- C. In Perspective Two, it was among the 50 words which displayed the highest variance in frequency in the discourse of any one Foreign Secretary compared to all ten.
- D. In Perspective Three, it was among the 100 words which displayed the highest variance in frequency in the discourse of any one government compared to all three.

I considered a word to be significant in the articulation of foreign policy if it expressed a meaning that could plausibly be described as being directly connected to matters of foreign policy. For example, I judged that *eu* (the initials of the European Union) had such a connection but that *including* did not (these words displayed, respectively, the 3rd and 13th greatest rise in frequency in Perspective One). For other words, it was less obvious whether such a connection existed. *Women* was also among the top 100 risers in Perspective One, and I selected it for investigation on the basis that an initial review of collocates and concordances would reveal any such connection. As such, my approach to analysis was iterative: I was willing, and through my choice of tools was able, to include words which instinctively seemed relevant, and could stop investigating them at any point if this transpired not to be the case.

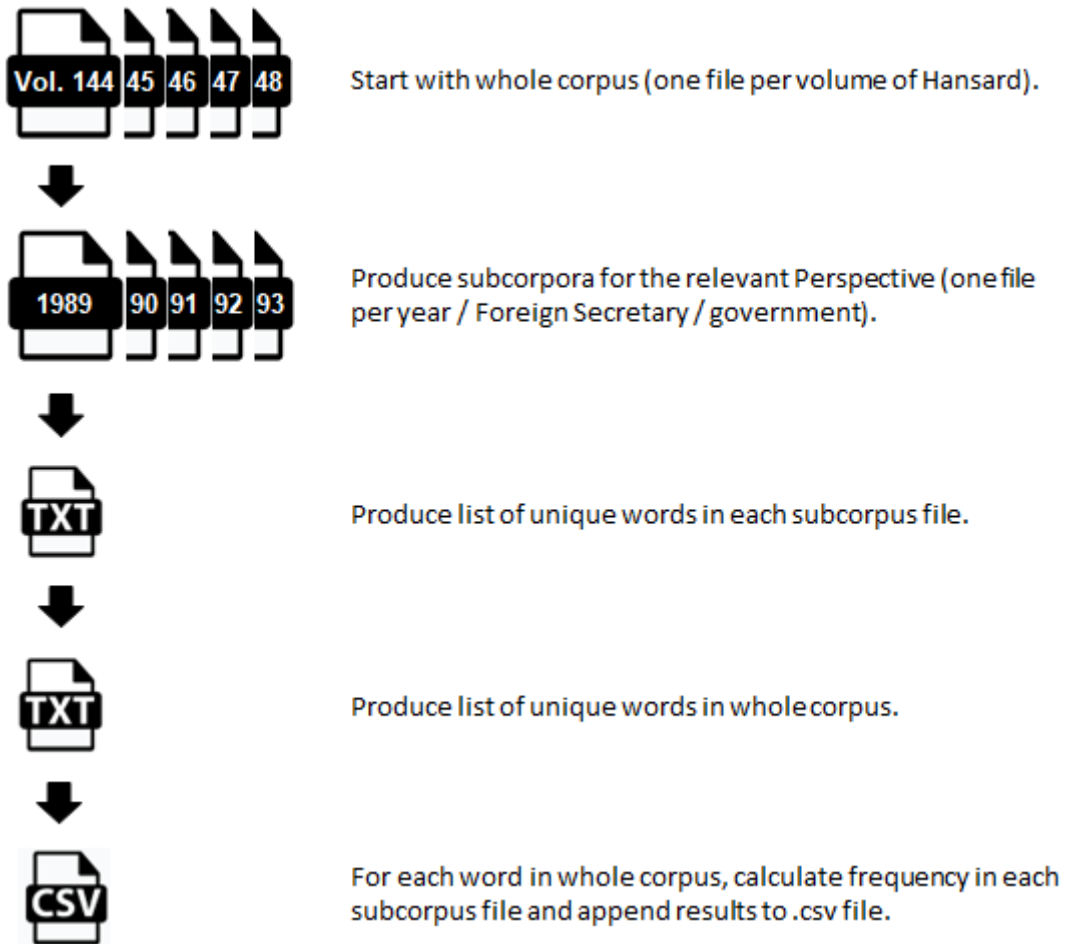
Some words met more than one of the criteria I specified. This was particularly common between Perspectives One and Three, because the first and last five years included in the corpus correlate approximately with the period during which the Conservative and coalition governments held office. I therefore chose not to give special treatment to words that met more than one of the criteria.

In each perspective, most of the words that displayed the greatest rise, fall or variance in frequency were common grammatical words such as pronouns, conjunctions, verb forms, adverbs and particles. Although these words do not suggest a direct connection to foreign policy, I was curious to identify any constructions in which they featured that had a meaning specific to the topic. In other areas of political discourse, I was aware of the significance of phrases such as *law and order*. To my criteria for selecting words for investigation, I therefore added:

- E. In Perspective One, it was among the 15 grammatical words which displayed the greatest rise in frequency.
- F. In Perspective One, it was among the 15 grammatical words which displayed the greatest fall in frequency.

A separate script was used to produce the frequency data for each perspective. These 'Word selection scripts' identify every unique word in the relevant set of corpus data and calculate the frequency data needed to inform the selection of words. Figure 6.1 shows the conceptual design for the scripts.

Figure 6.1: Conceptual approach for Word selection scripts



The full data generated using the scripts is shown in four sets of data tables. The first three of these provide frequency data for every Word in Perspectives One¹⁹, Two²⁰ and Three²¹. The fourth set of data tables shows the data used to select words for analysis²². Using the criteria I had determined, this data informed my selection of 47 words for investigation as shown in Table 6.3.

¹⁹ Data Tables for ch06 (1) - Frequency analysis - Perspective 1 - Year on year change

²⁰ Data Tables for ch06 (2) - Frequency analysis - Perspective 2 - Foreign Secretaries

²¹ Data Tables for ch06 (3) - Frequency analysis - Perspective 3 - Governments

²² Data Tables for ch06 (4) - Data used to select words for investigation

Table 6.3: Words selected for analysis

Category	A		C										D			E	F
	Rise	Fall	Howe	Major	Hurd	Rifkind	Cook	Straw	Beckett	Miliband	Hague	Hammond	Conserv.	Labour	Coalition	Rise	Fall
Aid		X											X				
Assistance		X							X		X		X				
Bilateral													X				
Britain			X			X	X						X				
Brussels														X			
Civil	X														X		
Commonwealth	X														X		
Development		X							X	X	X		X				
Dialogue	X													X			
Environmental		X															
EU	X							X	X	X		X		X	X		
Food		X											X				
Freedom	X														X		
Government	X		X	X		X			X	X		X		X	X		
Human	X										X				X		
Intelligence								X						X			
Military														X			
Nations		X											X				
Police									X					X			
Programme		X											X				
Projects		X											X				
Refugees			X	X									X				
Regime	X										X						
Relief		X											X				
Religious	X														X		
Resolution								X						X			
Rights	X										X				X		
Sanctions												X					
Security	X								X	X		X		X	X		
Sexual	X														X		
Society	X														X		
Terrorism								X						X			
Threat												X					
UK	X								X	X	X	X		X	X		
United		X			X	X		X					X				
Violence	X								X		X				X		
Weapons														X			
Women	X														X		
And									X	X	X	X			X	X	
Be		X	X	X	X	X	X						X				X
I			X	X	X		X	X					X				X
My			X		X			X					X				X
Not					X	X	X						X				X
Shall			X	X	X		X						X				X
That			X	X	X	X	X						X	X			X
This									X	X	X	X			X	X	
With							X				X	X			X	X	

For many of the words selected for analysis, synonyms can be identified. For example, one might consider *liberty* to be a synonym of *freedom*, or *debate* to be a synonym of *dialogue*. Analysing synonyms of the selected words could yield significant results, particularly if this analysis showed that ministers' rising use of one Word was mirrored by a fall in their use of its synonym. This would suggest that a lexical substitution was taking place rather than a given topic becoming a larger or smaller part of the government's foreign policy discourse. However, the identification of synonyms is fraught with difficulty, because the choices made would inevitably be subjective and because of the particular meaning of words in the setting of a parliament. *Debate* is not a satisfactory synonym of *dialogue* in this context, because *debate* is the formal name on a type of event that takes place in the UK parliament, whereas *dialogue* is not. For these reasons, this thesis does not attempt to identify or analyse synonyms of the selected words. Discussion of lexical substitution is therefore limited to substitution between the selected items.

6.8 Grouping words into themes

With 47 words to analyse, a logical means was needed to group the items into themes for the analysis chapters. The 'grammatical' words were one obvious category, so they form a chapter of analysis. The 'foreign policy' words are grouped using a concept which will be referred to as 'excess frequency'. Excess frequency is the additional proportional frequency of a word in a subset of the corpus, above and beyond its frequency in the corpus as a whole. This concept follows Sinclair's observation that "many uses of words and phrases show a tendency to occur in a certain semantic environment" (1991: 112). Beyond linguistics, it is a similar concept to that of 'excess mortality' used by the medical profession, i.e. the additional deaths recorded at a particular time or among a particular group (Ellis 2020).

In this thesis, the purpose of 'excess frequency' is to identify words that are frequently found in the same contributions, because this suggests that such words are connected to one another, either syntactically or thematically. To do this, a subcorpus was created for each of the 37 'foreign policy' words. This contained every contribution in which the selected Word appeared at least once. A script – the 'Theme Identification' script – was then used to calculate the frequency of each of the 37 words in that subcorpus. The conceptual approach for the 'Theme Identification' script is shown as Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Conceptual approach for Theme Identification script

For each of 37 selected lexical items:



Search whole corpus and identify every contribution containing that lexical item.



Create a subcorpus containing only those contributions.



Calculate frequency of each of the 37 selected lexical items in that subcorpus.



Calculate frequency of each of the 37 selected lexical items in the whole corpus.



Calculate excess frequency of each of the 37 selected lexical items in the subcorpus compared to the whole corpus and append results to .csv file.

In addition to obtaining frequency data for the selected words in the relevant subcorpus, the data generated by the script includes a comparison of these tpm values with those of the same words in the corpus as a whole. Using this data, it then calculates the excess frequency of each word in the given subcorpus. The results of the calculations carried out using the script are presented in the final set of data tables for the present chapter²³.

For example, in the subcorpus of contributions containing the word *human*, the word *rights* has a frequency of 6,925 tpm. The frequency of *rights* in the corpus as a whole is 2,006 tpm, meaning that it has an excess frequency of 4,919 tpm in the *human* subcorpus. This value makes *rights* the Word with the highest excess frequency in the *human* subcorpus; and conversely *human* has the highest excess frequency in the *rights* subcorpus at 5,336 tpm. This indicates – unsurprisingly – that the words *human* and *rights* have a high frequency of co-occurrence in ministers’ discourse and they are therefore included in a theme together.

However, not all of the words fit as neatly into discrete themes. Another word with a high excess frequency in the *human* and *rights* subcorpora is *freedom*. The Word with the highest excess frequency in the *freedom* subcorpus is *society*, but this does not rank as highly in the *human* and *rights* subcorpora. A similar pattern of semi-overlapping relationships can be seen across the data and a degree of judgement and intuition was therefore needed – guided by the data – to determine which words to group together as a theme.

A further complexity is that while the highest excess frequency of a given Word ‘A’ may be found in the subcorpus of contributions of containing Word ‘B’, it does not necessarily follow that, in the subcorpus of contributions of containing Word ‘B’, the Word with the highest excess frequency is ‘A’. There are advantages and disadvantages to using either approach to group words into themes. The former favours words that have a high frequency in the corpus as a whole; the latter those that have

²³ Data Tables for ch06 (5) - Data used to group words into themes

a low overall frequency. To avoid undue bias in the grouping of words into chapters, data from both approaches will be included in each analysis chapter other than that discussing grammatical words.

For these reasons, the excess frequency data is used a starting point for determining how to group words into thematically-based chapters, not as a final categorisation. Many words could defensibly be included in more than one chapter. The rationale for each thematic grouping will be explained at the beginning of the relevant chapter.

6.9 Analytic tests

For each Word selected, detailed analysis begins with understanding its changing frequency through all 26 data points in Perspective One, ten data points in Perspective Two and three data points in Perspective Three. In practice the more granular data from Perspective One is the main focus of the analysis chapters, but data from Perspectives Two and Three is also discussed where it adds unique insight, and particularly where these perspectives provided the basis for selecting the Word for analysis. Analysis script 1 is used to calculate this frequency data.

A second test applied to each selected Word is frequency analysis of its closest collocates, i.e. the bigrams or two-word groups in which it occurs. Bigrams are of particular interest in this research because of the way in which a word may be qualified by its nearest neighbours. For example, some bigrams of the noun *freedom* take the form adjective + *freedom* and these pairs give insight into the types of freedom that ministers discuss. This test is carried out using analysis script 2, which creates a list of all unique left bigrams (e.g. *political freedom*) and right bigrams (e.g. *freedom fighter*) of the specified word, and calculates the frequency of each bigram in each year and in total. From this data, it is possible to identify the most frequent bigrams overall and those with the largest rise or fall in frequency between the first five and last five full years of the period. Where this exercise identifies bigrams that suggest the existence of a relevant longer string (e.g. *freedom of*), examples in which

the bigram occurs are identified using analysis script 3, which simply identifies all contributions containing specified words within a given set of parameters. For any longer strings that are considered to be of interest (e.g. *freedom of expression*), frequency data is obtained using analysis script 1. This script is capable of producing frequency data for a string of any length.

The capability of analysis script 2 to identify and carry out frequency analysis for bigrams could be extended to handle strings of any specified length. However, any cut-off point in the length of strings to be analysed to some extent arbitrary. Limiting the length of a string to three words would capture data on the frequency of *freedom of religion*, but disregard any possible semantic or thematic connection between *freedom* and *religion* in a longer string such as ‘the freedom of individuals to practice their religion’. This raises the question of what length of string is meaningful in the context of parliamentary discourse. In reading excerpts from Hansard, it became clear that there was usually a level of thematic unity in any one contribution, whether that contribution comprised a statement, a passage of a speech or an answer to a question. To understand the frequency of co-occurrence of words within ministers’ contributions, I developed analysis script 4. This script creates a subcorpus containing only those contributions which contain a given Word and calculates the frequency of all other words that occur in that subcorpus. This script was used selectively where additional insight was felt to be needed beyond that provided by scripts 1-3.

In addition to the ability to identify individual contributions containing a particular Word, I also wished to identify the dates on which ministers made the greatest use of a given word. Uniquely among the analytic tests described here, this relies on a calculation of absolute frequency. Where a word has a high absolute frequency on a given date, this often indicates the existence of a speech on a topic to which that word relates. As such, analysis script 5 provides a means of identifying speeches to read in full.

The ability to identify all of the contributions in which a given Word appears and present them as concordance lines centred around that word is provided by analysis script 6. Two additional tests are used in the analysis chapter entitled 'Grammatical words', looking at the frequency of full stops and word-*and*-word strings. These are supported by analysis scripts 7 and 8 respectively.

Figures 6.3 to 6.10 show the logical design of the analysis scripts.

Figure 6.3: Logical design of frequency analysis script (Analysis script 1)

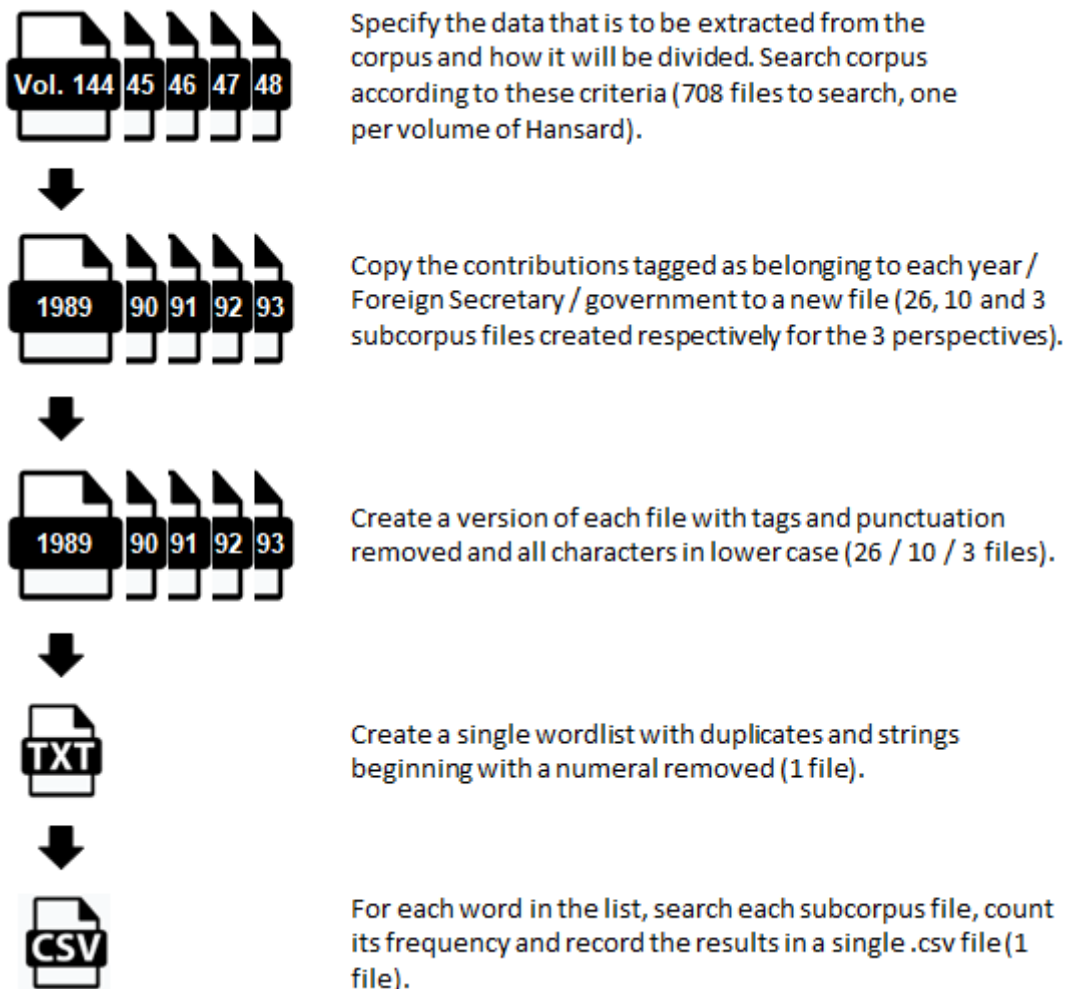


Figure 6.4: Logical design of bigram analysis script (Analysis script 2)



Specify the search word for which bigrams will be identified. Search for this word in the subcorpus files for the relevant perspective, e.g. each year's files (already created when carrying frequency analysis).



Copy all contributions in which the search word appears to a single file. Remove all commas as these would cause errors when writing the data to a .csv file later.



Search the file created at the previous stage and identify each left and right bigram of the search word. Write each bigram to a list and deduplicate.



Divide the contributions containing the search word as required for the perspective (by year, Foreign Secretary or governing party).



For each year, Foreign Secretary or governing party, calculate the frequency of each bigram. Append the results to a single .csv file.

Figure 6.5: Logical design of analysis script to select examples of contributions (Analysis script 3)

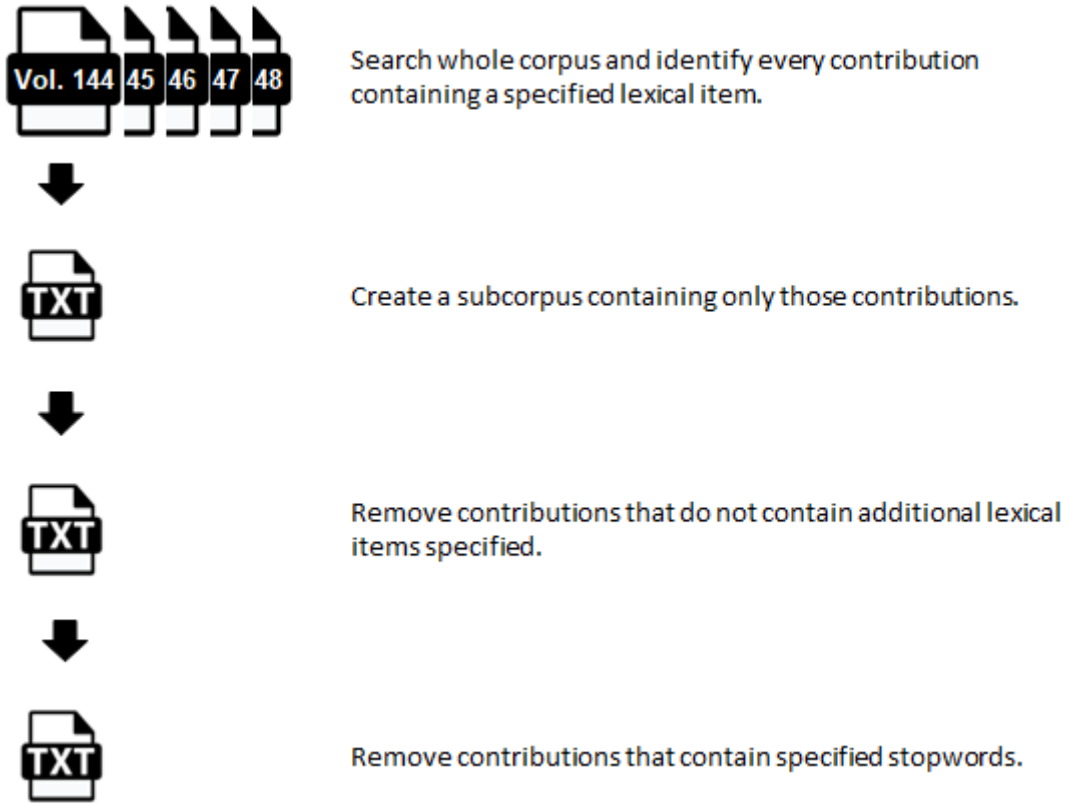


Figure 6.6: Logical design of script for frequency analysis in a specified subcorpus (Analysis script 4)



Read existing subcorpus containing only those contributions that include the specified lexical item (created using 'Theme Identification' script – see Figure 6.2).



Distribute the contributions to one file per calendar year, with tags and punctuation removed and all characters in lower case.



Create a single wordlist with duplicates removed.



For each word in the list, search each subcorpus file, count its frequency and append the results to a single .csv file.

Figure 6.7: Logical design of 'speech identification' script (Analysis script 5)

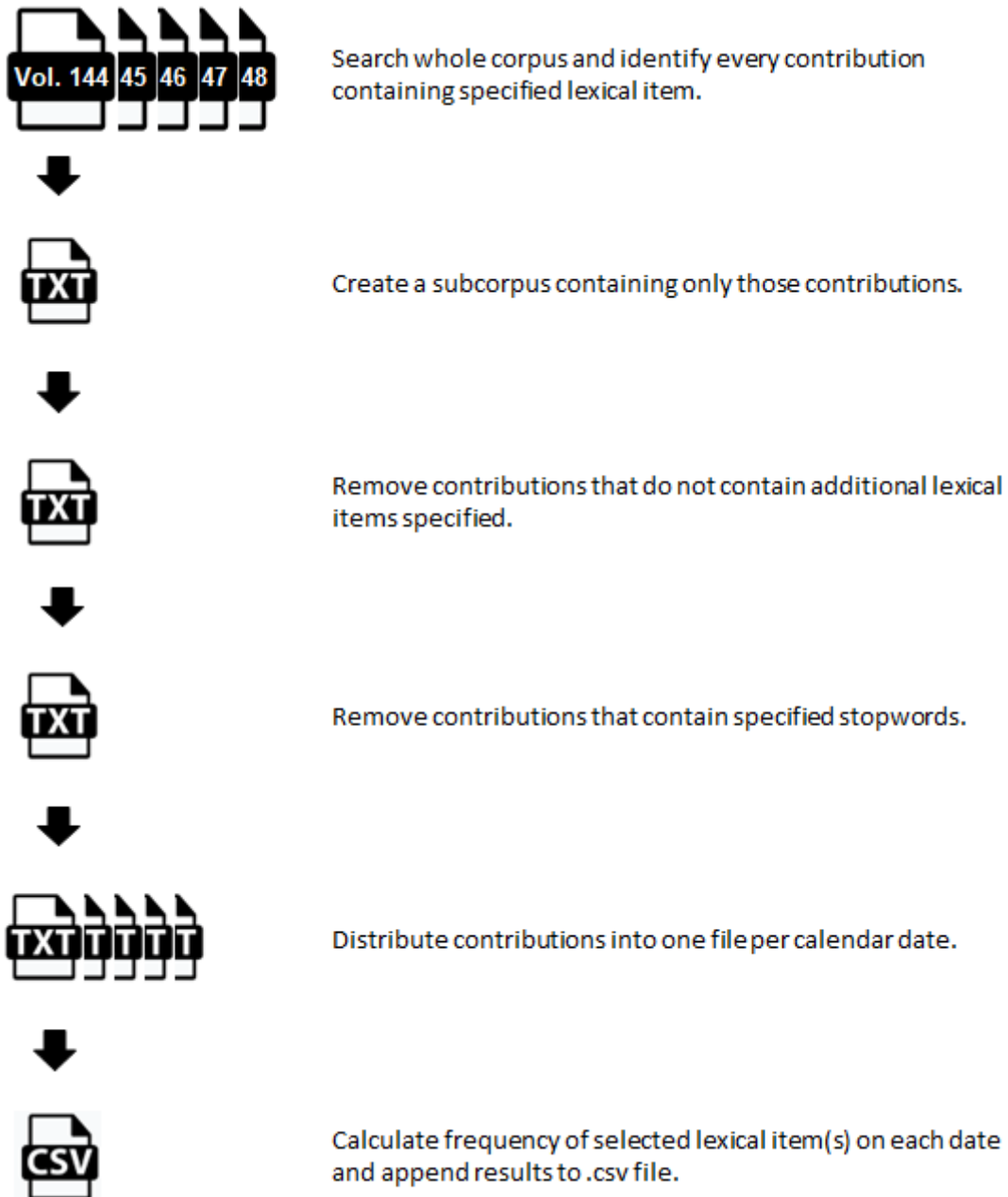


Figure 6.8: Logical design of concordance analysis script (Analysis script 6)



Specify the search string for which the concordances will be identified. Search each subcorpus file (for year, Foreign Secretary or governing party/ies) to identify every contribution containing this string.



Copy the relevant strings to a single .csv file, removing all existing commas. Insert a new comma after each tag and before and after the search string, so that the text is organised into the following columns when the file is opened:

- 'House' tag
- 'Volume' tag
- 'Date' tag
- 'Member' tag
- Text preceding search string
- Search string
- Text following search string

Figure 6.9: Logical design of frequency analysis script for full stops (Analysis script 7)



Search version of corpus divided by calendar year.



For each year:

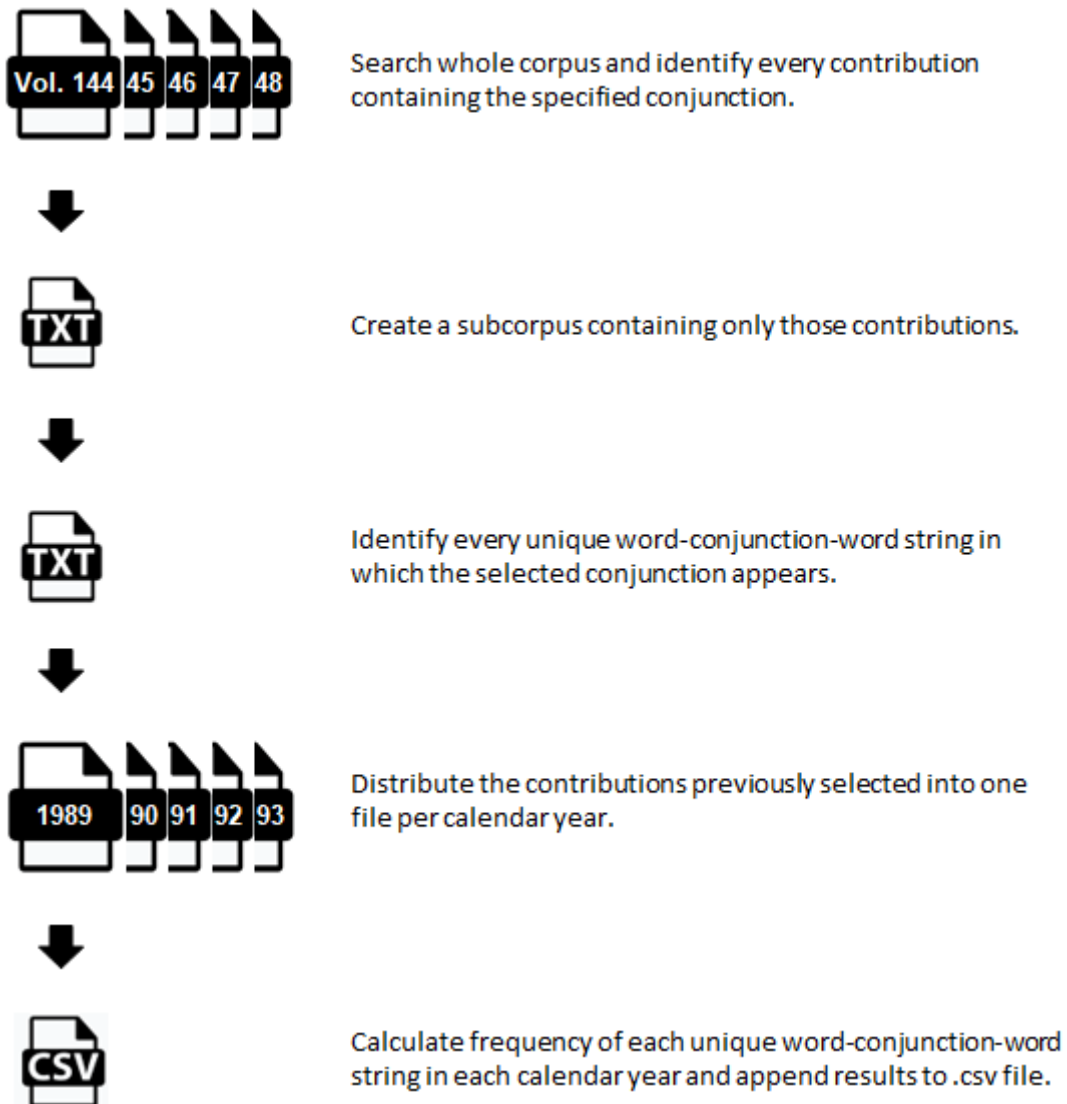


Remove instances of 'dot' character that are followed directly by a numeral (i.e. where used as a decimal point) or form part of an attenuation mark (...).



Count number of remaining 'dot' characters in that year's contributions and append results to .csv file.

Figure 6.10: Logical design of frequency analysis script for word-conjunction-word strings (Analysis script 8)



6.10 Errors and issues identified during analysis

As with the scripts used to compile the corpus, the analysis scripts were developed iteratively until they produced data in the form required for this thesis, and which were verifiably correct (for example, by manually counting the number of tokens of a given word on a specified date and comparing this with the figure provided by the scripts). All of the data presented in the following chapters is derived from the final version of these scripts.

Whilst carrying out the analysis, two residual issues became apparent:

1. The Bigram analyser script produces an absolute frequency of zero for some pairs of words e.g. *veal potato*. Upon investigation, this occurs only where the words are in separate sentences or separate cells in a table, and occurs because the script identifies bigrams from a version of the corpus in which punctuation marks are removed, but counts their frequency in the punctuated text. Although inelegant, the results produced by this feature of the script are unproblematic, because it was never my intention to count words occurring either side of a full stop or in adjacent cells of a table as a bigram.
2. The Word selection scripts used to calculate the frequency change of every Word in each perspective have produced zero values for a small minority of words. This affects 1005 words in Perspective One, 159 words in Perspective Two and 1033 words in Perspective Three. In principle this should not be the case, because a word should not appear in the wordlist if it does not exist in the corpus. In practice, however, none of the affected words are well-formed, but are instead words presented incorrectly in the Hansard transcripts such as misspellings, words combined by the omission of a space and words with digitisation errors. I found no evidence of this issue causing inaccuracies in frequency data for well-formed words.

As neither of these issues has any material impact on the analysis carried out in this thesis, I left the scripts unaltered and disregarded the zero values in the results.

7. ANALYSIS: GRAMMATICAL WORDS

7.1 Introduction to the analysis chapters

The analysis chapters of this thesis follow a standardised format. Each chapter begins with an introduction which sets out which words are analysed and why they are grouped together in the chapter. In the thematically-based analysis chapters (ch. 8-13), a short section outlining some political and historical context relevant to the theme is also included. Detailed analysis of the selected words follows, drawing on data from the corpus; and a concluding section discusses the significance of the results of the analysis. In principle the analysis chapters could be read in any order. However, thematic connections between some of the topics (for example, between the United Nations and Security) suggests a logic to reading them in the order presented.

A data table is included in each chapter showing the frequency change year-by-year of the words and any longer strings that form the focus of the discussion. Additional data tables and figures are included selectively to highlight data that is of particular interest. For the thematically-based chapters, these include two data tables which help explain the reasons for grouping the words together. These tables, which are referred to respectively as 'Type A' and 'Type B' Excess Frequency table, show:

- A. The ten subcorpora (of 37, one for each of the 'foreign policy words' selected for analysis in this thesis) in which each of the words discussed has the highest excess frequency; and
- B. The ten words (from the list of 37 'foreign policy words') that have the highest excess frequency in the subcorpus of contributions containing the specified Word.

A full data table for each chapter is available online as indicated in the front matter of this thesis. This contains frequency data for the words and longer strings discussed in the chapter from the each of the three 'perspectives': year-by-year, data from the contributions of Foreign Secretaries only; and

government-by-government. It also includes frequency data for every bigram that includes the words selected for analysis and additional material where relevant, such as data from a particular subcorpus discussed in the chapter.

7.2 Introduction to this chapter

This chapter analyses the changing patterns of use of nine common grammatical words in the UK government's foreign policy discourse. When comparing the first and last five years of the period studied, three of these words rose in frequency: *and*, *with* and *this*. The other six fell in frequency: *that*, *not*, *I*, *my*, *shall* and *be*. Unlike the other words analysed in detail in this thesis, these words are not grouped together on the basis of their co-occurrence in ministers' contributions. Instead, they are grouped together precisely because they are not obviously part of any 'specialist' vocabulary of foreign policy. They are also among the words with the largest change of frequency in the corpus: with an increase in frequency of 7,500 tpm between the first five and last five full years of the period studied, *and* has the largest change of frequency of all. As such the motivation for analysing these words is primarily linguistic curiosity. However, the results of the analysis also point to some changes in the nature of foreign policy discourse.

The selected grammatical words appear in a very large number of bigrams – over 17,000 in the case of *and*. For some of the words, analysis of bigrams identifies that particular pairs were strongly associated with the changing frequency of the word. For other words, such analysis shows that the change was more generalised and was not strongly linked to a rise or fall in the use of particular pairs. This chapter therefore discusses changes in frequency of each of the selected words; and discusses the bigrams in which a word appears only where they contribute significantly to the change. It also includes excerpts from Hansard that illustrate the use of the some of the selected words at the beginning and end of the period.

Table 7.1: Year-by-year frequency data for words discussed in ch. 7

Word	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																										Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)		
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		1989-93	2010-14
and	24701	26554	26450	25891	24729	26188	26124	25777	25346	24456	25789	27330	27250	28072	27642	29072	30374	31542	28930	31804	30366	31265	32805	33843	32955	34166	25609	33109	7500
be	8098	7747	7066	6550	7274	7048	7406	7331	6967	6785	6370	6188	6420	6327	6059	5822	5834	5421	6186	5146	5630	5889	5820	5383	5711	4912	7368	5530	-1839
but	2638	2704	2916	2904	3274	2913	2822	3063	2290	2231	2196	2092	2313	2619	2819	2528	2309	2214	2621	2456	2425	2499	2482	2095	2260	1947	2907	2247	-660
can	1852	1682	1836	1527	1750	1636	1694	1926	1816	1694	1804	1819	1779	1631	1656	1420	1365	1540	1806	1543	1482	1727	1552	1509	1757	1596	1735	1619	-116
could	771	705	501	505	625	613	781	633	573	649	500	581	636	671	535	549	554	526	521	548	597	497	539	581	541	489	626	532	-93
he	2542	2023	1879	2382	2286	1792	1696	1870	1792	2449	2047	2204	1895	2074	2102	1864	1340	1168	1891	1965	1655	1707	1439	1136	1290	1374	2223	1368	-854
her	718	531	553	608	516	581	436	514	659	906	818	759	611	614	537	493	387	377	521	429	608	1037	782	742	835	951	581	856	275
him	581	506	449	575	604	483	418	480	526	644	574	622	636	650	560	480	370	342	554	542	398	464	414	315	353	390	546	382	-164
his	1872	1363	1229	1516	1410	1233	1157	1242	1339	2050	1714	1767	1555	1769	1552	1549	1471	1211	1470	2025	1471	1541	1472	1119	1170	1206	1474	1289	-185
i	10917	9746	10219	9540	11945	8922	9116	9053	8565	9933	9338	8967	9738	9581	9826	8729	6828	7067	9715	7357	7346	7729	7783	6989	7338	7328	10575	7417	-3158
may	1356	1301	1312	1375	1518	1259	1175	1463	1164	1525	1308	1286	1137	1231	1324	1343	1100	1124	1042	937	1075	887	1119	985	838	798	1380	933	-447
me	605	432	576	500	744	419	483	449	345	592	464	454	483	496	511	457	336	331	617	507	498	405	395	340	322	292	582	349	-233
might	400	284	296	232	352	253	371	348	366	316	273	224	296	272	278	228	178	223	285	209	265	299	348	223	207	193	317	253	-64
must	1155	1206	1197	1123	1260	970	939	1204	997	956	971	823	812	965	773	740	714	824	712	665	707	696	761	643	711	750	1194	713	-481
my	6405	5125	5910	5052	5620	4594	4531	4462	4615	5148	5044	4691	4204	5320	4467	4122	3825	4023	4772	4050	3827	3784	3855	3398	3629	3883	5632	3703	-1930
never	162	142	190	159	166	128	195	204	179	138	122	122	159	124	179	128	102	125	142	134	147	125	67	89	116	89	163	95	-68
no	2597	2704	2414	2226	2735	2718	2762	2293	2374	2355	2475	2022	2195	1914	1768	1706	1818	1879	1753	1626	1626	1639	1598	1294	1374	1308	2556	1433	-1123
nobody	37	17	27	15	22	10	24	18	22	37	13	19	12	9	17	8	6	16	25	6	11	16	9	3	6	6	24	7	-16
non	522	681	682	805	650	680	706	635	431	479	432	500	381	346	405	438	603	718	641	665	516	625	433	427	587	468	664	499	-165
none	205	267	199	204	181	253	392	199	203	163	153	116	137	200	173	128	127	128	128	90	113	91	76	50	66	49	210	65	-145
not	6322	5925	6064	5624	7228	6092	6278	6487	5551	5633	5153	5361	5930	5373	5779	5162	4939	4776	5677	5261	5198	5271	4937	4630	4432	3943	6302	4617	-1685
nothing	201	167	108	88	145	126	191	137	108	149	88	153	172	153	131	108	64	71	98	78	88	78	68	64	62	48	144	64	-80
nowhere	24	11	9	8	5	6	10	7	0	0	4	6	15	2	9	1	3	1	6	4	5	10	10	3	1	2	11	5	-6
our	4276	4338	4336	3911	3541	3638	4009	4232	4039	3992	4198	4274	4175	3665	3745	3600	3850	3634	3400	3862	3920	4797	5049	5307	4864	4464	4055	4914	858
shall	1751	1496	1522	1597	1405	1062	1260	1381	1305	1190	1012	1197	1056	815	840	543	378	332	443	387	305	293	193	143	144	120	1545	172	-1373
she	328	226	269	187	232	172	229	230	203	273	185	346	290	190	259	180	196	187	431	283	296	348	203	216	297	306	249	267	18
should	2105	2148	2019	1648	2069	1718	1763	1786	1478	1543	1497	1564	1655	1471	1540	1214	1105	1156	1390	1183	1194	1257	1421	1033	1087	947	2012	1148	-864
that	19731	17514	18670	17350	20412	16842	18466	19173	17298	19109	18313	17986	19406	18207	19076	16572	14784	14347	17994	16588	17276	16956	16332	14518	15415	14705	18855	15510	-3345
their	2374	2268	2448	2034	1956	2021	2197	2045	2213	2222	2556	2254	2440	2410	2166	2360	2352	2338	2163	2429	2662	2426	2516	2748	2459	2482	2206	2536	330
them	1059	1102	1039	1024	912	960	954	1047	1090	1126	1128	1149	1166	1049	1017	863	880	882	978	873	855	842	926	899	927	892	1021	901	-121
they	2402	2446	2495	2256	2303	2600	2317	2355	2309	2118	2292	2416	2632	2405	2198	2116	1971	2032	2275	2074	2399	2379	2287	2362	1979	2059	2379	2209	-171
this	4247	3731	4009	3840	3927	3692	3397	3577	4039	4104	3867	4187	3946	4353	4415	4389	4629	4682	4809	4612	5019	5127	5230	5392	5537	5174	3951	5302	1352

Table 7.1 (contd.)

Word	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																										Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)		
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		1989-93	2010-14
this	4247	3731	4009	3840	3927	3692	3397	3577	4039	4104	3867	4187	3946	4353	4415	4389	4629	4682	4809	4612	5019	5127	5230	5392	5537	5174	3951	5302	1352
us	935	923	1052	908	944	730	1063	1040	1090	1155	1257	1292	1394	1430	1751	1397	1151	1310	1272	1372	1687	1193	868	853	1030	1048	952	982	30
we	12476	13202	13430	12515	12137	11921	12679	12466	12767	11959	13145	14270	12363	11603	11801	11138	10871	11024	10275	10357	11010	11929	12760	12818	13026	12074	12723	12567	-157
will	6049	6064	5815	6036	5504	5322	5586	5584	6671	5613	5762	6103	6298	5558	5586	4974	5866	5277	6089	5419	5297	6457	5719	6341	6718	6133	5870	6254	383
with	6851	6773	7017	6863	6417	6848	6824	6724	6810	7285	7573	7831	7485	7732	8013	8273	8245	8309	7399	7625	7820	8663	8666	9153	8709	8914	6761	8832	2071
would	2754	2131	1976	1910	2752	2179	2561	2047	2093	2346	2127	1945	2405	2144	2224	2133	1806	1748	2050	1879	2212	2036	2187	1682	1821	1483	2340	1837	-503
you	57	47	97	101	85	48	53	77	58	43	41	33	46	67	93	70	65	76	177	134	182	102	64	53	99	88	77	79	2
your	85	127	163	474	393	283	274	241	157	376	395	193	319	330	423	410	135	58	76	64	71	102	95	90	68	42	250	79	-171
. [full stop]	56209	56322	56214	55264	54617	54661	54033	53031	53878	51739	50509	53686	52132	51890	50303	49209	48984	49114	49686	47758	48329	47010	44698	43692	44521	44331	55678	44709	-10969

7.3 And

The word *and* may be categorised as a conjunction, a coordinator or a coordinating conjunction, and links elements which have the same syntactic role. *And* can be used as a phrase-level connector as well as a clause-level connector (Biber et al. 2021: 81). It may be used to allow supplementary information to be provided that modifies a meaning.

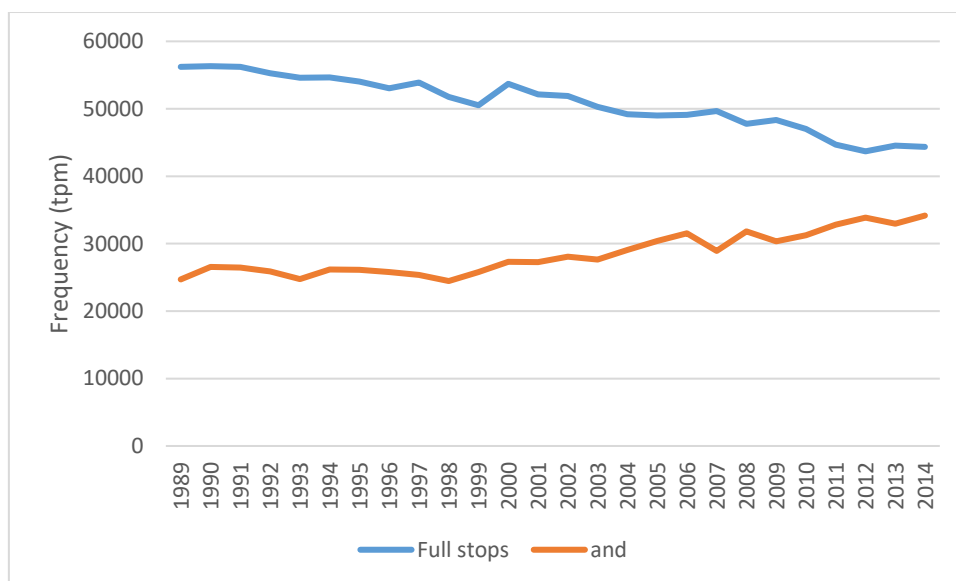
Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1287) note that a large number of pairs of words joined by *and* are either fully or partially lexicalised, forming expressions that may have a meaning distinct from their constituent parts. In a fully lexicalised expression, the words always occur in a set order; in a partially lexicalised expression this is often the case. The subject matter of this thesis provides an example of an expression that is fully lexicalised in the Hansard source material - the corpus contains over 16,000 tokens of *foreign and commonwealth* but no instances of *commonwealth and foreign*.

One use of *and* associated with speech is as a turn-initial discourse marker (Biber et al. 2021: 1073). This use of *and* is not seen in the corpus. It seems unlikely that ministers would never have begun an oral contribution with a construction such as “And I told him so”, and more likely therefore that Hansard transcribers have removed *and* from the beginning of contributions as part of the process of filtering out spokenness that Slembrouck (1992) observes.

And displays a large increase in frequency through the period studied, as the data shown in Table 7.1 indicates. The frequency of *and* is relatively stable from 1989 to 1998, then rises steadily during the years that both the Labour and coalition governments held office – an increase of 29% when comparing the first and last five full years’ data from the corpus. This change is associated with an increase in the average length of sentences in the corpus, from 18 words during the first five years to 22 during the last five. There is a degree of complexity in calculating sentence length as the same ‘dot’ character is also used in other ways including as a decimal point; and (from 2003 onwards) to

mark attenuation. Excluding any dot that is followed by a numerical character and any series of three dots, the frequency of full stops falls by 20%. Figure 7.1 shows the changing frequency of *and* and full stops during the period.

Figure 7.1: Frequency of *and* and full stops

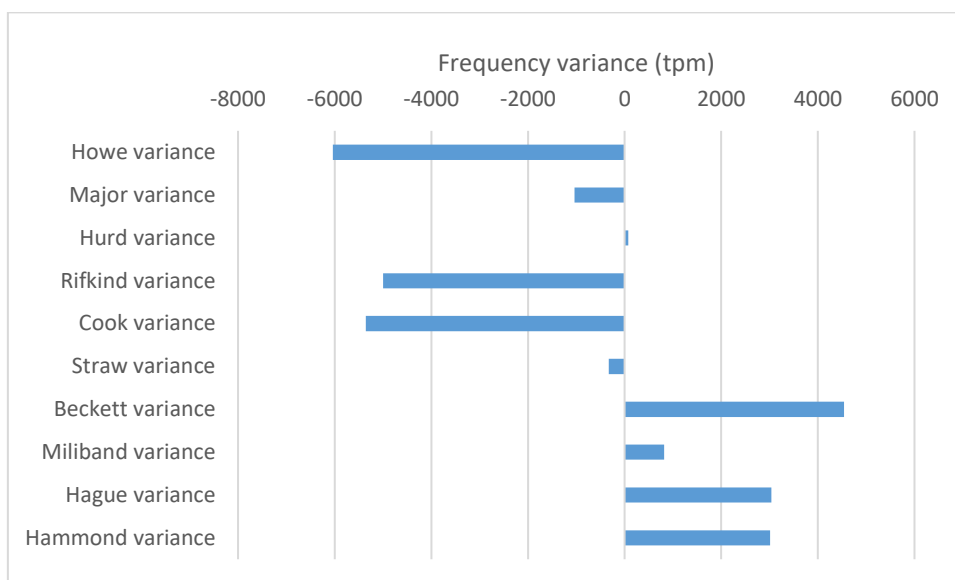


This shift towards longer sentences may be influenced by actual changes in ministers' discourse; changes in transcription practice; and/or an increase in the use of written answers and statements during the period studied. Perhaps the most likely hypothesis is that a combination of these factors lies behind the change. Another possibility would be that the rise of *and* occurred at the expense of *but*. Although the frequency of *but* fell during the period, the change (from 2,907 to 2,247 tpm) can only be a relatively small contributory factor in the rise of *and*.

The frequency of *and* in the discourse of some individual Foreign Secretaries differs from the overall trend. In particular, the contributions of Douglas Hurd, who held the office from 1989 to 1995, have a slightly higher frequency of *and* than is seen in the contributions of all ten Foreign Secretaries as a whole. This suggests that, while there is a clear trend over time, the frequency of *and* is partly also a

matter of idiolect. Figure 7.2 shows the variance in the frequency of *and* in each Foreign Secretary's discourse.

Figure 7.2: Frequency variance of *and* in discourse of each Foreign Secretary



An example of the high frequency of *and* in the contributions of Margaret Beckett can be found in the following written answer to a question, which contains no fewer than five tokens of the word in a single sentence:

During the UN General Assembly ministerial week in New York from 18 to 22 September, my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, other Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers and I raised with African, Arab, Security Council and other Foreign Ministers the need for concerted action by the international community to halt the Sudanese military offensive, secure the deployment of a UN force, and to ensure a political solution in Darfur. (Commons vol. 451, 31 October 2006).

At 80 words, the length of this sentence is several times the average even for the latter part of the period studied. The first two tokens of *and* occur in the context of Beckett giving the full name of the Foreign Office; the third and fourth join lists identifying the ministers involved in the discussions; and the fifth joins two actions that Beckett wishes to be taken. As such, the dominant use of *and* in this excerpt is not to articulate an argument, but to show that individuals in relevant ministerial positions were involved in the discussion. Nonetheless, it would have been possible for the writer of the answer – almost certainly an official rather than Beckett herself – to divide it into shorter sentences and reduce the use of *and*. Such an approach would make the answer more readable.

As conjunctions, *and* and *with* are words that join two strings of text. Their increased frequency is caused in part by a rise in frequency of particular binomials – words which belong to the same grammatical category, have a semantic relationship with one another, and are joined by the conjunction. The most frequent word-*and*-word binomial in the corpus is *foreign and commonwealth*, of which there are 16,488 tokens. This is also the word-*and*-word binomial with the largest rise in frequency when comparing data from the first and last five years of the period and reflects an increased use of the full titles of the ‘Foreign and Commonwealth Office’ and the ‘Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs’, a change that will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 13.

Other word-*and*-word strings with large increases in frequency include words already selected for analysis in this thesis such as *peace and security* and *[human] rights and democracy*. *Trade and investment* also has a large rise in frequency, which might suggest an increase in focus on these matters in the UK’s foreign policy in this period. However, *trade and co-operation* and *aid and trade* fell in frequency, so in practice this may be more of a change in terminology. ‘UK Trade and Investment’ was the name of a UK government body from 2003 to 2016 and examination of concordance lines shows that, from 2003 onwards, many tokens of *trade and investment* were

references to 'UK Trade and Investment' or its minister, the 'Minister for Trade and Investment'. This illustrates how organisational changes in government can manifest themselves in the lexis of ministers' discourse.

The effect of geopolitical changes is also evident in the data, for example in the rise in frequency of *bosnia and herzegovina*, which became an independent country in 1992; or the fall of *central and eastern [europe]*, which was a focus of foreign policy discourse following the collapse of communism at the beginning of the period studied. There are also changes in the use or transcription of parliamentary terms of address, with *hon[orable] and learned* and *[right] hon and hon [members]* falling in frequency. Table 7.2 shows the changing frequency of the strings discussed.

Table 7.2: Frequency of selected word-*and*-word binomials

String	TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM change
foreign and commonwealth	713	1708	996
bosnia and herzegovina	3	80	77
peace and security	25	96	71
rights and democracy	2	51	50
trade and co-operation	31	1	-29
trade and industry	40	3	-37
aid and trade	46	2	-44
we and our	66	20	-46
hon and hon	69	18	-51
central and eastern	77	5	-72
hon and learned	253	51	-202

The string *we and our* is a perhaps unexpected faller as, calculated individually, both words rose in frequency. Examination of concordances shows extensive use this string preceding 'European partners', 'EC partners' and 'EU partners', but also with names of other organisations and states. Constructions of each of these types continue to be seen later in the period, but with a reduced frequency of those relating to Europe, perhaps suggesting that ministers' enthusiasm for associating the UK government with the EU waned during the latter years of the period. Table 7.3 shows selected concordance lines containing *we and our*.

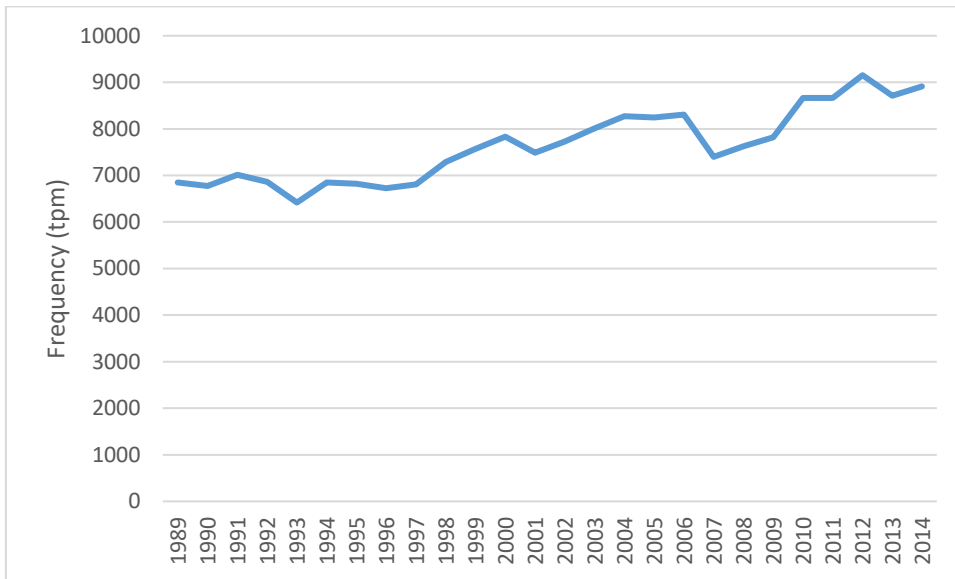
Table 7.3: Selected concordance lines for *we and our*

Attribution	Contribution		
William Waldegrave, Commons vol. 152, 10 May 1989	We hope that all parties concerned in the fighting.	We and our	European partners fully support the efforts of the Arab League to arrange a ceasefire
Mark Lennox-Boyd, Commons vol. 192, 6 June 1991	We do not expect the Iraqi Government to hinder the relief operation.	We and our	allies would view any attack by the Iraqis as completely unacceptable
Alastair Goodlad, Commons vol. 235, 18 January 1994	The situation in Tibet is a matter of serious concern.	We and our	European Union partners regularly raise human rights with the Chinese authorities
Douglas Hogg, Commons vol. 261, 13 June 1995	These criteria are always subject to interpretation in the light of circumstances on the ground. In January 1992	we and our	EC partners recognised Croatia on the basis of advice from the arbitration commission
Jeremy Hanley, Commons vol. 286, 27 November 1996	We have not raised the specific case of Bishop Zeng Jingmu with the Chinese, but	we and our	EU partners continue to press the Chinese authorities to respect fundamental rights
Mike O'Brien, Commons vol. 399, 6 February 2003	reported sightings of Osama bin Laden since 9/11.	We and our	coalition partners will continue to hunt for bin Laden and the other al-Qaeda leaders
Geoff Hoon, Commons vol. 450, 9 October 2006	in accordance with Turkmenistan's international obligations.	We and our	EU and OSCE partners will continue to follow this case closely
William Hague, Commons vol. 514, 21 July 2010	I do not want to minimise in any way to the House the immense challenges that	we and our	allies continue to face in Afghanistan or the difficulties and dangers
William Hague, Commons vol. 527, 26 April 2011	The Libya contact group's statement made it clear that, in contrast to Gaddafi	we and our	allies regard the national transitional council as a legitimate interlocutor
Jeremy Browne, Commons vol. 529, 10 June 2011	We cannot compromise the safety and security of our British and Indonesian staff. Our embassy will remain closed until	we and our	Indonesian counterparts reach and implement a viable solution

7.4 *With*

Much like *and*, the preposition *with* was relatively stable in frequency during the period of office of the Conservative government (to 1997); rose under Labour (to 2010) and continued to rise under the coalition government. As a conjunction, its rise in frequency is probably also a consequence of the increase in sentence length seen over the years covered by the corpus. Figure 7.3 shows the rise in frequency of *with*.

Figure 7.3: Frequency of *with*



Among the word-*with*-word binomials that display the greatest rise in frequency, *closely with the* is typically used to describe the UK government working with other governments and international bodies such as the UN. This may suggest an increasing emphasis on working with such partners as the period covered by this study progressed. Another string with a large rise in frequency, *concerns with the*, relates to the UK raising concerns with other governments, including over issues such as human rights – an area of foreign policy discourse already identified for analysis in this thesis.

Of the strings that display the greatest fall in frequency, *touch with the* typically describes the UK government being in *regular, frequent* or *close* touch with other governments – activities more often described later in the period as being in *dialogue with the* or in *contact with the* other governments. The decline in *agree with the [honourable member]* and *agree with my [honourable friend]* parallels the changes in the use or transcription of parliamentary terms of address observed in relation to *and*. Table 7.4 shows frequency data for the word-*with*-word strings discussed.

Table 7.4: Frequency of selected word-*with*-word binomials

String	TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM change
closely with the	23	117	94
concerns with the	4	98	94
agree with the	122	66	-56
agree with my	87	31	-57
touch with the	84	27	-57

7.5 *This* and *that*

The fact that the demonstrative pronoun *this* rose in frequency during the period appears potentially significant as it may represent a shift away from use of ‘far’ demonstrative forms to ‘near’ forms.

However, the data is not conclusive on this point as *that* has many other uses as a definite article, a conjunction, an adverb and an adjective²⁴. Additional evidence exists in the form of frequency data for the plural demonstrative pronouns, *these* and *those*. *These* increased in frequency during the period, while *those* fell. The hypothesis of a shift in favour of near demonstrative pronouns is therefore true in the case of the plural forms.

An alternative factor which could have contributed to the fall of *that* would have been an increase in the frequency of *which*, if such a change took place. Setting aside discussions about the grammatical and stylistic merits of ‘The bread that I ate’ versus ‘The bread which I ate’, the data does not suggest that there was such a substitution, because *which* also fell in frequency. Table 7.5 shows the change in frequency of each of these words.

²⁴ The corpus used for this research is not tagged to indicate parts of speech as that is not needed in order to answer the research questions. Consequently, it is not possible to carry out large-scale analysis of which grammatical category each token of *that* belongs to.

Table 7.5: Frequency of *this*, *these*, *that*, *those* and *which*

Word	TPM 1989-93	TPM 2010-2014	TPM Change
this	3951	5302	1352
these	1111	1730	619
those	2091	1670	-422
which	5231	3474	-1757
that	18855	15510	-3345

Analysis of bigrams including *that* suggests a possible change of style in ministers' discourse. As Table 7.6 shows, the pairs with the greatest rise in frequency are *ensure that* and *clear that*, while the pairs with the greatest fall are *believe that* and *hope that*.

Table 7.6: Frequency of selected bigrams of *that*

Bigram	TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM change
ensure that	352	573	221
clear that	263	392	130
hope that	606	254	-352
believe that	762	335	-427

The bigrams *believe that* and *hope that* both peak in frequency during the first half of the period studied, in 1996 and 1998 respectively. Throughout the period, both pairs are used to introduce a view that the government holds, such as a desire that something outside of its direct control should happen or an action that some other entity (a person, organisation or state) should take. Whilst *believe that* expresses a degree of confidence, *hope that* allows ministers to state a view even when their expectations of the situation are low. This is the case when Jeremy Hanley states that "The talks [between Syria and Israel] are currently suspended, but we hope that they will be resumed as soon as possible" (Commons vol. 274, 29 March 1996).

Hope that and *believe that* are also used to signal what the government understands others think, are doing or intend to do. Both pairs form part of contributions in which ministers comment on proceedings in parliament, for example to assert that there is consensus on an issue. Defending the

approach of the UK and its allies to providing aid to Iraq, Baroness Chalker claims that “[...] nobody - I believe that I speak for all sides of the House in saying this - has come up with any better solution than that deployed by the allies” (Lords vol. 558, 17 October 1994).

By contrast, *clear that* and *ensure that* reach their peaks in frequency towards the end of the period studied, in 2013 and 2014 respectively. *Clear that* may be followed by a claim that there is clarity in something that an entity (particularly the UK government) has said. It may refer to a text (for example, the conclusions of a European Council meeting), a parliamentary contribution or a speech in another setting. The phrase is used to claim clear leadership on the part of the UK government, for example when Hugo Swire states that “the Prime Minister has been clear that we will use our position on the United Nations Human Rights Council [...] to call for an international investigation [into allegations of human rights abuses in Sri Lanka]” (Commons vol. 576, 24 February 2014).

Ensure that features in contributions describing the responsibilities of the UK and other governments, in the context of ensuring that taxpayers' money is spent wisely, and to signal intent on the part of the government. The following contributions illustrate ways in which ministers use the bigram *ensure that* towards the end of the period studied:

The movement and settlement of people is a hugely divisive political issue, and it is one reason why we have pressed both sides to move towards a settlement, because that is the only thing that will ultimately ensure that all those who live in Israel and in the Palestinian territory can live in peace and security. (Alistair Burt, Commons vol. 538, 17 Jan 2012)

We are also actively engaged with humanitarian organisations and the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] government to ensure that any approach to the IDP [Internally Displaced Persons'] camps around Goma complies with humanitarian law and the Kampala Convention. (Hugo Swire, Commons vol. 592, 12 Feb 2015)

[...] it is clearly our responsibility to ensure that we use all possible measures to deny ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] access to funds and to constrain it from executing its brutal campaign. (David Lidington, Commons vol. 592, 12 Feb 2015)

In the first excerpt, *ensure that* is used to describe the potential for a policy to achieve a particular end, that of creating peace and security for the Israeli and Palestinian people. In the second excerpt, the minister's use of the bigram focuses on the responsibility of another government to take particular action; and the third acknowledges a responsibility of the UK government. While there is variation over who should ensure that something happens and how that should be achieved, in each case ministers emphasise a need for action.

The decline in frequency of *believe that* and *hope that* and the rise of *clear that* and *ensure that* may indicate a shift on the part of ministers, away from deliberative and reflective discourse, and towards a more definite, emphatic and action-orientated style. A number of other changes suggesting such a change are seen in the chapters that follow.

7.6 I and my

The Word *I* has the second largest fall in frequency in the corpus, falling from 10,575 tpm in the first five years to 7,417 tpm in the last five. This word is used both as a personal pronoun and as a Roman numeral, with the result that this figure cannot be assumed to reflect solely a change in pronoun use. However, as the pronoun *my* also displays a large fall in frequency (from 5,632 to 3,703 tpm), there are reasons to think that ministers' use of first person singular pronouns declined over the period.

One possible way to estimate the frequency of the use of *I* as a Roman numeral would be to check frequency data for 'II', 'III' and 'IV'. However, this approach is not reliable as ministers' discourse includes isolated references to each numeral, typically as a clause or article in a legal document. For

example, Article IV of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is mentioned several times in 2004-2008 in statements regarding Iran, with much less frequent reference to the other articles of the treaty.

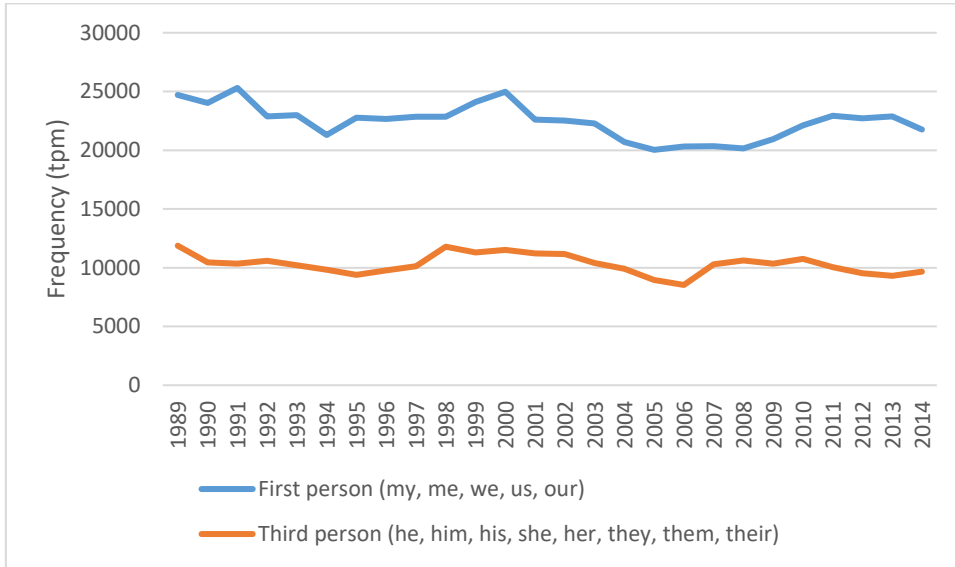
Instead, the analysis of personal and possessive pronouns that follows excludes *I* and looks at changing patterns of use of the remaining first, second and third person pronouns; the use of masculine and feminine pronouns; and the use of singular and plural. To do this, the frequency data shown in Table 7.7 was compiled for the following pronouns: *my, me, we, us, our, you, your, he, him, his, she, her, they, them* and *their*. The second person pronouns *you* and *your* are by far the least frequent in this group due to the parliamentary convention that only the speaker is addressed in the second person.

Table 7.7: Frequency of personal and possessive pronouns

Pronoun	TPM 1989-93	TPM 2010-14	TPM change
our	4055	4914	858
their	2206	2536	330
her	581	856	275
us	952	982	30
she	249	267	18
you	77	79	2
them	1021	901	-121
we	12723	12567	-157
him	546	382	-164
your	250	79	-171
they	2379	2209	-171
his	1474	1289	-185
me	582	349	-233
he	2223	1368	-854
my	5632	3703	-1930

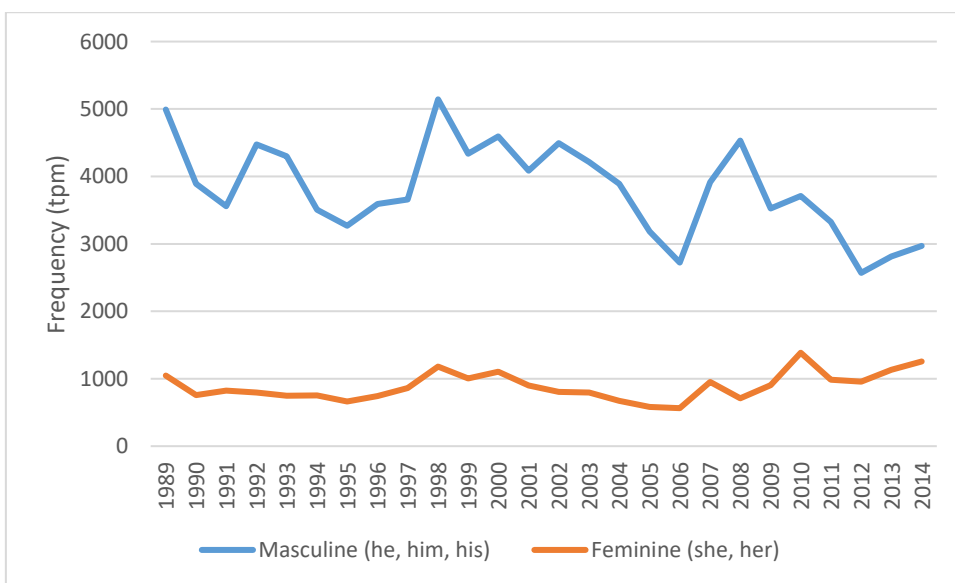
As Figure 7.4 shows, there is a slight downward trend in the use of both first and third person pronouns during the period, with the first person (excluding *I*) consistently being used approximately twice as frequently as the third person. This forms part of an overall fall of 7% in the use of personal and possessive pronouns (excluding *I*) over the period studied. In part this may be explained by the increased frequency of *and* in longer sentences.

Figure 7.4: Frequency of first and third person pronouns



By contrast, there is a marked change in the use of masculine and feminine pronouns. Masculine forms dominate throughout the period but, as Figure 7.5 shows, there is a growth in feminine forms from 2006 onwards and the gap in frequency between masculine and feminine narrows considerably.

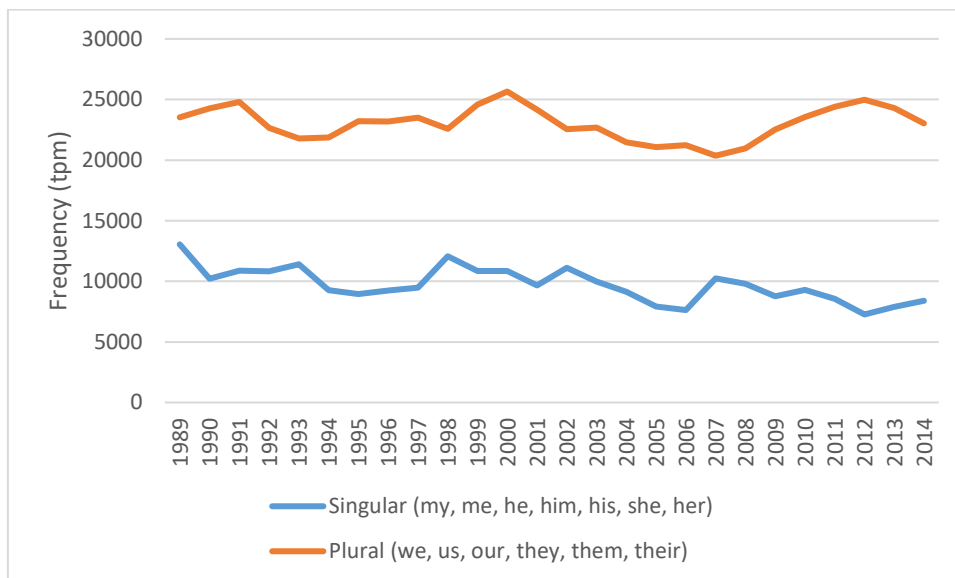
Figure 7.5: Frequency of masculine and feminine pronouns, 1989 to 2014



The upward trend in the frequency of *she* and *her* from 2006 occurs at a similar time to a rise in *woman* and *women*. These words had a combined frequency of 182 tpm during the first five years of the period, which rose to 521 tpm during the last five years. Taken together, this data suggests that women and issues affecting women were a growing part of the UK government’s foreign policy discourse. This change will be explored more fully in a separate chapter.

Throughout the period studied, plural pronouns are more frequent than singular, as Figure 7.6 shows. When comparing the first and last five years of the period, the frequency of plural forms is little changed, while there is a noticeable fall in the use of singular forms.

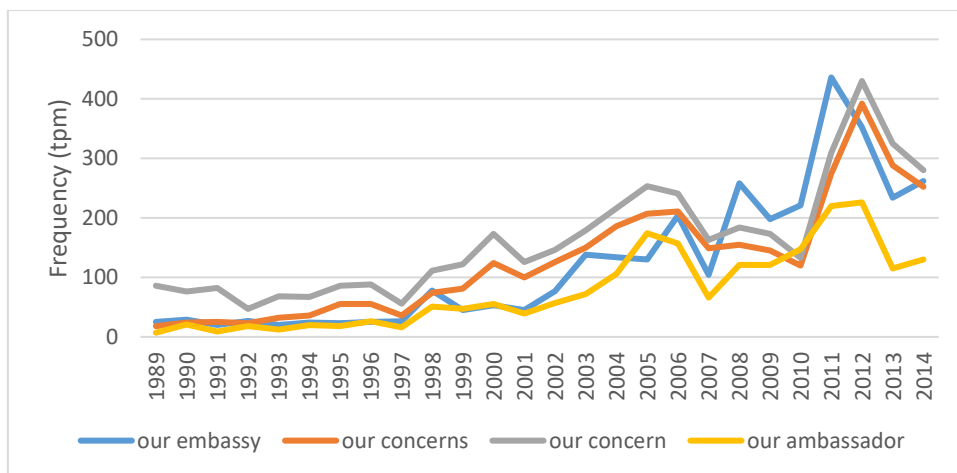
Figure 7.6: Frequency of singular and plural pronouns



The plural pronouns with the greatest rise in frequency are the possessives *our* (from 4,055 to 4,914 tpm) and *their* (from 2,216 to 2,526 tpm). There could be a number of explanations for this including ministers attempting to make their discourse more inclusive; appealing to populist and nationalistic sentiment or simply adopting a less formal register. Among bigrams of the form ‘*our* + noun’, the pairs which have the largest rise in frequency are *our embassy*, *our concerns*, *our concern* and *our ambassador*, as Figure 7.7 shows. By contrast, bigrams including these nouns which declined in

frequency during the period include [*her*] *majesty's embassy* (from 27 tpm to zero), *british concerns* (from 2 tpm to zero), *british concern* (from 3 tpm to zero) and [*her*] *majesty's ambassador* (from 37 tpm to 8).

Figure 7.7: Frequency of selected 'our + noun' bigrams



The following excerpts from the corpus provide examples of this substitution:

We can see no justification for the Soviet authorities' continued refusal to allow Boris and Galina Lifshitz to emigrate. Her Majesty's embassy in Moscow raised the case with the Russians in December [...]. (William Waldegrave, Commons vol. 145, 20 Jan 1989)

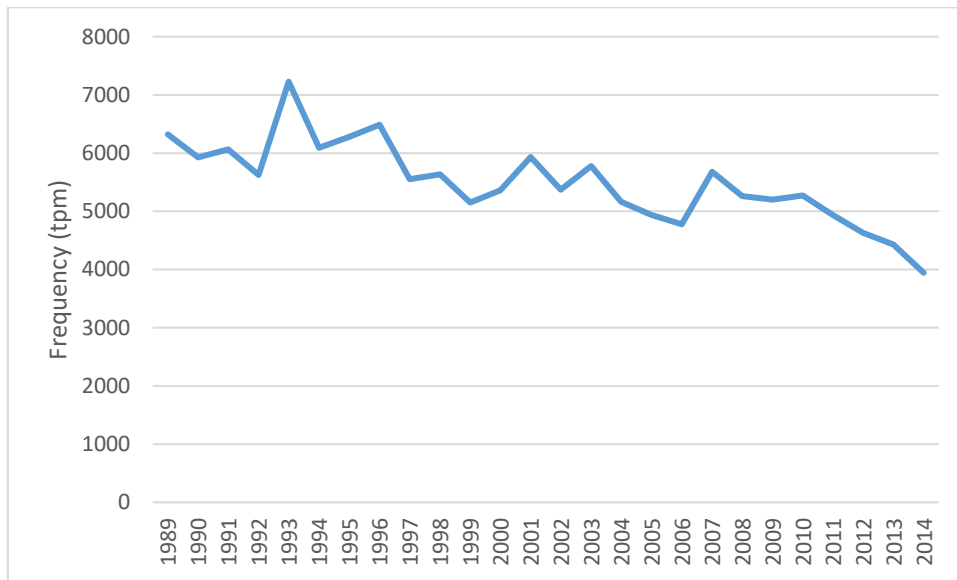
Our Embassy in Guatemala City represents the UK in Honduras and has raised Dina Meza's case with the Honduran authorities on several occasions. (Baroness Anelay, Lords vol. 756, 5 November 2014)

These shifts could be the result of Hansard transcribers becoming more tolerant of ministers using less formal language. However, it seems more likely that they reflect an actual change in ministers' discourse or a combination of the two.

7.7 Not

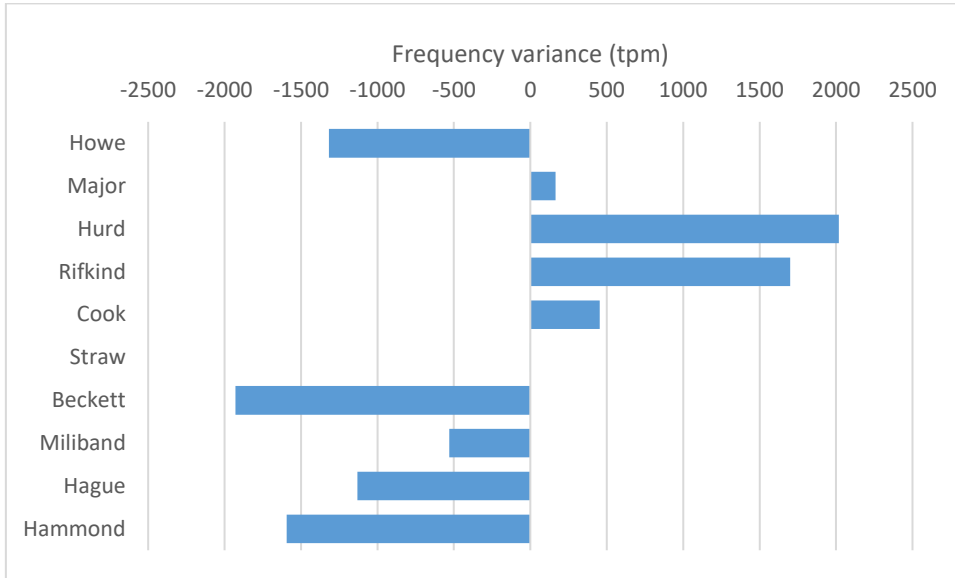
The word *not* has the twelfth largest fall in frequency in perspective one and, as Figure 7.8 shows, displays a clear and sustained downward trend.

Figure 7.8: Frequency of *not*



A similar change is seen in perspective two: *not* has a positive variance in the discourse of most of the individuals who served as Foreign Secretary during the earlier part of the period studied, and a negative variance among those who served in the latter part. As Figure 7.9 shows, however, there are exceptions to this. The word has a negative variance in the discourse of the first Foreign Secretary of the period, Geoffrey Howe; and its negative variance is largest during the period of office of Margaret Beckett, approximately two thirds of the way through the period. However, data relating to the discourse of Howe, Beckett and also Major should be treated with caution as their subcorpora are smaller than those of the other seven individuals who served as Foreign Secretary. The discourse of Douglas Hurd also stands out as having the largest positive variance.

Figure 7.9: Frequency variance of *not* in discourse of each Foreign Secretary



Analysis of bigrams shows that the greatest fall in frequency occurs where *not* is used to qualify common verb forms such as *is* and *do*. These pairs both display an increase of frequency of more than 300 tpm when comparing the first five and last five full years covered by the corpus. By contrast, the bigrams with the greatest rise in frequency display a much smaller change, as Table 7.8 shows.

Table 7.8: Top 5 risers and fallers in frequency among bigrams including *not*

Bigram		TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM Change
Risers	not he	54	106	52
	not made	15	65	50
	not hold	9	53	44
	not receive	19	42	23
	not current	5	25	20
Fallers	shall not	111	8	-103
	all not	114	9	-105
	are not	498	354	-144
	do not	1044	724	-320
	is not	1023	685	-338

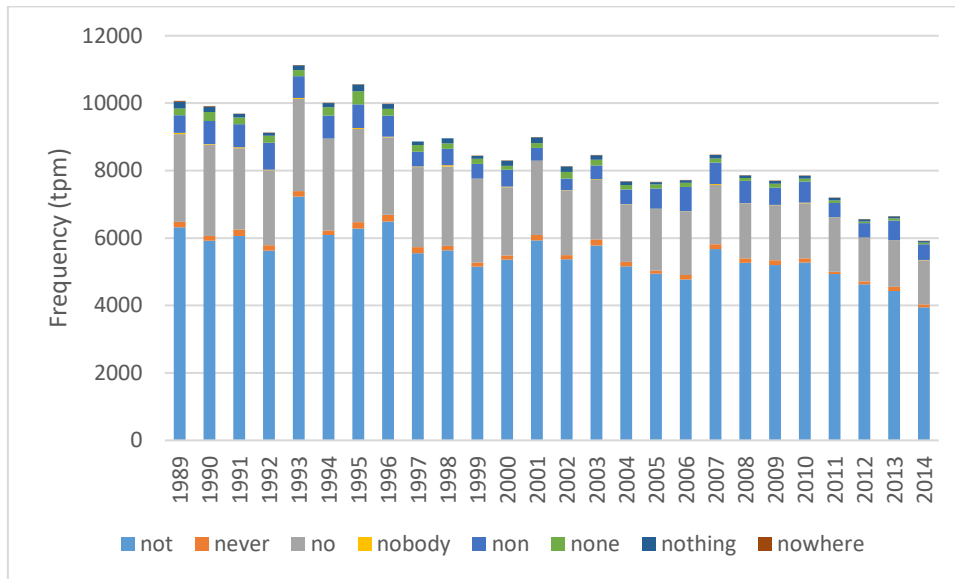
A fall in frequency over the period studied also occurs in ministers' use of other words of negation: *never, no, nobody, non, none, nothing* and *nowhere*. As the script used for this analysis removes all punctuation marks before calculating frequencies, *no-one* is counted as a token of 'no' and the contraction *n't* is not included in this list. Even allowing for these effects, however, the list is likely to be comprehensive enough to give an overall sense of the change in frequency of words of negation. Table 7.9 provides data on the decline in frequency of these words.

Table 7.9: Frequency of not, never, no, nobody, non, none, nothing and nowhere

Word	TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM change
nowhere	11	5	-6
nobody	24	7	-16
never	163	95	-68
nothing	144	64	-80
none	210	65	-145
non	664	499	-165
no	2556	1433	-1123
not	6302	4617	-1685

While the reality of this decrease in frequency is clear, the reasons are less so. In the case of *not*, the number of bigrams is smaller at the beginning of the period (1,892 pairs in 1989 to 1993) than at the end (2,010 pairs in 2010 to 2014). This suggests that, rather than ministers reducing the range of contexts in which they express negation, they are using negation less frequently within those contexts. There also appears to be a cyclical aspect to the data. As Figure 7.10 shows, a peak in frequency of words of negation occurs at or shortly before the end of the period of office of each Prime Minister: Thatcher (who left office in 1990); Major (1997); Blair (2007); and Brown (2010). These peaks might suggest that over time ministers increasingly felt the need to defend their government's record from criticism, or found themselves justifying what they were not doing (by contrast to a new government setting out what it would do). Conversely, the overall downward trend in the use of negation during the period as a whole might suggest that ministers have increasingly sought to present their government as an active influence for positive change in the world.

Figure 7.10: Frequency of words of negation



Analysis of bigrams including *not* provides an insight into how ministers' repeated use of an agreed policy line may manifest itself in their lexis. The bigram *not content* does not appear in the 1989-1993 subcorpora, but is found 20 times in 2010-2014. Of these, 18 appear in a stock answer (sometimes with minor variations of wording) to questions relating to Gibraltar. The following contribution illustrates this:

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and I have regular contact with our Spanish counterparts on a wide range of issues. Any discussions that we have on Gibraltar reflect our clear position on sovereignty, which is that the UK will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their wishes. Furthermore, the UK will not enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar is not content. (David Lidington, Commons vol. 532, 9 September 2011)

7.8 Shall

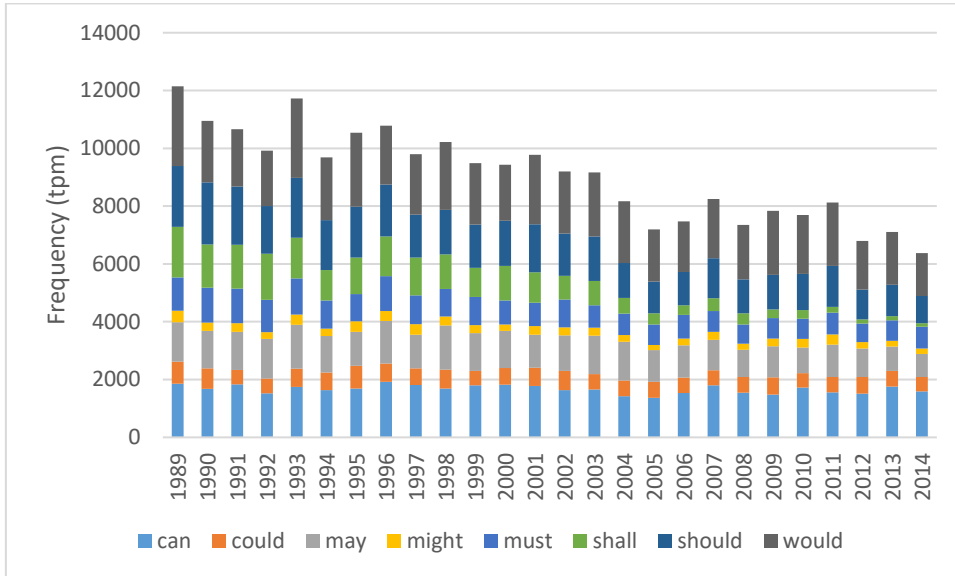
The modal verb *shall* fell in frequency during the period, from 1,545 tpm to 172 tpm. Its view of its steep decline, data was also obtained for *will*, to establish whether the latter was displacing the former; and for other modal verbs to shed light on changes in their frequency. In addition to the verbs originally selected for analysis – *shall* and *be* – this section therefore also discusses *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *should*, *will* and *would*.

The data in Table 7.10 shows that overall the frequency of modal verbs fell by 21% between the first and last five years of the period, with *will* being the only modal to rise in frequency. This occurred as a gradual and sustained decline, as the year-by-year data shown in Figure 7.11 shows. The generalised nature of the change indicates that this represents a long-term shift in the manner of expression in ministers' discourse. The fall in frequency of these expressions of possibility, ability, permission or obligation may also suggest that ministers adopted a more definite and affirmative style of discourse over time.

Table 7.10: Frequency of *shall*, *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *should*, *will* and *would*

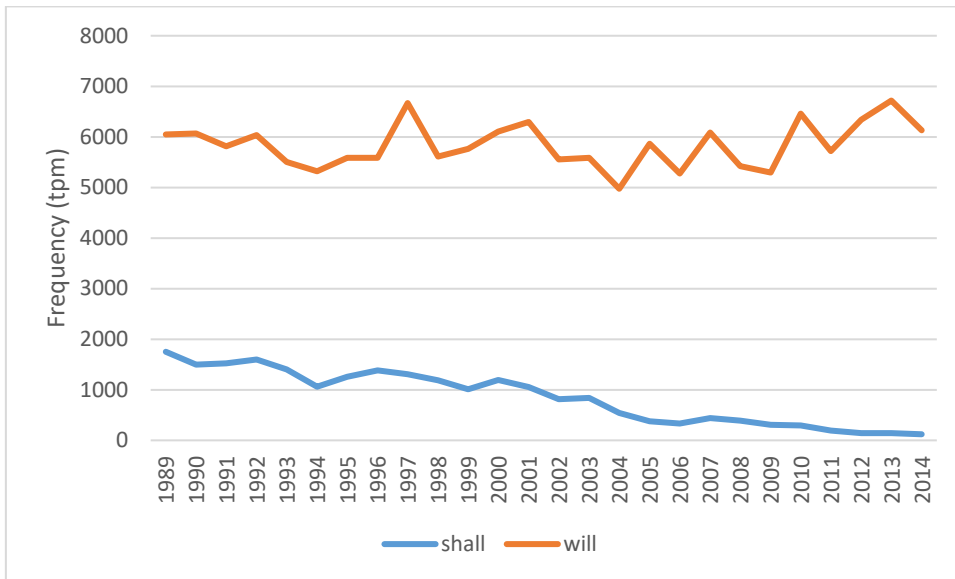
Word	TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM Change
will	5870	6254	383
might	317	253	-64
could	626	532	-93
can	1735	1619	-116
may	1380	933	-447
must	1194	713	-481
would	2340	1837	-503
should	2012	1148	-864
shall	1545	172	-1373

Figure 7.11: Decline in frequency of *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *shall*, *should* and *would*



The data also confirms that the fall in frequency of *shall* is accompanied by a rise of *will*. As Figure 7.12 shows, however, the frequency of *will* is relatively erratic year-by-year, and its overall rise in frequency is smaller than the fall of *shall*. What is clearer is that *shall* shows a decline in frequency unmatched by any other modal verb. In the last complete year's data in the corpus (2014), its frequency was just 100 tpm; and if its rate of decline continued for a few more years, it would become extinct in this discourse. It is perhaps more likely, however, the range of contexts in which ministers use the word *will* continue to narrow without it disappearing entirely in the short term.

Figure 7.12: Frequency of *shall* and *will*



The following extracts both show a Foreign Secretary making a commitment to inform the House of Commons about particular developments overseas. In the first extract from 1989, Douglas Hurd uses *shall* in a way that may now seem archaic. In the second extract from 2014, William Hague uses *will* in an otherwise very similar construct:

We have a responsibility to decide on the arrangements for 1997, of course that is related to whatever appears in the basic law concerning arrangements following that date. The timing of our decision is therefore related to the timing of the basic law. When we have reached a conclusion, we shall of course inform the House and the people of Hong Kong. (Douglas Hurd, Commons vol. 162, 24 November 1989)

I wish to spend the remaining few minutes of my speech - so that others can speak - updating the House on recent developments and on the Government's overall strategy, treating these remarks as our quarterly report to Parliament on progress in Afghanistan. At the close of this debate, the Secretary of State for International Development will inform the House of development progress. (William Hague, Commons vol. 528, 16 May 2011)

7.9 *Be*

The word *be* fell from a frequency of 7,368 tpm in the first five years of the period to 5,530 in the last five. Its fall is linked to that of the modal verbs: as Table 7.11 shows, *should be*, *would be*, *shall be*, *may be* and *must be* are among the bigrams including *be* that display the largest fall in frequency. Of the pairs that increase in frequency, the rise of *and be* is unsurprising giving the increase in frequency of *and* already noted in this chapter. The rise of *be found* and *be published* is driven by the inclusion in Hansard of references to statements published online.

Table 7.11: Bigrams including *be* that have the largest rise or fall in frequency

Bigram	TPM 1989-93	TPM 2010-14	TPM change
be found	31	115	85
and be	130	185	55
be published	28	64	36
must be	375	256	-118
is be	315	187	-128
may be	274	128	-146
shall be	172	18	-154
would be	702	514	-188
be a	1343	1150	-193
should be	677	409	-267
to be	1878	1591	-287
as be	1412	1095	-317
not be	855	491	-364
will be	1776	1409	-367

7.10 Comparison with the British National Corpus

For the reasons explained in the previous chapter, this study analyses data on a diachronic basis and as such it does not require the use of a reference corpus. However, an exception is made for the present chapter and a reference corpus is used here with the aim of understanding whether the changes observed in the frequency of grammatical words reflect changes in their use outside parliament. For the results of such a comparison to be meaningful, the reference corpus must cover a

similar time period and it should preferably be derived from both spoken and written material, as is the case in Hansard transcripts.

The British National Corpus (BNC Consortium 2015) provides a suitable reference corpus. In its original form, it was compiled between 1991 and 1994, drawing on written and spoken material from the late 20th century. A 'British National Corpus 2014' (Love et al. 2017) also exists and gives access to recorded conversations gathered from members of the UK public between 2012 and 2016. At 100 million and 11.5 million words respectively, these are substantial corpora and the time periods from which their data is drawn correspond well to the beginning and end of the period covered by this study. In view of these qualities, the absence of spoken material in the BNC 2014 is considered tolerable.

Table 7.12 shows frequency data, from both the corpus created for the present research and from the British National Corpus, for the nine words selected for analysis in this chapter.

Table 7.12: Comparison of frequency data for *and, with, this, that, not, I, my, shall and be*

Word	Frequency in own corpus (tpm)		Frequency in BNC (tpm)		Frequency change (tpm)	
	1989-1993	2010-2014	BNC	BNC2014	Own corpus	BNC
and	25609	33109	21224	24272	7500	3048
with	6761	8832	3974	3791	2071	-183
this	3951	5302	4665	4386	1352	-279
that	18855	15510	20562	20048	-3345	-514
not	6302	4617	5058	5590	-1685	532
I	10575	7417	38046	39626	-3158	1580
my	5632	3703	2613	3969	-1930	1356
shall	1545	172	314	181	-1373	-133
be	7368	5530	4757	4996	-1839	239

The rise of *and* and the fall of *shall* and *that* observed in the present research are reflected in the BNC data. However, the other six grammatical words move in opposite directions when comparing data from my own corpus with that from the BNC. This is perhaps unsurprising given that parliamentary discourse is governed by a set of protocols that do not apply to general use of

language. As such, the comparison with the BNC does not provide evidence that changes in the frequency of most of these grammatical words in parliament reflect changes in their use more generally. However, in the case of *shall*, the comparison with the BNC provides further evidence of the declining use of the word.

7.11 Conclusions

The words discussed in this chapter could easily be dismissed as small and insignificant words with little relevance to understanding changes in foreign policy discourse. The evidence presented here suggests, however, that changes in the frequency of these words may be markers of wider changes. These changes can be found on several levels: in foreign policy discourse; in parliamentary discourse; in the way in which parliamentary business is conducted and contributions are transcribed; and in the use of English more widely. In a minority of cases, the nature of the change seems clear. The decline of *shall* in foreign policy discourse appears to follow the decline of the word in general usage. Other cases are less clear, however, and the changes observed may reflect an interplay of multiple factors.

The analysis carried out for this chapter also suggests some changes in way in which ministers express themselves in parliament. Taken together the rise of *will*, the decline of the other modal verbs, the decline of words of negation and the shift from 'far' to 'near' demonstratives may suggest that the discourse has become more positive, affirmative and emphatic. Ministers appear to increasingly project certainty in an uncertain world. In this interpretation, parliament may be viewed as having become less as a forum for deliberative debate and more of a place for making statements. In one sense, though the introduction of written statements, that is literally the case. An alternative view would be that the changes are more of style than substance. Seen in this way, the changes could be regarded as part of a shift towards informality in parliamentary discourse, in a similar way

to that which has been observed in party election broadcasts in the UK (Pearce 2005); or simply as examples of language changing over time. In either case, changes in the frequency of these grammatical words have a greater significance than might be expected.

8. ANALYSIS: RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter groups five words into the theme of ‘rights and freedoms’: the words *human*, *rights*, *religious*, *freedom* and *dialogue*. There is a high frequency of co-occurrence of these items. For example, in the subcorpus of contributions that contain the word *human*, the word *rights* has a frequency 5,406 tpm higher than is the case in the corpus as a whole. Of the 37 ‘foreign policy’ words selected for analysis, *rights* has the highest excess frequency in the corpus of contributions that contain the word *human*, other than *human* itself. As Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show, a similar pattern is seen among the other words selected for analysis in this chapter: each word is seen more frequently in contributions containing the other selected words than in the corpus as a whole. This evidence of co-occurrence of words in the same parliamentary contributions provides a statistical basis for grouping together the analysis of the words in a single chapter. However, intuition also plays a part and the fact of *human* and *rights* co-occurring is unlikely to surprise readers. It may be less obvious, however, why *rights* and *dialogue* would co-occur without the analysis that follows. A combination of statistical evidence and intuition is therefore required to organise the words into thematic groups of a manageable size.

On the basis of the data shown in Tables 8.1 and 8.2, the words *brussels*, *intelligence*, *sexual* and *society* were also candidates to include the present chapter. However, viewing the data as a whole suggested that *brussels* would fit better with other words including *government*, *uk* and *eu*. The word *intelligence* will be analysed as part of a theme of ‘security’, where it displays a greater co-occurrence with other words than is the case in this chapter. Similarly, *sexual* and *society* have a higher frequency of co-occurrence with words including *violence* and *women*, and these items will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Of the words selected for analysis in this chapter, *human*, *rights*, *religious* and *freedom* display a relatively steady rise in frequency through the period studied, as Figure 8.1 and the data in Table 8.3 illustrate. The word *religious* had a low frequency in ministers' discourse during the years that the Conservative government held power, peaking at 43 tpm. It rose in frequency during the Labour years, reaching 268 tpm, and rose further under the coalition government to peak at 484 tpm. Ministers' use of *freedom* also grew from a low base, while *human* and *rights* both display a large increase in frequency from a higher base. *Dialogue* rises to a first peak of frequency in 1998, then is relatively stable over the remainder of the period, with a modest second peak in 2008.

Figure 8.1: Frequency of *human*, *rights*, *religious*, *freedom* and *dialogue*

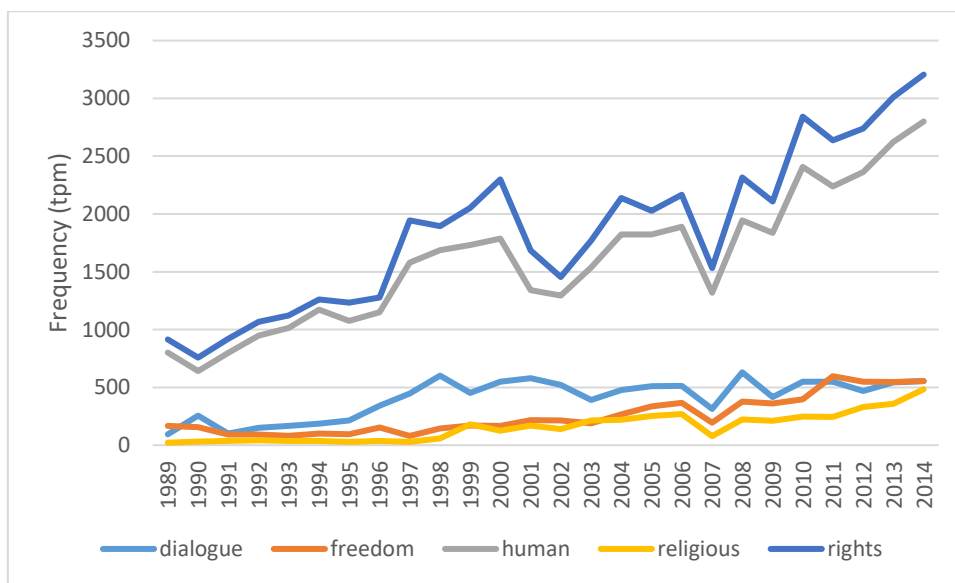


Table 8.1: Excess frequency data for ch. 8 (Type A)

Showing the ten subcorpora in which the words specified in row 1 have the highest excess frequency

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Dialogue		Freedom		Human		Religious		Rights	
	word	tpm	word	tpm	word	tpm	word	tpm	word	tpm
1 st	dialogue	3120	freedom	3195	human	5632	religious	4567	rights	5641
2 nd	religious	1250	religious	2361	rights	4999	freedom	784	human	5406
3 rd	brussels	1111	society	270	religious	2798	sexual	214	religious	3070
4 th	freedom	593	sexual	270	sexual	2275	society	61	sexual	2558
5 th	terrorism	348	dialogue	164	freedom	1842	intelligence	44	freedom	2012
6 th	violence	343	terrorism	147	women	1590	terrorism	9	women	1966
7 th	society	298	intelligence	113	dialogue	1338	women	3	dialogue	1408
8 th	refugees	270	women	91	violence	1178	dialogue	-31	violence	1317
9 th	sexual	246	regime	88	society	993	violence	-38	society	1052
10 th	women	244	violence	78	regime	958	relief	-45	regime	998

Table 8.2: Excess frequency data for ch. 8 (Type B)

Showing the ten words that have the highest excess frequency in the subcorpus of contributions containing the Word specified in row 1

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Dialogue		Freedom		Human		Religious		Rights	
	word	tpm	word	tpm	word	tpm	word	tpm	word	tpm
1 st	dialogue	3120	freedom	3195	human	5632	religious	4567	rights	5641
2 nd	government	1775	government	2114	rights	5406	government	3107	human	4999
3 rd	rights	1408	rights	2012	government	2979	rights	3070	government	2914
4 th	human	1338	human	1842	uk	1669	human	2798	uk	1503
5 th	uk	1220	uk	1186	eu	947	freedom	2361	eu	809
6 th	eu	1044	eu	1018	security	296	uk	1766	security	89
7 th	security	623	religious	784	commonwealth	241	eu	1615	united	64
8 th	united	439	security	659	united	236	dialogue	1250	commonwealth	-19
9 th	development	397	commonwealth	631	dialogue	68	commonwealth	938	dialogue	-188
10 th	commonwealth	300	dialogue	593	development	-154	violence	914	civil	-387

Table 8.3: Year-by-year frequency data for words and longer strings discussed in ch. 8

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																												Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93	2010-14	
buddhism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
buddhist	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	7	3	7	0	2	8	0	3	0	0	0	6	4	4	3	4	3	5	4	1	4	3
buddhists	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0
christian	52	53	45	53	41	20	45	55	46	20	30	77	41	24	46	47	40	41	11	47	31	83	69	91	78	81	48	80	32
christianity	2	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	11	2	0	2	13	1	3	8	2	3	1	11	10	5	9	19	1	11	10
christians	9	11	11	10	7	6	14	11	12	7	36	75	62	47	51	48	37	63	16	56	60	105	67	103	147	196	9	123	114
dialogue	94	256	99	151	166	186	213	341	446	601	451	550	580	522	391	476	511	512	314	630	415	550	549	468	545	556	155	532	377
freedom	168	154	93	91	82	102	95	153	80	144	170	168	217	215	190	266	335	367	194	377	361	396	597	549	546	555	117	538	421
freedom of expression	13	15	7	3	12	28	8	29	9	34	45	33	46	35	24	36	56	109	42	74	90	99	147	141	111	129	10	128	117
freedom of movement	9	15	0	3	2	12	4	18	18	11	11	8	10	11	27	30	25	16	9	13	47	16	19	54	26	14	6	27	21
freedom of religion	0	2	0	10	10	4	2	2	0	7	7	15	25	24	12	30	18	43	14	78	61	84	116	117	189	217	5	147	142
hindu	0	0	5	0	2	0	2	0	3	4	7	2	8	9	9	3	7	6	2	8	4	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	0
hinduism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
hindus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	8	7	1	1	8	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
human	801	641	799	949	1014	1173	1075	1151	1579	1688	1732	1788	1340	1294	1539	1823	1824	1889	1319	1944	1837	2406	2239	2362	2624	2800	847	2482	1635
human rights	703	563	725	858	951	1076	1012	1082	1512	1614	1652	1700	1236	1220	1469	1733	1740	1798	1227	1857	1748	2303	2130	2252	2489	2683	767	2367	1600
human rights act	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	12	5	4	2	6	3	3	9	0	5	2	1	0	4	0	0	2	2
islam	0	6	0	0	0	2	16	9	0	5	21	15	41	15	30	6	18	14	11	25	11	26	26	28	51	22	1	31	29
islamic	15	15	7	8	24	6	22	44	28	28	39	27	87	53	82	48	67	98	34	39	28	28	28	29	75	162	14	65	50
jew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
jewish	2	21	11	3	7	6	2	20	3	18	45	56	12	6	26	10	13	15	5	18	53	36	31	33	9	12	9	24	15
jews	0	17	9	0	3	6	0	22	0	5	19	27	10	6	4	4	6	4	2	6	8	13	1	3	1	8	6	5	-1
judaism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	2	0	2	1	1	3	2	1	0	0	3	2	4	6	0	3	3
media freedom	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	8	6	0	3	3	10	11	25	22	18	16	26	20	14	13	0	18	18
muslim	0	0	16	10	60	34	16	4	6	20	47	66	68	51	74	63	40	80	44	30	71	45	30	43	86	73	20	55	36
muslims	2	2	16	13	87	54	18	0	0	9	21	60	43	30	34	28	9	38	14	8	31	24	16	24	54	61	28	36	8
national dialogue	0	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	2	0	0	0	6	10	3	4	7	0	46	9	28	35	4	25	21
political dialogue	7	11	7	38	10	28	16	31	71	101	15	31	23	21	29	19	31	18	19	56	45	50	22	35	45	41	14	38	24
regular dialogue	0	4	2	8	12	12	10	4	6	9	19	29	19	23	21	23	41	31	25	19	26	50	25	30	25	30	6	31	25
religious	22	32	36	43	36	38	30	35	28	60	180	124	170	141	214	221	252	268	79	221	210	246	246	331	359	484	34	335	302
religious freedom	4	0	2	0	7	2	0	2	0	9	21	0	19	29	25	49	43	40	6	43	33	36	37	36	54	39	3	40	37
rights	915	758	921	1067	1122	1261	1234	1277	1946	1894	2052	2300	1684	1456	1772	2138	2029	2166	1532	2315	2109	2842	2636	2741	3011	3206	962	2880	1919
rights dialogue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	30	36	62	66	50	39	113	108	89	58	103	72	117	59	59	72	66	0	71	71

8.2 Political and historical context

The concept of citizens having rights and freedoms enshrined in law was established long before the period covered by this study. In the United Kingdom, the Magna Carta of 1215 articulated rights and freedoms which persist to today. The United Kingdom was among the countries which signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations' General Assembly in 1948, which may be seen as a cornerstone of human rights post-World War 2, and the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950. The Human Rights Act of 1998 incorporated the rights contained in the Convention into UK law (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018).

As foreign policy discourse focuses by definition on overseas rather than domestic matters, the contributions contained in the corpus mainly discuss rights and freedoms outside the UK. The passage through parliament of the UK's Human Rights Act of 1998 was the responsibility of Home Office ministers (UK Parliament 1998) and the string *human rights act* has a frequency of only 7 tpm in the corpus as a whole. Events around the world, however, gave Foreign Office ministers reasons to discuss rights and freedoms throughout the period studied, from the violent suppression of pro-democracy protests in China in 1989 to the use of chemical weapons in civilian areas of Syria at the end of the period.

8.3 Human and rights

The words *human* and *rights* are found together no fewer than 27,282 times in the corpus and their pairing accounts for over 80% of the 33,380 tokens of *rights*. *Human* is the word most frequently found forming a bigram with *rights*, while *human right* and *human rights* are the most frequent bigrams including *human*. As Figure 8.1 shows, the frequency of *human rights* rises by 1,600 tpm

when comparing the first five and last five complete years. This rise, as shown in Table 8.4, is the largest rise in frequency over the period of any bigram of *rights*²⁵.

Figure 8.2: Frequency of *human rights*

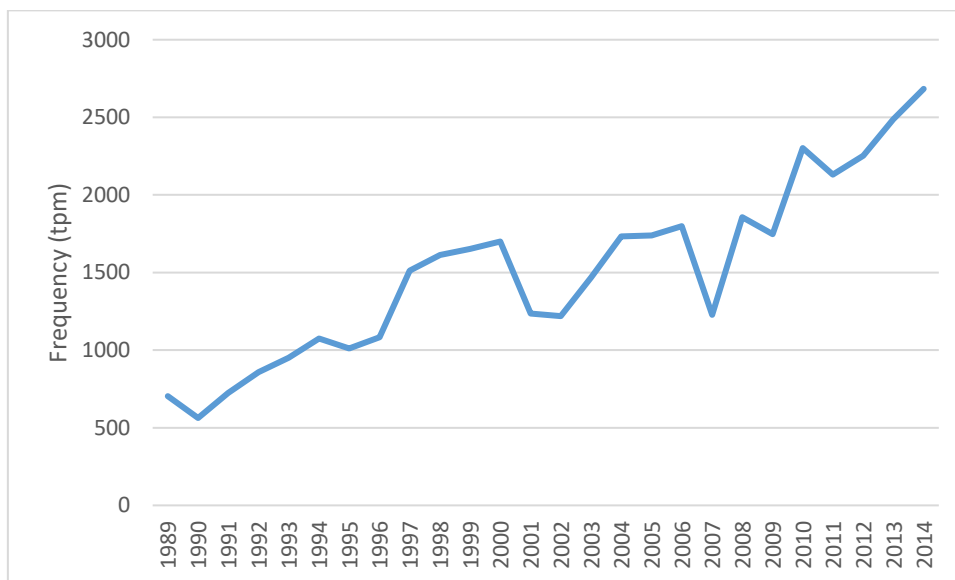


Table 8.4: Bigrams including *rights* with the greatest change of frequency

Bigram	TPM 1989-93	TPM 2010-14	TPM change
human rights	767	2367	1600
rights and	99	296	197
rights council	0	181	181
rights of	57	190	133
the rights	42	161	119
rights situation	30	129	99
rights defenders	0	78	78
rights violations	20	95	76
rights issues	31	106	75
rights dialogue	0	71	71

²⁵ No bigram including *rights* has as large a fall in frequency: the only pair to fall by more than 10 tpm is *of rights*, which fell from 18 to 4 tpm.

As *human* and *rights* are so frequently used as a pair and their change in frequency far exceeds that of any other bigram including *human* or *rights*, the remainder of this section focuses on the growth of *human rights* as a theme in foreign policy discourse. However, the three bigrams with an initial frequency of zero are also notable. The bigram *rights council* forms part of the name of the Human Rights Council, a UN body created in 2006; while *rights defenders* is first seen as a name for a particular type of activist in 1998; and *rights dialogue* will be discussed in the *dialogue* section of this chapter.

The geographic focus of ministers' discourse regarding human rights shifts during the period. In a subcorpus of contributions which contain the word *rights*, the country names with the greatest rise in frequency when comparing the first and last five full years of the period are Syria (+777 tpm), Iran (+719) and Sri Lanka (+698). There is a steep fall in the frequency of ministers' references to the territory of Hong Kong (-1390), China (-333) and Yugoslavia (-326). The reasons for these changes vary: civil wars promoted concern for human rights in Syria and Sri Lanka and ministers became "particularly concerned by the sharp rise in the number of executions [...], the ongoing suppression of freedom of expression and treatment of religious and other minority groups" in Iran (Commons vol. 587, 6 November 2014). Hong Kong, and by association China, were a particular focus at the beginning of the period as the handover of the territory in 1997 approached, as will be discussed. References to Yugoslavia, which peaked in frequency during the country's civil war, decreased as the country dissolved and peace returned.

Data from this subcorpus also suggests that ministers' conception of human rights broadened during the period. There is a large rise in frequency for words associated with the particular aspects of human rights including *women* (+701 tpm), *religious* (+641 tpm), *political* (+620 tpm), *expression* (+298), *children* (+159 tpm) and *minority* (+148 tpm). Words that decline in relative frequency include

economic (-465 tpm) and *democracy* (-87), but even these rise in absolute frequency (+88 and +81 tokens respectively).

At the beginning of the period, ministers' contributions regarding human rights are mostly short and are often given in response to questions. They express concern regarding the human rights situation in a wide range of areas around the world, but in many cases ministers' mention of these places is prompted by a specific question and answers are repeatedly given in a standard format such as "We have made a number of representations about human rights to the Yugoslav authorities over the last five years" (Tim Eggar, Commons vol. 156, 3 July 1989). To a large extent, the presence of human rights as a topic in ministers' discourse is not of their own making, but is instead driven by opposition and backbench members.

China and Hong Kong are a notable exception to this is. Ministers were highly critical of the Chinese government's handling of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 and expressed determination to preserve rights and freedoms in Hong Kong. Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe acknowledged the "very deep concern felt by all hon. Members about the future of the territory in the wake of the recent horrific events in Peking" and declared that "Hong Kong's capitalist system and its way of life will continue, with all its human rights and freedoms, its laws and its legal system" (Commons vol. 156, 13 July 1989). Although the relative frequency of references to China fell later in the period, it remained one of the most frequently mentioned countries in ministers' rights discourse in 2010-2014 with a frequency of 505 tpm. Ministers had "concerns about restrictions to civil and political freedoms in China, particularly around ethnic minority rights; the death penalty; and freedom of expression, association and assembly" (Hugo Swire, Commons vol. 582, 19 June 2014).

In 1998 – the first full year of the Labour government's period of office – the frequency of *human rights* was more than double that of 1989. Ministers continued to give brief responses to specific questions, but human rights also feature more frequently in their longer contributions. One

contribution succinctly describes the place the new government saw for human rights in its foreign policy:

[...] The House is fully aware of the Government's commitment to the promotion of human rights — indeed, it is a centrepiece of our foreign and domestic policies. We are committed to the principle of the universality of human rights: human rights — economic, social, cultural, civil and political — are for all people, regardless of their sex, age, ethnic origin or where they live. [...] (Derek Fatchett, Commons vol. 309, 1 April 1998)

This broader concept of human rights continues into the period of coalition government. At 786 tpm, the term *human rights* is more frequent in the contributions of William Hague than in those of any previous Foreign Secretary who held office during the period studied. In July 2012, the government sought parliament's approval for an EU Charter of Fundamental Human Rights and for the appointment of an EU Special Representative for Human Rights. Minister of State David Lidington spoke twice during the debate and the 145 tokens of *human* and *rights* contained in his contributions are among the highest numbers seen from a minister in a single debate anywhere in the corpus. Lidington argued that the EU's human rights strategy would “complement and amplify the UK's own human rights policy”, emphasising that “Democratic freedoms, universal human rights and respect for the rule of law are at the heart of British diplomacy and policy” (Commons vol. 548, 12 July 2012).

With the Labour party supporting the motion, the most critical voices were those of Conservative backbenchers, who expressed concern that the proposals represented “European creep on a monumental scale” (Bill Cash, Commons vol. 548, 12 July 2012); and that the Special Representative's role might overlap with that of the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner. Other backbenchers expressed support for the EU countries using their collectively strength to promote human rights, including by making the respect of human rights a condition of trade agreements with other countries, particularly in relation to the arms trade. Lidington did not make any specific

commitments on this last point, but responded that the purpose of the initiative was “to ensure that human rights concerns cannot be overlooked or dismissed in any area of the EU’s external activity”.

In summing up, Lidington rejects the criticisms of his own backbenchers and reiterates his support for the UK participating in these EU initiatives relating to human rights. His contributions may be read as a distillation of the human rights discourse of the government at that time: stating that human rights are a priority of the government, working independently and with international bodies; and acknowledging that questions of human rights cannot be viewed in isolation from other issues such as trade. It is not for this thesis to assess the extent to which this discourse translated into action or achieved results, but the evidence from the corpus shows a clear growth in ministers’ discussion of human rights, with the topic increasingly being discussed of their own volition and with human rights viewed in a broader sense than was previously the case.

8.4 Religious and freedom

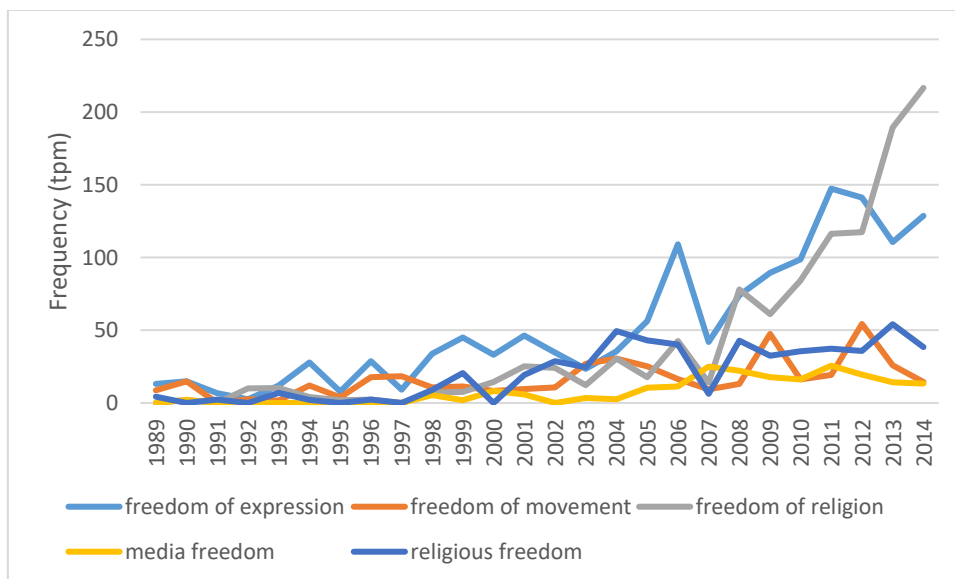
The bigrams of *freedom* that display that largest change in tpm value include *freedom of* (which has the largest rise), *religious freedom* (4th) and *media freedom* (8th). *Press freedom* (14th) and *political freedom* (19th) have smaller rises, while three-word groups beginning with *freedom of* that display a large rise in frequency include *freedom of religion* (1st), *freedom of expression* (2nd), *freedom of movement* (7th), *freedom of information* (13th) and *freedom of assembly* (14th). Bigrams and trigrams that fall in frequency are far fewer in number and none fall by a large amount. The expressions *public freedom*, *academic freedom* and *freedom of travel* are all absent from ministers’ discourse during the last five full years of the period studied. Table 8.5 shows frequency data for these and selected other bigrams and trigrams of *freedom*.

Table 8.5: Frequency data for selected bigrams and trigrams of *freedom*

Bigram / trigram	TPM 1989-93	TPM 2010-14	TPM change
freedom of	49	401	352
freedom of religion	5	147	142
freedom of expression	10	128	117
religious freedom	3	40	37
media freedom	0	18	18
freedom of movement	6	27	21
freedom of information	1	12	11
freedom of assembly	1	11	10
press freedom	1	9	7
about freedom	0	8	8
political freedom	1	5	4
economic freedom	4	3	-1
academic freedom	1	0	-1
public freedom	1	0	-1
freedom of travel	3	0	-3

This section will focus on the strings which have the largest change in tpm value, all of which rise in frequency by more than 20 tpm: *freedom of religion* and *religious freedom*; *freedom of expression*; *media freedom*; and *freedom of movement*. The rise of these strings is shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.3: Frequency of selected bigrams and trigrams of *freedom*



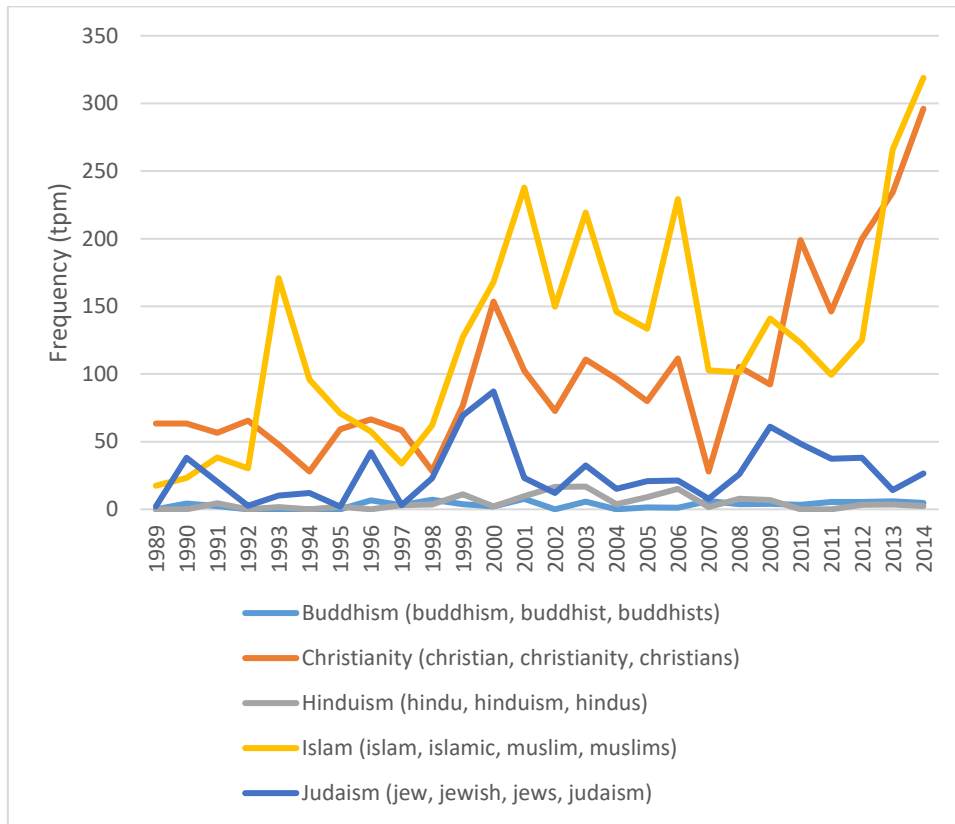
In the corpus as a whole, the frequency of references to the world's five largest religions²⁶ follows a similar pattern to that seen with the expressions *religious freedom* and *freedom of religion*. As Figure 8.3 shows²⁷, these references are relatively stable and infrequent until 1997, except for a spike of references to Islam in 1993 prompted by attacks by Islamist extremists in Egypt; discussion of Islamic influences on the legal system of Libya in relation to a child custody case; and a series of questions by a backbench MP about the application of the Islamic dress code to female diplomats serving in Iran. Ministers also criticise the Chinese authorities' treatment of Buddhists in Tibet.

References to the five faiths increased after the Labour government came to power in 1997 and references to Judaism peaked in 2000 due to concerns over anti-semitism in Russia, Austria and particularly Iran. Islam is the most frequently mentioned religion overall in the corpus, with references being particularly frequent following the '9/11' terrorist attacks in the US in 2001 and during the subsequent US-led military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. References to Islam and Christianity grew further after the coalition government took power, with both reaching reaching similar peaks of frequency at the end of the period.

²⁶ Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism (World Population Review 2022)

²⁷ As these figures are derived from frequency analysis of the noun and adjective forms shown, they include indirect mentions of each religion, such as through references to Christian Democratic political parties in Europe, the Islamic Relief non-governmental organisation, or the 'Islamic State' group which controlled large areas of Iraq and Syria in the early to mid-2010s.

Figure 8.4: References to the world’s five largest religions (1989-2014)



Although Islam is the most frequently mentioned religion in the corpus as a whole (with 2,282 tokens compared to 1,837 for Christianity, counting the forms shown above), Christianity is the most frequently mentioned religion in a subcorpus of only those contributions that contain the word *freedom* (with 673 tokens compared to 423 for Islam). This reflects a concern on the part of ministers and other members over restrictions, discrimination and violence towards Christians around the world, including in Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indonesia. Ministers emphasise that “The Government condemns all instances of violence and discrimination against individuals and groups because of their faith or belief, wherever they occur or whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned” (Jeremy Browne, Commons vol. 518, 17 November 2010). They give particular attention, however, to the plight of Christians in comments such as “Indonesia has a strong tradition of religious diversity and tolerance but there has been a rise in recent years of localised instances of

inter- and intra-religious conflict and examples where the rights of religious minority groups, including Christians, have not been protected” (Hugo Swire, Commons vol. 577, 10 March 2014).

Contributions made by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Mark Simmonds on 3 December 2013 (Commons vol. 571) contain 41 tokens of *religious* and *freedom of religion*, which is the largest number seen on any single day in the corpus as whole. Simmonds was speaking in a debate entitled ‘Persecution of Christians’ called by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). In his contributions, Simmonds outlines the policy of the coalition government regarding religious freedom: he emphasises that the government supports the right to freedom of religion or belief for all, including the “freedom to practise, change or share one’s belief without discrimination or violent opposition”; and draws a link between freedom of religion and other human rights such as freedom of expression. He argues that a “cross-faith, cross-continent response” is needed to confront sectarianism and intolerance and sets out diplomatic steps the government is taking, including lobbying bilaterally and through groups including the UN to change discriminatory laws; equipping Foreign Office staff with a toolkit to monitor and address concerns about religious freedom; and setting up a group of experts to advise the Foreign Secretary on freedom of religion and belief. However, while he agrees with the DUP that UK parliamentarians should speak out on behalf of persecuted Christians, he cautions that defending them in particular risks “isolating them from the wider populations”. The debate ended with MPs voting in favour of the DUP’s call for the government to “do more both in its foreign policy and its aid work to defend and support people of Christian faith”.

References to *freedom of expression* exist in ministers’ discourse throughout the period studied and are seen in relation to a wide range of countries including Afghanistan, Cuba, Russia and Sri Lanka. A new dimension to this strand of discourse appears in 2004, when Bill Rammell reports that the government raised concerns with China about issues including: “freedom of expression; and asked for further information and clemency for five internet activists” (Commons vol. 417, 12 February

2004). From then on, the internet plays an increasingly important part in ministers' discourse relating to freedom of expression, particularly during the Arab Spring uprisings. At the time of protests in Egypt, Alistair Burt informed MPs that "Severe restrictions on freedom of expression, including the closure of internet access and mobile phone services, have only fuelled the anger of demonstrators. We have called on the Egyptian authorities to lift those restrictions urgently" (Commons vol. 522, 31 January 2011). The peak in frequency of references of freedom of expression in 2011 is also explained by the UK government hosting the 'London conference on cyber-space', among the aims of which were to "promote an open internet, not only on access and content, but on freedom of expression" (David Lidington, Commons vol. 534, 27 October 2011).

The concept of *media freedom* is closely related to *freedom of expression*, but is used less frequently and the way in which ministers describe it does not change greatly during the period studied. Instead, the focus of their comments shifts geographically according to where media freedom was felt to be threatened at particular times, for example Romania in 1990; Zimbabwe in 2000; and Bahrain in 2011.

As one of the 'four freedoms' of the European Single Market²⁸, *freedom of movement* features in discussion of European matters, particularly in response to backbench MPs' concerns about the enlargement of the EU. However, the expression is used in many other contexts too, including in relation to movement across the divided island of Cyprus; the situation of internally displaced persons in Sri Lanka; and an EU-facilitated agreement on freedom of movement between Serbia and Kosovo. As with *media freedom*, ministers' focus is largely determined by outside events.

The growth of *freedom* as a theme of the UK government's foreign policy discourse during the period studied is striking, as is the extent to which two types of freedom fuel that growth: *religious freedom*

²⁸ Free movement of goods; free movement of capital; freedom to establish and provide services; and free movement of persons (European Parliament 2021).

and *freedom of expression*. Through their actions, opposition and backbench MPs had a key role in prompting ministers to discuss religious freedom and put a particular focus on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East and Asia. Without it necessarily being their intention, freedom to practice the Christian faith consequently became a major part of ministers' discourse regarding religious freedom. In the case of *freedom of expression*, the right to free speech on the internet is a significant new strand of ministers' discourse and it would not be surprising if this strand grew further beyond the period studied.

8.5 Dialogue

In ministers' discourse, *dialogue* is closely linked to the concept of human rights. The frequency of co-occurrence of these terms noted earlier in this chapter is driven primarily by the UK's participation in organised, institutional dialogues regarding human rights with other countries. As the period progresses, the UK's participation in *rights dialogue* increasingly takes place through the EU. By 2015, the EU had such dialogues with over 40 countries (EUR-Lex 2015), of which the 'EU-China Human Rights Dialogue' is the most frequently mentioned in ministers' contributions. The concordance lines shown in Table 8.6, all of which are from the year in which *dialogue* has its highest frequency (2008), illustrate the emphasis that ministers put on such dialogue.

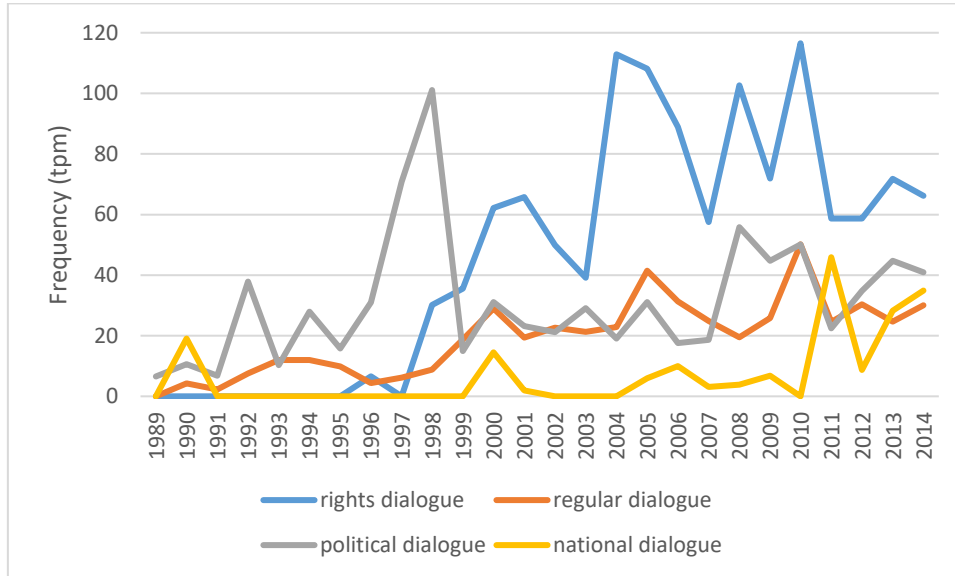
Table 8.6: Selected concordance lines for *dialogue*

Attribution	Contribution		
David Miliband, Commons vol. 470, 7 January 2008	the meeting they attend is intergovernmental and includes a political	dialogue	that directly promotes democracy, human rights and the rule of law
Meg Munn, Commons vol. 470, 8 January 2008	We will raise our concerns on Tibet at the next round of the UK-China human rights	dialogue	in Beijing later this month.
Kim Howells, Commons vol. 470, 16 January 2008	A further meeting of the ad hoc EU-India human rights	dialogue	is planned to follow the EU-India Summit of 30 November 2007
Jim Murphy, Commons vol. 471, 30 January 2008	The EU and Uzbekistan have established a human rights	Dialogue.	These developments are outweighed, however, by continuing concerns
Jim Murphy, Commons vol. 471, 1 February 2008	The first EU-Turkmenistan ad hoc	dialogue	on human rights took place in Brussels in September 2007.
David Miliband, Commons vol. 471, 4 February 2008	We maintain an ongoing	dialogue	with human rights organisations and International Security Assistance Force partners
Meg Munn, Commons vol. 472, 19 February 2008	The UK-China human rights	dialogue	took place at the end of January and included a field trip to Tibet
Meg Munn, Commons vol. 472, 25 February 2008	The biannual EU-Vietnam Human Rights	dialogue	, which was established in 2003, is the main forum for raising our concerns

By their nature, dialogues such as those referenced in Table 8.6 are conducted through regular meetings. However, this is not the only context in which ministers speak of *regular dialogue*, as they also use the expression to refer to contact with other countries and groups around the world as a general part of diplomacy.

Rights dialogue and *regular dialogue* are among the bigrams of *dialogue* which display the greatest rise in frequency across the corpus as a whole (with the 2nd and 6th greatest rise respectively), closely followed by *political dialogue* (7th) and *national dialogue* (8th). Figure 8.5 shows the rising frequency of these pairs in ministers' discourse. No pairs display a fall in frequency of equivalent scale.

Figure 8.5: Frequency of selected bigrams including *dialogue*



The expression *national dialogue* is typically used to refer to talks between opposing parties within a country, or to a wish for such talks to take place. It is first used in 1990 in relation to the process that eventually led to multi-racial, multi-ethnic elections in South Africa; and reaches its peak of frequency in 2011 when ministers called for *national dialogue* to take place in several countries in which the uprisings of the Arab Spring took place. For example, Foreign Secretary William Hague informed the Commons that “I hope to speak to the Crown Prince of Bahrain again shortly about the status of the national dialogue that he attempted to launch. Clearly, there have been difficulties on both sides of the argument in Bahrain as regards participating in that national dialogue and it is important that they are all ready to enter into it” (Commons vol. 525, 24 March 2011).

Political dialogue is sometimes used synonymously with *national dialogue*, but more frequently refers to a dialogue between two countries or groups. The geographic focus of ministers’ comments is widespread: the 1998 peak in use of this expression includes references to Algeria, Burundi, Kosovo and Burma; while the 2008 peak includes references to Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories, Pakistan and Ukraine. The following contribution from Jim Murphy illustrates the

intertwined nature of ministers' discourse regarding *human rights, dialogue* and *religious freedom*, as well as the UK's participation in EU mechanisms for such dialogue:

The EU has regular political dialogue with Ukraine at which we make clear our concerns about respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. On 28 November 2007 the EU carried out a demarche at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry to express concern about racist and anti-Semitic attacks. Under the terms of its relations with the EU, Ukraine is committed to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rights of persons belonging to minorities in line with international standards. (Commons vol. 479, 22 July 2008)

8.6 Conclusions

Analysis of the words *human, rights, religious, freedom* and *dialogue* shows some distinct changes in the UK government's foreign policy discourse between 1989 and 2015. Firstly and most obviously, references to human rights become more frequent. This change is seen both in the use of the term *human rights* and in the growth of terms relating to particular rights such as *religious freedom* and *freedom of expression*; and references to the rights of women, children and minorities. This latter change does not appear to be a substitution effect, as no other types of freedom display a corresponding fall in frequency. This suggests that the scope as well as the scale of ministers' discourse of rights and freedoms increased during the period.

References to *religious freedom* were so infrequent up to 1996 that one might describe this a new strand of foreign policy discourse that started in 1997 and continued to grow under both the Labour and coalition governments. In this area of foreign policy at least, the change of government in 1997 may be seen as a turning point, whereas there was a large amount of continuity in 2010. The emergence in 2004 of ministers' calls for freedom of expression on the internet, by contrast, was not

connected to any change of government and this is a clear example of how a technological development in the wider world may give rise to a new strand in ministers' discourse.

Several factors work together to shape ministers' discourse including the government's own priorities for the topics they wish to address; the issues raised by opposition parties and backbench MPs in their questions and choices of debates; and events around the world that are outside of the government's control. The growth in references to religious freedom illustrates this: while the Labour and coalition governments spoke out on this issue in the context of their wider human rights agenda, the focus on the rights of Christians in the Middle East and Asia appears to have been driven more from the backbenches. Geographic shifts in ministers' focus on the other hand appear to be primarily event-driven.

At a surface level, the high frequency of co-occurrence of *dialogue* with *human rights* is easily explained through the UK government's participation in dialogue – including through the institutions of the EU – as a method of advancing human rights in countries around the world. At a deeper level, this connection between words may also reflect successive governments' preferences for how to exert diplomatic influence. One might regard dialogue as the gentlest of levers of diplomacy, which escalate through diplomatic protests and sanctions to the threat and use of military force. Viewed in this way, the co-occurrence of the terms gives an insight into ministers' preferred means of advancing human rights.

9. ANALYSIS: WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

9.1 Introduction

This chapter groups together five words: the words *women*, *civil*, *society*, *sexual* and *violence*. As with the previous chapter, these words are grouped together on the basis that they have a high frequency of co-occurrence. These relationships are seen particularly strongly in Table 9.1, in which the subcorpora in which each word has the highest excess frequencies are those containing the words analysed in this chapter. Although a number of other words score highly in Table 9.2, relationships of co-occurrence between the five selected words can again be seen.

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 also indicate that, in contributions containing the words selected for analysis in this chapter, there is a high excess frequency of the words discussed in the previous chapter. This suggests that there is a connection in ministers' discourse between the words *women*, *civil*, *society*, *sexual* and *violence*, and matters of human rights. The analysis that follows confirms this: many of the issues relating to women that ministers discuss are indeed human rights issues. Presenting this analysis separately from the previous chapter is not intended to take away from that connection. Instead, it is driven by a recognition that the growth in discourse around issues affecting women is substantial and merits a chapter in its own right.

As Figure 9.1 shows, the words *women*, *civil*, *society* and *violence* all form part of ministers' discourse at the beginning of the period and follow an upward trend in frequency, with *women* and *violence* rising more steeply towards the end of the period. By contrast, the word *sexual* barely features in ministers' discourse until the early 2000s and becomes much more frequent in the 2010s. The year-by-year data underlying Figure 9.1 is shown in Table 9.3, which also includes equivalent data for the other words and longer strings discussed in this chapter.

Figure 9.1: Frequency of women, civil, society, sexual and violence

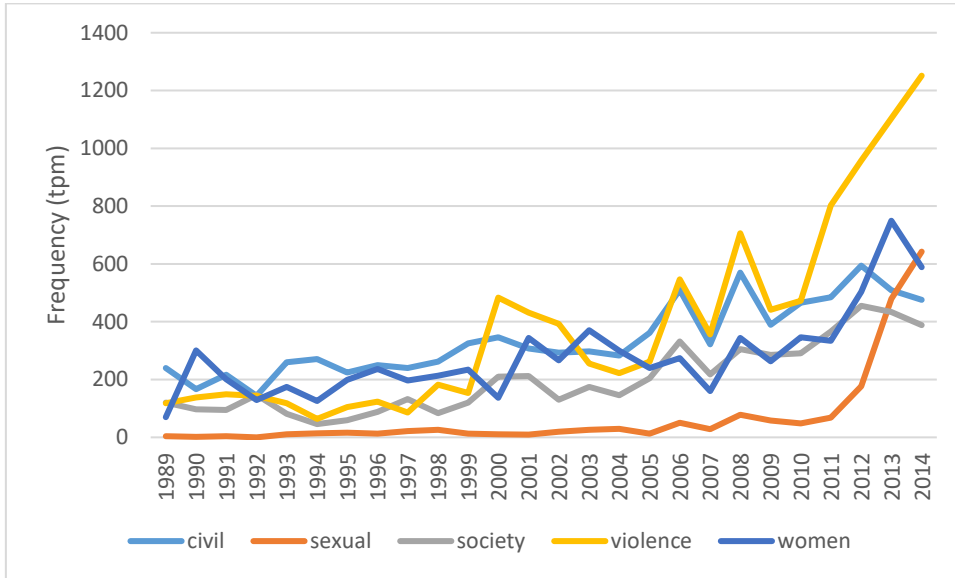


Table 9.1: Excess frequency data for ch. 9 (Type A)

Showing the ten subcorpora in which the words specified in row 1 have the highest excess frequency

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Civil		Sexual		Society		Violence		Women	
1 st	civil	2748	sexual	4610	society	2311	violence	3708	women	3972
2 nd	society	1465	violence	403	sexual	976	sexual	3641	sexual	2154
3 rd	sexual	1012	women	399	civil	912	women	1137	brussels	501
4 th	women	794	society	-68	women	868	religious	914	violence	381
5 th	religious	742	relief	-71	brussels	809	terrorism	476	religious	280
6 th	brussels	717	religious	-74	religious	706	society	365	society	279
7 th	freedom	420	refugees	-99	freedom	356	regime	333	intelligence	275
8 th	intelligence	395	intelligence	-103	violence	254	freedom	303	refugees	168
9 th	relief	303	environmental	-112	projects	205	police	296	relief	152
10 th	refugees	255	threat	-133	relief	161	refugees	275	projects	142

Table 9.2: Excess frequency data for ch. 9 (Type B)

Showing the ten words that have the highest excess frequency in the subcorpus of contributions containing the Word specified in row 1

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Civil		Sexual		Society		Violence		Women	
1 st	civil	2748	sexual	4610	society	2311	violence	3708	women	3972
2 nd	government	1483	violence	3641	government	1511	government	2450	government	2314
3 rd	uk	1109	government	3179	civil	1465	uk	1410	rights	1966
4 th	society	912	uk	2855	uk	1081	security	1401	uk	1708
5 th	rights	904	rights	2558	rights	1052	rights	1317	human	1590
6 th	human	766	human	2275	human	993	human	1178	development	1452
7 th	security	604	women	2154	development	712	united	741	security	1207
8 th	commonwealth	601	commonwealth	1916	security	601	eu	717	violence	1137
9 th	development	534	security	1866	eu	563	commonwealth	686	united	1012
10 th	united	486	development	1324	commonwealth	531	development	646	society	868

Table 9.3: Year-by-year frequency data for words and longer strings discussed in ch. 9

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																												Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)	
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93	2010-14		
civil	240	167	217	144	259	271	225	250	240	262	326	346	307	293	298	283	362	510	322	571	389	466	485	594	509	475	210	509	300	
civil servants	31	17	11	0	20	38	28	18	22	27	15	23	23	17	25	16	19	36	20	127	46	44	42	55	25	24	17	38	21	
civil society	0	2	0	3	2	4	6	0	18	25	45	124	122	74	110	90	141	214	121	192	155	194	235	326	300	274	1	270	269	
civil society groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	15	14	5	10	11	15	6	3	19	3	8	29	34	28	30	0	27	27	
civil society organisations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	5	4	4	4	26	19	31	22	24	37	33	52	34	0	37	37	
civil war	28	40	36	40	87	66	32	38	52	35	30	25	39	47	25	11	21	23	12	6	8	3	36	25	5	14	49	18	-31	
domestic violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	2	4	6	10	28	5	20	10	6	11	6	7	0	8	8	
end sexual violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	105	0	23	23
political violence	0	2	0	0	3	2	0	2	0	2	0	10	15	26	7	4	6	8	8	9	5	3	1	9	12	7	1	6	5	
preventing sexual violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	18	119	103	0	49	49	
preventing sexual violence in conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	44	41	0	18	18	
preventing sexual violence initiative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	59	36	0	21	21	
sectarian violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	6	1	1	3	12	4	3	3	2	28	13	25	0	15	15	
sexual	4	2	5	0	10	14	16	13	22	27	13	10	10	20	26	29	13	50	28	78	58	49	68	177	479	643	5	288	284	
sexual violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	4	0	1	3	1	16	5	26	15	10	19	121	434	570	0	108	108	
sexual violence in	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	9	4	2	3	42	189	292	106	393	287	
society	120	97	95	146	82	46	59	89	132	83	120	209	213	130	175	146	204	332	218	305	285	291	366	455	434	389	0	27	27	
society groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	15	14	5	10	11	15	6	3	19	3	8	29	34	28	30	0	37	37	
society organisations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	5	4	4	4	26	19	32	22	24	37	33	52	34	132	939	807	
violence	118	138	149	144	118	64	105	124	86	183	153	483	431	393	255	222	262	546	356	706	441	473	803	958	1104	1251	177	509	333	
women	70	300	201	129	174	126	199	237	197	213	234	137	344	266	370	299	240	274	160	344	263	346	334	504	749	588	210	509	300	

9.2 Political and historical context

The period covered by this study was one of growth in the participation of women in parliamentary politics in the United Kingdom. At the 1987 general election (the last election before the start of the period), only 6% of the MPs elected were female. At the 2010 election (the last of the period), 22% were female (UK Political Info 2022). The ministerial team at the Foreign Office in 1989 included one woman and Margaret Beckett became the UK's first female Foreign Secretary in 2006. In total, twelve women held ministerial positions at the Foreign Office during the period studied: five in the Commons only, six in the Lords only and one who sat in the Commons and then the Lords.

In 2004, FCO published a booklet entitled "Inclusive Government: Mainstreaming Gender into Foreign Policy", prepared by its Gender Advisory Group. A key aim of the publication was to encourage consideration of the impact on men and women of a particular policy, project or service²⁹. In the following year, as seen in Figure 9.1, *women* had a higher frequency in FCO ministers' contributions than at any previous point during the period studied. It seems, however, that the appointment of Margaret Beckett as Foreign Secretary was not universally viewed as positive. She reports being warned by a senior female official at FCO that "You do realise that there are people in the Foreign Office who don't think a woman should be Foreign Secretary?" (Institute for Government 2016). She dismissed this view, but was clear that being a woman did not mean she should have to specialise in issues affecting women. She has commented in an interview that:

[..] it always seemed to me that the whole point about feminism was that people should be able to do the things that they wanted to do, that they felt were right for them, that they were interested in, not the things that other people thought they [should do] (Rhodes 2019).

²⁹ This booklet is no longer available online but is mentioned in a contribution by the then Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, on 10 June 2004 (Commons vol. 422).

Ultimately Beckett served as Foreign Secretary for only a year, being replaced by David Miliband when Gordon Brown became Prime Minister. Nonetheless, the analysis that follows indicates a growth in discourse relating to women during the period covered by the corpus.

9.3 Women

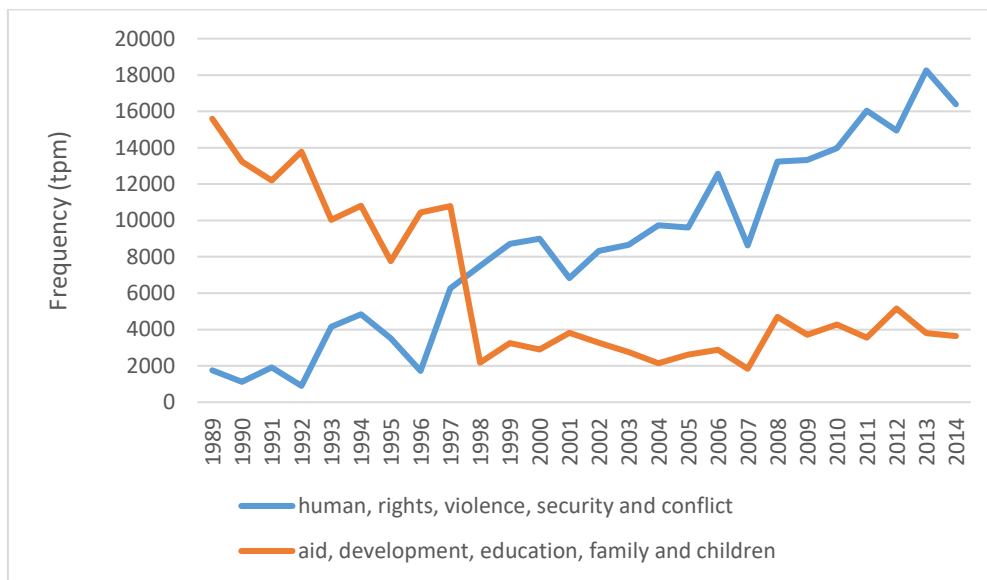
Over the period studied, there is a marked change in both the frequency of tokens of *women* in ministers' foreign policy discourse and in the topics in relation to which women are discussed. From 1989 to 1997, during the period of office of the Conservative government, the frequency of *women* was 178 tpm. This rose to 271 tpm under Labour and 510 tpm under the coalition government. Initially, ministers' references to women are often made in the context of international development and the words *aid* and *development* are respectively the 26th and 28th most frequent words in contributions that contain *women* between 1989 and 1993. Themes of education, family and children also run through ministers' discourse relating to women at this time and, in the following contribution, Lynda Chalker emphasises the interconnectedness of these issues:

Almost everything that we finance in Africa, bilaterally and through multilateral organisations, benefits children by encouraging sustainable economic and social development. Our health sector aid concentrates on preventive community-based systems in which mother and child health programmes have a central place. Child health also benefits from our support for family planning, provision of clean water and sanitation, education, especially women's education, and programmes to improve the status of women. (Commons vol. 167, 19 February 1990)

After the creation of the Department for International Development (DfID) in 1997, one might expect there to be fewer references to women in foreign policy discourse, but this is not the case. Instead, the focus of Foreign Office ministers' contributions relating to women shifts to other topics including

human rights and the impact of violence on women. Figure 9.2 compares ministers' use of two sets of high-frequency words in the subcorpus of contributions that contain the word *women*: from the beginning of the period *aid, development, education, family and children*; and from later in the period *human, rights, violence, security and conflict*. The two frequency lines intersect in 1997, reflecting the change in focus of Foreign Office ministers' discourse after DfID was created.

Figure 9.2: High-frequency words in ministers' contributions containing *women*



After 1997, ministers' comments regarding the impact of conflict of women initially focus on the former Yugoslavia. Describing the horror of two massacres in Kosovo, Baroness Symons notes sombrely that "As I am sure we are all aware, most of those killed were women and children" (Lords vol. 593, 12 October 1998). Later the focus shifts to Afghanistan, the Middle East and North Africa, with ministers also emphasising the importance of enabling women to participate in politics and public life more widely. In contributions containing *women*, the frequency of the words *political* and *participation* is markedly higher in the last five full years of the period studied than in the first five, rising by 1,441 and 417 tpm respectively. For example, Alistair Burt remarks that "The UK has been clear with the Egyptian authorities that women's participation is a key part of supporting political

transition and building stability” (Commons vol. 557, 28 Jan 2013). The spike in frequency seen in both lines in Figure 9.2 in 2012-13 is largely driven by a new strand in ministers’ discourse which will be discussed later in this chapter.

During the period studied, ministers also comment on the role of women in the Foreign Office, typically prompted by questions from backbench or opposition MPs. In 1998 Robin Cook stated his intention to “modernise the Foreign Office and ensure that it is representative of modern Britain”, noting that only around 7% of posts overseas were headed by women (Commons vol. 317, 27 July 1998). In 2013, William Hague reported that he had increased the proportion of women in senior posts but felt further action was needed, remarking that “I feel strongly about the subject and often discuss with the senior management of the FCO the need over the next few years to ensure that a higher proportion of senior positions, including senior ambassadorial positions, are held by women” (Commons vol. 564, 18 June 2013). By 2015, the FCO reported that approximately 19% of post overseas were led by women (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2015). Contributions such as these relating to gender equality in the Foreign Office may be seen as a strand of foreign policy discourse in their own right. It cannot have escaped the notice of foreign governments that, at the same time as the FCO ministers advocated greater opportunities for women around the world, progress towards gender equality among their own senior staff was limited.

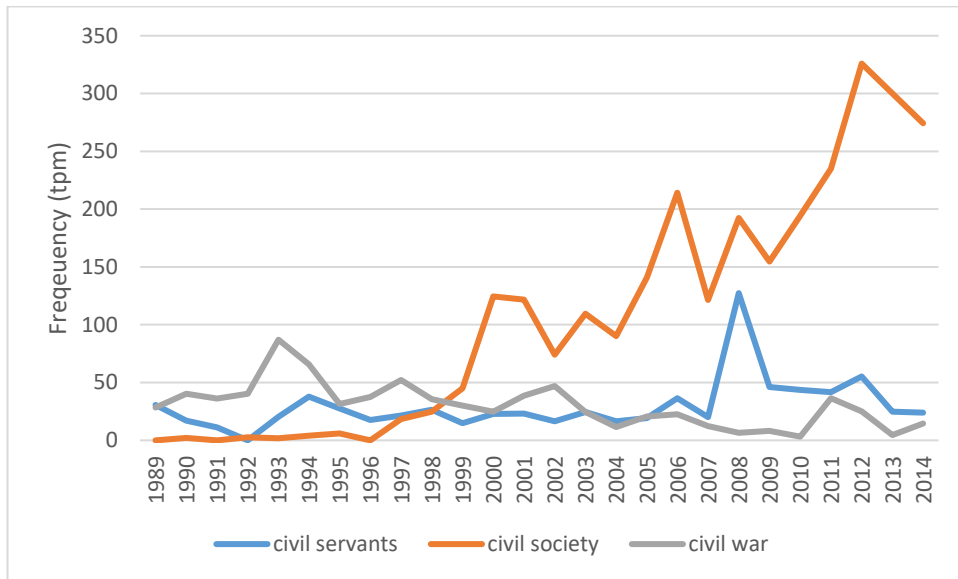
The overall trend in ministers’ discourse relating to women during the period studied is clear.

Women feature more frequently in the discourse and it broadens out from what might be considered traditional themes relating to women, particularly their role in the family and in caring for children, to address a wider range of issues including human rights, the impact of violence on women and the participation of women in politics and public life. This shift in foreign policy discourse is surely welcome and the case for it is well made through ministers’ contributions describing situations faced by women around the world.

9.4 *Civil and society*

The words *civil* and *society* are closely linked in the corpus. The most frequent bigram of *civil* is *civil society*, which occurs 2,122 times between 1989 and 2014. This is also the bigram of *civil* that displays the greatest change in frequency when comparing the first and last five full years of the period, with a rise in frequency of 269 tpm (from 1 to 270 tpm). Excluding grammatical words, the bigrams of *civil* that display the next largest change in frequency are *civil war* (-31 tpm) and *civil servants* (+21 tpm). In the case of *society*, the bigrams with the largest changes of frequency are *civil society*, *society organisations* and *society groups* and these pairs join to form the strings *civil society organisations* (+37 tpm) and *civil society groups* (+27 tpm), which also rise in frequency. This section therefore focuses mainly on the bigram *civil society*, with a brief discussion of *civil war* and *civil servants*. Figure 9.3 shows the changing frequency of these three bigrams.

Figure 9.3: Frequency of *civil society*, *civil war* and *civil servants*



The World Health Organisation defines civil society as “the space for collective action around shared interests, purposes and values, generally distinct from government and commercial for-profit actors” (World Health Organization 2007). In the corpus, ministers’ descriptions of civil society are broadly consistent with this definition and they identify NGOs, charities, trade unions and faith groups as civil society organisations. Tribal and clan elders are occasionally referred to as civil society leaders; and independent media organisations are mentioned either as part of or alongside civil society.

Under the Conservative government to 1997 there are just ten tokens of *civil society*. During these years, the phrase is used in the additional sense of a ‘civilised’ society. Table 9.4 shows selected concordance lines which illustrate the two uses of the phrase.

Table 9.4: Selected concordance lines for *civil society*

Attribution	Contribution		
The Earl of Caithness, Lords vol. 535, 5 February 1992	These great strides towards a	civil society	were President Gorbachev's towering achievement.
Mark Lennox-Boyd, Commons vol. 227, 24 June 1993	Reconstruction of a	civil society	is ultimately the responsibility of the Somalis themselves.
Mark Lennox-Boyd, Commons vol. 240, 22 March 1994	We have paid particular attention to helping to improve the economy and	civil society	in countries which have experienced periods of civil unrest such as Uganda and Mozambique
Jeremy Hanley, Commons vol. 268, 4 December 1995	the revision of legal frameworks and capacity building, both of institutions of	civil society	and of Governments.
Baroness Chalker, Lords vol. 578, 19 February 1997	The important thing is to allow	civil society	groups to hold their governments to that convention.

In the first of these concordance lines, the Earl of Caithness uses ‘civil’ in the sense of ‘civilised’ when he declares that free elections, the release of political prisoners and a large reduction in censorship in Russia under President Gorbachev were "great strides towards a civil society". The same meaning of civil society is seen in the 1993 contribution from Mark Lennox-Boyd, but his use of the phrase in 1994 more closely resembles the WHO definition. This contribution is also the first explicit reference in the corpus to the UK government supporting the development of civil society in another country. This meaning of ‘civil’ prevails in later contributions such as those from Jeremy Hanley and Baroness Chalker.

From 1997 onwards, Labour ministers focus to a much greater extent on action the UK government can take to promote civil society. By the time of the 2000 peak in frequency seen in Figure 9.3, there are many references to the role of civil society in international development, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations such as Colombia and the former Yugoslavia. In a debate concerning sanctions against Serbia and its then leader Slobodan Milosevic, Peter Hain explains that “the EU is placing even greater emphasis on its relations with the Serbian democratic opposition and the

Montenegrin Government, and on support for independent media, non-governmental organisations and civil society in general” (Commons vol. 350, 22 May 2000). Ministers also refer to the United Nations Millennium Forum, an event for civil society organisations held at the UN’s New York headquarters in May 2000. The aim of this event was to “formulate a collective vision for the new century, focusing specifically on the role of the United Nations and civil society in the issue areas of peace, poverty eradication, human rights, the environment, globalization and the revitalization of the United Nations” (One Country 2000).

By the time a second peak in frequency of *civil society* is reached in 2006, ministers make a more explicit linkage in their discourse between civil society and human rights; and also to women. For example, Lord Triesman notes in relation to Iraq that “We want to make sure that there is capacity building in the human rights areas affecting women and the development of civil society, which is often a great bastion of protection and development for women, and also capacity building within civil society organisations” (Lords vol. 684, 6 July 2006).

References to *civil society* rise further under the coalition government and, by the time of the 2012 peak in frequency, ministers’ discourse regarding civil society has four distinct aspects:

1. Engagement with governments to encourage the development of civil society;
2. Engagement with representatives of civil society organisations to develop their effectiveness;
3. Funding for projects that support the development of civil society organisations; and
4. The use of sanctions against those who suppress civil society.

The first three of these aspects can be seen in contributions made by William Hague regarding Afghanistan during 2012. He reports that the UK government engaged both with the government of Afghanistan and directly with representatives of civil society organisations during a conference regarding the future of that country at the end of the previous year (Commons vol. 540, 9 February

2012); and he later informs parliament that the UK has delivered a ten-day training course on tackling crime for civil society members, lawyers, police officers and others; and is providing funding for 15 women's organisations through a programme to strengthen civil society (Commons vol. 545, 24 May 2012). The fourth aspect is seen in a contribution from David Lidington regarding Belarus, in which he states that EU foreign ministers have agreed criteria for imposing travel bans and asset freezes on those responsible for the repression of civil society (Commons vol. 539, 30 January 2012).

From scattered references before 1997, *civil society* is gradually established as a recurrent thread in ministers' discourse. Ministers appear to view civil society in a positive light from the outset, but it is primarily after 1997 that their discourse focuses on actions the UK government can take to support civil society in other countries. This is a notable new development in the UK government's foreign policy discourse post-1997, and one which continues to grow after the 2010 change of government.

The changes in frequency of *civil war* and *civil servants* are smaller than that of *civil society*. The peak in frequency of *civil war* in 1993 (87 tpm) is driven mainly by discourse relating to events in Bosnia, but also includes references to other conflicts including those in Sudan and Angola. Following a generally downward trend, a minor peak in frequency occurs in 2011, when ministers discuss whether the situation in countries affected by the Arab Spring constitutes civil war; and by references to other civil wars that had ended, particularly in Sierra Leone. In their contributions, ministers appear cautious about using the term *civil war* and it is possible that the trend in usage reflects a growing preference for alternative terms. This may explain why there are just 5 tpm of *civil war* in 2013, when Syria was very much in a state of internal conflict.

A large majority of tokens of *civil servants* are found in responses to questions relating to staff numbers and other administrative matters in UK government departments. In rarer cases, ministers discuss training that the UK provides for civil servants from other countries and the role or otherwise of civil servants in various controversies. Although the frequency of the term is 22 tpm higher in the

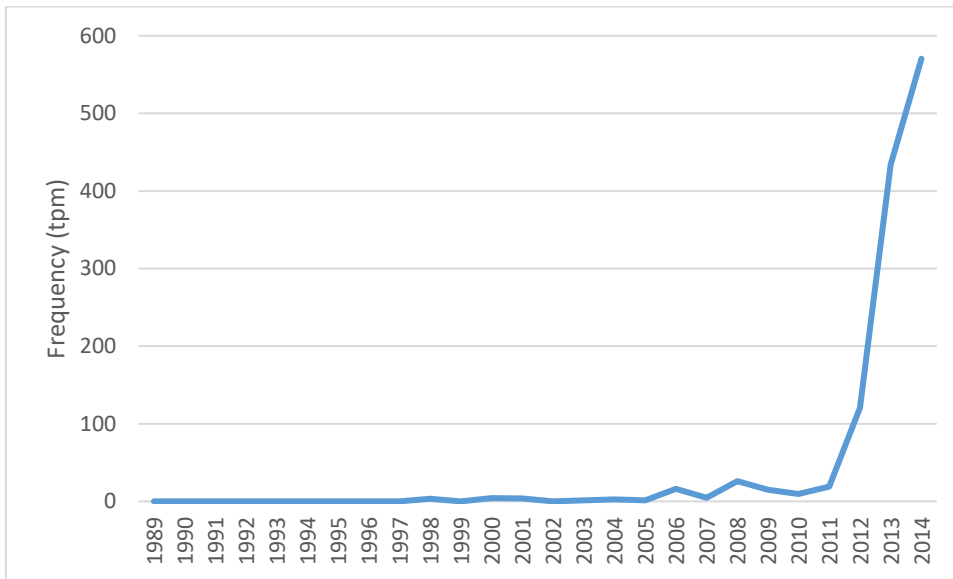
last five full years of the period than in the first five, it is relatively stable overall but for two exceptions: a trough in frequency in the early 1990s and a peak in the late 2000s. As these variations are mainly determined by the topics of questions put to FCO ministers by opposition and backbench MPs, there does not appear to be a significant change in foreign policy discourse associated with the rise in frequency of *civil servants*.

9.5 Sexual and violence

The bigram of *sexual* with the greatest rise in frequency is *violence*; and among the bigrams of *violence*, *sexual* has the largest rise in frequency. Although ministers' discourse refers to many other kinds of violence including *sectarian violence*, *domestic violence* and *political violence*, these display a much smaller change in frequency and this is also true of other bigrams of *sexual*. This section therefore focuses solely on the topic of *sexual violence*.

As Figure 9.4 shows, this pair is first seen in 1998 and rises in frequency to 235 tpm in the last five full years of the period, peaking at 570 tpm in 2014. Analysis of other bigrams and trigrams shows that these two words are used as part of longer strings including *sexual violence in*, *preventing sexual violence* and *end sexual violence*. The phrase *preventing sexual violence in conflict* is first seen in 2008, while from 2012 ministers also refer to a *preventing sexual violence initiative*. These phrases have frequencies of 18 and 21 tpm respectively during the last five full years of the period.

Figure 9.4: Frequency of *sexual violence*



In the first token of *preventing sexual violence in conflict*, Meg Munn states that:

We also support the campaign launched by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, on 25 February to intensify action to end violence against women and girls. More specifically the Government, through the Department for International Development, fund a programme implemented by the UN Development Fund for Women aimed at promoting women's engagement in peace-building and preventing sexual violence in conflict. Funding will go towards supporting women's community-level efforts to build peace and prevent sexual violence in Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor Leste and Uganda. (Commons vol. 477, 16 June 2008)

The issue of sexual violence was not entirely new in ministers' foreign policy discourse at this time. For example, in 1990 William Waldegrave referred to the rape of women as the communist regime in Romania collapsed. However, the greater frequency of references from 2008 onwards is connected to a number of developments. In 2008, the UK voted in favour of UN Security Council Resolution

1820 on “Women and peace and security”, which demanded the end to such violence and noted that:

“civilians account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict; that women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group; and that sexual violence perpetrated in this manner may in some instances persist after the cessation of hostilities” (United Nations 2008).

This was followed by a further resolution in 2010, UN Security Council Resolution 1960, which established monitoring and reporting arrangements specific to conflict-related sexual violence (United Nations 2010). The UK government then took part in a UN summit on sexual violence in conflict in September 2011 (Lord Howell, Lords vol. 731, 3 November 2011) and in June 2012, William Hague announced that the government was beginning an initiative on tackling sexual violence in conflict and post conflict situations, the *preventing sexual violence initiative* or ‘PSVI’ (Commons vol. 546, 12 June 2012). This initiative was linked with a declaration of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict launched at the UN in September 2013 and a global summit to end sexual violence in conflict, which Hague co-hosted in London in June 2014 with the special envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Angelina Jolie.

In two statements made on 16 June and 14 July 2014, Hague gives the most detailed explanation found anywhere in the corpus of the purposes and methods of the initiative. As he puts it, “The aim of PSVI is the eradication of rape as a weapon of war, through a global campaign to end impunity for perpetrators, to deter and prevent sexual violence, to support and recognise survivors, and to change global attitudes that fuel these crimes” (Commons vol. 584, 14 July 2014). He argues that sexual violence in conflict has lasting consequences for individuals and regions, as it makes a return

to conflict more difficult to prevent in the decades that follow and hinders development; and emphasises the need for coordinated international action to tackle the problem. He also informs the Commons of practical steps taken including launching an international protocol on how to document and investigate sexual violence in conflict and seeking to ensure that women are included in peace processes; and affirms that the UK will continue to deploy a specialist team including doctors, psychologists, lawyers and police officers to conflict areas in which sexual violence has taken place.

Of all the new strands of foreign policy discourse described in this thesis, this is one of the most striking as it is a topic that is starkly different from what might be perceived as traditional strands of foreign policy. Hague credits one of his Special Advisors, Arminka Helić, with influencing him to take up the cause following her own experience as a refugee of the Bosnia conflict (Coles 2014) and this illustrates the personal impact that one individual can make on a government's discourse. The fact that a female advisor prompted this development also provides an example of the greater role that women played in shaping foreign policy at the end of the period.

9.6 Conclusions

The data presented in this chapter provides clear evidence of the rising frequency of the word *women* and related words in the UK's foreign policy discourse between 1989 and 2015, with ministers discuss a widening range of topics relating to women. The evolution of the main themes of foreign policy discourse discussed in this chapter – women, civil society and sexual violence – is closely linked to the changes of government that took place in 1997 and 2010. Under the Conservative government that held office until 1997, ministers' contributions relating to women focused mainly on issues such as international development, education and the family. The election of the Labour government in that year, and the creation of a separate Department for International Development, brought a new focus in Foreign Office ministers' contributions relating to women in

which they emphasised human rights and the impact of conflict on women. The Labour years also saw the emergence of civil society as a theme in foreign policy discourse. These two themes – women and civil society – are partially overlapping as ministers express a wish for women’s rights and opportunities to be advanced through the work of civil society organisations and through women’s involvement in these organisations.

The theme of civil society continued to grow under the coalition government that took office in 2010, but ministers developed a distinct new strand of discourse through the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative. Although the Labour government had begun to discuss this topic in the late 2000s, the frequency of tokens of *sexual violence* remained low until after the 2010 election. This theme is strongly linked to the continued rise of *women*, due to the victims of such violence being mainly women and girls.

The themes discussed in this chapter also indicate a parallel in the development of politics and of policy. During the period studied, there is both a rise in the participation of women in parliamentary politics, as seen in the number of women MPs and the appointment of women to ministerial posts; and a growth in FCO ministers’ discourse on ‘issues affecting women. The gradual increase in the number of women holding senior positions in FCO and the influence on foreign policy of women such as Arminka Helić may also be seen as part of this change. Together, these factors contribute to there being a substantial change in the place of women in the UK government’s foreign policy discourse between 1989 and 2015.

10. ANALYSIS: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

10.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses a set of ten words: *aid, assistance, bilateral, development, environmental, food, programme, projects, refugees* and *relief*. As Tables 10.1 and 10.2 show, each of these words occurs more frequently in contributions containing other words from this group than they do in the corpus as a whole. The co-occurrence of these words will be unsurprising to any reader familiar with the discourse of politicians, the media or non-governmental organisations' relating to international development: these are basic terms used in that discourse.

The data contained in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 also suggests connections between the theme of this chapter and that of other chapters of this thesis. In particular, some words discussed in the chapters entitled 'Rights and freedoms' and 'Women, civil society and sexual violence' occur more frequently in the same contributions as the words discussed in this chapter than in the corpus as a whole. This data is consistent with the findings of the previous two chapters, which have already demonstrated how issues of human rights including those affecting women are intertwined with matters of international development in ministers' discourse. The data also shows connections with words that will be discussed in chapters relating to the UN and the EU. The relevance of these organisations to the UK government's international development work will be discussed in this chapter.

When comparing the first and last five full years of the period studied, each of these words falls in frequency, ranging from a fall of over 80% in the case of *aid, food* and *relief*, to 31% for *assistance*. However, the fall in frequency does not occur evenly over the period. As Figure 10.1 shows, this set of words initially rises in frequency, peaking at 10,565 tpm in 1992. After a second and slightly lower peak in 1994, the set declines rapidly until 1998, after which its frequency is comparatively stable at

around 3,500 tpm. Full frequency data for the words and longer strings discussed in this chapter can be found in Table 10.3.

Figure 10.1: Frequency of *aid, assistance, bilateral, development, environmental, food, programme, projects, refugees* and *relief*

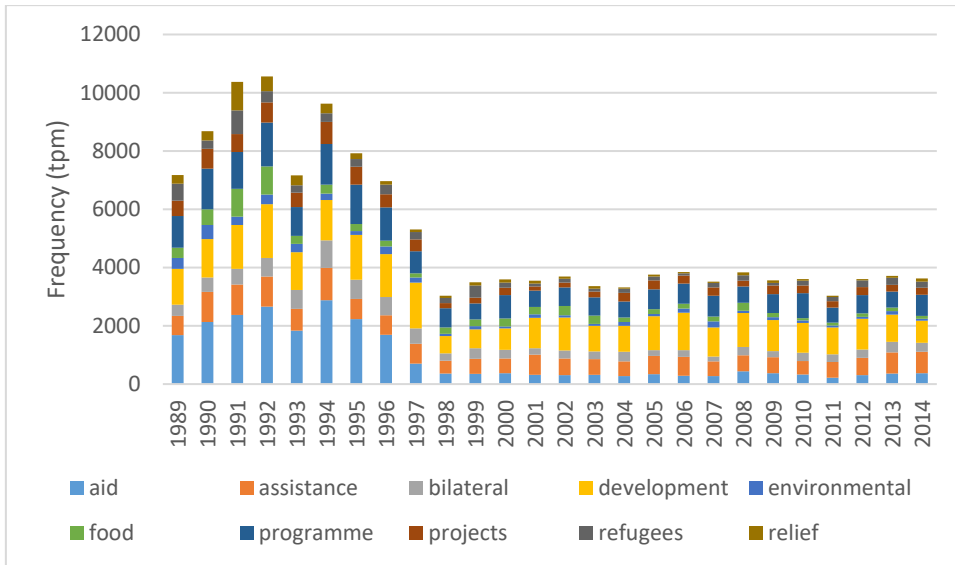


Table 10.1: Excess frequency data for ch. 10 (Type A)

Showing the ten subcorpora in which the words specified in row 1 have the highest excess frequency

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Aid	Assistance	Bilateral	Development	Environmental	Food	Programme	Projects	Refugees	Relief										
1 st	aid	4393	assistance	3126	bilateral	3170	brussels	4320	environmental	3538	food	3242	programme	3449	projects	3886	refugees	3782	relief	2728
2 nd	food	1515	refugees	1014	aid	807	development	3405	brussels	325	relief	741	aid	1627	environmental	837	sexual	496	refugees	499
3 rd	relief	1264	relief	960	projects	546	aid	1592	projects	167	refugees	381	food	1472	sexual	673	relief	495	food	496
4 th	projects	1051	aid	908	relief	412	projects	1539	food	-15	sanctions	320	brussels	1459	women	568	food	216	sexual	152
5 th	refugees	814	food	871	food	334	women	1452	relief	-17	aid	299	projects	1394	aid	380	women	16	aid	140
6 th	bilateral	807	projects	865	sexual	273	environmental	1362	sexual	-60	environmental	291	weapons	1024	religious	296	regime	9	environmental	27
7 th	programme	648	sexual	800	religious	268	sexual	1324	threat	-107	brussels	220	environmental	998	relief	249	religious	-27	sanctions	26
8 th	brussels	615	police	735	refugees	261	food	994	society	-115	regime	142	women	863	society	212	threat	-34	women	-14
9 th	environmental	572	brussels	618	environmental	232	programme	975	refugees	-132	sexual	46	relief	845	bilateral	182	terrorism	-48	religious	-42
10 th	women	449	women	592	terrorism	215	relief	931	intelligence	-132	threat	9	sanctions	697	food	171	society	-80	society	-42

Table 10.2: Excess frequency data for ch. 10 (Type B)

Showing the ten words that have the highest excess frequency in the subcorpus of contributions containing the Word specified in row 1

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Aid	Assistance	Bilateral	Development	Environmental	Food	Programme	Projects	Refugees	Relief										
1 st	aid	4393	assistance	3126	bilateral	3170	development	3405	environmental	3538	food	3242	programme	3449	projects	3886	refugees	3782	relief	2728
2 nd	government	1738	government	1361	government	1414	government	1461	government	1680	aid	1515	government	1348	government	1669	united	1883	government	1376
3 rd	programme	1627	uk	1022	uk	1039	uk	934	development	1362	government	1507	development	975	development	1539	government	1878	united	1375
4 th	development	1592	development	882	united	991	programme	525	uk	1007	programme	1472	uk	816	programme	1394	nations	1590	aid	1264
5 th	united	1308	united	718	aid	807	united	486	programme	998	united	1230	united	723	uk	1167	assistance	1014	nations	1032
6 th	assistance	908	security	573	development	748	aid	413	united	995	development	994	aid	648	aid	1051	security	1010	assistance	960
7 th	bilateral	807	programme	559	programme	670	assistance	375	projects	837	assistance	871	assistance	454	assistance	865	uk	978	development	931
8 th	uk	647	aid	429	eu	612	security	374	aid	572	security	868	security	404	commonwealth	802	rights	871	programme	845
9 th	projects	380	eu	285	assistance	544	commonwealth	188	assistance	538	uk	782	commonwealth	207	united	756	human	846	food	741
10 th	commonwealth	364	rights	269	rights	514	eu	116	human	422	nations	693	rights	174	rights	712	aid	814	security	704

Table 10.3: Year-by-year frequency data for words and longer strings discussed in ch. 10

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																												Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93	2010-14	
aid	1684	2133	2376	2665	1830	2879	2234	1693	705	360	348	375	313	307	314	270	336	288	280	434	369	333	222	310	364	372	2105	317	-1789
aid programme	280	383	395	381	234	485	410	217	55	20	13	12	12	14	8	4	7	5	8	16	5	5	4	16	8	22	328	11	-316
assistance	660	1035	1043	1029	755	1105	692	673	677	440	516	502	702	570	544	513	633	646	496	551	552	455	541	589	729	734	893	616	-277
assistance force	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	26	16	33	6	24	11	9	33	36	20	25	9	17	0	21	21
bilateral	378	491	533	633	650	950	651	626	526	257	365	301	215	280	259	323	199	227	165	286	213	293	253	290	360	309	540	300	-240
bilateral aid	118	216	178	250	172	263	270	166	49	9	34	15	2	5	7	3	4	3	0	9	3	2	14	9	11	2	185	8	-177
bilateral assistance	9	11	16	30	29	32	12	27	31	11	19	12	8	17	7	9	7	6	5	8	0	6	2	5	5	2	19	4	-15
bilateral discussions	7	8	5	5	3	20	6	9	3	0	9	10	10	15	8	8	6	8	5	14	8	18	7	5	24	5	6	11	6
bilateral relationship	0	4	5	10	9	4	8	11	12	14	19	15	29	21	13	6	12	15	14	17	34	37	47	43	53	47	6	46	40
bilateral trade	4	2	2	3	3	10	8	4	3	7	6	4	4	5	8	5	10	11	6	10	4	15	9	23	20	41	3	21	18
british aid	59	99	99	68	73	128	116	58	25	2	2	8	0	2	0	3	0	1	0	1	5	10	5	8	5	0	80	5	-75
consular assistance	9	6	7	3	7	2	0	4	3	5	7	2	6	26	30	30	43	35	67	64	26	52	63	49	49	60	6	55	48
debt relief	7	32	23	53	29	44	24	11	22	0	13	17	29	18	20	4	33	11	3	3	1	6	7	3	0	11	28	6	-22
development	1238	1314	1504	1847	1292	1383	1542	1474	1579	587	653	732	1050	1129	880	894	1166	1288	1002	1164	1060	1013	929	1053	934	761	1419	936	-483
development assistance	68	99	90	86	84	122	57	73	157	7	17	21	112	38	36	15	44	24	9	23	50	19	30	30	20	29	85	26	-59
development secretary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	4	5	9	10	12	1	2	4	7	28	16	16	28	16	0	20	20
disaster relief	28	21	115	18	9	10	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	4	0	2	0	0	1	1	37	1	-36
emergency relief	44	21	52	18	17	20	12	15	12	0	6	2	4	2	0	0	1	1	2	3	4	0	2	1	4	4	30	2	-28
environment	336	381	269	409	219	190	154	243	369	309	290	232	294	194	203	189	160	288	445	146	171	129	96	137	178	166	315	141	-175
environmental	367	485	291	336	289	218	128	257	175	78	109	71	118	74	72	128	74	149	215	82	100	95	64	66	120	65	352	81	-271
environmental appraisal	2	15	7	15	17	20	4	11	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	11	0	-11
environmental assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	1	7	0	4	4	4
environmental damage	17	6	14	3	5	0	2	11	3	2	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	9	1	-8
environmental impact	26	21	23	25	24	24	12	24	9	5	7	8	4	14	4	6	1	10	20	1	5	11	6	1	4	2	24	5	-19
environmental issues	35	32	11	23	14	10	2	2	22	5	4	2	12	5	2	11	4	10	17	9	3	10	14	1	8	4	23	7	-15
environmental projects	4	11	16	5	7	0	0	2	12	0	2	2	0	2	1	3	4	0	0	0	1	5	3	0	1	1	8	2	-7
environmental protection	35	42	16	15	29	12	6	18	9	5	4	8	8	3	2	5	7	16	6	5	14	13	5	9	27	5	28	12	-16

Table 10.3 (contd.)

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																												Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93	2010-14	
environmental standards	2	6	2	0	2	2	2	4	0	2	2	0	6	8	1	3	4	5	2	0	0	0	1	2	14	4	3	4	2
food	360	540	960	964	273	311	252	201	135	220	228	268	248	316	281	153	160	158	165	269	149	76	104	125	116	102	589	107	-482
food aid	33	25	52	83	22	32	8	9	9	2	2	0	2	15	24	5	3	4	6	3	4	5	0	1	0	0	41	1	-40
food programme	24	34	68	88	29	36	24	20	3	32	36	77	64	85	96	42	39	18	12	39	20	3	4	11	8	7	46	7	-39
food security	0	2	0	5	0	2	4	0	6	0	6	0	2	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	1
genuine refugees	26	8	11	13	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	-12
humanitarian assistance	24	68	117	116	84	78	28	22	31	60	32	50	85	68	97	37	49	51	34	51	81	31	60	79	71	94	81	69	-12
humanitarian relief	15	21	47	86	63	72	28	4	3	39	24	33	27	12	40	14	12	6	3	23	16	11	7	4	12	17	46	10	-36
international development	11	6	20	25	20	24	34	7	222	119	129	141	230	224	179	203	218	316	207	356	300	296	332	352	321	288	17	320	303
international relief	13	19	50	13	19	6	4	2	0	0	0	4	0	2	3	1	3	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	-23
international security assistance force	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	9	20	6	13	5	4	16	11	13	14	6	16	0	12	12
iraqi refugees	0	0	117	3	3	6	6	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	9	3	0	10	0	0	0	0	23	1	-22
nuclear programme	2	4	5	13	5	12	2	0	0	9	2	0	8	8	32	57	92	101	44	36	62	107	112	79	101	146	6	109	103
overseas aid	70	57	43	56	22	46	57	29	3	2	2	4	2	11	3	5	1	0	2	0	0	8	1	0	1	1	48	2	-46
overseas development	258	229	309	373	248	311	355	270	160	4	0	2	12	3	2	1	6	0	0	8	7	5	4	3	6	4	279	4	-274
overseas development administration	129	112	149	174	159	174	215	135	95	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	144	0	-144
palestinian refugees	9	8	18	5	2	24	6	7	3	4	13	21	2	6	4	3	0	0	2	0	3	3	6	12	5	4	8	6	-2
programme	1088	1399	1262	1504	990	1393	1343	1144	763	667	548	807	559	643	628	548	686	689	708	569	647	858	508	621	551	726	1229	637	-591
programmes	282	455	321	391	323	353	495	416	225	193	221	145	155	209	264	264	199	227	129	153	137	197	145	182	206	219	352	188	-164
project	382	482	440	575	394	710	635	372	299	156	193	143	124	125	163	183	228	204	135	168	209	304	161	190	162	191	449	195	-254
projects	518	683	617	689	488	764	617	443	406	176	195	255	147	165	195	303	305	281	294	199	290	257	221	275	233	236	591	244	-347
refugee	124	118	117	76	27	84	47	53	52	44	82	58	43	35	40	33	39	25	40	52	20	42	34	81	94	31	90	58	-32
refugees	587	279	811	384	258	287	268	336	246	172	419	174	104	130	102	145	127	74	151	181	91	167	142	232	242	208	451	199	-252
relief	299	324	980	515	336	335	197	113	92	74	109	110	93	77	91	43	73	46	45	99	83	55	45	39	66	114	478	63	-414
relief effort	2	25	120	35	29	24	4	0	3	7	2	8	0	3	1	4	7	3	0	9	8	5	1	5	6	0	41	3	-38
relief operations	7	13	63	18	15	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	-23
relief supplies	17	28	115	48	20	24	14	2	0	0	2	2	4	0	0	4	1	0	0	5	3	8	0	0	0	1	44	1	-42

Table 10.3 (contd.)

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																												Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)	
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93	2010-14		
repatriation programme	11	0	2	56	22	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	17	0	-17
sanctions relief	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	2	2
security assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	4	23	15	32	10	25	14	10	33	36	22	29	19	24	0	26	26	
somali refugees	9	4	27	3	5	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	0	9	1	-8	
special programme	20	23	29	30	14	6	12	11	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	-23	
syrian refugees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	34	22	0	15	15
technical assistance	28	49	108	114	44	98	57	22	43	27	26	56	44	42	30	34	33	35	28	19	18	19	15	16	47	54	66	30	-35	
training programme	35	28	18	38	5	28	10	7	43	12	7	8	0	5	4	4	3	4	0	0	5	3	9	5	4	8	23	6	-17	
uk aid	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
vietnamese refugees	39	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	-10	
work programme	4	13	0	23	20	12	18	11	34	39	22	17	14	23	12	14	37	28	20	6	9	18	9	43	25	36	12	26	14	
world food programme	24	34	68	86	29	36	24	20	3	2	0	0	31	50	40	9	10	18	11	39	15	2	4	11	7	7	46	6	-39	

10.2 Political and historical context

Responsibility within the UK government for matters of international development has shifted periodically, being either part of the role of the Foreign Office or the primary role of a separate government department. The Conservative government elected in 1979 merged the Ministry of Overseas Development into the Foreign Office, where it became known as the Overseas Development Administration, and created a post of Minister of State for Overseas Development who was accountable to the Foreign Secretary. This post was occupied by Chris Patten for the first few months of the period covered by this study, then by Lynda Chalker until the 1997 election.

The Labour government elected in 1997 separated international development from the role of the Foreign Office, creating the Department for International Development (DfID). This “marked a sea change in policy on aid and development because it was headed by a member of the cabinet” and also because the new government made reducing poverty in the developing world the primary focus of the department’s work (A Blair 2015: 139). This structural change is also significant for the purposes of this thesis, because from that point on Foreign Office ministers would not be expected to represent the government in parliament on matters of international development. Accordingly, one would expect words relating to international development to have a lower frequency in the corpus after the 1997 election, as is the case.

A range of terms are used to describe the activity of a donor organisation in one part of the world giving assistance (human, financial, material or otherwise) to a recipient organisation in another part of the world. These include ‘foreign aid’, ‘overseas aid’, ‘overseas development’ and ‘international development’. Where the donor is a government, the term ‘official development assistance’ is also used. A United Nations resolution defines development as “a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people” and identifies economic development, social

development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of development (United Nations 1997). These matters are the focus of this chapter.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported in 2011 that the largest categories of government-funded development projects were for social infrastructure such as improving healthcare and education (38%); and economic infrastructure such as transport, communications and energy (17%). Humanitarian aid accounted for 9% while debt relief made up 3% of the total (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2011). The UK government's expenditure on overseas aid was relatively stable between 1989 and 1997 at around 0.3% of Gross National Income (GNI) (HM Government 2019). It then rose over the remainder of the period, joining a small group of countries that met a UN target level of 0.7% of GNI in 2013 (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2015)³⁰. In monetary terms, the UK's international development budget was around £0.6bn in 1989 and £12bn in 2015.

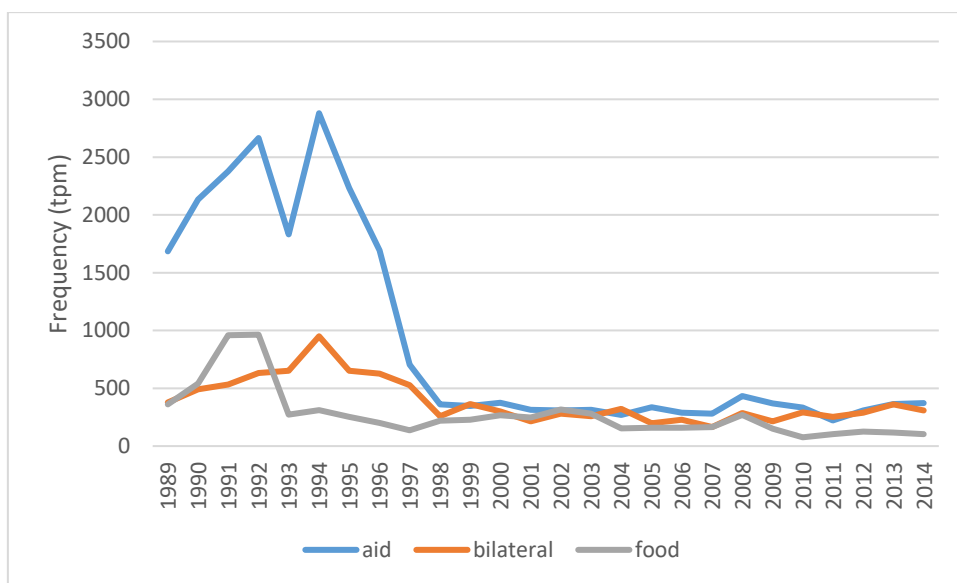
One might question the value of analysing words relating to international development given the likelihood that their decline in frequency is closely related to the removal of international development from the responsibilities of the Foreign Secretary. However, such an approach would leave unanswered the question of whether that was actually the case and nor would it explain how and why these words continued to form part of Foreign Office ministers' discourse after 1997. It would also disregard the significance of international development, and of the life prospects of people living poorer countries, as global issues. For all of these reasons, the fall in frequency of words relating to international development and the environment merits investigation.

³⁰ The UK maintained this commitment until 2020, when it cut its planned expenditure on international development to 0.5% of GNI as a "temporary" but not time-bounded measure (HM Government 2022).

10.3 Aid, bilateral and food

The frequency of aid, bilateral and food closely follows the overall pattern seen for the set of words discussed in this chapter. As Figure 10.2 shows, each of these three words peaks in frequency in the early to mid-1990s, declines steeply until 1998 and is relatively stable thereafter.

Figure 10.2: Frequency of aid, bilateral and food



The Word *aid* is used mainly but not solely in the context of international development. Of the first 20 tokens of *aid* found in the 1994 subcorpus (the year in which *aid* has the highest frequency), 17 relate to international development; two to state aid for industry; and one to the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, a scholarship scheme which supports US postgraduates to study at UK universities. In 2011 (the year in which *aid* has the lowest frequency), 14 of the first 20 tokens relate to international development; two to the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission; two to legal aid for defendants in court cases; and one to a set of guidelines to aid the drafting of referendum questions. Analysis of bigrams containing *aid* also indicates that international development is the main context in which ministers use the word: excluding grammatical words, *aid programme* and *humanitarian aid* are the most frequent bigrams including *aid* in the corpus as a whole. This evidence

suggests that ministers' use of *aid* in other contexts does not invalidate the focus of this section on matters of international development.

When comparing the first five and last five complete years of the period, the bigrams including *aid* that display the greatest change in frequency (excluding grammatical words) are *aid programme* (-316 tpm), *food aid* (-180 tpm) and *bilateral aid* (-177 tpm). There is also a fall in frequency for *british aid* (-75 tpm), while *uk aid* – the preferred term of the coalition government – has the largest rise in frequency (+17 tpm). This shift from *british* to *uk* is seen more widely in the corpus and will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 13.

The Word *food* appears in ministers' discourse overwhelmingly in the context of *aid*. Over the period as a whole, *food aid* is the most frequent bigram of *food* excluding grammatical words (43 tpm), while the name of the UN body responsible for providing food aid, the *world food programme*, has a frequency of 21 tpm. *Food security* is a rare example of a bigram including *food* that rises in frequency, albeit with a very modest rise from 4 tpm to 9 tpm. As the period progresses, this bigram is increasingly discussed in the context of international development and relief efforts coordinated through the EU.

By contrast to *food*, *bilateral* appears in a wider range of contexts. Among the 20 most frequent bigrams that include *bilateral* are pairs that relate specifically to aid such as *bilateral aid* and *bilateral assistance*, but also expressions which have more generalised uses in the conduct of diplomacy. These include *bilateral relationship* and *bilateral discussions*, which rise in frequency by 40 tpm and 6 tpm respectively, contrary to the overall decline in the frequency of *bilateral*. *Bilateral trade* rises by 18 tpm, perhaps reflecting a greater emphasis on promoting trade in the work of the Foreign Office.

Bilateral aid is among the topics discussed on 19 May 1995, when the Commons debated a motion sponsored by the opposition which condemned the government's track record on aid. At this point,

the UK had not met the UN target of spending 0.7% of Gross National Product on overseas aid, neither under the Conservative government in office at the time, nor under any previous government. However, Labour MPs emphasised that the percentage of GNP spent on aid increased during their last period of office and fell in the years leading up to 1995. Members' contributions cover several key policy choices relating to overseas aid:

1. How to balance aid spending between services such as healthcare and education; infrastructure projects; emergency assistance such as providing food and shelter in response to natural disasters; and debt relief;
2. What conditions – if any – should be attached to aid given by the UK, such as aid being 'tied' to trade agreements, economic reform, standards of governance or respect for human rights in the recipient country; and
3. The channels through which aid is given: either bilaterally from the UK to a recipient country, or multilaterally, particularly through the UK contributing to the EC's international development scheme, the European Development Fund.

At the time of this debate, the Conservative party had been in power for 16 years and ministers' contributions in the debate give an insight into what they considered to be the government's main achievements in respect of overseas aid. Minister of State Alastair Goodlad claims that:

The Government have led the way and transformed the global aid debate. First, we have led the drive for free trade and trade access. We must never forget that trade brings three times as much revenue to the developing world as aid. Secondly, the Prime Minister has consistently led the way on debt relief with the original Trinidad terms³¹ and their

³¹ The 'Trinidad terms' are described elsewhere in the corpus as an initiative "designed to relieve the debt of third world and developing countries [...] by approximately 18 billion dollars" (The Earl of Caithness, Lords vol. 529, 11 June 1991).

subsequent extension through the Paris Club³². Thirdly, we have introduced the idea of good government, using aid to promote sensible economic policies, democratic institutions, the rule of law and respect for human rights. We have pioneered the use of dedicated technical aid through our know-how funds. (Commons vol. 262, 19 June 1995)

Goodlad argues that the hallmark of aid is “helping people and Governments to help themselves”. He acknowledges that “the rise in the European Community budget will inevitably mean some further decline in Britain’s bilateral aid programme” but insists that “the Government are determined to maintain bilateral aid at an adequate level and to focus it on poor countries”. He is robust in his defence of providing aid to post-communist economies in eastern Europe but has greater difficulty responding to criticisms of the ‘Aid and Trade Provision’. This provision allowed the government to give higher priority to some aid projects of greater commercial importance to UK companies, but was used to justify controversial projects including the UK government’s funding for the Pergau Dam project in Malaysia in 1991, which was judged by the High Court to be unlawful (High Court Administrative Division 1995).

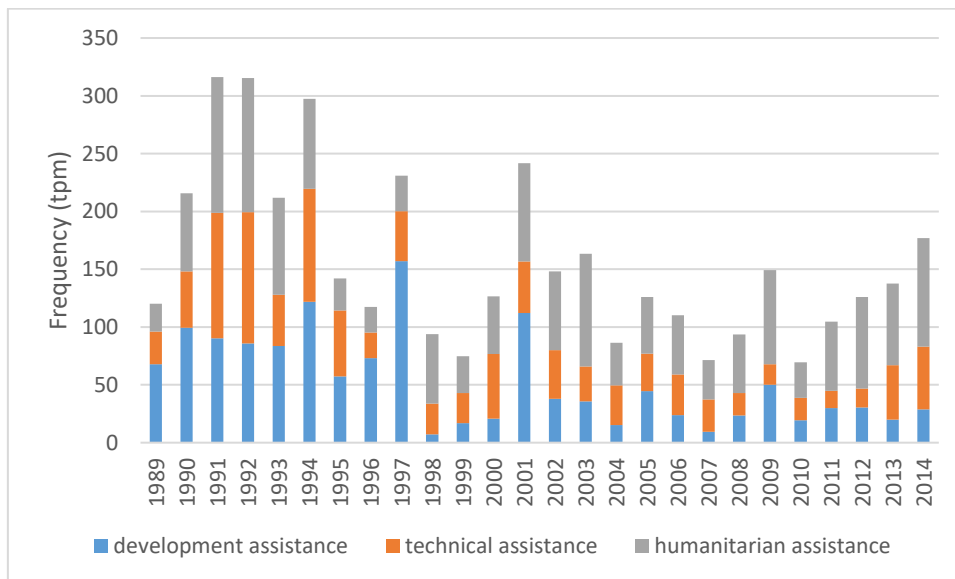
For its part, Labour had already committed itself to creating DfID if it won the next general election and to increasing the UK’s aid budget, though it had not specified an amount at this stage. With these commitments made, and with the government’s handling of overseas aid being a subject of controversy, one might consider that Labour had the stronger debating position. However, the Conservatives’ larger number of MPs enabled the government to amend the motion into one which commended the government’s actions and it was passed in this form.

³² The ‘Paris Club’ is group of government representatives from wealthy countries. The group describes its role as being “to find coordinated and sustainable solutions to the payment difficulties experienced by debtor countries” (Paris Club 2021).

10.4 Assistance

In common with the other words analysed in this chapter, the frequency of *assistance* is highest during the period of office of the Conservative government and it has a peak of 1,105 tpm in 1994. Its lowest frequency – 440 tpm – is seen in 1998, but the term sees an increase in frequency during the years of the coalition government, reaching 734 tpm in 2014. In the corpus as a whole, the most frequent bigrams including *assistance* relate to themes that are already familiar in this chapter, including *development assistance*, *technical assistance* and *humanitarian assistance*. Each of these bigrams falls during the period studied (by 59, 35 and 19 tpm respectively), as Figure 10.3 shows.

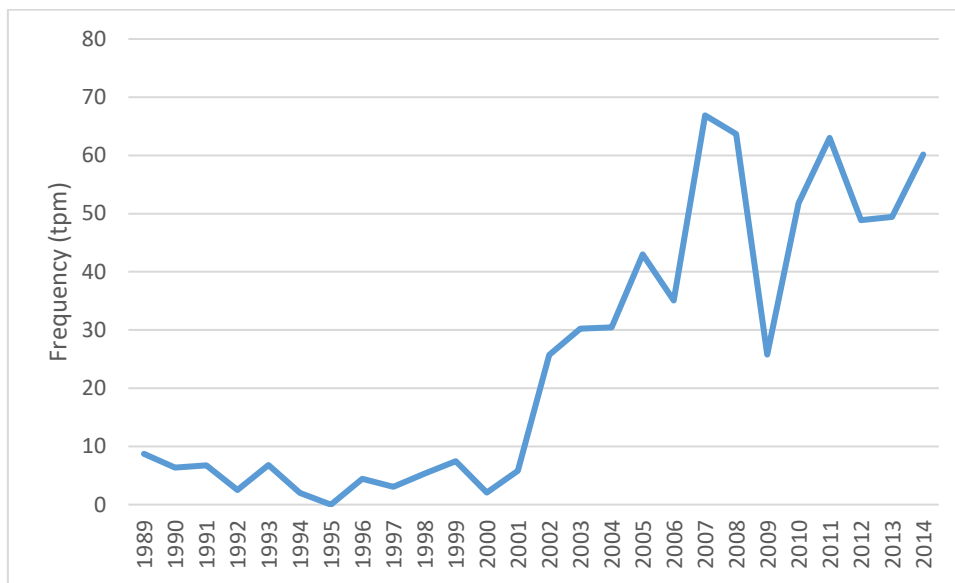
Figure 10.3: Frequency of *development assistance*, *technical assistance* and *humanitarian assistance*



Three other bigrams including *assistance* display a rise in frequency of greater than 20 tpm when comparing the first and last five full years. These are *consular assistance*, *security assistance* and *assistance force* (which rise by 48, 26 and 21 tpm respectively). The Foreign Office describes the purpose of consular services as being “To assist British people living, travelling and working around the world when they are most in need”. This includes taking steps to reduce the number of

preventable incidents affecting British people overseas; helping British people take responsibility for themselves when abroad; and providing professional and tailored assistance including in times of crisis (HM Government 2016). The expression *consular assistance* rises in frequency from 6 tpm to 55 tpm when comparing the first and last five full years of the period studied, as Figure 10.4 shows.

Figure 10.4: Frequency of *consular assistance*



A comparison of concordance lines between the early years of the period and the peak in frequency in 2007 gives a sense of some ways in which ministers' discourse relating to consular assistance changed during that time. At both points, ministers' remarks are often prompted by questions from backbench or opposition MPs. However, at the beginning of the period, their comments focus primarily on broad topics relating to the provision of consular services. As the contributions shown in Table 10.4 illustrate, ministers cover matters such as the availability of consular services in particular locations and the general advice made available to UK citizens travelling abroad. At this time, they rarely discuss the cases of individuals receiving consular assistance and their answers include few figures, financial or otherwise. By 2007, individual cases form a significant part of ministers' discourse

on consular matters and they increasingly quote statistics, whilst continuing to cover the broader topics seen earlier in the period.

Table 10.4: Selected concordance lines for *consular assistance*

Attribution	Contribution		
Tim Eggar, Commons vol. 148, 8 March 1989	No specific figures are available on the total cost of	consular assistance	in those cases.
Francis Maude, Commons vol. 165, 16 January 1990	we have temporarily withdrawn our embassy staff from Kabul, and, therefore, we are not able to offer	consular assistance	to British nationals in Afghanistan.
Mark Lennox-Boyd, Commons vol. 182, 13 December 1990	There are two "Get It Right Before You Go" leaflets: "	consular assistance	Abroad" and "Checklist for Travellers" and both give general travel advice
Mark Lennox-Boyd, Commons vol. 208, 2 June 1992	diplomatic missions of European Community member states may provide	consular assistance	to unrepresented EC nationals in non-Community countries.
Kim Howells, Commons vol. 456, 30 January 2007	in Mecca during the Hajj season and provides medical, pastoral and	consular assistance	to British Muslims at the time of the Hajj.
Kim Howells, Commons vol. 459, 01 May 2007	Our consular records show that at least 47 civilians entitled to	consular assistance	have been hospitalised, reported as injured and medivaced since March
Kim Howells, Commons vol. 461, 15 June 2007	the element in the cost of a passport which pays for the provision of	consular assistance	to British nationals overseas and which is collected in the UK by IPS ³³
Kim Howells, Commons vol. 467, 20 November 2007	Our staff in London and at our embassy in Dubai have provided	consular assistance	to Mrs. Ciliberto since September 2003.

In 2011, when *consular assistance* has a renewed peak in frequency, ministers discuss matters including assistance given to British citizens affected by the Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand; the UK's opposition to the diplomatic arm of the EU – the External Action Service – having a consular role; and why an acute threat of terrorism meant that the Foreign Office was unable to provide consular services in Yemen at that time. Minister of State Jeremy Browne states in May 2011 that:

³³ Identity and Passport Service.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has in recent months responded to an unprecedented number of crises. We have deployed significant resources to provide immediate, emergency consular assistance to British nationals. Overall the support has been excellent. However, there are lessons to be learnt [...]. (Commons vol. 527, 3 May 2011).

This may explain the 2011 peak in the frequency of *consular assistance*, but the longer-term rise suggests that ministers may have grown to consider consular matters more worthy of note in parliament, as well as being prompted to discuss them more frequently as a result of questions from backbench or opposition MPs.

Around 85% of tokens of *security assistance* and 95% of tokens of *assistance force* occur in the name of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the US and NATO-led military force that intervened in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 (NATO 2015). As such, the existence of this force is by far the dominant reason for the rise in frequency of those bigrams. Tokens of *security assistance* that do not relate to Afghanistan are found in discussion of proposals for other countries to provide security assistance in Burundi and the Middle East in the late 1990s, and in Libya and Lebanon in the early 2000s. Where *assistance force* occurs outside the string *international security assistance force*, ministers are in fact discussing ISAF in most cases, but either they or Hansard's reporters have named the force in a non-standard way such as 'International Security and Assistance Force' (Baroness Symons, Lords volume 630, 17 January 2002).

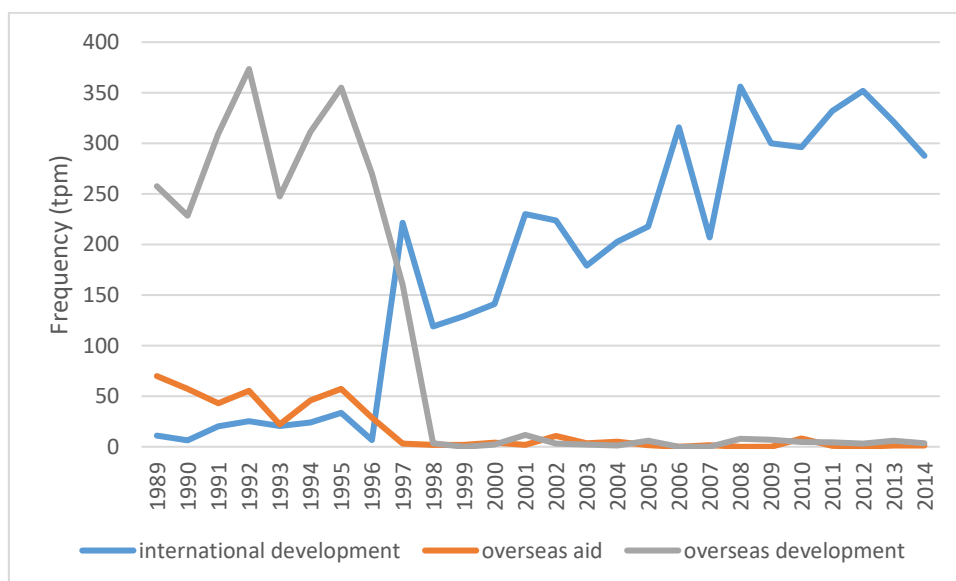
However, *consular assistance*, *security assistance* and *assistance force* only account for a small part of the overall rise in frequency of *assistance* between 2010 and 2014. Instead, there is more generalised use of the word during this period that is not linked to particular bigrams. The many other contexts in which it features include discussion of assistance to opposition forces in the Syrian civil war (a subject of controversy and a particular topic of ministers' discourse at the time of the

2014 peak in frequency of *assistance*); counter narcotics assistance for the government of Pakistan; and logistical assistance to an African-led peacekeeping mission in Mali.

10.5 Development

The Word *development* is used as a name both of an activity and an institution of the UK government throughout the period studied. Until the 1997 general election, the institution was the Overseas Development Administration and thereafter the Department for International Development, led by the Secretary of State for International Development. In the corpus as a whole, *international development* (201 tpm) is the most frequent bigram including *development* and it rises in frequency from 17 tpm in the first five years of the period to 320 tpm in the last five. The bigram *development secretary* also rises in frequency (+20 tpm) while *overseas development* (-274 tpm) and the trigram *overseas development administration* (-144 tpm) fall. As Figure 10.5 shows, the frequency of *international development* overtook that of *overseas development* and *overseas aid* in 1997 and it remained the dominant term until the end of the period.

Figure 10.5: Frequency of *international development*, *overseas development* and *overseas aid*



The highest concentrations of tokens of *development* in the corpus are found in October 1997, when the government presented a white paper on international development, and July 2001, when parliament debated a bill which led to the International Development Act 2002. However, the contributions in question were made by ministers in the Lords – Baroness Symons in 1997 and Baroness Amos in 2001. In both cases, the minister was ‘dual hatted’, being the government spokesperson in the upper House for both the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development. The proposed legislation was sponsored by DfID and one could therefore argue that these contributions should not be counted as foreign policy discourse. However, separating out such contributions when creating the corpus would have been highly complex and for this reason they remain.

Of the ten Foreign Secretaries who held office during the period of study, the contributions of David Miliband have a particularly high frequency of *development*, with a variance of +489 tpm compared to the contributions of all ten individuals³⁴. He makes no major speeches or statements on the topic, but his discourse arguably puts more emphasis on linkages between the work of the Foreign Office and DfID than is the case in contributions of other Foreign Secretaries³⁵. For example, he refers to a joint statement he issued with his DfID counterpart regarding the situation facing civilians in Gaza (Commons vol. 468, 28 Nov 2007) and the attendance of a DfID minister at a European Council meeting (Commons vol. 469, 11 December 2007). Amid political turmoil in Zimbabwe, Miliband alludes to the possibility of UK nationals needing to be evacuated and assures the Commons that “there has been a serious degree of activity on our part, and on the part of the Department for International Development, to deal with that contingency” (Commons vol. 474, 2 April 2008).

³⁴ The contributions of Margaret Beckett have a still higher variance of +942 tpm. However, as a result of her relatively short period of office, there are far fewer contributions in total relating to international development from Beckett than from Miliband.

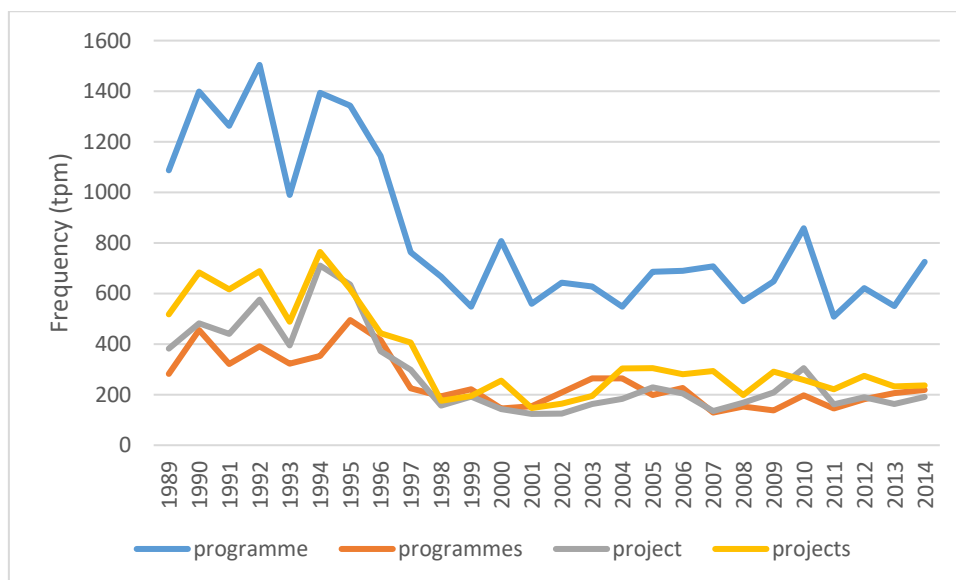
³⁵ In his autobiography, Gordon Brown describes an occasion in which he asked Miliband and the then Development Secretary, Douglas Alexander, to jointly re-examine the UK’s aims in Afghanistan (Brown 2017: loc 4676). This illustrates a type of issue over which collaboration would have been needed.

Miliband also refers to international development in the context of EU business in which he represented the UK government, particularly around the negotiation of the Lisbon Treaty, which made the eradication of poverty an explicit objective of the EU (European Union 2008: Article 208).

10.6 Programme and projects

The words *programme* and *projects* display a similar pattern in their frequency of use: they peak in the early 1990s, fall until the late 1990s and remain relatively stable thereafter. This pattern is also true of *programmes* and *project*, indicating that the changes of frequency observed are not simply variations in ministers' use of singular and plural forms. Figure 10.6 shows the changing frequency of the singular and plural forms of *programme* and *project*.

Figure 10.6: Frequency of *programme*, *programmes*, *project* and *projects*



Although the words *programme* and *project* might be considered part of everyday speech, they have a particular meaning in UK government business, with the former being described as an “interrelated series” of activities carried out in pursuit of a long-term goal, and the latter as a “temporary” activity

intended to produce a specific output (HM Treasury 2022: 129). The differentiation of the two terms can be seen in the following contribution by Mark Lennox-Boyd regarding assistance given by the UK to former communist states:

The know-how fund is a technical assistance programme and most of its projects are in sectors where environmental impact is limited or non-existent; for example privatisation, management training, accountancy development and the stimulation of small businesses. For those know-how fund projects with environmental aspects, the criteria used are the same as those operated for the rest of the UK aid programme. There is a tranche of the know-how fund that is available specifically to fund environmental projects. (Commons vol. 209, 16 June 1992)

Ministers' discussion of programmes and projects focuses primarily on international development. Two out of the three bigrams including the words *programme* or *projects* that display the largest changes in frequency over the period relate to international development: *aid programme* (-316 tpm) and *food programme* (-39 tpm). The third, *nuclear programme* (+183 tpm), illustrates the use of the term in an altogether different context and will be discussed in a separate chapter of this thesis.

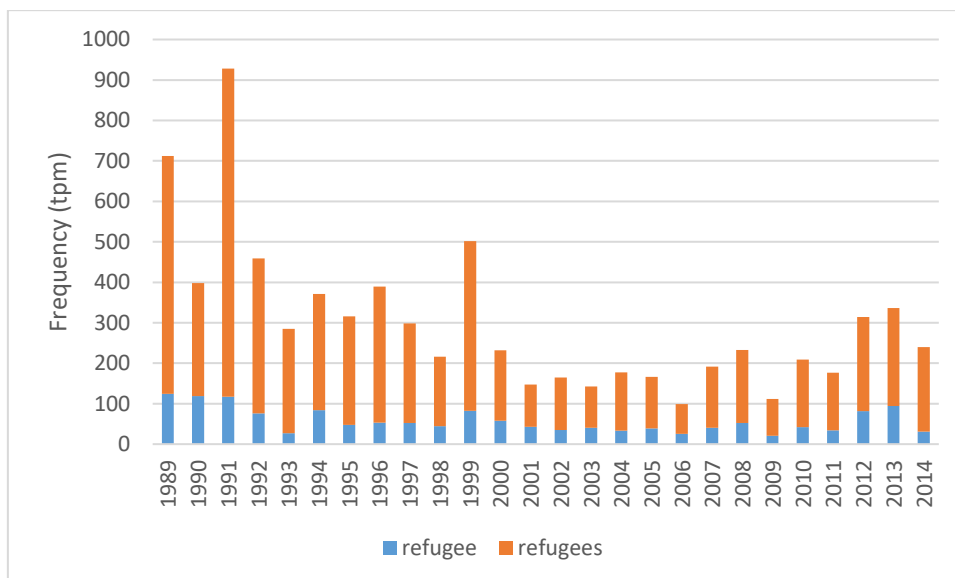
Other notable bigrams include *special programme* (-23 tpm), which forms part of the name of various initiatives run in Africa by the World Health Organisation and the World Bank; *training programme* (-17 tpm), which relates to a range of UK-funded development projects providing training in skills such as agriculture, forestry and education; and *repatriation programme* (-also 17 tpm), which relates to the return – willingly or otherwise – of refugees and other migrants to their homelands. Despite intermittent falls in its frequency, *work programme* (+14) follows a rising trend over the period, mainly through it being used as part of the name of the European Commission Work Programme and in other EU contexts.

Perhaps the most striking finding to emerge from analysing the use of *programme* and *projects* in foreign policy discourse is how closely their use is intertwined with the topic of international development. In simple terms, this is because the UK government structured its international development work into programmes and projects throughout the period studied, whereas the diplomatic and consular work of the Foreign Office was not structured in this way. It is therefore unsurprising that the fall in frequency of *programme* and *projects* follows a similar pattern to that of words such as *aid* and *development*.

10.7 Refugees

As Figure 10.7 shows, the Word *refugees* peaks in frequency in 1991 (811 tpm), has a secondary peak in 1999 (409 tpm) and then falls before gradually rising in frequency again towards the end of the period. A similar pattern is seen in ministers' use of *refugee*, data for which is also included in the figure.

Figure 10.7: Frequency of *refugees* and *refugee*



During the first five years of the period, the nationalities most frequently mentioned by ministers are *iraqi refugees* (23 tpm) and *vietnamese refugees* (10 tpm) – the former as refugees in Turkey and Iran in the early 1990s; and the latter because of their arrival in the then UK territory of Hong Kong in 1989. The geographic focus of ministers' contributions relating to refugees shifts from year to year as crises occur around the world. After *iraqi refugees* (117 tpm), *somali refugees* (27 tpm) are the most mentioned nationality at the time of the 1991 peak in frequency of *refugees*, while *palestinian refugees* (13 tpm) are the most frequently mentioned in 1999, and *syrian refugees* (34 tpm) in 2013. In each of these cases, ministers give details of humanitarian assistance the UK has given, respond to criticisms of the government's conduct and set out how the UK is contributing to international efforts to resolve the underlying situation that caused people to seek refuge.

However, bigrams in which *refugees* is paired with any word other than a grammatical word or an indicator of nationality or ethnicity are relatively low in frequency. Among these, *genuine refugees* (2 tpm in the corpus as a whole) is found foremost in contributions relating to Vietnamese migrants in Hong Kong. The need to accommodate these arrivals and determine which individuals should be given refugee status was a considerable challenge for the Hong Kong authorities. After criticism of the government's handling of the matter, the UK and Vietnamese governments reached an agreement which the Earl of Caithness described as follows:

We have now, I am pleased to say, reached agreement with the Vietnamese Government for the return of those who are not refugees. But this is not a problem confined to Hong Kong. Large-scale movement of people is an increasingly worrying global problem. We can only ensure that genuine refugees are protected if non-refugees are repatriated. (Lords vol. 532, 4 November 1991)

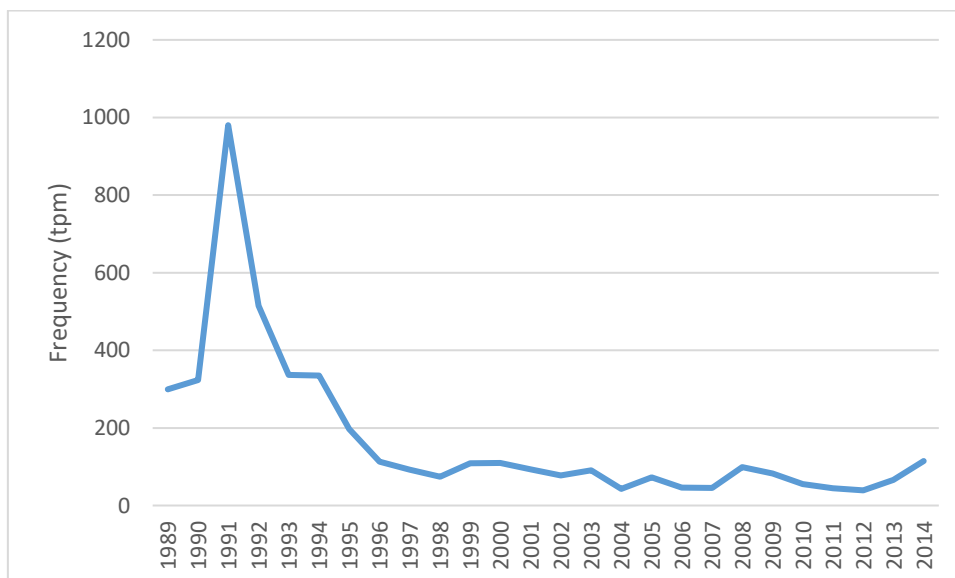
In view of the controversies over migration that took place in political and public debate during the period studied, it may seem surprising that Foreign Office ministers did not comment more

frequently on the validity of claims for refugee status. However, one should remember that immigration to the UK – the main area of controversy – was the responsibility of the Home Office. As a UK territory at the time, responsibility for immigration to Hong Kong was instead the responsibility of the Foreign Office and this is why the situation relating to the Vietnamese migrants is discussed by Foreign Office ministers. This exceptional case contributes significantly to the higher frequency of *refugees* at the beginning of the period studied, without which matters relating to refugees would form a much smaller part of the discourse.

10.8 Relief

The Word *relief* peaks sharply in frequency in 1991, falls until the late 1990s and is relatively stable thereafter. When comparing the first and last five full years of the period studied, it falls in frequency by 414 tpm. These changes of frequency are seen in Figure 10.8.

Figure 10.8: Frequency of *relief*



Six of the most frequent bigrams including *relief* also follow this pattern: *relief supplies* (-42 tpm), *relief effort* (-38 tpm), *disaster relief* (-36 tpm), *emergency relief* (-28 tpm), *international relief* (-23 tpm) and *relief operations* (-23 tpm). Among these bigrams, the highest peaks in frequency are for *relief effort*, *relief supplies* and *disaster relief*, each in 1991. Ministers used these expressions in relation to a number of emergencies around the world, but in particular following an uprising by Iraqi Kurds against the rule of Saddam Hussein. His forces suppressed the uprising and large numbers of Kurds fled to Iran and Turkey, requiring an international relief effort. The response to this was coordinated by the United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation, to which ministers refer in their contributions. At that same time, a famine was affecting Sudan and Ethiopia, in response to which the UK donated relief supplies. It is this combination of events that explains the sharp peak in frequency of *relief* in 1991.

Humanitarian relief (-36 tpm) reaches its peak of frequency in 1992, when ministers' made many references to the situation facing civilians in the former Yugoslavia; and has a lesser peak in 1995, at which time the government was calling on Russia to allow humanitarian relief into Chechnya. This bigram also has a period of heightened frequency in the late 1990s and early 2000s, again in contributions relating to Iraq and the former Yugoslavia, but also to Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and other countries.

Debt relief (-23 tpm) also peaks in frequency in 1992 the Paris Club agreed to provide debt relief for some of the poorest countries in the world. As Minister of State Lynda Chalker puts it, "The Government believe that, for those poorest countries whose efforts to achieve economic growth have been hampered by the heaviest debt burdens, debt relief has an important role to play. We were delighted to achieve Paris Club consensus in mid-December, when government creditors began to implement enhanced debt relief" (Commons vol. 202, 20 January 1992). Discussion of the continuing implementation of this debt relief contributed substantially to the lesser peak in

frequency of *debt relief* in 1994; and there was another peak in 2005, when the UK negotiated a further package of debt relief during its presidency of the G7 (The Guardian 2005).

Sanctions relief has the largest rise in frequency of any bigram including *relief*, albeit by a modest 10 tpm when comparing the first and last five years of the period. This bigram is barely seen until 2013 and is then used solely in relation to what William Hague describes as “limited, proportionate sanctions relief” (Commons vol. 570, 11 November 2013) for Iran as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed to limit that country’s nuclear capabilities (Arms Control Association 2021).

With its close linkage to matters of international development, it is unsurprising that *relief* should fall in frequency over the period studied. However, the use of its most frequent bigrams is strongly event-driven, being predicated by the emergence of situations around the world in which relief is required. *Debt relief* is an exception to this pattern: its changing frequency is more closely linked to specific initiatives aimed at reducing poorer countries’ debt. However, in common with other high-frequency bigrams including *relief*, it is less frequent after the creation of DfID than before. *Sanctions relief* provides an example of how a Word can take on a significance in ministers’ discourse in a context that is distinct from the previous dominant use of the term.

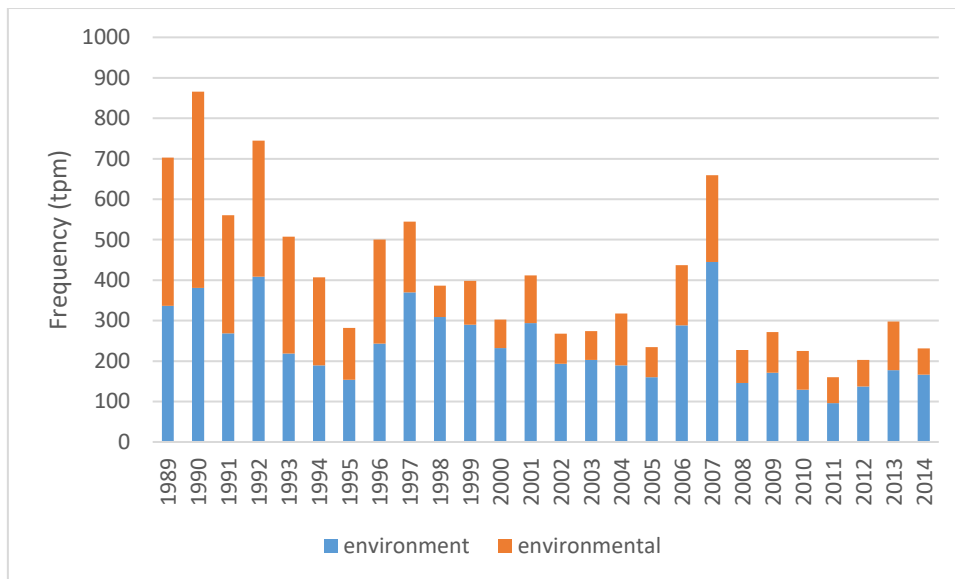
10.9 Environmental

As Figure 10.9 shows, the Word *environmental* has a peak in frequency of 485 tpm in 1990, after which it follows a downward trend for the remainder of the period of office of the Conservative government. After the election of the Labour government in 1997, it is relatively stable at around 100 tpm³⁶ and this remains the case during the period of office of the coalition government from 2010.

³⁶ Frequency values for *environmental* and *environment* are inflated in 2006 and 2007 due to the unintended inclusion of the contributions of Ian Pearson during his time as a DEFRA minister. If this material was removed, their frequency in 2006 and 2007 would be similar to the preceding and following years.

Overall the frequency of *environmental* falls by 77% when comparing the first and last five full years of the period. The related noun *environment* also falls substantially, by 55%, and is also included in the figure.

Figure 10.9: Frequency of *environmental* and *environment*



As with words related to international development, the fall in frequency of *environmental* in Foreign Office ministers' discourse is linked to the creation of DfID. The thematic connection between international development and the environment, however, is articulated much earlier by Minister of State Lynda Chalker in the following contribution:

I want to outline our philosophy of using aid to assist the environment of the developing — and thus the developed — world. There is no doubt that environmental questions are the most important facing the world today. The process of industrialisation that began in Europe more than 200 years ago has left no part of the globe untouched. The rapid depletion of the world's natural resources has been the dominant means of economic growth this century. In the past 30 years we have learnt, as the Prime Minister put it, that "Ours is a tenancy of this planet with a full repairing lease". We were strengthened in that view by the sight on

television of those first pictures of our world taken from space. We saw that the earth had a thin protective atmosphere and was very vulnerable; indeed, we now know that the ozone layer has holes in it. People are the stewards of the earth and it is our responsibility to manage and run it for the benefit of all mankind — without ruining it. Our cardinal principle must be that human well-being depends upon ecological processes whose options decrease as they become less diverse. Already, we have a most difficult task to manage and the daily increase in human population makes matters more difficult. In the richer countries, we are fortunate enough to have reasonable incomes, temperate climates and diverse economies. That makes it easier to be green. But in the poorer countries, poverty, burgeoning populations and environmental degradation are so interlinked that the goal of sustainable development is the goal that we are determined to achieve. Our guiding principles are the freedom of the individual in a framework of good government and the need to maintain ecological diversity. We aim to ensure that a sense of stewardship and positive environmental action are present in all our work in the British aid programme. (Lynda Chalker, Commons vol. 175, 26 Jun 1990)

The speech to which the above extract belongs contains 30 tokens of environmental, the largest number seen in any speech or statement in the corpus. In articulating her vision of using aid in a way that benefits the environment, however, Chalker would doubtless have been aware that development projects, especially those that create infrastructure, inevitably have some kind of negative environmental impacts. Giving evidence to a UK parliamentary committee in 2010, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) highlighted projects which the UK government had supported and which the WWF assessed to have had damaging environmental impacts, such as a pipeline through a national park in Georgia (UK Parliament 2011). The WWF recognised, however, the need for infrastructure to boost economic activity and lift people out of poverty. Chalker's contribution

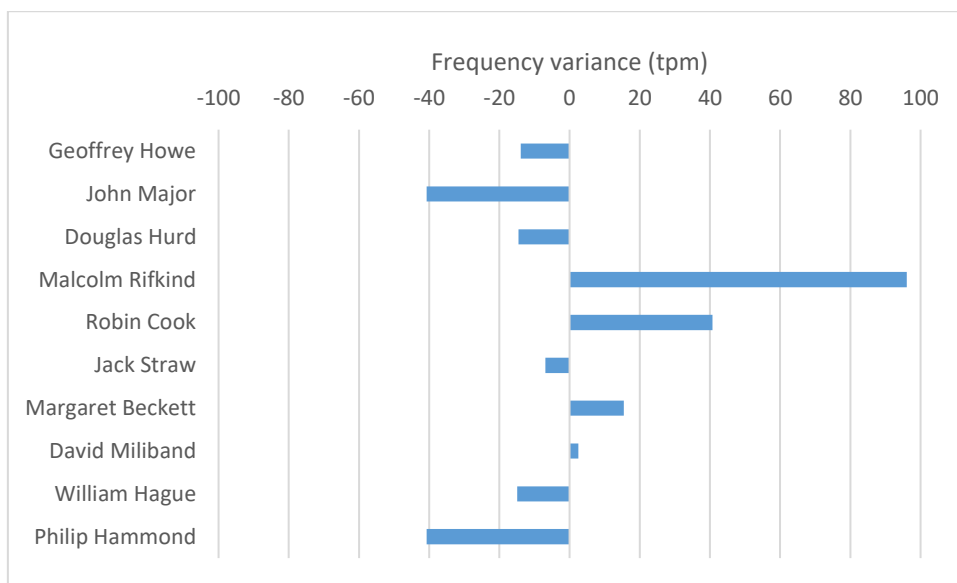
reflects the tensions inherent in development policy of balancing the needs of people and the planet, and designing development projects in a way that minimises environmental damage.

Another factor contributing to the frequency of *environmental* at the beginning of the period is the increasing awareness that ministers and others had of environmental problems in central and eastern European states. William Waldegrave notes that the province of Silesia in the German Democratic Republic suffers from “environmental health standards, which would make anyone in Britain weep, and environmental pollution worse than anything that we have seen for 100 years or more” (Commons vol. 162, 1 Dec 1989) and asserts that “We believe that environmental problems are best tackled through international co-operation, and we are working within the EC to establish how best we can help in eastern Europe” (Commons vol. 165, 15 Jan 1990). More broadly, ministers also comment on matters including deforestation and procedures for assessing the environmental impact of aid programmes; and environmental considerations also feature in discourse relating to deep sea mining. This seemingly obscure topic features in Foreign Office ministers’ discourse because legislation (Deep Sea Mining Act 1981) prohibits such activity taking place in UK territorial waters except where a certificate is issued by the Secretary of State. Because of this provision, Foreign Office ministers participated in debates relating to requests for certificates.

Of the ten Foreign Secretaries who held office during the period of the study, the individual whose contributions contain the highest frequency of *environmental* is Malcolm Rifkind, the last Foreign Secretary of the Conservative government. As Figure 10.10 shows, the frequency of *environmental* is 96 tpm higher in Rifkind’s contributions than in the average of the ten Foreign Secretaries. Rifkind makes 11 contributions containing *environmental*. Of these, six relate to the UK having a veto over some areas of European environmental policy (something which he claims the Labour party would give up in favour of Qualified Majority Voting), while the other five include an acknowledgement that the European Community has helped to drive up environmental standards; a recognition that the

environment is a global issue; and a discussion of environmental implications of trade liberalisation. As such, much of Rifkind’s discourse containing *environmental* is arguably not so much about the environment as about sovereignty, specifically the division of powers between the European Community and its member states including the UK. This case serves as a reminder that statistical data obtained from a corpus can only tell part of a story. Reading Rifkind’s contributions and understanding the context in which he made them provides important additional insight and it would be mistaken to infer from the statistics that Rifkind was more environmentally-minded than other Foreign Secretaries.

Figure 10.10: Frequency variance for *environmental* in the contributions of ten Foreign Secretaries



Following the creation of DfID, the environment is a relatively small topic in Foreign Office ministers’ discourse. However, Robin Cook acknowledges early in his period of office that “in the next century, the environmental agenda will become much more prominent in international relations” (Commons vol. 295, 10 June 1996) and he also refers to the negotiations that led to agreement of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, an international treaty that committed states to reducing greenhouse emissions (United Nations 2021). Cook also discusses environmental aspects of the enlargement of the

European Community, arguing that “Enlargement is important precisely because the environmental standards of some central and eastern European countries are well below those of western Europe” (Commons vol. 310, 7 April 1998) and noting that as a condition of accession, states are having to shut down nuclear reactors that do not meet European safety standards (Commons vol. 340, 12 July 1999). In Cook’s view, promoting environmental protection internationally is in the UK’s national interest and he links this to other ideals including peace, justice and respect for human rights (Commons vol. 321, 27 November 1998).

A comparison of bigrams including *environmental* in the first and last five full years of the period covered by this thesis reveals a degree of continuity in ministers’ discourse: *environmental impact*, *environmental issues*, *environmental projects* and *environmental protection* are among the 20 most frequent such bigrams both in 1989-93 and in 2010-2015. Bigrams which fall in frequency and leave the top 20 include *environmental appraisal* and *environmental damage*, while *environmental standards* and *environmental assets* join the top 20, the latter being an expression used by William Hague to describe the rich natural environment of the UK’s overseas territories (first seen in Commons vol. 524, 10 March 2011). The topic of deep sea mining contributes to the minor spike in frequency of *environmental* in 2013, when parliament debated and ultimately voted in favour of a new Act (Deep Sea Mining Act 2014).

The extent to which environmental matters form part of foreign policy discourse during the period studied is strongly influenced by the connection ministers make between the UK’s aid programme and the environment. As a result of this connection, the creation of the DfID in 1997 is the primary cause of the fall in frequency of *environmental*. However, there is also a European dimension to ministers’ discourse regarding the environment which can be observed throughout the period, both over environmental issues in themselves and in respect of sovereignty over environmental policy. Alongside the need to answer foreign policy questions with an environmental angle and the Foreign

Secretary's role in authorising deep sea mining activities, this means that the environment continues to have a place in ministers' discourse throughout the period studied.

10.10 Conclusions

The analysis included in this chapter shows a clear link between the decline in frequency of words relating to international development and the removal of international development as a responsibility of the Foreign Secretary in 1997. This structural change in government is the primary cause of the decline in frequency of the words. The decline in frequency of *environmental* has the same underlying cause, as the analysis shows that the environment and international development are closely linked topics in foreign policy discourse.

The frequency of the set of words relating to international development and the environment is remarkably stable after 1997, but was more volatile during the period when international development belonged to the remit of the Foreign Secretary. There was a marked decline in the frequency of the words analysed in this chapter from 1994 to 1997 and one might interpret this to mean that the Conservative government gave less priority to matters of international development during its final years in office. However, a range of other factors are relevant, including the fact that events in Hong Kong, Eastern Europe and elsewhere caused a peak in the frequency of words such as *refugees* during the preceding years. It is possible that the decline from 1994 to 1997 is part of a normal fluctuation in frequency driven by external events. Data from the years before 1989 would help to establish whether this was the case or not.

The fall in frequency of many of the bigrams and longer strings identified in this chapter also stems from the structural change in government. However, analysis of those bigrams that rise in frequency provides some interesting insights into new and growing themes of ministers' discourse. The rise of *consular assistance* is perhaps the most striking, while the rise of *bilateral relationship* and *bilateral*

discussions hints at a possible shift from multilateral to bilateral approaches to international relations on the part of ministers. Meanwhile, *relief* gains a new meaning towards the end of the period through its use in discussion of sanctions relief and this makes it an interesting example of how a Word may decline at one point in time, only to recover to some extent when it returns to use in a different context – a form of lexical recycling.

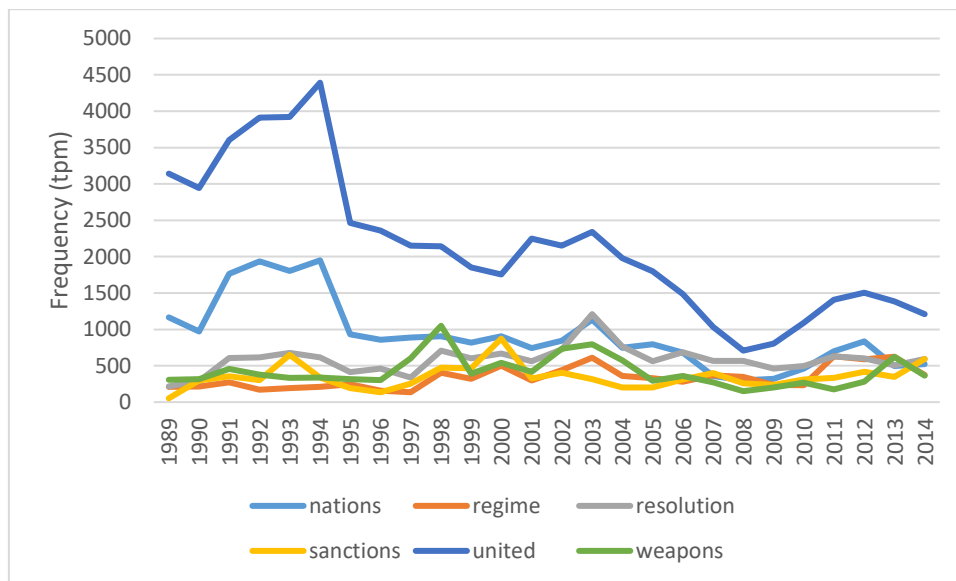
In 2020, responsibility for international development returned to being the responsibility of the Foreign Secretary in a newly-renamed Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Analysis of a corpus of foreign policy discourse which spanned this change would likely show a reversal of many of the findings of this chapter, albeit with ministers' retaining a preference for *development* over *aid*. A contrastive study of foreign policy discourse pre-1997 and post-2020 would also offer insights into how ministers' conceptualisation of international development had changed during the intervening years.

11. ANALYSIS: THE UNITED NATIONS

11.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses a set of six words: *nations*, *regime*, *resolution*, *sanctions*, *united* and *weapons*. As Figure 11.1 shows, three of these words (*regime*, *resolution* and *sanctions*) display a rise in frequency when comparing the first and last five years of the period, while two (*nations* and *united*) fall. The sixth word, *weapons*, displays only a modest change when comparing the first and last five years, but was selected for analysis because its frequency is markedly higher during the period of office of the Labour government than that of the Conservatives or the coalition government.

Figure 11.1: Frequency of *nations*, *regime*, *resolution*, *sanctions*, *united* and *weapons*



The data contained in Tables 11.1 and 11.2 shows multiple overlapping patterns of co-occurrence of the six selected words in the same contributions. Some of the reasons for these connections are entirely obvious, such as the co-occurrence of *united* and *nations* in the name of the institution on which this chapter focuses. Others relate more or less directly to the functions of the United Nations (UN) and to crises in which the UN mediated during the period studied. Each of the words is also

used in contexts other than discussion of the UN and this chapter will explore some of those other uses of the terms. An overview of year-by-year frequency data for the selected words and longer strings discussed in this chapter is provided in Table 11.3.

As is the case in each of the analysis chapters of this thesis, the data also shows patterns of co-occurrence between the selected words selected and those discussed in other chapters. The words *security*, *intelligence* and *military* have an obvious connection with the UN's role in preventing and resolving conflict but are considered to fit best in a separate chapter on the theme of security. Words such as *refugees*, *relief* and *human*, which have been analysed in previous chapters, relate to the humanitarian aspect of the UN's role. *Government* features prominently in Table 11.2, as it does in the equivalent table in a number of other chapters, but has a stronger connection still with other words that are grouped together for analysis in chapter 13.

Table 11.1: Excess frequency data for ch. 11 (Type A)

Showing the ten subcorpora in which the words specified in row 1 have the highest excess frequency

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Nations		Regime		Resolution		Sanctions		United		Weapons	
	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
1 st	nations	3415	regime	3338	resolution	3521	sanctions	4272	united	3606	weapons	4613
2 nd	refugees	1590	sanctions	1315	sanctions	1357	regime	769	nations	3092	intelligence	667
3 rd	sanctions	1370	weapons	1028	weapons	940	weapons	379	weapons	2026	sanctions	573
4 th	resolution	1145	intelligence	306	brussels	840	food	259	refugees	1883	regime	456
5 th	weapons	1137	food	269	regime	828	resolution	234	sanctions	1760	threat	360
6 th	sexual	1129	resolution	236	sexual	794	sexual	190	intelligence	1562	terrorism	283
7 th	relief	1032	refugees	231	women	686	relief	181	resolution	1432	resolution	93
8 th	united	937	sexual	225	religious	535	intelligence	101	relief	1375	sexual	90
9 th	regime	841	threat	221	refugees	533	threat	97	sexual	1324	food	61
10 th	women	699	terrorism	202	terrorism	464	refugees	66	aid	1308	relief	26

Table 11.2: Excess frequency data for ch. 11 (Type B)

Showing the ten words that have the highest excess frequency in the subcorpus of contributions containing the Word specified in row 1

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Nations		Regime		Resolution		Sanctions		United		Weapons	
	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
1 st	nations	3415	regime	3338	resolution	3521	sanctions	4272	united	3606	weapons	4613
2 nd	united	3092	government	1635	security	2242	security	2236	nations	937	government	2075
3 rd	government	1264	security	1303	government	1529	government	2039	government	815	security	2030
4 th	security	1217	united	1200	united	1432	united	1760	security	95	united	2026
5 th	resolution	430	uk	1097	nations	1145	eu	1553	uk	-446	uk	1426
6 th	uk	269	rights	998	uk	981	uk	1472	rights	-750	nations	1137
7 th	rights	207	eu	975	rights	702	nations	1370	development	-789	regime	1028
8 th	human	152	human	958	human	603	resolution	1357	resolution	-827	programme	1024
9 th	development	83	nations	841	eu	486	regime	1315	human	-851	military	945
10 th	military	45	resolution	828	military	431	military	825	eu	-941	resolution	940

Table 11.3: Year-by-year frequency data for words and longer strings discussed in ch. 11

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																										Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)		
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		1989-93	2010-14
appalling regime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	1	1
assad regime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	108	114	67	0	63	63
biological weapons	13	11	61	10	7	6	16	27	34	115	21	25	68	73	50	30	3	13	14	3	3	2	0	21	14	0	20	8	-12
brutal regime	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	5	1	0	2	2
burmese government	0	0	9	3	0	2	0	0	6	7	2	15	4	6	4	6	4	28	37	26	5	8	38	182	305	219	2	156	154
burmese regime	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	18	22	35	12	14	57	29	27	19	40	56	30	26	9	0	1	0	1	6	5
chemical weapons	138	95	93	40	67	38	16	55	37	144	82	68	41	83	43	39	33	21	6	6	4	2	20	23	258	112	87	85	-2
control regime	9	25	23	0	0	4	4	2	6	5	4	4	8	5	1	0	4	1	2	1	0	0	2	3	1	2	11	2	-9
economic sanctions	11	2	23	13	12	8	2	13	22	16	2	4	2	9	13	6	1	11	14	8	5	8	5	7	7	8	12	7	-5
eu sanctions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	41	4	17	21	15	12	8	48	31	15	31	33	67	60	48	0	49	49
financial sanctions	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	2	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	1	1	0
gaddafi regime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	113	9	6	1	0	29	29
iraqi government	22	21	102	33	31	18	22	20	3	12	26	39	2	11	43	95	67	104	78	45	45	68	90	12	5	70	41	48	7
iraqi regime	0	2	20	8	36	28	28	7	9	51	21	25	37	92	83	16	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	14	0	-14
nations	1164	971	1766	1938	1805	1950	933	857	890	904	816	906	744	842	1134	747	797	679	359	299	320	461	697	834	497	523	1528	617	-911
nuclear weapons	66	116	97	189	154	120	142	73	265	200	86	168	70	85	105	131	77	142	112	38	75	157	16	83	139	103	124	94	-30
regime	212	214	273	169	191	210	245	157	135	404	320	500	300	437	612	360	327	279	369	347	235	231	631	588	622	374	211	509	297
regime change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	4	3	6	3	2	3	3	0	3	2	2	1	0	2	2
resolution	216	290	605	613	678	617	412	463	339	706	601	670	561	727	1210	764	563	687	566	567	460	497	627	604	506	594	486	571	86
resolution 1441	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	196	65	31	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
sanctions	52	296	357	303	652	337	193	135	256	474	464	873	323	402	316	200	200	309	401	260	235	311	332	418	345	592	350	403	53
syrian government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	3	0	6	0	3	1	3	0	14	12	5	2	0	7	7
syrian regime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	51	174	56	45	0	70	70
targeted sanctions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	4	44	17	1	15	28	20	21	4	3	15	2	2	18	0	8	8
terrible regime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
uk sanctions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	2	4	3	6	6	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
un	242	303	745	838	749	1455	1189	1315	1275	1190	1229	1800	1299	1497	2065	1701	1554	2392	2112	2750	2404	1680	1583	1458	1693	1984	575	1672	1097
un sanctions	0	6	18	5	9	16	20	9	15	16	73	131	75	41	40	13	16	26	22	26	20	31	14	16	14	31	8	20	13
united	3142	2945	3602	3914	3923	4392	2465	2357	2152	2144	1850	1754	2247	2151	2340	1979	1797	1487	1034	708	806	1092	1409	1505	1385	1211	3513	1339	-2175
us sanctions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	11	2	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	3	1	0	2	1	0	1	12	0	3	3
weapons	306	315	456	376	335	337	317	301	600	1050	389	541	418	733	793	573	292	360	274	151	202	267	176	279	622	365	355	341	-14
weapons of mass destruction	2	6	75	25	41	22	22	40	102	264	71	104	91	237	301	190	41	41	22	12	22	23	7	16	24	7	30	15	-15

11.2 Political and historical context

The United Nations was founded in 1945 to “maintain international peace and security, give humanitarian assistance to those in need, protect human rights, and uphold international law” (United Nations 2021). Its main bodies include the UN General Assembly, which is “the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN” and at which all 193 UN member states are represented; and the UN Security Council, which has five permanent and ten non-permanent members and is responsible for “the maintenance of international peace and security” (United Nations 2021). The Head of the UN is known as the Secretary-General and, during the period studied, this post was held by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (1982-1991), Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992-1996), Kofi Annan (1997-2006) and Ban Ki-moon (2007-2016). The United Kingdom is a founding member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council.

Annan (Annan and Mousavizadeh 2013) describes the challenge faced by the UN in balancing member states’ right to self-determination with the responsibility of the international community to protect citizens from harm, known as the ‘responsibility to protect’. Questions of whether and how the international community should intervene in crisis situations around the world arose throughout the period studied, from Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait at the beginning of the period to the conflict in Libya at the end. These questions were particularly acute where a crisis remained unresolved after diplomatic interventions and where UN member states held differing views on what course of action should be taken. In some of these cases, including in Kuwait, UN Security Council resolutions provided legal authorisation for military intervention. In other cases, such as in the Kosovo crisis in 1999, no agreement could be reached and a group of states (in this instance the members states of NATO) intervened without the express authorisation of the UN. In the case of the Iraq war in 2003, there was and continues to be a dispute about whether previous UN resolutions provided a legal basis for the US-led military intervention. These episodes, and the failure of UN-backed forces to

prevent genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, resulted in the credibility and effectiveness of the UN being called into question.

Despite these challenges, the UN retains a central place in international relations. As Annan puts it:

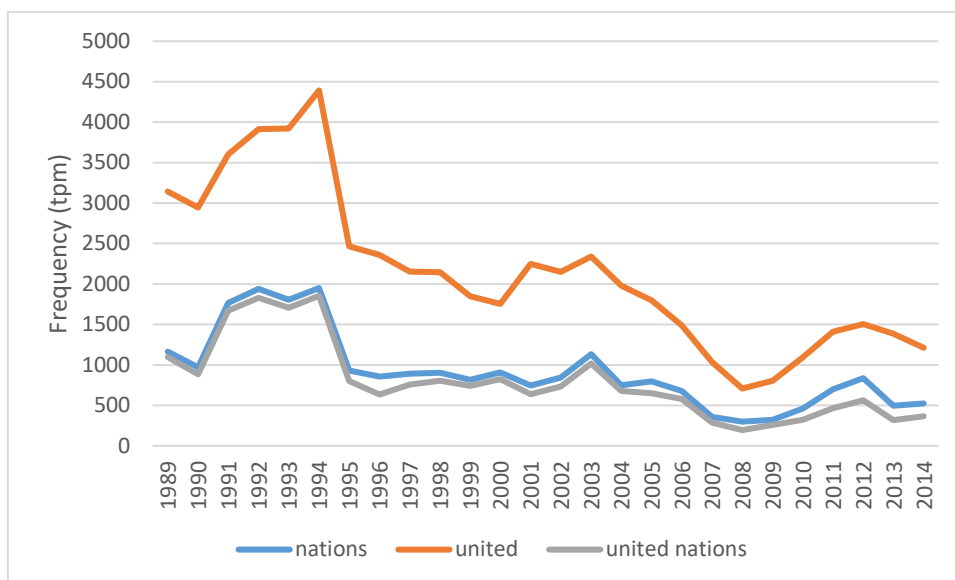
“We have not always lived up to our own words. But perhaps that is the fate of the UN: to disappoint those who see it as the panacea to the world’s problems, but to succeed, however incompletely, in giving voice to aspirations of individual men and women struggling in every country to live lives of dignity and opportunity, free of the threat of conflict and repression.”

(Annan and Mousavizadeh 2013: loc 2337)

11.3 *United and nations*

The words *united* and *nations* display a similar evolution in frequency throughout the period studied, with both having an overall downward trend in frequency punctuated by peaks in the early 1990s, early 2000s and, on a smaller scale, the early 2010s. As Figure 11.2 shows, *united* is around two to three times as frequent as *nations*, while 85% of tokens of *nations* are found in the string *united nations*. *Nations* is also found in the names of other groupings such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or more generally to mean countries or states, e.g. in *family of nations*, *sovereign nations* or *European nations*. In the case of *united*, 40% of tokens are found in the string *united kingdom*, 37% in *united nations* and 17% in *united states*.

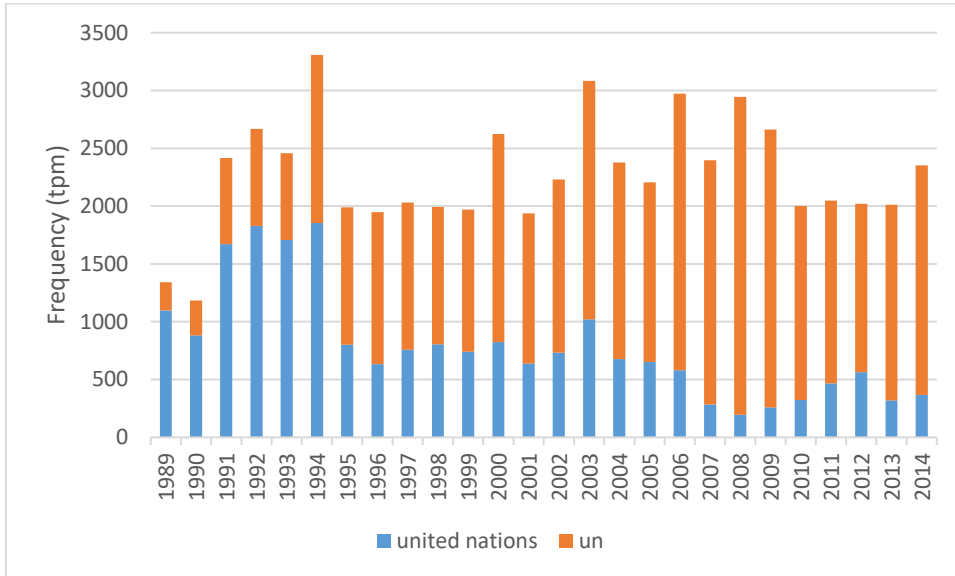
Figure 11.2: Frequency of *nations*, *united* and *united nations*



Throughout the period studied, the United Nations is referred to in Hansard both in its long form and by the acronym UN. Although *un* was not among the words selected for analysis in this thesis, it has a significance in this chapter because it rises in frequency as *united nations* falls. As Figure 11.3 shows, the combined frequency of *united nations* and *un* is relatively stable. One should not assume, therefore, that the fall in frequency of *united nations* indicates the organisation and its work have a decreasing place in ministers' discourse over the period studied.³⁷

³⁷ For the purposes of the frequency analysis carried out for this research, punctuation marks in the Hansard transcripts were replaced with a space. This means that the name of the institution is counted both in the string 'United Nations-sponsored peace talks' and in 'UN-sponsored peace talks'. It also means, however, that a token of *un* is counted when it used as a hyphenated prefix such as in 'un-European'. There are very few such cases in the corpus (only two during the first five full years and six in the last five) and as such they are considered insignificant.

Figure 11.3: Frequency of *united nations* and *un*



In total there are 38 bigrams including *united*, *nations* and/or *un* that display a change in frequency of greater than 20 tpm when comparing the first five and last five full years of the period. As Table 11.4 shows, 18 of these rise in frequency, all but one of which include the acronym *un*. Of the 20 bigrams that fall in frequency, all include *united* and/or *nations* but not *un*. This data underlines the shift towards *un* as the dominant term recorded in Hansard. These bigrams of *united*, *nations* and *un* point to a range of offices, institutions and activities of the United Nations and many of them form part of longer strings such as *un secretary general*, *un security council* or *un peacekeeping mission*.

Table 11.4: Bigrams including *united*, *nations* and/or *un* with >20 tpm frequency change

Bigram	TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM change
the un	379	1130	752
un security	68	302	234
un human	2	105	103
un general	17	92	75
un and	14	87	74
un special	12	75	62
of un	26	65	40
un high	9	44	35
other nations	13	45	32
a un	14	46	32
and un	6	38	31
un s	11	38	27
un resolution	4	30	25
un mission	3	26	23
with un	2	24	22
un peacekeeping	9	30	21
un to	5	26	21
un office	2	22	20
nations conference	20	0	-20
nations sanctions	22	2	-20
by united	25	4	-20
under united	25	4	-21
nations and	58	37	-22
nations plan	23	0	-22
nations agencies	25	2	-22
nations commission	28	4	-24
in united	28	3	-25
a united	64	37	-27
to united	33	4	-28
nations general	53	17	-36
nations security	137	77	-59
nations high	79	18	-60
of united	104	21	-82
nations secretary	103	8	-95
united states	500	232	-268
united kingdom	1479	589	-890
united nations	1437	416	-1021
the united	2646	1120	-1526

Excluding those bigrams that include a grammatical word and the country names *united kingdom* and *united states*, 15 other words are included in these bigrams: *agencies, commission, conference, general, high, human, mission, office, peacekeeping, plan, resolution, sanctions, secretary, security* and *special*. All of these words are present in the corpus as bigrams both of *nations* and of *un*.

Analysing the combined frequency of the long-form bigram and initial-based bigram in each case gives a more accurate indication of changes in frequency of ministers' references to these concepts than would be possible by considering each bigram in isolation. Table 11.5 shows these combined frequency changes.

Table 11.5: Combined frequency change for *united nations* and *un + agencies, commission, conference, general, high, human, mission, office, peacekeeping, plan, resolution, sanctions, secretary, security* and *special*

Bigrams	TPM 1989-1993	TPM 2010-2014	TPM change
united nations / un security	205	379	174
united nations / un human	7	117	110
united nations / un special	38	81	43
united nations / un general	70	109	39
united nations / un mission	11	37	26
united nations / un office	3	30	26
united nations / un resolution	12	33	21
united nations / un peacekeeping	28	35	7
united nations / un sanctions	30	22	-7
united nations / un agencies	41	21	-20
united nations / un commission	39	20	-20
united nations / un conference	27	4	-23
united nations / un plan	25	0	-25
united nations / un high	87	62	-26
united nations / un secretary	161	84	-77

The three largest changes in frequency in the table above are all driven by the use of longer strings that have particular meanings in the context of the UN. The increase in frequency of *united nations /*

un security arises from an increase in references to the United Nations Security Council, while the rise in *united nations / un human* stems from a growth in references to the UN's Human Rights Council and Human Rights Committee. Similarly, the fall in *united nations / un secretary* is entirely the result of a fall in the frequency of references to the organisation's Secretary-General.

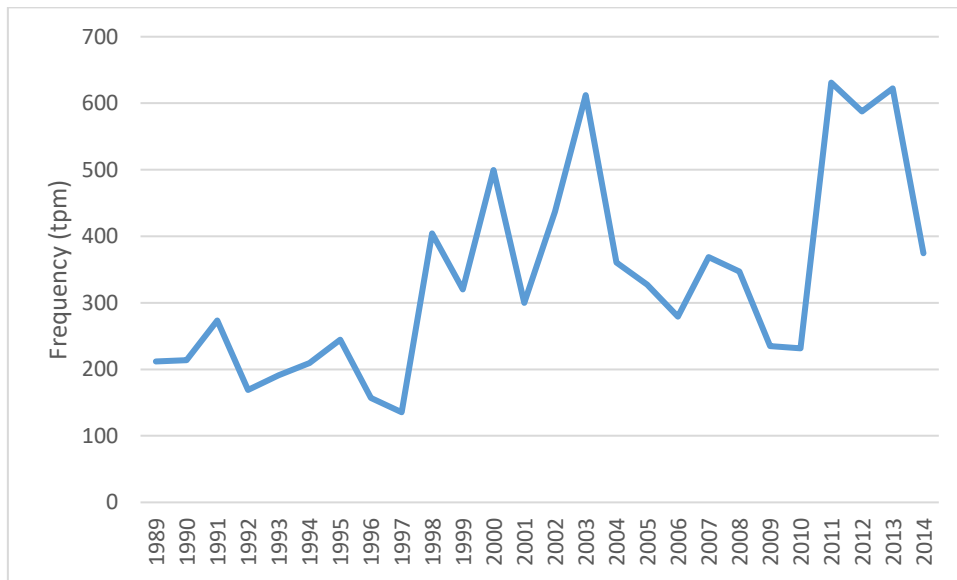
This data suggests that the work of the Security Council occupied a growing part of ministers' discourse relating to the UN as the period progressed, perhaps as a result of a series of world events occurring which were felt to require a response from the Security Council. The rise of *human rights* in discourse relating to the UN is consistent with the overall rise of this topic noted in a previous chapter. A significant factor in the fall in references to the Secretary-General is that a new Secretary-General was elected and took office during the first five years of the period studied, whereas no such change took place during the last five years. Consequently this change should not be interpreted as ministers attaching less significance to the office of the Secretary-General as time progressed.

11.4 Regime

The Word *regime* has an upward trend in frequency over the period studied, rising from 211 tpm during the first five full years to 509 during the last five. As Figure 11.4 shows, it first exceeds a frequency of 600 tpm in 2003 and reaches its peak of 640 tpm in 2011, during the period of office of the coalition government. The word *regime* has two distinct meanings in ministers' discourse: one being to describe a government that is considered authoritarian or otherwise ideologically opposed to western governments; and the other to describe an agreed system of rules such as a 'sanctions regime' or that used to control the arms trade internationally. All three bigrams including *regime* that rise by 20 tpm or more during the period are of the first type and these are *syrian regime* (+70 tpm), *assad regime* (+63 tpm) and *gaddafi regime* (+29 tpm). The bigram with the largest fall in frequency,

control regime (-9 tpm) exemplifies the second type and forms part of longer strings including *arms export control regime* and *missile technology control regime*³⁸.

Figure 11.4: Frequency of *regime*



One possible explanation for the rise of *regime* is that ministers increasingly use it as an alternative to *government* when expressing dismay or disapproval (Channell 2000). For the three most frequently mentioned countries described as having a regime in the corpus as a whole – Syria, Iraq and Burma, the rise and fall of *regime* and *government* can be related very directly to periods in which those governments attracted international criticism and this data is represented in Figures 11.5 to 11.7. Syria is described predominantly as having a *regime* following the outbreak of civil war in 2011; Iraq from its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 to the downfall of Saddam Hussein in 2003; and Burma for much of the period to 2010, during which Aung San Suu Kyi was held under house arrest.

³⁸ The Missile Technology Control Regime is an informal association of countries dedicated to the non-proliferation of unmanned weapons systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. The United Kingdom has been a member of the association since its foundation in 1987.

An example of ministers' use of *regime* is found in the following contribution relating to Syria, in which Alistair Burt also emphasises the importance of the UN's humanitarian work in the country:

We have and will continue to raise human rights issues at every available opportunity, at both ministerial and official level, with the Syrian authorities. We also discuss Syria with key international partners, and we will continue to take a strong and leading role in working with them to increase pressure on the Syrian regime to cease these atrocities and end the abuse of human rights. (Alistair Burt, Commons vol. 532, 7 September 2011)

Figure 11.5: Frequency of *syrian government* and *syrian regime*

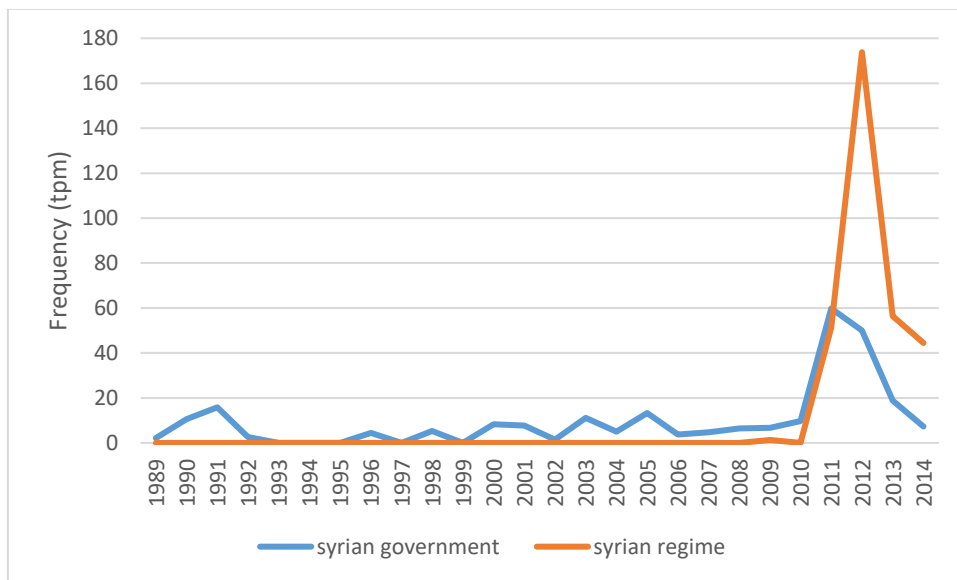


Figure 11.6: Frequency of *iraqi government* and *iraqi regime*

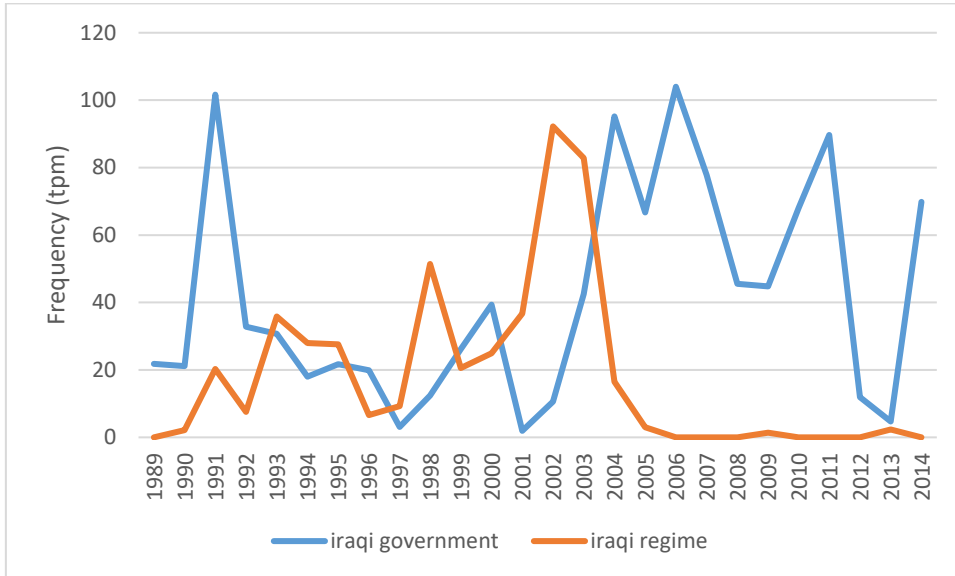
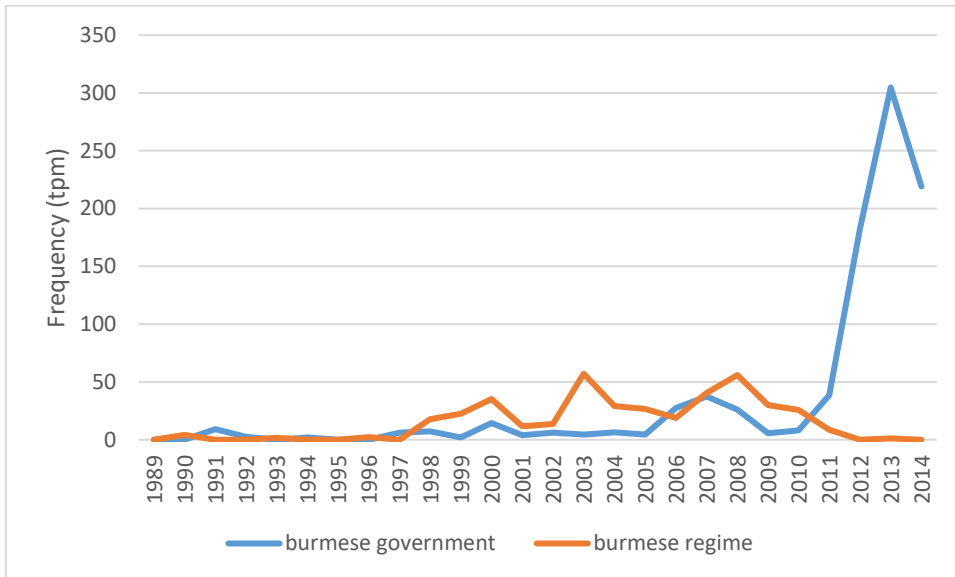


Figure 11.7: Frequency of *burmese government* and *burmese regime*³⁹



³⁹ The peak in frequency of *burmese government* in 2013 is associated with ministers expressing concern about a lack of progress on human rights in the country and particularly about violence in one state. These concerns did not, at least at this stage, cause ministers to refer to Burma's then government as a *regime*.

A less frequent bigram including *regime* is *regime change*, the controversial policy of bringing about the removal of a leader of another country. This bigram has a modest peak in frequency of 18 tpm in 2002, when ministers spoke openly about their desire to see the removal of Saddam Hussein as president of Iraq. *Regime* is also used together with evaluative adjectives, the most frequent examples of which are *brutal regime*, *terrible regime* and *appalling regime*. However, these bigrams are much rarer than the country names discussed, with frequencies of 1.1 tpm, 0.6 tpm and 0.6 tpm respectively in the corpus as a whole. The concordances shown in Table 11.6 illustrate ministers' use of these expressions.

Table 11.6: Selected concordance lines for *brutal regime*, *terrible regime* and *appalling regime*

Attribution	Contribution		
Jack Straw, Commons vol. 373, 30 October 2001	before 11 September, the Taliban were marked out as one of the most inhuman and	brutal regime	s in human history.
Baroness Symons, Lords vol.645, 26 February 2003	Saddam Hussein runs a cruel and	terrible regime	. He has inflicted untold suffering on his own people
Lord Malloch-Brown, Lords vol. 702, 23 June 2008	I hope that my noble friends will be as generous when we finally bring this	terrible regime	to an end and Zimbabwe gets the Government it deserves.
William Hague, Commons vol. 533, 19 October 2011	It is a mistake on their part to side with a	brutal regime	rather than with the people of Syria.
William Hague, Commons vol. 540, 06 February 2012	We will redouble our efforts to put pressure on this	appalling regime	and to stop this indefensible violence ⁴⁰ .
Hugo Swire, Commons vol. 579, 08 April 2014	We need to assemble all the evidence, because I believe that one day this	appalling regime	will be held to account ⁴¹ .

Lord Malloch-Brown's contribution of 23 June 2008 contrasts the government which Zimbabwe had at the time with a different type of government he hopes the country will have in the future. This rhetorical device is also used by ministers is to contrast a *regime* with the behaviour of another

⁴⁰ This contribution relates to the government of Syria.

⁴¹ This contribution relates to the government of North Korea.

individual or group. In the following extract relating to Burma, Mike O'Brien juxtaposes a series of qualities which he attributes to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi with the *brutal regime* in power:

Clearly it is a matter of enormous concern that a Nobel peace prize winner who has become a personification of the worldwide campaign for human rights and democracy should be detained by a brutal regime such as that in Burma. (Commons vol. 408, 2 July 2003)

The increasing use of *regime* as a negatively constructed term to describe authoritarian governments might be considered to represent a hardening of tone on the part of ministers. However, such a judgement would inevitably be subjective and a range of views are possible as to which governments around the world deserve to be described in this way. An alternative interpretation would simply be that *regime* forms part of the idiolect of some ministers more than others. William Hague, who was Foreign Secretary at the time of the 2011 and 2013 peaks, used the word *regime* to describe authoritarian governments more than any of his predecessors had done and it has a frequency of 854 tpm in his contributions. This figure is distantly followed by a frequency of 373 tpm in the contributions of Jack Straw, who held the same post at the time of the 2003 peak.

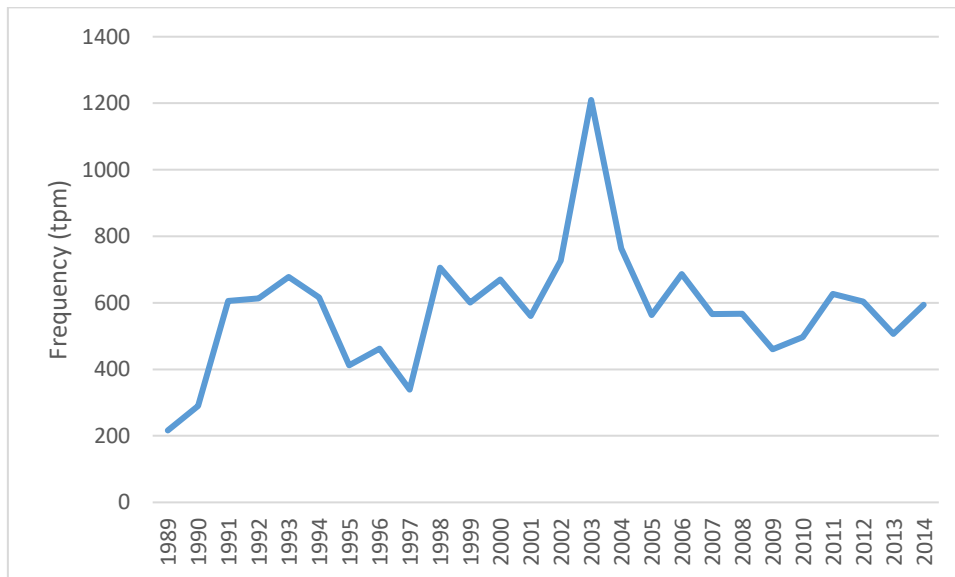
11.5 Resolution

The Word resolution appears in the corpus in a range of contexts, not all of them connected to the work of the United Nations. Ministers refer to European Parliament resolutions, express a wish to see peaceful resolution to problems and discuss conflict resolution more broadly. However, as *resolution* has a high excess frequency in the *nations* subcorpus and vice versa, this section will focus on the use of the word in the context of the United Nations.

Resolutions are “formal expressions of the opinion or will of UN organs” (United Nations 2022) and may be issued by the Security Council, General Assembly or other bodies. *Resolution* has a frequency

of between 400 and 700 tpm in most years covered by the corpus, the main exceptions being a lower frequency in 1989 and 1990 and a sharp peak in frequency in 2003, as Figure 11.8 shows.

Figure 11.8: Frequency of *resolution*



Every UN resolution has a unique reference number and these are widely used by politicians, diplomats and the media as a convenient shorthand by which to refer to a resolution. For a corpus linguist, this also means that bigram analysis can be used to identify resolutions which have a particularly high frequency. In the present corpus, *resolution 1441* is by far the most frequent bigram of the form *resolution* + number with an overall frequency of 18 tpm and peak of 196 tpm in 2003. The year 2003 – in which the United States and its allies including the United Kingdom invaded Iraq – was a time of great controversy regarding the reliance on UN resolutions to authorise foreign military intervention in a sovereign country. UN Security Council Resolution 1441 was passed in November 2002 and offered Iraq "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" that had been set out in several previous resolutions (United Nations 2002). The resolution stated that in the event of non-compliance, Iraq should expect "serious consequences" but did not specify what these would be. In early 2003, the US and UK unsuccessfully attempted to gain the agreement of the UN Security

Council for a further resolution that would have explicitly authorised their planned intervention in Iraq. In this context, two days before the invasion began, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw made a statement in the House of Commons setting out the case for the war on the basis of resolution 1441 and other previous resolutions.

Straw's statement and his answers to subsequent questions contain 56 tokens of *nations* and 19 tokens of *un*. In his opening remarks, Straw acknowledges the failure of attempts to obtain an additional resolution but states "such a resolution has never been needed legally, but we have long had a preference for it politically" (Commons vol. 401, 17 March 2003). This forms the central premise of his statement as he signals that, the next day, the government will ask the Commons to support the UK's participation in the military action. Straw states that this action will have "the objective of ensuring the disarmament of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and thereby the maintenance of the authority of the United Nations", and he sums up by arguing that the alternative approach favoured by others in parliament and elsewhere – of allowing Iraq more time to disarm peacefully under UN supervision – "is defied by all our experience of 12 weary years" and "can only bring comfort to tyrants and emasculate the authority of the United Nations."

The question of the UN's authority is discussed further in questions put to Straw by MPs and in his answers. One MP (Michael Moore, Liberal Democrat) notes that in the expressed view of the UN Secretary-General, military action without the backing of the Security Council would result in the legitimacy of the action being questioned, while another (Jim Dowd, Labour) counters that the credibility of the UN has been undermined by a lack of will on the part of other countries to enforce UN resolutions. Straw explicitly says at one point that "The issue raises a question about United Nations authority, which is at stake", although he is promptly reminded by an opposition MP (Alex Salmond, SNP) that the government did not have a majority in favour of its position on the UN Security Council. It is notable that all of these contributions presuppose that the premise of

resolution 1441 and earlier resolutions was correct, and that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. After the invasion, neither the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission nor the US-led Iraq Survey Group reported finding evidence of such weapons stockpiles. As such, the peak in frequency of *resolution* is driven in part by discussion of an assessed situation which transpired to be false.

During the period studied, UN Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq are the focus of a large number of ministers' contributions that contain the word *resolution*. However, they also discuss other resolutions that do not relate to Iraq, the most frequent being *resolution 1701* which was intended to resolve the 2006 Lebanon war; *resolution 1325*, which relates to the rights of women; and *resolution 1860*, which relates to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More broadly, discussion of resolutions relating to long-running conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia contributes to the sustained frequency of the word.

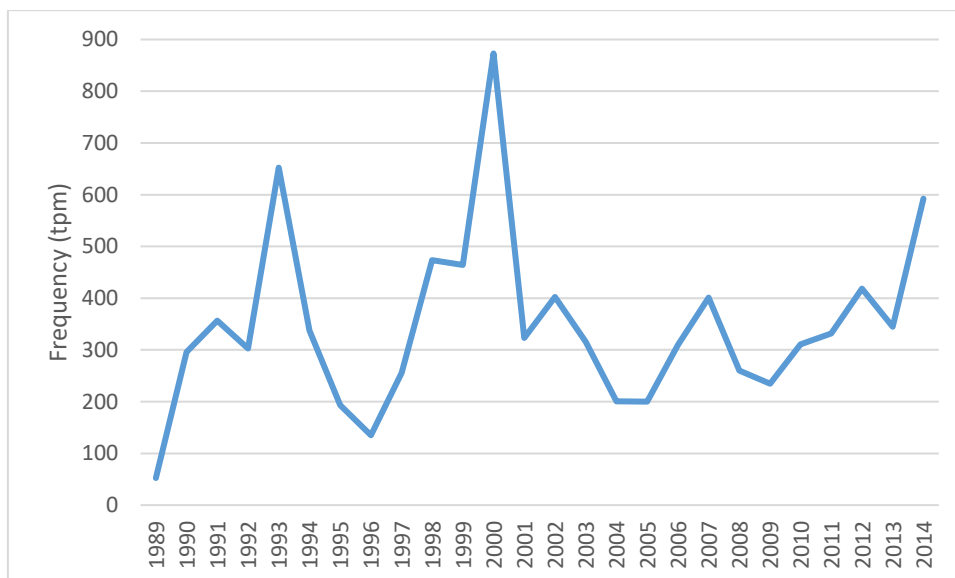
The change in frequency of *resolution* around 2003 is an example of 'burstiness' (Church and Gale 1995): the word's frequency rises sharply to its peak and falls sharply thereafter. However, its return to approximately its prior level of frequency suggests that the controversy surrounding UN Security Council Resolution 1441 did not deter ministers from discussing other resolutions in parliament, nor from proposing or supporting new resolutions at the UN. As such, the 2003 peak is more an indication of the scale of controversy over whether UNSCR 1441 provided a legal basis for the military intervention in Iraq than a sign of broader change in ministers' discourse.

11.6 Sanctions

Sanctions are "punishments a country (or group of countries) puts on another country", intended to bring about "a change in behaviour of the other state" (BBC News 2020). The frequency of *sanctions* in the corpus is much more volatile than that of *resolution* and has distinct peaks in 1993, 2000 and

2014, as Figure 11.9 shows. Each of these peaks is connected with particular situations in the world which gave rise to the application of sanctions. In 1993, Iraq was subject to sanctions following the refusal of Saddam Hussein to cooperate with UN resolutions, while the unfolding war in Bosnia led to such measures being put in place against Yugoslavia. There were still sanctions against both of these countries in 2000 as was also the case against Angola, another country in a state of civil war. At the time of the 2014 peak in frequency, ministers discussed sanctions against a wide range of countries including Zimbabwe under the rule of Robert Mugabe, Russia following its alleged involvement in the shooting down of a Malaysian airliner over Ukraine, and Iran. The case of Iran differs from the others in that ministers were explaining their reasons for supporting “proportionate and limited sanctions relief from the United States and the European Union, in return for significant commitments from Iran regarding its nuclear programme.” (Hugh Robertson, Commons vol. 573, 17 January 2014)

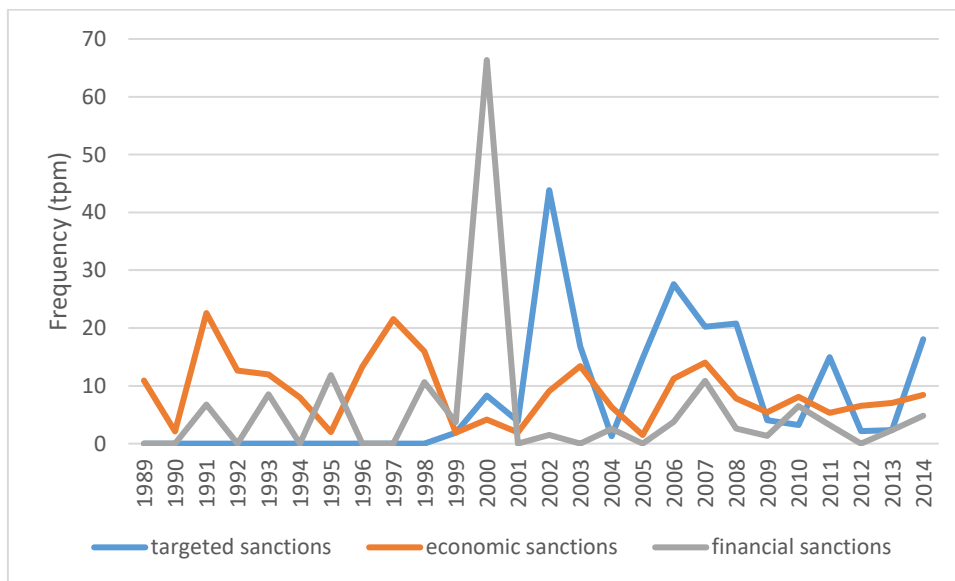
Figure 11.9: Frequency of *sanctions*



The bigrams including *sanctions* that have the highest overall frequency in the corpus include *un sanctions* (27 tpm) and *eu sanctions* (22 tpm). This points to the major role that multilateral institutions have in imposing and managing the coordinating the operation of sanctions. By contrast,

the frequency of *us sanctions* (2 tpm) and *uk sanctions* (1 tpm) is much lower. Of those bigrams in which a preceding adjective describes a type of sanction, the most frequent are *targeted sanctions* (9 tpm), *economic sanctions* (5 tpm) and *financial sanctions* (5 tpm). Figure 11.10 shows the frequency of these three types of sanctions.

Figure 11.10: Frequency of *targeted sanctions*, *economic sanctions* and *financial sanctions*



Each of these bigrams displays a markedly different pattern of frequency change. *Economic sanctions* is relatively stable and ends the period at much the same frequency as it started. *Financial sanctions* has a frequency generally in the range of 0-10 tpm but jumps to 66 tpm in the year 2000, only to return to zero the next year, while *targeted sanctions* is first seen in 1999 and is found in ministers’ discourse in every subsequent year, with a peak frequency of 44 tpm in 2002.

In the case of *financial sanctions*, the primary focus on ministers’ comments in 2000 is the former Yugoslavia. Along with other EU member states, the UK imposed sanctions on Serbia under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic including “an arms embargo, a ban on the sale or supply of equipment which might be used for internal repression or terrorism, a ban on the sale and supply of petroleum and petroleum products, financial sanctions, a ban on flights and a targeted visa ban”

(Keith Vaz, Commons vol. 348, 11 April 2000). These sanctions began to be lifted in October 2000 following the election of Vojislav Kostunica as President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which explains the sharp fall in frequency of *financial sanctions* thereafter.

The 'targeted visa ban' mentioned by Vaz is an example of *targeted sanctions*, in this case limiting the freedom of travel of named individuals in the Serbian leadership. The rising frequency of *targeted sanctions* perhaps reflects an acknowledgment that sanctions may otherwise have unintended and detrimental consequences for the citizens of a country. In the following contribution from in 2002, Peter Hain sets out the form that such sanctions against Zimbabwe will take:

On 18 February the General Affairs Council (GAC) of the European Union decided to implement targeted sanctions against the Government of Zimbabwe. The GAC expressed serious concern at continuing political violence, serious violations of human rights and restrictions on the media in Zimbabwe which call into question the prospects for a free and fair presidential election on 9-10 March 2002. The GAC noted that the Government of Zimbabwe had objected to having nationals of six EU member states accredited as observers for the forthcoming elections and refused to accredit the EU Chief Observer, Ambassador Pierre Schori. The measures adopted are carefully targeted. They comprise: (i) a travel ban to apply to Robert Mugabe and to 19 members of his inner circle; (ii) an asset freeze to apply to the same individuals; (iii) an embargo on the sale or supply of arms to Zimbabwe; (iv) an embargo on the provisions of technical assistance and training relating to arms; (v) an embargo on the sale or supply to Zimbabwe of equipment which might be used for internal repression. (Commons vol. 380, 27 February 2002)

The rise in the frequency of *targeted sanctions* raises the interesting question of whether the sanctions applied by the UK government became more targeted the period. Corpus linguistic analysis cannot directly answer that question, though it is clear from the data and from reading ministers'

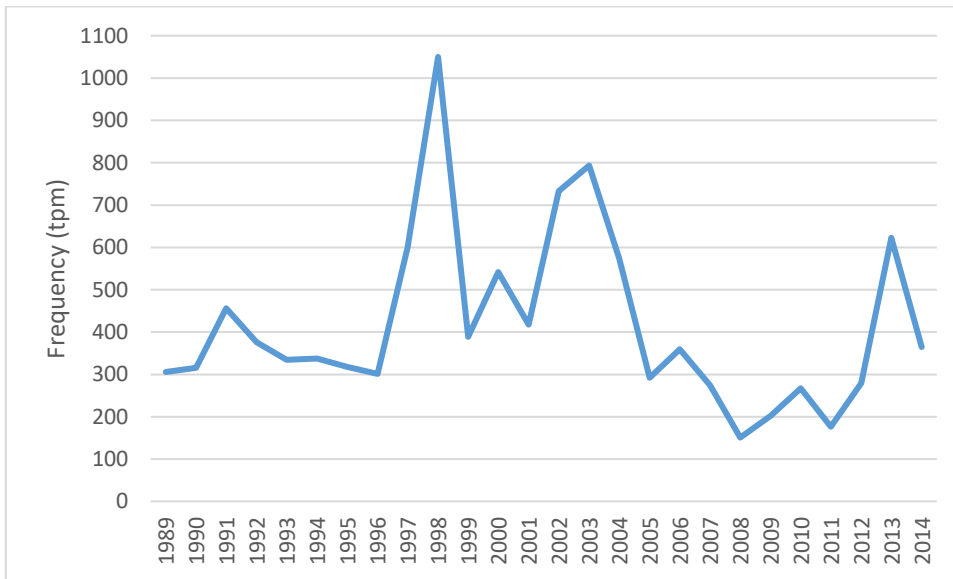
contributions that their discourse puts greater emphasis on the steps taken to target sanctions against the individuals whose behaviour they wish to change.

The Economist published an article in April 2021 (The Economist 2021) claiming that the use of sanctions as a diplomatic lever has increased significantly in recent years. Although it does not directly quantify the increase that it claims to have observed, it identifies new mechanisms through which particularly the US has applied sanctions to other countries, such as by barring companies that trade with Iran from operating in the US. If it is the case that the use of sanctions has increased overall, this may also go some way to explaining the rising trend in the use of *sanctions* in ministers' discourse.

11.7 Weapons

The Word *weapons* begins and ends the period with a frequency of around 300 tpm, but varies widely during the intervening years, as Figure 11.11 shows. The peaks in frequency in 1991, 1998, 2003 and 2013 all correspond to world events in which weapons were a significant issue. Iraq is a major focus on ministers' contributions in 1991 as they discuss efforts to ensure Iraq's compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (United Nations 1968) and international conventions relating to biological and chemical weapons; and this forms part of a wider discourse about preventing the proliferation of such weapons around the world. Iraq and weapons proliferation remain major topics of ministers' discourse in 1998, this time accompanied by remarks about Sandline, a controversial British company alleged to have been importing weapons into Sierra Leone in contravention of a UN embargo. In 2003, the existence or otherwise of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq dominate, while in 2014 the Syrian civil war and the prospect of Iran and North Korea developing nuclear weapons are major topics.

Figure 11.11: Frequency of *weapons*



One might view the changing frequency of *weapons* as simply reflecting the nature and intensity of conflicts around the world and the degree of concern over particular states obtaining or possessing the most lethal weapons. However, analysis of bigrams and the context in which they are used offers deeper insights into ministers' lexical choices. The most frequent bigram including *weapons* in the corpus as a whole is *nuclear weapons*, which has an overall frequency of 109 tpm. This adjective + noun string is a simple description of the type of explosive charge fitted to a particular weapon and ministers use it to describe systems possessed both by the UK and its allies, and by states viewed as a threat, as the following contributions illustrate:

It is the view of the whole Alliance [i.e. NATO] that we need to maintain short-range nuclear weapons, among others, in a capable and up-to-date condition. (Geoffrey Howe, Commons vol. 152, 10 May 1989)

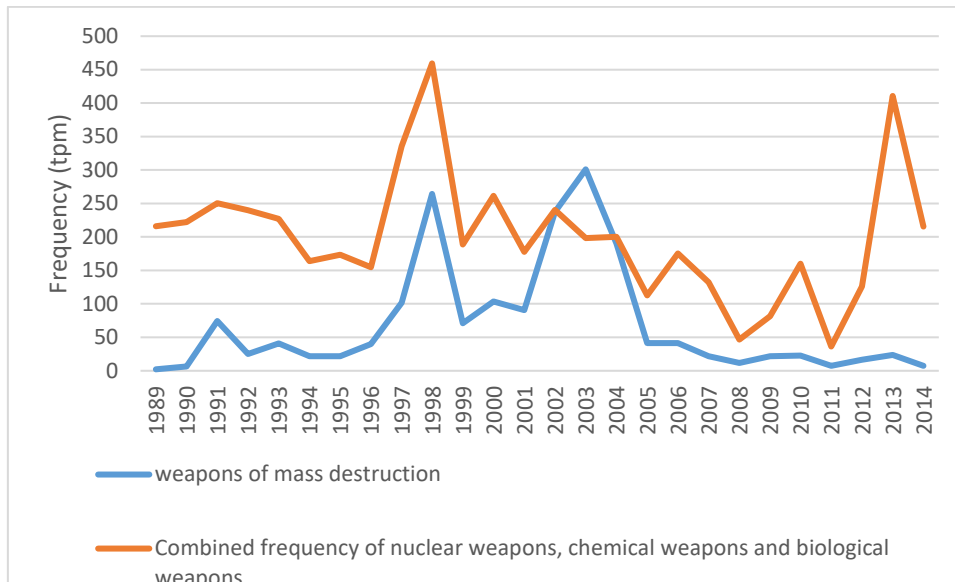
and

We have for some time had serious concerns about the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programmes of a number of countries. We are particularly concerned by recent statements

and actions by North Korea whom we believe to have ambitions to manufacture nuclear weapons. (Mike O'Brien, Commons vol. 402, 2 April 2002)

The second most frequent bigram including *weapons* is *weapons of*, which has an overall frequency of 74 tpm and forms part of the longer string *weapons of mass destruction* (71 tpm). This umbrella term – which in addition to nuclear weapons includes chemical, biological and radiological weapons – is similarly descriptive, but is used predominantly in relation to the weapons possessed or sought by adversaries, most notably Iraq. It is occasionally also used to describe an area in which no state would possess such weapons, such as in Egyptian proposals for a “Middle East Zone Free from Weapons of Mass Destruction” (the Earl of Caithness, Lords vol. 522, 16 October 1990). Most famously, however, *weapons of mass destruction* was the term used by the US and UK governments to describe the weapons stocks that they argued justified their 2003 intervention in Iraq. As it became clear that the expected weapons could not be found, the frequency of weapons of mass destruction in ministers’ discourse fell rapidly. Figure 11.12 contrasts the frequency of *weapons of mass destruction* with the combined frequency of *nuclear weapons*, *chemical weapons* and *biological weapons* and shows how the dominance of the umbrella term was short-lived.

Figure 11.12: Frequency of *weapons of mass destruction* and combined frequency of *nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and biological weapons*



11.8 Conclusions

The place of the UN in the UK government’s foreign policy discourse is more nuanced than the decline in frequency of *united nations* suggests. Rather than signalling a decline in discussion of the work of the UN, this primarily reflects a growing use – on the part of ministers and/or by Hansard transcribers – of the organisation’s initials in place of its full name. Taken together, the frequency of *united nations* and *un* is higher during the last five full years of the period than the first five, whether expressed as an absolute value or as tokens per million words. The rise in frequency of the words *resolution* and *sanctions*, which are two significant ways in which the UN expresses its will in the world, provides further evidence of the continued significance of the UN in the UK’s foreign policy discourse. However, the rise in frequency of words associated with the UN is not as pronounced as, for example, those associated with human rights, despite the fact that protecting human rights is one of the UN’s goals.

Rather than indicating a marked rise or fall in the place of the UN in the UK government's foreign policy discourse, analysis of the corpus suggests that peaks in references to the UN are cyclical and strongly event-driven. When a crisis occurs in the world and international agreement is needed on how to respond, the frequency of words such as *united*, *nations*, *un* and *resolution* rises. Where there is particular controversy over how to respond, a sharp peak in frequency may be seen, as is the case in the data from 2003. The event-driven nature of the discourse is also seen in the changing frequency of *weapons*, which is closely tied to the level of concern ministers felt regarding the acquisition and/or use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons by other states.

The rise of *sanctions* provides an insight into the importance that ministers attached to this lever of foreign policy during the period studied and the increase in frequency of *targeted sanctions* suggests an evolution in thinking about the form that such measures should take. The role of the UN in agreeing and enforcing sanctions explains the positive excess frequency of the word in the subcorpora of contributions containing the other words discussed in this chapter. *Regime* on the other hand is perhaps the outlier of the group as its main use in ministers' discourse – to describe an authoritarian regime – is not associated with any structure or process of the UN. However, where ministers discuss another government using this term, they are typically expressing concerns or advocating a course of action that require the involvement of the UN. Its high excess frequency in the contributions of William Hague also demonstrates how the idiolect of one individual may contribute to a change observed in the dataset as a whole.

12. ANALYSIS: SECURITY

12.1 Introduction

The word *security* has a wide range of meanings. In addition to the sense of ‘national security’ which forms the main focus of its chapter, it is also used in relation to another of the biggest areas of government spending in the UK - social security. As such any conceptualisation of the meaning of *security* in the context of government business must be broad. According to the Home Office, the first duty of the UK government is “to keep citizens safe and the country secure” (HM Government 2022). A broad interpretation of this statement could span several areas of government activity including defending the country from threats from abroad, maintaining law and order and protecting the population from poverty.

This chapter analyses six words: *intelligence*, *military*, *police*, *security*, *terrorism* and *threat*. The data included in Tables 12.1 and 12.2 shows the tendency of these words co-occur in the same contributions of Foreign Office ministers, with the frequency of co-occurrence being particularly high between *intelligence*, *security*, *terrorism* and *threat*. Readers may recognise the juxtaposition of these words in the discourse of politicians and the media, for example commenting on an increase in the assessed level of threat from terrorism; the response of the security services; or on whether there was any intelligence that could have prevented an attack.

Of the remaining two words, *military* could have been included in the chapter regarding the United Nations, alongside *weapons*. However, it also has a thematic connection to the other words selected for analysis in the present chapter because the armed forces are among the bodies with responsibility for the UK’s security. The role of the police in countering terrorism gives that word a clear thematic connection with this chapter. The rise in frequency of these words in the contributions of Foreign Office ministers may nonetheless be unexpected given that the military are the

responsibility of the Defence Secretary and the police the responsibility of the Home Secretary. The use of corpus linguistic techniques provides a way to explore the factors driving these changes.

Although all of the words analysed in this chapter have a higher frequency at the end of the period than at the beginning, four of them reach their peak during the Labour years, as Figure 12.1 shows.

The reasons for these peaks in frequency in the early to mid-2000s will be discussed in the relevant sections of this chapter. Full year-by-year frequency data for these and other words and phrases discussed can be found in Table 12.3.

Figure 12.1: Frequency of *intelligence*, *military*, *police*, *security*, *terrorism* and *threat*

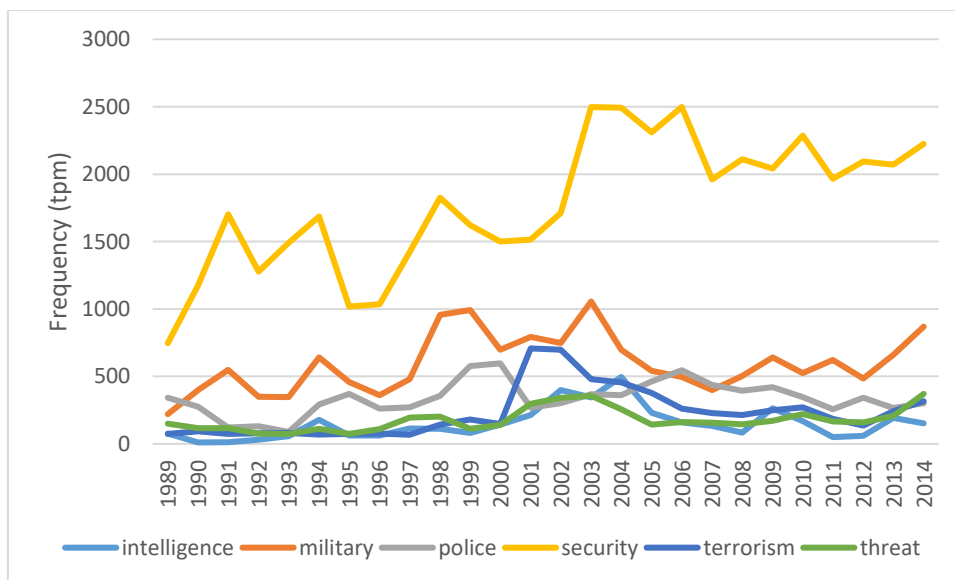


Table 12.1: Excess frequency data for ch. 12 (Type A)

Showing the ten subcorpora in which the words specified in row 1 have the highest excess frequency

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Intelligence		Military		Police		Security		Terrorism		Threat	
	1 st	intelligence	4486	military	3340	police	3741	security	3867	terrorism	3360	threat
2 nd	terrorism	237	intelligence	1085	sexual	670	intelligence	2862	intelligence	1006	intelligence	919
3 rd	threat	129	sexual	985	intelligence	566	resolution	2242	threat	505	terrorism	870
4 th	sexual	28	weapons	945	terrorism	333	sanctions	2236	religious	159	weapons	754
5 th	police	-69	sanctions	825	religious	244	weapons	2030	weapons	144	sanctions	190
6 th	religious	-83	regime	717	women	239	sexual	1866	sexual	78	sexual	146
7 th	relief	-84	terrorism	542	violence	205	terrorism	1677	police	26	regime	134
8 th	weapons	-95	threat	484	society	84	violence	1401	sanctions	16	environmental	132
9 th	environmental	-110	police	481	refugees	79	military	1366	relief	-21	religious	130
10 th	refugees	-144	refugees	444	threat	77	regime	1303	regime	-33	refugees	130

Table 12.2: Excess frequency data for ch. 12 (Type B)

Showing the ten words that have the highest excess frequency in the subcorpus of contributions containing the Word specified in row 1

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Intelligence		Military		Police		Security		Terrorism		Threat	
	1 st	intelligence	4486	military	3340	police	3741	security	3867	terrorism	3360	threat
2 nd	security	2862	government	1676	government	1914	government	1384	government	2038	government	1228
3 rd	government	2676	security	1366	uk	1607	uk	597	security	1677	security	1218
4 th	united	1562	united	986	security	1280	united	436	uk	1410	uk	853
5 th	uk	1521	uk	903	united	815	resolution	-55	united	1121	united	848
6 th	military	1085	nations	529	rights	741	nations	-122	threat	870	terrorism	505
7 th	terrorism	1006	rights	403	assistance	735	eu	-341	human	816	nations	489
8 th	threat	919	eu	397	development	647	rights	-440	rights	762	military	484
9 th	nations	693	resolution	373	human	637	development	-461	eu	684	development	370
10 th	weapons	667	human	319	commonwealth	559	military	-467	development	644	weapons	360

Table 12.3: Year-by-year frequency data for words and longer strings discussed in ch. 12

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																												Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93	2010-14	
energy security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	8	0	53	26	29	68	44	10	11	8	29	0	19	19
european security	7	25	16	5	2	30	24	31	83	32	64	112	114	33	27	18	27	23	61	75	14	18	3	0	2	8	11	6	-5
intelligence	76	11	11	30	58	178	63	62	114	112	80	143	215	399	344	496	231	160	132	84	263	170	49	61	192	153	39	120	81
intelligence sharing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	6	3	1	1	0	0	23	13	0	2	4	10	0	5	5
international security	0	0	0	3	10	22	6	20	6	16	19	4	14	36	34	53	12	29	25	22	52	63	37	46	44	30	3	43	40
international security assistance force	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	20	13	30	6	24	11	9	33	34	19	25	9	17	0	20	20
international terrorism	13	15	14	15	7	4	4	2	3	2	4	6	83	60	31	32	22	19	17	13	24	18	10	3	9	2	12	8	-4
israeli military	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	4	9	6	9	4	13	2	3	19	10	9	48	26	24	1	24	23
military	221	400	549	348	347	641	459	361	480	956	993	699	793	747	1055	699	541	497	398	503	640	524	622	486	660	869	371	634	263
military action	4	49	47	18	29	26	16	7	15	140	183	23	157	203	375	162	90	41	45	14	34	13	51	34	29	47	30	36	7
military intervention	0	4	5	3	17	14	4	15	6	18	13	10	4	2	4	8	4	0	3	3	9	2	10	36	33	32	6	24	17
military observers	7	0	9	20	14	40	12	4	3	18	7	19	2	5	0	4	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	10	1	-9
military operations	0	6	11	3	0	8	2	2	9	4	9	4	25	15	27	15	6	14	12	8	39	40	27	28	15	23	4	26	22
national security	9	4	11	15	3	48	20	20	22	30	24	21	31	38	46	55	52	30	50	44	100	172	135	155	129	143	8	145	137
national security council	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	4	4	2	6	4	5	19	8	17	3	7	34	30	25	31	35	0	31	30
nations security	20	87	167	172	222	196	57	38	80	112	75	93	104	133	150	127	151	100	65	26	31	52	99	108	62	53	137	77	-59
police	343	275	122	131	89	293	371	261	271	356	578	597	269	302	369	360	464	546	437	394	421	346	256	342	267	301	189	300	111
security	747	1174	1703	1277	1490	1686	1019	1036	1422	1827	1622	1501	1514	1711	2498	2493	2310	2498	1961	2111	2042	2285	1966	2093	2070	2225	1286	2115	828
security council	162	419	1039	797	901	876	383	332	443	922	640	552	493	711	1102	702	756	1031	705	672	605	532	587	581	559	487	669	552	-117
security forces	7	32	38	23	32	36	8	15	40	74	47	44	43	39	38	91	126	117	50	86	84	115	163	160	120	128	27	139	113
security situation	7	13	20	25	19	26	24	38	6	16	79	54	27	65	81	109	89	143	79	99	76	89	58	61	59	114	17	75	58
social security	50	17	18	5	39	40	26	46	25	27	15	66	56	3	13	11	9	3	22	6	3	2	5	2	0	5	27	3	-24
terrorism	74	93	75	78	80	70	73	77	68	142	181	147	708	698	479	457	378	261	227	214	250	270	186	136	244	315	80	225	145
threat	151	116	117	76	73	112	75	111	194	202	112	141	298	343	356	256	142	163	157	144	171	220	168	159	206	371	106	222	116
un security	2	51	111	81	94	102	108	126	108	140	142	164	149	198	259	170	196	479	370	470	421	329	321	263	321	284	68	302	234

12.2 Political and historical context

The period covered by this thesis was a time of great change in the UK's security landscape. The collapse of communism brought to an end a period in which two superpowers, each with their allies, dominated the world's security. As threats from Russia and other states receded, non-state actors became an increasing cause for concern, particularly in the form of international terrorist groups. The UK's alliance with the US and more widely with NATO remained the primary grouping through which it sought to assure its security, but European cooperation on security matters also grew, with EU member states agreeing common policies relating to security.

Domestically, the period was a time of increased openness regarding the work of the intelligence agencies. New legislation (Intelligence Services Act 1994) avowed the existence of the Secret Intelligence Service (known informally as 'MI6') and Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). The Foreign Secretary had and continues to have responsibility for both of these agencies and the Foreign Office therefore sponsored the passage through parliament of the Act⁴². Further legislative change (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000) provided a new basis for the agencies to request authorisation from the Secretary of State for their activities. There were a number of controversies relating to the intelligence services during the period studied including the unauthorised disclosure of secrets by staff and allegations of complicity in the mistreatment of individuals detained by the US in conflict situations (BBC News 2018). The period also saw intelligence reporting being put to a new and highly controversial use in a 'dossier' made public by the Labour government in 2002 as part of its justification for participating in the invasion of Iraq (BBC News 2002).

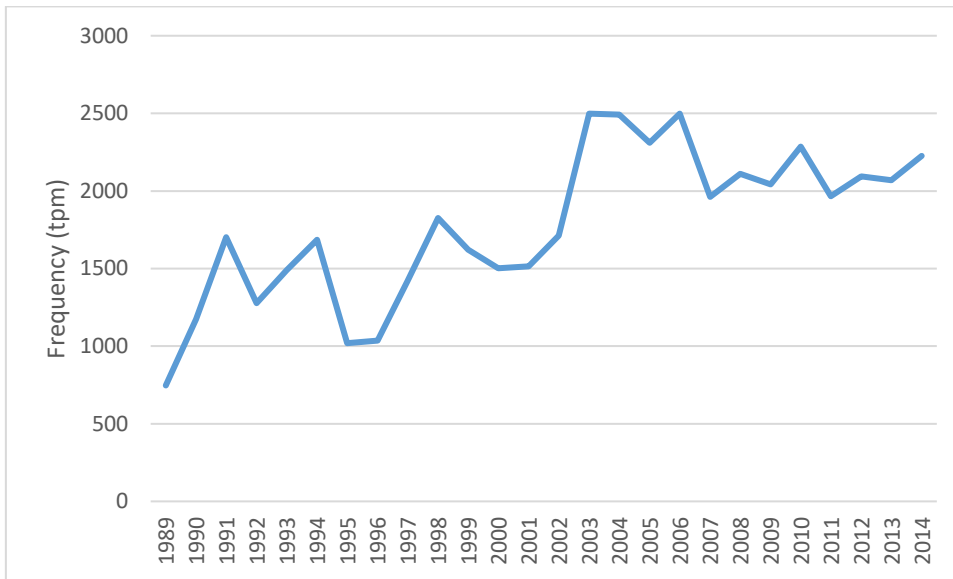
⁴² The existence of the Security Service (MI5), under the ministerial responsibility of the Home Secretary, had already been avowed through the Security Service Act 1989.

The final years of the period studied saw a major overhaul of how the UK government managed matters of national security. On taking office in 2010, the coalition government created a 'National Security Council'. Chaired by the Prime Minister and bringing together ministers and senior officials responsible for foreign policy, defence and counter-terrorism (including the heads of the intelligence agencies), this body was created to deliver a coordinated response across government to foreign policy challenges (Cameron 2019: loc 2894).

12.3 Security

The Word *security* displays a rising trend in frequency over the period studied, its frequency being 828 tpm higher in the last five full years of the period than in the first five. However, its frequency is higher still in the early to mid 2000s, when it approaches 2,500 tpm. Ministers' use of *security* is closely connected with world events: the end of the Cold War and the implications of that for NATO as a security alliance; matters relating to Iraq from the early 1990s to the mid 2000s; the impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US in 2001; and the events of the Arab Spring from 2010 onwards. As such the period sees a marked shift in ministers' perception of the source of threats to security. The data represented in Figure 12.2 gives an indication of how seriously ministers viewed the new threats: over the period studied the frequency of *security* is higher every year post-2001 than it was in any year pre-2001.

Figure 12.2: Frequency of *security*



The United Nations – and in particular the work of the Security Council – is a significant part of ministers’ discourse regarding security. As the UN has already been the focus of a separate chapter of this thesis, it will not be discussed further here other than to note that *security council*, *un security* and *nations security* are each among the most frequent bigrams of *security* in the corpus as a whole. Excluding bigrams relating to the UN and those that contain a grammatical word, pairs with the largest change in frequency include *national security* (+137 tpm), *security forces* (+113 tpm), *security situation* (+58 tpm) and *international security* (+40 tpm). This section will also discuss *energy security* (+19 tpm), which is first seen in 2002; *european security*, which displays a marked peak in frequency during the period of office of the Labour government; and *social security*, which falls in frequency (-28 tpm) over the period as a whole.

The concept of *national security* is not defined in law, but Douglas Hogg argues the expression “has been in general use for many years and is well recognised and understood” (Commons vol. 239, 16 March 1994). Ministers’ discourse over the period provides indications of how they conceive *national security*. At its most basic level, the purpose of national security work is to “keep Britain safe” (David

Miliband, Commons vol. 505, 10 Feb 2010). This includes the work of the intelligence agencies, while the UK's nuclear weapons are described as a guarantor of national security, as the following contribution illustrates:

Our strategic deterrent provides the ultimate guarantee of our national security and contributes to NATO's strategy of war prevention. (David Davis, Commons vol. 251, 15 Dec 1994)

During the early years of the period, a key strand of ministers' national security discourse relates to providing a degree of openness regarding the work of the intelligence agencies and this will be explored in discussion of the Word *intelligence*. A further rise in the frequency of *national security* occurs from 2001 onwards, with ministers arguing that events far overseas have a bearing on the UK's national security. Ministers use this argument in support of the UK's military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also to highlight dangers that they perceive elsewhere. In the following contribution relating to Iran, Ivan Lewis makes the same connection regarding the UK's national security:

Iran's development of nuclear weapons is a threat to stability in the middle east, but it would also trigger an arms race the likes of which we have never seen before among Iran's neighbours. In a year in which the world is seeking to make progress on non-proliferation in the review of the non-proliferation treaty, this is about the threat that Iran would pose to our national security and that of countries in the region, but it is also about the arms race that it would inevitably trigger. (Commons vol. 506, 2 Mar 2010)

The frequency of *national security* reached a new peak of 172 tpm in 2010, when the newly-elected coalition government articulated as a priority of the Foreign Office to "Safeguard Britain's national security by countering terrorism and weapons proliferation, and working to reduce conflict" (Alistair

Burt, Commons vol. 520, 7 Dec 2010). After the new government established a National Security Council and appointed a National Security Adviser, the frequency of *national security* is greater than 120 tpm for each remaining year in the period. This is another case in which lexical change in ministers' discourse is related to organisational change in government. The following contribution by William Hague describes the nature and purpose of the National Security Council:

The Government have established the National Security Council to bring together strategic decisions about foreign policy, security and defence policy and development, and we have appointed a National Security Adviser. Unlike the National Security Committee of the previous Government, which seemed to have little discernible impact, our National Security Council is at the centre of decision making in Government on these issues. It has already met three times in the two weeks since we took office, including this morning at the Ministry of Defence, and it will be a major means of involving domestic Departments-many of which have an increasingly international aspect to their work-in the pursuit of national foreign and security policy objectives, so that foreign policy will run through the veins of the domestic Departments of Government as well as those of the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence. (Commons vol. 510, 26 May 2010)

By the end of the period studied, discussion of national security has a substantially larger presence in ministers' discourse than was the case at the beginning. When reading ministers' contributions, it is notable that the earlier innovations – including greater openness regarding the intelligence agencies and the emphasis that events across the world affect security in the UK – remain part of ministers' discourse to the end of the period. As such, the increase in frequency of *national security* may be seen as a snowball effect: as time passes, new subject matter is added to the discourse while the existing subject matter is retained.

The bigram *security forces* (+113 tpm) is used mainly to describe armed personnel responsible for the internal security of a country and has successively higher peaks of frequency in 1998, 2006 and 2011. Throughout the period, ministers' construction of *security forces* is mainly negative and there are many contributions condemning excessive use of force by such units against local populations and/or calling for restraint. The expression is particularly used in discussion of states that the UK government viewed as pariahs at the time. In 1998, the conduct of Serbian security forces in Kosovo is a particular focus of ministers' comments and the same is true of Iraqi security forces in 2006. The behaviour of such forces is seen as a violation of human rights and the following contribution draws on the moral authority of the United Nations to make this point:

If any hon. Member doubts the brutality of Saddam's regime, I invite them to study the report of Max van der Stoep, the UN special rapporteur on Iraq, who only last November described the human rights situation there as "terrible", and concluded: "the system of military dictatorship effectively requires that human rights violations occur in order to retain the positions and privileges of those in power." His report describes the use of murder by the internal security forces as routine. (Robin Cook, Commons vol. 306, 17 February 1998)

However, a later example shows how *security forces* may be positively constructed. After peaceful voting in the 2006 election to the Palestinian Legislative Assembly, Kim Howells acknowledged the "positive role of the Palestinian Authority security forces in helping maintain order" (Kim Howells, Commons vol. 442, 6 February 2006). This wording deftly avoids referring to those forces as an army – something which no UK government minister could do, given the UK's non-recognition of a Palestinian state.

At the time of the 2011 peak in frequency of *security forces*, ministers' contributions have a wide geographic focus including Afghanistan, Chechnya and Sri Lanka, but also discuss many of the countries affected by the Arab Spring. Here again, the bigram is mainly negatively constructed, with

ministers calling on regimes to cease acts of brutality against protesters and allow democratic change. As such the rise in frequency of *security forces* appears to stem from an increased incidence of internal conflict in countries around the world, rather than in any change in ministers' construction of the term.

The bigram *security situation* (+58 tpm) has range of uses in ministers' contributions, mostly relating to areas of the world in which they consider security to be in jeopardy at a given point in time.

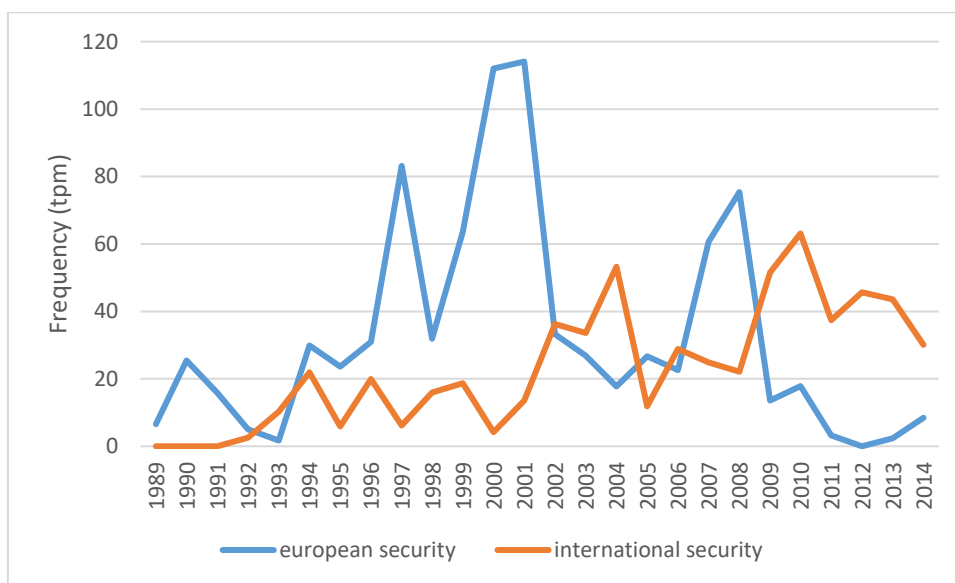
Ministers' stated concerns over security in a country arise from a range of sources including internal and border conflicts, violence and human rights abuses by state and non-state groups or a threat from terrorism. Contributions which include this bigram also cover the consequences of such situations including difficulties in delivering humanitarian aid, lawlessness or a change in the travel advice issued by the Foreign Office. They also discuss ceasefires, peace agreements and the capacity or otherwise of local forces to maintain security in a country. The following contribution covers several aspects of the security situation in South Sudan in 2014:

I wish to update the House on the situation in South Sudan and UK efforts to help resolve the conflict. We remain deeply concerned about the security situation and growing humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. The agreement reached by the parties on 9 May seeks to end months of fighting, in which atrocities have been committed by both sides. Although the fighting on the ground has diminished, the ceasefire remains fragile. (Mark Simmonds, Commons vol. 583, 11 June 2014)

In a smaller number of contributions, ministers construct security in a global context, with James Duddridge stating that "the United Kingdom will retain a credible, continuous and effective minimum nuclear deterrent for as long as the global security situation makes it necessary" (Commons vol. 586, 13 October 2014).

Frequency data for *European security* and *international security* suggests that a shift may have taken place in ministers' conceptualisation of how security is achieved. *European security* reaches its highest frequency during the years of the Labour government, peaking at 114 tpm in 2001. *International security* on the other hand peaks as coalition government took office, reaching 63 tpm in 2010. Figure 12.3 shows the frequency of these two bigrams.

Figure 12.3: Frequency of *European security* and *international security*

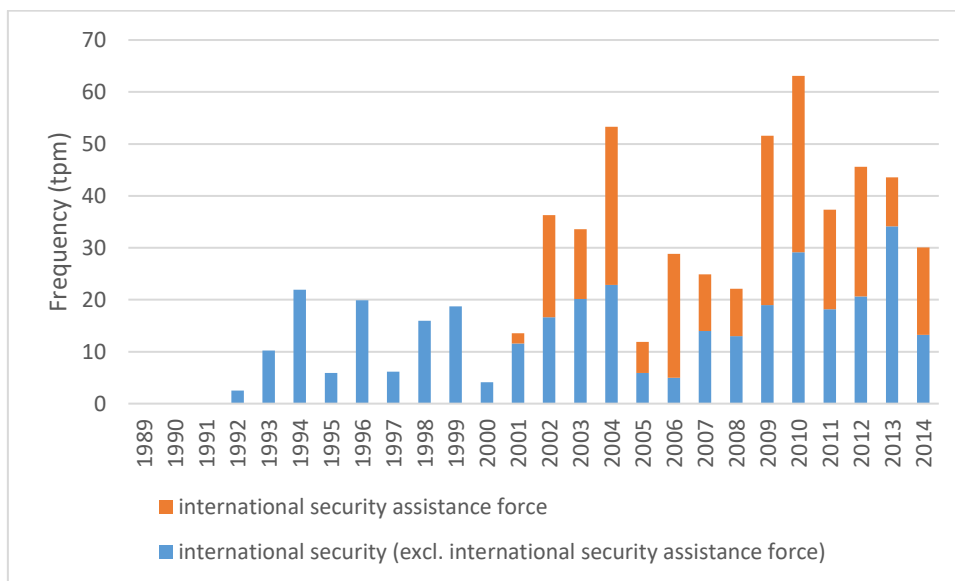


Whilst this data might suggest a shift from relying on European partnerships to safeguard the UK's security, towards a more international approach, deeper analysis reveals that to be only partly true. It is certainly the case that the European aspects of security were a greater focus of ministers' discourse during the Labour years than was the case before or after. The Labour years were the period in which the EU enacted its European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as envisaged in the Maastricht Treaty (Council of the European Communities and Commission of the European Communities 1992), including the EU giving itself the capability "where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises" (Keith Vaz, Commons vol. 360, 9 January 2001). This was a controversial development, particularly for the

eurospectic wing of the Conservative party. Huckle (2017) claims that the party’s response once in government was one of “disengagement”, although the UK continued to be part of ESDP until the UK’s departure from the EU. The low frequency of *European security* from 2010 onwards appears to support Huckle’s observation.

The rise of *international security*, on the other hand, is driven not so much by a change of policy or ideology as by an increase in references to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, a force to which the UK contributed. Once references to ISAF are removed, *international security* has a relatively low frequency throughout the period studied, as Figure 12.4 shows.

Figure 12.4: Frequency of *international security* (excl. tokens of *international security assistance force*) and international security assistance force



Outside the context of ISAF, the use of the expression *international security* evolves during the period studied, as the concordance lines in Table 12.4 illustrate. During the period of office of the Conservative government, international security is discussed primarily in connection with the proliferation of nuclear weapons and efforts to prevent this (as seen in the concordance line from

1993). A second context of discussion is the Balkans conflict, which ministers believed could have consequences for international security (1994 concordance line). After the election of the Labour government, and particularly after 9/11, international security begins to be conceptualised more broadly to include threats from non-state groups. Ministers increasingly discuss connections between international security, terrorism and poverty (2002). They also continue to discuss existing concerns including nuclear proliferation (2007). Under the coalition government, the creation of a post of Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Security (January 2013) contributes to the rise in frequency on *international security*. Cyber security is also discussed as a new dimension of international security (July 2013).

Table 12.4: Selected concordance lines for *international security*

Attribution	Contribution		
Douglas Hogg, Commons vol. 222, 2 April 1993	the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is crucial for the maintenance of	international security	. The attention of the international community is, accordingly, being increasing
Douglas Hogg, Commons vol. 238, 2 March 1994	Air strikes cannot enhance	international security	by themselves. However, in certain circumstances, as in the case of the UN/NATO
Denis MacShane, Commons vol. 386, 23 May 2002	It is right that the UN not only tries to handle the problems of	international security	, but reflects on the causes of terrorism and poverty. The UN has to debate the
Meg Munn, Commons vol. 463, 24 July 2007	on proposals to make withdrawal from the NPT more difficult. It is crucial for	international security	that states cannot just walk away and develop nuclear weapons. We are also work
Hugo Swire, Commons vol. 557, 2013	The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for	international security	Strategy, my hon. Friend the Member for South West Wiltshire (Dr Murrison)
Alistair Burt, Commons vol. 566, 16 July 2013	discuss practical ways in which we can improve partnerships to tackle issues of	international security	and cyber crime, while protecting and promoting the economic and social benefit

Two further bigrams including *security* merit a brief discussion. *Energy security* is first seen in 2002 and reaches a peak of 68 tpm in 2009, when a dispute between Russia and Ukraine caused concerns about gas supplies to mainland Europe. The UK government called for the EU's response to focus on "increasing diversification of energy supplies for the EU and interconnection within the EU, greater

transparency of gas flows and improving our ability to respond to supply disruptions” (Caroline Flint, Commons vol. 486, 22 Jan 2009). This represents a new strand of foreign policy discourse and the underlying issue has become more acute since the end of the period studied.

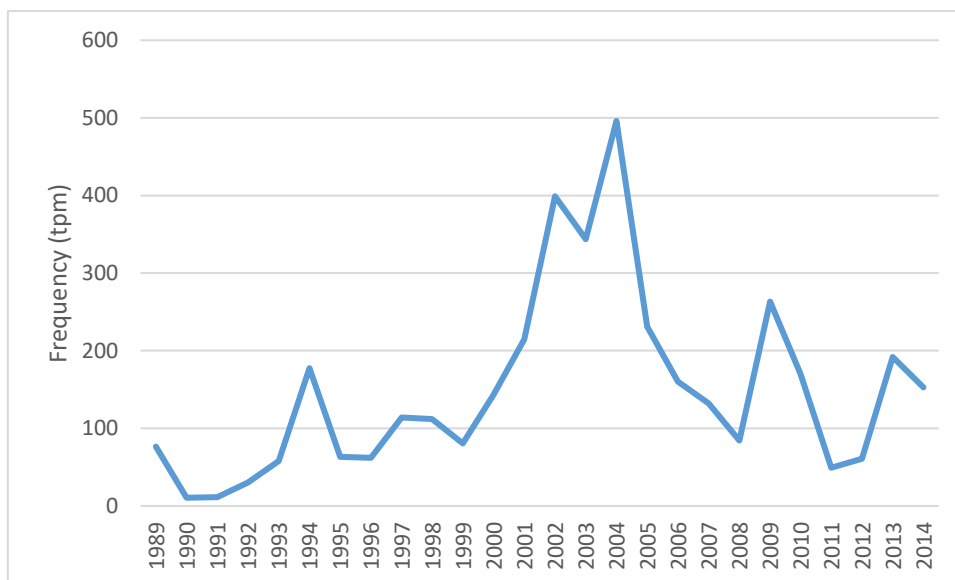
Social security (-24 tpm), unlike the other bigrams including *security* discussed above, fell in frequency during the period studied. It features in foreign policy discourse because there was a European dimension to the UK’s social security policy, with both the Conservative and Labour governments explicitly stating that they wished the UK to retain its sovereignty in this area of policy. As Robin Cook puts it in the context of a debate about EU enlargement and extending Qualified Majority Voting, “there are matters that we consider to be off limits for majority voting. They include border controls, defence, taxation, social security, own resources matters, and treaty amendments” (Commons vol. 342, 18 January 2000). By the end of the Labour years, this position had been secured in the Treaty of Lisbon (European Union 2007) and the frequency of *social security* fell to zero in 2013, which illustrates how a topic of negotiation with international partners may manifest itself in a temporary rise in frequency of a particular word or phrase.

12.4 Intelligence

The Word *intelligence* rises by 81 tpm when comparing the first five and last five full years of the period, but its peak in frequency occurs in 2004, as Figure 12.5 shows. Throughout the period the dominant use of the word is in the sense of ‘espionage’, not ‘intellect’. Uniquely among the words selected for analysis in this thesis, this means that one factor contributing to the frequency of the word is ministers not talking about intelligence. The doctrine of ‘Neither confirm nor deny’ is exemplified in a contribution by Jack Straw that “it is long-standing Government policy not to comment on operational intelligence matters” (Commons vol. 372, 15 October 2001), and similar statements can be found from ministers throughout the period studied. However, ministers discuss

other aspects of the work of the UK’s intelligence agencies. The boundaries of this strand of discourse are set out in a contribution by Douglas Hurd, who says that “We believe that the public should have access to information on security and intelligence matters when that does not pose a threat to national security or the operation of the agencies” (Commons vol. 238, 22 Feb 1994). The cautious increase in openness signalled by Hurd is a significant factor in the rise in frequency of *intelligence*.

Figure 12.5: Frequency of *intelligence*



The frequency of *intelligence* is higher in 1989 (76 tpm) than in any other year at the start of the period and this is largely explained by the passage through parliament of the Official Secrets Act 1989, as a result of which it was no longer to disclose information relating to intelligence matters unless it was “damaging” (Official Secrets Act 1989: s.1). The passage of legislation also explains the peak in frequency of *intelligence* seen five years later, when the Intelligence Services Act 1994 gained the approval of parliament. The Intelligence Services Act also resulted in the establishment of the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC), a parliamentary committee created to oversee all three agencies. This committee is named in ministers’ discourse almost every year from 1997 onwards and

has a frequency of 11 tpm in the corpus as a whole. The creation of the ISC illustrates a double effect of the passage of legislation on word frequencies: where a Word appears in the title of a piece of legislation or has a particular meaning within it, there is first a rise in the word's frequency while the legislation is debated. Once the law is enacted, ministers continue to use the word when referencing the legislation by its title or discussing how the powers contained in the legislation are used.

After taking office in 1997, the Labour government introduced parliamentary debates on the work of the intelligence services and ministers began to speak with a greater degree of specificity about the sharing and impact of intelligence. Excluding grammatical words, *intelligence sharing* is the bigram including *intelligence* with the third highest rise in frequency over the period as whole (+5 tpm) and the following contribution by Robin Cook contains greater detail than is seen in any contribution relating to intelligence at the beginning of the period:

[...] hard facts secured against the odds by the Secret Intelligence Service and Government communications headquarters have made a real contribution to the progress that we have made in foreign policy. The House will know, for example, of the malign role of the illegal trade in diamonds from Sierra Leone through Liberia and of the reverse flow of weapons through Liberia to the rebels in Sierra Leone. We have just secured a Security Council resolution that brings sanctions and pressure to bear on Liberia to halt both forms of trade. We could not have built that consensus in the Security Council if we had not been able to share with the United Nations hard facts and reliable intelligence about the situation on the ground. (Commons vol. 365, 29 March 2001).

From later in 2001 to the end of the Labour government's period of office, ministers' discourse containing *intelligence* is dominated by the fallout of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and controversies relating to the agencies' conduct and the government's use of intelligence. A particular topic of discussion is whether the intelligence agencies could have given warning of various terrorist attacks.

In the case of 9/11, Jack Straw – in whose contributions *intelligence* has frequency 376 tpm higher than the average of all ten Foreign Secretaries – draws to the attention of the Commons the finding of an ISC report that:

“the agencies did not overlook any intelligence that would have forewarned of the attacks on 11 September. There was intelligence, but it was not complete, and it was not known where or when the attacks were to take place, nor who would carry them out. A re-examination of material across the intelligence community has not found any evidence that, even with the benefit of hindsight, that intelligence could have been used to deter or to give advance warning of the attacks.” (Commons vol. 388, 4 July 2002)

Intelligence had a significant role in ministers’ discourse as they made their case for the UK participating in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and an ensuing controversy contributed significantly to the peak in frequency of *intelligence* in 2004. As Baroness Symons observes, when the government made public a dossier of evidence detailing the Iraqi government’s Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes, it drew on intelligence material “to an unprecedented extent” and intelligence reports were the basis for a claim that “the Iraqi military is already able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within 45 minutes of an order to do so” (Lords vol. 638, 24 September 2004). The evidence given in the dossier was later called into question when troops occupying Iraq were unable to locate much of the weaponry and this led to accusations that it drew on intelligence that was unreliable or had been misrepresented for political purposes. Defending the government’s actions, Jack Straw argued that the 45 minute claim was “subjected to the same rigorous assessment by the Joint Intelligence Committee as all other intelligence is” and that there was “no interference by anyone else” (Commons vol. 408, 8 July 2003). Ultimately a public inquiry found in 2016 that government statements “conveyed certainty without acknowledging the limitations of the intelligence” (Chilcot et

al. 2016: 46) but “There is no evidence that intelligence was improperly included in the dossier or that No.10 improperly influenced the text” (ibid.: 73).

Further controversies explain the 2009 and 2013 peaks in frequency of *intelligence*. A major element in the 2009 peak is ministers’ comments relating to the case of Binyam Mohamed, a UK citizen who was detained by US authorities on suspicion of terrorist activities – charges which were later dropped. His case attracted significant publicity in the UK after he claimed that MI5 officers had been complicit in mistreatment of him whilst in US detention. The peak in frequency of *intelligence*, however, arises from a separate aspect of the case relating to the sharing of intelligence between states. Mohamed sought the release of UK government papers to use in his defence against charges brought by the US, and among the material deemed relevant was intelligence shared with the UK by the US. The government strongly opposed this, arguing that “The issue at stake is not the content of the intelligence material, but the principle at the heart of all intelligence relationships: that a country should retain control of its intelligence information, and that that cannot be disclosed by foreign authorities without its consent” (David Miliband, Commons vol. 487, 5 February 2009). Ultimately the judges in the case disagreed with the government and a summary of the US intelligence was released. The government subsequently decided to “consolidate and make public the guidance we provide to the agencies’ officers and military personnel who may become engaged in handling detainees overseas.” (David Miliband, Commons vol. 507, 18 March 2010)

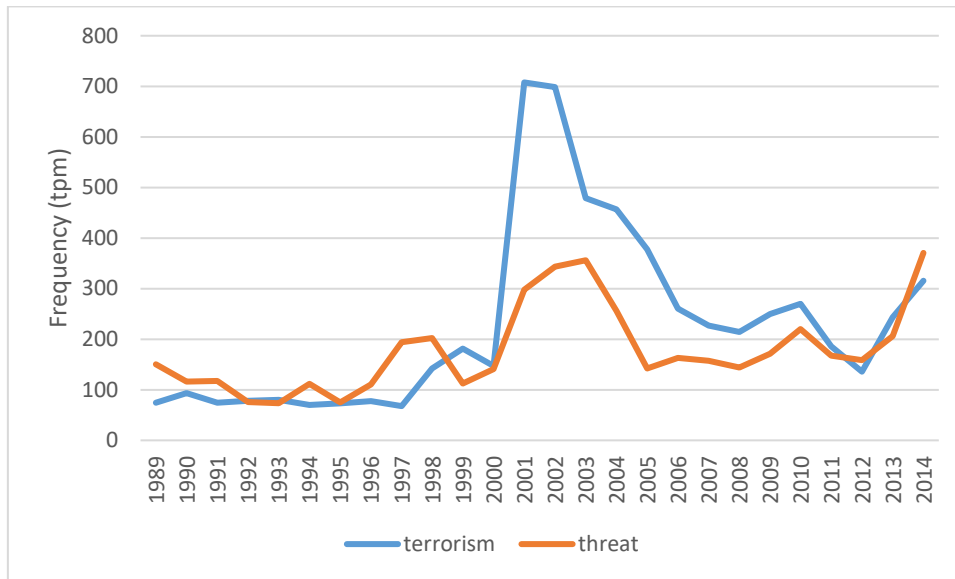
An event that contributed substantially to the 2013 peak of *intelligence* was the unauthorised release of classified information by a contractor working for the US National Security Agency (NSA), which included documents describing techniques used by GCHQ, the NSA’s UK counterpart organisation. For the UK government, a key accusation that arose from the leaks was that GCHQ used its partnership with the NSA to circumvent UK law and obtain information that it could not legally obtain in the UK. Describing this allegation as “baseless”, William Hague stated that “Any data

obtained by us from the United States involving UK nationals are subject to proper UK statutory controls and safeguards”, a view consistent with the findings of a subsequent ISC statement (Rifkind et al. 2013). Hague continued, however, that “There is a need to explain to the public in this country more than we have done for decades about the role of secret intelligence, its purpose and what it achieves” and that “we sometimes need to change aspects of the legal framework” (Commons vol. 564, 10 June 2013). This comment displays sentiments remarkably similar to those of Hurd at the beginning of the period.

12.5 *Terrorism and threat*

The words *terrorism* and *threat* have a similar evolution in frequency to one another: their frequency is initially relatively stable and rises sharply in the early 2000s before declining for most of the remainder of that decade. Both words then remain at a higher frequency than was the case at the beginning of the period and display a renewed rise in frequency in the early 2010s. Figure 12.6 shows the evolution in frequency of these two words.

Figure 12.6: Frequency of *terrorism* and *threat*



Terrorism is defined in UK law as the use or threat of action “designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public [...] for the purpose of advancing a political, religious racial or ideological cause” (HM Government 2000: s.1). This definition provides a link between the words *terrorism* and *threat*, a threat of such action being considered an act of terrorism in itself. *Threat*, however, has a wider range of uses in ministers’ discourse, many of which are not linked to terrorism. Ministers discusses threats to shipping as a result of piracy, threats to tropical rainforests and various cases in which UK citizens received threats of violence from outside the country, such as those made against the author Salman Rushdie by Iranian leaders.

The peaks in frequency of *threat* reflect the range of uses of the word. The 2003 peak occurred at a time of intensive discussion of Iraq’s alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes and various other security threats around the world, while in 2014 ministers’ contributions containing *threat* cover instability in Libya and Iraq, the threat from the ISIL group and Russia’s behaviour towards Ukraine. Threats to human rights also form part of ministers’ discourse at this time. It is interesting to

note that *threat* has a higher frequency than *terrorism* for most of the 1990s and again in 2012 and 2014, perhaps suggesting that these were periods in which threats other than terrorism were greater concerns for Foreign Office ministers. Nonetheless, there are close links between *terrorism* and *threat* in ministers' discourse. Excluding grammatical words, the most frequent bigrams including *threat* are *threat posed* and *terrorist threat* (each with a frequency of 10 tpm in the corpus as a whole) and the remainder of this section will focus on the use of *threat* in the context of *terrorism*.

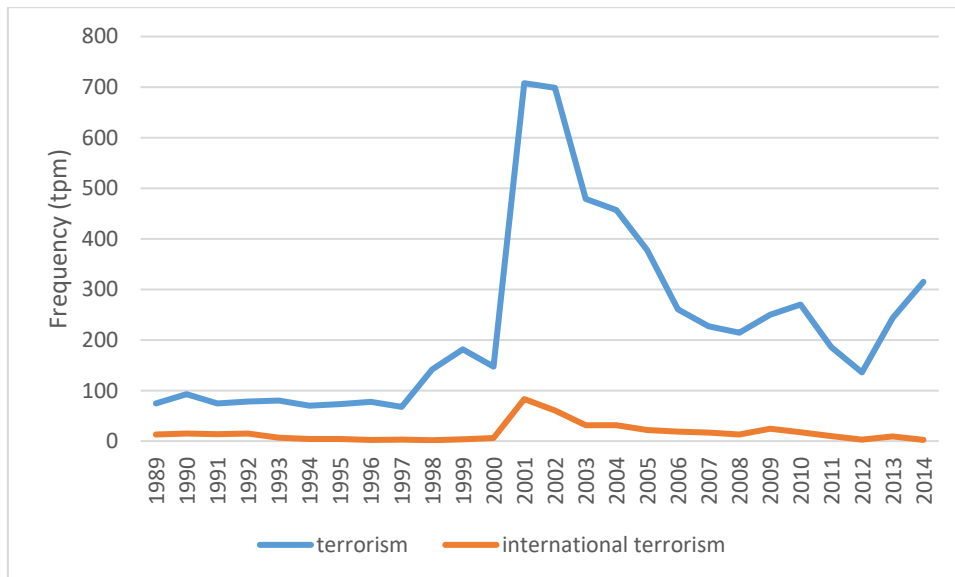
The sharp rise in frequency of *terrorism* in the early 2000s stems from the 9/11 attacks in the United States of America, in which almost 3,000 people died including 67 UK victims (BBC News 2021). Parliament was recalled from its summer recess following the attacks and Jack Straw summed up the sombre mood in the House of Commons in the following contribution:

The whole House, as we have heard in the past 55 minutes, has been united in shock and grief at the events in the United States on Tuesday morning. Today, as so many times before in our shared history, we find ourselves in complete solidarity with our friends and allies in the United States. Our peoples are inextricably bound together by close ties of family, friendship, language, culture and, above all, values. [...] The attacks were not just on the United States; they were on humanity, on civilisation and on us all. The terrorists who struck on Tuesday exploited what they see as the great weakness of democratic societies — freedom — but, in truth, freedom is and will remain our greatest strength. Terrorism is ultimately self-defeating. We must channel the rage and revulsion that we feel today to make intelligent decisions in order to ensure the triumph of the civilised values on which this House is founded. From the catastrophe, I believe that the United States and the free world will emerge stronger. (Jack Straw, Commons vol. 372, 14 September 2001)

The fact that tokens of *terrorism* increased following 9/11 is unsurprising. What is perhaps more noteworthy is the way in which the frequency of the word was already rising from 1998 onwards,

and how substantially its frequency declined between 2002 (698 tpm) and 2008 (214 tpm). The geographic focus of contributions containing *terrorism* in the late 1990s was widely scattered, with ministers discussing the actions of terrorist groups in Turkey, Chechnya and Iran amongst others. The minor peak in frequency in 1999 is driven in part by two incidents in Africa: the death of three British tourists in Yemen who had been taken hostage and were killed in a gun battle between their hostage takers and Yemeni security forces; and a controversial US missile strike on a pharmaceutical complex in Sudan, which the US said was being used to produce nerve gas for terrorist use. Despite Al-Qaeda attacks against US embassies in Africa in 1998, however, the expression *international terrorism* has a very low frequency in ministers' discourse at this time, being below 4 tpm throughout the second half of the 1990s. As Figure 12.7 shows, the frequency of *international terrorism* follows a similar pattern of change to that of *terrorism*.

Figure 12.7: Frequency of *terrorism* and *international terrorism*



In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, ministers' discourse relating to terrorism focuses heavily on the diplomatic response to the attacks including through the UN Security Council, the EU – where UK ministers argued that the introduction of a European arrest warrant would help tackle terrorism –

and through NATO, which for the first time invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO 2019), by which NATO member states consider an attack on one member to be an attack on all.

Regarding the possibility of an Al-Qaeda attack against the UK, ministers stressed that:

we have no specific knowledge of any specific threat against this country or our nationals and we are deploying all the tools at our disposal — military, intelligence, police, economic, diplomatic and political — to ensure that those people do not get the chance” (Jack Straw, Commons vol.372, 4 October 2001).

The fall in the frequency of *terrorism* for the remainder of the 2000s probably reflects the division of ministerial responsibilities between the Foreign Office and the Home Office. Whilst the immediate response to 9/11 was highly international in nature, other changes that took place in the following years – such as changes to the UK’s terrorism legislation – were the responsibility of the Home Secretary, as was the response to terrorist attacks on UK soil including the bombings on the London transport system on 7 July 2005. However, other matters relating to terrorism continued to feature in Foreign Office ministers’ discourse, including where attacks overseas claimed UK lives and where changes in the UK’s counter-terrorism machinery related to the work of MI6 and GCHQ. For example, following the publication of an ISC report on a terrorist attack in Bali in 2002 which killed 23 UK citizens, Jack Straw acknowledged “a need for changes in the way that intelligence is assessed and threat assessments are made, and in subsequent processing to a public result in terms of travel advice” (Commons vol. 396, 11 December 2002). During these years ministers also discussed terrorism extensively in connection with UK military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

During the final years of the period, ministers’ contributions relating to terrorism contain a particular focus on areas of the world which were home to groups presenting “the greatest long-term strategic terrorism threat to the UK” (William Hague, Commons vol. 556, 7 Jan 2013). Between 2010 and 2014, the country most frequently mentioned in contributions containing terrorism is Pakistan (1686 tpm),

followed by Iraq (1087 tpm), Afghanistan (1038 tpm) and Syria (994 tpm). The following contribution illustrates the approach the coalition government articulated regarding areas of strategic threat:

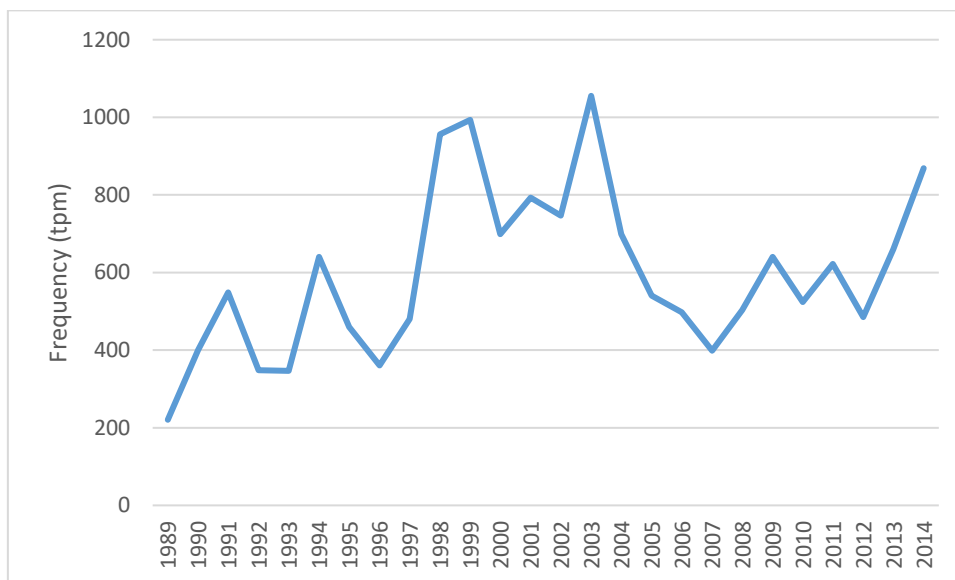
Pakistan is on the front line of the global fight against terrorism, including against groups such as the Pakistan Taliban. It remains one of our priority countries for counter-terrorism work. A major part of this effort is dedicated to working with Pakistanis to reduce the threat from violent extremism and to build their capacity to deal with it. This requires a determined security response, but also investment in education, tackling poverty, and confronting the extremist narrative. Alongside this, we have pledged further assistance, including UK strategic expertise, capacity development to improve detection and disruption of improvised explosive devices, support with developing effective approaches to countering violent extremism and infrastructure security. (Hugh Robertson, Commons vol. 584, 7 July 2014)

12.6 Military

The changing frequency of the Word *military* displays an obvious connection with the incidence of conflict situations around the world – in the main, conflicts in which the UK's armed forces were active. The peaks in frequency of *military* shown in Figure 12.8 occur at times when such conflicts took place: the Gulf war in the early 1990s; Bosnia in 1994; Kosovo in 1998-9; Iraq in 2003; and Syria in 2014. More broadly, the UK's military involvement in Afghanistan forms a major part of ministers' contributions containing *military* from 2001 onwards and particularly once UK forces took responsibility for security in Helmand province in 2006. What is perhaps more noteworthy is the greater frequency of *military* during the period of office of the Labour government compared to the Conservative or coalition years. *Military* has an excess frequency of +75 tpm in the contributions of Labour ministers compared to the corpus as a whole, and an excess frequency of +323 tpm in the

contributions of Robin Cook, compared to the contributions of all Foreign Secretaries who held office during the period.

Figure 12.8: Frequency of *military*



An important aspect of Foreign Office ministers’ discourse on military matters is to set out – either in the abstract or in relation to a specific situation – the reasons why they consider military action to be justified. In this strand of discourse, both the threat and use of military action are constructed as diplomatic levers, following Clausewitz’s aphorism that “War is the continuation of politics by other means” (Clausewitz 1989: 87).

On 10 May 1999, the Word *military* occurs 22 times in a single statement from Robin Cook. In many ways, Cook’s statement is highly unusual because it acknowledges NATO’s responsibility for bombing the Chinese embassy in Belgrade three days earlier, and he informs the Commons that “the Prime Minister has written to Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Premier, expressing our deep regret at the error, and assuring him that there was no deliberate intent on the part of the allies to attack the Chinese embassy” (Commons vol. 331, 10 May 1999). Beyond this, however, Cook states that the UK will “continue vigorously to pursue any opportunity for progress on the diplomatic track” and emphasises

that “Our best hope of success on the diplomatic track is to keep up the military pressure”. Similar arguments can be found in ministers’ discourse throughout the period.

Following acts of ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s, ministers also discuss what the criteria should be for the international community intervening militarily in the internal affairs of a state. Bill Rammell argues that:

Action should be taken only to prevent genocide or major loss of civilian life that could destabilise other states and threaten international peace and security. In those circumstances, force should be used only as a last resort and when a Government have demonstrated their unwillingness or inability to end large-scale civilian suffering within their jurisdiction. There also has to be a pragmatic element. The scale of actual or potential human suffering must justify the risks and dangers of military action, and there must be clear and relevant objectives and the military means to ensure a high probability of success. (Commons vol. 413, 11 November 2003)

However, ministers also recognise the limitations of using military force as a lever of diplomacy and the sense of their observations on this point is remarkably consistent at the beginning and end of the period studied. Douglas Hurd asks in respect of the Bosnia conflict “What military solution can there be in such circumstances? In practice, only an agreement between the parties will enable the different communities to live together in peace” (Commons vol. 259, 9 May 1995), while William Hague notes that “There is no military solution to the crisis in Gaza or to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (Commons vol. 553, 20 November 2012).

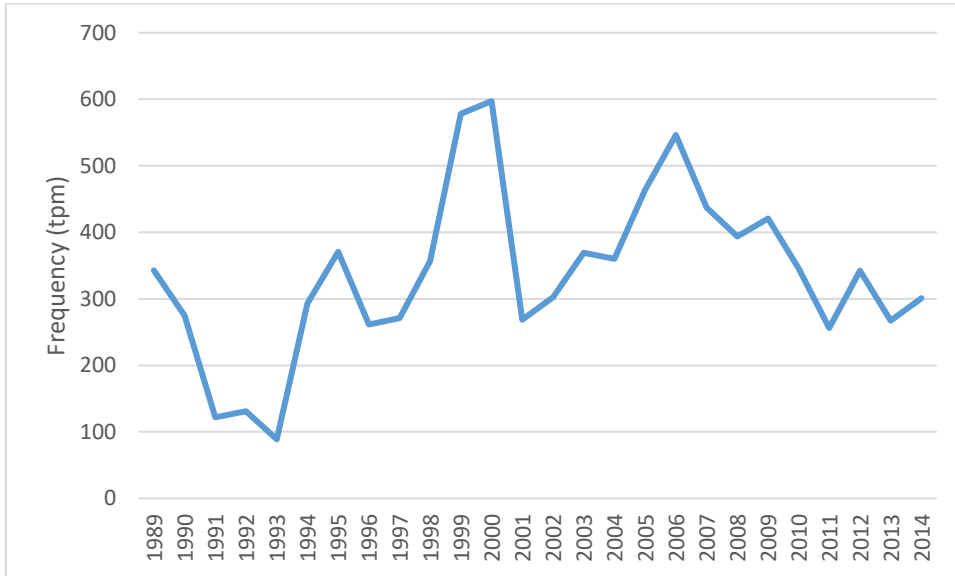
Analysis of bigrams including the word *military* reveals further stability in ministers’ discourse, the largest change being *israeli military* (+23 tpm). This rise of this particular bigram is largely due to persistent questioning by opposition members about the treatment of Palestinian children in the

Israeli military justice system. There is also a rise in the frequency of *military operations* (+22 tpm) and *military intervention* (+17 tpm), and a smaller rise for *military action* (+7 tpm). Whilst *military operations* displays an upward trend in frequency throughout the period, there is a distinct peak in the frequency of *military action* during the Labour years, and of *military intervention* during the coalition years. This suggests that while references to the military rose overall during the period, there were differences of preferred terminology between the successive governments. Among the bigrams that fall in frequency, *military observers* (-9 tpm) had a frequency of zero in 2011, 2012 and 2013, but returned to ministers' discourse when the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) sent military observers to Ukraine in 2014.

12.7 Police

The Word *police* rises by 111 tpm when comparing the first five and last five full years of the period studied, but reaches its peak frequency during the period of office of the Labour government, when it has an excess frequency of +89 tpm compared to the period as a whole. Figure 12.9 shows the changing frequency of police during the period.

Figure 12.9: Frequency of *police*



When *police* is at its lowest frequency in 1993, ministers' discourse focuses on three main topics: consular matters in which there has been police involvement, the conduct of police forces in other countries; and the UK's provision of funding, training and expertise to police services overseas. There is, for example, a statement on the actions taken by consular staff following the death of a British citizen in Portugal; an expression of concern that the citizens of Kosovo felt "oppressed" by the large number of Serbian police deployed there (Baroness Chalker, Lords vol. 544, 1 April 1993); and an announcement of the deployment of a senior police officer to South Africa to assist in the investigation of the assassination of an anti-apartheid activist.

Consular matters, questions of police conduct and the provision of assistance to police forces overseas continue to be part of ministers' discourse relating to policing throughout the period, but there are changes in the balance of these topics and an important addition to them. In a subcorpus of only those contributions that contain the word *police*, *training* falls in frequency (-424 tpm) when comparing the first five and last five full years of the period. However, the absolute frequency of *training* in this subcorpus rises over the period, suggesting that it remains a significant part of an

expanding area of foreign policy discourse. In a contribution from the year 2000, Keith Vaz describes the purpose of providing police training in the former Yugoslavia in terms that would not be out of place in later contributions relating to training the Afghan National Police. Vaz tells the Commons that:

We currently provide 10 UK police officers to the Police Monitor Group within the OSCE Mission to Croatia. Their role is to ensure the local police force continues to improve in its professionalism. In addition, we also provided 40 UK police officers to the OSCE Police Training School in Kosovo. Their role is to recruit and train a multi-ethnic Kosovo Police Service in order to help them gain the skills and equipment needed to engage effectively in police activities. (Commons vol. 345, 1 March 2000)

Over the period, there is more than a doubling in the frequency of both *human* and *rights* (by 932 tpm and 1203 tpm respectively) in contributions that contain *police* and ministers increasingly emphasise the importance of a respect for human rights in police conduct. As Alistair Burt puts it, “Respect for human rights is always a component in this training and a consideration when UK military and police personnel are mentoring their Afghan colleagues” (Commons vol. 559, 5 March 2013).

There is also a European dimension to ministers’ discourse regarding policing that increases over the period. In 1993, Baroness Chalker was able to dismiss a question about the possibility of a European police force being created as “hypothetical” (Lords vol. 548, 13 July 1993), but the transfer of some policing and justice powers to the EU was a real question by the time of the negotiation of the Lisbon Treaty. Ultimately the UK government decided to “opt out of all police and criminal justice measures adopted before the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty” (David Lidington, Commons vol. 583, 23 June 2014). Ministers’ deliberations on this point explain a sharp peak in frequency of *eu* (6,790 tpm) in contributions containing *police* in 2008.

12.8 Conclusions

The changes observed in ministers' contributions containing the words *intelligence*, *military*, *police*, *security*, *terrorism* and *threat* are influenced by a wide range of factors, not least of which are changes in the global political order. Whilst the end of the Cold War brought about a lowering of tensions between superpowers, the early years of the period studied were not without reasons for Foreign Office ministers to discuss matters of security. The frequency of the selected words remains relatively low, however, until the late 1990s; and begins to rise at around the time that the Labour government took power.

The second defining event of the period, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, brought about a much larger and more sudden shift in ministers' discourse. Although terrorism was already a topic of Foreign Office ministers' parliamentary contributions, the exceptionally rapid rise in frequency of *terrorism* in 2001-2 reflects the sudden and shocking nature of the event. The 9/11 attacks made terrorism a much greater focus of foreign policy, with international alliances and the use of levers of diplomacy increasingly being discussed as part of wider efforts to counter terrorism. During the latter years of the period, as the threat of 'home-grown' extremism and the effect of online radicalisation came to the fore, Foreign Office ministers' discourse refocused on strategic approaches to counter terrorist threats emanating from overseas. Viewed in this context, the spike in frequency of *terrorism* after 9/11 may be seen as an exception in foreign policy discourse driven by unprecedented event, while the decline in frequency that followed may be regarded as a shift to a new normality, in which discussion of strategic aspects of counter-terrorism is punctuated by contributions relating to specific threats or attacks affecting UK citizens and interests overseas.

The rise in frequency of *intelligence* is also caused in part by the development of international terrorism, but other factors are significant too. The policy of greater openness regarding the work of the intelligence agencies that successive governments pursued from the late 1980s onwards has left

traces in ministers' discourse in several ways. The passage of legislation affording greater transparency and accountability contributed in itself to the rise in frequency of intelligence, and also broadened and deepened discussion of the agencies' work in parliament on an ongoing basis. Controversies relating to intelligence matters – most notably in the case made by the Labour government for intervening military in Iraq – played out in parliamentary and public discourse in a way that would not have been imaginable previously. This meta-talk about the status of intelligence in the public sphere also contributes to spikes in the frequency of the word. Aspects of ministers' discourse relating to intelligence, such as the rise in frequency of the bigram *intelligence sharing*, also highlight a paradox regarding matters of security. Although many aspects of security are constructed in national terms and are embodied in the phrase *national security*, international cooperation is fundamental to achieving security.

The increase in frequency of *military* is a sobering reminder of the large number of conflicts that took place around the world during the period studied. This time was also a period of reflection and – one might argue – experimentation in how states including the UK used their military capabilities. The concept of the 'responsibility to protect' discussed in a previous chapter, the policy of liberal interventionism that the Labour government espoused even before 9/11, and the use of armed force to combat state and non-state adversaries all contribute to military matters being an important part of foreign policy discourse, albeit with some significant constants including ministers' acknowledgement of the limitations of using such force.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of ministers' discourse relating to policing is the way in which the provision of training and expertise is conceptualised as a tool of foreign policy and a way of promoting values such as human rights, typically in partnership with other countries providing similar assistance. This is not a new strand of ministers' discourse that emerges during the period, but an

enduring activity the scale of which varies according to the extent of the UK's involvement in providing such assistance.

It would be a step too far to infer that the rise in frequency of words associated with the topic of security indicates that the UK faced growing security challenges during the period studied. Such a conclusion could not be reached on the basis of linguistic analysis alone, and in any case some of the growth areas in the discourse such as the passage of legislation relating to the intelligence services do not necessarily indicate an increase in threats to security. However, the lexical changes in ministers' discourse perhaps reflect an increased diversity of security threats facing the UK, as well as highlighting some of the challenges associated with pivoting the country's security apparatus to face these new and unpredictable threats.

13. ANALYSIS: THE UK, THE EU AND THE COMMONWEALTH

13.1 Introduction

This final analysis chapter focuses on six words which relate to the identity of the United Kingdom as a state and its relationship with two international groupings. These words are *britain*, *brussels*, *commonwealth*, *eu*, *government* and *uk*⁴³.

As in previous chapters, these words are grouped together on the basis of both statistical and thematic relationships. As Tables 13.1 and 13.2 show, each of the selected words has a positive excess frequency value indicating its co-occurrence with at least two of the other words. This data gives a sense of which words are particularly likely to be found in same contributions, such as *brussels* and *eu*. However, the patterns of co-occurrence of the words are not as widespread as has been seen in some earlier chapters and the thematic basis for grouping the items together is particularly important in this case. The data contained in Tables 13.1 and 13.2 also suggests that some of the topics of previous chapters including human rights are a focus of ministers' discourse relating to the Commonwealth and the EU, and offers a reminder that security is a focus of discourse relating to Europe.

Britain and *uk* have an obvious thematic connection as country names (albeit referring to differing entities). *Britain* falls in frequency over the period studied while *uk* rises. The initialism *eu* is a new Word introduced into ministers' discourse as a result of the European Community becoming the European Union in 1994, and as such its frequency is necessarily higher in last five full years of the period than in the first five. By contrast, *brussels* – the seat of the European Commission and one of the seats of the European Parliament – is included on the grounds that it has a much higher

⁴³ Dotted initials are used so infrequently in Hansard as to be immaterial for the purposes of this thesis. U.K., E.U. and U.N. each have a frequency below 1 tpm in the corpus as a whole.

frequency during the period of office of the Labour government than before or after. The Word *commonwealth* also rises in frequency and forms part of the names of both the Commonwealth of Nations (more simply known as The Commonwealth) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. *Government* has the highest frequency in the corpus as a whole of any of the words selected for analysis, excluding grammatical words. It rises in frequency steadily throughout the period. Along with *uk*, *britain* and the use of *commonwealth* in the string *foreign and commonwealth office*, it is a term by which ministers refer to an entity which they represent.

Figure 13.1 shows the changing frequency of the six words selected for analysis in this chapter. Full year-by-year frequency data for these words and the longer strings discussed in the chapter can be found in Table 13.3.

Figure 13.1: Frequency of *britain*, *brussels*, *commonwealth*, *eu*, *government* and *uk*

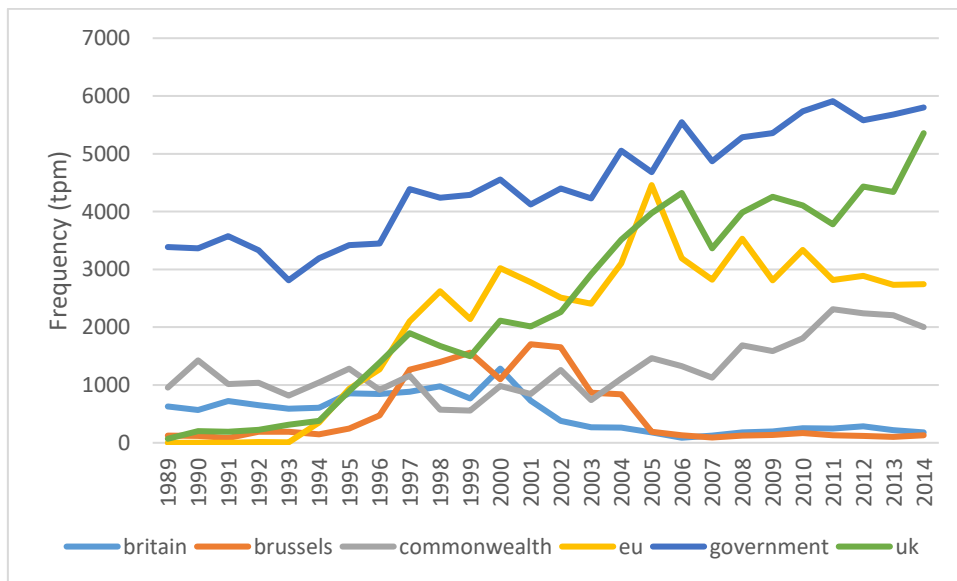


Table 13.1: Excess frequency data for ch. 13 (Type A)

Showing the ten subcorpora in which the words specified in row 1 have the highest excess frequency

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Britain		Brussels		Commonwealth		EU		Government		UK	
	word	value	word	value	word	value	word	value	word	value	word	value
1 st	britain	2560	brussels	6573	commonwealth	4920	eu	6374	government	3588	uk	4636
2 nd	relief	462	environmental	76	sexual	1916	brussels	5302	sexual	3179	sexual	2855
3 rd	refugees	384	food	-5	religious	938	religious	1615	religious	3107	eu	2599
4 th	intelligence	363	relief	-18	projects	802	sanctions	1553	human	2979	religious	1766
5 th	environmental	351	sexual	-31	women	794	dialogue	1044	rights	2914	women	1708
6 th	terrorism	305	sanctions	-56	violence	686	freedom	1018	intelligence	2676	human	1669
7 th	food	304	intelligence	-77	freedom	631	regime	975	eu	2666	police	1607
8 th	aid	226	terrorism	-82	civil	601	human	947	violence	2450	intelligence	1521
9 th	sanctions	225	threat	-87	intelligence	570	sexual	903	women	2314	rights	1503
10 th	threat	187	refugees	-91	police	559	rights	809	freedom	2114	sanctions	1472

Table 13.2: Excess frequency data for ch. 13 (Type B)

Showing the ten words that have the highest excess frequency in the subcorpus of contributions containing the Word specified in row 1

Highest excess frequencies (tpm)	Britain		Brussels		Commonwealth		EU		Government		UK	
	word	value	word	value	word	value	word	value	word	value	word	value
1 st	britain	2560	brussels	6573	commonwealth	4920	eu	6374	government	3588	uk	4636
2 nd	government	1593	eu	5302	government	1684	government	2666	uk	-1442	government	1325
3 rd	united	1132	development	4320	uk	1124	uk	2599	rights	-2077	eu	-302
4 th	security	823	programme	1459	rights	97	security	909	united	-2159	security	-392
5 th	nations	608	security	1255	human	42	rights	847	security	-2172	commonwealth	-555
6 th	eu	537	uk	1204	development	-20	human	527	human	-2315	rights	-814
7 th	uk	534	dialogue	1111	united	-91	development	62	eu	-2456	human	-984
8 th	development	508	government	1092	security	-275	united	-157	development	-2731	development	-994
9 th	rights	500	resolution	840	eu	-367	dialogue	-392	commonwealth	-2733	united	-1020
10 th	programme	405	society	809	programme	-510	commonwealth	-596	nations	-3172	programme	-1488

Table 13.3: Year-by-year frequency data for words and longer strings discussed in ch. 13

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																												Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93	2010-14	
across government	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	10	5	7	10	7	9	12	6	26	23	41	24	11	23	0	25	25
afghan government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	33	35	112	53	167	92	81	94	165	124	87	85	47	0	98	98
america	194	237	280	134	101	158	215	133	102	82	105	100	176	129	77	104	102	104	51	51	66	104	54	123	48	29	186	70	-115
american	157	146	138	96	67	124	128	84	55	80	64	106	153	110	112	86	46	56	47	78	92	65	28	59	32	35	118	42	-76
britain	631	569	723	654	592	607	858	843	884	979	767	1284	729	379	269	261	179	88	128	182	194	252	247	288	221	179	630	238	-392
british	1756	1923	1818	1630	1593	1890	1915	1992	1755	1591	1815	1499	1777	1761	1662	1699	1497	1219	899	1318	1422	1748	1919	1986	2052	1600	1739	1872	132
british government	142	171	217	134	166	158	195	159	169	90	58	85	116	162	167	174	95	73	51	68	83	133	189	431	406	321	166	305	139
brussels	124	118	84	189	190	150	246	471	1268	1399	1557	1099	1705	1654	866	840	193	129	92	125	134	167	131	119	100	129	143	127	-16
brussels bureaucrats	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
burmese government	0	0	9	3	0	2	0	0	6	7	2	15	4	6	4	6	4	28	37	26	5	8	38	182	305	219	2	156	154
chinese government	107	125	63	50	43	22	57	75	31	27	43	31	31	17	17	41	76	130	42	91	28	44	37	50	56	31	77	44	-33
co uk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	6	10	4	12	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
colombian government	2	11	0	0	5	8	4	7	28	23	21	39	44	27	36	65	30	41	16	52	35	45	46	16	49	36	4	38	34
commonwealth	954	1426	1019	1037	818	1044	1284	914	1161	573	558	981	845	1262	738	1111	1463	1329	1129	1686	1586	1811	2311	2241	2207	2005	1041	2139	1098
commonwealth charter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24	24	0	10	10
commonwealth development	37	34	59	73	50	32	39	29	28	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	50	0	-49
commonwealth heads	41	11	23	10	19	8	37	38	68	41	19	12	25	59	22	18	15	14	44	17	18	34	29	29	85	34	21	42	21
commonwealth heads of government	37	11	23	10	19	8	34	38	68	41	19	12	25	57	21	18	13	14	40	16	18	34	29	29	81	34	20	41	21
commonwealth institute	7	15	20	5	19	110	16	22	15	21	19	19	0	9	3	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14	0	-13
commonwealth values	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	3	1	10	31	8	0	11	11
cross government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	6	17	4	4	18	17	17	9	23	0	17	17
ec	544	927	858	1269	985	439	325	241	271	186	189	133	124	110	62	77	124	140	58	39	57	45	50	13	7	2	912	23	-889
eu	0	4	0	15	9	349	935	1273	2103	2625	2140	3024	2779	2513	2406	3103	4459	3192	2825	3530	2810	3335	2817	2887	2736	2746	6	2879	2873
eu accession	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	18	12	5	19	29	4	12	34	22	18	20	16	17	7	39	53	22	25	47	0	37	37
eu enlargement	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	13	18	11	7	8	15	41	15	33	12	8	11	10	8	21	23	20	22	17	0	21	21
europe	810	1490	838	782	685	724	1193	1268	1315	901	1068	1367	986	924	871	689	1012	580	582	676	528	498	537	478	405	548	916	493	-423
european community	550	590	639	664	620	219	132	148	111	64	75	81	102	24	46	36	67	40	34	19	18	11	3	7	2	10	611	6	-605

Table 13.3 (contd.)

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																										Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)		
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		1989-93	2010-14
european union	22	32	99	220	282	1313	1088	1273	1154	943	881	989	878	739	688	689	988	428	310	456	331	578	817	852	486	505	136	659	523
fco	140	85	140	111	159	285	351	288	271	649	778	562	580	832	856	982	1174	1059	645	1673	1942	1646	1356	1388	1200	883	129	1280	1151
fo	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	6	2	4	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-1
foreign and commonwealth	616	1060	682	595	589	585	465	292	474	358	370	533	420	547	508	941	1331	1196	846	1352	1334	1466	1971	1824	1577	1598	707	1708	1001
foreign and commonwealth office	275	408	300	328	249	327	248	195	249	277	303	481	350	434	455	874	1239	1042	725	1207	1210	1272	1314	1053	895	902	309	1082	773
foreign office	39	63	77	45	72	80	112	93	108	436	412	151	128	153	153	113	83	63	53	100	61	173	111	79	93	146	60	116	56
foreign secretary	111	125	129	139	236	423	319	529	723	722	638	697	623	859	699	760	871	834	667	934	1001	952	554	338	509	461	153	538	385
gb	0	4	2	5	0	0	0	2	3	2	7	2	2	0	0	3	0	10	0	3	0	5	0	1	1	2	2	2	0
good governance	0	0	2	3	2	14	16	31	31	21	22	54	56	67	49	39	108	75	47	49	77	40	53	80	33	34	1	49	48
good government	0	40	142	91	55	108	79	60	34	18	11	0	2	0	3	0	6	5	2	1	1	0	0	3	1	0	64	1	-63
gov uk	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	12	7	15	44	62	70	88	164	261	223	146	139	498	243	181	159	193	215	0	195	195
government	3389	3367	3573	3333	2812	3195	3421	3448	4387	4240	4290	4558	4122	4402	4228	5055	4683	5546	4871	5287	5357	5735	5910	5579	5677	5801	3266	5741	2475
government are	223	245	185	174	109	170	142	235	332	296	284	348	230	227	208	263	237	282	261	274	240	317	346	302	266	187	184	284	100
government has	9	15	11	20	12	6	10	9	18	23	30	50	21	50	64	51	31	43	28	32	23	16	26	33	62	165	13	61	48
government have	238	303	316	295	207	259	235	292	280	339	428	388	333	319	321	312	344	301	288	292	391	309	342	291	354	238	267	308	40
government is	20	21	18	33	26	24	18	20	34	16	28	29	10	44	58	53	46	34	22	31	18	34	23	36	56	140	23	58	34
great britain	15	42	25	13	15	22	26	20	12	28	21	4	14	23	17	27	0	19	11	10	35	11	5	13	40	8	22	16	-6
great britain china centre	0	4	5	3	0	12	4	7	0	4	7	0	2	9	10	4	0	8	5	4	1	8	4	8	19	1	2	8	6
inclusive government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	2	0	1	5	3	4	2	1	27	60	13	7	1	22	0	18	18
indian government	31	49	84	45	55	48	63	31	9	37	32	21	33	59	12	11	18	28	20	27	45	34	19	32	42	45	53	34	-19
iranian government	33	6	45	28	5	6	12	9	6	25	73	33	14	12	31	24	13	40	19	44	54	53	20	30	18	124	22	48	26
iraqi government	22	21	102	33	31	18	22	20	3	12	26	39	2	11	43	95	67	104	78	45	45	68	90	12	5	70	41	48	7
israeli government	63	78	41	33	63	24	43	44	65	66	36	44	27	89	103	148	156	153	93	62	161	134	123	193	76	49	57	116	59
lankan government	11	40	43	35	3	2	20	15	40	12	15	33	15	3	3	6	3	43	30	31	217	39	81	62	128	108	25	86	61
minister for europe	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	12	7	50	43	94	40	19	53	95	120	88	65	73	74	62	41	67	0	63	63
northern ireland	61	55	34	28	99	32	65	38	25	94	37	54	83	85	43	49	18	38	86	73	65	21	41	38	99	45	59	50	-9
org uk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	4	0	3	5	21	13	8	4	3	6	2	2	2	0	0	2	2
secretary of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs	304	612	278	222	292	202	174	66	142	32	43	31	60	103	44	63	70	113	93	118	98	155	614	700	594	609	344	560	216

Table 13.3 (contd.)

Word or string	Frequency in year or period (tpm)																											Freq change 1989-93 vs 2010-14 (tpm)	
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1989-93		2010-14
the commonwealth	177	209	190	285	155	311	505	330	428	165	94	336	282	549	151	112	71	83	194	194	159	196	176	287	418	258	199	269	71
the us	24	34	47	50	61	60	152	151	185	204	273	222	338	494	529	497	348	418	291	415	590	327	188	186	294	288	44	250	206
turkish government	46	36	54	20	51	100	75	62	58	53	62	15	29	35	47	61	65	20	17	23	8	18	26	28	36	36	42	29	-13
uk	70	201	192	225	311	381	895	1388	1896	1676	1500	2113	2015	2262	2914	3514	3974	4325	3367	3986	4257	4107	3779	4433	4339	5357	205	4403	4198
uk government	0	2	2	0	5	6	10	15	15	35	32	39	62	68	122	129	199	84	33	97	98	126	189	191	253	288	2	213	211
united kingdom	1271	1348	1432	1680	1647	2013	1250	1233	988	810	709	510	872	650	565	686	769	531	516	253	280	481	656	587	665	520	1479	589	-890
us government	0	2	2	8	7	12	35	11	15	4	36	29	15	42	40	55	40	65	31	44	39	24	15	5	22	14	4	16	12

13.2 Political and historical context

The literature review for this thesis discussed the concept of the ‘three circles’ of UK foreign policy (Sanders and Houghton, 2017). This chapter, in addition to considering how ministers refer to their country and their government, considers two of those circles: the ‘European’ and ‘Commonwealth’ circles; the ‘Atlanticist’ circle having been more of a focus in the ‘Security’ chapter⁴⁴. The period covered by this study was a time of rapid change in Europe, with the fall of communism and the development of the European Community to become the European Union, with its membership increasing from 12 to 28. The period also saw the completion of the European single market, the introduction of the European single currency and an abortive proposal for an EU constitution. At the same time, there was a growth in Euroscepticism in the UK (Brack and Startin 2015) including calls to leave the EU. The coalition government that came to power in 2010 included a wide range of perspectives on Europe. As part of their agreement to form a government, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats agreed that the UK would not join the European single currency during their period of office. They stated that the UK would be a "positive participant" in the European Union, but that there would be "no further transfer of sovereignty or powers" (HM Government 2010: 19). On 23 January 2013, David Cameron gave a speech (Cameron 2013) setting out his vision of negotiating a "new settlement" for the UK's relationship with the EU. If the Conservatives won the next election, he pledged to hold a referendum through which the UK public would decide whether they supported continued membership on those terms. Although the referendum itself and the UK's subsequent departure from the EU are outside the time period of this study, Cameron's speech represented a

⁴⁴ The words *america* and *american* are not analysed in this thesis as they did not meet any of the criteria for inclusion. Both words fall in frequency during the period studied while the string *the us* rises. The combined frequency of *american*, *american* and *the us* (471 tpm in the corpus as a whole) is much lower than that of *eu* (2,312 tpm) or *commonwealth* (1,372 tpm).

significant development in itself and signalled an intent to fundamentally change how the strategic direction of the UK's European policy would be set.

The Commonwealth – an association of “independent and equal countries”, mostly with historical ties to the British Empire⁴⁵ (The Commonwealth 2021) – was founded in 1949. It had over 50 members throughout the period studied spanning Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific, and South Africa notably rejoined in 1993 as it moved towards becoming a multi-racial democracy. Rather than having defining economic and social goals such as those of the EU or security goals such as those of NATO, shared goals identified by Commonwealth countries include development, democracy and peace. In a speech to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in 2011, William Hague expressed a view that the Commonwealth had “not received the attention it deserved” from the UK government and pledged to put it “back at the very heart of British foreign policy” (HM Government 2011). In this speech, Hague called for the Commonwealth to strengthen its work on human rights and democracy; increase its engagement on global economic issues; and assert a greater role in development and conflict prevention. He also remarked, however, that before coming to office he had received a report on the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in which the only reference to the Commonwealth was in the title. Amongst other topics, this chapter will explore the extent to which ministers made substantive remarks regarding the Commonwealth, both before and after Hague made this speech.

The final Word analysed in this chapter, *government*, strictly refers only to “MPs and Members of the House of Lords that hold a government post” (UK Parliament 2021), i.e. to ministers of all ranks from Prime Minister to Parliamentary Undersecretary of State. MPs and members of the Lords who are from same party or parties as the ministers in office but do not hold a government post are not

⁴⁵ Gabon, Mozambique, Rwanda and Togo are members of the Commonwealth but have no historic ties to the British Empire.

considered to be members of the government. Between 1945 and 2010 the UK government consisted always of ministers belonging to a single political party, albeit sometimes relying on the support of smaller parties in parliamentary votes. The agreement of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats to form a coalition government in 2010 therefore gave *government* a nuance of meaning which it had not had for several decades in UK politics.

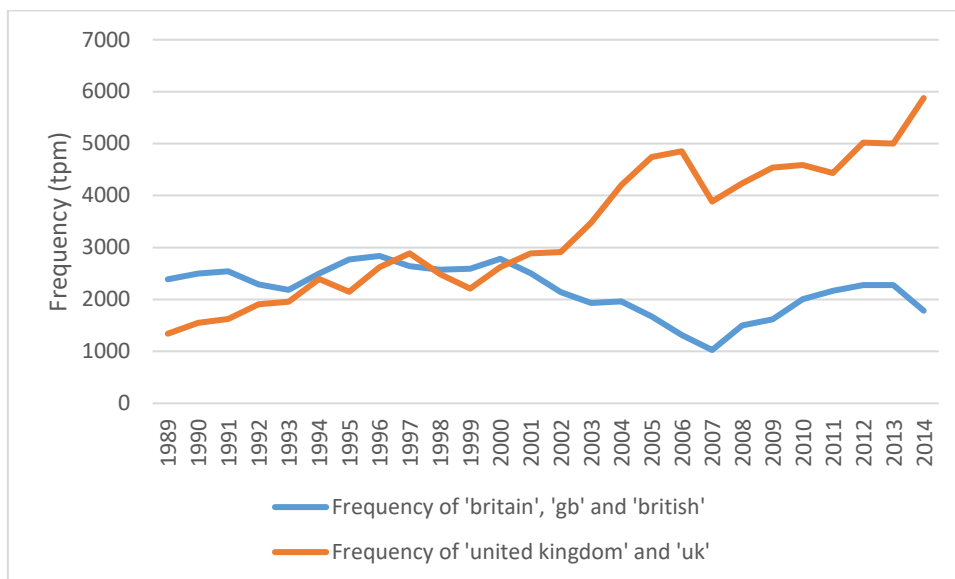
13.3 *uk* and *britain*

As noted in previous chapters, Hansard transcripts display an increasing use of initialisms as the period progresses and this pattern is seen in the frequency of *uk* and its associated full form, *united kingdom*: the full form is dominant at the beginning of the period, but *uk* has a higher frequency from 1996 onwards. The inclusion of web links in ministers' contributions in Hansard (particularly in written statements and written answers) also contributes in a small way to the rise in frequency of *uk*. Website addresses of the forms *gov.uk*, *org.uk* and *co.uk* have a frequency of 198 tpm in the last five full years of the period. Contrary to this trend, however, the initialism *gb* appears only in very rare circumstances such as in company names and the language tag *en_gb*, denoting British English in webpage addresses.

The changing frequency of *uk* and *britain* offers a perspective on how ministers choose to refer to their country. At the beginning of the period, the combined frequency of *britain*, *british* and *gb* exceeds that of *uk* and *united kingdom*, as Figure 13.2 shows. As the period progresses, this position is gradually reversed and *uk* and *united kingdom* become the dominant terms by which ministers identify their country from the early 2000s⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ A similar decline in the frequency of *britain* and *british*, and a rise in *uk*, is seen in data from the Hansard@Huddersfield interface, which includes contributions from all members of the Commons and Lords. As such this shift does not appear to be confined to the discourse of Foreign Office ministers.

Figure 13.2: Combined frequency of *britain*, *gb* and *british*; and *united kingdom* and *uk*



The initial dominance of *britain* and its related forms appears at odds with the role of Foreign Office ministers in a government whose jurisdiction includes not only England, Scotland and Wales, but also Northern Ireland. Reading ministers’ contributions reveals many instances in which their use of *britain* does not reflect its geographical meaning. When Robin Cook states that “The British Government have resolved to opt into the social chapter because we believe that that is right for Britain” (Commons vol. 295, 9 June 1997), he is referring to the UK government because there is no British government in a strictly geographic sense and the consequence of his announcement is that the provisions of the European social chapter would apply in Northern Ireland too. However, Cook is not alone in using *britain* as a shorthand for the *united kingdom* and the style guide of *The Guardian* newspaper claims that the terms are synonyms (The Guardian 2021). By contrast, the UK’s mapping agency describes it as a “cardinal sin” to confuse the terms (Ordnance Survey 2020).

Relatively few tokens of *britain* are preceded by *great*: fewer than 4% in the corpus as a whole. As Table 13.4 shows, in the case of Robin Cook – the Foreign Secretary whose contributions display the strongest preference for *britain* over *uk* – there are only three tokens of *great britain*, excluding

cases in which it appears in the names of organisations. A modest peak in the frequency of *great britain* in 2013 (34 tpm) is caused mainly by references to the Great Britain-China Centre (19 tpm), an arm of the Foreign Office established to support UK-China relations (Great Britain-China Centre 2021). Its name is that given when it was founded in 1974 and as such the use of *great britain* in this context does not indicate how ministers conceptualised national identity in 2013.

Table 13.4: Concordance lines for *great britain* in contributions of Robin Cook

Attribution	Contribution		
Robin Cook, Commons vol. 295, 9 Jun 1997	None of the press reports of that meeting portrayed the Prime Minister of	Great Britain	as a puppet. On the contrary, they all said
Robin Cook, Commons vol. 295, 9 Jun 1997	Even the German newspapers reported the Prime Minister of	Great Britain	as a rival to Chancellor Kohl for leadership of Europe.
Robin Cook, Commons vol. 365, 27 Mar 2001	it was the Conservative Government who presided over the government of	Great Britain	at the time of the Matabeleland massacres

The bigrams including *uk* that display the greatest rise in frequency over the period include *uk is* (+288 tpm), *uk has* (+264 tpm) and *uk will* (+158 tpm). In the case of *britain*, the bigrams with the largest fall in frequency include *britain has* (-53 tpm) and *britain is* (-19 tpm), while *britain will* has a smaller fall (-8 tpm). A comparison of contributions that contain the pairs including *britain* at the beginning of the period with those including *uk* at the end reveals a large degree of similarity in their use. At both time points, ministers use these constructions when emphasising the actions of the UK or British government, its influence and its track record. However, statements such as “The UK will stress the importance of Russia taking immediate action to withdraw all of its remaining troops and equipment from Ukraine” (David Lidington, Commons vol. 586, 16 October 2014) become more frequent as the period progresses. This change suggests that ministers increasingly wanted to demonstrate that they took an active approach to foreign policy. It provides no indication, however, that the shift from *britain* to *uk* was anything other than a simple substitution in ministers’ discourse.

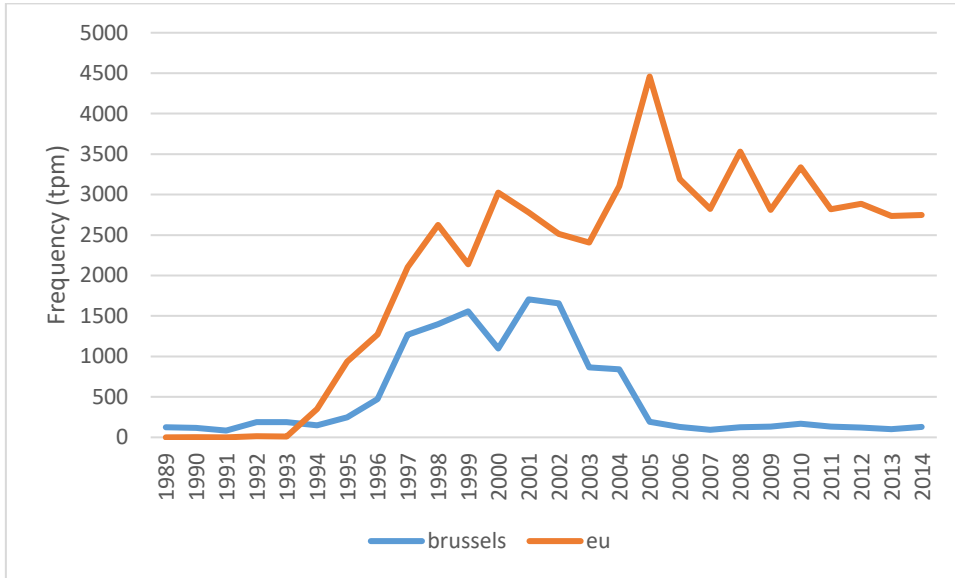
One might interpret ministers' shift towards *uk* as a way of voicing support for the integrity of the United Kingdom. However, the signing of Belfast Agreement in 1998 – in which the UK and Irish governments agreed that Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom and would remain so unless and until a majority of the people both of Northern Ireland and of the Republic of Ireland wished otherwise (HM Government 1998) – is not followed by any step change in the use of *britain* or *uk*. Furthermore, ministers' shift towards the term *uk* is not accompanied by any reduction in the frequency of *northern ireland*, which is relatively stable around a total frequency of 55 tpm. As such, this hypothesis does not offer a satisfactory explanation for the change. Alternatively, the shift towards *uk* could be viewed as a correction on the part of ministers. In this interpretation, Foreign Office ministers use *britain* simply as a metonym for the United Kingdom – a practice which exists throughout the period but is particularly common during the early years.

13.4 *eu* and *brussels*

The words *eu* and *brussels* have distinctly different patterns of frequency change during the period studied, as Figure 13.3 shows. The initialism *eu* is first seen in 1994⁴⁷ as a result of the European Community becoming the European Union through the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Its frequency then climbs rapidly before settling at around 3,000 tpm, with an isolated peak of almost 4,500 tpm in 2005. *Brussels* on the other hand is present in every year's data, with a heightened frequency from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s and a peak of a little over 1,700 tpm.

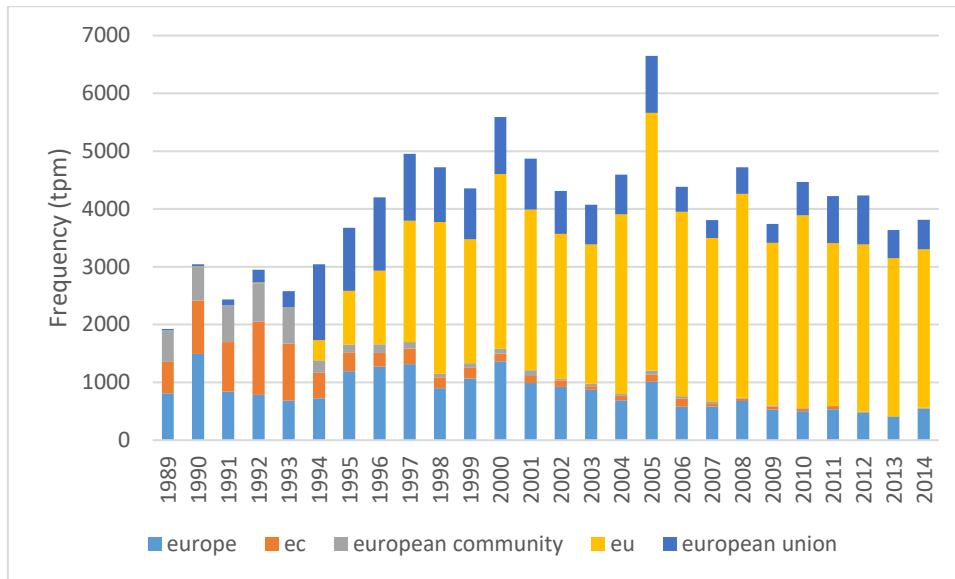
⁴⁷ Excluding a small number of cases where errors in the digitisation of Hansard have resulted in 'EC' and other strings being rendered as 'EU'.

Figure 13.3: Frequency of *eu* and *brussels*



At a basic level, the rise in frequency of *eu* is influenced both by the adoption of the name ‘European Union’ and by the increasing use of initialisms in Hansard. These factors create a degree of complexity in understanding changes in the frequency of ministers’ references to Europe. Combining frequency data for *european community*, *ec*, *european union*, *eu* and *europe* gives a fuller sense of the place that European affairs have in ministers’ discourse. As Figure 13.4 shows, the frequency of these items follows a rising trend until 2000 and a slowly falling trend thereafter, except for a peak in frequency in 2005.

Figure 13.4: Frequency of *europe*, *ec*, *european community*, *eu* and *european union*



Ministers use *europe* both as a metonym for the European Community and European Union and in a broader geographic sense. When Robin Cook speaks of an agreement “enabling Europe to open its doors to the new democracies of central and eastern Europe” (Commons vol. 342, 18 January 2000), he is perhaps straining the dual function of the word, but is not alone in doing so. The same countries are a major focus of ministers’ discourse when *europe* is at its initial peak of frequency in 1990, while later in that decade many contributions containing *europe* relate to the Balkans conflicts. The string *minister for europe* accounts for over 10% of tokens of *europe* each year from 2005 onwards.

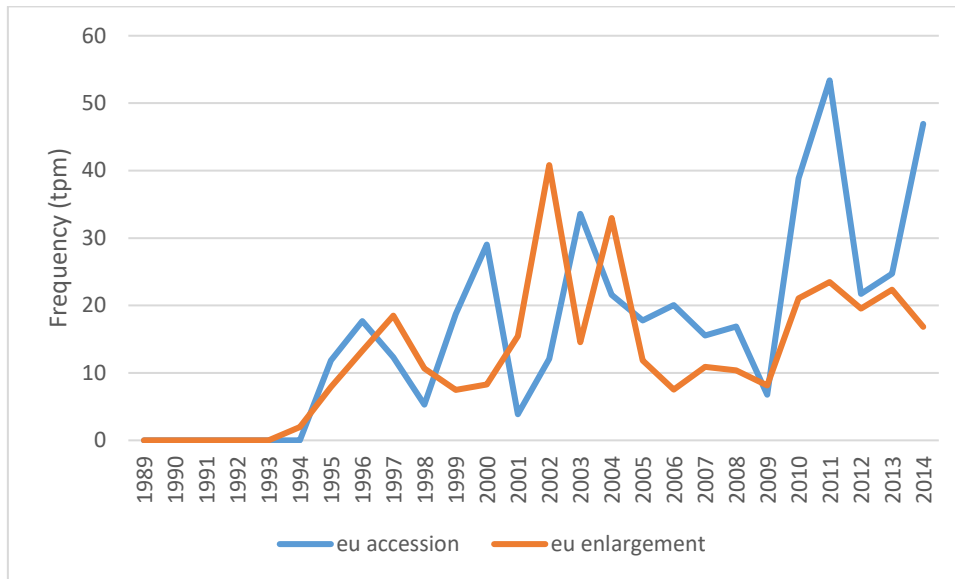
The nature and focus of matters of diplomacy in Europe also influence the frequency of the words discussed above. The peak of frequency seen in 2005 was in a year in which the UK held a “competent but uninspirational” presidency of the EU (Whitman and Thomas, 2005: 1), with a strong emphasis on economic matters. During the same year, voters in French and Dutch referenda rejected a proposed Constitutional Treaty for the EU, which Jack Straw had earlier described as “a necessary counterpart to the enlargement of the European Union” (Commons vol. 424, 9 September 2004).

Discourse relating to the treaty and its rejection contributes substantially to the peak in frequency noted in 2005.

Enlargement of the union is a thread running through ministers' discourse relating to Europe throughout the period studied. The strings *eu accession* (+23 tpm) and *eu enlargement* (+9 tpm) are among the bigrams including *eu* that display the largest rise in frequency when comparing contributions from the years 1997-2001 and 2010-2014⁴⁸. As Figure 13.5 shows, *eu enlargement* reaches its peak of frequency in 2002, when ministers gave enthusiastic backing for the EU to include central and eastern European states in its membership. By the time that *eu accession* reaches its peaks of frequency in 2011 and 2014, ministers' discourse focuses particularly on questions of whether Turkey and countries in the western Balkans might join the EU. As David Lidington puts it, "We believe that EU accession, and the accession process itself, is the best guarantee for bringing about long-term stability in the Western Balkans" (Commons vol. 533, 19 October 2011). This change in preferred terminology may reflect a deeper difference of views between Labour ministers and Conservative ministers in the coalition government, with those from Labour being instinctively more comfortable about the idea of the EU as an organisation enlarging and Conservatives finding it more palatable to discuss the matter in terms of the prospects for individual states to join the union.

⁴⁸ For other words discussed in this thesis, changes in the frequency of bigrams and longer strings have been analysed by comparing the first five and last five full years of the period. In the case of *eu*, it is more logical to compare the first five years when the initialism was well-established in ministers' discourse with the last five full years of the period.

Figure 13.5: Frequency of *eu accession* and *eu enlargement*



Ministers’ discourse from the early 2000s displays clear advocacy of benefits to the UK of EU membership. As Baroness Scotland puts it:

The European Union always has been, and must remain, more than just a free trade area. It is directly relevant to our prosperity and because of that is directly relevant to jobs. It improves the quality of life both here and abroad. It gives us peace and security and increases our influence on the world stage. The scale of those benefits will increase still further in the enlarged union which we shall see in the next decade. (Lords vol. 610, 17 March 2000)

However, at this time there were already growing calls for the UK to withdraw from the EU. The UK Independence Party is first mentioned in a contribution by a Foreign Office minister in 2000 (Robin Cook, Commons vol. 342, 18 January 2000). The balance of competences between European institutions and national governments also features in ministers’ discourse. For example, Keith Vaz’s view that “The Government are clear about the benefits for the UK of co-operating with our European partners” is tempered by a remark that “the Community should act only where the

objectives cannot be better carried out by member states” (Commons vol. 356, 8 November 2000).

On 11 February 2004 – the day with the third highest number of tokens of *eu* in the whole corpus – the main focus of a speech by Jack Straw was government’s plans to increase the role of the UK parliament in EU matters (Commons vol. 417, 11 February 2004).

When comparing Labour ministers’ contributions from the early 2000s with Conservative ministers’ contributions from the early 2010s, there is a noticeable shift towards more qualified support for the UK’s continued membership of the EU. After David Cameron’s January 2013 speech setting out his vision to reform the UK’s relationship with the EU, debates on Europe took place both in the Commons and Lords⁴⁹. In the Commons, William Hague argued that:

[...] over the past 20 years, member states have granted the European Parliament a dramatic increase in its powers through successive treaties, in the hope that it would address the growing sense of distance and disengagement among European voters. That manifestly has not worked. The question of democratic disconnection and accountability has not gone away. That suggests that we need a different answer. That answer will include a bigger and more significant role for national Parliaments, which are and will remain the true source of democratic legitimacy in the European Union. (Commons vol. 557, 30 January 2013)

Hague’s emphasis on democratic legitimacy is not entirely new here. In 1990 Francis Maude spoke of greater involvement of national parliaments being “one of the mechanisms for improving democratic legitimacy in the [European] Community” (Commons vol. 175, 28 June 1990) and the phrase is used in a similar way by Conservative and Labour ministers alike. However, the additional dimension of giving voters the opportunity to express their views through a referendum on the UK’s membership of the EU was new. As Hague put it, “Whether we want Britain to stay in the EU or leave, we should

⁴⁹ Cameron’s speech itself was not delivered in parliament, but at the London office of the Bloomberg company.

trust the people and put the decision to them” (Commons vol. 557, 30 January 2013). Liberal Democrat members of the coalition government, who held a very different view of the UK’s future relationship with the EU, did not occupy any ministerial posts at the Foreign Office at the time, and as such no contributions from them feature in the corpus for this debate.

If the changing frequency of *eu* reflects complex political factors, the case of *brussels* is remarkably simple. In contrast to journalistic discourse in which *brussels* is used – often unfavourably – as a metonym for the European Union, ministers’ use of the word in parliament is overwhelmingly and simply as a place name. During the Labour years, ministers gave regular statements about the budgets of UK embassies and consulates overseas and the impact of exchange rate variations. *Brussels* is mentioned in these and, as a result of the regularity of the statements, five of the ten most frequent bigrams including *brussels* in the corpus as a whole are financial values.

There is also a rise in frequency of the bigram *in brussels* (+20 tpm), which results largely from ministers making more frequent references to meetings taking place there. One reason for this is that, from 2003 onwards, European Council meetings were normally held in Brussels rather than in the country that held the Council Presidency at that time (European Union 2021). Instances in which *brussels* is used as part of a ‘stigma’ phrase (Teubert 2001: 53) are rare and mild. The bigram *brussels bureaucrats* occurs twice in the corpus, but as Table 13.5 shows, the phrase is used to mock those who mock the EU, not to stigmatise the institution itself.

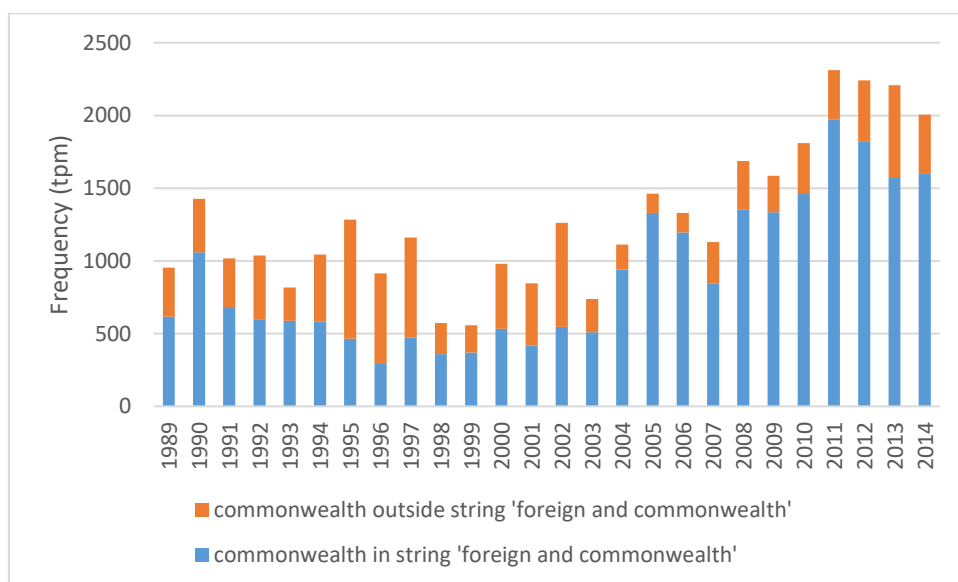
Table 13.5: Concordance lines for *brussels bureaucrats*

Attribution	Contribution		
Jack Straw, Commons vol. 387, 18 Jun 2002	It is not the oft-reviled and misunderstood	brussels bureaucrats	who make decisions; it is elected politicians, and so it should be.
Baroness Chalker, Lords vol. 566, 25 Oct 1995	As the noble Baroness said, we are not talking about more	brussels bureaucrats	. We are talking about having the right people in the right places.

13.5 Commonwealth

The dominant use of the Word *commonwealth* is in the title of the ‘Foreign and Commonwealth Office’ and in ministers’ jobs titles such as ‘Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs’. Approximately 73% of tokens of *commonwealth* occur in the string *foreign and commonwealth* and, as Figure 13.6 shows, ministers’ increasing use of this string accounts for the great majority of the rise in frequency of *commonwealth* over the period studied.

Figure 13.6: Frequency of *commonwealth*, within and outside the string *foreign and commonwealth*



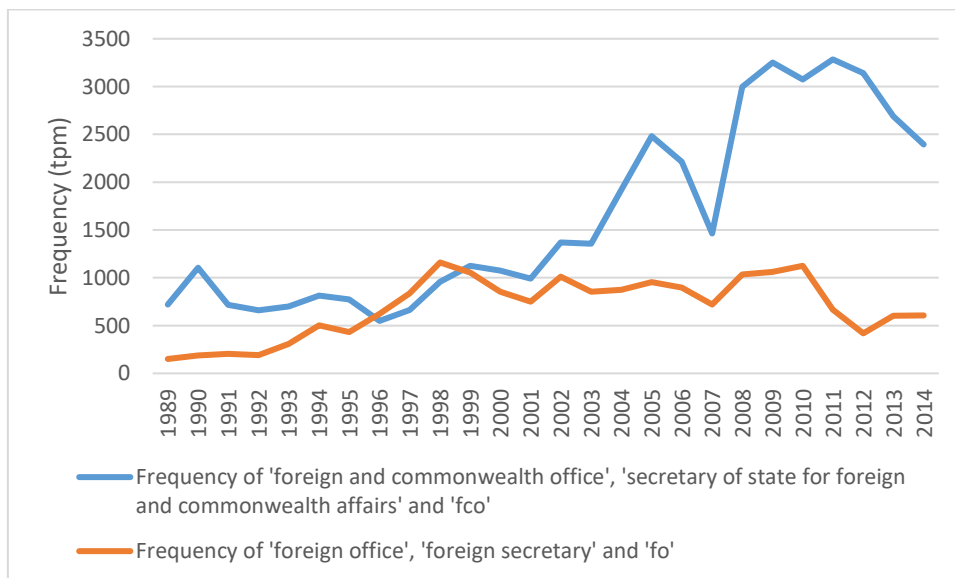
The rise in frequency of *foreign and commonwealth* (+1,001 tpm)⁵⁰ occurs despite a concurrent rise in the use of the initialism *fco* (+1,151 tpm), the frequency of which first exceeds that of *foreign and commonwealth office* in 1995. This differs from the pattern of frequency change observed with the

⁵⁰ The 1,001 tpm increase in frequency of the string *foreign and commonwealth* is a slightly higher value than the value of 996 tpm given in the discussion of binomials chapter 7. This script used to calculate the frequency of binomials uses a different and less accurate means of identifying and counting tokens of a phrase. However, as the difference in values is less than 1% and affects only one chapter, I have not considered it necessary to revise the script.

names of other organisations such as the EU and UN, where the rise in frequency of the initialism is accompanied by a fall in frequency of the full form.

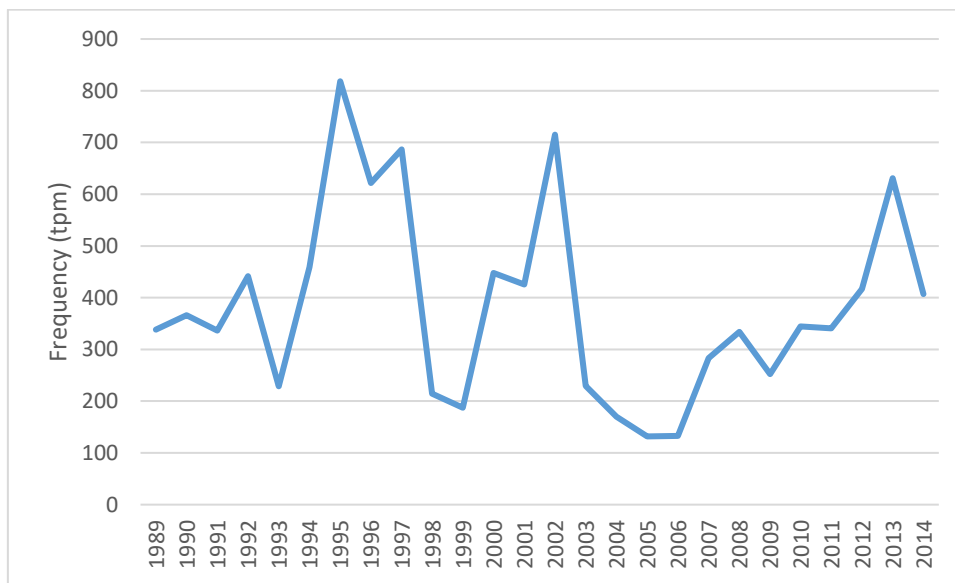
The Foreign Office and its ministers are named in Hansard using forms that mention the Commonwealth (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and FCO) or using forms that do not (Foreign Office, Foreign Secretary and FO). At the beginning of the period, forms referencing the Commonwealth are dominant. For a brief period after the Labour government took office, forms that do not mention the Commonwealth become more frequent than those that do. After this, forms that mention the Commonwealth regain their dominance, despite a large increase in the use of the string *foreign secretary* (+385 tpm) as a shorthand for ‘Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs’. Figure 13.7 shows these changes. These sometimes contradictory trends may have a range of causes including changes in transcription practices. However, their effect is that ministers’ discourse as recorded in Hansard includes the Word *commonwealth* significantly more frequently at the end of the period than at the beginning, as if to emphasise the ‘Commonwealth’ dimension of the FCO’s responsibilities.

Figure 13.7: Frequency of selected forms including and excluding *commonwealth*



The secondary use of the Word *commonwealth* is to discuss the association of countries known as The Commonwealth. The frequency of *commonwealth* outside the string *foreign and commonwealth* is highly variable year-on-year as Figure 13.8 shows. Its use outside the string rises over the period (+97 tpm), but by a smaller percentage than its use within the string (+29% vs + 141%).

Figure 13.8: Frequency of *commonwealth* outside the string *foreign and commonwealth*



The peaks in frequency of *commonwealth* outside the string *foreign and commonwealth* are connected with a range of factors including world events, developments within the association itself and developments in UK foreign policy. Ministers express pleasure at the transition to inclusive government in South Africa in 1995, concern over the conduct of elections in Zimbabwe in 2002 and address controversy over human rights in Sri Lanka in 2013. Each of these cases has a link to the Commonwealth, with South Africa rejoining the association, Zimbabwe’s membership of the Commonwealth Councils⁵¹ being suspended and UK ministers resisting calls to boycott a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka, but warning that “the CHOGM

⁵¹ The Commonwealth Councils are organisations accredited by the Commonwealth such as the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council and the Council for Education in the Commonwealth.

host should demonstrably embody our shared Commonwealth values” (Alistair Burt, Commons vol. 556, 14 January 2013).

Bigrams that include *commonwealth* (but outside the string *foreign and commonwealth*) reflect similar issues. The bigram with the largest change in frequency is *the commonwealth* (+71 tpm), followed by *commonwealth heads* (+21 tpm), which is found almost exclusively in the string *commonwealth heads of government*. The pairs *commonwealth values* (+11 tpm) and *commonwealth charter* (+10 tpm) relate to the signing of a Commonwealth Charter in 2013, which expresses “the commitment of member states to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all the people of the Commonwealth” (The Commonwealth 2013). It articulates 16 Commonwealth Values, several of which – including human rights and gender equality – are also identified in this thesis as growth areas in UK foreign policy discourse. The activities of the Commonwealth around these values contribute to the growth of these themes in ministers’ discourse: when comparing a subcorpus of contributions containing *commonwealth* with the corpus as a whole, the words *human*, *rights* and *women* each display a larger increase in frequency in the former than the latter⁵². With shared aspirations between UK foreign policy and the Commonwealth, William Hague was able to “strongly welcome” the charter (Commons vol. 559, 4 March 2013).

Of the bigrams including *commonwealth* that display the largest fall in frequency, *commonwealth development* (-49 tpm) forms part of the longer string *commonwealth development corporation*, which was a UK government-owned company providing “equity investment and loan finance predominantly to private sector enterprises in developing countries” (Mark Lennox-Boyd, Commons vol. 236, 31 January 1994). Conservative ministers discuss proposals to reform the corporation, but

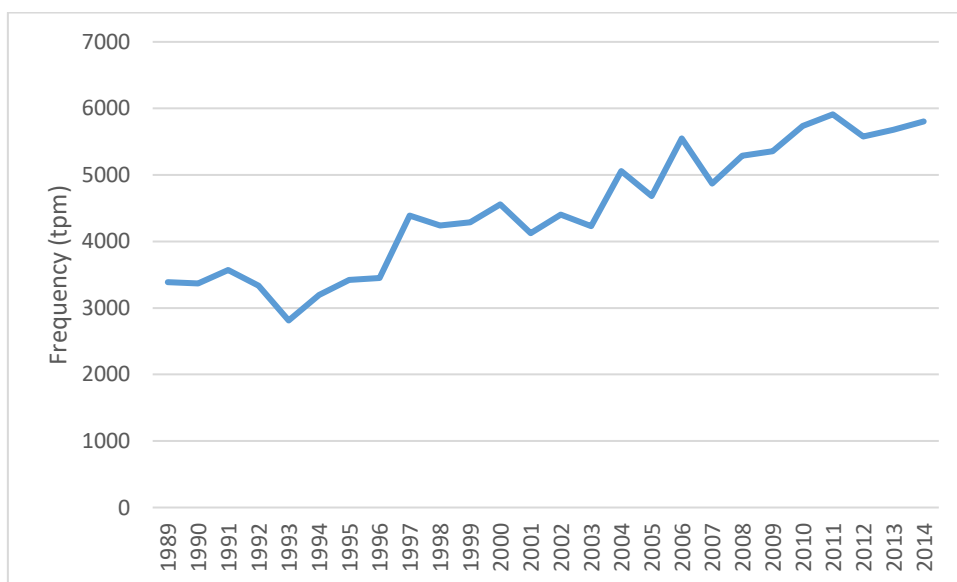
⁵² When comparing the *commonwealth* subcorpus with the corpus as a whole, changes of frequency are +2,116 vs +1,635 for *human*, +2,424 vs +1,919 for *rights* and +397 vs +333 for *women*.

with the creation of the Department for International Development when Labour came to power, it largely disappears from the contributions of Foreign Office ministers. Similarly, *commonwealth institute* (-13 tpm) relates to The Commonwealth Institute, an education and cultural organisation based in London which was experiencing financial difficulties and closed after it lost UK government funding (Baroness Chalker, Lords vol. 549, 27 October 1993).

13.6 Government

The word *government* has a frequency of 4,664 tpm in the corpus as a whole. Excluding the nine grammatical words, this makes it the Word selected for analysis that has the highest overall frequency, followed by *uk* (2,803 tpm), *foreign* (2,724 tpm) and *eu* (2,313). As Figure 13.9 shows, its frequency is relatively stable during the period of office of the Conservative government before rising steadily through the Labour years and stabilising again after the coalition took power.

Figure 13.9: Frequency of *government*



When ministers discuss *government*, they refer to the government of their own country more than any other: of the most frequent bigrams of the form ‘nationality + *government*’, *british government* (172 tpm) and *uk government* (99 tpm) head the list. However, foreign governments are named much more frequently overall, with the ten most frequently named foreign governments having a combined frequency of 471 tpm, compared to a combined frequency of 271 tpm for *british government* and *uk government*. Table 13.6 shows the frequency of each of these bigrams.

Table 13.6: Frequency of the 12 most frequent bigrams of the form ‘nationality + *government*’

Bigram	Frequency in whole corpus (tpm)	Combined frequency in whole corpus (tpm)
british government	172	271
uk government	99	
israeli government	92	471
afghan government	56	
chinese government	52	
burmese government	46	
[sri] lankan government	45	
iraqi government	45	
turkish government	40	
indian government	34	
iranian government	32	
colombian government	29	

In contrast to some other words analysed in this thesis, the rise in frequency of *government* cannot be attributed to any particular world event, nor to a change in policy or ministerial responsibilities. In a subcorpus containing only those contributions which include the Word *government*, many of the words which display the greatest rise in frequency are those which also rise most in the corpus as a whole. As Table 13.7 shows, the words *and*, *uk*, *eu*, *rights* and *human* are among the words with the largest increase in frequency in this subcorpus.

Table 13.7: Words with the largest change in frequency a subcorpus of contributions containing the word *government*

Word	TPM 1989-93	TPM 2010-2014	TPM change
and	24902	33297	8394
uk	199	4088	3889
on	8961	12086	3125
eu	0	2709	2709
to	33527	36015	2487
rights	1000	3215	2215
with	6728	8866	2138
foreign	1274	3260	1986
government	6909	8859	1950
human	887	2759	1872

When comparing contributions from the earlier and later years of the period studied, there are striking examples of this change. In the contributions of Douglas Hurd, *government* has a frequency 1,351 tpm lower than the average of all ten Foreign Secretaries. The following contribution regarding Iraq’s non-compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions illustrates his sparing use of the word. Asked whether the governments of Bahrain and Egypt support military action against Iraq, Hurd replies:

The hon. Gentleman must ask them for their views. I am accountable for the policy of this Government. Iraq is defying the United Nations and the international community. It has not complied with representations made to it on the southern no-fly zone and has refused UNSCOM — the United Nations special commission — permission to fly into Iraq. It has violated the border with Kuwait and has moved missiles into northern Iraq. The Security Council has made clear its views on all these matters and Iraq should be in no doubt that the consequences will be serious. (Commons vol. 216, 13 January 1993)

Hurd might have said “The government of Iraq is defying” or “the Iraqi government should be in no doubt” but this is not the case, even though his remarks clearly relate to the government of Iraq

rather than to the state or its people. In this respect, his use of the country's name as a metonym for its government is economical but imprecise and might be considered to unfairly tarnish a people by association with the actions of their government. Later in the period, this form of metonymy appears to be less common. In the following contribution from 2013, Baroness Warsi is critical of the government of Burma, but her comments name the government specifically (or the 'Burmese authorities'):

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right honourable friend the Member for East Devon (Mr Swire), visited Rakhine on 14 and 15 December, where he met communities affected by the violence and urged the Burmese authorities to ensure both security and humanitarian access across Rakhine State. The Burmese Government have⁵³, to date, allowed 19 separate visits by independent observers from foreign Governments and international organisations to visit the areas affected by the violence. Officials from our embassy, including our ambassador, led the first independent diplomatic mission to Rakhine State in early October, and visited again in early November. Given the levels of international access to the area, and the Burmese Government's establishment of an investigative commission to look into the events in Rakhine State, the British Government will await the Commission's recommendations, and will work with the Burmese authorities accordingly.

(Lords vol. 742, 8 January 2013)

In addition to the bigrams including *government* already discussed, several others merit a brief mention. *Good government* is a theme of ministers' discourse during the early years of the period, with ministers urging other countries to implement reforms conducive to it. Given the emphasis on

⁵³ Throughout the period studied, government is used both as a singular and plural noun. Based on an analysis of *government is/are* and *government has/have*, the dominant use is in the singular. However, its use as a plural noun (such as in Baroness Warsi's contribution) becomes more frequent during the period of office of the coalition government, almost matching the frequency of the singular forms in 2014.

the UK's 'soft power' that has been noted later in the period (Gautam 2021), it seems surprising that this bigram declined in frequency (-63 tpm). However, the expression is found primarily in contributions relating to international development and its decline occurs once this ceased to be a responsibility of the Foreign Office in 1997. Furthermore, *good governance* rose in frequency (+48 tpm) and is used as a near-synonym of *good government* in ministers' discourse in the later years. The following two excerpts illustrate a continuity of meaning between *good government* and *good governance*:

The Government are committed to upholding the rule of law in international affairs and fostering good government and a respect for human rights. (Mark Lennox-Boyd, Commons vol. 188, 28 March 1991)

and

The promotion of democracy, alongside human rights, the rule of law and good governance is a thread which runs through all of the Government's foreign policy. (Bill Rammell, Commons vol. 431, 22 February 2005)

Across government (+25 tpm) and *cross government* (+17 tpm) are first seen in 1995 and 2003 respectively and reach a combined peak in frequency of 58 tpm in 2011. By this time, ministers describe a joined-up and collaborative approach to matters that are of common concern to the Foreign Office and other government departments. They state, for example, that the Foreign Office "works closely with partners across Government to support the Government of Pakistan in strengthening democratic institutions" (Alistair Burt, Commons vol. 523, 9 February 2011) and that "Our overseas CT [counter-terrorism] priorities are driven by a comprehensive analysis across Government of the threat to the UK and our interests" (Alistair Burt, Commons vol. 524, 28 February 2011). The rise in frequency of these bigrams suggests an increased focus on the part of ministers on

cross-cutting issues, perhaps reflecting the world at large becoming more interconnected and globalised during the period.

Lastly, *inclusive government* (+18 tpm) has a short-lived spike in frequency 2010, which relates not to the formation of the coalition government in the UK, but to a new government in Zimbabwe in which political opponents Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai held the offices of President and Prime Minister respectively. The bigram is also used in the name of the Foreign Office publication entitled "Inclusive Government: Mainstreaming Gender into Foreign Policy" mentioned in an earlier chapter of this thesis (Jack Straw, Commons vol. 422, 10 June 2004).

13.7 Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter reveals some clear shifts in the lexical choices attributed to UK Foreign Office ministers between 1989 and 2014. In respect of the name by which they identify their country, there is a shift from *britain* being dominant to *uk*, the more accurate term in the context of ministers' discourse. This change forms part of a wider pattern of Hansard transcripts increasingly recording the use of initialisms as the period progresses, something which is also seen in *eu* and *fco*. The increasing use of *foreign secretary* in place of *secretary of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs* also indicates a growing preference for or acceptance of shorter forms.

The frequency data for the words analysed in this chapter also indicates an increase in ministers' use of terms that refer to their country, the government and department to which they belong and the job titles of ministers – terms that might broadly be described as self-referential. In some cases, this change brings greater precision to ministers' discourse, for example by differentiating between a country and its government. This distinction seems particularly pertinent in the case of governments that do not rule by popular consent. However, in other cases ministers simply use the terms more frequently than is strictly necessary to convey their meaning, making their discourse more verbose.

The rising frequency of *government* to refer to foreign governments as well as that of the UK might be interpreted as a sign of ministers developing an increasingly bilateral approach to international relations. Supporters of such a view might point to the rise of euroscepticism as being consistent with this change. However, closer examination of the data does not support this interpretation. The frequency of *government* was already rising while powers were being transferred to the EU through successive treaties. The concurrent increase in the frequency with which ministers refer to the EU and the Commonwealth further calls into question such a hypothesis. Instead, the rise of *government* and other self-referential terms seems to be foremost a stylistic change.

The frequency of ministers' references to Europe and specifically to the EU is influenced by a range of factors including the volume of EU-related business taking place in parliament at any time (for example when a proposed treaty is debated) and as a result of events taking place in Europe but outside the EU's borders (particularly in the Balkans). Nonetheless, the frequency of terms relating to the Europe is highest during the period of office of the Labour government⁵⁴, whose views were more consistently favourable towards the EU than those of the Conservative or coalition governments. Setting aside the peak in frequency of 2005, when the proposed EU constitution was the subject of extensive debate, the early years of the Labour government see the highest frequency of these terms. However, as there is no fall in the combined frequency of *european union* and *eu* later in the period, one cannot infer that the rise of euroscepticism made ministers any less forthcoming in discussing EU-related matters in parliament.

The volatility of the frequency of *commonwealth* limits the extent to which one can identify long-term trends in ministers' use of the term. Discussing the Commonwealth certainly does not appear to have been a priority of Labour government ministers during their early years in office. However,

⁵⁴ The same pattern is seen in data available via the Hansard@Huddersfield interface on the contributions of all members of the Commons and Lords.

there is a resurgence in use of the word thereafter and the fact that part of this increase occurs in strings other than those naming the Foreign and Commonwealth Office indicates some renewed focus on the Commonwealth as an organisation. Areas such as human rights and gender equality, on which the Commonwealth focused during the latter years of the period studied, are simultaneously growth areas in UK foreign policy discourse as seen elsewhere in this thesis. Viewed in this way, one might see the Commonwealth as a valuable channel through which the UK government could influence and collaborate with other states regarding such issues. However, ministers' references to the Commonwealth remain much less frequent than those to the EU or UN. Extending the time period of this study would reveal whether the UK's need to develop other partnerships in consequence of its departure from the EU resulted in further growth of discourse relating to the Commonwealth.

14. DISCUSSION: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

14.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to analyse lexical change in the parliamentary discourse of UK Foreign Office ministers in a way that is data-driven and without an overtly political agenda. It described how ministers' discourse would be studied using a corpus-based approach that is reproducible and verifiable, with the aim of making a specialist contribution that is of interest both to linguists and others working in disciplines such as political science. This chapter considers how the methodology has performed and how it might be further developed.

14.2 Putting CADS into practice

The research presented in this thesis uses the hybrid of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis that is associated with Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (Duguid 2007: 457). However, this thesis differs from many other works in this field in the extent to which statistical data is used. The selection of words for analysis was informed by data on the change in frequency of every Word in the corpus. The grouping of words into themes was informed not only by background knowledge and contextual reading, but by data on the co-occurrence of words in ministers' contributions. Analysing the changing frequency of bigrams and longer strings and obtaining data for the three 'perspectives' (frequency change year-by-year, between the contributions of the successive Foreign Secretaries and between governments) provided additional depth of analysis.

This approach has enabled me to gain insights that I might not otherwise have found. Whilst some of the major areas of lexical change were unsurprising in view of wider societal changes or were well-documented in contextual literature, others were less obvious. Without the data from the corpus, I might not have identified religious freedom as a topic to investigate in depth; nor understood the

shifting focus of ministers' contributions relating to women. Crucially, the data-driven approach also means that each lexical change is quantified and can be compared with others of a greater or lesser scale. Having multiple data points also makes it possible to differentiate between short-term peaks in frequency and longer-term trends.

The in-depth approach to data analysis used in this thesis has helped to mitigate some of the risks that attach to more limited use of data. The fall in frequency of *refugees* provides a case in point: taken in isolation, basic data would show that it has a much higher frequency at the beginning of the period than at the end. Based on this alone, one might be tempted to speculate that the change reflects a loss of concern on the part of ministers for the plight of refugees. However, as (i) the more granular data on year-by-year frequency change showed that most of the fall occurred after 1997; and (ii) excess frequency data showed a co-occurrence between *refugees* and other words associated with international development, it quickly became clear that the fall was directly linked to the creation of DfID. A reassignment of responsibilities within government may seem a mundane explanation for a lexical change in political discourse, but the results of this research suggest that such reasons – which will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter – are commonplace. This finding sounds a note of caution: analysts of political discourse should take care not to assume that a linguistic change has a greater significance than is actually the case.

If this thesis has emphasised the corpus-based aspect of CADS, qualitative analysis forms a smaller part of this study than in many papers in this branch of linguistics. I began the research with an intention to take a data-driven approach but without a set view of what proportions of the analysis would use quantitative and qualitative methods. The extent to which I ultimately used quantitative techniques was influenced by a realisation that the data-driven approach was yielding unique insights and enabling me to investigate a wider range of foreign policy topics than might otherwise have been possible. This reflection is not intended to downplay the insight that further qualitative

analysis could offer, but simply to suggest that in-depth data analysis has a value that may not yet be fully appreciated for CADS and other approaches such as PDA.

14.3 Reflections on the corpus

In compiling the corpus, there were decisions to take on which ministers' contributions to include, what time period to cover and how to tag the data. The decision not to include Prime Ministers' contributions means that some speeches covering matters of foreign policy are missing. Some of these contributions cover very significant topics such as decisions to go to war or to transfer additional powers from the UK parliament to the EU. By the nature of their responsibilities, the contributions of a Prime Minister are not necessarily confined to a single area of policy. A speech on Afghanistan may cover foreign policy, defence, international development and immigration policy, for example. For this reason, it would be impossible to identify a subset of 'foreign policy' contributions from a Prime Minister. Faced with a choice between including all of the contributions made by a Prime Minister or none, the latter remains the less bad option because of the large quantity of extraneous material that would otherwise have been included in the corpus. The exclusion of Prime Ministers' contributions is likely to have had little effect on the overall findings presented in this thesis, as any topic foreign policy discussed by the Prime Minister would almost certainly also be discussed by Foreign Office ministers.

The inclusion in the corpus of the contributions of all Foreign Office ministers, and not only those of a Foreign Secretary, proved worthwhile. The division of effort within the ministerial team means that excluding any individual would have affected the balance of the corpus. A corpus containing only the contributions of Foreign Secretaries would not include those of the Minister for Europe, excluding large parts of the government's discourse in a key area of foreign policy. For completeness, and

because of the distinct portfolios they held, it was also beneficial to include Foreign Office ministers in the House of Lords.

Covering a time period of over 25 years undoubtedly yielded insights that could not have been obtained from a shorter period. Among the words selected for analysis, different patterns of frequency change are clearly visible in the data. Those which display a sustained rise or fall in frequency across the period as a whole, such as *human rights*, are of particular interest as this suggests a long-term change in the scope and/or focus of the UK's foreign policy. Studying a still longer period would give further perspective and it is possible that some changes sustained over 25 years are in fact spikes when viewed in this way.

The most recent contributions included in the corpus are over seven years old at the time of submitting this thesis. In many respects it would have been desirable to include more recent discourse, as the thesis leaves unanswered the question of how today's foreign policy discourse differs from that of previous years. In view of the changes of policy that have taken place since 2015, including the UK's departure from the EU and the world events that have dominated ministers' attention including the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is likely that more recent data would show further significant lexical changes. However, as the corpus needed to be complete before beginning to calculate the frequency data presented in this thesis, there would inevitably have remained a gap between the most recent contributions and the date of submission. The significance of changes in ministers' discourse can perhaps also be evaluated more clearly with the benefit of some time elapsed, thanks in part to the greater availability of contextual literature such as (auto)biographies of political leaders who held office during the period studied.

The tagging schema applied to the corpus was very simple, with four tags indicating the House, Hansard volume, date and the name of the member who made each contribution. This provided sufficient information to make the corpus divisible and searchable for the purposes of this research.

For some of the changes identified in the ‘Grammatical words’ chapter, it would have been useful to have a fifth tag indicating the type of contribution, i.e. a contribution made during a debate, an oral statement, written statement, oral answer or written answer. With this additional tag, it would have been possible to identify whether, for example, the increase in average sentence length observed during the period was linked to an increase in the number of contributions made in written form.

A sixth tag capturing the title of the relevant item of parliamentary business would have provided an immediate indication of the context in which each contribution was made. Some of these (for example, ‘EU: External Action Service’) would have attracted my interest more than others (for example, ‘Diplomatic Missions: Parking Fines’). I briefly considered whether to tag contributions to show the political party to which the member belonged. However, as Hansard begins a new volume whenever there is a change of government, and as only one Liberal Democrat (Jeremy Browne) served as a Foreign Office minister during the coalition years, I was able to separate contributions by party without needing this additional tag.

14.4 Reflections on analytic methodology

A distinctive element of the analytic methodology used in this research was using bespoke scripts rather than ‘off-the-shelf’ corpus linguistic tools. Having learned some coding skills to assemble the corpus, it was not a great step further to write scripts to carry out basic frequency analysis for single words, bigrams and longer strings. Similarly, writing scripts to present concordance lines and to identify contributions which contained particular words was relatively straightforward. Whilst all of these functions could have been carried out using off-the-shelf software, developing my own scripts avoided the constraint identified by Anthony (2013) of the research methods being dictated by the functionality of existing tools. Instead, writing scripts enabled me to carry out bespoke analysis and was a satisfying exercise in itself.

The concept of 'excess frequency' provided the basis to group words into themes for the analysis chapters and added depth to the analysis of individual words. Using a bespoke script meant that calculating excess frequencies was not labour-intensive as the script carried out all of the necessary stages (from extracting the relevant contributions to presenting the results in tabular form) at a single click of the mouse. With this approach, obtaining data on an additional Word created minimal extra work and enabled me to explore the corpus more extensively than might otherwise have been possible.

Using bespoke scripts also made it possible to approach the co-occurrence of words in a string of text in a novel way. Whilst analysis of bigrams provided valuable early insights, it became clear that setting a numerical limit on the length of strings analysed would have been somewhat arbitrary. With many off-the-shelf tools, however, there would have been no alternative to this. By writing my own scripts, I was able to define the relevant string as being a contribution, irrespective of its length. This approach provided some striking insights including by demonstrating how the changing context in which the word *women* was used. As such, being unconstrained by the functionality provided in off-the-shelf software was a significant advantage and enabled me to shape my analytic methodology directly to answering the research questions.

In addition to these functional advantages, the principles of openness and replicability were important to this research. The analysis carried out here, using freely available software and published scripts, is capable of being verified by any individual with access to the internet and the relevant skills and inclination. Having the relevant skills is a significant qualification as attaining the level of proficiency required to understand the functioning of the scripts requires a period of learning. However, as I had no prior experience of coding before beginning the research and learned on a largely self-taught basis, the bar is not set excessively high.

Undoubtedly the scripts used in this research could be improved to achieve the same results through fewer lines of code. In hindsight my scripts wrote data to files more often than was necessary where that data was small enough to be held in memory. By making greater use of more efficient functions offered in Python, the scripts could have produced their results faster. The script used to calculate the frequency of every Word in Perspective One ran for around 80 hours; others such as that used to identify examples of contributions produced results within a few seconds. It is not certain, however, that making these improvements would have led to a net time saving. As a part-time researcher, the time taken to return results never inconvenienced me as I could leave a script to run for as long as necessary, knowing that the results would be ready for my next study day.

Although analysing the data using the three 'Perspectives' provided additional insight beyond that available solely from year-by-year analysis of frequency change, the value was not as great as I anticipated. Whereas I had expected to arrive at some distinct conclusions by separating out the contributions of Foreign Secretaries only in Perspective Two, the most significant learning from this analysis was instead the importance of including the other ministers to ensure balance in the corpus. The division of the corpus by governing parties in Perspective Three provided little insight beyond that which was already available from Perspective One. For further research of a similar nature, I would not consider it essential to obtain data for Perspectives Two or Three.

14.5 Topics not identified for analysis in this thesis

As the methodology used in the research has focused on a small number of words which display a large change in frequency, other changes are not covered and nor are areas of relative stability in ministers' discourse. Perhaps the most significant dimension of the UK's foreign policy that is not directly related to any of the selected words is the UK's relationship with the United States of America. The absolute frequency of *united states*, *usa* and *america* is relatively stable except for a

peak around the time of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This data underlines how the UK-US relationship has been a constant factor in UK foreign policy over the period. Expressed as tokens per million words, however, *united states*, *usa* and *america* all fall in frequency as other topics in ministers' discourse grow. The words *middle* (found overwhelmingly in the bigram *middle east*), *israel* and *palestinian* all display some event-driven volatility but their modest long-term rise in frequency was insufficient to prompt their selection for analysis. It is possible that similar patterns in word frequencies may be associated with other intractable problems in the world.

The period covered by this study saw a rapid rise in the economic and political power of China, but the word *china* displays a smaller rise in frequency than these changes might suggest. This is primarily because the word had a high frequency during the early years of the period in contributions relating to the suppression of pro-democracy protests and the handover of Hong Kong. As time passed, this part of ministers' discourse relating to China contracted, providing a counterbalance to other areas of growth.

From a purist perspective, it is logical for a corpus linguist focusing on frequency change not to select words such as *america*, *middle* and *china* for analysis. To do so would detract from the integrity of the data-driven methodology and could squeeze out discussion of other lexical changes that a researcher might not identify without the benefit of corpus data. However, as one aim of this research is to provide unique insight of relevance to specialists in other disciplines, the exclusion of words directly relating to important areas of foreign policy may seem unsatisfactory. Beyond this, when selecting words for analysis, I consciously avoided country names other than the UK as I was sceptical as to the value they would bring. Few readers would be surprised to learn that *afghanistan* has a low frequency before the UK's military involvement in the country and a high frequency during it. By contrast, words such as *development* and *security* offered the possibility of wider-ranging insights. Ultimately the method used to select words for analysis must be appropriate to the purpose

of the research. One of the great benefits of corpus techniques is their flexibility. With the same scripts developed for this research, it would be very simple to create a bespoke corpus of contributions in which any given country or topic is named and to analyse changes in discourse relating to that country or topic, if that accorded with the aims of the research.

More broadly, there are a number of topics which interested observers might identify as being significant in the UK's foreign policy discourse but which have not been discussed in this thesis. Direct references to the UK's colonial past are rare, with *colony* and *colonial* each having a frequency generally under 20 tpm. Indirect references occur in contributions relating to the end of apartheid in South Africa or the redistribution of land ownership in Zimbabwe, but without ministers making an explicit connection between those events and the UK's role as a colonising power. Instead, ministers prefer to emphasise positive present-day relationships with former colonies, both bilaterally and through the Commonwealth. At the end of the period, there are a number of contributions regarding the apparent loss of FCO files relating to the colonial period that were due to be made public, along with a statement by William Hague about a legal settlement with victims of brutality in colonial Kenya⁵⁵. The widespread public discussion of the UK's colonial past that has taken place in recent years is not prefigured in ministers' contributions during the period studied.

Similarly, British Values – which Sanders and Houghton (2017) identify as a theme of David Cameron's foreign policy – do not figure explicitly in the contributions analysed here in any major way and the bigram *british values* is little more frequent under the coalition government than it was under Labour. If Sanders' and Houghton's observation is correct, it may be that this development manifests itself less in parliament than in other discourses during the Cameron years, and/or that any

⁵⁵ This statement is discussed in chapter 4, where it is used in a comparison of Hague's words as spoken and as transcribed in Hansard.

other lexical changes arising from it are too small to meet the criteria used in this thesis to select words for detailed analysis.

14.6 Prospects for future use of methodology

The ability to carry out further analysis of a similar kind depends on the availability of suitable source material. To compile the corpus used in this research, over 100,000 Hansard transcript files were downloaded from the UK Parliament website by automated means. As of March 2022, the website blocks automated requests. The transcripts used to compile this corpus are still available to view via a web browser but cannot be downloaded using the corpus creation scripts.

This change is understandable from the perspective of making the website less vulnerable to ‘Denial of Service’ attacks, in which an attacker sends more download requests to a site than its servers can handle, making the site unavailable to ordinary users. Unfortunately, however, this restriction also limits the ability of legitimate researchers to compile data from Hansard, which may be seen as a backward step in respect of the transparency and accountability of the UK Parliament. An Application Programme Interface (API) now available on the UK Parliament website gives access to some Hansard material (UK Parliament 2022) in a way that should mean that researchers’ requests for data do not affect the availability of the site for other users. However, it does not provide access to transcripts produced since 2005. At the time of submitting this thesis, the site does not indicate whether more recent material will be made available in this way at a future point. Such a development would surely be welcome.

Faced with this constraint, a researcher could approach the managers of the UK Parliament website to explain their intentions and request a special arrangement that would enable them to obtain the material in bulk. Alternatively, they could use a third party interface such as Hansard at Huddersfield to access the material they required, designing their research methodology to fit the way in which

that site offers access to the data. A restriction on direct access to Hansard data makes the existence of third party interfaces all the more important and potentially provides an argument for the further development of an interface tailored to the needs of researchers. Assuming a suitable corpus can be obtained, however, the analytic methodology used in this research has potential to be developed further and applied to a range of discourse types.

15. CONCLUSIONS

15.1 Introduction

The analysis chapters of this thesis have identified lexical changes in the parliamentary contributions of UK government ministers attached to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1989 and 2015. Each of these changes has been quantified and the pattern of change discussed, for example through steady change or a short-term spike in frequency. The context in which a given word is used has been analysed, both where the change is associated with ministers' use of particular phrases containing that word and by more generalised shifts in their discourse. Drivers of lexical change have also been considered, including the effect of world events, changes in ministers' responsibilities and the influence of opposition and back-bench members. Speeches and statements have been identified in which ministers made particularly intensive use of a given Word and the significance of those contributions has been considered.

This chapter will interpret the results of this analysis, relating them to the research questions specified in the Introduction to this thesis. Those research questions were:

1. In the parliamentary contributions of UK government ministers attached to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1989 and 2015, which words display the largest changes in frequency?
2. What factors cause or contribute to these changes in frequency?
3. What do these changes indicate regarding the scope and focus of UK foreign policy discourse during the period studied?

The first research question will be answered by recapping key findings from analysis of the corpus.

For the second research question, a categorisation of drivers of lexical change is suggested which has

the potential to be adopted and added to by other analysts of political discourse. The third research question will be addressed through discussion of the extent to which the lexical changes observed indicate shifts in the scope and focus of foreign policy discourse. Two further sections of this chapter will set the conclusions in historical context and discuss the original contribution made by this thesis.

15.2 Limitations of the research

Before seeking to answer the research questions, the limitations of the research merit discussion. Limitations of scope mean that this thesis can only offer an incomplete insight into lexical change in the UK government's foreign policy discourse. The time period, although substantial, means that earlier changes are not observed and there is a gap of over seven years between the last contributions included in the corpus and the submission of this thesis. Furthermore, as only parliamentary contributions are included, other speeches articulating the UK's foreign policy (for example in public settings or in the European Parliament) are excluded. Similarly, alternative views on what the UK's foreign policy should be, such as those of opposition parties, journalists, think tanks, academics and the public more widely are not directly considered. Whilst necessary to limit the scope in this way, the ability of this thesis to draw on wider debates surrounding the UK's foreign policy is therefore constrained.

Methodologically, the fact that the source data for the research can no longer be obtained from the UK parliament in the same way imposes a limitation on any individual wishing to replicate this research or to apply the techniques to a different area of parliamentary discourse. Although outside the control of the author, this is a regrettable limitation. The words selected for analysis represent a fraction of a percentage of the total lexis found in the corpus. It is also not evident that linguistic research into an area such as foreign policy could be carried out effectively without prior knowledge of that discourse. Having worked as a civil servant, I benefitted from a degree of 'inside knowledge'

that another researcher might not have, which perhaps made it easier for me to contextualise and interpret the data, and to make contact with individuals who could help me navigate the subject matter. Set against that, I encountered an openness on the part of those individuals to engage with academic researchers more broadly and the contextual literature that I drew on is publicly available as referenced in this thesis. Any linguistics researcher wishing to make informed comment on a government discourse would need to ensure that they had built up sufficient knowledge of the subject matter, but this could be achieved in a number of ways which do not require inside knowledge.

The analysis presented in this thesis is rich in quantitative data. Whilst some readers may relish this, others would doubtless wish for qualitative methods to form a larger part of the research. There is clear scope to explore the research questions further using qualitative analysis and this thesis might well have done so, were it not for the rich insights that the quantitative data offered. Some readers may also wish for a more critical analysis of the UK government's foreign policy discourse, which is intentionally not provided here.

The conclusions of this thesis focus to a large extent on external drivers of lexical change in ministers' discourse, an emphasis which is consistent with the research questions. By its nature, the research does not aim to reveal the internal mechanisms of language change. It underlines the 'applied' in 'applied linguistics' and arguably reveals more about politics and foreign policy than about language itself. This approach, however, has yielded unique insights that will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

15.3 Changes in frequency of words (Research Question 1)

The discourse analysed in this thesis was a growing discourse. The annual word count of Foreign Office ministers' contributions in parliament increased by 76% from the first five to the last five full years of the period⁵⁶. Similarly, the number of unique words that ministers used increased by 30%⁵⁷. The word *and* displays the largest increase in frequency and four other basic grammatical words are among the ten words with the largest change. The increasing frequency of *and* is accompanied by an increase in the average length of sentences in ministers' contributions as recorded in Hansard. Some other grammatical words display a marked fall in frequency, with ministers' use of words of negation falling by 32%⁵⁸. Almost all modal verbs decline, with *shall* falling in frequency at a rate that – if continued – would see it disappear from ministers' discourse within a few years after the end of the period studied.

The words with the second and third largest rise in frequency – *uk* and *eu* – simultaneously reflect two trends: an increase in the use of initials to refer to states and organisations; and an increase in references to the country in which the ministers govern, to the government itself, and to organisations to which the UK belongs. Taken together with a rise in the frequency of ministers' job titles, this suggests that ministers' discourse may have become increasingly self-referential over the period. Set against this, and in contrast to the findings of other studies of political language (Pearce 2005, Stănculete 2019), *I* and *my* decline in frequency over the period.

⁵⁶ Contributions for the period 1989-93 have a total word count of 2,355,372; those from 2010-14 amount to 4,156,060 words. A simple glance at an archive of bound volumes of Hansard suggests that this was part of a more widespread growth in parliamentary discourse: for the latter years, the number of volumes is greater and they are typically thicker.

⁵⁷ From 29,244 unique words in 1989-93 to 37,954 in 2010-14. However, these figures should be treated with caution because of the existence of misspellings caused by digitisation errors in the earlier part of the period and character encoding errors in the latter part. Part of the growth may also be caused by an increased use of names of individuals as the period progresses.

⁵⁸ The combined frequency of *no*, *nobody*, *non*, *none*, *not*, *nothing* and *nowhere* fell from 9,910 tpm in 1989-93 to 6,690 tpm in 2010-14.

The words *human* and *rights* are also among the ten words with the largest increase in frequency. Tokens of *freedom* grow too, with references to religious freedom and freedom of expression climbing steadily during the period. Issues affecting women emerge as a distinct part of ministers' discourse, with a focus on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict situations from 2010 onwards. More broadly, references to women via feminine personal pronouns increase. Although they remain less frequent than masculine personal pronouns at the end of the period studied, the difference in frequency between masculine and feminine forms falls by approximately half.

A decrease after 1997 in the frequency of words associated with international development is directly attributable to the creation of the Department for International Development, which removed this responsibility from the Foreign Office. Changes in the structures of government also contribute to an increase in the frequency of *security*. However, the creation of the National Security Council in 2010 is only one factor in this change. Ministers' pursuit of a greater degree of openness regarding matters of security causes the frequency of *intelligence* and other related words to rise. References to the United Nations are relatively stable but its Security Council is named with increasing frequency.

The focus of this thesis on words that display a marked rise, fall or spike in frequency during the period studied has provided a starting point from which to identify changes in ministers' discourse. However, it inevitably means that other lexical changes have not been investigated. words relating to international trade narrowly missed being selected for analysis, as did *national* and *international*. *Bilateral* was included because of its connection with international development, but *multilateral* had a smaller change in frequency and was not selected. As such, the findings of this thesis are based on a limited snapshot of lexical change, but one that is tightly focused on statistically large changes in frequency.

15.4 Drivers of lexical change (Research Question 2)

Barack Obama comments of his time as US President that “90 percent of the job was navigating inherited problems and unanticipated crises” (Obama 2021: loc 6660). If the same is true of the ministers whose contributions make up the corpus, it should be no surprise that foreign policy initiatives of the government’s choosing are but one factor driving lexical change in their discourse.

In the analysis presented in this thesis, ministers’ discourse has been shown to be strongly driven by a range of factors beyond their control and not only by their own priorities. Each of these factors influences the scope and themes of ministers’ discourse and, consequently, the words they use.

Table 15.1 presents a categorisation of these drivers of lexical change. The categorisation suggested here is non-exclusive as, for example, an opposition member may ask a question that prompts a minister to discuss a world event. Nor should one assume that it is comprehensive. However, it offers a framework that could be developed further in future research and which could be adapted to the study of other types of parliamentary discourse.

Table 15.1: Drivers of lexical change identified affecting UK foreign policy discourse

Driver of lexical change	Description	Example
World events	Occurrences anywhere in the world, whether expected or unexpected, that are discussed in parliament.	The terrorist attacks in the US on 9 September 2001.
Influence of backbench and opposition members	The ability of opposition and backbench members to cause ministers to discuss a given topic through the questions they ask and the subjects they choose for debate.	The DUP's choice of 'Persecution of Christians' as the subject of an Opposition Day debate.
Changes of organisational structures and names	A change in how the government (or an international organisation) structures and organises its work, or of the name of an organisation.	Creation of the Department for International Development in 1997 to take on part of the previous responsibilities of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
Passage of legislation	Proposed new laws or changes to existing laws being debated in parliament.	The Intelligence Services Act, which completed its passage through parliament in 1994.
International negotiations	Discussion relating to treaties or agreements between countries or groups, typically in which the UK is a party to the negotiations.	The Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which led to the creation of the European Union.
Less formal initiatives	Collaborative action taken on a particular issue by a group of countries and/or international organisations.	The UN-backed 'Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative' launched in 2012.

Part of the role of Foreign Office ministers is to set out the government's view, position or response in relation to world events, and these events themselves influence ministers' lexical choices. Perhaps the most pronounced example is that of *terrorism* following the 9/11 attacks. The frequency of this word increased rapidly following the attacks, but declined steadily over the years that followed as ministers' discourse shifted from the attacks themselves to the wider security situation that existed

in their wake. However, the repercussions of 9/11 also manifest themselves in sustained use of other words and phrases including *security* and *international security assistance force*. Other significant and/or prolonged events also leave traces in the transcripts of ministers' contributions in the form of an increased frequency of words that relate to that event. Examples of this can be found throughout the period studied, from discussion of rights and freedoms in China in 1989 to comments on the fragile security situation in the Middle East in 2014.

Opposition and backbench members exert a considerable influence on ministers' discourse. Answers to questions and statements made in response to requests from other members of the Commons or Lords make up a substantial part of the corpus⁵⁹. Inevitably, the words included in ministers' responses are influenced by the topic of the request. Similarly, the topics chosen by opposition parties for 'Opposition Day' debates force ministers to address particular topics, as has been discussed in connection with the Democratic Unionist Party's choice to debate the persecution of Christians. The enlargement of the EU prompted many questions from Eurosceptic Conservatives, both during their time sitting on the government and opposition benches. Sustained questioning on topics of concern to individual members, such as on dress codes for female diplomats serving in Iran, also contribute to changes in the data. The ability of opposition and backbench members to ask questions of ministers on any matter of concern and to receive their answers is a vital aspect of parliamentary democracy. As such, the fact that this questioning leaves clearly discernible traces in the corpus data is a healthy sign.

If world events and the influence of opposition and backbench members are factors largely outside of ministers' control, one clear way in which ministers' own decision-making affects their discourse is

⁵⁹ The tagging originally applied to the Hansard source material indicates whether a contribution was made during a speech, or as a statement, question or answer. However, analysis of these tags would not directly indicate what percentage of ministers' comments were prompted by opposition and backbench members. One of the main reasons for this is that answers given in the course of a debate (as opposed to those given during scheduled question sessions) are not tagged differently from other contributions made during that debate.

through changes in how the government organises its work. The creation of a new structure or a transfer of functions between ministers – known as ‘Machinery of Government changes’ (The National Archives 2022) – may produce large and sustained changes in ministers’ lexical choices. The fall in frequency of words relating to international development when DfID was created and the rise of *security* at around the time of the creation of the National Security Council are clear examples of this. However, even though these organisational changes took place on a specific date, the associated changes in word frequency occur over several years. In the case of the National Security Council, the creation of this new structure both reflected and drove an increasing focus on matters of security on the part of ministers. Analysis of a larger set of words would probably reveal more cases in which organisational changes affect word frequencies, albeit on a smaller scale.

As noted in a previous chapter, the passage of legislation has the double effect: it brings an increase in the frequency of words that appear in the title of the legislation or have a particular meaning within it; and once the legislation is enacted ministers continue to use these words when referring to it. An example observed in this thesis is the increase in frequency of *intelligence* during and after the passage of new legislation governing the work of the intelligence agencies. Viewed in this way, such a change is an example of a policy initiative on the part of the government and therefore is neither an inherited problem nor an unanticipated crisis, in Obama’s terms. An alternative view is possible, however, in which updating the legislative framework for a particular activity is seen as routine maintenance of the country’s laws and therefore something closer to fixing an inherited problem. In either case, the passage of legislation has distinct characteristics as a driver of lexical change: it is a highly planned activity with a defined pattern of interactions between the Commons and Lords, and the lexical choices made in drafting the legislation leave lasting traces in ministers’ discourse, sometimes for many years.

International negotiations in which the UK government chooses to take part, including over European treaties, have a similar effect on ministers' lexical choices to the passage of legislation. There is of course a close connection between treaties and legislation where the UK's participation in a treaty requires ratification by parliament. However, participation in a treaty may raise deep questions of foreign policy, including over whether sovereignty should be protected as a national interest or pooled with other states in a shared interest; and over the alliances a country forms, both of a strategic nature and on particular topics. The period covered by this study is a period of deep integration of the UK with its European partners and the intensity of debate in parliament around the Maastricht and Lisbon treaties illustrates this. However, the UK's subsequent departure from the EU may not signal a long-term decline in the effect that international negotiations have on ministers' discourse. The need to reach new agreements with a large number of states and alliances is instead likely to be a driver of further lexical change.

The final driver of lexical change identified during this research, less formal initiatives, includes EU-led initiatives to promote human rights, the UN-backed initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflict, and steps taken by the G8 to reduce poorer countries' debt. The G8's debt relief initiative is notable for bringing about a resurgence in ministers' use of *relief*, a Word that was otherwise in decline. The sharp rise in frequency of *sexual violence* in the early 2010s shows how such an initiative – perhaps because it is less formal – can develop rapidly and establish itself as a distinct part of ministers' discourse.

The drivers of lexical change discussed above are all intrinsically linked to the role of ministers and to the workings of parliament, and as such are likely to produce different changes in word frequency to those that might be observed outside parliamentary discourse. The same is true where the introduction of new parliamentary procedures, such as allowing written statements, or the practices of Hansard change over time, altering how ministers' contributions are delivered and presented.

However, wider changes in language and in the world also leave traces in ministers' discourse. Technological change is reflected in references to the internet, both as a space for freedom of expression and through the inclusion of internet addresses in some contributions. The decline in frequency of *shall* and rise of *will* in ministers' discourse reflect a shift in use of modal verbs that is also seen in the British National Corpus. Taken together with the rise of *ensure that* and the fall of words of negation, the findings of this research suggest a shift towards a more action-orientated, positive, affirmative and emphatic discourse, with a decline in hedging. This might indicate that parliament has become less of a place for deliberative debate and more of a place for making statements. In one sense – the introduction of written statements as a new way of making a contribution in parliament – this is literally the case. However, as the word count of ministers' contributions rises over the period studied, written statements may instead be viewed as having supplemented deliberative debate; and the changes in language use may be simply that, rather than indicators of a change in the quality of parliamentary debate.

15.5 The scope and focus of foreign policy discourse (Research Question 3)

The lexical changes observed in this thesis reflect areas both of growth and decline in ministers' discourse. The major growth topics identified – including rights and freedoms, issues affecting women and matters of security and intelligence – were already present at the beginning of the period but are the subject of increasing focus as the period progresses. The rise of these topics was not the result of any change in the formal remit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, but rather reflects a growing focus on these existing areas of discourse on the part of ministers. The major area of decline – international development – differs in this respect, as the decline is primarily driven by a formal change of remit. This change amounted, therefore, to a reduction in the scope of FCO ministers' responsibilities.

A transfer of responsibilities from one government department to another presents challenges for discourse analysis. If a government's international development discourse is considered to be a strand of foreign policy at one point in time, why should it not be after a reorganisation of government departments? The giving of development assistance to other countries remains a lever of influence after such a change and to exclude this strand of discourse after 1997 is not entirely satisfactory. However, the fact that organisational changes occur on an ongoing basis means that the discourse analyst has to find a way of dealing with them and recognise their impact. Perhaps the most significant observation to make in this case is that the removal of international development from FCO ministers' responsibilities did not cause a reduction in the word count of their contributions. Instead, their discourse continued to increase in scale⁶⁰, indicating that this reduction in scope was more than compensated for by growth in other areas.

When the Labour government was elected in 1997, Robin Cook set out his intention to "put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy", emphasising that he was "setting a new direction for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office". His speech has been interpreted as signalling a new departure (Held et al. 2007), but the data presented in this thesis suggests a more nuanced interpretation. The frequency of *human rights* had been increasing since 1990 and this trend accelerated only slightly during Cook's period of office and that of the Labour government as a whole. However, the increase under Labour occurred despite the removal of international development – which was previously the main context in which ministers discussed human rights – from FCO's remit. Furthermore, the rise in frequency of *freedom* and *women* begins in earnest at the election of the Labour government. The net effect of these changes is to accord issues of human rights a much more central place in foreign policy discourse, by moving it to the mainstream of that discourse as well as through increases in word frequency.

⁶⁰ At 568,864 words, the 1998 subcorpus is the second largest seen up to that point.

Labour's third Foreign Secretary of the period in question, Margaret Beckett, has commented of the FCO that "I felt they had too many priorities when I arrived" (Institute for Government 2016). It is certainly the case that the word count of FCO ministers' contributions had continued to increase, rising from under 600,000 in 1998 to almost 800,000 when Beckett took up her post in 2006 (and eventually peaking at over 900,000 in 2011). The analysis carried out in this thesis suggests that the expansion of some areas of ministers' discourse was not at the expense of existing areas. There are few words with a distinct connection to foreign policy that fall in frequency as substantially as the rise in *human, rights or freedom*.

The election of the coalition government in 2010 is marked by further increases in frequency of some words that had grown during Labour's period of office. *Human, rights and freedom* all continue their upward trend while the increase in frequency of *women* accelerates markedly. Others, including some words relating to security, have a lower frequency than is the case in the early 2000s but display renewed growth. A common factor between the Conservative-Labour and Labour-coalition transitions, however, is that lexical change occurs gradually in the main. Neither transition brings about a lexical break from the past, but is instead followed by an accumulation of change over time, increasing and decreasing elements of the previous government's discourse, and occasionally introducing new elements. In response to Fairclough's question of "New Labour, New Language?" (Fairclough 2000), the answer suggested by this thesis is "Yes, gradually". The gradual nature of the change reflects the observation made earlier that ministers' discourse is influenced by many factors, not just policy choices. Nonetheless, it is possible that significant changes in policy may produce a faster rate of lexical change. Analysis of more recent data would indicate whether changes in the UK government's European policy after the 2015 general election produced a more lexically distinctive discourse.

The American political scientist Joseph Nye proposed the term ‘soft power’ to describe the use of cultural, ideological, and institutional influence to “get others to do what they otherwise would not” (Li 2018). It has been suggested that the period covered by this thesis saw a weakening of the UK’s ‘hard power’ (principally its military power) and an increase in its reliance on soft power (McClory, 2010; Moran 2021). It is certainly true that many of the growth areas identified in this thesis relate to soft power including the cultural ties emphasised by the Commonwealth, the promotion of human rights as part of a liberal ideology and the influence of the EU as an institution. However, ministers’ contributions throughout the period describe the use of a range of levers of diplomacy. The increased frequency of *dialogue* points to the importance ministers attached to one of the softest of levers. Firmer diplomatic pressure is applied through expressions of displeasure, formal protests and efforts to exclude countries from international groups. *Sanctions* – another word which grew in frequency – describes measures with potentially crippling effects on a country’s economy, sometimes backed by the threat of using military force. The lever of diplomacy of last resort – the use of military force – features throughout the period.

Alongside these levers, the government maintained at its disposal the giving or withdrawal of international development assistance and the sharing or otherwise of intelligence as further means to influence other states, the latter being increasingly acknowledged in ministers’ discourse as the period progresses. Both of these levers can be applied in a range of contexts from relatively low-level cooperation to their use in situations of armed conflict. As such, the situation observed is not one in which there is a binary distinction between soft and hard power, but one in which ministers’ discourse reflects a sliding scale of levers of diplomacy. It is possible that the UK may have experienced a diminution of its hard power during the period studied, but the analysis carried out here does not provide a means of measuring that. It is clear, however, that there are areas of lexical growth in ministers’ discourse that have a connection to soft power, which suggests an increased emphasis on certain aspects of soft power on the part of ministers.

This thesis has observed two broad patterns of growth in the UK government's foreign policy discourse during the period studied: a growth in the scale of the discourse (evidenced by a rising word count for ministers' contributions year by year), and a growth in its scope (evidenced by new topics coming to the fore without others being squeezed out). This growth could be interpreted in a number of ways including as a sign of ministers finding the capacity to engage with the complex issues facing the world, or as a warning that the UK's foreign policy may have lack focus on a manageable set of issues. When I suggested to delegates at the Political Studies Association 2022 conference (Appleton 2022) that the growth could be seen as good, bad, or a reality of changing times, my third suggestion seemed to have the most resonance with audience. Nonetheless, one may legitimately ask how broad a range of topics a group of ministers and their department can realistically work on and what the implications would be if the scope of their work, as reflected in ministers' discourse, continued to grow indefinitely. Corpus linguistic analysis cannot directly answer the question I put to my fellow conference delegates, but the patterns of growth observed in the corpus are certainly thought-provoking.

15.6 The conclusions in historical context

The elements of continuity and change that Sanders and Houghton (2017) observe in UK foreign policy are both evident in the findings of this thesis, as are changes of emphasis in the 'three circles' of the UK's influence in the world. The European circle is an area of clear growth in ministers' discourse as the UK became increasingly closely integrated – economically and institutionally – with its European partners. If measured by way of the frequency of *america* and related forms, the Atlanticist circle could be judged an area of stability or even decline. The content of ministers' discourse, however, particularly in the UK's close alignment with the US over Afghanistan and Iraq, underlines the continued importance which ministers placed on this relationship. The

Commonwealth circle has a perhaps unexpected growth through ministers' increased inclusion of the 'Commonwealth' element of their department's title. Aside from this, it is still striking that there is a modest growth in ministers' discourse relating to the Commonwealth even as the colonial period receded temporally.

The period studied is therefore one in which the UK maintained and increased its formal links internationally. The analysis carried out, however, also gives insight into the challenges associated with those relationships. Whilst ministers' position throughout the period studied was one of support for the UK's continued membership of the EC/EU, the major decisions and controversies associated with this membership have left traces in the data. Although the period studied may represent a 'high water' point in the UK's formal links across the three circles, the health of the European relationship was under clear strain periodically, particularly towards the end of the period. The expansion of the EC/EU and steps to increase integration between member states are a particular focus of ministers' discourse and these are times at which the influence of an existing member state could rise or fall: rise in the sense of having influence in relation to a larger number of other states in an increased number of policy areas; or fall in the sense of any individual state's influence being diluted as new members join and as new powers are transferred to the union. Questions of influence and self-determination would culminate after the end of the period in the UK's departure from the EU, redefining the European circle and prompting a further re-evaluation of the UK's influence in Europe.

In the case of the Atlanticist circle, the UK's alignment with the US remained close throughout the period, but the purpose of the wider NATO grouping was less clear after the end of the Cold War. Tensions over the Iraq conflict and the extent of NATO's involvement in Afghanistan strained the alliance. Through its policy on Iraq and Afghanistan, the UK government bolstered its bilateral relationship with the US but the extent to which it influenced the US administration's decisions has

been questioned. The domestic political controversy associated with the UK government's policy on Iraq and Afghanistan marks ministers' discourse over several years.

The corpus linguistic techniques used in this research do not provide a direct answer to questions such as how the UK's influence in the three circles changed during the period studied. A rise in frequency of particular words cannot be assumed to indicate a period of increased influence over or alignment with other states. However, frequency changes are an indicator that something significant is taking place in the discourse, and as such provide a starting point for qualitative analysis that can provide a perspective on these questions.

The concept of an 'ethical' foreign policy put forward by Robin Cook in 1997 was not entirely new: foreign policy decisions inherently have an ethical dimension to them, for example when ministers are required to balance national and international interests or to weigh the consequences of intervention and non-intervention in a troubled part of the world. Based on the data discussed in this thesis, it is possible to argue that matters of ethics have assumed a growing place in foreign policy discourse since 1997. This is seen particularly in discourse relating to human rights, including issues affecting women. Corpus analysis alone cannot establish whether this development came about because of the direction set out by Cook or reflected a wider societal concern for these issues. More discussion in parliament of issues with an ethical dimension does also not necessarily equate to more ethical decision-making on the part of a government. This thesis therefore does not draw conclusions about whether the UK's foreign policy discourse became more or less ethical over the period. Instead, it simply notes – and welcomes – ministers' engagement with issues such as human rights.

In a similar way, the analysis carried out for this thesis provides some insight into matters of openness and accountability in foreign policy. In one area of the Foreign Secretary's responsibilities – the work of the intelligence agencies – there is a clear shift towards a greater degree of openness. This change is manifested both in the rising frequency of words such as *intelligence*, and in the

content of ministers' contributions. However, as an activity carried out in secret, there is by definition less openness about the work of the intelligence agencies than about other areas of foreign policy, and critics would suggest that there was insufficient accountability even at the end of the period. In other areas, the extent of public support for foreign policy decisions is a recurring theme. There are examples of governments with large parliamentary majorities taking decisions that faced widespread popular opposition, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq; and examples of governments without a large majority being unable to take their preferred course of action, such as over Libya in 2013. The direct involvement of voters in determining or approving the direction of European policy was rejected by the government in relation to the Maastricht Treaty; accepted in relation to the EU's proposed constitution treaty until this position was overtaken by French and Dutch voters' rejection of the treaty; and was a central commitment of David Cameron's before the 2015 election. Taken together one could read these developments as indicating an overall shift towards openness, accountability and direct democratic consent in foreign policy matters. However, the reality may be more nuanced and following the 2017 vote one might envisage ministers having less enthusiasm for referenda, even when continuing to support openness and accountability.

15.7 Reflections on the contribution made by this thesis

This thesis set out to answer three research questions regarding lexical change in the parliamentary discourse of UK Foreign Office ministers. Beyond those questions, there are some further ways in which it may be significant for other researchers of political language and corpus linguists.

The drivers of change identified in this chapter emphasise connections between world events and lexical change; and between the workings of parliament and lexical change. In this sense, they are particularly attuned to the context in which the discourse is constructed. The categorisation of drivers of change that this thesis offers is flexible enough to be applied in a range of theoretical

frameworks and methodologies. It has arisen from corpus linguistic analysis but could be used by researchers in other fields, as a suggestion for potential drivers of change in political discourse that they might observe.

The research has also illuminated some complexities of attempting to research the language of a politician or group of politicians in isolation. Perhaps foremost, it has highlighted factors other than a group's own political priorities that influence their discourse. The use of a particular word or phrase by a parliamentarian does not necessarily indicate that they wish to discuss that topic and may instead reflect a range of pressures external to their group. Although less of a focus of this thesis, the use of discourse prepared on behalf of a parliamentarian (for example in stock answers to questions or speeches written by a speechwriter) means that it is not always obvious how much authorial ownership a politician has of their contributions. Attempting to comprehensively untangle these influences is near impossible, but being aware of their existence is vital.

The methodology used in this research includes some advances that may be of use to other corpus linguists. The subset of Hansard data that makes up the corpus could not have been extracted using existing interfaces. Although changes to the UK Parliament website mean the scripts used for this purpose no longer work, the corpus itself is available online for further use. The analytic scripts written for this research made it possible to exploit the data in ways that could not have been achieved, or would have been disproportionately labour-intensive, using existing tools. The use of statistical data to determine the direction of the research at key points (in the selection of words for analysis, to group them into themes, and to create and analyse subcorpora containing only those contributions in which a given Word is found) goes beyond what is commonly seen in corpus linguistics.

By taking a unique subset of source data from Hansard, setting the research in its historical and parliamentary context and applying corpus linguistic techniques, this thesis has sought to

demonstrate a rigorously evidence-based way of analysing political discourse. In showing how the study of lexical change can cast new light on the changing scope and focus of the UK government's foreign policy discourse, it provides an example of how linguistics can contribute to other fields. By combining those elements, I hope the research presented in this thesis will interest specialists in linguistics and beyond.

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Appendix A: Relevant Ministerial appointments, October 1989 to May 2015

HOUSE OF COMMONS			
Post	Name	Dates	Volume(s)
Secretary of State	Geoffrey Howe	To Jul 1989	140-157
	John Major	Jul 1989 – Oct 1989	158
	Douglas Hurd	Oct 1989 – Jul 1995	159-263
	Malcolm Rifkind	Jul 1995 – May 1997	264-293
	Robin Cook	May 1997 – Jun 2001	294-369
	Jack Straw	Jun 2001 – May 2006	370-445
	Margaret Beckett	May 2006 – Jun 2007	446-461
	David Miliband	Jun 2007 – May 2010	462-509
	William Hague	May 2010 – July 2014	510-584
	Philip Hammond	July 2014 to end	584-594
Minister of State	Chris Patten	Sep 1986 – Jul 1989	140-157
	William Waldegrave	Jul 1988 – Nov 1990	140-159
	Lynda Chalker	Jan 1986 – May 1997	To 206
	Francis Maude	Jul 1989 – Nov 1990	158-176
	Tristan Garel-Jones	Jul 1990 – May 1993	177-225
	Douglas Hogg	Nov 1990 – Jul 1995	180-263
	Alastair Goodlad	Apr 1992 – Jul 1995	207-263
	David Heathcoat-Amory	May 1993 – Jul 1994	226-247
	David Davis	Jul 1994 – May 1997	248-293
	Nicholas Bonsor	Jul 1995 – May 1997	264-293
	Jeremy Hanley	Jul 1995 – May 1997	264-293
	Douglas Henderson	May 1997 – Jul 1998	294-317
	Derek Fatchett	May 1997 – May 1999	294-330
	Tony Lloyd	May 1997 – Jul 1999	294-336
	Joyce Quin	Jul 1998 – Jul 1999	318-336
	Geoff Hoon	Jul 1999 – Oct 1999 and May 2006 – Jun 2007	332-336 and 446-461
	Keith Vaz	May 1999 – Jun 2001	337-369
	John Battle	Jul 1999 – Jun 2001	337-369
	Peter Hain	Jul 1999 – Jan 2001 and Jun 2001 – Oct 2002	337-361 and 370-392
	Brian Wilson	Jan 2001 – Jun 2001	362-368
Denis MacShane	Nov 2002 – May 2005	370-432	

	Douglas Alexander	Sep 2004 – May 2006	424-445
	Kim Howells	May 2005 – Oct 2008	434-479
	Ian Pearson	May 2005 – May 2006	434-445
	Ian McCartney	May 2006 – Jun 2007	446-461
	Jim Murphy	Jun 2007 – Oct 2008	462-479
	Caroline Flint	Oct 2008 – Jun 2009	480-493
	Bill Rammell	Oct 2008 – Jun 2009	480-493
	Ivan Lewis	Jun 2009 – May 2010	493-508
	Jeremy Browne	May 2010 – Sep 2012	510-548
	Hugo Swire	Sep 2012 to end	549-594
	David Liddington	May 2010 to end	510-594
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State	Timothy Eggar	Sep 1985 – Jul 1989	To 157
	Timothy Sainsbury	Jul 1989 – Jul 1990	158-176
	Mark Lennox-Boyd	Jul 1990 – Jul 1994	177-247
	Tony Baldry	Jul 1994 – Jul 1995	248-263
	Liam Fox	Jul 1996 – May 1997	285-293
	Ben Bradshaw	Jun 2001 – Jun 2002	370-386
	Mike O'Brien	May 2002 – Jun 2003	387-406
	Bill Rammell	Oct 2002 – May 2005	392-432
	Chris Mullin	Jun 2003 – May 2005	407-432
	Meg Munn	Jun 2007 – Oct 2008	462-479
	Gillian Merron	Oct 2008 – Jun 2009	480-493
	Chris Bryant	Jun 2009 – May 2010	494-508
	Alistair Burt	May 2010 – Oct 2013	510-567
	Henry Bellingham	May 2010 – Sep 2012	510-548
	Mark Simmonds	Sep 2012 – Aug 2014	549-585
	Hugh Robertson	Oct 2013 – Jul 2014	568-584
	Tobias Ellwood	Jul 2014 to end	584-626
James Duddridge	Aug 2014 to end	585-613	

HOUSE OF LORDS			
Post	Name	Dates	Volume(s)
Minister of State	Lord Glenarthur	Jun 1987 – Jul 1989	500-510
	Lord Brabazon of Tara	Jul 1989 – Jul 1990	511-521
	Earl of Caithness	Jul 1990 – Apr 1992	522-536
	Baroness Chalker	Apr 1991 – Mar 1997	537-579
	Baroness Symons	Jun 2003 – May 2005	649-671
	Lord Malloch-Brown	Jun 2007 – Jul 2009	693-712
	Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead	Jun 2009 – Oct 2009 and Oct 2009 – May 2010	711-718
	Lord Howell of Guildford	May 2010 – September 2012	719-739
	Baroness Warsi	September 2012 – August 2014	739-747
	Baroness Aneley of St Johns	August 2014 to end	747-760
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State	Baroness Symons	May 1997 – Jul 1999	580-604
	Baroness Scotland of Asthal	Oct 1999 – May 2001	605-625
	Baroness Amos	Jun 2001 – May 2003	626-647
	Lord Triesman	May 2005 – Jun 2007	672-693
<p>Note: At most points during the period covered by this research, there was only one Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, either in the Commons or the Lords. This explains why the appointment dates in any one House do not always follow directly from one another.</p>			

Appendix B: The 48 titles of Baroness Symons

Baroness Symons is introduced in the following ways in Hansard during her tenure as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State:

1. (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
2. B aroness Symons of Vernham Dean
3. Baron Symons of Vernham Dean
4. Barones s Symons of Vernham Dean
5. Barones Symons of Vernham Dean
6. Baroness Symons
7. Baroness Symons of ' Vernham Dean
8. Baroness Symons of Venham Dean
9. Baroness Symons of Verham Dean
10. Baroness Symons of Verhnam Dean
11. Baroness Symons of Vernham
12. Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean [followed by single space]
13. Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean [followed by double space]
14. Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:
15. Baroness Symons of Vernham Deanm
16. Baroness Symons of Vernhan Dean
17. Baroness Symons off Vernham Dean
18. Broness Symons of Vernham Dean
19. Lord Symons of Vernham Dean
20. The Minister for Trade (Baroness Symons of Vernham (Dean)
21. The Minister for Trade (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
22. The Minister for Trade (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) [followed by single space]
23. The Minister for Trade (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) [followed by double space]

24. The Minister for Trade (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean):
25. The Minister for Trade (Baroness Symons of Vernham Deau)
26. The Minister for Trade (Baroness Symons of Vernharn Dean)
27. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
28. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) :
29. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
30. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) [followed by single space]
31. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) [followed by double space]
32. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean):
33. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of VernhamDean)
34. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernharn Dean)
35. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:
36. The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
37. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
38. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
39. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
40. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
41. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
42. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernhain Dean)
43. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
44. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) [followed by single space]
45. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean) [followed by double space]
46. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean):
47. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)
48. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State., Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean)

Appendix C: Exceptions to methodology for compiling data

No.	Reason for exception	Response	Hansard volumes affected
1	No .XML files available for Commons vols. 200, 399 or 423 Part 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified relevant .HTM files and processed using method B 	Commons vols. 200, 399 and 423 Part 2
2	Character encoding error interrupted processing of volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified transcript files from which the error occurred (one file from vol. 693, all files from 31 March 2008 in vol. 700 and one file from vol. 707) Viewed file in browser to establish that it contained no wanted contributions Removed file from directory of files awaiting processing Processed remaining files successfully Adapted script to ignore any further character encoding errors 	Lords vols. 693, 700 and 707
3	Unable to download a subset of transcript files as parliament.uk website returned an 'Internal Server Error' message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified 25 affected files Modified script to exclude affected files Processed remaining 377 files successfully 	Lords vol. 711
4	Running standard script to process Lords vol. 686 instead returned index and transcript files for vols. 677-683, as the index served by the parliament.uk website was in a non-standard format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filtered resulting file of wanted contributions by date, to create one output file for each of vols. 677-683 	Lords vols. 677-683
5	URLs for index and transcript files were in non-standard formats, resulting in 'Page not found' error messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted script to handle the non-standard URL formats In the case of Lords vol. 671, this meant processing each day's transcripts separately then assembling wanted contributions into a single output file Processed volumes successfully 	Lords vols. 671-676 (and would have affected 677-683 had I not already processed them as described above) Commons vols. 446-451
6	Hyperlinks missing from some index entries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Script was already written to capture all hyperlinks given in the index. As any given transcript page could be 	Commons vol. 436

		linked to by any number of index entries, this may not have resulted in any transcript files being missing	
7	Variation in date formats between time periods and between Commons and Lords Hansard	Adapted scripts to ensure each contribution was tagged correctly with its date	All volumes
8	Written Answers not available in expected area of UK Parliament website but available via an alternative page	Downloaded 24 .HTML files, adapted a script to process them and added the data to the corpus files.	Commons vols. 586-594