

Conservatives prefer using nouns, new research finds

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New transatlantic research led by a psychologist at the University of Kent suggests conservatives prefer using nouns.

As part of the study researchers found that US presidents who were considered conservative used a greater proportion of [nouns](#) in major speeches.

The researchers, led by Dr Aleksandra Cichocka of the University's School of Psychology, also established that conservatives generally, to a greater degree than liberals, tend to refer to things by their names, rather than describing them in terms of their features. An example would be saying someone 'is an optimist', rather than 'is optimistic'.

This use of nouns, rather than adjectives, is seen to preserve stability, familiarity and tradition - all of which appear to be valued more highly by conservatives than liberals.

Because nouns 'elicit clearer and more definite perceptions of reality than other parts of speech', they satisfy the desire for 'structure and certainty' that is common among social conservatives, the research authors found.

The research was based on studies carried out in three countries - Poland, Lebanon, and the USA. The US study compared presidential speeches delivered by representatives of the two main political parties. The sample included 45 speeches delivered by Republicans, considered

to be more conservative, and 56 speeches delivered by then Democrats, considered to be more liberal.

The findings suggest that, compared with liberals, conservative political leaders are more likely to use parts of speech that stress 'clarity and predictability'.

The research, entitled *On the Grammar of Politics - or Why Conservatives Prefer Nouns* (Aleksandra Cichocka; Michal Bilewicz, University of Warsaw; John T. Jost, New York University; Natasza Marrouch, University of Connecticut; Marta Witkowska, University of Warsaw) is published in the journal *Political Psychology*.

More information:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/pops.12327/abstract>

Provided by University of Kent

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