

How do people from the Middle Earth interact in different communicative situations?

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Our research project deals with some recurrent linguistic features typical of specific communicative situations and register. We will focus on interactions of one character from the tv series "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power."

According to Finegan & Biber (1994) the use of economy features is more frequent in low-ranked classes rather than high-ranked classes, as it represents greater ease but lesser clarity and explicitness. On the contrary, high-ranked classes are more likely to adopt elaborated forms in their way of speaking, which require more effort at production but make their speech clearer. The distribution of certain linguistic features across social groups reflects differences in opportunities for involvement in the range of situations that undergirds the distribution of these linguistic features across social groups. We explored the applicability of Finegan & Biber's ideas to the recent fantasy series, "The Rings of Power". We looked at three scenes with different situational settings, but the same character, Halbrand, appearing in them. Example utterances from these scenes are given in (1)-(3).

- (1) "Because I **cannot** stop" (*Galadriel, an elf, talking to Halbrand. Episode 6*)
- (2) "Hey, low man. Really thought I wouldn't notice?" (*Tamar, Numenorean, talking to Halbrand. Episode 3*)
- (3) "All others look on you with doubt. I alone can see your greatness. I alone can see your light. You would make me a tyrant. I would make you a queen." (*Halbrand talking to Galadriel. Episode 8*)

As these examples show, the language of the characters varies according to their interlocutor, the people they belong to, and the related social rank. The character of Halbrand seems to vary his own way of speaking in relation to the interlocutor's social rank, who also changes their speech accordingly. Therefore, the use of more elaborated and explicit variants in sentence (1) can be motivated by the fact that Galadriel uses an higher register that reflects her high social status. On the other hand, in sentence (2) the use of syntactic economy such as respectively *that*-deletion and the absence of *do* as a mark of *yes/no* questions are considered in Finegan & Biber 1994 as characteristic of spoken registers and characteristic of lower-ranked social groups.

In relation to Halbrand's linguistic style and considering the sentence (3), we can notice that he shifts gradually from an informal language with economy variants in the first episodes to a very formal language full of prepositional phrases and lacking of contractions. This is in line with the character development in the series.

The following table indicates the number of realizations for each feature in relation with the possible realizations given in round brackets and the realizations per 1,000 words in square brackets.

Table 1 (scene from episode 6)

Contraction	That-deletion	Prepositional phrase	It-pronoun	Tot.words
0 (4) [0]	0 (1) [0]	3 [50]	0 [0]	60

Table 2 (scene from episode 3)

Contraction	That-deletion	Prepositional phrase	It-pronoun	Tot.words
29 (38) [75.7]	6 (7) [15.7]	20 [52.2]	8 [20.9]	383

Table 3 (scene from episode 8)

Contraction	That-deletion	Prepositional phrase	It-pronoun	Tot.words
2 (26) [5.6]	2 (9) [5.6]	28 [77.8]	4 [11.1]	360

References: • Finegan, Edward & Douglas Biber. 1994. Register and Social Dialect Variation: {An} Integrated Approach. In: Douglas Biber & Edward Finegan (eds.): *Sociolinguistic perspectives on register*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 322-339