

A white icon of a staircase with three steps, positioned to the left of the text.

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**PART 5 (of 6):
The Case of Derek Bentley:
the analysis and conclusions**

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Unusual frequency of *then*

- Initially, overuse of 'then' might seem unsurprising since Bentley is recounting a chronological sequence of events, which requires markers of the ordering of events
- But analysis of other (genuinely monologic) witness statements suggests that the abundance of *then* is an unusual, significant feature indicating textual intrusion
- Consider the results on the slide coming up...

Unusual frequency of *then*

	BENTLEY'S STATEMENT	WITNESS CORPUS	POLICE CORPUS
DESCRIPTION	Bentley's statement	3 witness s'ments (1 x Bentley case, 2 x unrelated case)	3 police statements (2 x Bentley case, 1 x unrelated case)
WORD COUNT	588 words	930 words	2,270 words
HOW OFTEN <i>THEN</i> OCCURS IN CORPUS	11 times	1 time	29 times
INSTANCES PER THOUSAND WORDS			

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INSTANCES PER THOUSAND WORDS	18.71 PTW	1.07 PTW	12.77 PTW

Unusual type of *then*

- Bentley's results are far closer to the police officers than the other witnesses
- What about when compared with other data? The 1.5m word COBUILD contains 3,164 instances of *then* (in *all* uses, not just temporal); an average of 2.11 PTW
- Another striking aspect of Bentley's use of *then* is its frequent post-positioning, as we can see on these two slides:

Unusual type of *then*

- (8) My mother told me that they had called and I then ran out after them.
- (11) Chris Craig and I then caught a bus to Croydon.
- (15) Chris then jumped over and I followed.
- (16) Chris then climbed up the drainpipe to the roof and I followed.

Unusual type of *then*

- (28) The policeman and I **then** went round a corner by a door.
- (30) Chris fired again **then** and this policeman fell down.
- (38) The policeman **then** pushed me down the stairs and I did not see any more.

Unusual type of *then*

- So not only is *then* occurring unusually often, it's also occurring in a construction that is unusual for a non-police-officer
- If we look in COBUILD's spoken section, *then I* occurs **ten times more than *I then***
- Moreover, *I then* occurs...
 - 9 times in the whole of COBUILD (1 per 165,000w)
 - 3 times in Bentley's statement (1 per 194w)
 - That's almost a thousand times more often

The Case of Derek Bentley

- Further, *I then* didn't occur in the witness corpus, but occurred nine times in the police corpus (as many times as in all of COBUILD)
- *So, I then* looks to be a particular feature of a police officer's (written) register
- Finding them throughout Bentley's statement strongly suggests that it is *not* a faithful, unaided dictation. Rather, it was more likely co-authored with the police

The Case of Derek Bentley

- Result? The incriminating *the* in "I did not know he was going to use **the** gun" could suddenly be the officer's word
- And if we cannot trust the officers' claims, made under oath, that Bentley's statement was unaided, how can we trust their claim that Bentley said, "Let him have it, Chris"?

The Case of Derek Bentley

- Bentley's family campaign for the next 46 years to overturn his guilty verdict, and in 1993 they achieve a partial pardon
- In 1998, the case is further reviewed. Lord Chief Justice criticises his predecessor's summing-up and allows the Appeal
- Finally on 30th Jul 1998, Bentley's conviction is quashed, and he is fully pardoned

Thank you



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