INTRODUCTION

We pull together three separate threads of prior research to make a prediction about a relationship between individuals’ use of seemingly unrelated function words:

- Chung & Pennelhaker 2007: Less use of “I” correlates with higher status or power
- Canales 2000: Exclusivity “othering” may be seen as an exercise of power within relationships, thus those with more power are more likely to “other.”
- Acton 2014: Using the with a plural NP—rather than using a bare plural—often depicts the group being discussed as a bloc of which the speaker is not a part, thereby providing a resource for distancing oneself from that group.

Together, (a) and (b) suggest that lower use of “I” should correlate with higher rates of othering—both behaviors reflecting or serving as bids for power. The findings in (c) provide a measure of a speaker’s use of othering—differential use of the when referring to groups of which the speaker is and is not a member—leading us to...

PREDICTION: Speakers who use “I” more will be less likely to use the differentially.

RESULTS

Each speaker uses the more frequently with respective opposing party than with own party.

REGRESSION MODELING

Interaction confirmed: use of the increases in referring to opposing party, with effect reduced by higher “I” frequency

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Prediction confirmed: greater “I” frequency correlates with lower othering ratio

CONCLUSION

The DIDc data show a clear relationship between linguistic othering and infrequent use of “I”, with prior work (C&P 2007; Canales 2000) relating both of these behaviors to power. Further work grounded in situated use may illuminate the relation between these two behaviors and the kind of power they express. Finally, deep corpora such as DIDc are a powerful resource for uncovering and analyzing such relationships.