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Bolivarianism and Socialism:
A corpus-driven investigation
into changes in Hugo Chávez's
rhetoric

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28 March 2008

Theory

- **Semantic change can be traced through diachronic corpora**
- **Politicians need to use language to have power**
- **If politicians use small changes in language to argue a case, this should be traceable in a corpus**

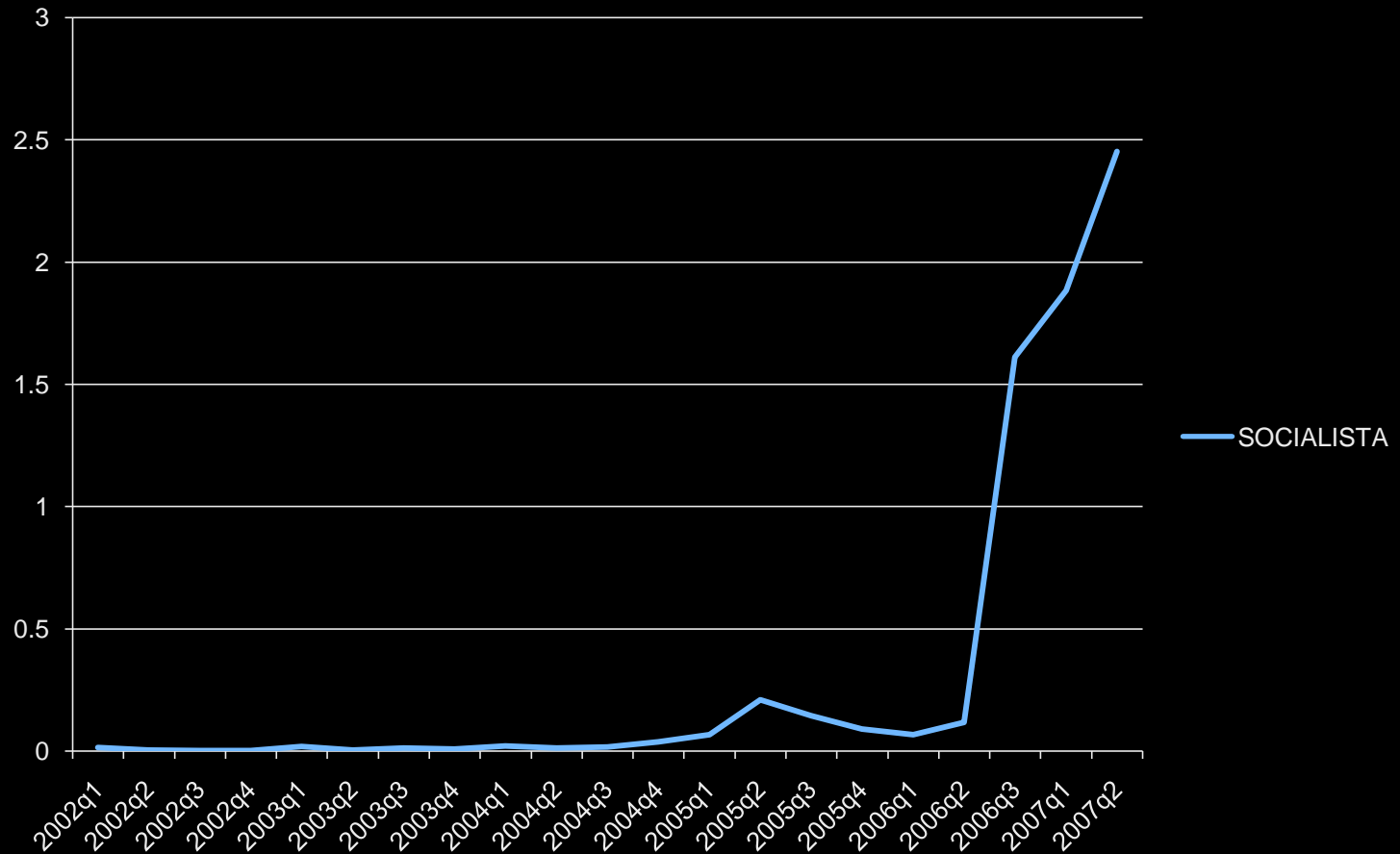
The corpus

- Transcripts of '*Aló Presidente*'
- December 2001 – June 2007
- 7.16 million words
- Sub-corpora: quarter-year periods

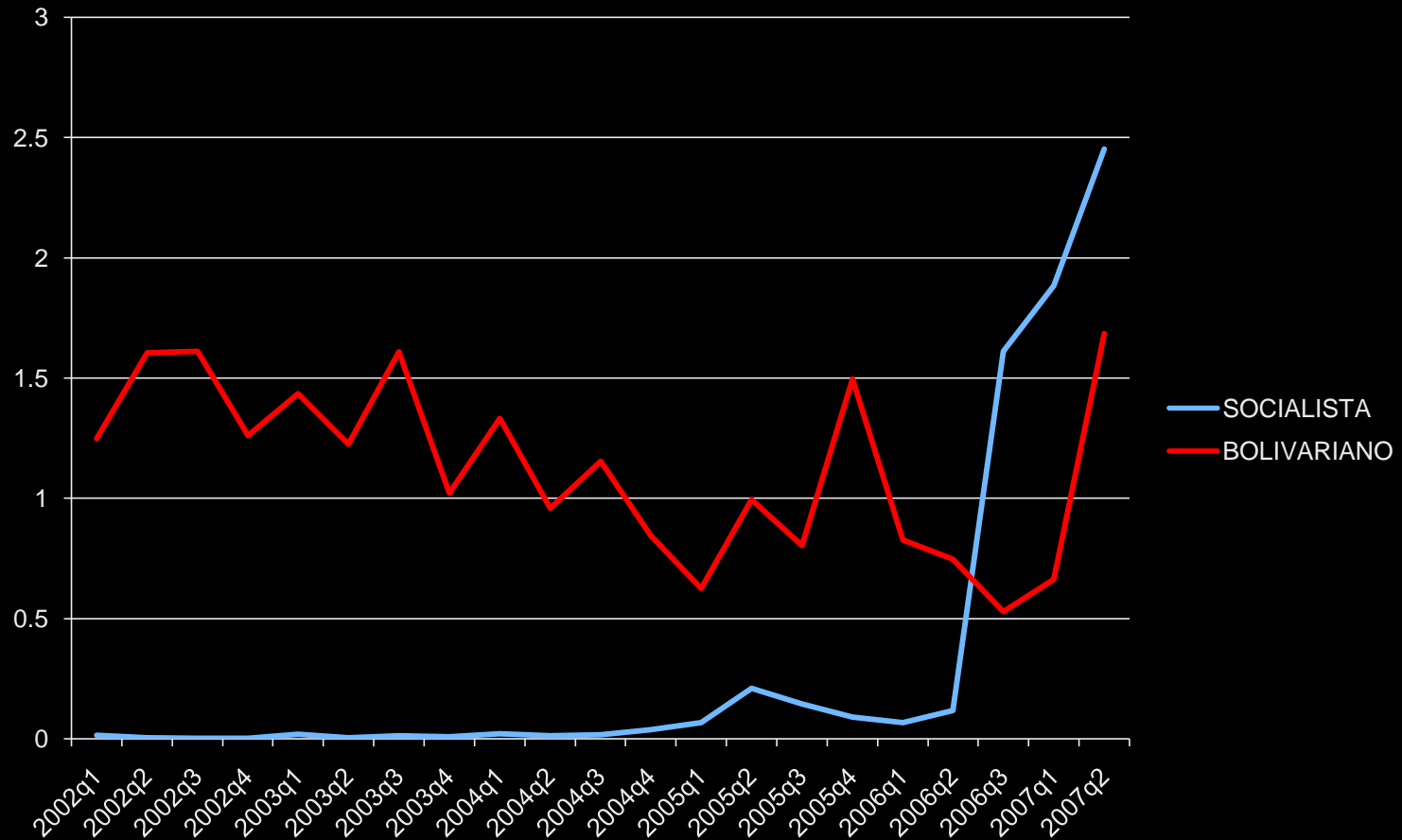
Methodology

- **Frequencies standardised (/1000)**
- **Used standard deviation to compare variation over time**
- **Grammatical words changed most**
- ***Socialista* is most changed lexical word (1726 occurrences; 431st most common; found in 93/189 editions)**
- **Lemmatised in Tree-Tagger Spanish**

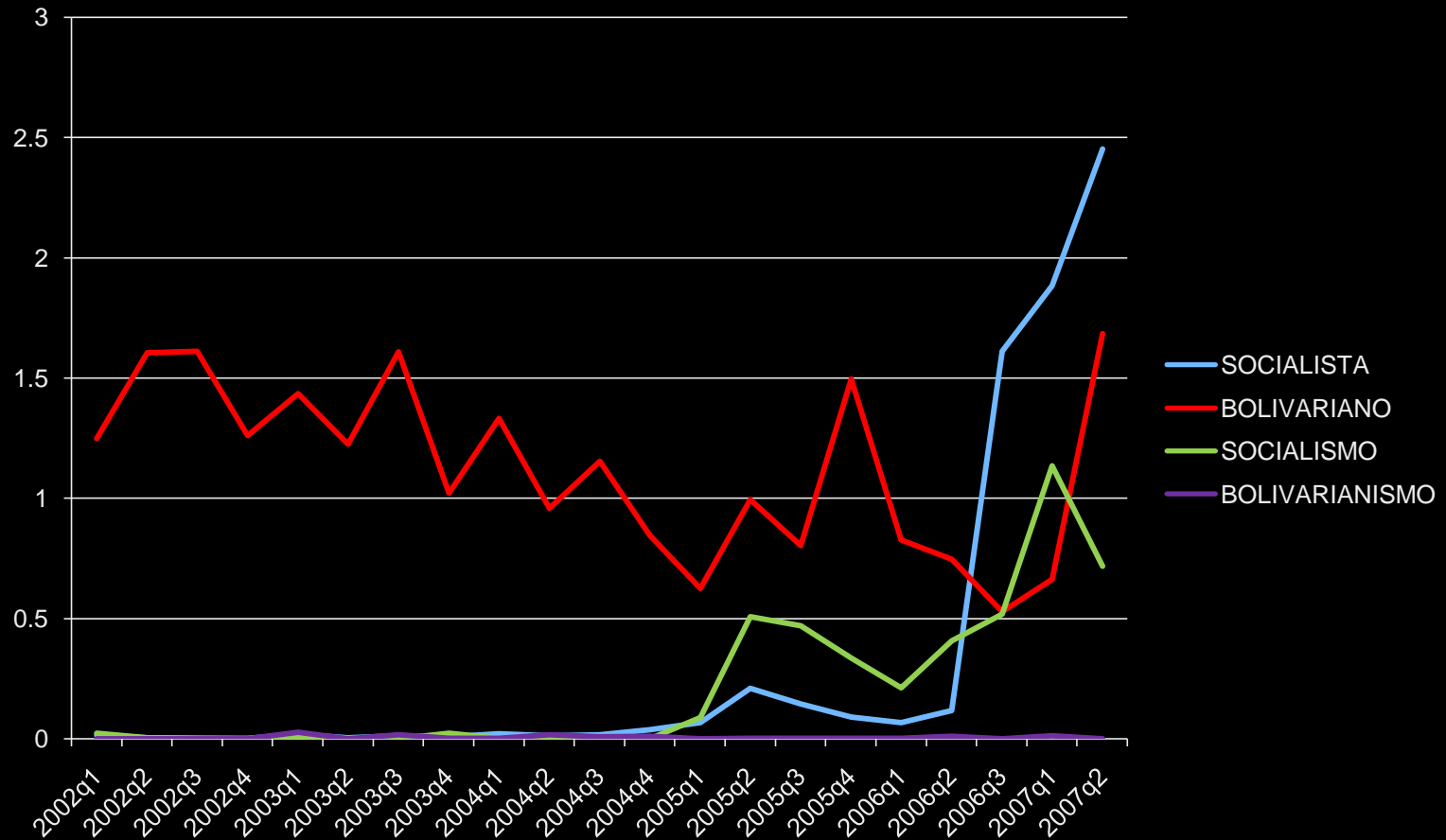
Frequency variation



Frequency variation



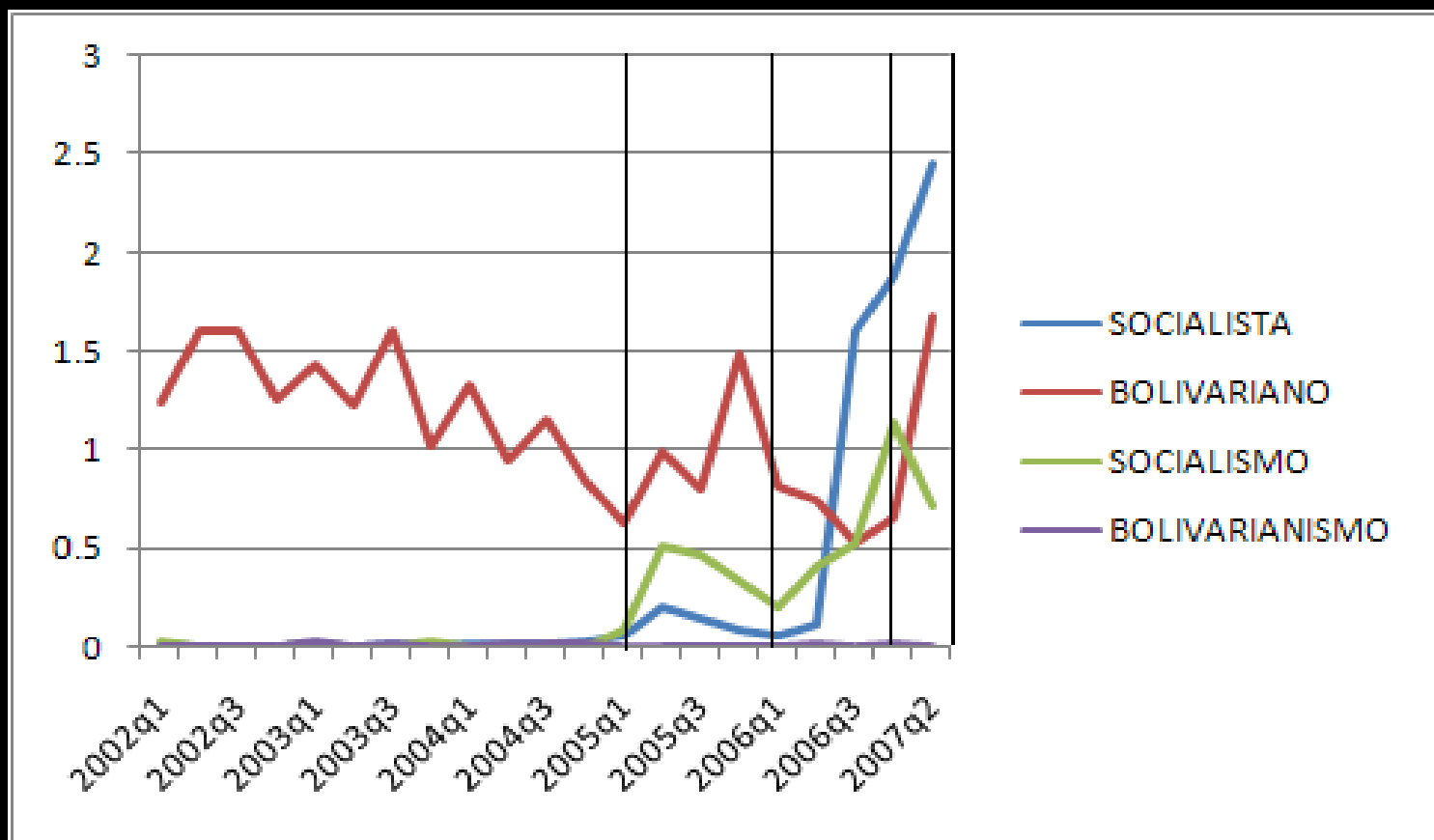
Frequency variation



Collocation

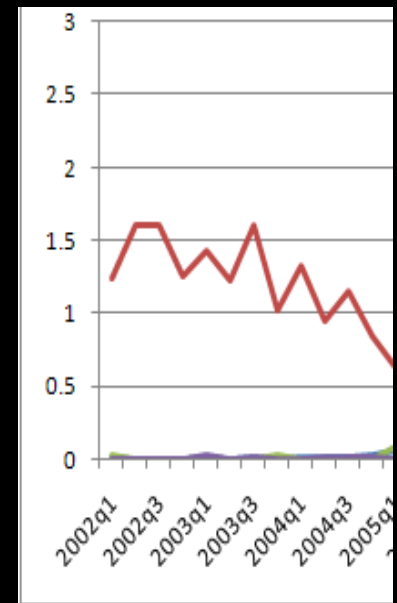
- **Collocates reveal statistically significant propensity to co-occur with the *node***
- **Statistic: MI3**
- **Span: L5R5**
- **Software: WordSmith Tools**
- **Excludes ‘grammatical words’**

Periods



Period 1: 2002-2005

- **Bolivarian Circles**
- **Bolivarian Republic, Revolution**
- **By 2003: Bolivarian University, Plan**
- **3 March 2002: Denies Socialism**
- **15 August 2004: Recall Referendum**
- **24 October 2004: Che Guevara's theoretical view of Socialism**



Period 1: 2002-2005

- ***‘Buena, sí, en verdad, nosotros no nos estamos planteando aquí ningún modelo socialista ni comunista. No; nosotros estamos dentro del marco del capitalismo, lo que queremos es salir del cauce del capitalismo salvaje, de ese neoliberalismo que niega el derecho al ser humano...’***

Period 1: 2002-2005

- *‘creo que después de que se culmine lo del quince de agosto, nos permitirá obtener una visión diferente de lo que es un sistema socialista y no un sistema capitalista.’*

Period 2: 2005

□ Socialism:

- Newness
- Path
- Political
- Nationalist & Religious Figures

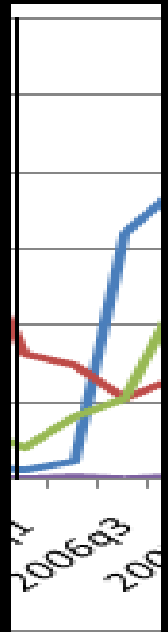
□ Bolivarian Education



Period 3: 2006 – Q1 2007

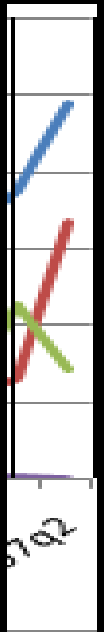
- **Socialist morals, property**
- ***Construyendo* socialism**
- **Bolivarian Education**

- **Bolivarian**
 - Venezuela, Revolution, Republic
- **Socialism**
 - Education



Period 4: Q2 2007

- *'Patria Socialismo o Muerte'*
- Socialist economy
- Bolivarian linked to social policy



Conclusions

- Remarkable that periods divide into years
- Against traditional argument of inexperience
- Bolivarian neologism experiences semantic shift from 'Bolivarian Circles' to education to social policy
- When socialism started in 2007, use of Bolivarian reduced

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Thank you

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