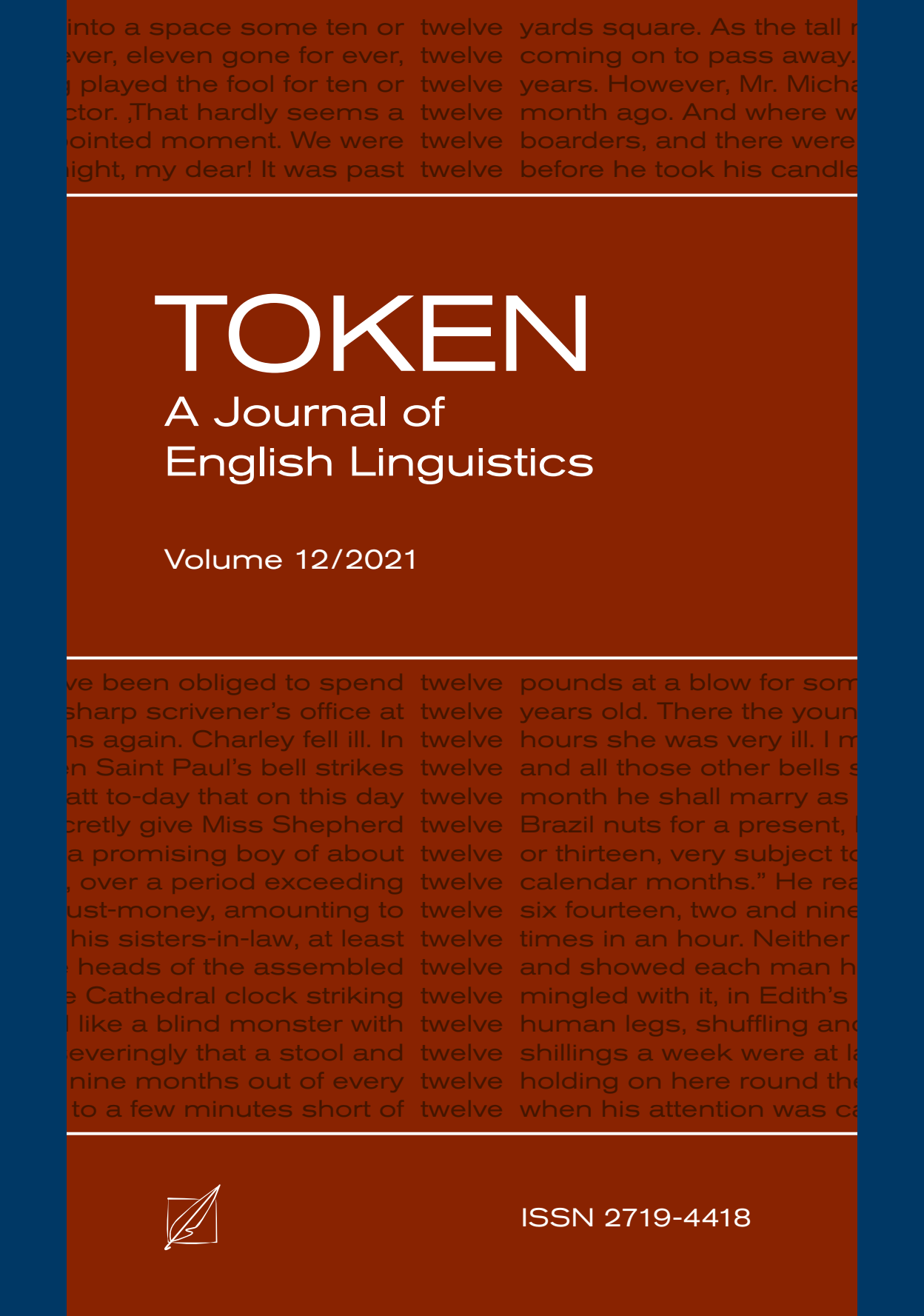
into a space some ten or twelve yards square. As the tall
ever, eleven gone for ever, twelve coming on to pass away.
played the fool for ten or twelve years. However, Mr. Micha
ctor. ,That hardly seems a twelve month ago. And where w
ointed moment. We were twelve boarders, and there were
ight, my dear! It was past twelve before he took his candle
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ve been obliged to spend twelve pounds at a blow for som
sharp scrivener's office at twelve years old. There the youn
ns again. Charley fell ill. In twelve hours she was very ill. I m
n Saint Paul's bell strikes twelve and all those other bells s
att to-day that on this day twelve month he shall marry as
cretly give Miss Shepherd twelve Brazil nuts for a present,
a promising boy of about twelve or thirteen, very subject to
, over a period exceeding twelve calendar months." He rea
ust-money, amounting to twelve six fourteen, two and nine
his sisters-in-law, at least twelve times in an hour. Neither
heads of the assembled twelve and showed each man h
e Cathedral clock striking twelve mingled with it, in Edith's
like a blind monster with twelve human legs, shuffling and
everingly that a stool and twelve shillings a week were at la
nine months out of every twelve holding on here round the
to a few minutes short of twelve when his attention was ca
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Introduction[1]

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1. Discursive identities in historical English texts

This special issue of *Token: A Journal of English Linguistics* contains a collection of papers originating from the International Conference on *Discursive Identities in Historical English Texts* organised by Prof. Christina Samson, coordinator of the Corpora and Historical English Research (CHER) group, within the Department of Education, Languages, Intercultures, Literatures and Psychology at the University of Florence. The conference was the first public engagement activity of CHER, held in October 2019, and it drew together researchers tackling diachronic discursive identity from multiple perspectives. Most of the contributions included in this special issue were presented and discussed at the event, whereas others were inspired by the topic and offer a wider angle on it.

All the papers analyse discursive identity in historical English corpora, many of which have been especially compiled for the purpose, as a result of the increasing number of historical digitised material available and easily accessible online. Corpora, on the one hand, are contributing to an increase in corpus linguistics studies from a diachronic perspective; on the other hand, they enable the expansion of the (currently limited) research on the notion of identity and its relationship with language use from a historical perspective.

Identity has long been considered a slippery and confusing concept, gathering together a wide range of concerns, tropes, curiosities, patterns

[1] Although the authors worked closely on the preparation of this Introduction, Christina Samson is responsible for Sections 1 and 3, whereas Birte Bös is responsible for Section 2.

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of thoughts, debates around certain binaries and particular kinds of conversations (Wetherell 2010: 3). However, in recent years, there has been an increasing consensus that regards identity as something created and performed rather than innate and possessed, as Joseph (2009) claims. Benwell – Stokoe (2009) argue that language and interaction are the focus of identity, which recalls Hegel ([1807] 1977), according to whom identity is a response to the activities of others. Human selves and their identities are not substances cemented prior to the establishment of people's relationships with one another, but are constituted as properties only in and through the forms of human subjectivity that arise from and inform that participation and those relationships (Williams 2000: 21). From this perspective, identity is seen not only as a complex and many-sided phenomenon, but also an entity constructed through interaction and dependant on time and space (Butcholz – Hall 2005; De Fina et al. 2006; Auer 2007), wherein language is crucial, as it allows speakers to express their world view in an interactive process.

Consequently, drawing on Bucholtz – Hall (2005: 585), identity is understood as a product rather than a source of linguistic and other semiotic practices, and therefore it is a social and cultural rather than primarily an internal psychological phenomenon. It includes macro-level demographic categories, temporary and interactionally specific stances, participant roles, and local, ethnographically emergent cultural positions. It may be linguistically indexed through labels, implicatures, stances, styles, or linguistic structures and systems. Moreover, overlapping aspects of the relationship between self and other, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice and authority/delegitimacy can be found in identity. The latter, can, therefore, be partially considered an outcome of interactional negotiation, a construct of others' perceptions and representations and of larger ideological processes and structures.

Within this approach, personal identity refers not only to individual characters or attitudes towards others, but also to self-consciousness, which never exists in isolation but in relation to 'others' who serve to validate its existence (Hall 2004). Therefore, the self is defined primarily by virtue of its membership in, or identification with, a particular group or groups (Benwell – Stokoe 2009). This leads to a collective or social view of identity.

Social identity is indeed related to the groups one belongs to or does not belong to, or identifies with, though, according to Kluge (2019), identity derives from the fusion of social identity and personality in contextual and interactive discourse, thus contributing to a complex entity. Social identity

implies both "the perception of features shared with fellows in the in-group and the perceived differences with other groups" (Grad – Martin 2008: 12) and it is linked to the majority culture that, according to Wodak (2011: 61), is seen as the norm, the 'us', and the minority group, which is viewed as the 'other'. Consequently, who we are varies according to the prevailing power relations of ideologies which impact on our perspectives.

Feeling part of a community is also related to the concept of national identity. For Hall (1996) it is a discursive construct which originates from a system of cultural representations that allows people to interpret and feel part of a nation intended as an "imagined community". This sense of in-group membership derives both from a shared culture and a common history – the latter defined as "collective memory" – which consists in a selective recollection of past events that are important for a specific community of people (Halbwachs 1985). The notion of collective memory is crucial to an analysis of the discursive construction of a nation, as it shows what aspects, events and social actors are selected from the archive of historical memory to identify a common origin and create continuity between past and present. However, Wodak et al. (2009) view national identities also as mental structures which influence – and are in turn influenced by – social practices and find their actualization in discourse. The notion of national identity is considered a sort of habitus: that is, a complex of common ideas, concepts or perception schemas of related emotional attitudes, of similar behavioural dispositions which are internalized through national socialisation (De Cillia et al. 1999: 153).

The representation of the 'other', though, is also linked to reference, that is, the selection of an object or an individual one wishes to say something about (Carlson 2004); this is what happens, for instance, in descriptions wherein some features rather than others are selected as emblematic of social group membership or self-reference. Self-reference is also connected to a writer's identity construction, as in the use of personal pronouns or indexical constructions that express social identification to foster in-group behaviour which reflects socio-cultural conventions as well as personal characteristics (Nevala – Lutzsky 2019). Terms of reference, therefore, convey information about the writer, the addressee, their positions in society, and their attitudes and evaluations by the use of discourse. In sum, there are myriad ways that identity can be conveyed, from habitual practice to interactional negotiation and ideologies which unfold in discourses such as those which historical linguists find preserved in written texts of the past.

2. Contexts and data

Research on processes of identity construction of the past poses particular challenges. Going beyond the basic assumption that people have always drawn on a repertoire of linguistic (and other semiotic) resources in the discursive construction of identities, it is essential to avoid relying merely on our modern socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic competences and models of present-day societies. For this purpose, a broad range of contextual aspects need to be considered.

Just like identity, context is a complex construct which has been conceptualised in many different ways (Flowerdew 2016) and which, in the wake of the discursive turn, came to be "understood in a new way as a dynamic and multi-layered notion" (Taavitsainen – Jucker 2015: 6). Its basis is formed by the text, which is considered as the locus of linguistic forms which can be constructed as indexical of particular identities. These forms are surrounded by cotext, infratextual and intertextual context whose consideration further contributes to a flexible conceptualisation of context (Taavitsainen – Jucker 2015: 6).

Moving beyond the text-focussed dimensions, situational and macrosocial contexts can be subsumed under the term 'extratextual context'. The "widening scope of context" particularly associated with sociocultural turns (Taavitsainen – Jucker 2015: 6) comprises the broader macrosocial contexts wherein context shapes and is shaped by discourse (Reisigl 2017). In addition, with the cognitive lens of the modern researcher not only the influence of the researcher's personal experiences in the reconstruction of historical identities, but also the importance of academic positioning needs to be considered.

The importance of accounting for changes in the conceptualisations of core notions in identity research, like the concept of 'self', is shown by Culpeper – Demmen (2011). They point out that the notion of an 'inner self' started to develop only in the Early Modern period. Various sociocultural developments, like the rise of Protestantism, and increasing social and geographical mobility and urbanisation, which changed the structure of social networks and weakened local community ties, fuelled the shift from community to individual. It is therefore vital to simultaneously consider the different levels of context and contemporary ideologies, taking into account historical discourse communities and their perspectives.

For obvious reasons historical texts are scarce, particularly for the earliest stages of English, whereas from the Late Middle English period

onwards increasingly varied data have been preserved (Jucker 2011: 185). However, the overall situation for researchers has improved tremendously in recent years, as historical documents have been digitized and made accessible to broad audiences in digital archives and historical corpora.

Small corpora, which are often compiled for specific purposes and are contextually well-anchored, enable careful 'horizontal reading' and manual processing (Taavitsainen 2018). This is an important advantage, as it is not easy to operationalise linguistic processes of identity construction, and many indexical elements can be hard to detect and extract automatically. Indeed, close reading also provides a chance to reveal less obvious features of identity construction (Hiltunen – Loureiro-Porto 2020: 4). Yet, the range and frequency of relevant features contained in small-sized corpora may be severely limited. Large corpora, on the other hand, may contain indexical features in higher frequencies, a broader range of genres, etc. However, the results of automated searches are usually presented in isolation, and it is not always possible to recontextualise them to a degree that is sufficient for identity research, especially in the case of those corpora which provide access to only a limited amount of cotext and lack detailed information regarding other contextual aspects.

No doubt, merely quantitative approaches do not suffice for research on discursive identities. However, combinations of qualitative and quantitative approaches prove fruitful, as the growth of fields such as historical corpus pragmatics and corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) in the past decades confirms. Such combinations allow for bottom-up methods, relying on elements extracted inductively from the data, e.g. in close reading, and top-down processes, using corpus-linguistic methods to investigate features previously identified, e.g. in prior linguistic or sociohistorical studies (Partington et al. 2013: 12; Taavitsainen 2018: 534).

3. The studies in this issue

In the first contribution of this special issue, Del Lungo Camiciotti focuses on religious identity, and examines the construction of women's Quaker identity in ego-documents which were a privileged locus of male self-expression in the 17th century and afterwards. More specifically, the study investigates Margaret Fell's writings that contributed to the establishment of the Quakers' group identity by elaborating forms of self-representation both similar to that of men, as members of the Society of Friends, and as women

assuming typically feminine roles. Although identity is primarily the locus of self and subjectivity, when referring to religious identity it addresses also social and political aspects. In this perspective, Del Lungo Camiciotti traces an identity which is masculine at a collective community level and feminine at an individual religious level, with a vision of separateness from the others, although the intent in Margaret Fell's writings was to prove the importance of the female world for the religious community, as indicated in the Scripture itself.

Samson's contribution analyses the construal of discursive social identities in a corpus of Victorian women's travel writings in colonial India. Through a corpus-assisted discourse analysis of key words and their key clusters, Samson highlights the most frequent linguistic patterns characterising representations of cultural and social contexts as well as how diversity is encoded in discourses construing the authors' and other identities. In particular, the constant awareness of England's role in India and of the writers' social identity emerging from the repeated need to differentiate and demarcate themselves from the other in discourse is brought to the fore. Although the writings support the rule of one collectivity over another, they foreground how identities cannot be considered immutable but might be seen as characterised by fluidity.

Shvanyukova examines a corpus of nineteenth-century advice manuals for women that ideologically and discursively constructed a model of socially acceptable female identity. The analysis foregrounds how the dominant conduct discourse disseminated ideas about how women were expected to appear and behave if they were to be treated as respectable members of society and eligible for marriage. Shvanyukova underlines how norms and codes of behaviour in advice manuals were explicitly presented as gendered, with women's position in society and personal identity represented as completely different from, if complementary and subordinate to, those of men in all spheres of life. Nevertheless, the manuals hint at changes in the social position of women, which generated anxieties in the society of the time, but which also resonate today.

The next two papers study national identity in different contexts. Cecconi investigates how British colonists of North America frame their national identity in the socio-political and judicial debates in a corpus of newspaper articles before and after the Declaration of Independence. In her corpus-assisted discourse study, Cecconi focuses on the most frequently used descriptors and their collocational and colligational patterns through which discursive national identities are not only encoded, but also show

how an independent (proto) national identity starts to emerge through discursive strategies of assimilation, perpetuation and dismantling.

Martini examines the denial of identity in a corpus of letters to the Editor of *The Times* published during the period 1914-1926 which mention the Armenian genocide, which is considered the first of its kind in the 20th century. That denial not only opposed international political pressure, but also contested much evidence provided in the press. By using a corpus-assisted approach, Martini analyses the linguistic patterns used to represent the Armenian question at the time. The concordance lines, collocations, clusters and extended co-textual references of keywords and their patterns influence the perception of the Armenian identity, which appears ambivalent in its representation, when not reduced to one of the socio-political instances involved in the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. This contributes to weakening the perception of the population's identity.

The identity of the English language is instead the focus of Facchinetti's study on the role the British lexico-grammatical tradition has had in shaping it through the centuries. By analysing, as case studies, the works of two scholars who contributed to the advancement of English in their own original way (the 16th-century lexicographer Peter Levins, who authored the first English-Latin rhyming dictionary, and the 19th-century grammarian Percival Leigh, who published two comic grammars, one for Latin and one for English), Facchinetti traces the progressive change in the power relationship between English and Latin.

Dossena takes a historical sociolinguistic approach to a small corpus of mostly mid-twentieth-century lyrics in Western movies and TV series to study what linguistic mechanisms are at work for the construction and reinforcement of group identities. These pertain both to the protagonists of the films themselves and to their viewers, whose empathy and emotive participation in the fictional events is elicited. Dossena suggests the lyrics have multiple functions, such as supplementing dialogue, telling stories through ballads, and referring to often stereotypical mental images in their recurring traits, and that their pragmatic success derives from their memorability and from the associations they evoke with an idealized past.

Vezzosi, drawing from descriptive and theoretical linguistics, adopts a text-centred approach in analysing Dickinson's use of personal and intensive pronouns. These are considered by the poet as structures which exist within a male-controlled realm and which require contrast with an unpredictable and indeterminate usage. This appears to conform to its norms, but in reality it endows the standard pattern with unexpected

functions and meanings. Vezzosi foregrounds how changes in gender pronouns (from female to neuter and male) become a powerful instrument to construct Dickinson's identity as a woman poet in a male-hierarchically structured society wherein her poetic creation is publicly recognised and socially accepted.

The volume closes with Ditifeci – Kantzas taking into consideration the effects of digital communication on language. The authors analyse the diachronic development of English through the textual comparison of English translations of the Bible, in order to verify the latter's discursive identity. For this purpose, several linguistic parameters are considered through statistical comparison and manual counting to assess initial research hypotheses referring to grammatical and syntactic features. Ditifeci – Kantzas underline that the results confirm their hypotheses in the diachronic axis 1611-1992, especially in relation to linguistic simplification. This indicates the occurrence of a deep linguistic identity modification over time, which contributes to our understanding of the manifold ways and contexts in which identity is construed and conveyed.

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The construction of women's Quaker identity. A case study: Margaret Fell

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses the writings of Margaret Fell, the co-founder together with her husband George Fox of the Society of the Friends of God, commonly called the Quakers, in order to show that the contribution of dissenting women to the construction of the religious identity of the society was no less important than that of male members. As the corpus is mostly composed of letters, the article shows how the woman writer, in addition to contributing to the society's collective identity, also constructs her multiple individual identity, which is not monolithic but multi-faced, as it varies according to the role of the recipient of her letters and the relationship between addressor and addressee. Margaret Fell's writings can also be considered a form of autobiographical self-representation as she speaks with both a public and a private voice, thus revealing different facets of her personality.

Keywords: Quakerism, identity construction, women's contribution, Margaret Fell's case.

1. Introduction

The study of ego-documents – diaries, journals, autobiographies – is a privileged locus of self-expression, revealing aspects of personal identity; these texts have mainly been used to privilege male identity issues. As Peterson (1993: 81) writes "prior to 1980 major critical studies of autobiography excluded serious consideration of women's texts. […] The effort to construct a literary past, a tradition of English autobiography that accounts for women's texts as well as men's, originated in the nineteenth century. More recently feminist scholarship has attempted to delineate a tradition of women's

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autobiography from the mid-seventeenth century, when non-conformist women began to produce spiritual accounts".[1]A related feminist assumption is that women's autobiography represents a separate and distinct tradition, a genre or subgenre different from autobiographical writing produced by men; however, as stated by Peterson (1993: 84) with reference to Quaker women writers: "Within the autobiographical tradition constructed by *The Friends Library*, variations in form reveal little correlation with gender." It is, however, the case that in their writings Quaker women contributed to the establishment of the Quakers' group identity by elaborating forms of self-representation similar to that of men, as members of the Society of Friends and as women assuming roles typically feminine.

In addition to ego-documents, other genres can help delineate questions about women's forms of self-representation. During the civil war and also after the restoration of Charles II in 1660, religious writings supporting puritan positions were not only produced by men; dissenting women also continued to publish as they had done during the republican interregnum. Staves (2006: 29) writes: "Both during the interregnum and after the Restoration, Quaker women were especially eager to publish pamphlets proclaiming their versions of the gospels, their visions, their advice about the right ordering of the world, and the histories of their preaching and persecution." Gill (2005) underlines the importance of women's writings for the construction of the Quakers' collective religious and political identity. She shows that they also created roles for themselves that emphasised their engagement with the Friends' religious and political agenda by producing texts such as prophetic writing, prison narratives, petitions, and deathbed testimonies, which reveal their involvement in the shaping of this movement.

It is my contention that, in addition to contributing to the society's collective identity, dissenting women also reveal individual identity in their writings. The focus of the present paper is on the construction of the religious identity of a woman, who was a leading and very influential figure among Quaker women, Margaret Fell (1614-1702). She was one of the founders of the Religious Society of Friends, known popularly as the Quakers; she was

[1] Prior to this period, Katherine Parr, the wife that survived Henry VIII, wrote a dramatic report of her conversion in *The Lamentation of a Sinner* written in 1546, though it was published after the king's death in 1547. In 1545 she had published *Prayers or Meditations,* and as noted by the Pastor Don Matzat (2017: 12), it was "the first book published by a woman in England under her own name and in the English language."

a leading preacher, theologian and activist in favour of the Society. As wife of George Fox (1624-1691), founder of the Society of Friends, she acted as unofficial secretary of the new movement and, being a member of the gentry,[2] she was often called upon to intercede in cases of prosecution or arrest of leaders such as Fox. Margaret Fell was also entrusted with tasks on behalf of the society. For instance, we know from Fox's *Journal* (see *Quaker Spirituality* 1984: 105) that she went to London to petition Charles II and his parliament for freedom of conscience in religious matters in 1660 and 1662. She also contributed to spreading the Quaker ideas and principles. During her imprisonment from 1664 to 1668 she wrote religious pamphlets and epistles to make the basic tenets of the society known and to support its friends. In this period, she also wrote her famous *Women's Speaking Justified*, a scripture-based argument for women's ministry centered on the principle of the spiritual equality of the sexes. In her writings it is possible to trace the elaboration of a religious identity represented at both the collective level, by virtue of her membership in the society, and the individual level, due to her status as a woman.

2. Religious identity

Identity is primarily the locus of self and subjectivity, but to speak of religious identity is also to refer to social and political aspects. As stated by Werbner (2010: 233), it "is to refer to a particular way of approaching 'difference'. Religious identity is, above all, a discourse of boundaries, relatedness and otherness, on the one hand, and encompassment and inclusiveness, on the other – and of the powerful forces that are perceived to challenge, contest and preserve these distinctions and unities". This is apparent in the outlook of the dissenting groups of seventeenth century England striving to establish their own group identity in conflict with the official religion of state, the Anglican church, or the Puritan outlook prevalent during the Interregnum.

From the socio-psychological perspective identity is the self image, derived from the experience lived both in childhood and in significant social relationships; current theory thus gives a central place to the self, which is posited as composed of multiple aspects rather than a unitary self (see Stryker

[2] She had married Thomas Fell, a barrister, in 1632, and had become the lady of Swarthmoor Hall in Lancashire, which after the death of Thomas Fell and her marriage to George Fox, became a centre of Quaker activity.

– Serpe 1994: 16). Identity is faceted, as it is constructed interpersonally, in the relationships established with others, in their confirmations and rejections or dis-confirmations (see Vitale 2016).

The discursive construction of identity has also become a central concern across a wide range of disciplines within the humanities and the social sciences (Benwell – Stokoe 2006, 2010), both contemporary and historical. From this perspective, identity is an intersubective rather than a subjective process, which complements post-modern accounts of identity as plural and fragmented. Benwell and Stokoe (2010) outline the history and development of approaches to discourse and identity and focus on the fact that through discourse analysis it is possible to show how identity is understood as a social phenomenon produced in social interaction. According to them (2010: 83), "identity is located not in the 'private' realms of cognition, emotion and experience, but in the public realms of discourse, interaction and other semiotic systems of meaning-making." Also, historical critical discourse analysis (Reisigl – Wodak 2016) is relevant to the examination of in-group and out-group roles and the asymmetrical positioning of discourse participants and social groups in diachronic reconstruction.

In recent years[3] many studies have focused on language as a relevant analytical tool to investigate identity. From this perspective, language is considered a salient marker of group membership and social identity. In interactional sociolinguistics the analysis of the linguistic choices used in specific speech events is considered meaningful as it may contribute to revealing the relationship between interactants and, in particular, the opposition between in- and out-groups, where the minority group tends to refer to itself as *we*, while using for the out-group the "they code" language (Gumpers 1982: 66). Also at the individual level, a person psychologically identifies him/herself as being a member of the in-group. By comparing his/her own group to out-groups he/she not only makes his/her own identity distinct, but also reinforces his/her own identity consciousness.

3. Material and methodology

This contribution will analyse a set of texts, primarily letters, to demonstrate how the religious identity of Margaret Fell is constructed both socially and individually in interaction with the addressees of her writings as no self-

[3] An overview of the most salient social identity research and theories is contained in Hansen – Liu (1997).

consciousness can exist in isolation. As stated by Hall (2004: 83): "It always exists in relationship to 'another' or 'others' who serve to validate its existence."

The approach adopted for the purposes of this paper is the analysis of identity construction in a specific historical and gendered discursive context: the emergence of dissenting female voices in the civil and religious conflicts of seventeenth century England through the analysis of the writings, in particular letters, of a major female actor in the religious arena, Margaret Fell. To delineate her identity, I will focus on the interrelational aspects of her self representation as a religious woman, as revealed in her writings.

Text-based discourse analysis is employed in this analysis, combining quantitative information retrieved by using the Lancaster University Corpus Tooklbox (LancsBox 5.0) and qualitative interpretation. The assumption is that the information contained in the writings by Margaret Fell is usually reported from the writer's point of view and tends to construct a self-representation that can vary according to the role assumed by the writer vis-à-vis her addressees.

The present paper is based on the analysis of Margaret Fell's letters[4] and epistles, and that of the pamphlet *Womens' Speaking Justified* downloaded from *The Quaker Writing Home Page*. To show her construction of a female religious identity, the paper identifies expressions which can reveal the type of relationship she establishes with her addressees and a few words, in particular Quaker key words[5] for instance *light/darkness*, whose presence in the corpus is recurrent as they refer to the relevant theme of Quakerism. Also, personal pronouns are analysed, as these seem relevant to revealing the kind of interpersonal relationship Margaret Fell established with both friends and opponents of the society. Quakers, instead of adopting the already-in-use symmetrical semantics expressed by the use of *Ye/You*, adopted a different egalitarian system by continuing to use *Thee/Thou* for singular and *Ye/You* for plural irrespective of power relationships. It is Margaret Fell's use of the first person pronoun to refer to herself that is particularly revealing as to the relationship she establishes with her addressees as she alternates between *I* and *We* according to the role she assumes.

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4 The importance of Margaret Fell's letter exchange in helping shape the community of the friends is underlined by Marjon Ames in her book, *Margaret Fell, Letters, and the making of Quakerism* (Routledge, 2016).

5 Corpus linguistics and the lexical approach to grammar and meaning developed by John Sinclair is useful in better identifying the significance of a text. For a recent appraisal of John Sinclair's importance see Moon 2007. A review of trends in corpus linguistics is contained in Tony McEnery – Andrew Hardie (2012).

Each document has been analysed individually and as part of one of the three subcorpora constituted by three 'private' letters, six epistles and two public documents, since as indicated by Jucker (2000: 161), we need to adopt a more micro-pragmatically motivated perspective that focuses on the intereactional status of the interactants. In this perspective, social status is only one aspect in the establishment of interactional status, and a microanalysis of texts may better illustrate the choices of Margaret Fell.

In the Quaker writings homepage, the provenance of the letters here analysed is indicated as follows.

The first letter is taken from Barclay, A. R., ed. *Letters, &c. Of Early Friends; Illustrative of the History of the Society, etc.* In: Evans, William and Evans, Thomas, eds. *The Friends Library.* Philadelphia: Joseph Rakestraw, 1847. Vol. XI, p. 351.

As to the second letter, first published in 1909 in *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society* (6, 2, pp. 69-81), Joseph Green writes in the Quaker writings homepage:

> The following letter is a transcript of the original which I discovered accidentally in a manuscript book having no connection with it, and enclosed in a wrapper endorsed by my late uncle, Henry Robson, who died at my father's house, Stansted, Essex, 1850, aet. fifty-one. It is probably that it was given to my grandfather, Thomas Robson, of Liverpool, by his intimate friend, Thomas Thompson, of the same, whose collection of Quaker MSS. is not at Devonshire House. The letter is a folio one, on one side of the paper only; the right hand margin has portions missing, and has been mended by the late H. Robson.

The third letter is taken from Barclay, A. R., ed. *Letters, &c. Of Early Friends; Illustrative of the History of the Society*, etc. In: Evans, William and Evans, Thomas, eds. *The Friends Library*. Philadelphia: Joseph Rakestraw, 1847. Vol. XI, p. 396.

The letter to the King, was appended to the end of William Shewen, *The True Christian's Faith and Experience,* etc. Philadelphia: M. T. C. Gould, 1830.

The six epistles, preceded by an introduction by Margaret Fell, are taken from an anonimous *The Life of Margaret Fox, Wife of George Fox. Compiled from her own Narrative, and other Sources; With a Selection From Her Epistles, etc.* Philadelphia: Published by the Association of Friends for the Diffusion of Religious and Useful Knowledge, 109 North TenthStreet, 1859.

4. Analysis

The first subcorpus analysed consists of three 'private' letters, though it is useful to remember that, in this period, letters, though addressed to an individual recipient, were only 'semi-private' as they were usually read aloud to a circle of family and friends. As stated by Del Lungo Camiciotti (2014: 24), a typical development of the early modern period is that correspondence began to be used in everyday life by members of virtually all social strata, most of them illiterate, who then relied on the assistance of people who wrote letters for them and read aloud the letters received.

The first letter (1) of this group is written from London in 1660 to give information home about the case of a prosecuted friend and other news; the second one (2) is written in 1684-85 to her daughter and son-in-law to give information home about what was happening in London; the third one (3) is written from Lancaster jail to her son-in-law and wife in 1664.

In all these letters the tone is rather informal and affectionate, particularly so in the opening and last paragraphs of the first one. The identity emerging from these documents seems to be that of a caring mother eager to inform family and friends of what is happening in London and, more than other texts, these letters show the private facet of her personality. Words and phrases showing her affectionate concern for the addresses are underlined.

In letter (1) Margaret Fell mostly uses the first person pronoun to refer to herself and the plural *You* for the addresses, thus establishing a personal affectionate relationship with her addressees, her "dearly beloved lambs and babes". In speaking about George Fox, who had been arrested, she refers to the enemies of the friends as *they/them*.

Letter (2) is more matter-of-fact. Here the reporting of news seems to outbalance establishing a connection with the addressees, though affectionate sentences and phrases are present. There are two versions of this letter in the Quaker site. The first is an exact replication of the original, while the second, here reproduced, is in modernized spelling. Though at the beginning of the letter the relationship with the addressee is expressed by *I/you*, *My/your* she shifts to *we/our* when she is speaking on behalf of the London community.

In letter (3), written when she was in jail, she tries to comfort her family about her situation by exhorting them to trust in God and his will. Again, it is the affectionate tone of a mother addressing her family that prevails. At the beginning she seems to address her letter to John Rouse, referred to as *thee/thy,* then she shifts to the plural referring to a group of friends "I hope in the Lord you are all together".

(1) Dated: London, 25th of Eighth month (tenth month) 1660.

My dearly beloved lambs and babes,--my love is to you all; and my prayer to the Lord is for you all, that in his arm and power you may be kept in the bosom of his love, there to be nursed and cherished up to eternal life. G. F. is now free, blessed be the Lord God,--whose arm and power alone has done it,--after he had appeared before the judge who sent for him up; then he appeared before the Lord Chief Justice of England in his chamber; and the next day he appeared before them all in open court, in the King's bench; and all this after the King had granted out an order to set him free: but they would not set him free, till he had appeared in all these places, to see if any thing would come against him. It was of great service to the Lord. […] Let me hear of the little ones, how it is with them all (you mention little of them when you write) and my desire is to hear of you all, and of your well-being in the Lord. […] So no more, but my love in the Lord Jesus is with you; and as soon as the Lord gives me leave, I shall return. The eternal arm of the Almighty be with you.

(2) To her daughter Rachel Fell and son in law.
Dated: London, the 7th 12th month, 1684-5.

Dear Son and Daughter Abraham.
I received your letter and I praise the Lord for your preservation in the truth and in your health as we are here all at this time glory to the lord forever, our business at the Lords is not yet ended but we hope in the Lord to get it ended this next week, here has been a great and Sudden Change, King Charles was taken ill on second day morning and departed this life yesterday about midday, and in the after noon King James the second Late Duke of York was proclaimed, so yet this day the Judges have received Commission to Sit again (as we hear). […] My dear love and constant prayer is to the Lord for you yet in his powerful Arm and Strength you may be preserved. My dear Love is to Leonard Fell and his wife and to all the Servants and friends, We Can give no account of what will become of Mary Woodburns business till out Motion Comes on. Your Brother and Sister Mead and Sister Susanah have their dear Loves remembered unto you, which is all at present,
From your dear Mother in the Lord

(3) Margaret Fell to John Rouse (her son in law) and wife.
Dated: Lancaster jail, 1st of 8th month (tenth month) 1664.

> As I had said often to thee, give up to be crossed; that is the way to please the Lord, and to follow him in his own will and way, whose way is the best. Let nothing enther [sic] thy mind concerning anything about me, for I am very well contented in the work of the Lord. I know your care and tenderness were not wanting to Friends: and so be all satisfied in the will of the Lord. I hope in the Lord you are all together, ere this come to you. Be all satisfied and content with the will of the Lord; and let neither murmuring nor repining enter any of your minds; and let not sorrow fill your hearts, for we have all cause to rejoice in the Lord evermore, and I most of all. […]

As can be seen in this set of letters, positive words and phrases are used, so that the impression we get is that of a caring motherly figure who wants to reassure her relatives and friends and communicate a positive outlook. In a second sub-corpus, called *Six Epistles by Margaret Fell*, which she published to edify her community, she presents a different facet of her personality, that of the leader and prophetess for her community of friends.

In the *Preface to Margaret Fell Epistles* (4), addressed to the 'friendly reader' and 'written by herself' (as it is written under the title), she explains the basic metaphor of Quakerism, the opposition between 'light' and 'darkness', using the authoritative voice of a prophetess. She presents herself as the intermediary between God and the friends and as inspired by God to write to them. To make her voice authoritative she employs the pronoun *we/us,* apparently speaking on behalf of the society, while addressing her reader as *thou*, a pronoun already in this period mostly used in religious discourse and by the Quakers,[6] though the prevailing pronoun for the addressee in the entire letter corpus is *you* (165 occurrences) since all but one (that to John Rouse) are addressed to the community. (For an overview of the use of the pronouns *You/Thou* from 1300 to 1700, see Dury 2007.) The opposition *we/they* is prominent

[6] As observed by Dury (2015), "During the 16th century the use of the singular *thou* had already been reduced to a few marked contexts: a husband addressing his wife (Puritanism), a superior talking to a person of very low rank. And the use as singular of contempt (especially during trials at court)". According to Finkstaedt (1963: 223) the loss of *thou* is due to changes in the society of the 17th century. However, the Quakers continued to use the singular pronoun of address regardless of rank or of relationship with the speaker (see Dury 2005: 2).

in the *Letter to the King on Persecution* (7): *we,* the people who has the light, are set in opposition to *they,* those who follow darkness and oppose the friends. In the entire corpus the personal pronouns recur as follows: *We* 109 / *They* 44; *Us* 32 / *Them* 50. Of course, the use of *they/them* is not restricted to enemies of the society, but the predominance of *we/us* seems to indicate that Margaret Fell sees herself as the authorized spokesperson of the society.

In addition, the presence in the corpus of *friends* (141 occurrences) predominates over that of *enemies* (94), so the focus of Fell's attention seems to be more on the society than on their opponents. Her prominent attention to the friends as a community is reinforced by the fact that the first person singular pronoun, which we could expect to be very frequent in letters, is less so than the plural: *I* 45 / *We* 109 occurrences. On the whole, Fell's attitude towards the situation the community is living in is positive; in her letters she is usually optimistic as she intends to bolster the friends' faith and help them overcome present difficulties. To give courage to the friends, she also reports citations from the Bible to reinforce her statements, though sometimes her voice sounds more reassuring than authoritative when she presents herself as a caring mother for her children.

Her positive vision is also enhanced by the use of key words characterising the construction of Quaker identity: in the corpus of letters there are 61 occurrences of *light* vs 9 of *darkness.* The basic Quaker dichotomy *Light/Darkness* is present in all the documents,[7] thus reaffirming the religious collective identity of the friends as chosen people different from the others, those who oppose and persecute them. To strengthen the boundaries between the collective identity of the society of friends, those who follow the light and are humble and obey the will of God, and those opposing them, she repeatedly mentions "the opposition of the power of darkness", identified with priests and professors trying to wage war against those who trust the light. In these documents an important aspect of religious identity emerges: that of a group of people different from and in opposition to the evil forces trying to oppress them. As for her personal identity, in the preface to the *Six Epistles,* she presents herself as authorized by the Lord to write to friends, as an authoritative leader and an inspired prophetess, urging her fellow Christians to follow and obey the light in opposition to the haters of the light, the forces of darkness. In this group of letters, the pronouns used are *we/thou.* She directly addresses her friendly reader by using the singular

[7] George Fox preached the 'inward light' as metaphor of the presence of Christ in the heart. Early Quakers would sit in silence and meditate until they felt Christ's Light shining on them and the Holy Spirit speaking to them.

thou, but she refers to herself with the plural *we,* rather than *I,* thus stressing her belonging to the community.

(4) Preface to Margaret Fell Epistles

Friendly Reader:
The following epistles were written at the first appearance of truth among us, when we were young in it: the Light of Christ being our first principle, our minds being turned to it, and it having become our teacher, leader, and guider, we saw perfectly that there was no safety, nor preservation out of sin and transgression, but as we obeyed the Light, and following it in our hearts and consciences, it leading out of sin, transgression, and iniquity: so as we waited in it, and dwelt in it, we came to witness a washing and cleansing, by the blood of Jesus. […] We were moved of the Lord to write often to Friends, and our testimony was very much to the Light of Christ in the conscience; because we that(sic) that this was the way, and there was no other; for Christ Jesus said, I am the Light; He also said, I am the way, the truth, and the life; and there is none that can come to the Father, but by me. And so we received His Testimony, and could set our seals that it was true. And then we saw the great concern that lay upon this, which is the salvation of poor people's souls. And we knowing as Christ said, they that hated the Light it was their condemnation; and also those that obeyed it, it would bring them to Christ their salvation; this made us very importunate with all people, both Friends and others, to direct them to the Light, and obey it. […] And so, reader, cleave to the blessed Light and Truth of the living God, that He hath placed in thy heart, and believe in it, and hearken to it, and obey it, and it will lead thee in the path that we have gone, and then thou wilt see, and feel, and understand what we have been through; and thou wilt come to be a witness of the living God and His Truth, which will be peace and comfort to thy soul.
The Lord God Almighty open thy heart, and enlighten the eye of thy understanding, that thou mayest come to have unity with all the saints in the Light.

(5) A General Epistle To Friends, 1655

So read, and with the eternal light examine and search, and try what it is that you thirst after; whether it be righteousness, purity and holiness, for these will the Lord satisfy; and whoever is not thus

seeking, shall never receive satisfaction from the Lord God; but wrath, and terror, and horror, shall fall upon that which is contrary to this. […] So examine, and try whether you are gathering now or scattering abroad, with the Light which is eternal, which is one in all. Examine and try your own selves, I charge you, as you will answer it before the Lord God; come down and stoop to the yoke of Christ, which is easy, and take His yoke upon you, and His burden, which is light; and beware of starting from under the yoke of obedience, or pulling away the shoulder; for the God required not only sacrifice, but obedience, which is better. […] So read where you are, for it(sic!) you are in that which is divided, you cannot stand. So in love and tenderness to your souls, I warn and charge you from the Lord, keep in the light, which is one, and in the power, which is one, and in the measure of life made manifest in you, which is one. […] And this I was moved of the Lord, to write to you, in love and tenderness to the measure of God in you, with which I have unity, which will witness for me forever; and this is in love to your souls. So the Lord God of life and power keep you alive in that, which He hath placed in you, to His everlasting glory: for a sweet savour we are unto God, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. And beware how you draw back from the everlasting truth, which the Lord God hath tendered to you, which you shall eternally witness to be of God: […]

From one who desires the good of all souls.

(6) An Epistle To Convinced Friends, in 1656

Dear Friends, brethren and sisters in the eternal light, by which we are gathered, which is or teacher and leader: which light cometh from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, in whom is life, and this life is the light of men; who has laid down His life for sheep, and who gives unto His sheep eternal life; and this life is in His Son: *your righteousness is of me,* saith the Lord; and this is the heritage of the saints: this you are made partakers of, who walk in the light, and dwell in the light, you shall have the light of life, and come to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, who is come a light into the world: he that believes in Him, shall not walk in darkness, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. […] Now, dear brethren, of this bear witness, and of the truth and faithfulness of the Lord God, you may set to your seals, all who abide in the light, and depart from iniquity, who name this name, which is better than other

names: to which every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. And now that ye are made partakers of a living, pure, eternal, immortal principle, which came from the living God, by which you may enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by this new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil (that is to say), His flesh; […] Beware of betraying the just and the innocent in you (I warn and charge you, as you will answer it to the Lord) with a form and profession of the truth without the life, and so betray your own souls; but to the pure eternal principle of the Lord God turn, and keep your minds unto this, which is given unto you, for the redeeming and ransoming of your souls form (sic!) the captivity and bondage of sin and corruption; […] And therefore I say again, fear the Lord God, that so the pure wisdom ye may come to learn; for dreadful and terrible is the Lord God; and the day of the vengeance of our God is come, in which He renders to every one according to his deeds; […]
From your dear sister in the unchangeable love of Christ, who desires the good of all your souls.

(7) An Epistle To Friends, 1657.

Dear Brethren and Sisters, who are gathered in the light of Christ Jesus, the fountain of all light, and life, from whence light comes, from whence life comes, from whence power comes; which redeems out of nations, kindreds, people and tongues, to be kings and priests unto God, to reign with Him upon the earth. This is the possession of the saints who dwell in the light, that leads them into the life and fountain from whence it comes; here is the unity of the spirit, and bond of peace, which never can be broken. […] And beware that you join not with God's enemies, either in yourselves or others; but join with God's pure witness and testimony, and there will be your peace. And here you will know Him, who is the life, and the resurrection; he that believe in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and there is no other name under heaven, whereby any shall be saved, than by that name, which is better than every name; […]
From a true friend of the Seed of God in all nations.

(8) An Epistle To Friends, 1659.

The eternal God keep you, who brought again our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; and by

> His blood wash you, and cleanse you from all sin, and all that would separate from God; that you may have fellowship one with another in the eternal light and life, and there I leave you; and to the Word of His eternal power I commit you, and commend you to His eternal Arm, which is able to save your souls, and keep you up to Himself.

(9) An Epistle To Friends In Ireland, in 1661.

> My dear love in the Lord God Almighty is upon you all, which never changest (sic!), but endures forevermore; […] the servants are not greater than their Lord; and blessed and happy are all they that learn this lesson in the power of God, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake; for they who suffer for Him, shall also reign over their enemies with Him; and in His power will they subdue and conquer at the last, for the Lamb and His followers shall have the victory. […] And so, my dearly beloved, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and be faithful, and bold, and true to your Maker, and he will be a husband unto you, and set your feet upon the rock most sure, […]
> The God of love, whose mercies fail not, preserve and keep you all, and nurse you up in His own bosom, to His own praise and glory, that you may be a people saved by the Lord.
> From your dear friend and sister,

The six epistles are dated from 1655 to 1661. They are public because they are addressed to the Friends, with whom Margaret Fell interacts by using the plural *You*. In these documents she mostly refers to herself with the collective *We* thus establishing an intimate bond with her addressees, stressing the common belonging to a chosen group, but she also uses the individual *I,* particularly in threatening sentences expressing the individual voice of the authoritative leader. So, at the same time, she presents herself with a reassuring voice and with that of the prophetess moved by divine inspiration, exhorting and at times even threatening her friends, as can be seen in letter (5). Margaret Fell's exhortations to her friends are rather pressing as she urges them by often using directives.

In epistle (6) the prevailing voice is that of the caring leader addressing her addressees as "Dear Friends, brethren and sisters" and "dearly beloved brethren" to reinforce the bond that unites them against those opposing and persecuting them, but she assumes also a prophetic voice to stir them up and threaten them at the same time. The two key words of Quakerism *light/*

darkness are present also in this letter to emphasise the religious identity of the society of friends based on this opposition.

The tone of epistle (7) is very similar to that of the preceding one. Margaret Fell presents herself alternatively as the caring sister reassuring the friends of their status as the chosen, exhorting them to give testimony of their faith, and sometimes as the prophetess using an authoritative voice to avoid darkness. At the beginning there is the usual allocution reinforcing the bond among the friends and their consciousness of being a chosen community.

In letter (8) the reassuring tone dominates. In epistle (9), the affectionate and caring voice is most prevalent. The readers are addressed as "My Dearly Beloved" and the letter tends to reinforce the recipients' faith in the living God. The writer presents herself using the pronoun *I* rather than *we,* thus establishing a personal bond, rather than a collective one, with her addresses. The tone is rather positive and encouraging. She is more a dear sister to them than an inspired prophetess.

A third facet of Margaret Fell's personality is revealed in two public texts: the letter addressed to the King to ask for liberty of conscience and the treatise *Women's Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed of by the* Scriptures, *All such as speak by the Spirit and Power of the Lord Jesus.*

While in letter (10) she declares that the Friends of God is a peaceful community loyal to the King, in the treatise she presents herself as a theologian, inspired by Jesus to speak in favour of the religious role of women; the spiritual equality of men and women is in fact a tenet of Quakerism. In this argumentative text, she proves that there is nothing in the Scriptures to justify the actions of those who oppose women's preaching; on the contrary, there is proof of the privileged status accorded to women by Jesus.

In *Margaret Fell's Letter to the King on Persecution, 1660*, (10) she assumes the role of spokesperson for the Society of the Friends of God; she is the charismatic leader speaking for her community as she always uses the pronoun *we* in opposition to those who are against them. Here the request to be granted liberty of conscience is clearly affirmed not by pleading for it but by arguing that those who oppose them do not know them, and she boldly asks for the right to "enjoy our civil rights and liberties of subjects, as freeborn Englishmen". In this letter the opposition *we, us / they, them* prevails, and it underlines that the Friends were cruelly persecuted by enemies of the Society. But the opponents of the Society of Friends are also directly addressed as *You* in a passage where she stresses that they are unjustly persecuted.

(10) Letter to the King on Persecution

> We have been a suffering people, under every power and change, and under every profession of religion that hath been, and borne the outward power in the nation these twelve years, since we were a people, and being that, through the old enemy which hath continually appeared against us, not only in the profane people of the nation, but also in the highest profession of sorts and sects of religion, we have suffered under, and been persecuted by them all: some even persecuted and imprisoned till death; others their bodies bruised till death, stigmatized, bored through the tongue, gagged in the mouth, stocked, and whipped through towns and cities; our goods spoiled, our bodies two or three years imprisoned; with much more that might be said, which is well known to the actors thereof. […] And now because the several of you, who are most concerned in this government, are not acquainted with our principles and practices, neither have known our innocency and sufferings, and the old enemy, by whom we have suffered, at this time being ready to incense and instigate, and infuse secretly into the minds of them who are strangers to us, against whom we have not transgressed, neither do we desire to give any just occasion of offence. […]

The enemies, "them who are strangers to us" are identified with "priests, teachers, and professors" thus claiming for the Friends a religious identity based on the separation between "us" who follow the light and spirit and "them" "who are contrary to people's consciences", defined as "deceivers of the people, and betrayers of their souls" because they do not have the spirit of God in them. The tone of her proclamation is formal and authoritative.

> We do therefore declare, to take off all jealousies, fears, and suspicions of our truth and fidelity to the king, and these present governors, that our intentions and endeavours are and shall be good, true, honest, and peaceable towards them, and that we do love, own, and honour the king and these present governors, so far as they do rule for God and his truth, and do not impose any thing upon people's consciences, but let the gospel have its free passage through the consciences of men, which we do not know that they have, by any law, as yet imposed. […] we do therefore inform the governors of this nation, high and low, that we are a people that desire the good of all people, and their peace, and desire that all may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, the way, and the life, which is Christ Jesus, […]

In the treatise *Women Speaking Justified* (11), right at the beginning, Margaret Fell declares her opinion on the role of women in religion to be contrary to that of many.

(11) Women Speaking Justified

> Whereas it hath been an Objection in the Minds of many, and several times hath been objected by the Clergy, or Ministers and others, against Women's speaking in the Church; and so consequently may be taken, that they are condemned for medling in the things of God: […]

She proceeds to prove that, contrary to official position of the Church, there are in the Scripture many places where the special status attributed by Jesus to women is apparent, not only in the New Testament, where it is reported that women were the first to 'preach' the tidings of The Resurrection, but also in the Old Testament where it is shown that some women, not just men, had the spirit of God:

> God hath put no such difference between the Male and Female, as Men would make. It is evident that God made no difference, but gave his good Spirit, as it pleased him, both to Man and Woman, as Deborah, Huldah, and Sarah.

In a further addition to the treatise, in answer to the objection concerning *Women keeping silent in the church* (1 Corinthians: 14.34), the tone is more polemical as she directly addresses her opponents, who are identified as "blind priests".

> Now let us see if any of you, blind Priests, can speak after this manner, and see if it be not a better Sermon that any of you can make, who are against Women's Speaking

On the contrary:

> Thus much may prove, that the Church of Christ is represented as a Woman; and those that speak against this Woman's speaking, speak against the Church of Christ, and the Seed of the Woman, which Seed is Christ; that is to say, Those that speak against the Power of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a Woman, simply by reason of her Sex, or because she is a Woman, not regarding the Seed, and Spirit, and Power that speaks in her; such speak against Christ and his Church, and are of the Seed of the Serpent, wherein lodgeth Enmity.

In this treatise, the tone is mainly that of a sober exposition of ideas supported by Bible citations, though occasionally a polemical vision that juxtaposes her opinion with that of her enemies emerges:

> Mark this, you that despise and oppose the Message of the Lord God that he sends by Women; What had become of the Redemption of the whole Body of Mankind, if they had not cause to believe the Message that the Lord Jesus sent by these Women, of and concerning his Resurrection? And if these Women had not thus, out of their Tenderness, and Bowels of Love, who had received Mercy, and Grace, and Forgiveness of Sins, and Vertue, and Healing from him; which many Men also had received the like, if their Hearts had not been so united and knit unto him in Love, that they could not depart as the Men did; but sat watching, and waiting, and weeping about the Sepulchre until the time of his Resurrection, and so were ready to carry his Message, as is manifested, else how should his Disciples have known, who were not there?

In this treatise, her arguments are frequently based on the fundamental dichotomy of Quakerism, *Light* vs *Darkness*, and the related oppositions *free* vs *bond* and *spirit* vs *flesh.* For example, *The General Epistle to Friends* (dated 1655) begins as follows: "Friends, whom the Lord God hath called unto the light which is eternal, which the Lord God has sent, to bring His seed out of bondage, and out of the house of darkness". Right at the beginning of the *Letter to the King*, she quotes the scriptural expression "He that is born of the flesh persecuteth him that is born of the spirit."

5. Concluding remarks

This analysis of Margaret Fell's letters and epistles shows that her identity as a religious woman is constructed in interaction with both friends and enemies; it is based on inclusiveness as she often refers to herself as a member of the community, and on difference as she opposes the enemies of the Society of Friends. In her epistolary exchanges her identity is presented as composed of at least two aspects as she seems to impersonate two different roles according to the functions and the recipients of her letters: the supporting figure and the charismatic leader. But there is also a third facet: that of the public speaker on behalf of the Quaker identity,

and in particular of the female Quaker identity, as revealed in her letters and in her theological treatise in favour of women. As just mentioned, the religious identity displayed in Fell's letters is composed of at least two facets: a private one, a caring and reassuring family voice, and a more public one, that of the spokesperson of the community. While the first is based on a familial metaphor – she is the sister, even a motherly figure at times – and is thus predominantly supportive and encouraging, the second is the charismatic voice of a leader and prophetess stressing the opposition between the friends of God, who trust the 'light', and their opponents, who represent 'darkness'.

We can conclude by saying that, in Margaret Fell's writings, it is possible to trace the elaboration of a religious identity represented at the collective level, by virtue of her membership in the Society, but also at the individual level, due to her status as a woman. Her personal identity as religious woman as well as that of her community of friends is based on a vision of separateness from other people, be they religious or not, and on the perception of being besieged by enemies, who are identified with establishment persons, who, according to Margaret Fell, do not know the true nature of the Friends and so represent a menace for them. Because of this, much of her message consists in helping her community to identify their enemies and to reassure the Friends that it is they who have the spirit of God and represent Light in opposition to the forces of Darkness.

At the collective level her identity construction is similar to that of Quaker men, but at the individual level she shows marked female features. In addition, she is particularly eager to prove the importance of the female world for their religious community, not only because she is a women that can exercise all those functions previously attributed to men, but also because the Scripture itself recognises this role of religious women.

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Discovering colonial India: The construal of discursive social identities in women's travel writings

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ABSTRACT

As a result of transportation development and socio-economic changes, 19th century upper middle class British women began travelling and discovering many countries of the British Empire of which they provided accounts. The objective of this study is to bring to the fore the recurring lexical features used in authentic non-literary Victorian women's travel writings forming a corpus. This was especially compiled, by downloading digitalised texts available in dedicated sites with the purpose of analysing the relatively most frequent key words and clusters used to construe discursive social identities while interacting with different social groups encountered in India. The methodology adopted is a mixed one. It integrates a corpus assisted approach with discourse analysis of the emerging data. The results suggest Victorian women travellers used discourse not only to construe distinct social identities linked to their awareness of England's role in India, and to demarcate their identity from the 'other' but also to highlight hybrid identities in the colonial socio-cultural context.

Keywords: social identities, travel writings, discourse, Victorian women travellers, corpus linguistics.

1. Introduction

The 19th century was the period in which Britain experienced rapid technological expansion, improved transportation, growing urbanisation and social development that encouraged upper middle class British women to travel and defy social taboos by traversing and discovering the Indian

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subcontinent (Samson 2020). Through their travel writings, which included memoires, outdoor literature, guidebooks, nature writing and travel journals, women not only contravened societal norms but they were also viewed as challengers of what was considered a masculine genre, or challengers never completely free from British moral codes and interests. Furthermore, in describing and providing a subjective perspective of all they encountered, Victorian women not only narrated activities they would not have been likely to participate in whilst still in England, but they also foregrounded their subjective discursive identities while discovering India.

Drawing on Benwell and Stokoe (2006), the term 'identity' is considered in its broadest sense by referring to who people are to each other, how difference is approached and how different identities are construed. In this study, therefore, unlike most of the extant gender, socio-ideological literature, the focus is on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the linguistic features characterising women's representations of the cultural and social differences they encountered in colonial India, how diversity is encoded in their discourses construing their and other identities in their travel writings.

In order to analyse the recurring linguistic features used in these texts within a societal value-system, a corpus of non-literary Victorian Women's Travel Writings in India (VIWOTWI) was compiled with the aim of attempting to answer the following questions:

1) Which are the relatively most frequent key words and clusters used in VIWOTWI?
2) How do the clusters recurrently encode the diverse discursive social identities construed in VIWOTWI?

The present paper is structured as follows: section 2 provides an overview of Victorian women's travel writings; section 3 introduces the concept of identity; section 4 describes the corpus and the methodology adopted whilst the data are analysed in section 5. Key conclusions are drawn in section 6.

2. Victorian women's travel writings

During the past decades there has been a growing interest in 19th century women's travel writings which has not only extended our knowledge but has also greatly nuanced our understanding of women's contribution to the genre. The 1980s, for example, witnessed pioneering anthologies of

women's early travel writing (Hamalian 1981; Birkett 1989; etc.), thus demonstrating an extensive female tradition in what many had assumed to be an overwhelmingly masculine genre (Thompson 2017). The stereotype that emerged from these studies was of a few eccentric, exceptional "spinsters abroad", overtly rebelling against the gender constraints of Victorian society and limiting their writings to the domestic realm of the private, often communal, journal/diary (Millim 2016) that contributed to colonial discourse and imperial identity (Bhabha 1984).

The following decade was characterised by a number of seminal literary-critical and theoretical works on the topic (Mills 1991, 1994; Frawley 1994; Bohls 1994; Morgan 1996; and others) with the mainstream claim that women travel writers constructed their texts within a range of power nexuses. That is, the power of patriarchy which acted upon them as middle class women through discourses of femininity and the power of colonialism that influenced them in relation to people of the countries described in their books. It is the convergence and conflict of these two power structures which were seen as determining the styles and content of their books (Mills 1994). Other studies attempted to illustrate the imperial mentality and the implications of imperialism in women travellers' identity formation (Morgan1996) with the result that travel was considered less as a physical act and more as a cultural one with its own language, literature, and ways of creating meaning.

The paradigms and perspectives which had been established by previous research have lately been extended to many different branches of the genre (McEwan 2000; Anderson 2006; Mackenzie 2012; Broome Saunders 2014). Some studies have focused on the cultural features of travel writing (Pratt 2007), others on the ideological construct iterated by women writers in the service of the Raj (Agnew 2017), or on how they subverted the constraints of Victorian gender discourses, thus nourishing proto-feminism (Lewis 2013) and power relations inscribed in the traveller's gaze (Ghose 2000).

By contrast, other studies typified by a pragmatic rather than an ideological approach (Sinor 2002) have counterbalanced their stigmatisation of women's travel accounts as informal and marginal documents by foregrounding their heteroglossic features in which multiple languages co-exist and interact in the combination of different traditions (Delafield 2009). This means that travel accounts might be mixed with those of a household, or with business reflections in different forms such as a bare-boned journal or log-book, a guidebook, or an emotionally effusive private diary. Furthermore, Bellanca (2007) underscores how journals or other forms of

travel writing are closely engaged with their historical context and can shed light on the multitude of overlapping discourses that pervade the culture in which they originated.

More recently, scholars have recognised that women's experiences and representations of India are to be seen as shaped by multiple, intersectional factors such as gender, age, class, financial position, education, political ideals, arts and professions (e.g. medicine, nursing). Their work is still often seen on the generic borders between scribal and print culture (Thompson 2017; Colbert 2017; Howell 2017; Mulligan 2016), gradually evolving into autobiographical genres; others have considered it as a means of self-reflection and an attempt at self-control during interactions with the Indian 'other', since, as Poon (2008) claims, the performance of Englishness constantly skirts the border between: a) a self-possession of "knowledge" into England's role in India – often characterised by uncertainty regarding its colonial involvement – and an in-dissociable form of guilt about its historical effects; and b) Englishness as an identity rooted in knowledge of the Indian society and culture, although primarily represented and mediated as a form of personal seeing.

3. Identity

Identity, according to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), is related to a dialectical relationship between particular discursive events and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded: on the one hand, the situational, institutional and social contexts shape and affect discourses; on the other hand, discourses influence social and political reality. In other words, discourse constitutes social practice and is, at the same time, constituted by it. Through discourse, social actors constitute knowledge, situations, social roles as well as identities and interpersonal relations between various interacting social groups, as in this case Victorian women travellers interacting with Indians. For Koller (2009) discourse practice is inherently linked to the power of discourse participants, as it is organised in the wider social formation and its institutions, in which text producers, distributors and receivers act in particular roles. Linguistically, in an analysis of collective identity, context is thus crucial, because the representation of social actors is shaped, if not determined, by discursive and social practices and formations (Koller 2009).

Within this perspective, the self is a crucial element, since the ability to self-reflect is a pre-condition of imaginative rehearsal of behaviour which

is attained through linguistic communication (Layder 2003). It is from this specific condition that identity emerges and can be seen as the product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices, since it is fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). This means that identity is characterised by complexity, and it usually cannot be directly linked to any specific feature of language, although it can be expressed and constructed by various linguistic means and meanings in inter-subjective relations of sameness and difference, power and disempowerment (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

Difference, in particular, is construed and encapsulated via the notion of 'othering'. For Fabian (2000), the 'other' is never simply given, never just found or encountered, but made. Since the eighteenth century in Europe, the 'other' has been construed as negative. For instance, the savage is represented without history, writing, religion, morals, as part of a vanishing world which consequently required documentation (Hallam and Street 2000).

Such negativity increased with the advent of industrialisation, bureaucracy and the notion of progress which reinforced the opposition between civilised and savage/primitive, subject and object, forming not only relations of difference and distance, but also of spatio-temporal remoteness which was considered a necessary conceptual category for the constitution of the 'other' (Hallam and Street 2000). Othering is therefore considered a process of differentiation and demarcation (Lister 2004) by which 'the line is drawn between "us" and "them" – between the more and the less powerful – through which social distance is established and maintained' (Lister 2004: 101) as in the case of colonial India.

This view entails constructions of the self or 'in-group' (the English), and the other or 'out-group' (the Indians), through identification of what the former has and what the latter lacks in relation to the former (Brons 2015: 70). It is, therefore, the means of defining into existence a group perceived to be 'inferior' (Schwalbe et al. 2000). For Jensen (2011) the concept of 'othering' signifies 'classed', 'raced' and 'gendered' processes through which powerful groups simultaneously claim a monopoly on crucial knowledge, use ways of actively demonstrating their power and construct/exclude less powerful others as pathological, 'dangerous' and/or morally inferior. But the concept of 'othering'' also attempts to capture the practices and processes through which the 'outsider' is produced.

The representation of otherness through language, as Hall (1997) claims, is central to the processes by which meaning is produced; consequently, dominant or hegemonic groups can exert control over

processes of representation, while representations of otherness can also be read as inverted representation of those doing the othering (Hall 1997) in discourse. Discourse, then, is not just a set of textual features but it embodies socially shared assumptions and practices that allow, as in this case, Victorian women travellers to construe discursive representations of the Indians as well as of themselves in the context of colonial India.

4. Corpus and methods

In an attempt to answer the research questions of this study, a corpus of Victorian Women's Travel Writings in India (VIWOTWI) consisting of 7,106,099 words was compiled. The texts forming the corpus were selected according to their authors' gender, content and the historical period in which they were written. Moreover, all the texts in VIWOTWI are published, non-literary accounts in forms varying from narratives to recollections and letters written by travel writers, educational social reformers, military officers' wives, journalists, biologists and botanical artists. The works in VIWOTWI are listed in Table1.

Table 1. Works in VIWOTWI

Author	Year	Titles	Words
Billington, M.	1895	*A woman in India*	570,561
Carpenter, M.	1868	*Six months in India*	492,344
Eden, E.	1872	*Letters from India* Vol. I.	711,824
Eden, E.	1872	*Letters from India* Vol. II.	320,026
Eden, E.	1867	*Letters written to her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India*	625,483
North, M.	1894	*Recollections of a happy life. India*	65,050
Parks, F.	1850	*Wanderings of a pilgrim*	1,037,078
Postans, M.	1838	*Western India* Vol. I.	301,168
Postans, M.	1838	*Western India* Vol. II.	284,776
Roberts E.	1835	*Scene and characteristics of Hindostan* Vol. I.	693,824
Roberts, E.	1837	*Scene and characteristics of Hindostan* Vol. II.	418,192
Roberts, E.	1837	*Scene and characteristics of Hindostan* Vol. III.	441,667
Savory, I.	1900	*A sportswoman in India*	572,050

Firstly, by drawing on Partington (2004, 2009), a corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CADS) was applied to VIWOTWI, since the corpus is used for replicable quantitative techniques. These allow us to identify and qualitatively interpret units of discourse construing reality, social identities and relationships.

The analysis started by applying Word Smith Tools (WST) 7.0 (Scott 2016) to VIWOTWI, in order to extract the relatively most frequent key word place-names and related nouns. My choice was based on the assumption that place-names are linked to spatial and social identity which are crucial for a sense of being in VIWOTWI.

The key words are calculated by comparing the frequency of each word in the word-list of VIWOTWI with the frequency of the same word/s in a reference word-list. A word is considered key in a key word list if it is unusually frequent in comparison with what one would expect on the basis of the larger word-list of the reference corpus (RC) (Scott 2016). The RC used in this study is a Corpus of Late Modern British English Extended Version (CLMETEV) – Dept. Linguistics, Leuven – of 15 million words.[1]

Secondly, the relatively most frequent key word clusters[2] referring to the construal of social identity in VIWOTWI were analysed qualitatively.

5. Analysis

The relatively most frequent key words – *India*, *Calcutta* and *Indian* – indicated in Table 2, were extracted by comparing VIWOTWI with the RC.

In Table 2, the first column shows the key word in VIWOTWI; the second its frequency in the source text(s)/VIWOTWI; the third, the percentage of the key word frequency; the fourth indicates the number of texts the key word is included in; the fifth, the key word frequency in the reference corpus and in the last column the p value, that is, the keyness value of the item under consideration.

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1 The Corpus of Late Modern British English Extended Version (CLMETEV) – Dept. Linguistics, Leuven – includes various text genres: personal letters, literary fiction, scientific writing by men/women belonging to different social classes of 18th-19th century British society. The texts range between 1710 and 1920 and the sources include Project Gutenberg, the Oxford Text Archive and the Victorian Women Writers project.

2 Clusters refer to two or more words found repeatedly near each other in some environments more than others (Hunston 2011).

Table 2. VIWOTWI key words by comparison with RC

N	Key word	VIWOTWI Freq.	%	Texts	RC. Freq.	%	P
1	INDIA	1,712	0.14	15	1,287	–	0,0000000000
2	CALCUTTA	911	0.07	12	73	–	0,0000000000
3	INDIAN	606	0.05	12	1,623	–	0,0000000000

It is no surprise that the first three relatively most frequent key words refer to place-names, since VIWOTWI is a corpus of travel writings and place-names are an important part of any geographical and cultural environment. They identify geographical entities of different kinds and represent irreplaceable cultural values of vital significance to people's sense of being. A place-name usually exists in relation to a geographical object and the address function of place-names is seen as fundamental (Andersson 1994; Helleland et al. 2012). However, place names also function at an emotive, ideological community-creating level and an analysis of the key clusters can significantly aid in the highlighting of the various meanings India acquires in construing identity, while referring to its territorial ideology in the colonial period.

Furthermore, clusters allow us not only to look at the immediate environment (co-text) of a search word, but also to link it outwards to the wider meaning context. This permits the isolation of lexical units and the foregrounding of the connotations which give sense to the place names in this particular context. Contextual meaning is therefore vital as, on the one hand, simple surface equivalence can hide important connotative meanings of proper nouns. On the other hand, different situational contexts develop clusters which are unique to that environment which, in this case, is related to the key word *India*.

5.1 India

India's relatively most frequent cluster *the natives of India* (np+prep+n) emerging from the Concordancer statistical counts per 1,000 words is shown in Table 3.

The discourse functions of the four-word cluster[3] *the natives of India*, which was found in 35 occurrences within VIWOTWI, were analysed by considering the cluster's proximity to a consistent series of collocates that

[3] Four words left and right of the key word India.

share its semantic preferences beyond the cluster itself. *The natives of India* is repeatedly used to single out particular attributes of the Indians as can be seen, for instance, in example (1), wherein they are compared to animals for the way in which they sit, thereby implying that the country is uncivilised and, consequently, the natives are unfit to belong to society.[4] Such an attribution highlights the writer's conviction of the relevance given to positioning people in their exact place within the Victorian social hierarchy.[5]

Table 3. Cluster key word India

N	Cluster	Freq.	Length
1	THE NATIVES OF INDIA	35	4

(1) The monkeys sat down in the attitude which *the natives of India* seem to have borrowed from these denizens of the woods.

Individual social values are further brought to the fore in example (2) to underline the negative nature of the natives who react to situations in a bizarre manner, according to the members of English society.

(2) *The natives of India* form an extraordinary compound of apathy and vivacity. In the midst of noises and tumult, which would stun or distract the most iron-nerved European in the world, they will maintain an imperturbable calmness; while, in ordinary matters, where there appears to be nothing to disturb their equanimity, they will vociferate and gesticulate as if noise and commotion were absolutely essential to their happiness.

In examples (1) and (2), the encoder presents phenomena from her point of view with her personal impressions of relations, qualities, positions and directions in space. The linguistic choices, apart from describing, give

[4] Alexander and Struan (2013) categorised into sense-families the evolution of social concepts of incivility in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Specifically, considering Indians similar to monkeys refers to wildness, that is, foreigners considered beast-like. The consideration emphasises the way in which not being part of society is akin to being animalistic, a frequent conceptualisation found in many Western societies. It constitutes one of the earliest beast-to-man metaphors recorded in English.

[5] In the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online* the entry for the noun 'native' indicates that the term may refer to: "A member of an indigenous ethnic group as distinguished from foreigners, especially in European colonies. Frequently with a suggestion of inferior status, culture, etc., and hence considered offensive" (5.a).

expression to associations, attitudes, feelings and moods that the Indians release in the women travellers by the use of evaluative expressions – *extraordinary compound, imperturbable calmness*, *absolutely essential* – which usually encode a positive connotation whereas here acquire a negative one, since they refer to what seems to contravene the norms of what is considered polished, according to the English behavioural standards. Thus, the traveller ascribes a negative identity to the Indians by differentiating them from the English.

Such differences are attributed or perceived by the English living in or outside India and they provide a social construct which is based on the description of the Indians' nature and manners. These contribute to construing a "place identity" that distinguishes it from any other while resembling that of an individual's "place identity" construct that is based on personal representations of images of a place (Peng et al. 2020) lacking civilisation, or characterised by ignorance, as can be seen in examples (3) and (4).

(3) The aim of education must be to civilize, and through the medium of civilization, to Christianize *the natives of India.*

In example (3) the reference to what education should aim at implies the Indians are considered uncivilised and should therefore be converted to Christianity. Such an assertion recalls not only Alexander and Struan's (2013) investigation of how the English conceptualised 'incivility' through their travels and contacts with the outside world, but also Layder's (2005) concept of sociological dualism according to which an individual has subjective experiences but at the same time is never free of social involvements. In other words, the traveller's personal view of Indian culture and religion leads to providing a very partial description of the socio-cultural Indian context because, according to the ideology of the time, it appeared unworthy of attention. This, in turn, reproduces clusters of power and social organisation which claim group superiority (Sommer 2011; Osterhammel 1997). Moreover, example (3) reflects the rule underpinned by missionary doctrines based on the colonial conviction of being culturally superior to the Indians.

The women travellers' sense of superiority occurs also in example (4) wherein *our advantages* are represented as deriving from the ignorance of the Indians and not from the power of the English on whom the former rely. In addition, the use of the possessive adjective *our* foregrounds the traveller's social identification as a process in which an individual recognises herself as

a member of one social group or the larger English collectivity. Specifically, through identification of what the English have – *advantages* – and what the Indians lack – *intelligence* – in relation to the former, the 'other' or 'out-group' is framed (Brons 2015).

(4) Many of our advantages have been hitherto derived from the ignorance of *the natives of India*.

5.2 Calcutta

Such contempt does not occur in the co-text of the relatively most frequent cluster *going down to Calcutta* (pv+prep+n) emerging from the Concordancer statistical counts per 1,000 words of the key word *Calcutta* shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Cluster key word Calcutta

N	Cluster	Freq.	Length
1	GOING DOWN TO CALCUTTA	7	4

The discourse functions of the four-word cluster *going down to Calcutta*, found in 7 instances within VIWOTWI, were analysed by considering the cluster's proximity to a consistent series of collocates that share its semantic preferences beyond the cluster itself. The use of the cluster highlights a change in the writers' perspective which from a sense of superiority towards the Indians turns towards the English community and its life in India, thus projecting an emotive, community-creating level meaning related to the place name Calcutta. Indeed, by frequently using the first person personal pronoun I, the traveller suggests a more intimate relationship between her subjectivity and the broader Indian context as in example (5).

(5) I have met hundreds of enormous boats, laden with cotton, *going down to Calcutta*, and other parts of the country; they are most remarkably picturesque.

In example (5), the traveller also provides an impressionistic action-recording description of life in the city, while defining identity as positioning the self and other (Bucholtz and Hall 2005) which, in this case, is the self and the life along the river. The description of the transportation of cotton provides a glimpse of the activities taking place in Calcutta and are connected to the use of the motion verb – *going down*. This highlights the spatial relation

between a path or linear entity and a landmark (Talmy 2003). Specifically, the river is the path along which motion – *going down* – is occurring and Calcutta with the rest of the country is the landmark. The description recalls what Richardson and Matloch (2007) claim to be a literal spatial description wherein the specific trading of cotton between England and her colony is represented and it creates a subjective social construct based on objective physical settings of the city (the river) that distinguishes it from others (Paasi 2009). Moreover, the use of the evaluative adjectives *enormous* and *picturesque*, the latter being boosted by the superlative *most remarkably*, provides a highly positive representation of what can be encountered in Calcutta wherein, however, only members of the traveller's in-group – the English – are referred to, as in example (6).

(6) We set off half-an-hour earlier than usual, and, from the strength of the tide, were three hours *going down to Calcutta*. It was very fatiguing, and we shall hardly try it again.

The action-recording sentences in example (6) are characterised by the use of evaluative expressions – *very fatiguing*, *hardly try it again* – indicating the difficulties faced by the English in India while the choice of the first person plural pronoun *we* indicates the in-group relation between the encoder and the English group of people among whom the author is placed and with whom knowledge and goals, language, norms and values, attitudes and ideologies are shared. This suggests a contrast with the evaluations referring to the Indians in the key word cluster *the natives of India*.

Furthermore, the spatial descriptions of Calcutta not only provide a representation of daily life, but they also generate a visual image of the means implemented to accomplish activities. This allows the reader to imagine the scene and simulate motion whilst reading the travel writings back home in Britain (Samson 2020), thus creating a sense of belonging to a certain social group.

5.3 Indian

The relatively most frequent collocational cluster *of an Anglo Indian* (prep+np) with the key word *Indian* emerging from the Concordancer statistical counts per 1,000 tokens/words is shown in Table 5.

The discourse functions of the cluster *of an Anglo Indian*, found in 5 occurrences within VIWOTWI, were analysed by considering the cluster's proximity to a consistent series of collocates that share its semantic

preferences beyond the cluster itself. The key noun *Indian* does not refer to a native inhabitant of India, or to a person of Indian descent but to Anglo Indians who the *OED Online* defines as "a person of British descent born or living in India; or relating to people of British descent born or living in India. Now chiefly historical".

Table 5. Cluster key word Indian

N	Cluster	Freq.	Length
1	OF AN ANGLO INDIAN	5	4

In VIWOTWI, *Anglo Indian* seems to suggest a social identity threat to the English. The Anglo Indians are not seen as fully part of the English nor of the Indian population, they are not recognized as inhabitants of their own country. Consequently, their acceptance as part of the English in-group is in jeopardy in identity denial situations; they are denied in-group status because they do not resemble the prototypical group member (Que-Lam 2013) and its English cultural values. Therefore, their common in-group identity is called into question or unrecognized by the English group members in power. Identity denial of the Anglo Indians then becomes, in colonial India, a blatant questioning of belonging to one's own country.

Moreover, the cluster *Anglo Indians* highlights how these inhabitants of India are typified by debasing attributions that cast doubts on their nature while suggesting how naming is a form of social control (Brown 1993). *Anglo Indians* are addressed with unserious and ironic propositions which Nash (1985) describes as utterances requiring a truth condition for their ironic supposition constituted by acknowledged facts that foreground negative connotations. These suggest that the *Anglo Indians* are not fully included in the English in-group and are partially considered members of the Indian out-group within the dichotomies that are crucial for the practice and vision of social order. The *Anglo Indians*, within the phenomena presented from the traveller's viewpoint, seem to be a hybrid, due to their calmness and reluctance to react dynamically, as the English instead would. They need *very stirring* information to do so, as indicated in example (7):

(7) Intelligence from the mother-country must be of a very stirring nature to excite the sobered feelings *of an Anglo-Indian.*

The linguistic choices also express the negative attitudes, feelings and moods that the Anglo Indians generate in the perceiver by the use of evaluative

expressions such as *slumbering energies*, which once again indicate people who react very slowly to important events, as shown in (8):

(8) Stimulants of inferior power have little influence over the mind *of an Anglo-Indian,* whose slumbering energies can only be called forth upon great occasions.

The process of differentiation and demarcation (Lister 2004) by which the line is drawn between the English and the others living in India is further enhanced when describing the relationships between the Anglo Indians and the Indians, as can be seen in examples (9) and (10).

(9) The mountaineers of this part of the country notwithstanding the wild and lawless life to which they had been long accustomed, have proved to be loyal and orderly subjects but they are sometimes to be seen amidst the retainers *of an Anglo-Indian*, and touching instances are related of their fidelity and attachment to those from whom they have received kindness.

(10) The Hindoo servants *of an Anglo-Indian* establishment, when this festival comes rounds offer little presents of sweetmeats and toys to those members of the family who they think will condescend to accept them, the children and younger branches.

The *Anglo Indians*, being tolerant and *kind* with *lawless* and *wild* Indians working for them (9) or showing willingness to receive *little presents* from their Hindoo servants during a festival (10), hint at, on the one hand, their capacity to understand and show their Indian workers empathy; on the other hand, by doing so, they seem to breach, to a certain extent, social differentiation and demarcation established by and characterising the norms of English community. This makes their identity look unstable and vulnerable to the Victorian women travellers' eyes.

6. Conclusion

In sum, the relatively most frequent key words in VIWOTWI – *India*, *Calcutta* and *Indian* – and their recurring clusters – *the natives of India*, *going down to Calcutta*, *of an Anglo Indian* – foreground some of the recurring social discursive identities construed by Victorian women in their writings while

discovering India. The clusters highlight the women travellers' constant performance of Englishness with their insight into England's role in India and their social identity awareness rooted in their repeated need to differentiate and demarcate themselves from the Indians and their culture. Such an awareness is a characteristic feature of their discourses typifying their negative other-presentations of the Indians but positive in-group presentations of the English, thus suggesting how engaged they were with the colonial ideology while travelling across and discovering India.

However, the representation of such social identities turns fuzzy in the discursive depiction of the Anglo Indians. The latter suggest the existence of no strict identity boundaries wherein they represent a hybrid; they appear to conflate identity variations according to the situational settings, thus indicating that identity is to be understood as something dynamic and often incoherent in social practice.

To conclude, although the findings are not exhaustive, they nevertheless show how Victorian women's travel writings can be considered, on the one hand, a crucial means of discovering and disseminating first-hand information of the colonial territories by representing the social identities characterising such contexts; on the other hand, while the writings support the rule of one collectivity over another, they underscore how identities cannot be considered immutable but more likely as incompletely consistent, if not fluid.

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Constructing a socially acceptable female identity: The case of nineteenth-century advice manuals for women

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ABSTRACT

In this study I conduct an exploratory corpus-based study of nineteenth-century advice manuals for women with a view to investigating the ways in which these texts ideologically and discursively construct a model of socially acceptable female identity. The analysis is based on a corpus of twenty advice manuals published in Britain between 1810 and 1878. By combining a quantitative analysis of keywords with manual investigation of concordance lines containing the most frequent keywords, I examine the parameters within which the model of socially acceptable female identity is discursively constructed. My analysis shows that, by learning to control their bodies, voices and speech, nineteenth-century women readers internalised the model presented in advice literature in order to become desirable to men of a good social position (Armstrong 2014).

Keywords: advice literature, women, identity, conduct, etiquette.

1. Introduction

In this contribution I am concerned with the ways in which nineteenth-century advice manuals for women ideologically and discursively construct a model of socially acceptable female identity. The dataset used comprises a small corpus of manuals in English published in Britain in the period between 1810 and 1878 and addressed to a generic middle- and lower-class target audience of women readers who were compelled to "examine their conduct, find it wanting, and apply themselves to correcting the faults they identify, so as to align their lives with the ideals found in the discourse" (Kukorelly

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2020: 127). Dominant conduct discourse throughout the nineteenth century aimed to disseminate ideas about how women were expected to appear and behave if they were to be treated not only as respectable members of society, but, most importantly, as covetable and eligible for marriage. Norms and codes of behaviour in advice manuals for women were thus explicitly presented as gendered, with women, their position in society, and their personal identity represented as completely different from that of men, and, contemporaneously, with women being complementary and subordinate to men in all spheres of life. In what follows, the analysis of my dataset shows how advice manuals partook in the ideological operation of disciplining women by imposing a model of socially acceptable female identity as one that was devoid of any real content. The main message that the manuals relentlessly pursue concerns the possibility for the ordinary female self to articulate itself in the "extraneous accomplishments" (*Mixing in Society*, [Anon. 1872: 99]) only and only to the extent to which this self was pleasing to the others.

The dataset analysed in this study can be considered representative of an extremely vast group of heterogeneous texts that were produced in the course of the nineteenth century for the benefit of women readers seeking instruction on contemporary norms of gendered behaviour.[1] The sample here includes shorter, programmatic guides dedicated exclusively to the rules of etiquette (e.g., *A Manual of Etiquette for Ladies* [Anon. 1856]; *Etiquette for Ladies* [Anon. 1857]); longer treatises on conduct containing separate sections for ladies and gentlemen respectively (e.g, *The Habits of Good Society* [Anon. 1859]; *Mixing in Society* [Anon. 1872]); popular early nineteenth-century comprehensive didactic manuals (e.g., *Advice to Young Ladies* [Broadhurst 1810]; *Practical Hints to Young Females* [Taylor 1815]), as well as beauty and fashion manuals (e.g., *Mirror of Graces* [Anon. 1811]; *The Art of Beauty* [Haweis 1878]). The manuals in question (or specific sections dedicated to women in generic manuals) can be considered to be examples of "sex-differentiated things" (Mills 2003: 18), that is to say, ideological products operating on the assumption that women and men, by virtue of being 'women' or 'men', ought to adopt distinctly different patterns of behaviour and assume different identities by naturalising the idea that social practices have to be gendered (cf. Lazar 2014). As Mills explains:

[1] Just how varied and large this body of texts was in the period between 1770 and 1900 is shown in the two six-volume editions of *Conduct Literature for Women. Part IV, 1770-1830* (Morris 2005) and *Conduct Literature for Women. Part V, 1830-1900* (Eden – Vickers – Morris 2006).

> the discourse of middle-class femininity in the nineteenth century consisted of the set of heterogeneous statements (i.e. those utterances, texts, gestures, behaviours which were accepted as describing the essence of Victorian womanhood: humility, sympathy, selflessness) and which constituted parameters within which middle-class women could work out their own sense of identity (1997: 62).

Advice manuals in the corpus under investigation offer many examples of such heterogeneous statements delineating "a homogeneous ideal-type of womanly behaviour" (Kukorelly 2020: 123) which their readers are exhorted to imitate. In the following discussion, by combining quantitative analysis of keywords with close readings of selected concordance lines, I intend to show that the parameters that this discourse of femininity produced were defined in such a way as to deny any room for individual women to work out a of sense of identity of their own. Put simply, the restrictions imposed on the users of these manuals were such as to obliterate any timid attempt to pursue an independent "project of the self" (Benwell – Stokoe 2006: 18).

2. Theoretical framework

My approach to the theorisation of identity relies on the broad theoretical paradigm that recognises an anti-essentialist view of identity (Foucault 1972). As is well known, this paradigm emphasises the role that dominant discourse and ideology play in the shaping of the discursive construction of identity. This discursive model, as Benwell and Stokoe explain, "presumes all meaning to be situated not within the self, but in a series of representations mediated by semiotic systems such as language" (2006: 31). Referring to Howard's (2000: 385) notion of the 'ideological constitution of the self', Benwell and Stokoe draw our attention to the potential of dominant discourses to "shape and direct the individual":

> If our identities are inscribed in available discourses, then these processes may operate to reproduce social inequalities […] In this account, the development of the individual becomes a process of acquiring a particular ideological version of the world, liable to serve hegemonic ends and preserve the status quo. Identity or identification thus becomes a colonising force, shaping and directing the individual (2006: 31).

Sex-differentiated advice literature subscribes to an ideological vision of society in which inequalities at all levels are justified and naturalised, first of

all, on the basis of gender. By mobilising and promoting specific ideological beliefs and values, the manuals in the corpus under investigation lay bare a set of expectations about women's gendered identities and their position in society as gendered beings. These gendered identities are discursively constructed by offering a set of representations of what counts as acceptable social behaviour for nineteenth-century women.

To the considerations on the discursive dimension of the 'ideological constitution of the self', it is necessary to add the layer of performativity[2] as elaborated on by Butler (1990, 1993). In Butler's (1990) reformulation of the discursive model of identity, the model is reconfigured to include "also a *performance* with all the connotations of non-essentialism, transience, versatility and masquerade that this implies" (Benwell – Stokoe 2006: 33, original emphasis). This aspect of performativity is of central importance in an investigation of the ideological dimension of the discourse of advice literature. With the minute descriptions of how their women readers were to sound, look, move, stand, and so on, all of which were presented "as if [they] were commonsense" (Mills 2003: 15), nineteenth-century advice manuals participated in the effort to regulate and naturalise the performance of the everyday gendered rituals. The work of advice literature was directed at persuading women to adopt the ready-made solutions (cf. Kukorelly 2020) that instructed them on how they were to perform the appropriate gender role and assume a socially acceptable female identity. In the next sections I will examine the building blocks of this identity as it is constructed in the discourse of nineteenth-century advice manuals.

3. Dataset and methodology

In this section, I present the dataset that will be used to conduct an exploratory, qualitatively-oriented study of a small dataset comprising twenty different English advice manuals for women.[3] The corpus with the full texts of the twenty manuals under investigation contains 1,100,000 tokens. In order to be able to combine the quantitative analysis of keywords with focused

[2] In her discussion of the everyday performance of rituals, Butler argues that "[g]ender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of a substance, of a natural sort of being" (1990: 33).

[3] To the best of my knowledge, this methodology has so far been applied in studies investigating conduct literature for women in languages other than English (cf. Paternoster 2019).

qualitative readings of selected concordance lines and extended portions of the texts, I extracted a 70,000-word sub-set, dealing specifically with the topic of conversation, from the larger, 1,100,000-word corpus. The small Conversation corpus collects dedicated sections on conversation[4] included in the majority (thirteen out of twenty) manuals, together with selected excerpts from the other seven manuals that discuss the rules of conversation as applied to women specifically. Table 1 presents an overview of the manuals and information about the specific parts dedicated to conversation that were extracted and analysed:

Table 1. List of manuals with/without a dedicated section on conversation

Year of publication, author	Short title	Section on conversation
1810, Broadhurst	*Advice to Young Ladies*	no dedicated section
1811, Anon.	*Mirror of Graces*	no dedicated section
1813, Anon.	*A Father's Advice to His Daughter*	included (a dedicated tale)
1815, Stewart	*The Young Woman's Companion*	included
1815, Taylor	*Practical Hints to Young Females*	no dedicated section
1840, Anon.	*The Ladies' Pocket-Book of Etiquette*	included
1841, Anon.	*The English Maiden*	no dedicated section
1845, Ellis	*The Women of England*	included
1847, Butcher	*Instructions in Etiquette*	included
1849, Anon.	*The English Gentlewoman*	included
1854, Anon.	*Etiquette, Social Ethics, etc.*	no dedicated section
1855, Anon.	*The Ladies' Guide to Etiquette,*	included
1856, Anon.	*A Manual of Etiquette for Ladies*	included
1857, Anon.	*Etiquette for Ladies*	included
1859, Anon.	*The Habits of Good Society*	no dedicated section
1859, Maxwell	*Advice to Young Ladies*	no dedicated section
1872, Anon.	*Mixing in Society*	included (a dedicated tale)
1875, Anon.	*All about Etiquette*	included
1876, Anon.	*Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen*	no dedicated section
1878, Haweis	*The Art of Beauty*	included

[4] A dedicated section usually means a chapter, typically entitled "On Conversation" or "Rules for Conversation" (for example, in *The Young Woman's Companion* [Stewart 1815: 361-376]) or simply "Conversation" (see Chapter IV in *Mixing in Society* [Anon. 1872: 89-100]).

The topic of conversation was chosen because it represents one of the key foci of the normative discourse concerned with women's appropriate behaviour. Conversation, just as it continues to be today (Lakoff 1975, Cameron 2012, Talbot 2019),[5] was one of the key sites of identity work in the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century women were indoctrinated with the idea that conversation was "a reflex of character" (*Mixing in Society*, Anon. 1872: 99) and repeatedly instructed to pay the utmost attention not only to what they talked about, but to how they sounded and what kind of language they used.

The examination of the top keywords extracted from the smaller subset dedicated to conversation[6] can provide some preliminary information about the specific topics that appear to be most relevant in the advice discourse regulating women's behaviour. Table 2 provides an overview of the top ten keywords in the corpus (column 2), together with the top ten keywords per individual category (columns 3 to 6):[7]

Table 2. Keywords in the Conversation corpus

ID	Top 10 keywords (types)	Top 10 keywords (nouns)	Top 10 keywords (verbs)	Top 10 keywords (adjectives)	Top 10 keywords (others)
1	conversation	conversation (1)	is (4)	young (12)	or (3)
2	society	society (2)	be (6)	own (23)	your (5)
3	or	woman (9)	are (7)	every (31)	if (13)
4	is	others (10)	may (8)	good (32)	her (15)
5	your	lady (17)	should (11)	agreeable (84)	never (16)
6	be	company (21)	will (14)	general (88)	their (18)

[5] Cf. also Lazar's discussion of voice and communicative styles in the public sphere today: "[t]he accepted communicative style of power and authority in the public sphere is decidedly masculine (e.g., in terms of tone of voice, intonation in giving orders, and use of direct speech acts), which makes it difficult for women (especially in senior management positions) to get their communicative styles 'right' and to be taken seriously" (Lazar 2014: 184).

[6] For the retrieval of the keyword list, I used the open-source corpus analysis tool, #LancsBox version 4.0 (Brezina – McEnery – Wattam 2015; Brezina et al. Forthc.), with the sub-section of the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (*CLMET 3.0*, De Smet 2005; De Smet –Diller –Tyrkkö) covering the period between 1780 and 1850 (99 texts, 11,202,550 tokens) used as a reference corpus. The same software was used to inspect concordance lines containing the relevant lexical items.

[7] The numbers in brackets indicate the ranking position of the individual keywords in the list of the top 150 keywords.

7	are	knowledge (22)	cannot (20)	female (103)	you (19)
8	may	persons (24)	talk (26)	ill (107)	she (25)
9	woman	attention (30)	let (44)	other (113)	who (27)
10	others	mind (33)	must (56)	best (123)	always (28)

In the sections that follow, the manual analysis of the concordance lines containing the most frequent keywords in the corpus will be boosted by integrating the theoretical framework of Appraisal (Martin – White 2005) applied specifically to the examination of evaluative adjectives used to present rules and norms of behaviour to the manuals' women readers. In adopting this approach, I draw on Paternoster's (2019) work treating historical etiquette books in Italian, with its focus on prescriptive metadiscourse and evaluative language. More specifically, in this study Paternoster is concerned with assessing changes in the nineteenth-century conceptualisation of politeness in Italy through an investigation of evaluative language limited to the Appraisal system of Judgement (Martin – White 2005). By adapting the theoretical framework of Appraisal (Martin – White 2005) to study the relationship between politeness and other values linked to behaviour, Paternoster emphasises the role of Judgement, one of the two major evaluative systems comprising Affect (in Martin and White's semantic system for evaluation). Judgement can be presented as an evaluative sub-system concerned with ethical appraisal, that is to say, with "attitudes towards behaviour, which we admire or criticise, praise or condemn" (Martin – White 2005: 42), as well as institutionalised morality, given that it "reworks feelings in the realm of proposals about behaviour – how we should behave or not" (Martin – White [2005: 45], quoted in Paternoster [2019: 116]). Integrating Martin and White's framework with Kádár and Haugh's (2013) insights on the interrelationship between politeness and interpersonal evaluation, Paternoster foregrounds the role of politeness evaluators, that is to say, "descriptors or metalanguage used by members to conceptualise their social world" (Kádár – Haugh [2013: 94], quoted in Paternoster [2019: 117]), in her attempt "to develop a lexical, or conceptual, map of positive evaluative terms present in turn-of-the-century [Italian] etiquette books" (Paternoster 2019: 118). These evaluative terms are examined in Paternoster's study as "a window on the values that determine a historical social practice" (2019: 118).[8]

[8] See Paternoster (2019: 118-120) for a detailed description of her model. As to her dataset, Paternoster manually collected and then selected, based on their frequencies,

As already mentioned, Paternoster's focus was on the subsection of Judgement, specifically in the two main categories of the subsection represented by Social Esteem (relating to behaviours that we "admire") and Social Sanction (comprising terms that "praise" behaviour (Martin – White [2005: 53], quoted in Paternoster [2019: 121/125]). The examination of the former of the two fields and, specifically, of the three groups of evaluative adjectives representing, respectively, Normality (which indexes social distinction), Capacity (which indexes intellectual value), and the Tenacity group (which indexes one's self-discipline) leads Paternoster to conclude that

> Social Esteem gives a fairly precise idea of the qualities that the perfect gentleman/lady has to possess before he/she becomes eligible for social interaction: what does it take to be admitted to the social network of the happy few? There are three main requirements: to be of superior social standing, to be intelligent, to have self-discipline. In contrast to conduct books, centred on social advancement, in etiquette books social distinction takes on a renewed ideological importance, which is shown first and foremost in the total occurrences of the members of the semantic group Normality, which is the most frequent set within Social Esteem (2019: 125).

In the second field of Social Sanction, Paternoster looked at the categories of Veracity and Politeness,[9] whose subsets include Politeness, Conformity, Affection, Goodness and Pleasure. It is expected that, similarly to findings discussed in Paternoster's study of nineteenth-century Italian advice discourse, the field of Social Esteem (and especially, the group of Normality), as well as the field of Social Sanction (Pleasure), which focuses "on a specific kind of pleasure, conflict-free interaction" (Paternoster 2019: 133), will be characteristic of nineteenth-century advice discourse in English as well.

The manual inspection of the concordance lines presented in the next section aims to shed light on the linguistic resources the manual authors drew on in order to present their views on a specific version of a socially acceptable female identity in the "Conversation" corpus. The analysis of their assumptions and prescribed rules, as well as the strategies they

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a set of 275 adjective types which were subsequently annotated for their evaluative meanings according to different semantic categories and analysed (2019: 120-121).

[9] With the latter category being re-named Politeness from the original Propriety (Paternoster 2019: 125) as proposed in Martin and White (2005).

used to encourage some behaviours, condemning, at the same time, other behaviours, can help unveil these authors' ideas about a particular gendered ideological version of the world.

4. Analysis

The collection of texts that the Conversation corpus under investigation is comprised of focuses on the ways a generic (literate) nineteenth-century English woman reader[10] is expected to behave in interactions with others. Her demeanour is scrutinised and criticised in order to justify the need to provide detailed advice on how to use her voice, to adjust her manner of speaking, to select the topics of conversation, and, most importantly, to improve her skills to please her interlocutors. The starting point for this discussion is the taken-for-granted assumption that a woman's character will be revealed in her mastery (or lack thereof) of proper conversational skills. Thus conversation is represented as much more than merely "a high essential in polite society" (*A Manual of Etiquette for Ladies,* Anon. [1856: 22]). In fact, conversation is treated as "the medium by which knowledge is communicated, affection enkindled, sorrow comforted, error reclaimed, and piety incited" (*Instructions in Etiquette*, Butcher [1847: 88]). It is in its higher qualities, as another author points out, that "the higher qualities of the mind" (*The English Gentlewoman*, Anon. [1849: 42]) come to the fore. In other words, a woman's inner self is expected to become known to others in conversation.

Contradictions, however, cannot be avoided. For example, a number of manuals agree that women are "great talkers naturally" (*Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen*, Anon. [1876: 44]) and conversation can be presented as a woman's "peculiar power" (*The Ladies' Pocket Book of Etiquette*, Anon. [1840: 52]). At the same time, the authors insist on the fact that women need dedicated instruction on developing conversational skills. In fact, it is underlined that they have to be taught how to converse just as they would be taught philosophy or composition (*The English Maiden*, Anon. [1841: 60-61]).

[10] With ephemeral texts such as the manuals under discussion here, it is challenging to recover any definitive information as to the identity of the specific target audience group. Who they were written for, who actually bought them and followed the advice given, are questions that represent a major challenge for scholars interested in this kind of popular non-fictional literature. My focus in this study is on the manuals themselves and the idea of a gendered world they bring to life, in a fashion that is adopted in a number of studies dealing with present-day women's (and men's) lifestyle magazines.

Being able to converse "with propriety and elegance" is elevated to be one of the most valuable accomplishments for a woman:

(1) an accomplishment, that beyond all others promotes the happiness of home, enlivens society, and improves upon every other blessing in existence […]. How many excellent women are deficient in the power of expressing themselves well, or, indeed, of expressing themselves at all! (*The English Gentlewoman*, Anon. [1849: 41])

The longer excerpt in (1) contains some evaluative lexis, such as *excellent* and *deficient*, two evaluative adjectives belonging to the category of Capacity in the field of Social Esteem. Capacity, as already explained above, "indicates an intellectual type of distinction achieved through rationality and intrinsic merit" (Paternoster 2019: 123). According to Paternoster, Capacity is linked to Pleasure in the field of Social Sanction through its association "with intelligence and reason, which are the very tools used to establish what counts as pleasing behaviour" (2019: 135).

It is not unexpected that, in a handful of these manuals, references should be made to the acquisition of good speaking manners as a prerequisite for successful social advancement. Here women aspiring to pass as ladies in polite society are reminded that

(2) [t]he moment a woman speaks, you can tell whether you are listening to a lady or not. The tone of the voice, the accent, the use of peculiar phrases,[11] at once determine whether she is only an educated woman, but unused to good society; or a (perhaps) less educated person, but still used to associate with well-bred people (*Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen*, Anon. [1876: 45]).

In (2) we again find evaluative lexis from the category of Capacity (e.g., several repetitions of *educated*), but we also have an example (*well-bred*) from the

[11] Some authors, in addition to dispensing with generic observations on the use of "grammatical English" or the importance of speaking without a provincial accent (*Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen* [Anon. 1876: 45]; *Etiquette for Ladies* [Anon. 1857: 34]) also offer specific examples of expressions ladies are not allowed to use. For example, in *All about Etiquette* we are told that "[i]f you mean that you were angry, do not say you were 'mad' – 'It made me so mad,' 'I was quite mad at her,'' are phrases not to be used by people considering themselves genteel. Anger and madness are not the same, or should not be; though it is true that ungoverned rage is sometimes carried so far as to seem insanity" (*All about Etiquette* [Anon. 1875: 323]). It has to be said that these authors pay relatively little attention to the linguistically prescriptive aspect.

subset of Normality, another category from the field of Social Esteem. The terms comprising the subset of Normality show "how important social distinction is for etiquette books, which strive for exclusive behaviour, and this is reflected in adjectives indicating behaviour that is normal, typical, for the top layer of society" (Paternoster 2019: 122), or, as in this case, a (true) 'lady'. In a similar vein, another author cautions his/her readers that "the first sentence a woman utters spoils her […] The soul, say the poet, is not in the eye, but in the voice. At all events, we can take ready measure of your intellect and character by your conversation; and your culture is at once *disclosed* by it" (*Etiquette for Ladies*, Anon. [1857: 34]).

Yet references to conversational skills as a tool for social advancement are rare. Generally speaking, as the manual inspection of the concordance lines containing the keywords *conversation, society, woman, lady, company, others,* and *agreeable* has shown, the distinction of class (between, for example, middle-class and upper-class women), is given less weight compared to the distinction based on gender. Women, regardless of their social status, are exhorted to "acquire that delightful and easy manner of address and behaviour in all useful correspondences, which may render [their] company every where desired and beloved" (*The Young Woman's Companion,* Stewart [1815: 373]). *Delightful* and *easy* are two examples of evaluative adjectives representing the subset of Pleasure in the field of Social Sanction. In Paternoster's dataset, evaluative adjectives expressing Pleasure are further subdivided into the two sub-groups of 'agreeable' and 'pleasant' (2019: 132-133). The larger group combining the two "positively evaluate[s] sensations of wellbeing and happiness" and serves as indicative of a kind of politeness "based on a rational weighing of the others' desires for wellbeing in interaction" (Paternoster 2019: 132; 133). As will be shown in the next sub-sections, the role of the evalutaive lexis from the category of Pleasure is central to the authors' effort to convince women readers to accept their duty of having to please male interlocutors in conversation. This duty clearly emerges as the main preoccupation with the authors of this type of advice literature.

The more specialised topics that reintroduce and discursively fine-tune the idea of women's conversational obligations are discussed in the next sub-sections. Among these we find paramount importance given to "an agreeable voice" (which, as we are told, is more important than beauty); the importance of proper listening skills, as well as the importance of carefully selecting topics for conversation that women are/are not allowed or expected to engage in. These topics continue to be consistently framed

within the larger ideological version of the world in which, as already hinted at, a woman's self is discursively constructed as a self that comes into being in interactions with others with the sole purpose of pleasing her interlocutors.

4.1 The focus on voice

One of the core rules presented to the readers of advice literature for women concerns the importance of "an agreeable voice." The manuals argue that men prefer "an agreeable voice" over "any amount of beauty" (*The Habits of Good Society* [Anon. 1859: 98]). The specific characteristics of such a voice are defined through evaluative lexis representing the category of Pleasure. In fact, an agreeable voice will be "melodious and well-regulated" (*The Women of England* [Ellis 1845: 209]) or "'gentle and low [being] above all other extraneous accomplishments, 'an excellent thing in woman'" (*Mixing in Society* [Anon. 1872: 99]). The woman's agreeable voice "invests a woman with a potent sway, even though she lack the possession of beauty and personal charms" (*The Ladies' Guide to Etiquette* [Anon. 1855: 17]). The voice, combined with proper conversational skills, becomes the most powerful tool a woman can have to conquer the right man's heart:

(3) it is indeed no uncommon thing to see a young lady of ordinary features, and without any other influence than a sparkling wit and persuasive eloquence, completely captivate the *preux chevalier* of an assembly, to the surprise and mortification of the more handsome but less accomplished rival (*The Ladies' Guide to Etiquette* [Anon. 1855: 17]).

On the contrary, any serious fault with a woman's voice is interpreted as a sign of a faulty character. For example, a voice that is too low is taken to reveal that the woman is "sullen, sulky, obstinate", while shrill voices belong to "petulant, pert, impatient" women (*Mirror of Graces* [Anon. 1811: 200]). Such vocal "aberrations" need to be corrected lest they discourage their prospective suitors. It is explained, for example, that "merely for the tone of voice which did not quite harmonize with their ears, [some sensible men] have dropped the connection with women who, in all other points, were unexceptionable" (*Mirror of Graces* [Anon. 1811: 201]). What is striking in these passages is the quantity of negative evaluative lexis from the field of Social Sanction, used unsparingly to stigmatise forms of behaviour that do not conform to the given model of femininity.

At the same time, even an agreeable woman's voice must be used in a prudent way. Women are in fact encouraged to become diligent listeners: "from her position in society, it is the peculiar province of a woman, rather to lead others out into animated and intelligent communication, than to be intent upon making communications from the resources of her own mind" (*The Women of England*, Ellis [1845: 196-197]). A woman's superior listening skills will guarantee that "[s]he will please more [by being a good and animated listener], than by any display of her own knowledge and acquirements" (*Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen*, Anon. 1876: 48). The roles that interlocutors are to play in conversation are thus clearly assigned on the basis of gender: women are told to do the most listening, while men are given the privilege of doing the most speaking. The reference to character is found again in the discussion of the listening skills a woman must master: her character, she is told, will be revealed not only in her manner of speaking, but in her manner of listening and "gently sympathising" with the speaker (*The English Gentlewoman*, Anon. [1849: 46]).

4.2 The focus on topics

The (limited) range of topics that women could be allowed and expected to engage in polite company is dealt with extensively in the manuals under investigation. The general agreement is that women should "be well informed, and capable of conversing rationally on general topics" (*A Manual of Etiquette for Ladies* [Anon. 1856: 22]). In passages describing women's contributions to conversation, the main type of evaluative lexis used (e.g. *well informed*, capable) is again represented (cf. Section 4) by the category of Capacity in the field of Social Esteem).

As one of the authors explains,

(4) [o]ne does not wish to hear a lady talk politics nor a smattering of science; but she should be able to understand and listen with interest when politics are discussed, and to appreciate in some degree the conversation of scientific men (*Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen*, Anon. [1876: 47]).[12]

[12] According to Tablot, "[t]his is in line with the pronouncements of the Greek philosophers […] Aristotle, for example, wrote that women should be prevented from taxing their brains with things like political activity, because it would dry up their wombs" (2019: 201).

Women are admonished to avoid any "injudicious attempt" at starting an argument with gentlemen on political, scientific or financial topics, on the grounds that their knowledge of such subjects "is so small in comparison with the knowledge of men that the discussion will not elevate them in the opinion of masculine minds" (*All about Etiquette* [Anon. 1875: 210]). The same author, however, concedes that

(5) it is well for a woman to desire enlightenment, that she may comprehend something of these discussions when she hears them from the other sex, but let her refrain from controversy and argument on such topics, as the grasp of the female mind is seldom capable of seizing or retaining. Men are very intolerant toward women who are prone to contradiction and contention when the talk is of things considered out of their sphere, but very indulgent toward a modest and attentive listener, who only asks questions for the sake of information. Men like to dispense knowledge; but few of them believe that, in departments exclusively their own, they can profit much by the suggestions of women (*All about Etiquette* [Anon. 1875: 210-211]).

The ideal for women is explicitly presented as that of a *modest* and *attentive* listener, two characteristics that represent the category of Goodness in the field of Social Sanction whose function is to "promote concern for the welfare of others" (Paternoster 2019: 132). This concern can also be interpreted as a face-saving strategy necessary in those cases where a woman's educational achievements can risk undermining the merits of her interlocutors:

(6) Do not make a parade of your learning if you have any, 'a little learning is a dangerous thing,' and few women have more than a little. If you are really well-informed, you may choose subjects which may instruct in conversation, but men, in particular, have a dislike to women who seem too sensible of their literary acquirements (*Advice to Young Ladies,* Maxwell [1859: 23]).[13]

Such restrictions on the range of topics available to women makes it inevitable that women easily fall victims to the vice of gossiping:

[13] Here Maxwell appears to be repeating what has already been said by one of her predecessors: "But if you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and a cultivated understanding" (*The Young Woman's Companion,* Stewart [1815: 374]).

(7) The multifarious pursuits of business and politics, or the labours of scientific and professional studies, engross [the thoughts of the men], and necessarily lead them to more elevated and expansive channels. Women, acting in a narrower sphere, examine with extreme ardour, whatever falls under their observation, or enter into competition with them. When employments weary, or amusements fail, *character* is a favourite field in which to expatiate. By nature they are gifted with a facility for reading its idioms. But if they indulge themselves in searching out only its weaknesses, – if they form a taste for hunting down its deformities, and feeding, like the hyena, upon its fleshless, lifeless carcass, are they not in danger of perverting the tides of benevolent feeling, and tinging the fountain of the heart with bitterness? (*Instructions in Etiquette* [Butcher 1847: 83]).

In order to escape such dangers, women are not only told to "[a]void, as far as possible, all personal conversation" (*Instructions in Etiquette* [Butcher 1847: 84]), but to "select the subjects of conversation best suited to [their] auditors, and to pursue them just so long as they excite interest, and engage attention" (*The Women of England* [Ellis 1845: 203]).[14] Most importantly, women are required to develop the ability to accommodate their interlocutors' needs and interests, that is to say, to take up and react to the thoughts of others, so as to keep the ball rolling (*Etiquette for Ladies* [Anon. 1857: 35]). All of this is summarised by Ellis in the following way:

(8) There is scarcely any source of enjoyment more immediately connected at once with the heart and with the mind, than that of listening to a sensible and amiable woman, when she converses in a melodious and well-regulated voice, when her language and pronunciation are easy and correct, and when she knows how to adapt her conversation to the characters and habits of those around her (*The Women of England* [Ellis 1845: 209]).

Example (8) stands out for the density of evaluative adjectives (*sensible* and *amiable, melodious* and *well-regulated, easy* and *correct*) that represent the category of Pleasure in the field of Social Sanction. The quotation that

[14] A number of manuals give more or less detailed instructions on what NOT to talk about (for example, no personal conversations about oneself, other people or family affairs in *The English Gentlewoman* [Anon. 1849: 44]) or examples of how to adjust the topic according to one's interlocutor in *Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen* (Anon. 1876).

follows contains additional items from the same category (e.g., *pleasant* and *profitable*) in the author's comment on the true reasons as to why a woman should be educated: "[i]n order to converse agreeably and intelligibly, a lady should cultivate her intellect, not with the idea of becoming a blue-stocking or a pedant, but to render her society pleasant and profitable to others" (*A Manual of Etiquette for Ladies* [Anon. 1856: 24]). Even the few authors who defend – against all odds – a woman's right to education, are careful to clarify that being well-educated will help women to become better friends, wives, and mothers:

(9) Some persons, I am aware, will be ready to exclaim at the sight of an outline so unusual, To what end is all this knowledge in women? or why, in the attainment of it, should they be taken away from their peculiar sphere in society, and assume the privileges of the nobler sex? of man, whose acknowledged province it is to read, to study, to think, to write, to legislate, and to govern ? of man, the lord of the creation, and second in rank and power to the angels only ? In reply to this objection, I beg leave to bring to your recollection the sentiments delivered to you in my first address, when I stated the vast utility of a well-cultivated mind to the female sex, as it regards their character and influence in general society, as it relates to the connubial state, and as it is connected with the judicious management and careful education of a rising family (*Advice to Young Ladies,* Broadhurst 1810: 68).

Having described in detail what women are allowed and encouraged to talk about, and how, authors remind their readers about "the most essential rule for good talk", that is to say

(10) *to have something to say*. Do not be afraid, then, of reading and observing too much. Men of sense do not like a blue stocking who is a slattern or a hoyden: but, as a great man once observed, it does not matter how blue the stocking is, so long as the robe of feminine feeling is long enough to cover it (*Etiquette for Ladies* [Anon. 1857: 34]).

4.3 The focus on looks

As the examples discussed in sub-sections 4.1 and 4.2 show, the authors of advice manuals tend to present their model of acceptable female behaviour by overwhelming their readers with a battery of prescriptive do's and don't's, or behavioural maxims (Weller 2014). In addition to this fairly straightforward

method of attempted indoctrination, in a handful of manuals the authors prefer to realise their goal by integrating in the text elaborate descriptions of, on the one hand, ideal and, on the other hand, 'deviating' female characters.[15] These dedicated narratives routinely detail the ways in which idealised and compliant female characters are rewarded for their conformity to the models disseminated in the manuals, while non-conforming characters are punished for their refusal to comply. Unsurprisingly, the reward is presented in the form of a marriage proposal from a worthy gentleman. The punishment, on the other hand, is represented in the impossibility of finding a suitable match. The English version of the French collection of "instructive narratives" (*A Father's Advice to His Daughter*, Anon. [1813: title page])[16] is the first manual in the Conversation corpus that offers an example of this strategy in the dedicated and lengthy story tellingly entitled "The Charm of a Sweet Voice" (Anon. 1813: 77-100).[17]

Shorter sketches that pay tribute to the same tradition of the didactic narrative genre by featuring mostly misbehaving female characters are found, for example, in *The English Gentlewoman* (Anon. 1849: 41-42), as well as in *The Habits of Good Society* (Anon. 1859: 263-269). In the second manual, the author dedicates several pages to the description of a number of special 'types' of ladies who do not conform to the prescribed model of femininity. These 'types' include:

• The fast young lady, described as "the hoyden of the old comedies, without the indelicacy of that character", or, in other words, someone who is "violently confident", with "a hard *blasé* look; a free tongue", with a preference for male company (*The Habits of Good Society* [Anon. 1859: 266]). This character is condemned for her lack of femininity, and warned that

(11) the instant a woman loses the true feminine type, she parts with half her influence. The 'fast girl' is flattered, admired openly, but secretly

[15] This strategy has already been identified by Kukorelly (2020) in her discussion of the denunciation of anger in advice literature for women.

[16] An English translation of the original French manual entitled *Conseils à ma fille; ou, Nouveaux contes*, by J. N. Bouilly, published in London by H. Colburn in 1813.

[17] The storyline of "The Charm of a Sweet Voice" can be briefly summarised as follows: a distinguished military gentleman in search of a wife is introduced to three young ladies whose merits and demerits are discussed in detail. Their major demerits concern either their flawed conversational skills or faulty voices. In the end, the gentleman chooses a fourth lady as his life companion. The lady wins his heart thanks to superior conversational skills and an angelic voice (*A Father's Advice to His Daughter* [Anon. 1813: 89-90]).

condemned. Many a plain woman has gained and kept a heart by being merely womanly and gentle (*The Habits of Good Society* [Anon. 1859: 267]).

Other special 'types' of badly behaved young ladies include

• The "jolly girl", that is to say, a loud, high-spirited, overbearing woman (*The Habits of Good Society*, Anon. [1859: 267]);

• The "chaff" or the "masculine" lady, notorious for her reckless flirtation, a loud voice, jokes, and so on (*The Habits of Good Society*, Anon. [1859: 269]).[18]

This overview concludes with two more 'types': "the prude, who sees harm in everything, and her friend the blue-stocking" (*The Habits of Good Society*, Anon. [1859: 269]).

A similar classification of non-comforming and non-compliant female characters is presented in *The Art of Beauty* (Haweis 1878).[19] Here the author decides to divide young women into the two 'scientific' categories of "the Visible and the Invisible":

(12) A girl is Invisible when for any reason she fails to attract: and to attract is the indispensable attribute of woman *per se,* without which she may be, no doubt, a capital individual, lay-figure, buffer, 'brick,' or anything else good in its way, but not a woman: just as a magnet that has lost its magnetism might be called a good stone, a weight, a stopper, or what not, but hardly a magnet (*The Art of Beauty,* Haweis [1878: 259]).

To the "Visible" class belong women who are handsome, talented, brilliant, learned and indispensable (*The Art of Beauty,* Haweis [1878: 260]). Such women have the duty of being visible, as "[b]eauty blushing unseen is

[18] The "chaff" features in another manual published in the same year: "A bold masculine deportment in woman may amuse for a time, but a man of right feelings would startle at the thought of uniting his fate with one whose sole delight seemed in crowds and assemblies" (*Advice to Young Ladies,* Maxwell 1859: 28).

[19] As its title makes clear, this manual is concerned first and foremost with matters related to beauty (e.g., dress, head-dresses, etc.). However, its project of improving a young woman's life is much more ambitious than that, and this is why Haweis includes a dedicated section in the book (Book 4, "The Garden of Girls", 1878: 255-295) in which she discusses norms of young women's behaviour.

a waste of wealth which political economy forbids us to sanction" (*The Art of Beauty,* Haweis [1878: 259]). The second category includes everybody else, but here a more fine-grained operation is performed by sub-dividing the class of "the Invisible" into several sub-classes and sub-categories of sub-class:

(13) Under the Class II. *Invisible*, we place
A The Nonentity.
B The Ill-educated.
C The Stupid.
D The Ordinary or Plain.
E The Discouraged.
The latter subdivision may be further subdivided into the
1. The Naturally shy.
2. The Family-ridden.
3. The *Passée*.

(*The Art of Beauty,* Haweis [1878: 260])

In order to support her attempt at a 'scientific' classification, Haweis offers some statistical data on the number of males for each female in England. She then proceeds to urge those women who "do not even try to be agreeable to look at" (*The Art of Beauty,* Haweis [1878: 262]) to think about

(14) how numerous they are, and the small absolute need men have of wives; but, nevertheless, men do still marry, and would oftener marry could they find mates – women who are either helpful to them, or amusing, or pleasing to their eye (*The Art of Beauty,* Haweis [1878: 262-263]).

Haweis dedicates two sub-sections in her manual to a more detailed description illustrating each sub-class, including the sub-categories of the "Invisible" type (*The Art of Beauty*, Haweis [1878: 266-275]), and to illustrating the behaviour of these 'anomalous' female characters in a range of fictionalised settings (for example, in social interactions at a garden party, *The Art of Beauty*, Haweis [1878: 276-295]). Haweis insists that she offers this classification in order to help the women who identify with individual sub-classes to transform themselves into the "helpful, or amusing, or pleasing to the eye" and, ultimately, to become "Visible" (*The Art of Beauty,* Haweis [1878: 265]). This, she believes, is the only possible and rational line of action her readers are expected to embrace and adhere to.

5. Discussion

The discourse of advice literature is an example of a naturalised narrative that "encode[s] and preserve[s] key ideological assumptions" (Benwell – Stokoe 2006: 175). This discourse is 'gendered' (Sunderland 2004) in that advice literature for women clearly aims to impose a particular model of a socially acceptable female identity. At the same time, this discourse reveals the contradictions inherent in any attempt to define and discipline a group's identity. As the analysis in the previous sections has shown, these self-help manuals appear to subscribe to the ideology of "identity as a 'project of the self" (Benwell" – Stokoe 2006: 18). In fact, by entrusting individual women with the task of improving themselves, of fashioning their identities – albeit within the rigid constraints that are imposed on them – the manuals promote the ideology of individual responsibility for one's situation in life. This responsibility, moreover, is made to look appealing through the use of mainly positive evaluative language whose function is to gently coerce women into becoming agreeable and pleasing in exchange for making a good marriage match. On the other hand, the rigid script of "the subjected, structured self, produced via a set of identifications in discourse" (Benwell – Stokoe 2006: 30) disseminated through advice literature presents the model of female identity as that of a human being whose project of the self excludes the idea of the self as her own. Ellis, for example, explicitly defines woman as a "relative creature":

(15) Women, considered in their distinct and abstract nature, as isolated beings, must lose more than half their worth. They are, in fact, from their own constitution, and from the station they occupy in the world, strictly speaking, relative creatures. If, therefore, they are endowed only with such faculties as render them striking and distinguished in themselves, without the faculty of instrumentality, they are only as dead letters in the volume of human life, filling what would otherwise be a blank space, but doing nothing more (*The Women of England*, Ellis [1845: 209-210]).

Even when this ideological version of the world is not presented in such explicit terms, the same message is conveyed by disciplining women into listening, rather than speaking, or into choosing only a limited number of topics for conversation, as well as into doing their "best to be agreeable" (*Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen*, Anon. [1876: 52]) to others. A woman's

duty to please and be the perfect companion defines her self, leaving no room for any independent sense of identity of her own. It is as if advice literature took up Taylor's (1989) intersubjective concept of the reflective self, which sees a self "only in relation to certain interlocutors" (Benwell – Stokoe 2006: 35), and applied the concept exactingly by degrading women to the status of complementary, "relative" human beings.

The performative dimension of this ideological operation comes to the fore in the detailed guidelines made available to 'help' women monitor their external behaviour. The thoroughness with which the author of the following passage describes the smallest details of the appropriate female body language is striking:

(16) If the whole of the company be standing, and you are addressed by any one in particular, you must immediately direct your whole attention to him only. Your body perfectly upright, but not stiff, a little turned to the right or left, with the face completely towards him, looking a little over one shoulder, the arms across the waist, the upper hand open, or the hands clasped and hanging down in front, one foot advanced a little, the body resting upon that foot which is behind. If the person who speaks to you is giving any directions, every time you think it necessary to assent, incline the body and head gracefully forward. Should the individual present any thing, you keep the body bent until you have received it; and when you leave him, slide smoothly away, sinking at the same time (*Instructions in Etiquette,* Butcher 1 [847: 32]).

The manuals discussed in this paper exemplify attempts to get women to perform a specific female identity. By learning to control their bodies, voices and speech, nineteenth-century women readers were expected to internalise the rigid parameters of their assigned identity of a second-class member of society. Scholars such as Mills, speaking about nineteenth-century conduct books, argue that the proliferation of advice manuals on women's conduct should be read as being indicative of women's resistance to gendered discourses of subordination, rather than as evidence of women's oppression (Mills 1997: 90). It is certainly true that the analysis conducted in this study hints at anxieties in contemporary society triggered by the changes in the social position of women.[20] At the same time, what is most striking, from

[20] As I have already shown in detail in Section 4.3, these anxieties are dealt with by denigrating women that do not conform with the prescribed model of femininity, in ways that are exemplified in the following passage: "The prude and the pedant

the point of view of a twenty-first-century reader of nineteenth-century advice literature for women, is how resilient such discourses of oppression continue to be.

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are often firm friends, each adoring the other. The fast young lady deals largely in epithets: "Idiot, dolt, wretch, humbug," drop from her lips; but the prude and her friend the blue-stocking permit themselves to use conventional phrases only; their notion of conversation is that it be instructive, and, at the same time, mystifying. The young blue-stocking has, nevertheless, large views of the regeneration of society, and emancipation of woman from her degrading inferiority of social position. She speaks in measured phrase; it is like listening to a book to hear her" (*The Habits of Good Society*, Anon. [1859: 269]).

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From "British Subjects" to "American People": Transformation of national identities in a corpus of American newspapers (1764-1783)

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the way in which the British colonists of North America frame their national identity in the socio-political and judicial debates which are voiced in the press in the period before and after the Declaration of Independence. To this purpose, I constructed a corpus of newspaper articles from 1764 to 1783 and I analysed the most frequent descriptors used by authors to encode their national identity in discourse, focusing on recurrent collocational and colligational patterns. Results show that colonists adopt discourse strategies of assimilation, perpetuation and dismantling across the two decades. If until the mid-1770s they enhance their sameness with native Britons on the basis of their common cultural inheritance and historical memory, after 1776 colonists seek to construct an autochthonous American nationality. Although they appear to be neither able nor willing to see themselves as dis-membered from the British Empire, the years of the Revolution set the premises for the development of a post-British national identity.

Keywords: social transformation, national identities, American newspapers, American Revolution, corpus linguistics.

1. Introduction

The American Revolution prompted the construction of a new national identity outside the British Empire. The process was slow and strenuous as the colonists of the 1760s were neither prepared nor willing to abandon their British identity. Until the Revolution, European Americans cherished

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and cultivated their Britishness by proudly replicating the socio-economic relations and legal culture of their mother-land. As Greene points out: "for the colonists before 1775 a positive sense of identity was dependent upon their ability to identify themselves as 'free Englishmen', inheriting the liberties, rights and culture of all the British subjects" (Greene 1992: 301). When the monarchical authority began to levy taxes and deprive the inhabitants of their natural rights as English freemen, the reaction was justified as a legitimate attempt to protect time-honoured British freedoms. Even when Independence was finally accomplished, the consciousness of an American national identity seemed to be difficult to awaken in the population. If on the one hand, the voice of the Patriots celebrated the construction of a free, happy and prosperous nation in the press, on the other hand, Loyalists, representing about one third of the population, refused to think of themselves as dis-membered from their mother-land.

Print culture provides valuable testimony of the opposing representations of national identity which characterised the period before and after the Revolution. In particular, newspapers, thanks to their periodicity, were instrumental in structuring, replicating and transforming the national and political consciousness of the colonists, by voicing discourses and counter-discourses about their traditional rights to Britishness on the one hand, and their growing sense of Americanness on the other.

My aim in this article is to examine the linguistic strategies through which this progressive shift of nationhood, from British subjects into post-British Americans, is constructed and negotiated in discourse. To this purpose, I compiled a corpus of American newspapers published from 1764 to 1783 and covering the period from the Stamp Act to the Treaty of Paris, marking the end of the American Revolution and sanctioning the new nation's complete separation from the British Empire. The time span of 19 years is subdivided into three periods in order to track the diachronic evolution of the colonists' national consciousness. Specifically, I shall analyse the most frequent descriptors referring to people and geographical territories in terms of collocations and concordances.[1] The emergence of lexico-syntactic patterns will enable us to trace the mutual relationship existing between the socio-cultural attitudes conveyed by recurrent linguistic choices and the

[1] Words referring to geographical territories are selected for analysis since space is an intrinsic part of any definition of national identity. Indeed, national identity cannot really be conceived without the presence of a nationalist territorial ideology (Kaplan – Guntram 2011).

socio-political and cultural contingencies of a very turbulent period in the history of the British Empire.

Previous studies on the emergence of an American national identity in the press were conducted by, amongst others, Merritt (1965) and Ziegler (2006), who carried out a quantitative analysis of place-name symbols and reference terms in a selection of colonial newspapers of the time, focusing on the period 1735-1775 and 1750-1800, respectively. In this sense, my research can be placed within the tradition of historical news discourse studies and contribute to the historiographical debate over the origins of American nationalism (Trautsch 2016).[2]

2. Theoretical framework

According to Hall (1996), national identity is a cultural and discursive construct which originates from a system of cultural representations that allows people to interpret and feel part of a nation intended as an "imagined community" (Anderson 1988). This sense of in-group membership derives both from a shared culture and a common history – the latter defined as "collective memory" – which consists in a selective recollection of past events which are considered important for a specific community of people (Halbwachs 1985). The notion of collective memory is crucial to an analysis of the discursive construction of a nation, as it shows what aspects, events and social actors are selected from the archive of historical memory in order to identify a common origin and create continuity between past and present.

Within their Discourse Historical Approach, De Cillia et al. (1999) and Wodak et al. (2009) draw upon the works of Anderson (1988), Hall (1996) and Halbwachs (1985), amongst others, to elaborate their framework of national identity addressing the role of collective narrative, time and discourse. They argue that:

> The discursive construction of national identity resolves around the three temporal axes of the past, the present and the future. In this context, origin, continuity/tradition, transformation, timelessness and anticipation are important ordering criteria. Spatial, territorial

[2] Following Trautsch (2016: 291) I adopt a broad definition of nationalism as "the ideology which creates, legitimizes, mobilizes and integrates the nation, promotes the unity of the national people and demands a sovereign state for this nation".

> and local dimensions […] are likewise significant in this discursive construction of national identity. (Wodak et al. 2009: 26)

To complete their framework De Cillia et al. (1999) and Wodak et al. (2009) conceive of national identities not only as discursive constructions but also as mental structures which influence – and are in turn influenced by – social practices and find their actualization in discourse. In this regard, they draw upon Bourdieu's notion of national identity as a sort of *habitus*, that is to say a complex of common ideas, concepts or perception schemas of related emotional attitudes, of similar behavioural dispositions all of which are internalized through national socialization (De Cillia et al. 1999: 153).

In my analysis, I shall adopt the Discourse Historical Approach theorized by Reisigl – Wodak (2009) and Wodak (2013) in order to examine the changing discursive representation of the colonies and their inhabitants in the press. Within this theoretical framework, the historical background in which national identities are discursively constructed is of paramount importance, in order to account for the authors' socio-political and ideological attitudes actualized in their lexical choices. What is more, the model allows the analyst to explore the way in which particular discourse representations may change diachronically, thus contributing to the identification of divergent identity narratives over the years. The mutual relationship existing between text and the socio-political and historical context of its production will be investigated through the aid of corpus linguistics.

Following the principles of CADS (Partington 2004, 2009; Lombardo 2009), I shall take the quantitative evidence of linguistic patterns in the corpus as a point of departure and I shall move to the identification of the discourse strategies adopted by news-writers in order to shape and mould their national identity in terms of Britishness or Americanness in connection with the specific historical contingency. In order to tackle aspects of discourse continuity and change throughout the decades, the corpus will be divided into three sub-corpora. The most frequent descriptors for people and nations will be examined in terms of collocations and concordances and – where possible – will be grouped within the following four macro-strategies identified by De Cillia et al. (1999) as being at the basis of the discursive construction of a national identity:

1) the constructive strategy which includes all those linguistic devices which help invite identification and solidarity with the we-group, at the same time expressing distancing from "others";

2) perpetuation and justification strategies which reproduce, support and protect a threatened national identity by justifying the status-quo through the use of collective memory of the past;
3) transformation strategies which are used to transform the meaning of well-established aspects of national identity to another;
4) dismantling or destructive strategies which are used to demolish existing national identities or elements of them.

3. Corpus and methodology

In my study of nomination strategies in American newspapers (1764-1783) I have made use of the online news archive *America's Historical Newspapers*, which includes the *Early American Newspapers Series* from 1690 to 1922 as one of its major sources. The archive features searchable full text and page images of newspapers recounting people and events which shaped the American nation. I selected 110 news texts which specifically dealt with the relationship between the American colonies and Britain from the Stamp Act to the Treaty of Paris and I built a machine-readable corpus of about 101,000 words.

The corpus contains newspapers which conveyed the perspective of Patriots as well as newspapers which were sympathetic to the viewpoint of Loyalists. In particular, 12 newspapers promoted the Patriot cause, and 12 newspapers supported the Tory cause (Davidson 1941; Barnes 1974; Potter – Calhoon 1980; Parkinson 2015).[3] My dataset comprises four major text-types reported in order of frequency: 43% letters (including extracts

[3] The revolutionary newspapers are the following ones: *The Boston Gazette* (1719-98), *The Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal* (1755-93), *The Pennsylvania Chronicle* (1767-74), *The Connecticut Courant* (1764-74), *The Essex Gazette* (1768-75) *The Massachusetts Spy* (1770-72), *The Pennsylvania Packet or the General Advertiser* (1771-1783), *The New England Chronicle or the Essex Gazette* (1775-76), *The Continental Journal and Weekly Advertiser* (1776-87), *The Independent Chronicle and the Universal Advertiser* (1776-1801), *The New Jersey Gazette* (1777-1786), *The Freeman's Journal or the North American Intelligencer* (1781-92). The loyalist newspapers are *The Massachusetts Gazette* (1765-66, 1768-69), *The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser* (1763-69), *The Boston Chronicle* (1767-70), *The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Weekly Newsletter* (1704-76), *The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Newsletter* (1763-65), *The Massachusetts Gazette and the Boston Post-Boy Advertiser* (1769-75), *The New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury* (1768-83), *The Pennsylvania Evening Post* (1775-81), *The Royal Pennsylvania Gazette* (1778-78), *The Royal Gazette* (1777-83), *The Norwich Packet and the Weekly Advertiser* (1779-1782), and *The Salem Gazette* (1781-85). *The Boston Evening Post* (1735-1775) is considered more objective by presenting both sides of the controversy (Volo 2012: 150).

from epistolary correspondence and opinion articles in the form of letters to the printer and letters to readers), 30% official documents (i.e. resolutions, petitions, declarations), 24% news reports and 3% essays. In order to carry out a diachronic investigation of nomination strategies throughout the two decades, the corpus has been divided into three sub-corpora of about 33,000 words each, corresponding to three different periods. Period 1 covers the years from 1764 to 1770 and contains 46% letters, 36% news reports and 17% official documents. Period 2 comprises the time span from 1771 to 1776 and is composed of 46% letters, 35% official documents and 19% news reports. Period 3 stretches from 1777 to 1783 and features 43% news reports and 35% letters, 13% official documents and 8% essays.

My database was queried with the aid of the text analysis software *Sketch Engine*.[4] In order to single out recurrent lexico-syntactic patterns of language use and relate them to their historical contextual factors, I worked out a wordlist for each sub-corpus, from which I selected the most frequent descriptors of place and people by adopting the threshold of 20 occurrences per sub-corpus as a criterion for obtaining sufficient evidence for a quantitative analysis. For each noun, I examined its collocational and colligational behaviour in concordances through the word-sketch function offered by Sketch Engine. This tool provides a snapshot of the grammatical and collocational set in which the noun occurs and displays results in the form of grammatical relations. The results obtained from each of the three periods were compared quantitively and qualitatively, in order to identify similarities and differences in the nomination strategies and trace their diachronic evolution in the representation of a post-British, American identity.

4. Analysis

In Table 1, I report the most frequent descriptors of people and place and their distribution over the three periods.

Period 1 is characterised by a series of tax acts which the British crown imposed on the colonies. Despite their growing indignation, colonists still felt they were part of the British Empire and the descriptors represent empire-minded people who tried hard to preserve their British cultural heritage. In period 2 the major variation consists in the replacement of the

[4] For further information on the corpus tool, see Sketch Engine at https://app.sketchengine.eu/

top word *colonies* with *America*, indicating a growing sense of territorial and geographical unity. At the same time, the descriptor *Americans* records the same frequency as *subjects*, thus marking the emergence of a new and revolutionary sense of in-group membership as rightful owners of the American continent, separated from Britain. Period 3 documents the discursive construction of an autochthonous national identity as we can see from the top word *States,* mostly occurring in the multi-word unit *United States*. The political and diplomatic union among the ex-provinces, however, was still disjointed by a real sense of national consciousness, and the word *Tories*, referring to those who remained loyal to their Britishness, is evidence of the identity crisis of those years.

Table 1. Quantitative distribution of descriptors across the three sub-corpora

PERIOD 1 (1764-1770)	F	PERIOD 2 (1771-1776)	F	PERIOD 3 (1777-1783)	F
COLONIES	86	AMERICA	114	STATES	141
COUNTRY	81	COLONIES	91	AMERICA	95
PEOPLE	79	PEOPLE	83	COUNTRY	83
BRITAIN	61	COUNTRY	73	BRITAIN	66
AMERICA	42	BRITAIN	67	PEOPLE	41
INHABITANTS	41	INHABITANTS	41	TORIES	29
SUBJECTS	37	SUBJECTS	27	NATION	25
		AMERICANS	27		

4.1 Period 1 (1764-1770): Striving for Britishness

The most frequent descriptor in period one is *colonies* in the plural. The word occurs within three major collocational patterns: *these colonies* (28),[5] *other colonies* (8) and *British colonies* (6). The collocation *these colonies* is usually introduced by the preposition *in/of* in the lexico-syntactic constructions *the people/inhabitants of these colonies* (4) or *his Majesty's (liege)/British subject(s) in these colonies* (4). The two patterns are mostly found in official documents and letters, as examples (1) and (2) show. In both cases the nomination appears to be overlexicalized, as happens every time we have to deal with a problematic aspect of a culture which requires the creation and use of many words for a single entity or concept (Fowler 1991: 85). In period 1, there is no one

[5] From this point in the article, the number of occurrences of words/patterns in the corpus will be given in brackets.

single word used to define the colonists' nationhood, which is why authors resort to descriptive patterns combining *people/inhabitants/subjects* with their geographical territory and their cultural heritage. The lexical preference for the word *colonies* in the plural instead of *America* is indicative of the colonists' endorsement of the British Imperial ideology and subsumes their adherence to the principle that loyalty to their colony means loyalty to the Empire. Even so, while example (1) features the use of perpetuation strategies by referring to the bond of allegiance and subordination of the colonies to Britain, example (2) challenges the justice of the British parliamentary procedures and initiates the transformation of Britain from a generous and valuable mother-land to a greedy and unjust centralized imperial authority.

(1) The following is said to be a copy of the RESOLUTIONS of the CONGRESS held at NEW-YORK. Saturday, October 19, 1765. RESOLVED, That **his Majesty's subjects in these colonies**, owe the same allegiance to the crown of Great-Britain, that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination to that august body of the parliament. (*Massachusetts Gazette*, 20 March 1766, official document)

(2) The place of paying the duties, imposed by the late act, appears to me therefore to be totally immaterial. The single question is, whether the parliament can legally impose duties to be paid by **the people of these colonies** only for the sole purpose of raising a revenue, on commodities which **she obliges us to take from her alone**? (*Supplement to the Boston Chronicle,* 21 December 1767, letter)

The second most frequent collocation is *other colonies*. The cluster uncovers the colonists' perception of the fragmentation and differentiation which still characterised the provinces of America. Examples (3) and (4), however, show the use of assimilation strategies which discursively constructs the colonies' common interest in opposing an unlawful taxation policy and in preserving an inherited *status quo*. If up to that time colonists felt united as British freemen under his Majesty's authority, from the mid-1760s a new sense of horizontal, inter-colonial affinity began to take shape, as shown by the collocates *with us*, *all*, *mutual*, *each other*. This affinity was far from being revolutionary and progressive in intent. It was closer to an *English* form of resistance endorsed by the Assemblies against reformist innovations originating from London (Chet 2019: 7). As Wahrman points out, contrary to

other wars in recent memory, the American War cannot easily be conceived of in terms of a polarization between *us* vs *them* based on stable criteria of sameness and difference. Indeed, the lack of clarity about who the British were, either enemies or brethren, makes it hard for the colonists of either side to cast them within univocal identity categories (Wahrman 2001: 1238):

(3) As his Majesty's **other Northern American colonies** are embark'd with us in this most important bottom, we further desire you to use your endeavours, that their weight may be added to that of this province: that by the united application of all who are aggrieved, all may happily obtain redress. (*Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Newsletter,* 28 May 1764, official document)

(4) For the cause of one is the cause of all. If the parliament may lawfully deprive New York of any of its rights, it may deprive any, or **all the other colonies** of their rights; and nothing can possibly so much encourage such attempts, as a mutual in-attention to the interest of each other. (*Boston Chronicle*, 21 December 1767, letter)

The second descriptor in the wordlist is *country* which is mostly found in the pattern *mother country* (12) and *(our) own country* (6) in official documents and letters as in examples (5) and (6). The two clusters correspond to the overlapping processes of Anglicization and Americanization characterising the colonists' discursive construction of their national identity. By Anglicization, historians refer to the post-Glorious Revolution British identity which the royal colonies of the 18th century embraced and actualised in political, socio-cultural and economic practices in an attempt to replicate the British culture, society and legislation in the continent (Greene 1992; Murrin 2018; Chet 2019). By Americanization, on the other hand, they indicate that process of inevitable acclimatization with the peculiar conditions of the country, from the easy availability of land and exploitable resources to the incorporation in the broad Atlantic trading system which stimulated high levels of individual activity and expansiveness (Greene 1992; Conforti 2001). In period 1, the reiteration of *mother country* is consistent with the Anglicization process as it encodes a metaphorical child-parent relationship between the colonists and their home land, on which basis they discursively construct their national identity as free born and dutiful children of Great Britain:

(5) We have evinced our Loyalty to our King, our Affection to the British Government and **our Mother Country**, on all Occasions, by an uncommon readiness to assist in any Measures with our Blood and Treasure to extend their Conquests, and to enlarge those Dominions, from which the reap so many and great advantages. (*The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, 4 November 1765, official document)

At the same time, however, the pattern is also used within a counter-discourse which uncovers British abuses and anticipates a clash of interests between the mother-land and its colonies, as we can see in example (6):

(6) And while the colonists are indulged or encouraged in trade, they never will think of going upon manufactories themselves, the only thing **the mother country** has to fear from them and which must now very soon be the case or they must learn to go without clothes (a very hard matter in this climate) every branch by which they could make remittance for them being stopped. (*Boston Evening Post*, 2 January 1764, letter)

The tension between assertions of sameness and difference destabilizes well-demarcated superimposition of identity categories, thus determining continuous shifts along the sameness-difference dyad (Wahrman 2001: 1241).

The cluster *our/your own country* is usually found in the pattern [produce] + *of* + [possessive adj.] + *country* and can be construed as part of a tendency towards Americanization. As Merritt noticed, at the time "the perception of the land as being a part of the American rather than British community precedes a similar perception of the inhabitants of that land" (Merritt 1965: 333). Evidence suggests that the gradual construction of an American national identity starts with the description of the land as American and only later does it encode its inhabitants as Americans (see Period 2). The lexico-syntactic pattern suggests how the independence of a nation is determined by its internal economic growth, as shown in example (7):

(7) Thus my countrymen, by consuming less of what we are not really in want of, and by industriously cultivating and improving **the natural advantages of our own country**, we might save our substance even our lands, from becoming the property of others […] (*The Boston Post Boy and Advertiser*, 16 November 1767, letter)

Again, it is worth bearing in mind that in the 1760s, the colonists' appeal to labour and consumption of American products is not to be intended as an annihilation of their Britishness but rather as a way to secure their rights and privileges as English freemen inside the political and cultural framework of the British Empire.

The third most frequent descriptor is *people*, often occurring in the pattern *people of* + [geographical place] (14). The cluster *people of these colonies/ this colony/province* (7) coexists with *people of England/Great Britain* (6) in order to emphasise continuity and in-group membership between the two parts of the Empire, as example (8) shows. In this regard, the pervasive appeal to historical memory is part of those perpetuation strategies which are meant to defend and preserve the colonists' national identity as British freemen.

(8) Resolved, That the First Adventurers, Settlers of this his Majesty's Colony and Dominions of Virginia, brought with them and transmitted to their Posterity, and all other his Majesty's Subjects since, inhabiting in this his Majesty's Colony, all the Privileges and Immunities that have at any Time been held, enjoyed and possessed by **the People of Great-Britain**. (*The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 24 June 1765, official document)

If on the one hand, assimilation and perpetuation strategies are adopted in the hope of persuading Britain to abide by the Charter and treat the colonists as equals, on the other hand, dissimilation strategies are put in place in order to prompt a proto-national sense of inter-colonial unity (of interests in misfortune), as we can see in the polarization between *we/the people of these colonies* vs *she (the mother-country)/they* in examples (9) and (10):

(9) The single question is, whether the parliament can legally impose duties to be paid by **the people of these colonies** only for the sole purpose of raising a revenue, on commodities which **she** obliges us to take from **her** alone? Or, in other words, whether the parliament can legally take money out of our pockets without our consent? (*Supplement to the Boston Chronicle*, 21 December 1767, letter)

(10) Nor can **we** think that any Calamity or Misery which may befall **this distressed People**, ought to be imputed to our refusing to part with our just Rights and Liberties. Moreover, we detest **their** principle who say, let us do Evil that Good may come, and are offended and grieved

at the Violence and Robberies lately committed. (*The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, 4 November 1765, official document)

Dissimilation strategies document the beginning of a very primitive narrative of intercolonial solidarity which is carried out through negative other-presentation, i.e. by representing the British Parliament as acting against the law and through positive self-presentation, i.e. by replicating the paradigm of the colonists as dutiful but vexed subjects of Great Britain. It is worth pointing out that at that time colonists still hoped to have their grievances redressed by the king, and they were probably unaware that their polemical discourse would set the basis for the construction of a future national identity separated from Great Britain.

In light of the on-going dispute with the British government, it is no surprise that the descriptor *(Great) Britain* is more frequent than *America* especially in official documents. Faced with the threat of losing their British rights, colonists use all possible rhetorical strategies to re-state their sameness with their fellow countrymen in Britain through association in the form of relationyms and origonyms such as *our fellow subjects* (4), *sons* (5) and *descent* (Reisigl – Wodak 2001: 51-52):

(11) At the same time we reflect on our happiness in having a natural and constitutional Right to all the Privileges of **our Fellow Subjects in Great Britain**, we behold with Pain and Horror, any Attempts to deprive us of them, and can not but look on such Attempts as Instances of the greatest Unkindness and Unjustice. (*The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, 4 November 1765, official document)

(12) We own **our descent** from thee – we glory in being **the sons of Britannia**. We glory in the Birth Right of Englishmen – we claim no more (*The Boston Chronicle*, 29 August 1768, letter)

The next descriptor, *America*, occupies the fifth position in the wordlist, suggesting that its acknowledgement as a geographical single entity is relevant but not predominant yet. The term was originally used by the British during the intercolonial wars for treating the continental colonies as a unit (Greene 1992). The descriptor is mostly found in letters (52%), whereas official documents contain only 15% of the occurrences, suggesting that freeholders in legal assemblies still privileged the word *colonies* over the notion of a geographical entity detached from the mother-land. Although

the lower frequency of *America* in period 1 reveals that colonists did not feel fully confident with it, its usage is nonetheless consistent with an emerging tendency to find unity in the geographical territory inhabited. The descriptor is mostly found in the pattern [NP] + *in* + *America* (22). In most cases, it collocates with *his Majesty's loyal subjects* (4) and *British dominions/plantations* (6) in line with the persistent colonial ideology, as example (13) shows.

(13) it flow'd from every tongue and pen and press, till it had diffused itself thro' every part of **the British dominions in America**; it united us all, we seem'd to be animated by one spirit, and that was a spirit of liberty. (*The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, 18 November 1765, letter)

There are also instances in which America is metonymically used to refer to its own people although always within a British colonial framework, as we can see in the collocation *British America* (5) in example (14):

(14) As soon as this shocking act was known, it fill'd **all British America**, from one End to the other, with astonishment and grief. (*The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, 18 November 1765, letter)

The last two descriptors which appear in the wordlist are *inhabitants* and *subjects*. The former is found in the pattern [*other*] *inhabitants* + *of* + [*colony/these colonies/town/city*] (19) and reveals the fragmented and pluralistic identity of the colonists in the vast American territory, as we can see in example (15):

(15) Gentlemen, Your being chosen by the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, to represent them in the General Assembly the ensuing year, affords you the strongest testimony of that confidence which they place in your integrity and capacity. (*The Massachusetts Gazette,* 28 May 1764, letter)

The latter (*subjects*) represents the Anglicization of the continent where empire-minded people proudly acknowledge their constitutionally regulated subordination to the British crown. The most common collocates for *subjects* are *loyal* (9), *free/natural born* (6), *dutiful* (4) which reveal their "blood relation" with Great Britain, since their English forefathers colonized these territories (Cecconi 2020):

(16) it would carry a face of Injustice in it, to deny us any of the Liberties and Privileges contained therein [the Charter]; seeing that our Fathers had so dearly purchased them, which Charter affirms to us all the Privileges of **Natural Subjects**, **born within the Realm of England**. (*The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser,* 4 November 1765, official document)

(17) THAT **his Majesty's liege subjects in these colonies**, are intituled to all the inherent rights and liberties of **his natural born subjects**, within the kingdom of Great-Britain (*Massachusetts Gazette*, 20 March 1766, official document)

The collocational patterns of period 1 show a predominance of perpetuation/justification strategies actualized in the recurrent reference to the bond of allegiance of the colonies to Britain and in the emphasis on the colonists as British freemen resident in America as part of the British Empire. Even so, instances of dissociation between the colonies and Britain begin to take shape, especially in letters, thus setting the premises for the discourse construction of an American national identity separated from the motherland.

4.2 Period 2 (1771-1776): From Britishness to Americanness

In period 2 the descriptor *America* makes a rapid rise and occupies the top position in the wordlist, reaching a peak in official documents (53%). Colonists foreground the unity of their geographical territory so as to construct a narrative of solidarity and communality which anticipates the creation of a new national identity. The word mostly occurs within two lexico-syntactic patterns [*British/His Majesty's colonies/plantations*] + *in* + *America* (32) and [NP] + *of* + *America* (30), both present in letters and official documents. The former is consistent with the Anglicization of the colonists as it simply indicates the territory where the British dominions lie, as in example (18):

(18) That whereas his Majesty GEORGE the Third is the rightful Successor to the Throne of Great-Britain, and justly entitled to the Allegiance of the British Realm, and agreeable to Com- pact, of **the English Colonies in America**. Therefore we the Heirs and Successors of the first Planters of this Colony, do chearfully acknowledge the said GEORGE the

Third to be our rightful Sovereign […] (*Supplement to the Massachusetts Gazette,* 15 September 1774, official document)

The latter, on the other hand, encodes the Americanization process, whereby the land is metonymically used to refer to its people and their rights, as can be seen in example (19).

(19) That the resolution lately come into by the East India company to send out their tea to America, subject to the payment of duties on its being landed here, is an open attempt to enforce the ministerial plan, and a violent attack upon **the liberties of America**. (*The Boston Gazette and Country Journal,* 29 November 1773, official document)

In the pattern *liberties of America* (7), the geographical territory is personified so as to assimilate all its people and construct sameness among them. At the same time, the metonymic choice of the term is meant to mitigate the challenging force of the polemical discourse by backgrounding the colonists' direct responsibility for accusing their mother-land of tyranny and for outlining the possibility of a separation from her.

The revolutionary force of this narrative overlaps with a more conservative discourse, where the resentment of the colonists is voiced within an empire-dependent framework. This trend is traceable in the recurrent collocation of *America and Britain* (10), where the two entities, though encoded as distinct – are conceived of as belonging together and as necessary to each other for the common welfare of the Empire. The lexicon of continuity – *restoring*, *preserving*, *remain* – is consistent with the perpetuation strategies adopted by the colonists to defend their Britishness as we can see in the following patriotic newspaper:

(20) Civil war, confusion, and destruction are inevitable, if administration continues to invade the rights of the Americans; and therefore our most serious and attentive consideration should be applied to the great affair of **restoring and preserving union and harmony between Britain and America**. (*Massachusetts Spy,* 30 June 1774, letter)

(21) The empire standing upon these great principles of equity and equality no just cause would ever exist for disunion between **Britain and America**; and the British dominions might upon this basis of

justice and liberty, extend further and further to the remotest regions of the earth; and **Britain remain the centre of union**, wealth and splendour. (*Massachusetts Spy*, 30 June 1774, letter)

The second most frequent descriptor is *colonies* which is consistent with the dominant Imperial ideology. The word is pre-modified by two semantic sets of adjectives which confirm the overlapping voices of Anglicization and Americanization characterising press debate. On the side of the Anglicization, we find occurrences of *loyal colonies* (2), *British colonies* (4) and *his Majesty's colonies* (4), mainly encoded in the letter text-type. On the side of Americanization, we find instances of *American colonies* (5), especially in letters, and *united colonies* (6) and *confederation/union of the colonies* (2) mostly found in official documents. The occurrences of *united colonies* date from 1775 though it is only one year later, in 1776, that they are capitalized as a new political body, as shown in the following passage:

(22) FORASMUCH as all the endeavours of **the United Colonies**, by the most decent representations and petitions to the King and Parliament of Great Britain, to restore peace and security to America under the British government, and a reunion with that people upon just and liberal terms, instead of redress of grievances, have produced, from an imperious and vindictive administration, increased insult, oppression and a vigorous attempt to effect our total destruction. (*The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 24 June 1776, official document)

Another interesting collocational pattern involves the words *colonies* and *Great Britain/Her* linked by the preposition *between* (7), as can be seen in examples (23) and (24):

(23) When the inhabitants of this extended continent observe that regular measures are prosecuted for **re-establishing harmony between Great Britain and these colonies**, their minds will grow more calm (*The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 11 July 1774, letter)

(24) We solemnly assure your Majesty, that we, not only most and ardently **desire the former Harmony between Her and these colonies,** may be restored, but that Concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis as to perpetuate its Blessings, uninterrupted by any future Dissentions to succeeding Generations in both Countries and to

transmit your Majesty's Name to Posterity. (*The New England Chronicle or the Essex Gazette*, 24 August 1775, official document)

The Britishness perpetuated and justified in these narratives extends to the year 1775, showing that the revolution was dictated by necessity. As stated at the Virginia Convention of August 1774, the revolution was undertaken for the purpose not of forming a new nation but rather of "securing the Peace and the Good Order of Government within the ancient colony" (Greene 1992, 2001).

The third most frequent collocate is *people* which is mostly found in letters (45%) and official documents (37%). It occurs in the syntactic patterns [NP] + *of* + *the people* (26) and *people* + *of* + [NP] (19). In the former pattern – along with words referring to the colonists' legal claims, mostly *liberties* (4), *rights* (3) and *representation* (2) – we find words showing people's awareness of their high number (*increase*, *measures*) as a socio-economic pre-condition for independence:

(25) This continent is more than a hundred times larger than Great Britain; and according to the present **increase of the people**, in less than a century they will exceed fifty millions. Can it be supposed that this vast people w ill be slaves and vassals of tyrants in Britain? (*Massachusetts Spy*, 30 June 1774, letter)

(26) Their numbers will be too small, in any manner whatever to control **the sentiments or measures of the people of America**. Their conduct never can prevent the exertions of these colonies in vindication of their liberty. (*The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 11 July 1774, letter)

As was the case in period 1, the construction *people of* in example (26) features a coexistence of assimilation and dissimilation between the people of America/this colony and the people of England/Great Britain. In this regard, the ideological stance of authors oscillates between a desperate hope for a reconciliation through the use of assimilation strategies such as *our Brethren in Great Britain* (Anglicization), as example 27 indicates, and the growing awareness of an irreconcilable gap between the two countries, in a polarized *we* vs *they* discourse (Americanization) characterised by negative other-presentation, as shown in example 28.

(27) Though the rulers there have had no compassion upon us, let us have compassion on the people of that kingdom: And if to give weight to our supplications and to obtain relief for our suffering brethren, it shall be judged necessary to lay ourselves under some restrictions with regard to our imports and exports, let it be done with tenderness so as to convince **our brethren in Great Britain** of the importance of a connection and harmony between them and us, and of the danger of driving us into despair. (*The Boston Gazette and Country Journal,* 11 July 1774, letter)

(28) **We** have seen **the people of Great Britain so lost to every sense of virtue and honor**, as to pass over the most pathetic and earnest appeals to **their** justice with an unfeeling indifference. – The hopes **we** placed on **their** exertions, have long since failed. (*The Boston-Gazette and Country Journal*, 10 June 1776, official document)

The next most frequent word is *country*. In period 2 the pattern *your/our country* (12) outnumbers *(our) mother/parent country* (10), showing an increasing tendency to consider America as a country of its own, especially in revolutionary newspapers. The Americanization at the basis of the constructive strategy in example (29) is compensated by the Anglicization traceable in example (30) where loyal colonists continue to conceive of their identity in terms of a parent-child bond with Britain, especially in petitions to the king. In both cases, the pervasive presence of the possessive adjective (*our/your*) is indicative of the importance ascribed to the sense of ownership of the land and membership of a community as proxies for the construction or perpetuation of a national identity.

(29) We are ready with our lives and interest to assist them in opposing these and all other measures tending **to enslave our country**. (*Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 13 December 1773, official document)

(30) **The Union between our Mother Country and these Colonies**, and the Energy of mild and just Government, produced Benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an Assurance of their permanency and increase, that the Wonder and Envy of other Nations were excited, while they beheld Great-Britain rising to a Power the most extraordinary the World had ever known. (*The New-England Chronicle or, The Essex Gazette*, 24 August 1775, official document)

The fifth word in the list is *Britain*, which mostly occurs in the pattern [NP] + *of* + *Britain,* as we can see in examples (31) and (32).

(31) The history of **the present king of Great Britain** is a history of unremitting injuries & usurpations, among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, but all have in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. (*The Continental Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, 18 July 1776, official document)

(32) The Spirit of opposition to **the arbitrary and tyrannical acts of the Ministry and Parliament of Britain,** hath diffused itself so universally throughout this province, that the people, even to its most extended frontiers, are indefatigable in training themselves to military discipline (*The New England Chronicle or the Essex Gazette*, 15 June 1775, news report)

The NP slot is filled by lexemes referring to the governmental institutions and the king, especially in patriotic texts. This is dictated by the colonists' need to restrict the target of their blame, showing that the revolt was due to the contingencies of an unconstitutional government and a tyrannical king, rather than to any gratuitous spirit of rebellion against their own people.

While the next word *inhabitants* maintains the same frequency and collocational behaviour as in period 1, the word *subjects* registers a decrease which results from the appearance of the descriptor *Americans* among the most frequent words. The descriptor *subjects* continues to be used in official documents and letters, as can be seen in example (33).

(33) We yet entertain hopes of your uniting with us in the defence of our common Liberty, and there is yet reason to believe, that should we join in imploring the attention of our Sovereign to the unmerited and unparalleled oppressions of **his American Subjects**, he will at length be undeceived, and forbid a licentious Ministry any longer to riot in the ruins of the Rights of Mankind. (*The New-England Chronicle*, 22 June 1775, official documents)

The loyalist narrative of American subjects of the British Empire runs parallel to the patriotic representation of Americans living in a vast territory

and sharing conditions and interests which make them feel part of a new, distinct community, as shown in example (34).

(34) It might be demonstrated by a million of reasons that Britain cannot long rule **the Americans** by mere power, and hold them in servile subjection. This continent is more than a hundred times larger than Great Britain; and according to the present increase of the people, in less than a century they will exceed fifty millions. (*Massachusetts Spy*, 30 June 1774, letter)

The collocational patterns of Period 2 reveal an alternation of perpetuation strategies (Americans as British subjects) and constructive strategies based on both assimilation (sense of solidarity and common ground among Americans) and dissociation (America as different from Britain). Although the constructive strategies eventually win, leading to the secession in 1776, many Americans are still unwilling to rethink their nationhood in terms of a separation from Great Britain.

4.3 Period 3 (1777-1783): Identity challenge between Patriots and Loyalists

In period 3 the keyword *colonies* disappears in favour of *States* in the multi-word unit *United States* (77). After the Declaration of Independence, a new body politic comes into existence and is discursively constructed through a different naming system centred on the descriptors *United States* and *America*, which are predominant in official documents published in patriotic newspapers.

The existence of an American nationhood separated from the British Empire is expressed in numerous concordances where the word *United States* co-occurs with *His Majesty* (8), or *Britain* (7), both acting as independent participants in the negotiations. The national singularity of the United States is encoded in discourse by means of capitalization and by its equal footing with Britain and Europe, represented as *external* Others (Trautsch 2016: 303), as we can see in examples (35) and (36):

(35) Article 8th: The Navigation of the river Mississippi, from its source to the Ocean, shall forever remain free and open to **the Subjects of Great Britain** and **the Citizens of the United States**. (*Massachusetts Spy*, 27 January 1782, official document)

(36) All our treaties, whether of alliance, peace, or commerce, are formed under the sovereignty of the **United States**, and **Europe** knows us by no other name or title. The division of the empire into states is for our own convenience, but abroad this distinction ceases. (*Pennsylvania Packet,* 19 April 1783, essay)

The descriptor *United States* also reveals a semantic preference for words such as *nation(al)* (8), *independence* (7), *sovereignty* (6) and *citizen/ship* (4) which are meant to construct a new national identity in patriotic letters and essays, as shown in the following examples:

(37) **Citizens** of **America**, the severe conflict to which the Divine Providence hath called the **United States** requires the exercise of all virtuous and heroic principles. (*Norwich Packet,* [from the *Boston Gazette*] 21 September 1780, letter)

(38) In short, we have no other **national sovereignty** than as **United States**. It would even be fatal for us if we had – too expensive to be maintained and impossible to be supported. (*Pennsylvania Packet*, 19 April 1783, essay)

(39) There are four things which I humbly conceive are essential to the well-being, I may even venture to say, to the existence of the **United States** as an **Independent Power** […] These are the pillars on which the glorious Fabric of our **Independence** and **National** Character must be supported. (*Connecticut Courant*, 9 September 1783, letter)

The emphasis on the *united* character of the states was of paramount importance at a time when the ex-colonies were still marked off from one another and reluctant to overcome their local differences. In this sense, the rhetorical focus on the union was meant to disguise and compensate for the heterogeneity of the 13 States. It is worth pointing out that in almost half of its occurrences (64 out of 141) the word *States* is either unpremodified or preceded by adjectives and determiners such as *several, different*, *particular*, *individual*, *each, other* which attest the fragmentation of the new body politic, as example (40) indicates:

(40) More effectually to demonstrate our good intentions, we [the President and some members of the Congress] think proper to declare

> […] that we are disposed to […] perpetuate our union, by a reciprocal deputation of an agent or agents from **the different states**, who shall have the privilege of a seat and voice in the parliament of Great Britain; or, if sent from Britain, to have in that case a seat and voice in the assemblies of the **different states** to which they may be deputed respectively, in order to attend to the several interests of those by whom they are deputed. (*Pennsylvania Packet*, 4 July 1778, letter)

Patriotic essays warn against the individuality of the states as damaging to the international power and authority of the newly born nation, as we can see in example (41):

(41) **Individuals or individual states** may call themselves what they please; but the world, and especially the world of enemies, is not to be held in awe by the whistling of a name. Sovereignty must have power to protect all the parts that compose and constitute it: and as UNITED STATES we are equal to the importance of the title, but otherwise we are not. (*Pennsylvania Packet*, 19 April, 1783, essay)

America (95) is the second most frequent word in period 3. It defines the nation geographically rather than politically and mostly occurs in the lexico-syntactic pattern [NP] + *of* + *America*. There are 16 occurrences of *United States of America* followed by *citizens/people of America* (8). The last pattern is particularly significant when compared to the pattern *loyalists in America/ this country* (6). Whereas Patriots present themselves as citizens/people belonging to America as a new body politic, as shown in example (42), Loyalists construct their identity as resident in America but not as part of the emerging national community, as indicated in example (43).

(42) **The Citizens of America**, placed in the most enviable condition as the sole Lords and Proprietors of a vast Tract of Continent comprehending all the various soils and climates of the World, and abounding with all the necessaries and conveniences of life, are now by the late satisfactory pacification acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and Independence. (*Connecticut Courant*, 9 September 1783, letter)

(43) On the contrary, the services of the loyalists have in all cases been ready and voluntary and in many unsolicited and in some unnoticed if not rejected. If it should be said, if such is the number and disposition of the **loyalists in America**, how comes it to pass that they have not been

of more importance to his Majesty's service? (*Salem Gazette*, 25 July 1782, official document)

The descriptor *country* (83) comes third in order of frequency. It is mostly found in patriotic letters which aim at eliciting a nationalistic spirit among the readers. It consistently occurs in the pattern [NP] + *of* + [possessive adjective] + *country* (34) with a semantic preference for the words *laws* (4) and *happiness* (4), whereas m*other-country* which was predominant in period 1 and 2 has completely disappeared from the narratives, as the following examples reveal:

(44) We have of late been so engaged to purchase British goods that we have dared to violate **the laws of our country** and have robbed the State of more than one half of its circulating medium. (*Massachusetts Spy*, 27 January 1782, letter)

(45) The real patriot feels pleasure arising from **the happiness of his country** and the welfare of others; the generous wish brings delight and the benevolent heart has a reward for all its particular desires. (*Norwich Packet* [from the *Boston Gazette*], 21 September 1780, letter)

The next descriptors *Britain* and *people* show a collocational behaviour similar to the one found in period 2, with *Britain* mostly occurring in the pattern *king/crown of Great Britain* (13) and *people* in the cluster *people of the (United) States/America* (11). It is worth pointing out that in patriotic letters to the printer/readers both the expression *our/his country* and *the people of (United) States/America* entail a paradigm of exclusion by which Loyalists are denied American *citizenship.* Only through this process of exclusion – camouflaged under the deliberately promiscuous choice of the indefinite term *the people* – did Patriots manage to create the myth of an American nation founded upon consent, or in Bradburn's words, *a myth of unanimity* (Bradburn 2009: 57-58).

The word *nation* (34) is a new entry in the list and stands out for its ground-breaking force within the pre-existing ideological framework of the Empire. In loyalist newspapers (especially in petitions to the king), the word is still used to refer to Great Britain as the only recognized nation to which the Americans feel they belong, as we can see in example (46), whereas in patriotic letters the word exhibits a conscious understanding of the citizens'

service to the Nation as an essential precondition for the establishment of their American identity and happiness, as shown in example (47).

(46) Surely, whole brigades throwing away their arms and returning home and all that sort of conduct must carry with it the most presumptive evidence not only of their dissatisfaction to the measures of Congress, but of **their loyalty and attachment to his Majesty, and the British nation and government**. (*Salem Gazette*, 25 July 1782, official document)

(47) At this auspicious period, **the United States came into existence as a Nation**, and if their Citizens should not be completely free and happy, the fault will be entirely their own. This is the moment when the eyes of the whole World are turned upon them. This is the moment to establish or ruin their national Character forever. (*Connecticut Courant*, 9 September 1783, letter)

The last word in the list is *Tories* (29) which – along with *loyalists* (19) – attests the English residues of the post-British national identity. The derogatory word used by Patriots to refer to those Americans who still recognize themselves as British features a strong negative semantic prosody which aims at dismantling/demolishing the legitimacy of their Britishness. Its usage in revolutionary newspapers reveals to what extent the post-British phase continues to be marked by an identity crisis which makes it hard for the nation to acquire a full consciousness of its singularity and independence, as indicated in examples (48) and (49).

(48) Awake Americans **to a sense of your danger**. No time is to be lost. Instantly **banish every Tory** from among you. Let these walls, let America be sacred alone to freemen. Drive far from you **every baneful wretch** who wishes to see you fettered with the chains of tyranny. (*Pennsylvania Packet*, 5 August 1779, letter)

(49) It is said that many of the **most zealous tories in New York** have packed up their effects in order to be ready at the shortest notice to see **the justly incensed vengeance** of those who have forsaken their habitations and have espoused and supported the cause of freedom, **in defiant of the most strenuous efforts of the tyrant**. (*The Freeman's Journal*, 29 January 1783, news report)

The collocational patterns of Period 3 exhibit a predominance of constructive strategies – often combined with dismantling ones – used by Patriots to promote the development of a conscious American identity. After the Declaration of Independence, perpetuation strategies lose their ground and their usage is confined to petitions to the king or complaining opinion articles in loyalist newspapers.

5. Conclusion

The discursive construction of an American national identity had to come to terms with the *habitus* of people who shared the same cultural background and collective memory of the native subjects of Great Britain. This determined an identity crisis which characterised the period before and after the Declaration of Independence (1764-1783). Even during the great disruption of the decade 1765-1775 the colonial élite continued to be confident they had more in common with a transatlantic community of polite, commercial, imperial British middle class and gentry than they had with their fellow colonials lower in the social order (Greene 2001; Murrin 2018). In period 1 (1764-1770) this mental structure is confirmed by a predominance of assimilation strategies which are meant to reinforce Americans' claim to Britishness through nomination patterns such as *Majesty's/British subjects in these colonies*, *our mother-country*, *British dominions in America*, *British America* and *sons of Britannia*.

In period 2 (1771-1776) – when the dispute with Britain escalated into open conflict – the Britishness of the colonists continued to be expressed in narratives where perpetuation and justification strategies highlighted continuity with the past, in order to defend an endangered national identity from the outrageous abuses of the mother-land. The lexicon of continuity, traceable in expressions such as *restoring and preserving union and harmony between Britain and America*, merges with patterns such as *liberties/rights of the people/America*, in order to justify the colonists' military action in response to being deprived of those rights to which they are entitled according to the Constitution. It is in period 2 that the Anglicization which sets the tone of more conservative narratives overlaps with counter-discourses of Americanization which – although already present in period 1 – gain momentum in press debate after the Boston Massacre of 1770. In patriotic narratives, assimilation and dissimilation strategies are deployed to construct a horizontal, inter-colonial sameness and communality against the tyranny of Britain, represented as the opposing *other*. In this sense, it may be argued that while Britishness originates from a common culture,

American nationalism derives from a common interest which functions as a pre-condition for the full recognition of a common *habitus*.

Period 3 (1777-1783) – covering the last phase of the American Revolution – sees the predominance of revolutionary narratives which deploy constructive strategies to shape a new national identity outside the Empire. Along with assimilation strategies which are instrumental in constructing in-group membership among ex-colonies still bound to local interests, a new lexicon emerges with descriptors such as *United States, nation* and *citizens of America*. Various shifts in the naming system take place as part of dismantling strategies which are meant to demolish the pre-existing British identity, in order to frame a proto-American national character. The fact that cultural resistance to Americanness continued to be strong among the people is documented by descriptors such as *Tories* and *loyalists* which represented the residues of a powerful British cultural heritage. By and large, the corpus-assisted discourse analysis confirms Zuckerman's claim (1989) that although the colonists were unprepared to see themselves as a people with a cultural identity of their own, their colonial experience as British Americans was so particular that the emergence of an independent (proto) national identity was almost inevitable.

The present corpus-assisted discourse study places the origins of American nationalism in the period of the American Revolution and since "nation-formation is a process and not an occurrence or event" (Connor 1990: 99; Trautsch 2016: 304), future research could focus on the years of the early republic to see how American nationalism developed and spread among the citizenry through the power of the press.

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A denial of identity. The Armenian genocide in the letters to the editor of *The Times* 1914-1926

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ABSTRACT

Genocide is the most violent denial of human identity, and it aims systematically to transform the societal organization of both victims and perpetrators. Considered the first among the genocides of the 20th century, the massacre of around 1.5 million Armenians has been denied official recognition by the Turkish government to date. Such denial has resisted not only international political pressure, but also evidence provided by news articles, editorials, and by letters to the editor documenting or referring to the massacre. Many letters to the editor of *The Times* mention the massacres that were later to be referred to as the Armenian genocide; the corpus analysed in this study includes those published closer to the events, between 1914 to 1926. Letters to the editor of a newspaper are selected for publication when their content fosters debate among the readers on topics which are particularly relevant for the newspaper's agenda, and they have rarely been the target of linguistic analysis. This study examines the linguistic patterns used to represent the Armenian genocide at the time of the events, and how these patterns influence the perception of the Armenian identity via its representation through the letters to the editor. Concordance lines, collocations, clusters and extended co-textual references of keywords related to the Armenian national identity will be analysed using a corpus-assisted approach.

Keywords: letters to the editor, national identity, Armenian genocide, corpus linguistics, concordance/clusters, denial, social transformation.

1. Introduction

Letters to the editor have been for decades the privileged space for selected readers to participate in the news discourse by engaging at a textual, referential, and interpersonal level, and thus being allowed to convey

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criticism, judgement, and appeal for action (Pounds 2006). Published letters in newspapers keep alive a topic that is considered relevant to the reading public, as was the case of the Armenian genocide during World War I.

The massacre of the Armenians between 1915 and 1923 under Ottoman rule has always been denied the status of genocide by the Turkish government (Mamali et al. 2019; Üngör 2012). Despite considerable press coverage, the Turkish government has claimed that the genocide was a series of massacres that are part of ordinary wartime violence that targets civilians. These massacres, and their unprecedented systematic violence, were mentioned in many letters to the editor of *The Times* (Peltekian 2013). Accounts by survivors and eyewitnesses, as well as the studies conducted so far, have proved that those massacres were part of a concerted process aimed at a permanent transformation of Ottoman society that implied the dismantling of the national and human identity of the Christian minorities through systematic, ferocious acts of violence (Lemkin 1944; Kingsley 2019). Therefore, the Armenian identity seems to have undergone two different processes of denial: first, through the genocide, which is indeed the most violent, organised, and systematic denial of a national identity; and second, through the decade-long denial of the genocide by its perpetrators.

Presupposing these processes of denial of the Armenian national identity, this paper attempts to contribute from a linguistic point of view to the studies on identity intended as "public phenomenon, a performance or construction that is interpreted by other people" (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 4) and to those studies examining the discursive strategies adopted to dismantle national identities (De Cillia et al. 1999). To study how the Armenians' public identity was constructed in the news discourse at that crucial point in their national history, the linguistic representation (Partington 2015) of the Armenian identity in letters to the editor is analysed. A corpus of letters to the editor of *The Times* published between 1914 and 1926 collects the readers' stance on the massacre and provides data in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the most recurrent linguistic characteristics of the representation of the Armenian identity in the letters to the editor of *The Times*?
2) Are there any linguistic characteristics that might have contributed to the "social amnesia" of the Armenian genocide (Elayyadi 2017; Alayrian 2018)?
3) If so, how are these linguistic features used in the mediated news discourse of letters to the editor?

Despite their relevance for news discourse (Cavanagh – Steel 2019; Elspass 2012), corpora of letters to the editor have rarely been the object of a linguistic analysis (some exceptions are Chovanec 2012; Romova – Hetet 2012; Pounds 2005, 2006). Using a corpus-assisted quantitative and qualitative approach (Partington 2004, 2010; Partington et al. 2013), this analysis focuses on collocational patterns, concordances, and clusters (Hunston 2002) of the keywords *Armenia*, *Armenian*, and *Armenians* to answer the research questions.

2. The Armenian genocide and the denial of identity

The phrase "Armenian Genocide" specifically refers to the massacres of the Armenian living within the borders of the former Ottoman Empire. The genocide was initiated by the Turkish government on 24th April 1915, when several hundreds of notable Armenians were arrested in Constantinople and then murdered after being deported to Anatolia (Astourian 1990; Aybak 2016; Elayyadi 2017; Alayrian 2018). The massacre of the Armenian minority continued throughout the Ottoman Empire for months, until the autumn of 1916 in its most violent outbreak, and well into 1918, with news of murders and brutality reaching the international community even until 1923 (Dadrian 2003; Üngör 2012).

In 1915, Armenia was not an independent national entity, but rather a mental construct (De Cillia 1999) with a strong, centuries-old national identity. According to De Cillia (1999) and Wodak et al. (2009), this is a case where the production, reproduction, transformation, and destruction of related national identities take place through language and other semiotic systems, such as shared beliefs, emotional attitude, and behavioural dispositions, which is what identified the Armenian Christian minority as differing from the Turkish Muslim majority. When the identity of a certain group of people identifying in different cultural and/or ethnic traits, e.g., the Armenians, becomes intolerable to another group, e.g., the Turks, genocidal violence occurs to eradicate the national identity which is no longer tolerated (Lemkin 1944).

Crucial to the creation of a nation and of the discursive construction of its national identity are also time and space references. Time references include continuity with tradition and a shared origin in time, while spatial references are the visible territorial and local elements shared within the same national identity (Wodak 2009). Christian minorities and other

minorities were considered a threat to the desired social transformation of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire into a pan-Turkish state and had to be "relocated" outside of its borders (Elayyadi 2017). Therefore, together with religion and culture, the territorial dimension of the Armenian nation seems to have been another major cause of the Armenian genocide.

The massacres that started in 1915 were not the first attempt to "relocate" minorities from within the Ottoman borders. To discourage Armenians from claiming their independence and form their nation-state, 300,000 Armenians had already been massacred between 1894 and 1896 by Sultan Abdul-Hamid II. This, however, strengthened the Armenian nationalist sentiment, which led the Young Turks to consider the outbreak of the First World War as the chance to implement their plan and "Turkify" the Empire by eradicating non-Muslim minorities (Alayarian 2018). To understand how successful such eradication was, suffice it to say that while Armenians were considered a Christian nation-state under the Ottoman Empire prior to the genocide, they are now considered an ethnic group (Alayarian 2018).

3. Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor have been treated as a specific journalistic genre since the Victorian age (Hobbs 2019), and considered a privileged tool of civic engagement, intended as "an appraisal of issues which are preselected as of 'public' significance" (Cavanagh – Steel 2019, Brownlees et al. 2010).

Letters published in newspapers serve not only as reminders of topics already published in the news; according to Wahl-Jorgensen (2019), they also publicly express complaints that demand a reply and, ultimately, they strive to bring about social transformations. Wahl-Jorgensen (2019) also claims that letters to the editor are perceived as a powerful, influential tool because they "are understood, by readers and news organisations alike, as a privileged site for forms of public deliberation that might influence broader social, cultural and political developments" (Wahl-Jorgensen 2019: ix).

The letters included in the corpus are written by influential personalities of the time to inform the international audience of *The Times*, as reported by Peltekian (2013: xxv): "[…] British government officials, diplomats, members of parliament and citizens, some of whom had lived in Turkey; there are also letters written by Armenian notables and delegates (such as Nubar Pasha) or those living in England; there are some letters written by Armenian notables

and citizens of other nationalities who deemed it important to convey events and facts as they saw it". British and Armenians alike all wrote to *The Times* to sensitize public awareness of the events and to call for possible and immediate political and social resolutions of the situation. *The Times* was chosen in view of its status as a respectable and influential broadsheet (Conboy 2011) and also in response to the first-hand accounts of war correspondents (Knightley 2004). In this light, keeping the Armenian question relevant in the mediated discourse of letters to the editor (Hobbs 2019; Landert – Jucker 2011) for years during and after the massacres of 1915 (Mayersen 2016; Peltekian 2013) signals an editorial decision that stood against the denial of the extent of the massacres made by the Turkish government.

4. Investigating *The Times* online archive and creating the corpus

The Times provides access to a comprehensive and extensive online archive featuring OCR-scanned and PDF copies of all its articles from 1st January 1785 to 31st December 1985, which can be analysed through a corpus-assisted approach (Partington 2004, 2010, 2015). As shown, for example, in Sinclair (1994, 2004), Tognini-Bonelli (2001), Baker et al. (2008), Partington (2010), and Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti (2016), Corpus Linguistics software-aided analysis performed on the news is particularly relevant when looking for the objective features of a specific discourse. This work follows the so-called "corpus-assisted" approach (Partington 2004, 2010) to examine recurrent collocations, concordances, and clusters of nodes related to the Armenian national identity *Armenia*, *Armenian*, *Armenians*. This methodological approach is particularly useful in quantitatively identifying recurrent linguistic patterns, on which to perform a qualitative discourse analysis to access non-obvious meaning "constructed and reinforced by the accumulation of linguistic patterns" (Partington – Marchi 2015: 220).

Letters to the editor of *The Times* were selected from *The Times and The Sunday Times Online Archive* using the search words *Armenia* and *Armenian*. The search results also included letters mentioning the noun *Armenians*. In the entire time span covered by the online archive (1785-1985), the term *Armenia* turned out to have 6,361 occurrences, while the term *Armenian* occurred 10,641 times. The time span under examination was set between 1st January 1914, more than one year before 24th April 1915, and 31st December 1926, which corresponds to three years after the more extended alleged duration of the Armenian genocide (Rafter 2016). This time span was selected

to study the representation of the Armenian question before, during, and after the genocide.

The corpus collects all the letters mentioning the Armenian question in the chosen time span; it will be referred to as LEAQ (Letters to the Editor on the Armenian Question) and it features around 120,000 tokens, i.e., "sequences of letters separated by spaces of punctuation" (Hunston 2002: 17). Using WordSmith Tools v.8.0 (Scott 2020), a wordlist was generated and compared with the written section of the BNC XML Edition corpus (2007), a 100-million-word collection of samples of written and spoken language that also includes extracts from regional and national newspapers, to obtain a keyword list of the LEAQ corpus. The keywords extracted from LEAQ are mostly nouns and adjectives of nationality as well as place names, all related to the nationalities involved in the Armenian question between 1914-1926. Table 1 shows the first eight relatively most frequent keywords by their ranking position on a 500 keyness scale:

Table 1. Keywords of the LEAQ corpus

Keyword	Freq.	%	Texts	RC. Freq.	P
TURKISH	398	0,34	110	1.408	0,0000000000
TURKS	271	0,23	100	463	0,0000000000
ARMENIANS	227	0,19	102	95	0,0000000000
ARMENIAN	247	0,21	108	258	0,0000000000
TURKEY	266	0,23	90	2.014	0,0000000000
CONSTANTINOPLE	166	0,14	62	249	0,0000000000
ARMENIA	141	0,12	75	322	0,0000000000
GREEKS	145	0,12	53	694	0,0000000000

The first column shows the keywords; the second shows their frequency in the source texts of LEAQ; the third, the percentage of the frequency; the fourth indicates the number of texts in which each keyword occurred in LEAQ; the fifth, its frequency in the reference corpus (the written section of the BNC XML Edition corpus) and in the last column the *p* value referring to the keyness value of the items under consideration. The search words referring to the Armenian national identity are all included in the most frequent keywords, which confirmed their relevance for the analysis and, ultimately, their choice as nodes, i.e., centre words of larger recurrent co-texts to be analysed. The keyword list suggests further analysis of other frequent keywords (*Turkish*, *Turks*, *Turkey*, *Constantinople*) to examine how

the Turkish national identity is represented in the corpus, which however exceeds the scope of the current analysis.

Some letters to the editor were not included in the corpus, because the search word *Armenian* pointed to the sinking of the *Armenian*, the vessel sunk on 28th June 1915 by a German submarine U-24, and these occurrences would not have been relevant to the lexical scope of this research. After having eliminated repeated search results, the corpus eventually amounted to 186 letters to the editor of *The Times*.

5. Data analysis

The analysis of the letters was performed using WordSmith Tools 8.0 (Scott 2020) and focused on the concordances of the keywords *Armenia*, *Armenian*, and *Armenians* and on their recurring clusters and collocations. This analysis attempts to address the research questions stated above, and to isolate the linguistic features of the public representation of the Armenian identity.

5.1 Word frequency

Searching the corpus wordlist for the adjectives and nouns referring to the Armenian national identity, a first sign of the cognitive dissonance (Mamali et al. 2019) that has affected the treatment of the Armenian genocide is detectable. By cognitive dissonance applied to the Armenian genocide, Mamali et al. (2019) refer to the characteristics of the two conflicting narratives on the genocide made by the victims on the one side, and by the perpetrators on the other. As the existing narratives on the Armenian genocide show, the narrative made by the victims seeks for public recognition of the events as genocide, while the narrative constructed by the perpetrators denies this. Therefore, a conflicting narrative of recognition vs. denial is evident. The polarity between the two sides, i.e., acknowledgment/recognition vs. denial, belonging to two opposing national identities, inevitably leaves traces in the linguistic expression of textual evidence that reports on it.

In particular, the wordlist shows *Turkish* (34th) as the first lexical item appearing on the list after the grammatical words, followed by *British* (45th), *government* (47th), *war* (48th), *Turks* (50th), and *Turkey* (51st). *Armenian* and *Armenia* rank 58th and 97th, with *Armenia* mentioned 141 times in 75 letters, and *Armenian* mentioned 247 times in 108 letters. Also, *Armenians* ranks 61st, with 227 mentions in 102 letters. The side in denial, i.e., Turks, is cited twice

as often as the side which seeks public recognition, i.e., Armenians (Mamali et al. 2019). This prefigures linguistic choices that might have affected the narration on the side of the victims (De Cillia et al. 1999). The analysis of concordance lines and most recurrent collocations and clusters of *Armenia*, *Armenian* and *Armenians* will examine the linguistic strategies in use within the conflicting narrative of the Armenian genocide, and attempt to establish whether they might somehow have reflected the concerted denial of the Turkish official statements.

5.2 Collocations and patterns of meaning

5.2.1 Armenia

The noun *Armenia* most frequently collocates with the coordinating conjunction *and*, repeatedly introducing coordinate collocates of locations (*Arabia*, *Mesopotamia*, *Syria*, *Palestine*) connected with the genocide. Since coordinating conjunctions connect constituents either belonging to the same class or sharing an equal status (Biber et al. 1999), coordination establishes a relationship of equality where each constituent is assigned the same semantic weight inside the extended co-text within which it is located. Being frequently mentioned together with other nouns related to national entities, Armenia is somehow deprived of an individual narrative, with the effect of diluting its prominence as geographical context of reference of the discursive creation of the Armenian national identity (De Cillia et al. 1999), weakening the side of the victim in the conflicting narrative of the events. Examples (1) and (2) provide evidence of this:

(1) The trouble in *Armenia and Kurdistan* is that with the possible exception of the vilayet of Van the Christians are everywhere in a minority as compared with the Moslems.

(2) The Save the Children Fund has, as a matter of fact, sent no relief to Berlin since September because, deplorable though the condition of the children still is in many German towns, the need for help is yet more desperate in *Poland and Armenia*, *Hungary and Vienna*.

In example (1) *Armenia* collocates on the right with the place name *Kurdistan* through the coordinating conjunction *and* while discussing what endangers the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire. Example (2) shows how Armenia is one item in a list of places where help to children is needed.

The coordinating conjunction establishes an equal significance of the two coordinated place names; therefore, these and other coordinated collocations with national geographical entities suggest a general equivalence, with all entities sharing similar events and having suffered from similar violence, thus combining areas which instead had different stories during World War I. The frequency of the collocation *Armenia* + *and* + geographical entity suggests that pairing it with another national entity was quite common in the letters to the editor on the Armenian question and somehow denied Armenia the centre of the narration. The reasons behind this choice remain unknown; however, the frequency of this strategy is suggestive of an objective linguistic trait of the letters in the LEAQ corpus.

Armenia also collocates frequently with the grammatical words *of* and *in* which occur in two recurring clusters that contain the two prepositional phrases *of Armenia and* and *in Armenia and*, whereby the prepositions left-collocate the node *Armenia*, which in turn right-collocates with the coordinating conjunction *and*. Both clusters reiterate the collocation with the coordinating conjunction, confirming the first objective trait explained above and adding more extensive examples of the seeming impossibility for Armenia to be at the centre of an individual narration. Following Partington's corpus-assisted approach (Partington 2004, 2010), in order to look for non-obvious meanings and to "extend the patterns of meaning" as suggested in Samson (2020: 283), the co-text of both clusters was investigated using the results of their concordances.

Concordance lines of the cluster *of Armenia and* are shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Concordance with search cluster *of Armenia and*

N	Concordance
1	more horrible in the war than the treatment *of Armenia and* Syria, and he is right.
2	Allied troops to protect the Christian population *of Armenia and* Cilicia in the present
3	line of defence is formed by the forces *of Armenia and* Pontus. These two countries
4	not recognize that the age-long devastation *of Armenia and* massacre of her people

The most frequent collocates of the cluster *of Armenia and* are, on the left, common nouns (*treatment*, *population*, *forces* and *devastation*), and, on the

right, place names (*Syria*, *Cilicia*, *Pontus*) and a common noun (*massacre*). The lexical items *treatment*, *devastation* and *massacre* all belong to a semantic field of genocidal violence and connect Armenia with the actions that concurred to dismantle its national identity. The cluster is paired with other geographical entities (*Syria* and *Cilicia*) through the coordinating conjunction *and*, which reiterates the cognitive dissonance on the Armenian genocide (Mamali et al. 2019).

The sentence in example (3) shows further co-textual evidence:

(3) The author of the article in The Times complains that there has been *nothing more horrible* in the war than *the treatment of Armenia and Syria*, and he is right.

The cluster *of Armenia and* collocates on the left with *the treatment*, which is an anaphoric reference of the negative evaluative phrase *nothing more horrible* that shows the writer's position (Hunston – Thompson 2000) using emotive parameters (Bednarek – Caple 2019). This left side of the cluster's co-text shows a narrative in favour of the victims in its use of negative evaluative language to describe the violence. Its right side, however, coordinates *Armenia* with *Syria*, presenting, as explained before, the frequent objective linguistic trait that weakens the narrative of the victims. Syria was actually the final destination for the Armenians who survived death marches, where they would be left to die in the desert. What seems to emerge is an uneven distribution of connotational meaning, whereby on the one side the narrative is openly supporting the victims, while on the other some language choices that weaken the previous support are made. This signals an underlying cognitive dissonance between contrasting attitudes, the frequency of which will emerge in the following analysis.

The same uneven distribution of connotational meaning occurs when attempting to examine the concordance of *in Armenia and*, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Concordance with search cluster *in Armenia and*

N	Concordance
1	whether the atrocities of which we hear *in Armenia and* elsewhere are all to be placed to
2	of the Turk from Constantinople. The trouble *in Armenia and* Kurdistan is that with the

3	cruelties practised against their fellow-Moslems *in Armenia and* Western Asia Minor, and
4	demanded an investigation of the occurrences *in Armenia and* Asia Minor by an impartial

Here *in Armenia and* collocates, again, with place names (*Kurdistan*, *Western Asia Minor*, *Asia Minor*). As Samson (2020: 288) points out, "Place-names are an important part of any geographical and cultural environment, since they identify geographical entities of different kinds and represent irreplaceable cultural values of vital significance to people's sense of well-being and feeling at home". As example (4) shows, *Armenia* collocates not only with other place names through the coordinating conjunction *and*, but with a more generic *elsewhere* that erases the cultural and national connotations of the geographical area:

(4) And the question arises whether the *atrocities of which we hear in Armenia and elsewhere* are *all to be placed* to the credit of these Mahomedans […].

A recurrent structure of the sentences where *Armenia* is mentioned seems to emerge whereby, on the left of the keyword, nouns related to genocidal violence occur (*atrocities*), the evaluative impact of which is lessened by the right-collocates of the keyword (*elsewhere*). This structure reflects the cognitive dissonance on the Armenian genocide at sentence level: on the left, affirmation (naming the violence); on the right, in the more semantically charged position, denial conveyed through the use of generic place names, or through coordinating place names, as if to claim that Armenia was not the only place to suffer.

5.2.2 Armenian

The most frequent collocate of *Armenian* is, once again, the coordinating conjunction *and*, in line with the results for *Armenia*. The most frequent lexical right-collocates of *Armenian* are respectively *people*, *refugees*, *republic*, *state*, *massacres*, *nation* and *question*. Therefore, *Armenian* collocates with nouns referring to genocidal violence (*refugees*, *massacres*) and to politics (*people*, *republic*, *question*, *nation*). This suggests that the attributive adjective *Armenian* seems to be used with co-textual evidence that makes more explicit reference to the narrative of the genocide, because the term directly identifies the national identity of the victims and refers to its treatment, as

shown in example (5) below. In example (5), extended co-textual reference is provided following Partington (2004, 2013) wherein evaluative language is also italicised to show how the narrative of the victims is constructed through the linguistic choices signalling the stance of the author of the letter:

(5) The experience of the last forty-five years has demonstrated that the *interference* of the Powers on behalf of the *Armenian people* has produced *an unbroken series of misfortunes*, making *ultimately* the position of *this people almost impossible*. No organized Government *would dare to renew* in its national affairs an experiment *which has signally failed time and again*. Then why should *such a cynical course* be adopted in regard to the *Armenian people*? Nevertheless, the Allied delegates have again been *urging upon* the Turks the *necessity* of allowing the return of the *refugees* to their homes in Turkey.

The collocation *Armenia* + *people* is repeated twice, and *people* is also repeated in an anaphoric reference of the first occurrence of the collocation. Italicised evaluative language shows the negative stance on the Allied intervention to settle the Armenian question, and the author of the unsigned letter, "An Armenian", ultimately suggests that Armenians and Turks should be better left alone in finding a solution to the conflict, in view of the negative consequences of the interventions so far.

Examples (6) and (7) below show further co-textual evidence of the collocation *Armenian people*:

(6) The *rights* and the *effective protection* of the *minorities* in Eastern and Western Thrace and of the *Armenian people* are *by no means secured* by the agreement into which we have already entered with the Turkish Nationalists.

(7) Sir,-The *danger* to the *remnant* of the *Armenian nation* which your Correspondent at Constantinople points out in his message in your issue of to-day is a *real*, an *urgent*, and a *terrible danger*. It *threatens* the *destruction* of the little republic at Erivan, which the Allied Powers themselves recently called into being by their official recognition of it; and it probably means the *extermination by the sword and by famine* of *so much of* the *Armenian people* as has survived from the *massacres* of 1915.

Both examples (6) and (7) use negative evaluative language to complain about the risks to which the Armenians are exposed by the political situation

and decisions undertaken by the Allied forces. This reinforces the hypothesis that the political sides of the Armenian question and the humanitarian implications of the genocide seem to be prevalent in the collocates with the attributive adjective of nationality *Armenian* in the collocation *Armenian* + noun. However, when examining recurrent clusters, the pattern affirmation *vs.* denial identified for *Armenia* seems to occur again, in particular when analysing the concordance lines of one of the most recurrent clusters, *Greek and Armenian*, shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Concordance cluster with search cluster term *Greek and Armenian*

N	Concordance
1	at that port in 1915, and against whom *Greek and Armenian* witnesses testified in Court
2	murder, rape, and butchery at the expense of the *Greek and Armenian* elements in Mersivan.
3	While I talked at length with the *Greek and Armenian* Patriarchs in Constantinople, I
4	at the Greek Consulate; at the homes of the *Greek and Armenian* Patriarchs;

Analysing the results in Table 4 above, the cluster *Greek and Armenian* collocates, on the right, with *witnesses*, *elements* and *Patriarchs*, and, among the lexical items on the left are *murder, rape and butchery*. Therefore, while some left-collocates introduce negatively connoted language referring to the genocide, right-collocates are nouns reflecting no evaluative connotational meaning. Here as well as in concordance lines of *Armenian* + *and*, the Armenian identity is paired with other national identities of the area where the genocide occurred, thus depriving Armenians again of their individual narrative as victims.

Placing neutral, factual lexical choices to the right, in the most semantically significant part of the sentence (Biber et al. 1999), reveals, at sentence level, the cognitive dissonance on the Armenian genocide. On the left, affirmation (naming the violence); on the right, in the more semantically charged position, denial (using generic place names, or coordinating place names to make it seem that Armenia was not the only place to suffer). This also discloses the choice of levelling the narrative of the genocide by coupling the victims with other national identities with the recurrent collocation national identity noun/adjective + *and*, with the coordinating conjunction either as left- or right-collocate.

Example (8) expands on co-textual references:

(8) […] and in the telegram of October 26 there is an account of *murder, rape, and butchery* at the expense of the *Greek and Armenian elements* in Mersivan.

On the left, genocidal violence (*murder, rape, and butchery*), and, on the right, a more generic abstract noun (*elements*). It could possibly have been news jargon, but the sterile connotation of labelling massacred people as *elements* inevitably contributes to denying the victims the status of human beings, thus contributing, again, to the cognitive dissonance on the Armenian genocide.

5.2.3 Armenians

The last search involves the term *Armenians*, which is another term crucial to the construction of the discourse of the national identity (De Cillia et al. 1999), or to its destruction, depending on the surrounding contexts of use. The most frequent collocate is, again, the coordinating conjunction *and* (34 times occurring on the right), and the second most frequent collocate, both on the left (18 times) and on the right (12 times) is *Greeks*.

The concordance cluster list shows that the cluster *Greeks and Armenians* occurs 12 times and that the cluster *Armenians and Greeks* occurs 10 times. These coordinated nominalised adjectives of nationality seem to confirm the lexical strategy of pairing Armenian nation-related terms with other nation-related terms to deprive Armenians of their individual narration. However, the lexical elements associated with each pair are different, as Table 5 and Table 6 below show.

Table 5. Concordance cluster with search cluster term *Greeks and Armenians*

N	Concordance
1	accounts of the Turkish cruelties perpetrated on *Greeks and Armenians* during the war.
2	organization of the massacring of both *Greeks and Armenians* by the Turkish Government
3	have suffered more terrible oppression than the *Greeks and Armenians* have from Turkey.
4	reputable eye- witnesses of the killing of *Greeks and Armenians* in Smyrna before the fire

The cluster *Greeks and Armenians* co-occurs with collocates belonging to the semantic field of genocidal violence on the left (*cruelties*, *massacring*, *oppression*, *killing*), with two of them further pre-modified to state the responsibility (*Turkish cruelty*) and to intensify their evaluative connotation (*terrible oppression*). On the right, one time-related prepositional phrase (*during the war*); one denotative place-related prepositional phrase (*in Smyrna*); one connotative place-related prepositional phrase (*from Turkey*); a noun phrase where the attributive adjective acts as a metonym of the real agent behind genocidal violence (*the Turkish Government*). The repetition of words connected to Turkey seem to counterbalance the structure affirmation *vs.* denial identified before. There seems to be no room for denial, here, on the right side of the collocations, at least in lines 2 and 3 of the cluster concordance lines. Examples (9) and (10) expand on these two concordance lines and offer more co-textual evidence to investigate this linguistic feature:

(9) The American Ambassador at Constantinople in 1915-16, Mr. Henry Morgenthau, was a first-hand witness as to the *deliberate organization of the massacring* of both *Greeks and Armenians* by the Turkish Government at Constantinople.

(10) If there is a thing on which both branches, the British and the American, of the Anglo-Saxon race pride themselves it is their *championship of the weak and oppressed* and their *respect for their plighted word*. No races in the world have suffered *more terrible oppression* than the *Greeks and Armenians* have from Turkey.

Both examples evidence references to British and American national identities before mentioning the victims of the genocide with the cluster *Greeks and Armenians*. Example (9) explicitly mentions the American Ambassador and advocates for his first-hand account of the genocide, while in example (10) the author takes pride in claiming how *the Anglo-Saxon race* invariably comes to the rescue of victims worldwide. Mentioning the Turks at the right end of the sentence creates an opposition, a comparison with rescuers of the victims and perpetrators of the violence that serves to clarify the role of each side, and to explicitly blame the responsibility of the violence on the opposing side. The victims are placed on these two sides, and this distribution seems to reflect the actual situation of the political conflict between the Allied forces and the defeated Ottoman Empire as viewed from the British perspective of *The Times*.

Pairing the victims with a coordinating conjunction, however, weakens their narrative as victims for the implications already mentioned in previous occurrences of the collocation national identity noun / adjective + *and*, thus further underlining the absence of an individual narrative of the genocide in the LEAQ corpus.

Concordance lines in Table 6 show instead the recurrent cluster *Armenians and Greeks*:

Table 6. Concordance cluster with search cluster term *Armenians and Greeks*

N	Concordance
1	village on the chance of finding food. *Armenians and Greeks* are still being attacked
2	least of the evils which the ill-fated *Armenians and Greeks* of Asia Minor have suffered
3	in the ruthless persecutions of *Armenians and Greeks* and other subject rates of the
4	exaggeration of the figures of *Armenians and Greeks* alleged to have been massacred

The cluster *Armenians and Greeks* co-occurs with lexical items similar to those of the cluster *Greeks and Armenians* in terms of genocidal violence (*are still being attacked*, *evils*, *have suffered*, *ruthless persecutions*, *massacred*). Here, the structure affirmation *vs.* denial is still in place, with a displacement, a removal of the Turks from active subjects to agents of passive or state verb forms (*are still being attacked*, *have suffered*, *have been massacred*). Again, this seems to lessen the connotation of the nouns related to genocidal violence occurring on the left (*evils*, *persecutions*). Also, the attributive adjective *ill-fated* has a metaphorical connotation which shifts the focus from real, concrete, and planned human actions massacring the Armenians (and the Greeks) to a more divine-like intervention.

The adjective *ill-fated* makes implicit reference to the history of the Armenians and to their oppression under the Ottoman Empire, and, at the same time, seems to ascribe their suffering to fate, as if it is inscribed in the destiny of the Armenians to suffer. On a much more remote plan of interpretation, it blames the violence not on human actions but on an outer force that condemned Armenians to be persecuted, against which it is impossible to fight. This could even be an implicit way of discharging responsibility on the part of the international community who had seemed unable to intervene and stop the genocide.

In particular, example (11) indicates a claim made by Ameer Ali, the influential Indian Muslim politician, in the letter to the editor dated 17th October 1922, according to which crimes committed by the Christian minorities on Turks should be acknowledged too:

(11) Apart from the *ludicrous exaggeration* of the *figures* of *Armenians and Greeks alleged* to have been *massacred* by the Turks, there is a *grim simplicity* about the *logic*.

Example (11) shows denial of the Armenian genocide by questioning the numbers of the victims, claiming that they are smaller than those declared by the international community. Hereby, again, the structure affirmation vs. denial is in place. The evaluative noun phrase that collocates on the left of the cluster (*ludicrous exaggeration*) collocates itself, on the right, with the prepositional phrase *of the figures* (Armenians and Greeks are figures, not people), and *exaggeration* is a cataphoric reference of another dehumanizing abstract noun (*figures*).

Another strongly evaluative lexical item (*alleged*) collocates on the right of the cluster, and it is acting on the denial side of the structure, doubting, on a semantic level, that the massacres even happened. This is a strategy to deny credibility of the Armenian claims towards recognition of Turkish genocidal actions because Ameer Ali and the Indian Muslim community want to express their support for the Turks by questioning the narration of the victims. Using the same narrative elements inside a conflicting narrative, they subvert the representation of the Armenians as victims and create cognitive dissonance to make the readers of *The Times* aware of the possibility of coexisting different versions of the same events.

6. Concluding remarks

The potential of letters to the editor for civic engagement and for exerting influence on social and political developments (Wahl-Jorgensen 2019) seems to have not been fully exploited by the letters of the LEAQ corpus, which failed to activate an intervention to end the Armenian genocide and to relieve Armenians of their sufferings. The corpus-assisted approach adopted for the analysis shows that the letters in LEAQ, mentioning the Armenian question from 1914 to 1926, present specific linguistic features that might have contributed to building the long-lasting cognitive dissonance on the Armenian genocide.

The most recurrent linguistic characteristics of the representation of the Armenian identity in LEAQ are language choices that reduce the impact of their content. This occurs through the repeated use of the coordinating conjunction *and* to pair Armenian national identity-related terms to other nationalities as well as to place names by the use of collocates with contrasting connotations on either side of the most recurrent clusters.

As to the "social amnesia" of the Armenian genocide, the organization of the constituents according to the pattern acknowledgement/request for public recognition *vs.* denial is a linguistic characteristic that seemingly contributes to the dismantling of the national claims of the Armenians at the textual level. These linguistic strategies seem to oppose the contents expressed in the letters and to reduce the impact of the pleas for relieving the sufferings of the Christian populations that were the victims of the genocide.

As to the linguistic features characterising the mediated news discourse in LEAQ, it would be beyond all factual interpretations to claim that such linguistic choices were intended to undermine the extent of the massacres. Perhaps the choice to refer to both Armenians and Greeks, thus comparing references to the Armenians with references to other people involved in the massacres, was intended to reinforce the impact of the genocide, and therefore to highlight the remarkable number of the victims, attaining an effect opposite to the one emerging from the analysis. According to this interpretation, the ideal intention was, therefore, to denounce the humanitarian emergency and the living conditions of refugees of not only one, but two or even more entire populations "relocated" from their homes.

Drawing some conclusive remarks should not exclude *a priori* all possible interpretations of the data. The recurring linguistic patterns isolated within the analysis of the nodes pertaining to the Armenian national identity indicate ambivalence in the representation of the Armenian question. When not mentioned in its humanitarian features, it seems to be reduced to one among the different socio-political instances involved in the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, thus weakening the perception of the identity of the population. Such ambivalence, if not overtly conveyed by the content of the letters themselves, still finds its way into the formulation of the content.

Further extending the analysis of LEAQ would certainly provide more material to complement these findings in order to understand how the Armenian genocide was framed for the readers, how the representation of the Armenian identity was constructed, and if the language choices adopted contributed to the century-long process of the denial of the Armenian question.

Unfortunately, dealing with historical news discourse makes it impossible to consult the living sources of the texts under examination, and the actual intentions behind observed linguistic phenomena remain inaccessible. Moreover, it is not within the scope of a linguistic analysis to formulate hypotheses that pertain to a broader socio-historical and political debate over the events referred to in the corpus.

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The building of English language identity through dictionaries and grammar books: Two case studies

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ABSTRACT

The present paper focusses on the role the British lexico-grammatical tradition has had in shaping the identity of the English language through the centuries, shifting its focus gradually but steadily from Latin to English. To do so, attention will be drawn to the works of two scholars who contributed to the advancement of English in their own original way; specifically, the 16th-c. lexicographer Peter Levins who authored the first English-Latin rhyming dictionary, and the 19th-c. grammarian Percival Leigh who published two comic grammars, one for Latin and one for English. Their works will be analysed as case studies testifying to the changes undergone in the 'power-relation' between English and Latin from the 16th to the 19th century.

Keywords: historical English lexicography, historical English grammars, English identity, Peter Levins, Percival Leigh.

1. Introduction

Since its early stages, the English language has been nurtured by scholarly studies that have helped its growth and contributed to its spreading both in England and abroad. Indeed, through the centuries, glossaries, dictionaries, grammar books and educational treatises of various kinds have been walking by the side of English, first to aid the British people in the comprehension and learning of Latin and of other classical languages, then to improve the English language skills of native and non-native speakers throughout the world.

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The English Renaissance, in particular, witnessed a wide-ranging socio-cultural awakening that linguistically marked the flourishing of studies on English, thus giving birth to the first full-fledged bilingual English dictionaries, on the one hand, and to grammar writing, on the other (Padley 1985; Starnes – Noyes 1991). During the following centuries, language scholars did their best to free English from its early dependence on Latin; indeed, though still relying on Latin, their works proved that English grammar was far more than the application of Latin norms to the vernacular and that it was worthy of the same respect that Latin had enjoyed over the centuries. By the 19th century, the shift from Latin to English was complete and writers could indulge in focussing not only on the English language as such (Michael 1987), but also on its users (and misusers) both in Britain and in America (Dierks 2009; Schultz 1999); indeed, as aptly remarked by Schweiger (2010),

> [t]he social history of English grammar tells how the ancient reverence for the power and mastery of language moved within reach of all ranks of society in the nineteenth century. Plain, cheap, and plentiful, English grammars pulled the ancient traditions of Latin grammar and its associations with gentility and learnedness into a new century, extending the possibility of eloquence to ordinary readers. (Schweiger 2010: 554-555).

Bearing this in mind, in the present paper I will first overview how and to what extent the British lexico-grammatical tradition has contributed to shaping the identity of the English language. Then, I will focus on a lexicographer and a grammarian, respectively Peter Levins and Percival Leigh, as two case studies from two different historical periods; in particular, 16th century Peter Levins authored the English-Latin *Manipulus Vocabulurom* (1570), the first rhyming dictionary ever published in England, and *The Pathway to Health* (1587), a medical book totally written in English. In turn, 19th century Percival Leigh wrote two complementing works, *The Comic Latin Grammar* and *The Comic English Grammar*, both published in 1840. The works of these two scholars bring to the fore the change in the 'power relationship' between English and Latin from the 16th to the 19th century, testifying – through their lexico-grammatical works – the steadily increasing role of the vernacular at the expenses of what for centuries had been the European working language.

2. British lexico-grammatical tradition and the shaping of English identity

Since early Anglo-Saxon England, between 600 and 700 A.D., Latin glosses of religious and practical treatises had appeared with the primary purpose of explaining difficult Latin words. These glosses soon came to be written in the vernacular (Fernández Cuesta – Pons-Sanz 2017) and then were often collected in glossaries which evolved into authentic Latin-English dictionaries, arranged either alphabetically or under classified entries, whose object was essentially to provide a Latin dictionary for the use of Englishmen (see Stein 1985, 1990, 2017; Considine 2014; Bailey 2019; among others).

Between the 15th and the 16th century, English-Latin dictionaries began to enrich the scene (Stein 2014); their aim was turned from Latin to English, since they were mainly concerned with glossing English entries. Indeed, it is generally acknowledged that the first English-Latin bilingual dictionaries were more innovative in approach than their Latin-English counterparts, which were heavily indebted to earlier monolingual Latin works and often simply glossed the works of previous scholars. In contrast, most English-Latin dictionaries drew on material from a greater number of sources; for example, John Withals' *Shorte Dictionarie for Yonge Begynners* (1553) had at least twelve sources, including previously published dictionaries as well as scientific and literary treatises of his century; Withals also registered proverbs, wise sayings, legends, and myths. This enhanced attention for the English language and culture contributed to making the 'vulgar idiom' less 'vulgar' (in lay terms) and 'more idiom', in so far as the nobility first and the gentry afterwards were more and more accustomed to reading and writing the language they used in their everyday life, while at the same time they perceived both French and Latin as more distant languages (Joby 2017; Adams 2003).

In 16th and 17th century Britain, glossaries and vocabularies gradually gave way not only to monolingual, bilingual and polyglot dictionaries, but also to indexes and glossaries appended to grammar books (and vice versa) for pedagogic reasons, thus paving the way for a productive work of both grammarians and lexicographers (Keener 2018; Mitchell 2001). The practice of appending small dictionaries and indexes to textbooks was explicitly welcomed by Richard Mulcaster and William Bullokar[1] who, as teachers,

[1] Richard Mulcaster published a handbook to good practice in English language teaching 1582 (*Elementaire*, 1582), while William Bullokar authored the first published grammar of English (*Bref Grammar for English*, 1586).

insisted on the importance of joining a dictionary to a grammar book. A few years later, in 1594, Paul Graves published his *Grammatica Anglicana*, which contained, for the first time, also a *Dictionariolum of English words with their Latin equivalents*.

Graves and those who followed him were far from being inclusive in their works and quite often ended up writing simplified indexes for the use of their students; however, this custom of merging grammatical notes with glossed English entries along with their translation into Latin testified to the need of educators – and of the British cultural world in general – to mould a more educated 'English' society, aware of the potentialities and applications of what by then had become their official language.

In a specular way, the shift of focus from Latin to English that had involved lexicographers affected grammarians as well, who started to tread the British scene in the 16th century. At first, they generally assumed that, since Latin was still the official language taught at school, what was pertinent to the description of Latin would be equally pertinent to the description of English. Due to this belief, their books were often devised in a Latinised framework and turned out to be little more than Latin grammars in disguise. Indeed, at that time there was still no codified set of rules for the English language; nor did anyone officially question the authoritative Latin tradition, which had its main representatives in Varro, Donatus, and Priscian.

William Lily was one of these early grammarians and his Latin grammar *Rudimenta Grammatices* (ca. 1540) became so popular that in 1542 it was imposed by the Tudors as the only 'authorized grammar'; as such, all subsequent grammarians had to come to terms with its overriding importance and often published merely approving annotations of the same text. No doubt, at that time the publication of translations, elucidations and supplements of this book was, as pointed out by Padley (1985), partly a subterfuge allowing publication, which would otherwise have been thwarted by the royal privilege enjoyed by Lily's grammar.

Meanwhile, however, English evolved into a national language and England itself was becoming a 'nation'. London grew as the political and commercial centre of the country and a standard variety gradually emerged[2], crossing lands and oceans with its speakers via colonialization.

[2] Although the Chancery Standard has long been acknowledged as the dialect that almost exclusively contributed to the Standardization of the English language, recent studies challenge this orthodox view testifying to the fact that Standard English largely stemmed from a phenomenon of supralocalisation driven by language contact occurring all over the country (Wright 2020).

The process of English overriding Latin in grammar books was embodied and symbolized by the shift from William Lily's Latin grammar to Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* (1795) which was widely published and re-edited not only in Britain but also in its colonies. By that time, English had functionally diversified so as to be used for a wide range of purposes and had become the favourite language of science, culture, administration and colonization.

Between the 18th and 19th century, grammarians openly devised their grammars with full sections on orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody of English rather than of Latin; they codified rules and prescribed norms of use in a variety of communicative domains; they fixed and codified spelling in their dictionaries and contributed to incrementing the English lexicon (Görlach 2001; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2009); they even proscribed and stigmatized the linguistic misuses in speaking and writing (Sundby et al. 1991).

So, the attitude of English language scholars gradually changed from hesitantly nurturing the language to overtly imposing its culture on the peoples and places where the British spread and settled. Christopher Cooper's *Grammatica Linguæ Anglicanæ*, published in 1685, was the last English grammar written in Latin; between 1750 and 1799 the number of English-related language books had more than quadrupled compared to the previous fifty years. This officialization of English grammars in schools and the flourishing of manuals in the vernacular gave the final boost to English's coming of age.

In the following sections, attention will be drawn to the works of two scholars who contributed to this advancement of English in their own original way: the 16th century lexicographer Peter Levins (Section 3) and the 19th century grammarian Percival Leigh (Section 4). Their works will be analysed as case studies testifying to the above-mentioned changes in the 'power-relation' between English and Latin.

3. Peter Levins' lexicographic zest for the English language

Peter Levins (or Levens) was a 16th century scholar and "eminent physician" (Wood 1813: col. 548) who wrote two books:

- *Manipulus Vocabulorum. A Dictionarie of English and Latine wordes, set forthe in suche order, as none heretofore hath ben, the Englishe going before the Latine, necessary not onely for Scholers that want varietie of words, but also for such as use to write in English Meetre* (1570).

- *A right profitable Book for all Diseases, called the Pathway to Health; wherein are most excellent and approved Medicines of great virtue; as also notable Potions and Drinks, and for the distilling of divers Waters, and Making of Oils, and other comfortable Receipts* (1587).

In the Preface to the *Manipulus*, Levins highlights the originality of his manual as the first rhyming dictionary, "the gathering of oure Englishe wordes, and deviding of the same into this alphabet order of the last sillable being a trade not of any man afore attempted" (Levins 1570: 6). When reprinting the book in 1867, the Camden Society qualified it as a "curious work" due to its arrangement by the ending of the words rather than by the beginning. Yet it is this "curious" aspect that has helped scholars understand how English was written and spoken in the 16th century, when orthography and pronunciation were still fluctuating in a sea of variants, while grammar books were timidly setting off their boats to navigate that sea. By the 19th century, the key role of both Levins' dictionary and of those who had followed him along his path[3] had become clear to many, including John Wheatley who, in his Preface to the 1867 edition of the book, wrote:

(1) A Dictionary arranged according to endings is especially likely to contain a number of words which are otherwise unregistered, for the rhyme must have naturally brought to the recollection of the compiler many words of frequent use in conversation, which had not found their way into books. (Wheatley 1867: Preface)

Indeed, Wheatley hit the target in attributing to Levins the scouting role of listing words that had apparently been left unregistered by previous lexicographers; up to 266 new terms were first mentioned in the *Manipulus*, some of which appear only in Levins' book, while others have survived up to the present time (Facchinetti 1996).

Levins was also the first to include word-formation as an integral part of his dictionary, listing inflectional and derivational suffixes as headwords together with a description of their function (Facchinetti 1996). Though some of these qualifications may have been both ingenuous and incorrect,

[3] The following rhyming dictionaries were published between the 16th and the 18th century: Thomas Willis' *Vestibulum Linguae Latinae* (1651), Joshua Poole's *The English Parnassus* (1657), Edmund Bysshe's *The Art of English Poetry* (1701), Edmund Bysshe's *The British Parnassus* (1714), John Walker's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1775), Le-Tans'ur's *The Beauties of Poetry* (1776), and J. Trusler's *Poetic Endings* (1783).

we must acknowledge his key role in laying a new stone in the path of the development of the English language, and in the shaping of its identity as the general language of communication and knowledge transmission.

As a matter of fact, Levins' role as a forerunner lies not only in his "firsts" in the phonological, morphological and lexicographic fields, but also in HOW he conveyed such "firsts" to the general public. Indeed, his dictionary is English-Latin rather than Latin-English, that is, Levins presents English entries first, with their meanings and etymologies, while Latin follows in a merely complementing way:

(2) There be many other in able, deriued of Englishe verbes, almost as many as there be verbs, which are only formed by putting too Able at the ende of the English terme, as these that folow, and such other, whose latin is in *bilis*, & do signifie, that a thing is conuenient, mete, fit, apt, worthy or able to be done, as,
EATABLBE, méet or fit to be eaten
Comestibilis, bile.
TREATABLE, worthy, or able to be treated upon.
[…]
These maye also be written in abill, as, Laudable, or Laudabill, &c. Loke in (ill). They bee deriued of Verbes, and haue theyr latine in *lis*.

In some cases, as in *treatable* above, Levins even drops the Latin translation. Here, Latin appears to be ancillary to English, often needed only to complete Levins' notes on the English words, and thus testifying to the shift in perspective dealt with in Section 2 above that was groundbreaking in Levins' times.

Moreover, while listing words of the same endings, Levins is careful enough as to clarify their grammatical functions in English, for example introducing verbs with *to* ("to WALE, wéepe, lugêre, plangère"), placing the indefinite article form *a* before common nouns ("A BYNAME, epíthelon"), leaving proper nouns with no article ("GALINGALE, herb, acorus, I"), or mentioning English phrases and collocations ("to GALE for colde, algêre"). Such practice, which is largely employed by Levins throughout the book, testifies to his care for English and for its practice and for the need he felt to transmit it to his readers.

Levins' second book, *The Pathway to Health*, is the natural consequence of the *Manipulus*, since in the *Pathway* he totally drops Latin in favour of English. *The Pathway to Health* deals with illnesses and their remedies and is mentioned here only on account of its introductory Epistle, which is of great

importance to our purpose, since in his introductory words Levins justifies the use of English as the only language of the book:

(3) I have given the onset to publish in our own Natural Tongue this most excellent work for all Diseases, for the which cause it should not bee the lesse esteemed, although some more curious then wise esteem of nothing but that which is most rare, or in hard or unknown Languages. Certainly, these kind of People cannot abide that good and laudable Arts should be common to many, fearing that their Name and Practise should decay, or at the least should diminish: the intention truely of such persons seemeth much like them that gape for all, and would have all, leaving nothing to anybody, but that which they must needs forgo, considering that we are not born for our selves only, as Plato saith, but for the profit of our Country. (Levins 1587: Epistle)

Levins advocates the use of "our own natural tongue" rather than of "hard or unknown languages" and remarks that those who prefer other difficult languages to English prefer to keep knowledge for themselves rather than sharing it with others. To him "all Arts and Sciences may bee published in that Tongue which is best to be understood"; indeed:

(4) If then the intent of all that ever set forth any notable Study, have been to bee read of as many as would, what reason is it that we should keep secret among a few the thing that was to be made common to all?
[…]
it is exceeding damnable and devillish, to debar the fruition of so inestimable benefits, which our heavenly Father hath prepared for our comfort. (Levins 1587: Epistle)

The English language is considered by Levins a way to disseminate culture and knowledge to the masses. Hence, writing in English is religiously and ethically justified, while the use of other languages is condemned. This attention of Levins to the use of English makes him one of the earliest and keenest contributors to the spreading of the language throughout England to all levels of British society.[4]

[4] In this endeavour Levins should also be contextualized within the process of democratization of learned medical knowledge that led to the increased use of the English language and to the production of vernacularisations (Sanderson 1999; Fissell 2007).

4. Percival Leigh and the English language growing of age

By the 19th century, English was spoken not only in the British Isles but also, notably, in America, and it was starting to spread to other parts of the world as a result of massive colonialism, which, as is well-known, contributed to further changes and to the remodelling of the language itself. In an enlightening study which correlates 19th century grammarians' views with actual phenomena of language change, Anderwald (2016: synopsis) discusses 258 19th century grammar books from Britain and North America and illustrates how grammar writers of the time reacted to language changes. In some cases, they simply acknowledged them (like the variable past tense forms and the GET-passive); some forms were refused (i.e. the rise of the progressive passive), while others were welcomed (i.e. the rise of the progressive). Hence Anderwald concludes that "eventually prescriptivism had only a small-scale, short-term effect on the actual language used".

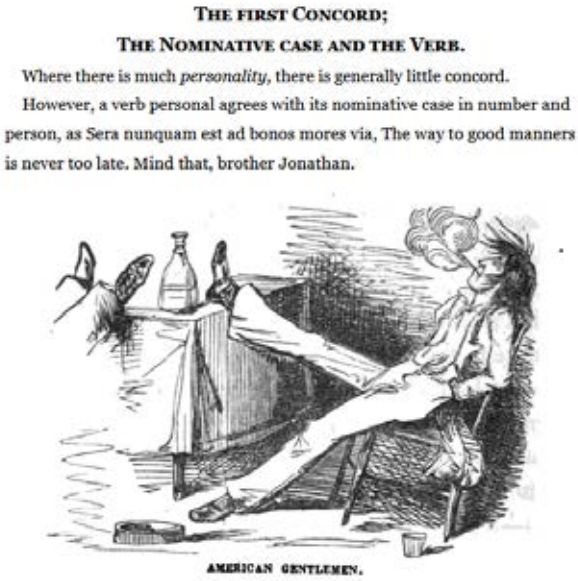
Still, prescriptive and proscriptive writers were more than a rarity in the 19th century and found manifold ways to convey their views, not least of which through humour and satire towards linguistic 'wrong-doing'. This is the case, for example, with Percival Leigh, a physician turned writer and language expert. His *The Comic Latin Grammar*. *A new and facetious introduction to the Latin tongue* and *The Comic English Grammar. A new and facetious introduction to the English tongue* are two specular books both published in 1840. The texts complement each other in so far as they appear to be two faces of the same coin, the coin being the English language.

The introductory illustrations of both manuals are particularly telling of the author's attitude; indeed, in the Latin grammar, the teacher is portrayed as an old schoolmaster waging his stick at bored, unhappy children, some of whom poke fun of him behind his back – possibly symbolizing the utmost effort to safeguard the respect for a dead language whose time had passed by then. In turn, in the English grammar, the portrayed teacher hides his face under a smiling mask and leisurely reads a book to amused and relaxed children – possibly signifying the positivity of teaching and learning what had by then become their national language.

So, well aware that Latin has become far too difficult a subject for British schoolboys, Leigh justifies the comicality of his Latin grammar with the need to make a hard topic more palatable. In turn, the English grammar is meant to be comic in so far as it identifies and stigmatizes whoever does not abide by Lindley Murray's well-established English

language rules.[5] By targeting "the violations of grammar", "evil speaking", "incorrect phraseology" and "the vices of speech" of his society "in their naked deformity" (Leigh 1840b: x), Leigh testifies to an array of linguistic idiosyncrasies and social prejudices of his time that provide a remarkable snapshot of Victorian society, as well as of its language use and apparent misuse.

When dealing with Latin, Leigh focusses on word classes and their declensions, on verb moods and their tenses, on cases and their concords, on prosody and its different verse types. All examples – be they idioms, phrases or full sentences – are followed by their English equivalents. Moreover, rules are often accompanied by comments on life, customs, religion, politics or ethics, as in Figure 1, where he teaches the concord between nominative case and verb:



THE FIRST CONCORD;

THE NOMINATIVE CASE AND THE VERB.

Where there is much *personality*, there is generally little concord.

However, a verb personal agrees with its nominative case in number and person, as Sera nunquam est ad bonos mores via, The way to good manners is never too late. Mind that, brother Jonathan.

AMERICAN GENTLEMEN.

Figure 1. The first concord (Leigh 1840a: 49)

[5] Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* (1795) was widely used in British and American schools especially during the first half of the nineteenth century. The text enjoyed numerous editions, not only in Britain and America, but also in Canada, France, Germany, Portugal, and India (Alston, 1965: 92-96, 1966: 189). Leigh's grammar is one of the four known parodies of the book, two of which were written by anonymous writers, *The Illustrated English Grammar; or, Lindley Murray Simplified* (c. 1843) and *The Comic Lindley Murray; or, The Grammar of Grammars* (1871) and one by Alfred Crowquill, *The Pictorial Grammar* (1842).

Here the comment on "personality" is followed by the remark on "the way to good manners" stigmatizing the portrayed "American gentleman" who indulges in smoking and drinking.

'Chauvinistic' remarks on "Yankees", Dutch, Italians, Russians, and French, to name only a few, are particularly outspoken in the English grammar. To Leigh, American English is "comic English in a 'pretty particular considerable tarnation' degree" (Leigh 1840b: 15), since "when the Americans revolted from the authority of England, they determined also to revolutionise their language" (Leigh 1840b: 60), and even created comic verbs, called "Yankeeisms", exemplified in "I calculate", "I reckon", and "I guess". In turn, the French are considered vain, light people, who dedicate themselves to "exquisite and nimble dances" and talk inarticulately.

Leigh's bias is sharpened by the illustrations provided by his friend and caricaturist John Leech, who portrays

(5) that great warrior Napoleon Bonaparte standing agin a tree with his hands in his pockets, *him* taking good care to keep out of harm's vay", while the Duke of Wellington boldly treads on the French flag "amidst the red-hot cannon balls, *him* not caring von straw. (Leigh 1840b: 130)

Even the facetious way he adopts in presenting rules is justified in the English grammar with the need to respect the attitude of the British; to Leigh, the British are a people with a "comic character" and a "comical mind", which, "like the jaundiced eye, views everything through a coloured medium. Such a mind is that of the generality of Britons" (Leigh 1840b: 11). This peculiarity – he writes – cannot be found either in the Germans or in the French. By stressing cultural differences between the British and other populations as well as the negativity of employing non-English words and phrases in everyday speech, Leigh underpins his feeling of personal belonging to his nation and his desire to give prominence to English as a further characterization of national identity.

Leigh invites schoolboys not to mix languages when they talk, as in "nous voulons dire" or "avec un poco", and warns them to avoid foreign languages in general, including "latinised English", that is a kind of fine English that is not the proper language to be spoken "especially when applied to the purposes of common discourse; as (…) 'Are your corporeal functions in a condition of salubrity?'" (Leigh 1840b: 15). Most notably, he remarks that

(6) There is nearly as much difference between Latin and English substantives, with respect to the number of cases pertaining to each, as there is between a quack-doctor and a physician; for while in Latin substantives have six cases, in English they have but three. But the analogy should not be strained too far; for the fools in the world (who furnish the quack with his cases) more than double the number of the wise. (Leigh 1840b: 58-59)

Though parodical as it is, the downgrading of Latin to the language of "the quack" and the upgrading of English to the language of "the wise" is particularly telling of the changed attitude towards Latin compared to that of his predecessors.

When his eye turns from foreigners to his compatriots, however, Leigh is not lenient and becomes a strict schoolmaster teaching "proper English". He mentions the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the "ignorant and degraded" costermongers, of the heavy drinking draymen, of weavers, tailors, quack doctors and beadles, not to mention dust-men, milk-women, pot-boys, fruiterers, hearth-stone-vendors, ballad-singers, last-dying-speech-hawkers and old clothesmen itinerant, hackney-coachmen, cabmen, lackeys, turnkeys, thieves, lawyers' clerks, medical students, and more generally the mob. All of them, he remarks, are amusing like "monkeys and such like animals at the Zoological Gardens" (Leigh 1840b: 221); they are to be looked at through the bars of their cages, but – he warns – familiarity with these people breeds contempt, on account of their modes of expression which we should not imitate. Compared to his predecessors, the shift in focus is overt: Leigh's aim is no longer to teach just English, but rather proper English and, most of all, to teach proper English no longer just to the nobility or the gentry, but rather to the whole of British society. To this aim, as a keen teacher, he also dedicates great attention to idioms and phraseology:

(7) When a thief pleads "Guilty" to an indictment, he is advised by the Judge to recall his plea; as if a trial were a matter of sport, and the culprit, like a fox, gave no amusement unless regularly run down. This perhaps is the reason why allowing an animal to start some little time before the pursuit is commenced, is called giving him *law*» (Leigh 1840b: 10)

Some say that words are but wind; for this reason, when people are having words, it is often said, that "the wind's up". (Leigh 1840b: 32)

Similarly, when dealing with interjections he remarks that

(8) though unprovided with a Johnsonian title to a place in the English vocabulary, they have long been recognised by the popular voice; and let it be remembered, that as custom supplies the defects of legislation, so that which is not sanctioned by magisterial authority may nevertheless be justified by vernacular usage. (Leigh 1840b: 41)

It is this strong focus on English language use as opposed to Latin outdated and forced teaching that makes Leigh's texts particularly important in forging the minds of his British compatriots as English speakers rather than Latin admirers. Both in the Latin grammar – where he presents Latin as a foreign language – and in the English grammar, where the use of foreign words rather than English ones is marked as indicative of a corrupt way of thinking and speaking – Leigh no longer hides behind the Latin tree but rather strides boldly on the English language ground, well aware of the full-fledged national identity that such language has achieved in his country and abroad.

5. Conclusions

When Levins and Leigh wrote their textbooks, many a century had already gone by since the time of the first Anglo-Saxon glosses written interlinearly or in the margins of Latin manuscripts to explain and translate unknown words. A lot had changed also from the first topical vocabularies of Medieval times, listing words classified according to their meanings and semantic fields, which had been greatly employed by students when learning their mother tongue.

In Levins' times, English was already gaining prominence and prestige; with his *Manipulus Vocabulorum* (1570), this lexicographer gave his own contribution to the process. Indeed, moving away from the Latin-centred tradition, he indulged here more in the detailed analysis of English pronunciation and its inflectional and derivational suffixes than in the well-established Latin terms and rules. Most of all, in the *Pathway to Health* (1587), he insisted on the social, ethical and religious value of disseminating knowledge to the general public in native English instead of keeping science and culture in secret closets at the mere disposal of the few who could master foreign languages such as Latin, Greek or French.

Early Modern England saw an interplay between grammar writings and dictionary compilations whereby 17th century grammar books often included lexicons and 18th century dictionaries also included grammars, largely taking on their shoulders the task of further "codify[ing] and standardis[ing] the English language" (Michell 1994: 551).

In the 19th century, in a 'less scholarly', though equally effective way, the grammarian Percival Leigh further insisted on differentiating English from Latin and on showing respect to his mother-tongue, adding, for example, that

(9) the structure of the ancient verse […] is preserved, but the quantity of which is regulated in accordance with the spirit of our own language. (Leigh 1840b: 212)

Indeed, by Leigh's times, the shift from Latin to English had been fully accomplished and for scholars it was no longer a matter of choice between Latin and English but rather of discussing the many socio-geographical variants and professional jargons of their official language. Hence, Leigh juxtaposes serious indications with insightful remarks, mocking the socio-historical plateau of mid-19th century England; the very examples he draws from everyday speech faithfully reflect the language spoken and written by all classes of English society at that time. The English language had come of age and its identity had reached centre stage.

Later on, the intertwining of political, social and economic factors further contributed to consolidating the leading role of English in the international arena; yet little could possibly have been done without lexicographers and grammarians like Peter Levins and Percival Leigh, whose pivotal role in shaping the English identity certainly exceeded what they could have imagined.

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From *The Magnificent Seven* to *The Hateful Eight*: Labels, lyrics and (group) identity construction in Western movie songs[1]

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ABSTRACT

This study, part of a larger project on the role of popular culture in language change and stabilization, takes a historical sociolinguistic approach to a small, specially-compiled corpus of (mostly mid-twentieth-century) songs featuring as theme tunes in Western films, in order to study what linguistic mechanisms are at work for the construction and reinforcement of (group) identities. Such identities pertain both to the protagonists of the films themselves and – albeit indirectly – to their viewers, whose empathy and emotive participation in the fictional events is elicited. Although the strategies on the basis of which these identities are created are historically situated, the patterns they establish may be shown to have had a lasting impact on later phenomena, such as those pertaining to the tourist industry. Typically, the memorability of the songs enables potentially obsolete views to maintain a certain degree of viability even among twenty-first-century audiences: as a result, identities acquire time depth and remain recognizable across decades spanning almost a century.

Keywords: historical sociolinguistics, identity, Western songs, film soundtracks, popular culture.

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1. Introduction

Language change and stabilization are arguably indebted to texts pertaining to popular culture, such as songs and advertisements; however, it is only in relatively recent times that scholars have begun to approach language history "from below" (see Elspaß et al. 2007), and the investigation of popular culture has begun even more recently, although the interest in other aspects of everyday language, such as dialect fiction, has a longer academic tradition (see Donaldson 1986). The comments offered in this study derive from a larger project on the language of popular culture and they expand on my previous analysis of semantically-charged lexical choices in identification through labelling (see Dossena 2019).

The analysis takes a historical sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic approach to a small, specially-compiled corpus of twentieth-century songs featuring as theme tunes in Western films and TV series, in order to study what linguistic mechanisms are at work in the construction and reinforcement of (group) identities. Such identities pertain both to the (main) characters in the films themselves and – albeit indirectly – to their viewers, whose empathy and emotive participation in the fictional events is elicited. The strategies on the basis of which these identities are constructed rely on several mechanisms aiming to achieve suspension of disbelief and – consequently – elicit the kind of identification that enables vicarious experience, such as that suggested in the tourist industry concerning 'Western trails'[2] and museums, in which visitors are encouraged to walk 'in the footsteps' of the various figures as if they were actually witnessing the past through the lens of what has in fact been carefully (re)constructed.

In that respect, special attention is paid to the earliest instances of the songs taken into consideration, on account of the lasting impact that they may have had on later texts. Especially in the mid-twentieth century, among the strategies that can be shown to contribute most effectively to identity construction there are the linguistic choices that characterize both movie titles and the songs that typically accompany the movies themselves, whether as title songs or as pieces supporting the plot. Both titles and lyrics often define the protagonists as the heroes of the narration, sometimes actually having them speak in the first person:[3] this is the case, for instance, with the lyrics in Dimitri Tiomkin's *My Rifle, My Pony and Me*, featured in *Rio Bravo* (directed

[2] See Boardman (2015) and Groves (2018).

[3] Interestingly, this contrasts with the proverbial taciturnity of the male protagonists of Western movies discussed by Tompkins (1992: 54-58) and others.

by Howard Hawks and released in 1959), and with *The Ballad of High Noon* (also known as *Do Not Forsake Me*), featured in *High Noon* (directed by Fred Zinnemann and released in 1952).[4] In other cases, songs elicit audience participation through tunes which may seem distant from the narrative itself, but which are designed to be memorable per se and thus contribute to the success of the movie while becoming hits in their own right; such is the case, for example, with Burt Bacharach's *Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head* in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (directed by Sam Peckinpah and released in 1969) and with Bob Dylan's *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* in *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* (also directed by Sam Peckinpah and released in 1973).[5]

While posters function as explicitly promotional material (Dossena 2017), thus creating expectations while inviting the viewers' participation, soundtracks accompany and support the artefact: not only do they guide the interpretation of scenes and thus provide suggestions for the emotive response of the audience, but they also convey messages that contribute to the definition of characters and events in the plot.[6] Moreover, memorable songs and soundtracks extend their communicative force beyond the viewing experience, as their message is recapped every time they are performed, sung, or even hummed, regardless of how long since they first appeared in their original context. In fact, they may be familiar even to audiences who have never actually watched the movies in which they were first employed, though the emotional impact they may have is obviously different from the one they may have on recipients who saw the movies in the first place.

For this reason, songs are a very useful object of study in a sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic perspective, as they fulfill various functions. Through

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4 The latter is listed at no. 10 among the 25 "greatest film scores of all time" as ranked by the American Film Institute (www.afi.com/afis-100-years-of-film-scores/). The list also includes *The Magnificent Seven* at no. 8 and *How the West Was Won* at no. 25. All the websites mentioned in this paper were accessed in January 2022, unless other indications are given.

5 As a matter of fact, it is not unusual for film songs to achieve success outside the artefact: other instances among many more are *Moon River* (authored by Johnny Mercer and Henry Mancini), from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (directed by Blake Edwards and released in 1961), and *We Have All the Time in the World* (authored by Hal David and John Barry, and sung by Louis Armstrong), which is a secondary musical theme in the Bond movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (directed by Peter Hunt and released in 1969). Indeed, the phenomenon seems to be particularly widespread in children's film culture: see for instance all Walt Disney films, songs from which maintain their popularity among their young audiences into adulthood – further analysis of this, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

6 See for instance Moschini (2011) on the interaction of music, lyrics and on-screen events in TV series.

them, audiences are offered a profile of the protagonists (and often of the relationships existing among them), a summary of the plot, a representation of the environment, or a combination of all these elements. As a result, they contribute to the creation of identities for both film characters and (indirectly) for viewers. In addition, they may contain phrases that become idiomatized, such as "high noon" or "the magnificent …". In my study I will also attempt to assess whether these mechanisms of (group) identity construction are distinctive or are in fact consistent with the strategies deployed in other popular title tunes of the latter half of the twentieth century, such as those in James Bond movies.[7]

The essay is structured as follows. In Section 2 below I present my materials and the methodological approach I chose to employ, before discussing the role of labels in the construction of identity within popular-culture domains in Section 3; then, in Section 4, I focus on movie songs, their typical traits and their relationship with other genres. In Section 5 I present a brief outline of how (stereotypical, constructed) images of the West are powerful tools of promotional communication in the tourist industry thanks to the popularity they achieved through films and their respective songs. Finally, some concluding remarks are offered in Section 6.

2. Methods and materials

This study is based on a specially-compiled collection of lyrics from twenty films and three TV series. Where applicable, data on the films was derived from the information made available by the American Film Institute (AFI); this was occasionally supplemented with details from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb, at www.imdb.com), from which information on the TV series was sourced. The lyrics discussed here represent a selection of texts included in a much larger corpus which is still in preparation and they were deemed to be representative of the most salient topics that appear to occur in all the texts. These twenty-three tunes were selected, first and foremost, on account of their popularity, as it is their widespread circulation

[7] Although Ian Fleming (1908-1964) authored 12 novels and two collections of short stories with this protagonist, all published between 1953 and 1966, as many as 19 films appeared between 1962 and 1999, in addition to six in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, thus stressing the popularity of both stories and characters across time, in spite of the inevitable debates associated with changes in the starring actors and plot variation (or lack thereof).

that contributed to the idiomatization of phrases and tokens of stereotypical identity. However, tunes from less well-known films were also included, in addition to award-winning ones, so as to have a fairly diversified sample of texts and assess the validity of the interpretative hypotheses across a broader range of documents.

The time span taken into consideration here goes from 1935 to 1973 – four decades that roughly coincide with the so-called 'golden age of Western movies', i.e. the time when their popularity was extremely high. According to data in the AFI online catalogue,[8] as many as 5,278 Western movies were released between 1900 and 2008, with a peak of 358 in 1910 and often many more than 100 per year until 1950. The popularity of the genre began to decline in the late 1960s, although in 1976 sixteen titles appeared; since then, however, there were never more than six new films a year. As for the popularity of Western TV shows, Cawelti states that in 1959 eight of the top ten shows on television ("as measured by Neilsen ratings") were Westerns (1999: 1), which illustrates how powerful they might be in the creation of both enduring images and identities.[9] Although the materials under discussion have a maximum time depth of nearly a century, and may therefore seem relatively recent, it is undeniable that they have become key elements in popular culture.

The lyrics analyzed are listed in Table 1 below – see Appendix. It should be pointed out that this study does not aim to include comments on soundtracks in which music accompanies the storyline without repeating the lyrics or is indeed present without lyrics at all, such as in the case of Ennio Morricone's pieces,[10] as musicological observations are beyond the purview of this treatment. Also, it would seem a moot point to focus merely on quantitative aspects, given both the uniqueness of the pieces and their often deliberate repetitiveness within the same text, not least on account of the use of choruses. Although this issue does not seem to have been considered relevant in recent corpus-based studies of popular song lyrics – e.g., Werner (2012), Bértoli-Dutra (2014) and Brett and Pinna (2019) – any comment on the frequency of lexical items is bound to be biased by redundancy in the

8 See https://catalog.afi.com/Search?searchField=Genre&searchText=western&sortType=sortBytitle.

9 Although radio shows could also be very popular and therefore influential, at the moment they fall outside the scope of this investigation because their multimodal quality is not comparable with that of artefacts which also comprise visual elements, as those greatly enhance memorability.

10 In this respect Morricone appears to have changed both the type and function of soundtracks, in films that have actually changed the genre itself.

lyrics. Besides, for the purposes of my analysis, it is more appropriate to take a qualitative perspective, within a Critical Discourse-historical approach (see van Dijk 1995 and Wodak & Meyer 2001). Wordlists and collocations, however, have been investigated by means of AntConc (Anthony 2019), so as to identify semantic patterns and prosodies in a preliminary stage of the study. Comparisons have also been made with materials in *The Movie Corpus* and *The TV Corpus*;[11] however, in such corpora song lyrics are not listed separately from scripted dialogue, so again deliberate redundancy may skew data. Besides, data do not necessarily coincide also in relation to the fact that the *Movie Corpus* is based on the IMDb, and not on the catalogue of the AFI, so – for example – for 1935 *The Movie Corpus* comprises the scripts of three Western films, while the AFI indicates that no fewer than 126 Western films were released in that year. It is inevitable that different (and equally randomly selected) samples will yield different results, while still placing themselves in what appears to be the same framework.

3. How identities are constructed: Socio-onomastics in the language of entertainment

As I discussed in a recent study (Dossena 2019), labels in general, and pseudonyms and nicknames in particular, are very powerful tools in the construction of individual and group identities, and this applies to such apparently distant domains as the arts, sports, politics and history, signaling an intriguing contiguity between academic subjects and popular culture (see Ainiala & Östman 2017). For this reason, labels are often culture-bound, not least in the language of entertainment. More specifically, the film industry has contributed greatly to the memorability of labels like *The Sundance Kid* (i.e., Harry Longabaugh, 1867-1908), *Billy the Kid* (i.e., Henry McCarty, 1859-1881) or *'Buffalo' Bill Cody* (i.e., William F. Cody, 1846-1917). In addition, book and film titles can be shown to rely on the apparently paradoxical move of avoiding the use of actual names, or even pseudonyms, to indicate their protagonists. In literature, titles like *The Bride of Lammermoor* (authored by Walter Scott in 1819), *The Master of Ballantrae* (authored by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1889), *The Man Who Would Be King* (authored by Rudyard Kipling in 1888), or *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (authored by David Herbert Lawrence and first published privately in 1928) refer to a protagonist that is identified by means of a phrase meant to

[11] See www.english-corpora.org/movies/ and www.english-corpora.org/tv/ respectively.

elicit curiosity through its simultaneous specificity and vagueness: although no proper name is given, the identification is unambiguous.[12] Indeed, the replacement of names with generally qualifying labels seems to have been a recurrent strategy throughout the history of Western movies, from early 'classical Westerns' to recent 'post-Westerns': see *The Virginian* (versions of which circulated in 1914, 1923, 1929 and 1946, based on a novel published with the same title in 1902), *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (directed by Sergio Leone in 1966), *The Magnificent Seven* (directed by John Sturges in 1960), *The Hateful Eight* (directed by Quentin Tarantino in 2015) and *The Revenant* (directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu also in 2015).[13] However, plots and protagonists can be defined through various other means in the artefact – not least in how they are (re)presented in songs that punctuate the plot or even summarize it.

4. Songs in a multimedia approach to film discourse

Undoubtedly, film scores have played a crucial part in the success of films on both sides of the Atlantic.[14] Even when films were silent, i.e. until the late 1920s, the musical accompaniment that underscored scenes and gestures contributed to the elicitation of the audience's emotive response. With the advent of sound, the phenomenon became even more remarkable, with composers whose popularity is mostly due to film scores and actors-singers who became household names thanks also to their records. Among such figures there are Bob Nolan (1908-1980), who featured in as many as 90 films between 1935 and 1948, contributing more than 500 tunes either as a soloist or together with his group, the 'Sons of the Pioneers',[15] and Gene Autry

12 The details provided here about literary works and their dates of publication are of course available in all standard histories of English literature and in good encyclopaedias.

13 Among Westerns, an award-winning film in which a proper name is used in the title (thus in a way similar to what is found in the abbreviated titles of literary works like *Moll Flanders* and *David Copperfield*, authored respectively by Daniel Defoe in 1722 and Charles Dickens in 1849-50) appears to be *Dances with Wolves*, starring and directed by Kevin Costner, and released in 1990. As the name is the English translation of a Lakota one, this points to the protagonist's adoptive cultural affiliation.

14 For recent discussions of film music more in general see Neumeyer (2013).

15 The site with most information and lyrics was at www.bobnolan-sop.net/index.htm (available until December 2019); however, biographical information is available in various other 'hall of fame' sites, e.g. those of the Manitoba, Nashville, and Canadian Songwriters: see www.manitobacma.com/viewpage.php?page_id=40&artist=71, nashvillesongwritersfoundation.com/Site/inductee?entry_id=2207, and www.cshf.ca/songwriter/bob-nolan/ respectively.

(1907-1998), who is labelled "America's Favorite Singing Cowboy" in the official website dedicated to his figure.[16]

Nolan's songs are very close to traditional country music, but they are also significant for their representation of the cowboy, a character that has become emblematic of a persistent image of the American West. A sample of Nolan's songs shows that his representations are often idyllic and indeed seem to evoke a certain mysticism (Bindas 1986); however, they are also humorous, sometimes even to the point of caricature – compare the lyrics of *The Happy Cowboy* (1935, in the film *The Old Homestead*, directed by William Nigh and listed as 'musical' by AFI) and *A No-Good Son-of-a-Gun* (1938, in the film *The Call of the Rockies*, directed by Alan James); in the former, the cowboy enjoys the life of an impecunious, single man who is nonetheless entirely satisfied with his days as a singing rover; the protagonist of the latter, instead, appears to take pride in his laziness and actually admits that marriage is only for him to obtain wealth, while the chorus describes him with a good-natured euphemism:

(1)

The Happy Cowboy	*A No-Good Son-of-a-Gun*
Nowhere to go an' nothin' to do, I'm just a happy rovin' cowboy. Let me ride that long trail down to the end Where the skies are always blue. […]	I don't like work and I never will – He's a no-good son-of-a-gun I'd rather sleep and eat my fill – He's a no-good son-of-a-gun So I got me a job with the cattle crew And the boss said Son I'm gonna fire you So I guess that's just what he'll have to do – He's a no-good son-of-a-gun. […]
I ain't got a wife to bother my life I'm a just happy rovin' cowboy. Let me make my bed where the varmints prowl Beneath a sky of blue. […]	
I ain't got a dime, I'm jes' spendin' my time I'm just a happy rovin' cowboy Let me sing my song till they call me home To the land beyond the blue.	Now I've been tired since life begun – He's a no-good son-of-a-gun I don't recall any work I've done – He's a no-good son-of-a-gun

[16] See www.geneautry.com/home.php.

> So I think I'll marry me a wealthy
> wife
> And settle down away from strife
> And sleep all the rest of my natural
> life –
> He's a no-good son-of-a-gun.

Leaving aside (possibly anachronistic) observations on the intrinsic misogyny of such lyrics, it is interesting to see how the representation of the stereotypical cowboy is also conveyed through spelling conventions that evoke eye dialect (such as *jes'* for *just*) and other features of colloquial speech, such the use of *ain't* and of pleonastic indirect objects, as in "I'll marry me a wealthy wife".[17] This is shown also in other titles of songs presented by Nolan and/or his group or indeed other artists – see for instance the following, in which (not unexpectedly) double negations are also present: *Money Ain't No Use Anyway*, released in 1931 and sung by Gene Autry in the 1936 film *The Old Corral* (directed by Joseph I. Kane), and Bob Nolan's *You Ain't Heard Nothin' Till You Hear Him Roar*, dating from 1940 and featuring in *Heldorado* (directed by William Witney and released in 1946).

In addition to this microlinguistic level, there is also another level at which songs in Western movies can be analyzed, and that is the way in which they function as powerful tools for the explicit or implicit reinforcement of contents in terms of shared cultural images and values. It is this further level, which is of pragmatic and sociolinguistic significance, that will be the object of the next paragraphs: first of all, I will discuss the role of songs as virtual summaries of the films themselves, then I will focus on the relationship between songs in Western movies and other popular discourse types, such as folk lore and religion.

4.1 Songs as summaries

Within the multimodal apparatus supporting the artefact, not least in a promotional perspective, songs can play a very important role as summaries of the plot. This is the case of such well-known tunes as *The Ballad of High Noon* (1952) and *Gunfight at the OK Corral* (1957), both authored by Dimitri Tiomkin (music) and Ned Washington (lyrics). In these cases, the songs are

[17] On this point see Hubbard (1968) and Dossena (in preparation).

also love themes, as they address the female protagonist and ask for her continuing support of the male hero:

(2)

The Ballad of High Noon	*Gunfight at the OK Corral*
Do not forsake me, oh my darlin'	Ok corral ok corral
On this, our weddin' day	There the outlaw band
Do not forsake me, oh my darlin'	Make their final stand
Wait, wait along	Ok corral
The noon train will bring Frank Miller	Oh my dearest one must die
If I'm a man I must be brave	Lay down my gun or take the
And I must face that deadly killer	chance of losing you forever
Or lie a coward, a craven coward	Duty calls
Or lie a coward in my grave	My back's against the wall
	Have you no kind word to say
Oh, to be torn twixt love and duty	Before I ride away away
S'posin', I lose my fair-haired beauty	
Look at that big hand move along	Your love your love
Nearin' high noon	I need your love
	Keep the flame let it burn
He made a vow while in state prison	Until I return
Vowed it would be my life or his'n	From the gunfight at ok corral
I'm not afraid of death but, oh	If the lord is my friend
What will I do if you leave me?	We'll meet at the end
	Of the gunfight at ok corral
Do not forsake me, oh my darlin'	Gunfight at ok corral
You made that promise when we wed	
Do not forsake me, oh my darlin'	All kill all kill
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'	So cold so still
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead	There they lay side by side
	The killers that died
Wait along, wait along…	In the gunfight at ok corral

As a matter of fact, theme songs are also a characteristic of TV series and of movies that are somehow a series themselves, such as the James Bond ones. Among the latter, as many as 16 out of the 24 'official' James Bond films released between 1962 and 2015 featured songs with the same title as

the movie, which were generally sung by internationally-famous artists. Although the lyrics do not always summarize the plot, they do at least evoke some traits of the protagonists, such as *Goldfinger* (1964) or *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974), or imply references to key moments in the film, such as *Skyfall* (2012).

On the other hand, the title songs of two very popular mid-twentieth-century TV series (*Rawhide*, which ran for 8 seasons between 1959 and 1965, for a total of 217 episodes, and *Bonanza*, which ran for 14 seasons between 1959 and 1973, for a total of 431 episodes) presented their protagonists and their life, creating specific and recognizably trademark (male) identities – see the lyrics below:[18]

(3)

Rawhide	*Bonanza*
Rollin', rollin', rollin' Rawhide!	We chased lady luck, 'til we finally
Rollin', rollin', rollin'	struck Bonanza.
Though the streams are swollen	With a gun and a rope and a hat
Keep them doggies rollin' Rawhide!	full of hope, we planted a family tree.
	We got hold of a pot of gold,
Rain and wind and weather	Bonanza.
Hell-bent for leather	With a horse and a saddle, and
Wishin' my gal was by my side.	a range full of cattle,
	How rich can a fellow be?

[18] Indeed, title songs in which the protagonist is presented can be so iconic that they are cited in other soundtracks: this is what happened with Franco Micalizzi's *Trinity*, which features in the closing credits of *Django Unchained* (directed by Quentin Tarantino and released in 2012), but is in fact the title song of the Italian B Western *Lo chiamavano Trinità*, directed by E. B. Clucher and released in 1970. In the lyrics of *Trinity*, the protagonist is never identified with a name or a nickname; instead, his identity is solely defined by his use of a Colt 45; in fact, "You may think he's a sleepy tired guy", but "he's the guy who's the talk of the town with the restless gun". Also, a typically hyperbolic definition says that "He's the top of the West, always cool, he's the best". Moreover, the main theme of *Django Unchained* is in fact the same as that of another Italian B Western, *Django*, directed by Sergio Corbucci and released in 1966; this time, however, the song, authored by Robert Mellin, Franco Migliacci (lyrics) and Luis Bacalov (music), does not define the protagonist directly, but addresses him in his perpetual loneliness. Tarantino also stresses the intertextual connection between the two films by having a scene in which the protagonists (unaware of each other's identity) discuss the name's spelling and pronunciation for a few seconds, and viewers are allowed the pleasure of recognizing the original Django, played by Franco Nero, without any further hints.

All the things I'm missin',
Good vittles, love, and kissin',
Are waiting at the end of my ride

Move 'em on, head 'em up
Head 'em up, move 'em on
Move 'em on, head 'em up
Rawhide […]

Keep movin', movin', movin'
Though they're disapprovin'
Keep them dogies movin'
Rawhide!

Don't try to understand 'em
Just rope, throw, and brand 'em
Soon we'll be living high and wide.
My hearts calculatin'
My true love will be waitin',
Be waitin' at the end of my ride.
Rawhide!

On this land we put our brand,
Cartwright is the name,
Fortune smiled, the day we filed
the Ponderosa claim.
Here in the West, we're livin' the
best Bonanza,
If anyone fights any one of us, he's
got to fight with me.

Hoss and Joe and Adam know every
rock and pine,
No one works, fights, or eats, like
those boys of mine.
Here we stand in the middle of
a grand Bonanza.

With a gun and a rope and a hatful
of hope, we planted our family tree,
We got hold of a potful of gold,
Bonanza.
With a houseful of friends where
the rainbow ends,
How rich can a fellow be? […]

With the friendliest, fightingest,
loving band,
That ever set foot in the promised
land, and we're happier than them
all.
That's why we call it Bonanza…
Bonanza… Bonanza…

Predictably, the emphatic and self-glorifying tone of both TV series and songs, with their idyllic representation of a heroic world, whether in military environments or in homesteading ones, brought about parodic reinterpretations. Already in 1965-67 there were two seasons (for a total of 65 episodes) of the TV series *F Troop*, whose title song, sung by a male choir in suitably baritone voices, opens with what sounds like a traditional

heroic incipit, "The end of the Civil War was near", then summarizes the background story of the anti-hero and the kind of context in which the protagonists hardly reflect the Native – Euro-American antithesis so often found in films, comic books, dime novels and even literature (see, among others, Rosso 2016):

(4) The end of the Civil War was near
When quite accidentally,
A hero who sneezed abruptly seized
Retreat and reversed it to victory.

His medal of honor pleased and thrilled
his proud little family group.
While pinning it on some blood was spilled
And so it was planned he'd command F Troop.

Where Indian fights are colorful sights
and nobody takes a lickin'
Where pale face and redskin
Both turn chicken.

When drilling and fighting get them down,
They know their morale can't droop.
As long as they all relax in town
Before they resume with a bang and a boom F Troop.

In the second half of the twentieth century, also in films parodies began to appear, from *West and Soda* (1965, an Italian animation movie directed by Bruno Bozzetto) to *Blazing Saddles* (directed by Mel Brooks and released in 1974), down to the recent *A Million Ways to Die in the West* (directed by Seth MacFarlane and released in 2014). More importantly, films in which Native Americans were represented more sympathetically became more numerous as well as more militant – see for instance two films both released in 1970: *Soldier Blue*, directed by Ralph Nelson, and *Little Big Man*, directed by Arthur Penn. Even so, certain images continued to be clichés well into the twenty-first century, to the point that rugged cowboys are shown herding cats in a well-known commercial that was first presented in 2000, and the same linguistic features that are presented in the script were found in Bob Nolan's lyrics several decades before:

(5) I wouldn't do nothin' else.
It ain't an easy job but when you bring a herd into town and you ain't lost one of them, ain't a feeling like it in the world.

(EDS ad, script at http://theinspirationroom.com/daily/2005/cat-herders-herding-cats/)

4.2 Songs as echoes of other genres and discourse types

When Western movie songs are investigated in relation to other genres pertaining to popular culture, such as ballads, folk tales and even Gothic stories, fascinating patterns begin to emerge. Indeed, many songs are called "The Ballad of …", thus stressing the contiguity between them and a specific genre which is supposed to evoke an old-timey atmosphere. In such cases, the singer draws the attention of his listeners by introducing the main character of his story, as in Bob Nolan's song *Cody of the Pony Express*, featured in the 1939 film *The Thundering West* directed by Sam Nelson; after the incipit, the protagonist appears almost by magic and then hyperbolic anecdotes are recounted of his deeds, just like itinerant storytellers had done for centuries in Europe:

(6) In every corner of this world they boast of men so bold.
From Captain Blood and Mister Mud to England's kings of old.
Why, every place I've ever been, they think their man's the best.
But listen while I introduce a bold man from the West.

A thunderbolt bust and then a big cloud of dust
And out rides Cody of the Pony Express.
Totin' the mail beside him, he knows the trail to guide him,
Cody of the Pony Express.

Now, the Injuns wait by the canyon's gate to take Bill by surprise
But they'll never beat the mustang feet of the fastest horse alive.

So, over the rim he's running,
Racing the wind, he's coming,
Cody of the Pony Express!

Now I once saw Cody fight his way through a thousand Indian braves
Riding on a two-ton buffalo's back, he jumped on an Indian's grave
Then he took a half hitch on the buffalo's tail and swung him 'round
and 'round
Says, "Step up close, you red galoots, I'll mo-o-o-o-w you down!"

In other cases, the lyrics evoke contemplative atmospheres at sunset, when the landscape takes on a dreamy quality in which even a rifle can be a cherished companion, as in *My Rifle, My Pony and Me*, in *Rio Bravo* (directed by Howard Hawks and released in 1959):

(7) The sun is sinking in the west
The cattle go down to the stream
The redwing settles in the nest
It's time for a cowboy to dream

Purple light in the canyons
That's where I long to be
With my three good companions
Just my rifle, pony and me

The relationship with popular culture is equally seen in the echoes of folk tales and indeed of Gothic stories that are found in songs that evoke events in the distant past, mythical/ metaphorical places, such as the 'river of no return' (discussed below), and ghosts. One of the most famous songs to have appeared in a Western movie, Bob Dylan's *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (see Section 1 above), strikingly includes the same address to a female (motherly) figure by a dying man as in the anonymous traditional ballad *Lord Randal* (see Child 1882-98, I: 151-166):[19]

(8)

Knockin' on Heaven's Door	*Lord Randal*
Mama, take this badge off of me	'O where ha' you been, Lord
I can't use it anymore	Randal, my son?
It's gettin' dark, too dark for me to	And where ha' you been, my
see	handsome young man?'
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's	'I ha' been at the greenwood; mother,
door […]	mak my bed soon,
	For I'm wearied wi' hunting, and
	fain wad lie down.

[19] Previously Dylan had quoted this ballad almost verbatim in his 1962 song *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*.

Mama, put my guns in the ground
I can't shoot them anymore
That long black cloud is comin'
down
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's
door

An example of a tale set in the distant past is found in Bob Nolan's *Song of the Bandit*, in *Outlaws of the Prairie* (directed by Sam Nelson and released in 1937):

(9) Long, long ago in old Wyoming lived a maid,
Fair as the sweetest flower bloomin' in the glade.
She loved a bandit bold who roamed the prairie o'er
And every night she'd listen for his call.
Then, far to the west, his voice came ringin',
Ridin' a wild horse, he came singin'…
"Hee lee o lee yip I o lee aye!" […]

Also, *River of No Return* (sung by Marilyn Monroe in the film with the same title, directed by Otto Preminger and released in 1954) tells a story of love and loss, with the ghostly call of the lover bound to be unanswered forever:

(10) If you listen you can hear it call. (Wailaree)
There is a river called the river of no return
Sometimes it's peaceful and sometimes wild and free
Love is a traveller on the river of no return
Swept on forever to be lost in the stormy sea. (Wailaree)

I can hear the river call (no return, no return)
I can hear my lover call, "come to me"
I lost my love on the river
And forever my heart will yearn
Gone, gone forever
Down the river of no return
Wailaree, wailaree…
You never return to me

Ghostly voices can also be heard at the sites of famous battles, such as the one at the Alamo (fought between 23rd February and 6th March 1836), or where outlaws carried out their infamous activity and are now 'ghost riders in the sky', as another well-known mid-twentieth-century song would label them. In films, such songs are found in *The Ballad of the Alamo* (sung in the film called *The Alamo*, directed by John Wayne and released in 1960) and in *The 3.10 to Yuma* (featuring in the film with the same title directed by Delmer Daves and released in 1957):

(11)

The Ballad of the Alamo	*The 3.10 to Yuma*
In the southern part of Texas	There is a lonely train called the 3.10
In the town of San Antone	to Yuma
There's a fortress all in ruins	The pounding of the wheels is more
that the weeds have overgrown	like a mournful sigh
You may look in vain for crosses	There's a legend and there's a rumor
and you'll never see a-one	When you take the 3.10 to Yuma
But sometimes between the	You can see the ghosts of outlaws go
setting and the rising of the sun	ridin' by […]
You can hear a ghostly bugle	
As the men go marching by	
You can hear them as they answer	
To that roll call in the sky. […]	

However, there are more than echoes of other genres when religious references are taken into consideration. It is undeniable that the West was also won on religious grounds, although literature does not seem to acknowledge that (see Tompkins 1992: 28). The numerous conversion narratives published throughout Late Modern times and indeed the grammars of Native languages that were written for or by Christian missionaries stress the importance of religion in the creation of a new cultural environment intended to replace the existing one.[20] Indeed, the song that features as the Finale Ultimo in the soundtrack of *How the West Was*

[20] On conversion narratives see, among others, Gordis (2005) and Henkel (2014); as for early descriptions of Native American languages on the part of British and French missionaries, see – most recently – Kilarski (2018).

Won,[21] the film directed by John Ford, George Marshall, Henry Hathaway and Richard Thorpe (uncredited) and released in 1963, presents settlers as armed with "Bible, fist and gun":

(12) The promised land, the land of plenty rich with gold
Here came dreamers with Bible, fist and gun
Bound for land, across the plains their wagons rolled
Hell bent for leather – that's how the West was won

This ideological approach is seen on various occasions when the creation of a shared image of that achievement is pursued. The belief that it was the USA's 'Manifest Destiny' to conquer new territory[22] is reflected in the instances of biblical phraseology interspersed in songs that call the West "the promised land", such as *Bonanza*, and "the land of milk and honey": at the beginning of the same *How the West Was Won*, the song "I Am Bound for the Promised Land" actually uses both metaphors:

(13) The promised land I'm going, I'm going, going, going to the bountiful, bountiful land!
Roll, wagons, roll! I am bound for the promised land, I'm bound for the promised land

Oh who will come and go with me I am bound for the promised land
It's a land of plenty that never fails
Where trees immortal grow,
Where rocks and hills and brooks and vales
With milk and honey flow […]

In addition, there are echoes of the lexical and syntactic patterns of Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 in *The Green Leaves of Summer*, performed in the above-mentioned film of 1960, *The Alamo*:

[21] The soundtrack was authored by Ken Darby (lyrics) and Alfred Newman (music), and also included adaptations of classic or traditional songs, such as *Greensleeves*, a sixteenth-century tune which became "A Home in the Meadow" and was sung by Debbie Reynolds in the section titled "The Plains", directed by Henry Hathaway.

[22] It is a belief that influenced a broad range of genres, from literature to the figurative arts, as painters and, later, photographers also contributed greatly to the creation of an idealized image of the West (see Cartosio 2016).

(14)

The Green Leaves of Summer	Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8[22]
A time to be reapin', a time to be sowin'. The green leaves of Summer are callin' me home. 'Twas so good to be young then, in a season of plenty, When the catfish were jumpin' as high as the sky. A time just for plantin', a time just for ploughin'. A time to be courtin' a girl of your own. 'Twas so good to be young then, to be close to the earth, And to stand by your wife at the moment of birth. A time to be reapin', a time to be sowin'. The green leaves of Summer are callin' me home. 'Twas so good to be young then, With the sweet smell of apples, And the owl in the pine tree a-winkin' his eye. A time just for plantin', a time just for ploughin'. A time just for livin', a place for to die. 'Twas so good to be young then, to be close to the earth, Now the green leaves of Summer are callin' me home.	There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven – A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing. A time to search and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate; A time for war and a time for peace.

[23] This is based on the text of the *New American Standard Bible*, first published in 1960 and available at https://biblehub.com/nasb/ecclesiastes/3.htm. This version was chosen on account of the viability that it would have for a large part of the envisaged audiences at the time.

5. Live the dream: From the screen to the trail

There can be little doubt that many images that have first appeared on the silver screen have shaped the collective perception of 'the West'. As shown by Rosso (2008, 2010 and 2016) and Cartosio (2018), American literature and popular culture have re-invented the story of real-life characters like 'Billy the Kid' in countless dime novels, actual novels and, later, films. Indeed, the connection between the film and the tourist industries is made visible in the reference to the Autry Museum of the American West at Gene Autry's website, where visitors are invited to enjoy "world-class galleries filled with Native American art and artefacts, film memorabilia, historic firearms, paintings, and more" (www.geneautry.com/museum/). Moreover, on the same page there is also a link to another museum said to hold "an outstanding collection of memorabilia of Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Rex Allen, Tex Ritter, Jimmy Wakely, Eddie Dean, and many others who appeared in the much-loved musical Western movies of the 1930s and '40s": it is the Gene Autry, Oklahoma Museum, which the site presents as "a fan favorite".

On the homepage of the latter museum, an obviously promotional text invites visitors to a kind of virtual time travel by underlining the coalescence of experiences derived from remembering the films and visiting the museum:

> The **Gene Autry Oklahoma Museum** houses the *World's Largest Collection of Vintage Cowboys in Entertainment Memorabilia* from the 1920s to present day. Of course, *Gene Autry* and the *Singing Cowboys* are prominent but we just love all cowboys (and cowgirls). Cowboys and Cowgirls from Radio to Vinyl to Tape to CDs and from Film to Television to YouTube (live or animated) and web, they're all so entertaining!
>
> Visitors to the Museum learn about the Cowboy Way of Life, enjoy past memories while creating new ones, and discover a bit about what was Berwyn, Oklahoma, now the Town of Gene Autry.
>
> (https://geneautryoklamuseum.org/, original emphasis)

Similarly, there is a specific gallery on Western performers in the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, and again in the presentation of the gallery the contribution of such performers to the 'creation' and recording of both stories and legends is acknowledged:

> The Williams Companies Western Performers Gallery explores the various ways the American West has been represented in literature and film. Honoring Western popular icons who have contributed to the creating and recording the stories and legends of the West. Gallery highlights include John Wayne as both performer and collector, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans material, a multimedia review of Western culture narrated by Sam Elliott and mid-century memorabilia.
>
> (https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/all-galleries/the-williams-companies-western-performers-gallery/)

In addition, the same museum regularly runs exhibitions that are meant to appeal to film audiences; among these, we may mention one that ran between November 15th 2019 and May 10th 2020, and was on *True Grit*, a film two versions of which have appeared in less than fifty years (one directed by Henry Hathaway in 1969 and starring John Wayne, the other directed by Joel Coen in 2010);[24] another exhibition ran between November 15th 2019 and July 5th 2020, and invited visitors to "Find your Western" through the acknowledgement that "Consumption of the West through popular media has been a mainstay of Western culture".[25]

However, it is not just performers who elicit interest; stories and places can be just as evocative for present-day visitors who may only have heard of them in films. For this reason, the website of the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, WY, (https://museumofthemountainman.com/) hosts a page in which what is supposed to be the true story underpinning the plot of the 2015 film *The Revenant* is disentangled from myth and legend.[26]

As for the famous OK Corral, the identification of visitors to Tombstone, AZ, with film characters and stars is exactly what the homepage of the city's site takes for granted:

> A refuge for international travelers [sic] looking for the REAL America, the true Old West, here in Cochise County. Where you'll walk on the same boardwalk as Wyatt Earp, on his way to the OK Corral shootout. Drink in the same saloons. And, if you want, ride a horse down the old trails and shoot your single-action .45 revolver at targets in the sweet-smelling sagebrush.
>
> (http://gotombstone.org/)

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24 See https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/exhibition/two-grits/.
25 See https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/exhibition/find-your-western/.
26 See http://hughglass.org/the-legend/revenant-the-movie/.

Indeed, visitors can print out a map of Tombstone in 1882, so as to make sure they are actually walking in the footsteps of Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday (presumably humming the title song of the 1957 film starring Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas).

Although other examples could be provided, these probably outline most clearly how identity can be reinforced, when not actually constructed, through language in a broad range of media and – even more importantly – how such mechanisms are effective across time, since their validity may well span several decades.

6. Concluding remarks

As this preliminary investigation of lyrics in Western movies and TV series has shown, there are many different functions that such lyrics may have and the pragmatic success of them is due both to their memorability (indicated by their immediate recognizability even decades after they were written) and to the associations they evoke with a cherished, idealized past. Not only can such songs function as blurbs and/or as punctuation of the story: they can present a specific image of the (main) characters and of how they relate to one another, with their distinctive gender roles (for example, the male hero shoots and kills, or roves over the range, while his lady love patiently waits). They can also supplement dialogue, such as when protagonists or additional characters tell stories through ballads or evoke different atmospheres in peaceful interludes among otherwise violent scenarios; lyrics also depict landscapes and scenes, in this case referring to mental images that are often stereotypical in their recurring traits. In addition, they can appeal to shared values, typically those encoded in religious terms.

What all these functions have in common is that they elicit the viewers' emotive response and their participation and acceptance of shared identities across time and space. For this reason, they are highly valuable contributions to multimodal artefacts and – from a sociolinguistic point of view – they enhance the perception of historical stability both in language and in identities.

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APPENDIX
Corpus samples discussed in this article

TV Series

	Year	Song	TV series	Network	Lyrics	Music
1.	1959-65	Title song	*Rawhide*	CBS	Ned Washington	Dimitri Tiomkin
2.	1959-73	Title song	*Bonanza*	NBC	Ray Evans	Jay Livingston
3.	1965-67	Title song	*F Troop*	ABC	Irving Taylor	William Lava

Films

	Year	Song	Film	Director	Lyrics	Music
1.	1935	The Happy Cowboy	*The Old Homestead*	William Nigh	Bob Nolan	Bob Nolan
2.	1935	Way Out West in Texas	*The Sagebrush Troubadour*	Joseph I. Kane	Gene Autry	Gene Autry
3.	1936	Money Ain't No Use Anyhow	*The Old Corral*	Joseph I. Kane	Gene Autry	Gene Autry
4.	1937	Song of the Bandit	*Outlaws of the Prairie*	Sam Nelson	Bob Nolan	Bob Nolan
5.	1938	A No-Good Son-of-a-gun	*The Call of the Rockies*	Alan James	Bob Nolan	Bob Nolan

6.	1939	Cody of the Pony Express	*The Thundering West*	Sam Nelson	Bob Nolan	Bob Nolan
7.	1941	Back in the Saddle Again	*Back in the Saddle*	Lew Landers	Gene Autry	Gene Autry
8.	1942	Cowboy Serenade	*Cowboy Serenade*	William Morgan	Rich Hall	Rich Hall
9.	1946	You Ain't Heard Nothin' Till You Hear Him Roar	*Heldorado*	William Witney	Bob Nolan	Bob Nolan
10.	1952	The Ballad of High Noon	*High Noon*	Fred Zinneman	Ned Washington	Dimitri Tiomkin
11.	1954	Johnny Guitar	*Johnny Guitar*	Nicholas Ray	Peggy Lee	Victor Young
12.	1954	River of No Return	*River of No Return*	Otto Preminger	Ken Darby	Lionel Newman
13.	1957	3.10 to Yuma	*3.10 to Yuma*	Delmer Daves	Ned Washington	George Duning
14.	1957	Gunfight at the OK Corral	*Gunfight at the OK Corral*	John Sturges	Ned Washington	Dimitri Tiomkin
15.	1959	My Rifle, My Pony and Me	*Rio Bravo*	Howard Hawks	Paul Francis Webster	Dimitri Tiomkin
16.	1960	The Ballad of the Alamo	*The Alamo*	John Wayne	Paul Francis Webster	Dimitri Tiomkin
17.	1960	The Green Leaves of Summer	*The Alamo*	John Wayne	Paul Francis Webster	Dimitri Tiomkin
18.	1963	How the West Was Won	*How the West Was Won*	John Ford, George Marshall, Henry Hathaway and Richard Thorpe (uncredited)	Ken Darby	Alfred Newman

19.	1969	Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head	*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*	George Roy Hill	Hal David	Burt Bacharach
20.	1973	Knocking on Heaven's Door	*Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*	Sam Peckinpah	Bob Dylan	Bob Dylan

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Pronouns in Dickinson's poetry as a means of constructing a poetic *self*

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ABSTRACT

Poetic language is often defined by its apparent violations of ordinary language rules because of its usage of 'unacceptable' or at least very unusual constructions, under the label of 'poetic licence'. This is also true for Emily Dickinson's language, characterised as obscure, elliptical or ambiguous. The present paper is an attempt to show how the 'poetic forms' are nothing but an extreme exploitation of everyday language resources which can sometimes appear to be ambiguous or obscure only as a side effect of their extra-contextualisation. The case in point is the analysis of Dickinson's use of personal pronouns, which is not agrammatical, but resorts to the pragmatic and topicality conditions overruling the semantic rules of gender agreement, thus building her view and feeling of herself as a woman and a poet.

Keywords: poetic language, grammaticality, Dickinson, pronouns, language function.

> Primary function of poetry, as of all the arts, is to make us more aware of ourselves and the world around us. I do not know if such increased awareness makes us more moral or more efficient. I hope not. I think it makes us more human, and I am quite certain it makes us more difficult to deceive.
>
> (Auden, *On the function of poetry* 1938)

1. Introduction

The Romantic notion of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"[1] seems to be negated by the modern views expressed by Eliot,

[1] This is the famous definition of poetry by Wordsworth (1802) which appeared in the *Preface* of the second edition of the *Lyric Ballads*.

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when he states "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things" (Eliot 1919: 73).

Only superficially are these two conceptions of poetry in contradiction, as well argued by Stead (2007): Eliot's call to escape from personality does not coincide with his denial of the *self*, on the contrary it implies a search for a deeper *self*. Poets incorporate themselves into their work, but "transmute the passion" into something universal (Eliot 1919: 72). How this transmutation might happen is of no concern to Eliot who does not explicate how the poet can elevate their own feeling and emotion into a universal experience. Eliot's claim finds a direct correlation in the philosophical inquiry in the meaning of being and its linguistic expression, where Heidegger, inspired both by Karl Jaspers' (1938) idea of the limits of existence and by the Aristotelian dynamic notion of ἀλήθεια (Berti 1996), conceptualises ἀλήθεια as unconcealedness and the meaning of being as the phenomenogical analysis of temporality, the historicity of our being (Allen 2007: 9). Accordingly, he sees in the language of poetry the only language capable of articulating the meaning of being, since it discloses the meaning of things for human beings (Heidegger 1969, 1992).[2]

An explanation of how such universality of experience and such unconcealedness are linguistically achieved is offered by Jakobson's (1960) studies and definitions of the functions of language according to which poetry shares two main functions: the poetical function, that is the operative function focussing on the linguistic code and how it is used, and the emotive function relating to the addressee and expressing the internal state of the speaker, namely the poet. Deciphering the language of the poem commits the addressee to construct their own message, thus making it part of their own experience (1968). Poetry in its linguistic realisation is thus recognised to have the capability of both expressing awareness of our existence (cf. Jaspers 1932) in the encounter of one's own limits in death, sorrow, guilt, chance and the like, and of elevating one's own existence onto a general and universal level through the interplay between the poet and the addressee.

[2] In the early to mid-20th-century, Heidegger refined the definition of the concept of ἀλήθεια, starting from the pre-Socratic notion of disclosure, to arrive at the idea of "unconcealedness" (Heidegger 1992) as apparent from its etymology ἀ–λήθεια "not hidden, patent" (1975: 50). Thus, it is distinct from conceptions of truth as correspondence and coherence, and relates to how an ontological "world" is disclosed, how things are made intelligible for human beings (Heidegger 1972: 69).

The present paper focuses on a significant aspect linked to one's existence, the establishment and the recognition of the *self*, by looking at Emily Dickinson's poetry. In life, her public 'existence' was limited both as a woman and as a poet, in that she lived much of her life in seclusion and her poetic production was unknown to most. Nevertheless, she was rightly recognized as being a landmark woman poet, because she gave voice to her being a woman and a poet, by asserting the irrepressible creative female spirit in a household, in a society and a literary scene kept exclusive[3] by males. In particular, the construction of Dickinson's *self* will be traced through her use of personal and reflexive pronouns in some of her poems.

After a brief introduction to Jakobson's view on language and poetry, the choice of these linguistic elements will be explained following Benveniste's linguistic theory. Given that poetry exploits the resources concealed in the morphological and syntactic structure of language (cf. Jakobson 1960: 375) and that "for poetry, the standard language is the background against which the aesthetically intentional distortion of the linguistic components of the work is reflected" (Mukařovský 2014: 43), it is useful to spend a few words on the present day usage of personal pronouns and reflexives in informal language and in varieties of English, which can help make sense of "the intentional violation of the norm of the standard" (Mukařovský 2014: 43) operated by Emily Dickinson, in using these linguistic elements to construct her identity as a woman and a poet.

1.1 A few words on the method

Before proceeding to the main argumentation, it is worth spending a moment on the approach applied in the present study and on the theoretical and scholarly background of the present topic.

Emily Dickinson's poetry, though neglected from the theory of the canon for years (Hagenbüchle 1998), has been long appreciated as a topic of research for its style and rhetoric (Hagenbüchle 1974), especially within gender studies (Erkkila 1984; Howe 1986; Smith 1991; Juhasz – Miller 2002; Gischler 2005). It has received similar attention within cognitive linguistics

[3] Although 'exclusive' may sound excessive, as one reviewer has rightly noticed, in the nineteenth century, neither households nor society nor the literary scene were "exclusively" male domains; using this adjective, I intended to be more faithful to women writers of the period for whom "your thoughts don't have words every day" (Dickinson, poem n. 1452). Later, the same feeling was expressed by Wolf in the phrase "a room of one's own".

(Budick 1985; Freeman 1995, 1996, 1997; Hamilton 2005; Young 2019) especially for the use of punctuation, ellipsis, metaphor and metonymy. Apart from very few exceptions (Perlmutter 1977), the results of linguistic research on ordinary language have not been applied to Dickinson's poetic language until the last couple of years, which saw the publication of two seminal studies, Panizza – Kannan (2020) and Bauer – Beck et al. (2020), which combine formal linguistics and literary studies[4] and aim to show that her apparent non-compliance with linguistic rules depends on her exploitation of the potential of English grammar. The present paper is aligned with this research perspective, and focuses on the English personal and reflexive pronominal system.

Strictly speaking, her natural point of reference is not Present-day English,[5] whose pronominal system has recently undergone and is still undergoing interesting changes. Nevertheless, what is pertinent to the present analysis concerns the semantic spectrum, whose nuances are present in the English pronominal system at any diachronic stage (Vezzosi 2008; Vezzosi – Semplicini 2017; Siemund – Dolberg 2011), and therefore it is justifiable to attribute it to Dickinson's language itself. The linguistic analysis of Dickinson's use of personal and intensive pronouns does not aim to establish the poet's grammar[6] nor to describe Dickinson's pronominal system. On the contrary, it is a text-centered approach to literary studies that draws from descriptive and theoretical linguistics, especially semantics and pragmatics. Linguistics can serve as a tool in reaching a better understanding of a literary text, as it can give a precise and detailed analysis of the text by applying linguistic structures, mechanisms and methods. According to the most recent publications,[7] this seems to be a very suitable approach to interpreting Dickinson's production.

In practice, I have created a sub-corpus of Dickinson's poems,[8] selecting those in which the poet's use of pronouns is remarkable and apparently non-compliant to grammatical rules. I argue that her uncommon use of language was part of her poetic strategy, which meant extending the range of linguistic expression as far as possible. The rules of the English language

4 Unfortunately, these books were issued only after the submission of this paper; therefore, I could not consult them. It is quite comforting, however, to see that they share the approach I chose and that their suggestive results are in agreement with the interpretation I have hereby proposed.

5 I thank an anonymous reviewer for this remark.

6 Apropos, see Miller (1987).

7 Panizza – Kannan (2020) and Bauer – Beck et al. (2020).

8 I used Johnson's edition (1955).

are not suspended, but function differently: the poet bends and exploits the rules of grammar and she does it systematically. Therefore, the reader is able to adapt to such deviances. This adaptation process triggers a reflection in the reader about language and the way language works.

2. Language in poetry and the functions of language

Poetic language acquired a special status within the theory of language in the works of Jakobson, when its distinctiveness[9] as a medium of expression became a gradient feature.[10] However, Jakobson's seminal work followed, and integrated the previous models of Karl Bühler and Bronisław Malinowski.

Karl Bühler's *Sprachtheorie. Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache* (1934) formulated the Organon Model, according to which communication has three functions: the expressive function (*Ausdrucksfunktion*), the representation function (*Darstellungsfunktion*) and the conative function (*Appellfunktion*). In fact, his cognitive representation of language is based on three relational components involved in the communicative act – the things that are represented, the sender (whose inner states are professed) and the receiver (whose reaction is triggered)[11] – neglecting the role of context and code, which become central in Malinowski's thought on language. Being an anthropologist, Malinowski did not deny that language is an "instrument of thought and of the communication of thought" (Malinowski 1972 [1923: 297]), but he analysed it as "a cultural aspect in its own right" (Malinowski 1935, II: 10) and "an indispensable ingredient of all human action" (Malinowski 1935, II: 7), whose main function is "not to express thought, not duplicate mental processes, but rather to play an active part in behaviour" (Malinowski 1935, II: 7). Accordingly, any communicative act involves relational components other than the message, the sender (sender or encoder), the receiver (receiver or decoder); the channel or contact,[12] the

9 The term "distinctiveness" is used as in Benjamin (2012).

10 I am using here the term "feature", following Jacobson's for "elementary informational units" (1961: 245).

11 "Dreifach ist die Leistung der menschlichen Sprache, Kundgabe, Auslösung und Darstellung" (Bühler 1934: 28).

12 Jakobson uses the term "contact", referring to the contact established by the medium of transmission of the message – for instance between the articulatory system of the speaker and the acoustic system of the hearer in the case of an utterance – "a physical channel and psychical connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling them to enter and maintain communication" (Jakobson 1987[1960]: 66).

context[13] and the code itself have to be considered as constitutive elements of the linguistic act. This is the starting point of Jakobson's theory of language and language functions.

According to Jakobson (1960), for any given act of verbal communication or speech event, there are six fundamental elements or factors which must be present for it to be operable: (1) addresser (speaker, encoder, emitter; poet, author; narrator); (2) addressee (decoder, hearer, listener; reader; interpreter); (3) code (system, *langue*); (4) message (*parole*, the given discourse, the text); (5) context (referent) and (6) contact. Each factor is the focal point of a relation, or function that operates between the message and the factor. Therefore, for each factor one function of language is devised, which determines an orientation within the verbal message on that factor,[14] namely: (1) emotive; (2) conative; (3) metalingual; (4) poetic; (5) referential and (6) phatic. Related to the Addresser (speaker) is the Emotive function, which allows the Addresser to externalize feelings and moods, as well as desires or the level of interest or passion, that is it "aims a direct expression of the speaker's attitude toward what he is speaking about" (Jakobson 1960: 354); therefore, it is also called 'expressive' (Waugh 1980: 58). The conative function, also called 'appellative', engages the Addressee directly, in that it is the function of mandate and question, where the Addresser tries to influence the behaviour of the Addressee. The referential function, corresponding to the context, is also referred to as 'denotative', 'cognitive' or 'ideational' (Waugh 1980: 58) and describes a situation, object or mental state function. The referential function is often associated with the *énonciation récit* of Benveniste (1966: 240-241). Connected to the variable of contact is the phatic[15] function which "contributes to the establishment and maintenance of communicative contact" (Lyons 1977: 53-54) and keeps up the channels of communication. Whenever the addresser and/or the addressee need

[13] The mathematical model of communication developed by Shannon and Weaver (1948-49) presupposes the intervention of five variables in any linguistic act: they do not take into account the context. The role played by their model in Jakobson's works is made clear by himself in Jakobson (1961).

[14] As for the choice of the term and its definition, see also Jakobson and Tynyanov (1980[1928]).

[15] Malinowski introduces the notion of 'phatic': "There can be no doubt that we have a new type of linguistic use – phatic communion I am tempted to call it, actuated by the demon of terminological invention – a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words […] phatic communion serves to establish bonds of personal union between people brought together by the mere need of companionship and does not serve any purpose of communicating ideas" (Malinowski 1936: 314-316).

to check whether they are using the same code, whenever the linguistic code talks about itself, speech performs a metalingual function, proper to metalinguistic thought.

Special attention is reserved to the poetic function of language, which is defined as "[t]he set (*Einstellung*) toward the message as such, focus on the message for its own sake" (Jakobson 1960: 357). As with every function, the poetic function is not restricted to poetry, but is operative in any utterance which focuses on the *signifiant*, that is the linguistic code and how it is used. Indeed, in communicative events, verbal messages do not fulfil one single function. They are instead a hierarchical bundle, a "set" or a "setting (*Einstellung*)" of hierarchically organised functions. The structure of any message and its diversity depends on its particular hierarchical setting of functions (cf. Jakobson 1963). Accordingly, it is plausible to claim that in poetry the poetic function forms poetry, being dominant over the referential (cognitive) function, which is the leading task of most messages, including the poetic expression (cf. Jakobson 1963, 1968). That is, repeating Sir Philip Sidney's words in his *Defense of Poetry*, "Now for the Poet, he nothing affirmeth and therefore never lieth".

2.1 Relation between poetical language and ordinary language

Consequent to Jakobson's theory of language and language functions is the question concerning the relationship between poetic language and ordinary language. If poetic language focuses on the message in itself, then it contains the principle of organization and its own aim. That means the poetic language is not instrumental to anything (Jakobson 1931), while ordinary language is instrumental to an external aim, such as knowledge, communication, or persuasion – all objectives for which the word is a means, but not a goal *per se*. Hence it follows that ordinary language is structural, in that it has its structural principle in the language grammar. On the other hand, poetic language appears to be structurally freer, less rigorously respectful or rather disrespectful of the language grammar.

The relationship between ordinary and poetic language can be accounted for in terms of gradience and in a so-called inverse correlation, which Jakobson sees in the relation among the functions, *in primis* between the poetic and the referential functions as a sort of battle for supremacy: the more the message "talks" about itself and refers to itself (the poetic function), the less it talks about the context and refers to it (the referential function) and vice versa.

> Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focused message, briefly a corollary feature of poetry […] The supremacy of poetic function over referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous. The double-sensed message finds correspondence in a split addresser, in a split addressee, and besides in a split reference, as it is cogently exposed in the preambles to fairy tales of various. peoples, for instance, in the usual exordium of the Majorca storytellers: 'Axio era y no era' ('It was and it was not'). (Jakobson 1960: 370-371)

As clearly stated by Mukařovský (2014 [1970]), the *differencia specifica* between the language of ordinary discourse and language of poetic discourse does not lay in different grammars nor in adherence to or absence of a grammar, but in the process of foregrounding or de-automation, a technique to 'defamiliarise' discourse elements in the act of composition. Foregrounding, however, is possible because most of the poetic composition is backgrounded, rooted in ordinary or 'automatized' language. Linguistic fictions owe their existence to "the grammatical forms of the discourse", paraphrasing Bentham's words (Odgen 1932: 44). Poetic language is "either grammatical or anti-grammatical but it is never agrammatical" (Jakobson 1960: 368).[16] Only against the background of the ordinary language's grammar can the (grammatical) contrivances in poetry be understood. In other words, the poetic effect originates from the poet's use of his own language grammar, from the potentiality of the words extrapolated from their 'automated' context. "L'effort du poète porte sur les mots et les mots sont ce qui attire l'attention du lecteur ou de l'auditeur" (Benveniste 2011: 642), a goal reached by the poet by resorting to the potentiality of his own language: "the figure of sound" and the "figure of grammar" are a constitutive principle in verse (Howpkins 1959). Partially in disagreement with the Saussurian analysis of poetry, according to which "les mots ne sont pas des signes", Benveniste claims that it "consiste en une émotion verbalisée" (2011: 199).

In conclusion, what characterizes poetry and distinguishes it from other genres (literary and textual in general) is not simply the predominance of the poetic function. However, because of that, poetical language differs from ordinary language in that it is not purely referential: in poetry, the

[16] The precise quotation is the following: "rhyme is either grammatical or anti-grammatical but it is never agrammatical" (Jakobson 1960: 368). However, Jakobson himself extends this statement to the poet's language: "The rhyme technique is 'either grammatical or antigrammatical' but never agrammatical, and the same may be applied as well to poets' grammar" (Jakobson 1968: 605).

communicative intent is to make the addressee experience an experience through the organization of words (cf. Benveniste 1966). Other functions, such as the emotive function, are then operative.[17]

The poetic intent is achieved through the peculiarities of poetic language, e.g. the peculiar use of such constructions, words, or sounds on the side of the poet, and the systemic analysis of it and of its interrelation with the ordinary language usage on the side of the reader. The more an act is automatized, the less conscious it becomes for that act to be interpreted; the more it is foregrounded, the more completely conscious does it become for that act to be executed or interpreted: the reader is thus made part of the poet's experience. Consequently, we can argue that grammatical concepts find their widest applications in poetry as the most formalised manifestation of language, because through them the poet's intent is expressed.

2.2 Personal pronouns in English

Any linguistic sign, grammatical category or construction, can conceal poetic resources (Jakobson 1960: 375). In ordinary language, it is generally assumed that the relation between concept and sign is formalised, automated, given *a priori* and therefore unconsciously processed. In poetry, it is admitted that this relation becomes dynamic, in *statu nascendi*, when the correspondence between the sign and the object has to be newly established. In poetry, each linguistic element does not necessarily occur contextualised in the real external world, but it is often extra-contextualised, that is contextualised in the interior word of the poet, thus deepening its semantic dimension (Agosti 2007). This holds for any linguistic element, including relational and grammatical units, such as pronouns:

> The pivotal role performed in the grammatical texture of poetry by diverse kind of pronouns is due to the fact that pronouns, in contradistinction to all other autonomous words, are purely grammatical, relational units […] (Jakobson 1968: 606)

The term *pronoun* literally means that it stands for or refers to another noun, and accordingly it is generally defined as a word, or more technically a pro-

[17] This holds for lyrics in particular. Contrarily, epic poetry "strongly involves the referential function of language" (Jakobson, 1960: 357). The identification of the functional configuration (e.g. the identification of the secondary, tertiary and so on function) is decisive for a typology of poetic genre.

form, that functions like a noun and substitutes for a noun or noun phrase. Unlike nouns, pronouns lack a descriptive content and are empty signs, that is they are not referential with respect to reality or the extra-linguistic world. They become 'full', acquire a content, as soon as the speaker introduces them into each instance of his discourse (Benveniste 1971: 210-220). Of particular interest are personal pronouns, since their reference is either cata- or anaphorically established and it is successful if the speaker and the hearer either share the extra-contextual knowledge or the discourse in which they occur. In English, furthermore, personal pronouns constitute the only class, marked according to gender. Still further, in English, gender is not a class-feature, or a fixed property of nouns, stored in the lexicon and assigned by means of language-specific rules, i.e. assignment rules (Corbett 1991); but it is a morphosyntactic property, in that it becomes visible in context through agreement. If a noun by its form[18] cannot be assigned any gender in English, through pronominal coreference it can be classified as feminine, masculine or neuter according to whether the noun denotes animates or inanimates.

In more informal registers, there are cases, even in ordinary language, where the straightforward semantic rules are overridden by emotive and affective factors (Vachek 1964) as in (1). Especially in colloquial usage, considerable variation is possible: humans may be downgraded by the use of *it*, and inanimates upgraded by the use of *he* or *she*, only if they are countable and individuated (2 a-b). Another feature determining gender fluctuation is the individuality parameter (Siemund 2008; Kortmann – Scheider 2004): feminine and masculine pronouns are also used with inanimates if characterised by the feature [+individuated], but never with mass nouns (cf. 3). Sometimes, subtler and elusive factors seem to be at play, such as the protagonist vs. the narrator's perspective (4), or the personal vs. impersonal perspective (5) as well as the specific vs. generic reading.

(1) You said the black knife, you said. I said the sharp one this one *he*'s fairly cheap but they use *him* a lot [BNC KD0]

(2a) Is *he* washable? [thus an American female customer at a store refers to a bedspread] (Corbett 1991: 12)
(2b) I can understand why they took the silverware etc. But why did *it* [the robber] take my piggy bank? (Mathiot 1979: 11)

[18] I refer to those few lexical pairs whose gender is marked by the occurrence of a special suffix, such as *lion* vs. *lioness*, *actor* vs. *actress*, *hero* vs. *heroine* and those lexemes related to one gender only, such as *hen* vs. *rooster*, *queen* vs. *king*.

(3) [H]ow did they do that [sc. Baking] again? Well, y-you see, you and-, had – 'twas hearth fires then, th., th-, right down on the hearth, you see, and they had a big round iron with a handle on '*n*, and they used to put *he* under the fire and *he*'d get hot; then they used to put some – take some fire from the corner o'the fireplace like and put *it* here where you was going to bake to, and put this iron on top of *it* [South West England (Wakelin 1986: 103-4)]

(4) The fly was beating its wings furiously, trying to break loose and free itself. "First" said Charlotte "I dive at him … Next I wrap him up"

(5) […] he went out on to the ice and hammered a hole in it with his heavy wooden shoe, and carried the duckling home to his wife. There *it* soon revived. The children wanted to play with *it* but the duckling thought they were going to ill-use *him*, and rushed in his fright into the milk pan …

In other words, Standard English gender agreement rules can be disregarded or rather be flexible for semantic, pragmatic or stylistic reasons. In ordinary language, the interpretation depends on the communicational and cultural context, in poetry on the poet's message. In particular, Emily Dickinson fully maximises such flexibility to convey her own experience, emotions, and in particular to construct her identity as a woman and a poet.

2.2.1 Intensive pronouns or intensifiers and reflexives

A special instance of pronouns are the reflexives, which consist of a personal pronoun + *self*. Like any pronoun, reflexive pronouns lack a descriptive content and are expressions which are prototypically used to indicate that a non-subject argument of a transitive predicate is coreferential with (or bound by) the subject: *himself* acquires a content meaning because it cannot possibly refer to anyone but John in *John*$_i$ *saw himself*$_i$ *in the mirror*. Reflexive pronouns in English are identical in form to the so-called intensifiers or intensive pronouns, differing in terms of distribution: both make reference to antecedents, but intensifiers are adjoined to either NPs or VPs and function as adverbial or adnominal modifiers, not as arguments of verbs (König – Siemund – Töpfer 2005).

Intensifiers are always prosodically prominent, i.e. they always carry a sentential stress. Such focusing and stressing is associated with the semantic effect of establishing contrast, i.e. of evoking alternatives to the referent of

the expression they are in construction with and structuring them as the periphery of the asserted (=central) value (the meaning of the noun phrase or the referent of the pronoun they follow).[19] In (6a), *the artist* is opposed to the *dust* produced by his activity as sculptor. Thus, in certain contexts the use of an intensifier raises and excludes the evoked alternatives, or more precisely, excludes the question of delegation, help or joint action, as in (6b), when the person interested in the action is also the direct agent.

(6a) Since cleansing river breezes never found their way through the walls, a patina of stone dust covered everything. Even the artist himself wore a fine grey powder like a second skin. (E. Georg, WSM, p. 9)

(6b) "If you don't go up and get it for me" he said "I'll just have to go up and get it myself." (Hole 2001: 136)

One restriction concerning the status of the noun or pronominal phrase modified by an intensifier is that it has to be accessible, in Lambrecht's terms (1994): in other words, it must be either situational or textual or inferentially accessible and 'anaphorically recoverable' (Halliday 1985).

A special occurrence of reflexive pronouns is that of the so-called 'locally free reflexives', 'untriggered reflexives', 'viewpoint reflexives', or 'perspective logophors' of English (Gast 2002), such as in *So what can a fine Tory gentleman like yourself have to do with a manufacturing Whig like Braithwaite?* [LOLAC 1985.205:2382], *The bottom stacks were compressed but the upper layers were soft and would provide comfort for everybody soon, including myself* [LOLAC 1985.200:2080], *Silvia was no helpless, downtrodden flower. Which meant that something else, apart from the defence of Silvia, had provoked her own furious outburst yesterday evening. Some more personal resentment that had come from within herself* [BNC JXT 2086]. This special type of reflexives has been differently interpreted by scholars: some have viewed them as reflexives bound by a minimal subject of consciousness within their discourse (Zribi-Hertz, 1989), some as personal pronouns (Reinhart – Reuland 1993), some as intensifiers without pronominal heads (Baker 1995; König – Siemund 1999). Formally identical to reflexives, they are not bound to any antecedent in the same clause, but either in a higher clause or outside the verbal context in the speech situation. They also evoke alternatives to their reference value,

[19] For a more precise description of intensifiers see (Baker 1995; König – Siemund 1999; Gast 2002).

which is structured into a centre and a periphery according to the following relations and are much like intensifiers:

a X has a higher rank than Y in a real-world hierarchy
b X is more important than Y in a specific situation
c Y is identified relative to X (kinship terms, part-whole, etc.)
d X is a subject of consciousness, centre of observation, etc. (logophoricity).

Although locally free reflexives are of quite limited use in Standard English, diachronically they are relatively frequent in Early and Late Modern English (Vezzosi 2005). In particular, they are a frequent feature of Dickinson's poetic language.

3. How Emily Dickinson uses personal pronouns

Emily Dickinson's choices are partly due to sort of contrasting paradigms in her poetry and her poetic language. On the one hand, her language has often been described as obscure, ambiguous and indeterminate (Gross 1969), characteristics often attributed to the high degree of intimacy (Hagenbüchle 1974). Her language has also been "accused" of "noncommunication" (Gross 1969), but she herself explicitly expressed her faith in the power of words and language (Anderson 1960) to understand the world and to be eternal.[20] While her language has been seen as "familiar" (Hagenbüchle 1974), her love for sophisticated, 'unusual' and studied vocabulary (Howard 1957) is patent, as she admitted it, when she wrote that her "Lexicon" was her only companion (Letters 404). I think that the source of this apparent paradox lies in Dickinson's deep knowledge and extremely original use of grammatical units, lexis and constructions in either unusual or unexpected contexts, which allow her to emotionally express her thought and feelings, but also produce an effect of disorientation and estrangement in the reader, who has to assess the context and the co-text by themselves, thus participating actively and empathically in the poetic creation.

This is particularly true for the personal pronouns whose meaning depends on the co-text and on the context. To determine the referent of

[20] A few poems express Dickinson's poetic concerning language and in particular words as vehicles of her messages. Just a few lines often quoted by literary critics in this regard: *A Word that breathes distinctly / Has not the Power to die* (J.1651), This loved Philology (J.1651).

a personal pronoun is strategic when the poet reflects on the poetic creation, on the status of the poet and on her condition as a woman, because they unveil what she thought about. In the following few paragraphs, I will analyse some poems by Dickinson, where her metalinguistic thought is assumed to be more evident.

A significant number of Dickinson's poems is dedicated to and focuses on the poet as language-maker and the act of poetic creation and writing. *This is a Poet* (J448) is a clear statement on both the actor and the act of writing poems: the poet's theory of poetic creation, according to which the poet can create incredible wonders from the ordinary (life and language), unperishable unlike the real world from which the poet takes their inspiration. If the reader can quite easily grasp the sense of the poem, they are at a loss when trying referentially to interpret the pronouns. Knowing how personal pronouns can be used in both formal and informal registers, the semantic features underlying their usage, and the pragmatic inferences implied by the intensive pronouns can help the interpretation of the poetic message.

Leaving aside the interplay between different spaces and different times established by the alternation of *This* – *That* and of verbal present vs. past, it is not plain what *it* stands for, although it is clear that it does not refer to any inanimate antecedent. Such indeterminacy forces the reader to make sense of it, searching in their repository of other less standard ordinary functions of this pronoun:

(7) This was a Poet – It is That
Distills amazing sense
From ordinary Meanings
And Attar so immense
From the familiar species
That perished by the Door
We wonder it was not Ourselves
Arrested it – before
Of Pictures, the Discloser
The Poet – it is He
Entitles Us – by Contrast
To ceaseless Poverty
Of portion – so unconscious
The Robbing – could not harm
Himself – to Him – a Fortune
Exterior – to Time (J 448)

It in the first verse can both refer to *this* and *poet* as well as function as a dummy subject introducing the complement that-clause. A clue to the meaning and function of this unidentified *it* might be found in the following verses: in "it was not Ourselves" *it* plausibly refers to the poet, who does not belong to the same community as the speaker – *ourselves*, *us* –; in "arrested it" *it* might even hint at the poem, the art of the poet. In this poem Dickinson is speaking as a reader and not as a poet, as she considers herself a part of the admiring, ordinary crowd. Accordingly, she depicts a poet as a public figure and accordingly as a male poet, who creates effortlessly and easily, so that for him poetry is a source of pleasure and richness from which the speaker's community is excluded. The mutual exclusion of the poet's and the speaker's worlds is emphasised by the use of intensifying pronominal forms: *ourselves* identifies *the poet* as an alternative to a central *we*, which includes the speaker and the other poets whose poetic creation is a painful delivery, while *himself* excludes any alternative values other than *the poet* from the joy of his writing poetry. The choice of *it* to introduce the poet and his art is not a neutral one, but a means to express the speaker's attitude towards the 'professional' famous poet. When, in colloquial and informal English, *it* is used with animates and even humans, it implies taking a distance from its referent,[21] downgrading it or a preference for a generic and impersonal reading. Accordingly, *it* for Dickinson indicates a generic situation and at the same time expresses her sense of distance with respect to the generic figure of a poet and a general representation of the act of composing poetry. But it also implies a sense of estrangement and non-identification of Dickinson with the public figure of the poet. As a confirmation of that, when the speaker's voice moves to the present situation, the poet is marked by a masculine pronoun – "it is He […] Himself – to Him" – as to reinforce Dickinson's sense of exclusion from the poet's world as a woman and as a female poet.

This is not the only example in which the poet caught up in the creative act is referred to with a masculine pronoun: in *The Spider as an Artist* (J1275), in *A spider holds a Silver Ball* (J605) or in *A Spider sewed at Night* (J1138), the spider's work symbolises the artwork, and the spider, which personifies the artist, namely the poet, is referred to by means of a masculine pronoun. Curiously, masculine pronouns seem to be the preferred option not only

[21] The use of *it* to distance herself from the person she's referring to is a frequent device in Dickinson's poetry: an explicatory example is *If it had no pencil* (J921), where she is appointing her Master who does not reply to her letters, who does not write to her by means of *it* instead of the more obvious *thee* or *you* to distance herself from her own suffering by referring to him generically.

with reference to whatever symbolises the socially recognised poet, but even to poetry itself (A Word that breathes distinctly / Has not the power to die / Cohesive as the Spirit / it may expire if He – /Made Flesh and dwelt among us […] J1651):

(8) The Spider as an Artist
Has never been employed –
Though his surpassing Merit
Is freely certified

By every Broom and Bridget
Throughout a Christian Land –
Neglected Son of Genius
I take thee by the Hand – (J1275)

Masculine pronouns do not refer only to men, but they also identify women. Dickinson dedicates three eulogies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, as a sign of what she meant for her:[22] Dickinson looked to her as a role model and a politically ally. Expectedly in these three poems Dickinson refers to her by means of a feminine pronoun – "Her – last poems –" (J312), "[…] That Nature murmured to herself" (J593), "I went to thank Her – / But She Slept" – (J363). Nevertheless, in J449 Dickinson genders her as male: "He questioned softly". Here Dickinson deals with Keats and the ideal of beauty in poetry, a theme dear to Browning who in *A Vision of Poets* said "[…] These were poets true, / Who died for Beauty, as martyrs do / For Truth –…" (ll. 289-291). The reference is clearly not to the woman Elisabeth Barret Browning, but to her as a poet, as an artist and as an actively involved theoretician.

Shifts from the expected feminine pronoun for female referents to a grammatically unmotivated masculine pronoun are not rare in Dickinson's poems on marriage and love, something that in Dickinson's time could be paradoxical. If loving would take to marriage and marriage was regarded as an inevitable and longed for step in a woman's life, Dickinson was aware that it might well require the woman to renounce her own identity, to subordinate her own life and desires to those of her partner. Such a paradox is the topic of J732: the voluntary choice amounting to self-abnegation.

[22] One of the most influential writers for Emily Dickinson was Elizabeth Barrett Browing, whose portrait was ne of three hanging on her bedroom wall, together with George Eliot and Thomas Carlyle. In a letter she wrote to Samuel Bowles: "if you touch her Grave, put one hand on the Head for me – her unmentioned Mourner" (J312, J593, J363).

(9) She rose to His Requirement, – dropped
The Playthings of her Life
To take the honorable Work
Of Woman and of Wife.

If aught She missed in Her new Day
Of Amplitude, or Awe,
Or first Prospective, – or the Gold
In using wore away,

It lay unmentioned, – as the Sea
Develops Pearl and Weed,
But only to Himself – be known
The Fathoms they abide. (J 732)

In the first stanza, marriage in women's lives is expected to mark adulthood and is depicted as a means of acquiring a social status, as suggested by the verb *to rise*. However, by the end of the line the poet has undercut her initial claim that the wife's new honourable position involves any real elevation. The verb *dropped* both applies to its object ("The Playthings of Her Life"), and, due to its end-line position, to the woman who drops all her expectations after the disappointment of the marriage. Such dissatisfaction is known "only to Himself". According to the roles of English grammar, *himself* should refer to a masculine entity and consequently to the husband. The grammatically most plausible interpretation turns out to be contextually unconvincing: the husband would know about his wife's dissatisfaction, while the wife herself would not be aware of her own state. On the basis of the rules governing the felicitous use of intensifiers, *Himself* can select an extra-contextually high ranked entity: it could refer to God as the highest ranked entity in the world, thus suggesting that only God knows her discontent.

However, this interpretation, although plausible, is not totally convincing, because it is not in line with the structure of the poem, where everything moves around the figure of the woman. As the second (and second to last) stanza is a continuation of the previous one, specifying what women imagine marriage should mean in their lives, the reader would expect the same topic to be maintained in the last one, there being no sign of a turn change. Furthermore, it is undeniable that a parallelism between the sea and the referent of *Himself* is suggested by the conjunction *as*: as the sea is aware of its treasure concealed in its abyss from everybody's sight,

so the referent of *Himself* is the only one who knows the woman's qualities buried in the innermost part of her *self*, unrecognised and forgotten ("unmentioned") by the external world. Were it not for the gender of the pronoun, the identification of *Himself* with the woman would be immediate: not only is she the topic of the entire poem, but she will be at the end the centre of the perspective through which the institution of marriage is seen. In this way, the parallelism with the sea is even more effective: the poet highlights the oceanic depth, breadth and wealth of life she does not reveal to others.

But why did Dickinson not use the feminine form? Probably for the same reason why she genders Elisabeth Barret Browning as a male, when addressed in her role of a poet. In the 19th century, and surely in Dickinson's society and community, women were often regarded as being hardly more serious than children, instinctive and emotive, but not rational. By using a masculine pronoun, the poet confers a masculine status on the woman to mark her as a subject of consciousness and power, that is, 'male' qualities in her times.

As a matter of fact, in Dickinson's poems there are just ten instances of *herself* which turns out to be the least frequent form of the *self*-paradigm, and only one in explicit relation to a woman: it cannot be casual that that happens with her muse, Elisabeth Barret Browning (J592). The feminine pronouns generally refer to Nature, Flowers, and Birds, sometimes as metaphors for women, or Emily Dickinson herself. An analysis of three poems may shed some light on the symbolic and poetic meaning conveyed by gendered pronouns.

In all three, Dickinson metaphorically identifies herself with the Bird and poetry with the bird's singing (*Her smile was shaped like other smiles* J514) and freedom (*They shut me up in Prose* J613). The *Bird* has *herself* as a coreference marker in J514 when it presents the poet-girl, who enthusiastically approaches poetry, from which she then withdraws remembering the suffering caused by previous experiences. Like the bird being hit by a bullet, the memories of previous frustration and incomprehension stop and make her baffled about her right and the possibility to 'sing'. The image of the song as beads scattered in the mud is particularly vivid.

(10) Her smile was shaped like other smiles –
The Dimples ran along –
And still it hurt you, as some Bird
Did hoist herself, to sing,

Then recollect a Ball, she got –
And hold upon the Twig,
Convulsive, while the Music crashed –
Like Beads – among the Bog – (P514)

Contrarily, the same image of the bird symbolising the poet in J613 is referred to by means of *himself*. Here the bird stands for the poet-adult, who is aware of what she wants and what she suffers, who is conscious of having been silenced and imprisoned in a male-dominated world of commonplace dullness, obliged to silently accept its values and its roles. But she also is aware that it was as futile as shutting up a bird in a pound, because a bird can easily escape a pound by flying away. And as easily, she let her imagination and creativity express themselves. The parallelism with her own life is striking: she shut herself up in her own room so as to prevent herself from assuming the roles society would impose on her, and thus be free to be a poet.

(11) They shut me up in Prose –
As when a little Girl
They put me in the Closet –
Because they liked me "still" –

Still! Could themself have peeped –
And seen my Brain – go round –
They might as wise have lodged a Bird
For Treason – in the Pound –

Himself has but to will
And easy as a Star
Look down upon Captivity –
And laugh – No more have I – (J613)

The link between the social and cultural role of the poet and a referential masculine pronoun is even more evident in *A Spider sewed at Night* (P1138), a dense and enigmatic vision of the poet-spider, working at night, as Dickinson is well known to have done. That Emily Dickinson identifies herself in the spider is undoubted: the spider is said to sew, as she often self-portraits herself in the creative act (Don't put up my Thread & Needle / I'll begin to Sow /When the Birds begin to whistle […] J617). It is not the only instance of the spider metaphor for the poet, but here the spider's art

is turned into an emblem of immortality. In other words, this poem, often described as a riddle, can be interpreted as a manifesto of the poetic art: the poet with only the guide of his (her) own inner vision sews his (her) meaning on the *tabula rasa* of the paper (Arc of White), with the self confidence that the essence of his (her) own words will be immortal. Out of no casualness does Dickinson refer to herself with a male pronoun in this declaration of hers as espousal of the idea of *l'art-pour-l'art ante litteram.*

(12) A Spider sewed at Night
Without a Light
Upon an Arc of White.

If Ruff it was of Dame
Or Shroud of Gnome
Himself himself inform. (J617)

4. Conclusions

Emily Dickinson withdrew from social and public life at the age of thirty-five, avoiding meeting strangers or even acquaintances. She left no biographical traces behind; her poems, though they number almost 1,800, are the only testimony to her private world. She was perfectly conscious of the power of the "Syllable" as soon as it is "delivered" (L342a), and equally aware that she used language to give voice to her creative ambition or imagination, but also to balance the contrasting aspects of her life. Being the daughter of a conservative Trinitarian in 19th century America, she knew she was expected to be a wife and a mother, but her ideals were against the conventions of her time and the Puritan and patriarchal society she lived in, which would deny her the right of being a poet. Her culture is a culture where gender designated difference, whose expression was controlled by hierarchical structures. Language can also be understood as a structure, and, like many other social structures of her time, a male-controlled realm. Thus, Emily Dickinson used language in an unpredictable and indeterminate way, apparently adhering to its norms, but practically endowing the standard pattern with unexpected functions and meanings the reader is required to decipher: that is, the reader has to build the *signifié* of the linguistic sign by means of inquiring into its *significant*. In other words, reading Dickinson's poetry turns into a 'signification process' leading to a new experience, that of the readers, thus achieving a "super-natural and lasting value" in Mukařovský's words (1940).

In her hands, the pronoun becomes a powerful instrument, if not weapon (There is a word / Which bears a sword / can pierce an armed man […] J8) with which to construct her identity (a Columnar Self, J789) as a woman poet in a male-hierarchically structured society and in a male world of literary and poetic language. Exploiting the possibility of pronouns to identify not exclusively biological sexes, but also to refer to the properties prototypically attributed to either of the two sexes or to the sexually unmarked and inanimate, she uses the neuter pronoun for the general, and the male pronoun to indicate a member or a representative of the male-world wielding social power and authority. Therefore, it is the male referential pronoun that designates her as a source of critical consciousness, as a self-confident poet, inasmuch as male is the wielder of control and authority, and male is the poet-type whose poetic creation is publicly recognised and socially accepted. Accordingly, the gender shifts from masculine to feminine, when Emily Dickinson represents herself as a would-be poet or even more impressively after the poetic creation (cf. J1339) when she gets back to her condition of a silent woman to whom an independent public voice is denied: *Remain for her – of rapture / But the humility.*

Obviously, a linguistic and structural analysis of poetry is not sufficient to understand its meaning exhaustively, and linguistic interpretations are not the only possible ones. What linguists can do is to delineate the 'limits of interpretation', by showing which interpretations are or are not motivated by the text and what the consequences of a particular interpretation are.

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Lost identity in the Bible[1]

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ABSTRACT

The current and complex framework for the study of languages, especially English, offers key insights into not only language change, but also the role of neuroscience in such change. In this study, which is part of a wider project, our aim is to trace the diachronic development of English through the textual analysis of various Bible translations, in order to verify its discursive identity. For this purpose, the 50 chapters of Genesis have been analysed in the following versions of the Bible: the Wycliffite, the Tyndale, the King James, the New King James, the 1881 English Revised Version, and the 1982 New King James Version. Several linguistic parameters have been compared through manual counting and statistical comparison. The results have confirmed our hypothesis that a deep modification of linguistic identity has occurred over the centuries.

Keywords: identity, quantitative analysis, language change, simplification, neurological reading.

1. Introduction

Heidegger has stated that language is 'the house of being' and 'in its home, human being dwells'; the being and essence of human individuals is determined in reference to the being and essence of language (Heidegger 2008: 37-41). Our research stems from a desire to examine, through rigorous study, the symptoms that inhabit the contemporary world of language.

[1] Research for this paper has been carried out jointly by the two authors. Though the general framework has been developed together, Ilde E. D. Kantzas is responsible for section 1 and Francesca Ditifeci for sections 2-3.

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Texts produced today may be seen to contain a radically different structuring of writing, which suggests orality rather than literacy, as claimed by Ong (2002). In his text, Ong provides a useful example of this by comparing two versions of the creation sequence in Genesis, one from 1610, and one from 1970, in order to show the evolution and simplification of language which has occurred over time (Brownlees – Ditifeci 2019: 157-161). The original Hebrew text is a written one which preserves noticeable oral patterning in its additive style. The 1610 Douay version, dating from a time with a still considerable oral culture keeps close to the oral additive patterning, keeping to the original Hebrew nine instances of *we* and *wa* ('and') with nine 'ands':

(1) In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: Be light made. And light was made. And God saw the light that it was good; and he divided the light from the darkness. And he called the light Day, and the darkness Night; and there was evening and morning one day.

In comparison, The New American Bible (1970) dates from a time and culture more accustomed to written texts and offers a translation where *we* and *wa* are translated by 'and' (only twice), 'when', 'then', 'thus', or 'while' to provide 'a flow of narration' more in keeping with the 20th century expectations for texts:

(2) In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day' and the darkness he called 'night'. Thus evening came, and morning followed – the first day.

As Ong states:

> Oral structures often look to pragmatics, chirographic structures look more to syntactics (organization of the discourse itself). Written discourse develops more elaborate and fixed grammar than oral discourse does because to provide meaning it is more dependent simply upon linguistic structure, since it lacks the normal full existential contexts which surround oral discourse and help determine meaning in oral discourse somewhat independently of grammar (Ong 2002: 36-38).

Daniell also reports in his extensive study of the Bible (2003: 13-14) a striking example of this simplification, when he compares an extract (Matthew 6: 5-13) from a 1996 version of the New Testament with one from Tyndale's translation of 1534. The 1996 version reads:

(3) When you come before God, don't turn into a theatrical production. All these people making a regular show of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat? Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role play before God. Just sit there as simply and honestly you can manage. […]

Tyndale's version seems much less immediate to 20th century readers:

(4) And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrities are. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, because they would be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and shut the door to thee, and pray to thy father which is in the secret: and thy father which seeth in secret shall regard thee openly. […]

There is much critical debate around the theme of the return to orality, since some feel it can never be demonstrated, and that we should not simply hypothesize an earlier primitive and wild goodness, a Rousseauian goodness: "writing, before being the object, is the condition of the episteme" (Derrida 2006: 49). Here, once again, neurological and linguistic studies come to a fruitful meeting point.

Many questions arise in the age of digital communication with respect to the effects that this type of writing, volatile and tendentially iconic, has had on language, on mnemonic function and on learning modes. Is the 'unmaking' of language (Jakobson 1971) today a characteristic only of some pathological conditions or is it slowly invading, in a viral and almost devious way, every field of human thought? This is our point of departure for our study. We have therefore turned to psychoanalysis to find a way of approaching the issue. If until the 1970s, in the psychoanalytic clinic, there was a clear distinction in the fields of neurosis and psychosis, with respect to the emergence of the symptom, today a new reading of the contemporary symptom has been developed, stemming from the thought of Jacques Lacan,

later elaborated by Jacques Alain Miller (2009). In this new reading neurosis and psychosis are no longer seen as separate but as overlapping.

Other experts in psychopathologies have added further points for consideration. For example, Ansermet notes that in psychosis "These may be extravagances, a particular use of language, disturbances of thought" (Ansermet 2016). Shanahan draws attention to the crisis of classifications and pluralisms of identity in the contemporary world which has led to the absence of guiding established discourses to assist in choice: "In this sense, the "there is no norm for all" is followed by the fact that everyone must choose" (Shanahan 2018).

Language is the mirror through which we have chosen to read this trend, to verify it, to put it to the test. The ductility of the instrument, and the contemporary world that encourages simplification and greater comprehensibility, the use of a ready-made language, seems to mark a path that leads to a universal pathologization. "The elevation of modern individualism relates to the promotion of the category of election […]. This is what Lacan defines in clinical terms when he affirms that the whole world is insane. Everyone from now on makes his own choice. We know that the world in which we live and will live will be animated by the frenzy of choice" (Miller 2017).

From this point of view i.e. interpreting the contemporary world as inhabited by a globalized madness, it may be useful to resort to the analysis of discourse as a fundamental landmark (in the medical sense) in the pathology of language. The bold hypothesis, which we are about to put to the test, was therefore to extrapolate from scientific literature (Jakobson 1971; Pennisi 1998), the signs and symptoms of this contemporary pathology which is largely similar to psychosis, from the point of view of linguistic expression and characteristics, namely Broca's aphasia, to test a written text, in a diachronic comparison. It was Jakobson who first turned the attention of linguists to the aspects of aphasia, working from the findings of Goldstein. Therefore, this is common ground for neurologists, psychoanalysts and linguists. It is necessary to go back to the beginnings of modern neurology, to Wernicke, a pupil of the same master of Freud, Meynert, who proposed an associationist model of language, based on the assumption that language is not located in a single, well-defined brain area, but that it is the result of active cooperation between sensory and motor centres, according to a scheme elaborated later in the form of a diagram by Wernicke and Liechtein (Liechtein 1885).

The development of a discourse, from Jakobson's point of view, can take place according to two different semantic directions: one theme leads to another by similarity or contiguity. The most appropriate denomination

for the first case would be metaphorical, for the second metonymic, since they find their most synthetic expression respectively in metaphor and metonymy. "In normal verbal behavior both processes are continually operative, but careful observation will reveal that, under the influence of a cultural pattern, personality, and verbal style, preference is given to one of the two processes over the other" (Jakobson 1971: 129). Keeping in mind Jakobson's recommendation, that "linguists should be familiar with the technical terms and procedures of medicine" (Jakobson 1971: 117), we can also add that on certain occasions there is a very particular fixity in the meaning. Dessal adds, with respect to ordinary psychosis:

> …sometimes there is a very particular fixity in signification, cases in which the patient is able to maintain a discourse constructed out of phrases that have been selected here and there, supplementing their inability to metaphorize the Real and serving as a form of nomination. We notice this in the constant use of clichés, refrains, sayings, rhetorical turns, quotes, and even jokes, that make up a kind of verbal 'ideology' that the patient repeats to frame the void of enunciation (Blanco 2018).

We began, first of all, in order to discover the elements of the language used by everyone in today's world which would prove the contemporary pathologization of language which has attracted our critical interest and investigation, by making a comparison based on scientific literature that allowed us to make a logical assimilation among three different syndromes. Symptoms which although distinct from each other due to different clinical symptomatologies are nonetheless similar with regard to the pathologies characteristic of language, namely Broca's aphasia, autistic language, psychotic language.

2. Methodology[2]

Regarding the initial question, i.e. the search for a significant variation of certain parameters over time, we felt it was appropriate to deal with a text that remained unchanged along the diachronic axis, preferring not to compare similar texts such as novels, bureaucratic texts, or letters, to preserve the study from the hypothetical variations due to the subjectivity of the writer,

[2] The methodology applied in this research has been developed and utilized for the first time by I. E. D. Kantzas in her Ph.D. dissertation, forthcoming.

his/her context or culture and the recipient. The most natural choice has fallen on the sacred text *par excellence*, which, moreover, offers a wide variety of translations into British English and American English. Furthermore, as pointed out in the introduction, in many linguistic studies a comparison between different versions of the Bible is used to highlight differences and shifts in language; however, we wanted to pinpoint further the individual elements whose sum or juxtaposition is called style, and extract from this analysis a statistical inference which would prove the unmaking and shift of the language hypothesised.

> English is the most translated-into language in the world. […] since Tyndale's first printed Bible translation into English from the original languages of Greek and Hebrew, in the 1520s and 1530s, there have been published in English over 350 translations of the complete Bible (Daniell 2003: xiii).

We have therefore chosen, among the multitude of English translations of the Bible, published from 1526 onwards, five particularly significant versions, which have the characteristic of being slightly different versions of the same text. "It is important to emphasise the variety. Just as for nearly five hundred years the number of Bible translations into English has been far greater than into any other language, so, in the sixteenth century, England was unique in the number of different vernacular translations on offer" (Daniell 2003: 11). The work of selecting and skimming the most significant versions involved a considerable effort, because, if our hypotheses were confirmed, they should show the progressive shift of language, without displaying too many variations.

In fact, we can say that the choice of a text so adherent to the canon has not facilitated our work, but we deliberately tried to test an absolutely innovative method on a text that did not offer any kind of variation due to other linguistic or stylistic factors such as those related to the authors, their culture, their language, their audience, and the literary genre

While the English versions of the Bible that we have examined are among the most representative ones from a theological point of view, they by no means represent the most singular; for they are each the standard for the period in which they were published. In addition, they are not the result of the work of a single author, but the result of many contributors (Daniell 2003: 769; Volli 2011: 186-187).

This choice not only allowed us to operate on a wide diachronic axis, but also to share with the scientific community a valid and repeatable method. Statistical analyses have been carried out to explore the following research hypotheses, consistent with the linguistic characteristics of the ordinary psychosis model outlined by Miller (2009):

1. The hypothesis of decreased total number of words
2. The hypothesis of decreased total number of sentences
3. The hypothesis of decreased average number of words per sentence
4. The hypothesis of a higher percentage of words belonging to the open classes than to the closed classes
5. The hypothesis of decreased percentage of prepositions
6. The hypothesis of decreased percentage of conjunctions
7. The hypothesis of decreased percentage of pronouns
8. The hypothesis of increased percentage of nouns
9. The hypothesis of a higher percentage of non-finite verbs than finite verbs
10. The hypothesis of a higher percentage of main sentences than subordinate ones

We carried out specific statistical analyses to address the hypotheses of the present study. Initially, the main descriptive indices of the variables were calculated and evaluated for the 50 chapters of the Book of Genesis in each of the 5 Bible versions from 1526 to 1992.

Subsequently, the trends of the average values of the variables in the diachronic axis 1526-1992 were graphically shown with 95% confidence intervals to allow comparisons. Specifically, we compared the average values of the pairs of Genesis versions – *King James* of 1611 *vs*. *New King James* of 1982 and *English Revised Version* of 1885 vs. *Revised Today's English Version* of 1992 – through Student's test T to compare the averages of two paired samples.

3. Results

For each of the 50 chapters of Genesis, the variables shown in Table 1 have been taken into consideration and, subsequently, the corresponding main descriptive indices, calculated in the 50 chapters for each of the 5 editions, have been reported in Table 2.

Table 1. List of variables and corresponding labels

Label	Variable
prep	Percentage of prepositions over total number of words.
conj	Percentage of conjunctions over total number of words.
closed_classes	Percentage of words belonging to closed classes (articles, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections and adverbs) over total number of words.
fin_verbs	Percentage of finite verbs over total number of verbs.
non_fin_ verbs	Percentage of non-finite verbs over total number of verbs.
subst	Percentage of nouns over total number of words.
pron	Percentage of pronouns over total number of words.
open_classes	Percentage of words belonging to the open classes (verbs, nouns, adjectives and pronouns) over total number of words.
tot_classes	Total number of words.
subord_sent	Percentage of subordinate sentences over total number of sentences.
simple_sent	Percentage of main sentences over total number of sentences.
tot_sent	Total number of sentences.
AWPS	Average number of words per sentence.
Version	Genesis Versions: 1526 – Tyndale 1611 – King James 1885 – English Revised Version 1982 – New King James 1992 – Revised Today's English Version

In order to better appreciate the changes of the average values of the variables shown in Table 2, the diagrams of the average values have been created in correspondence with the research hypotheses referring to the time span 1526-1992.

Table 2. Main descriptive indices of the variables under study per Genesis Version

Version		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std deviation
1526	Prep	50	.047	.198	.12291	.029190
	Conj	50	.047	.200	.11408	.027011

1526	closed_classes	50	.311	.487	.37226	.034960
	fin_verbs	50	.623	1.000	.90960	.071681
	non_fin_verbs	50	.000	.377	.09040	.071681
	Subst	50	.168	.448	.25298	.056230
	Pron	50	.021	.224	.12814	.035552
	open_classes	50	.513	.689	.62774	.034960
	tot_classes	50	406	1672	687.74	250.627
	subord_sent	50	.092	.600	.33585	.114446
	simple_sent	50	.400	.908	.66415	.114446
	tot_sent	50	15	219	96.76	42.813
	AWPS	50	5.17	33.87	8.3838	5.45737
	Prep	50	.047	.202	.12596	.025652
	Conj	50	.067	.217	.11969	.026413
	closed_classes	50	.317	.449	.37550	.029717
	fin_verbs	50	.653	.988	.91143	.056560
	non_fin_verbs	50	.012	.347	.08857	.056560
	Subst	50	.164	.427	.24863	.051071
1611	Pron	50	.017	.216	.13147	.038683
	open_classes	50	.551	.683	.62450	.029717
	tot_classes	50	384	1691	710.06	253.918
	subord_sent	50	.105	.667	.31491	.123008
	simple_sent	50	.333	.895	.68509	.123008
	tot_sent	50	21	224	98.78	41.747
	AWPS	50	4.30	29.26	8.5028	5.53249
	Prep	50	.052	.195	.12140	.026467
	Conj	50	.047	.215	.10698	.031589
	closed_classes	50	.263	.456	.35952	.044242
	fin_verbs	50	.660	1.000	.91637	.058350
	non_fin_verbs	50	.000	.340	.08363	.058350
	Subst	50	.161	.481	.25312	.058817
1885	Pron	50	.024	.221	.13303	.037246
	open_classes	50	.544	.737	.64048	.044242
	tot_classes	50	403	1665	702.02	252.281
	subord_sent	50	.101	.522	.31144	.107131
	simple_sent	50	.478	.899	.68856	.107131
	tot_sent	50	28	231	101.28	42.877
	AWPS	50	5.00	31.57	8.1494	5.45189

1982	Prep	50	.048	.204	.12389	.026363
	Conj	50	.051	.187	.09627	.023056
	closed_classes	50	.272	.458	.36071	.032930
	fin_verbs	50	.593	1.000	.91108	.068926
	non_fin_verbs	50	.000	.407	.08892	.068926
	Subst	50	.167	.440	.25421	.055680
	Pron	50	.025	.209	.13404	.037117
	open_classes	50	.542	.728	.63929	.032930
	tot_classes	50	383	1653	694.10	255.892
	subord_sent	50	.123	.549	.30530	.098677
	simple_sent	50	.451	.877	.69470	.098677
	tot_sent	50	21	227	98.28	41.365
	AWPS	50	4.61	31.97	8.1798	5.25090
1992	Prep	50	.069	.163	.11080	.020405
	Conj	50	.043	.133	.07782	.019862
	closed_classes	50	.269	.415	.32492	.031113
	fin_verbs	50	.640	1.000	.89830	.063749
	non_fin_verbs	50	.000	.360	.10170	.063749
	Subst	50	.173	.497	.25616	.056183
	Pron	50	.032	.233	.13868	.038874
	open_classes	50	.585	.731	.67508	.031113
	tot_classes	50	320	1498	615.66	234.905
	subord_sent	50	.124	.640	.32206	.091218
	simple_sent	50	.360	.876	.67794	.091218
	tot_sent	50	25	239	95.80	41.763
	AWPS	50	4.13	21.28	7.2552	3.87631

3.1 The hypothesis of decreased total number of words

This hypothesis is central to our study, because it shows clearly how language progressively forgoes complexity.

The average number of words used in the 5 Genesis versions seems to follow a parabolic trend: after an increase from the 1526 to the 1611 versions, there is an evident decrease until the 1992 version. By comparing the average values of the 1611 and 1982 *King James* versions (M_{1611} = 710.06 253.92 *vs*. M_{1982} = 694.10 255.89) with those of the 1885 and 1992 *English Version*s (M_{1885} = 702.02 252.28 *vs*. M_{1992} = 615.66 234.91) we can see, in both cases, that the decreased average number of words used in the Genesis chapters is

statistically significant (respectively $t_{(49)} = 4.45$ con $p < 0.001$ e $t_{(49)} = 8.69$ con $p < 0.001$), confirming our initial hypothesis.

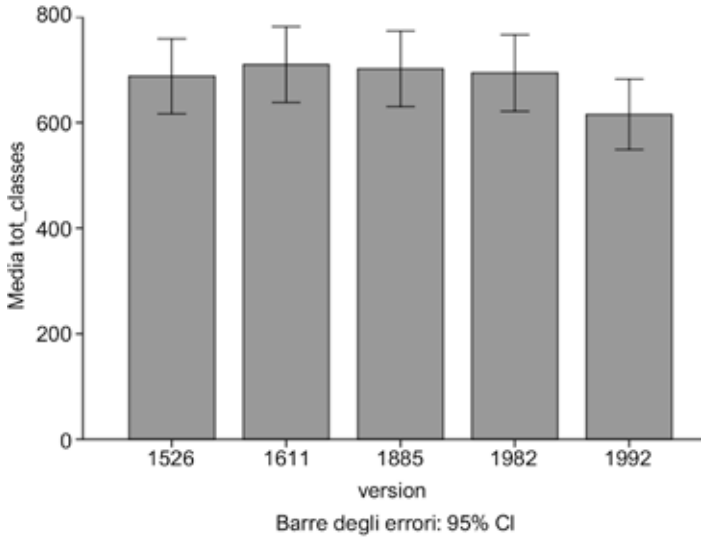

Figure 1. Diagram of the average *Number of words* per Genesis *Version*

3.2 The hypothesis of decreased total number of sentences

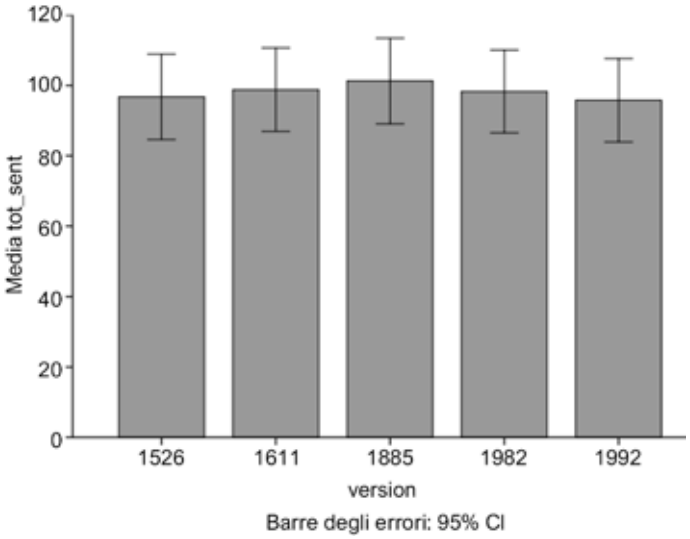

Figure 2. Diagram of the average *Number of sentences* per Genesis *Version*

The average number of sentences contained in the 5 versions increases gradually until the 1885 version and then decreases conversely until 1992. Comparing the average values of the *King James* versions (M_{1611} = 98.78 41.75 *vs*. M_{1982} = 98.28 41.37) we notice that this difference is almost absent and is not significant, while for the *English Versions* (M_{1885} = 101.28 42.88 *vs*. M_{1992} = 95.80 41.76) we observe that the average number of sentences in the examined chapters has significantly decreased ($t_{(49)}$ = 2.79 con $p < 0.01$), partially confirming our hypothesis.

3.3 The hypothesis of decreased average number of words per sentence

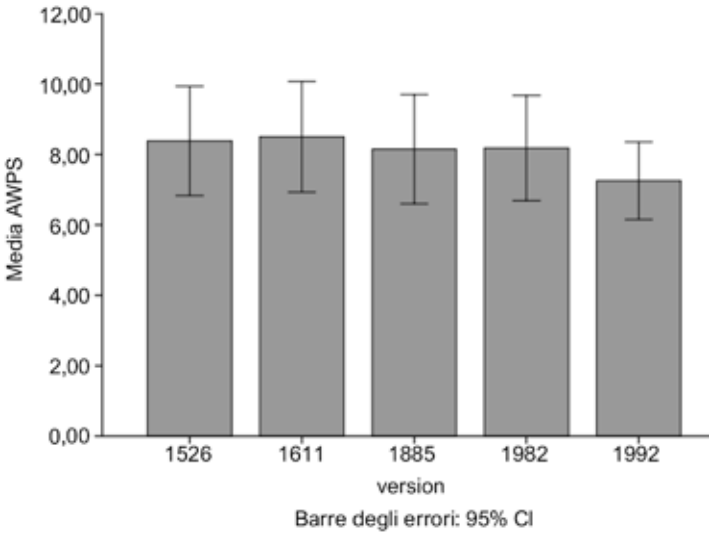

Figure 3. Diagram of the average *Number of words per sentences* per Genesis *Version*

By evaluating together, the number of words and sentences used in the chapters of Genesis, we can observe an overall decrease in the average number of words that make up the sentences. Looking at the corresponding averages of the *King James* (M_{1611} = 8.50 5.53 *vs*. M_{1982} = 8.18 5.25) and *English Versions* (M_{1885} = 8.15 5.45 *vs*. M_{1992} = 7.26 3.88) it emerges that they are not statistically significant (although the second comparison produces a "tendency to significance" ($p = 0.054$). This lack of significance could be the result of the fact that some chapters of Genesis (Ch. 10, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 36, regardless of the version) have a limited number of sentences and therefore a significantly higher average number of words per sentence.

3.4 The hypothesis of a higher percentage of words belonging to the open classes than to the closed classes

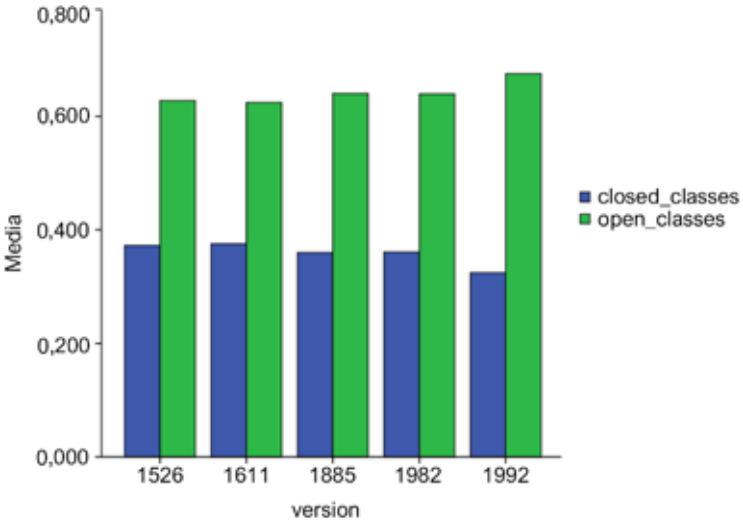

Figure 4. Diagram of *Average Percentage of Words belonging to the Open Classes* and *to the Closed Classes* per each Genesis *Version*

Fig. 4 shows how in the diachronic axis from 1526 to 1992 the word ratio belonging to the open classes tends to prevail more and more until it becomes almost twice that of the closed classes. Comparing the average values of the words belonging to the closed classes of the *King James* versions ($M_{1611} = 37.55\%$ 2.97% *vs*. $M_{1982} = 36.07\%$ 3.29%) with those of the *English Versions* ($M_{1885} = 35.95\%$ 4.42% *vs*. $M_{1992} = 32.49\%$ 3.11%), the result is that both reductions are not fortuitous (respectively $t_{(49)} = 5.30$ con $p < 0.001$ e $t_{(49)} = 6.16$ con $p < 0.001$). The results are the same if we compare the average percentages of words belonging to the open classes, thus confirming the research hypothesis.

3.5 The hypothesis of decreased percentage of prepositions

In the hypothesis of a decreased syntactic structure in the discourse, it is clear how prepositions play a pivotal role. Their disappearance, in a rigid text like the B*ook of Genesis*, even if statistically it is only partially significant, is however particularly interesting and relevant for our pathology model.

The percentage of prepositions within the 50 chapters seems to follow a fluctuating trend, which tends to decrease over time. Comparing the average values of the *King James* versions (M_{1611} = 12.60% 2.57% *vs*. M_{1982} = 12.39% 2.64%) no significant difference emerges, while the difference between the corresponding averages of the *English Versions* (M_{1885} = 12.14% 2.65% *vs*. M_{1992} = 11.08% 2.04%), is statistically significant ($t_{(49)}$ = 3.16 con $p < 0.01$), confirming partially our hypothesis.

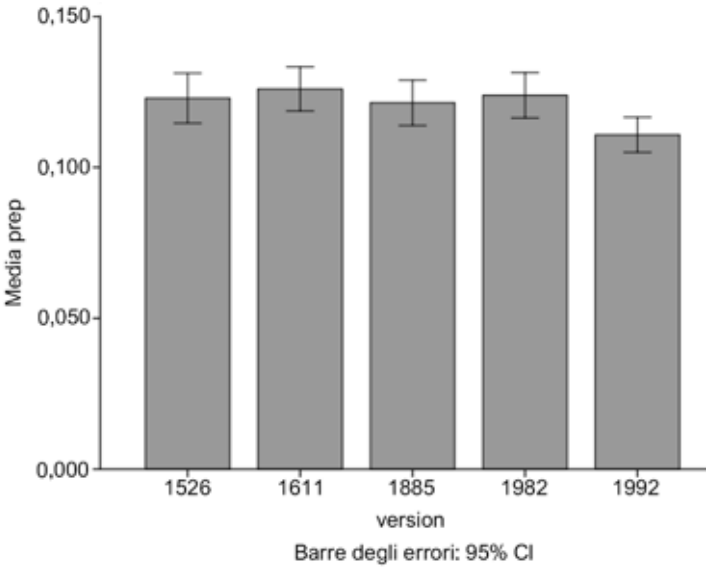

Figure 5. Diagram of *Average Percentage of Prepositions* per Genesis *Version*

3.6 The hypothesis of decreased percentage of conjunctions

Conjunctions are the keystone of discourse construction, syntactic bond and subordination. The clear tendency towards their reduction confirms that we are witnessing a dissolution of the context, as in the known clinical phenomenon (Frith) in autism.

Except for the increase from the 1526 version to the 1611 one, the percentage of conjunctions has fallen sharply and steadily over time. Comparing the average values of the *King James* versions (M_{1611} = 11.97% 2.64% *vs*. M_{1982} = 9.63% 2.31%) with those of the *English Versions* (M_{1885} = 10.70% 3.16% *vs*. M_{1992} = 7.78% 1.99%), it may be seen that both differences are strongly significant (respectively $t_{(49)}$ = 8.58 con $p < 0.001$ e $t_{(49)}$ = 6.37 con $p < 0.001$). Even in this case the research hypothesis is confirmed in each of the two versions of Genesis.

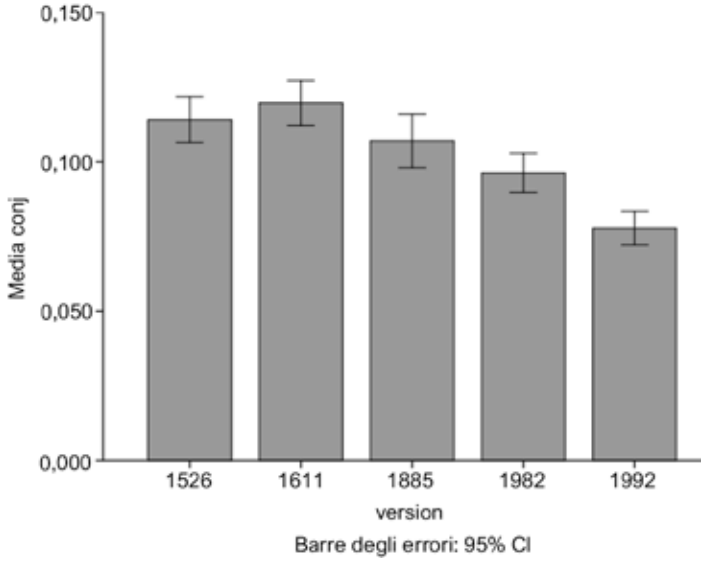

Figure 6. Diagram of the *Average Percentage of Conjunctions* per Genesis *Version*

3.7 The hypothesis of decreased percentage of pronouns

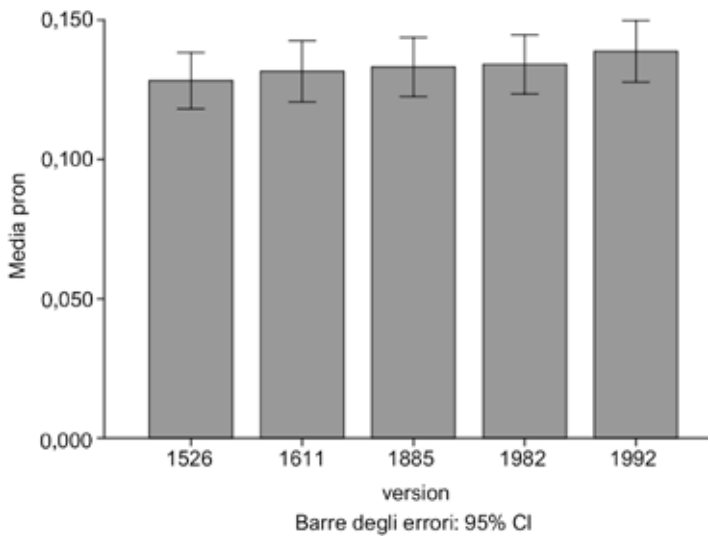

Figure 7. Diagram of the *Average Percentage of Pronouns* per Genesis *Version*

The percentage of pronouns seems to go against the trend of the formulated hypothesis: they increase slightly and constantly over the time axis considered. When compared, the averages of the *King James* versions (M_{1611} = 13.15% 3.87% *vs.* M_{1982} = 13.40% 3.71%) are not significantly different,

underlining the fact that the percentage of pronouns remains almost stable in these versions. In contrast, the comparison between the average values of pronouns in the *English Versions* (M_{1885} = 13.30% 3.72% *vs*. M_{1992} = 13.87% 3.89%), shows that this increase is not fortuitous, but is statistically significant ($t_{(49)}$ = -2.05 con $p < 0.05$). Therefore, not only did the percentage of pronouns not decrease as hypothesized, but it actually increased in the *English Versions*.

3.8 The hypothesis of increased percentage of nouns

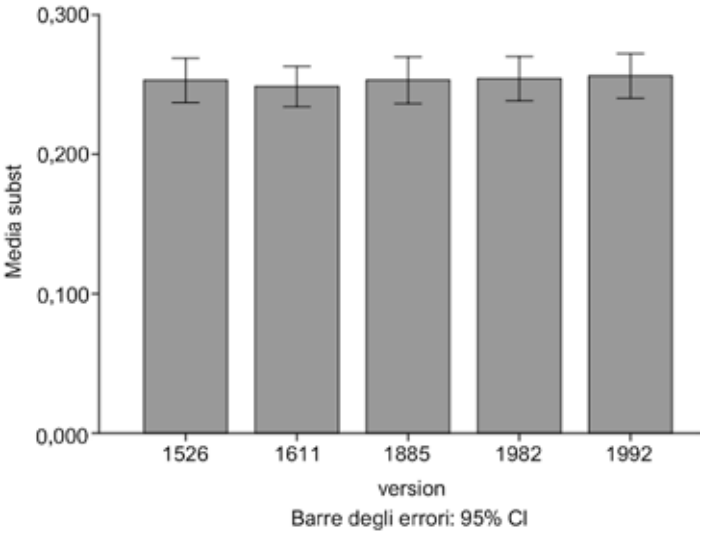

Figure 8. Diagram of the average *Percentage of Nouns* per Genesis *Version*

Except for the 1526 version, the average values shown in Fig.8 increase slightly over time. Specifically, the average values of the percentages of nouns in the *English Versions* (M_{1885} = 25.31% 5.88% *vs*. M_{1992} = 25.62% 5.62%) seem to be due to chance, however, those of the *King James* versions (M_{1611} = 24.86% 5.11% *vs*. M_{1982} = 25.42% 5.57%) are statistically significant ($t_{(49)}$ = -2.70 con $p < 0.01$), thus disproving our hypothesis.

3.9 The hypothesis of a higher percentage of non-finite verbs than finite verbs

The trend of verb ratio in the chapters of Genesis increased significantly within the selected diachronic axis. More specifically, Fig. 9 shows the trend of the percentage of finite and non-finite verbs over the total number of verbs: the percentage of finite verbs increased from the 1526 Genesis version

to the 1885 one and then decreased conversely until the 1992 version. As a result, the percentage of non-finite verbs decreased until 1885 and then conversely increased. Comparing the average values of percentage of finite verbs in the *King James* versions (M_{1611} = 91.14% 5.66% *vs*. M_{1982} = 91.11% 6.89%) we can see an almost stationary situation: the difference between the two averages is not significant. However, when we compare the average values of the *English Versions* (M_{1885} = 91.64% 5.84% *vs*. M_{1992} = 89.83% 6.37%) there is a significant decrease of finite verbs ($t_{(49)}$ = -2.77 con $p < 0.01$), which therefore confirms partially our hypothesis. The same results are achieved when comparing the average percentages of non-finite verbs.

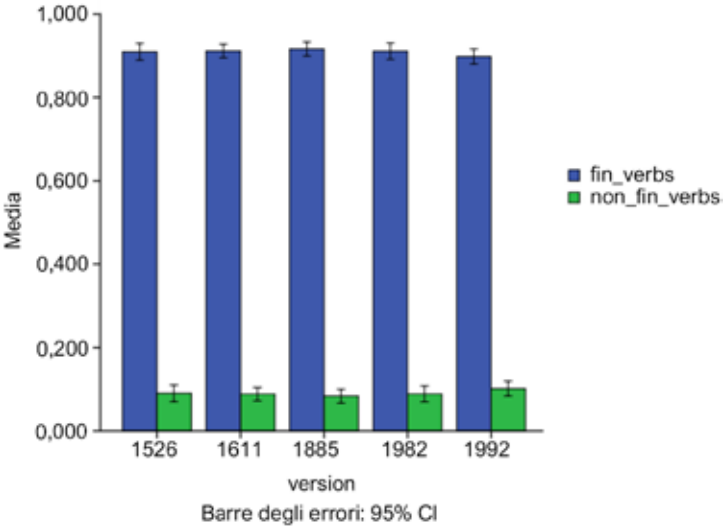

Figure 9. Diagram of the average *Percentage of Indefinite and finite verbs* per Genesis *Version*

3.10 The hypothesis of a higher percentage of main sentences than subordinate ones

The hypothesis is verified by the 1526 and the 1982 versions, then it goes against the trend in the 1992 version, where the percentage of subordinate sentences has increased. If we consider the average percentages of subordinate sentences in the *King James* (M_{1611} = 31.49% 12.30% *vs*. M_{1982} = 30.53% 9.87%) and *English* versions (M_{1885} = 31.14% 10.71% *vs*. M_{1992} = 32.21% 9.12%), it can be seen that in the former there was a decrease, while in the latter there was an increase, although in both cases it is not a statistically significant

difference. The same conclusions are reached when comparing the average percentages of main sentences.

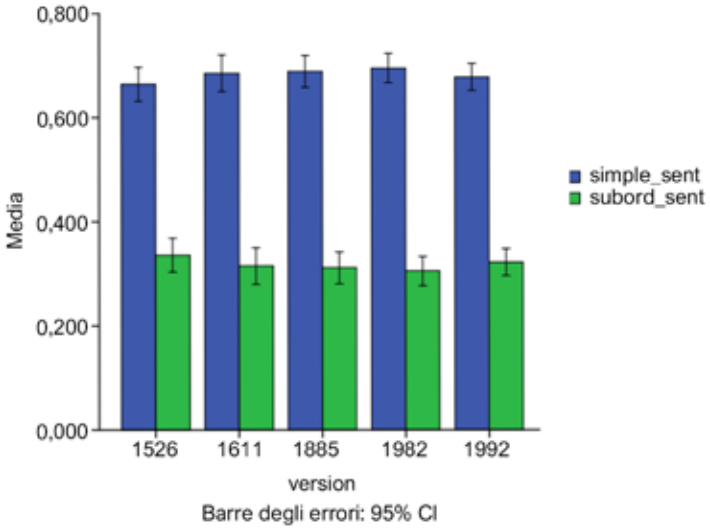

Figure 10. Diagram of the average *Percentage of Main Sentences and Subordinate ones* per Genesis *Version*

4. Conclusions

The 1526 Genesis version of Tyndale often seems to go against the trend of our hypotheses, and this is consistent with its particular origin: it was a direct translation from Hebrew, and was firstly not approved and then excluded from the official Corpus. Table 3 summarizes which of the hypotheses were confirmed, or confuted, in the two pairs of versions of Genesis – 1611 King James vs. 1982 New King James and 1885 English Revised Version vs. 1992 Revised Today's English Version:

Table 3. Summary of confirmed, confuted or countertrended hypotheses per revised version pairs of Genesis

Hypotheses	King James 1611-1982	English Version 1885-1992
1) Decrease in the total number of words.	✓	✓
2) Decrease in the total number of sentences.	×	✓

3) Decreased average number of words per sentence.	×	×
4) Higher percentage of words belonging to the open classes than the closed classes.	✓	✓
5) Decreased percentage of prepositions.	×	✓
6) Decreased percentage of conjunctions.	✓	✓
7) Decreased percentage of pronouns.	×	countertrend
8) Increased percentage of nouns.	countertrend	×
9) Higher percentage of indefinite verbs than finite verbs.	×	✓
10) Higher percentage of main sentences than subordinate ones.	×	×

Hypothesis 7) decreased pronoun ratio, hypothesis 8) increased percentage of nouns and hypothesis 10) a higher percentage of main sentences than subordinate ones, were not confirmed in any of the two pairs of revised versions, bearing in mind that hypothesis 3) decreased average number of words per sentence tends to be significant in the English Versions. In particular, hypotheses 7) and 8) showed a significant countertrend: the percentage of pronouns increased in the English Versions and the noun ratio decreased in the King James versions, but it should be remembered that there are few possible variations in this text especially if compared to a previous standard. Both the King James and English Versions confirmed hypothesis 1) a decrease of the total number of words, hypothesis 4) a higher percentage of words belonging to the open classes than to the closed ones and hypothesis 6) decreased percentage of conjunctions. The English Versions confirmed also hypothesis 2) a decrease of the total number of sentences, hypothesis 5) decreased percentage of prepositions and hypothesis 9) a higher percentage of non-finite verbs than finite verbs. In conclusion, we can state that, overall, statistical analyses seem to confirm an increase in "ordinary psychosis" characterized, especially in the diachronic axis 1611-1992, by a linguistic simplification and a reduction of the connective linguistic tissue, i.e. tending to the phenomenon of the dissolution of the phrase context as noted by Frith (2003) in autism.

With surprise and satisfaction, we have followed the progressive construction of this hypothesis in the unfolding of the data collection, a painstaking work for which we are grateful to the students of *Linguistic Analysis*, Master course in International Relations and European Studies, 2017-18 AY at the School of Political Science "Cesare Alfieri", University of

Florence. Credit for the subsequent test of the data goes to Dr. Iljà Barsanti, who, as a consultant, has structured the statistical analysis.

The meticulous grammatical and syntactical examinations of a text that is fixed and not ductile such as the Bible, which is not subjected to great variations in syntax and content, that must remain within certain parameters to preserve its traditions, confirmed our hypotheses and have been so precise as to allow the isolation of the first version, considered to be heretical and expelled from the theological Corpus of the Anglican Church by Henry VIII himself, as that exception that confirms a tendency.

In fact, the hypothesis validity is confirmed for almost all the items considered, both on a grammatical and syntactical level. The shift of language towards linguistic simplification is not only detectable by the eye, but also measurable and comparable, but only comparable, as a tendency, to the pathological result of psychiatric disorders such as autism or aphasia (Pennisi 1998, Caramazza-Finocchiaro 2002).

It seems rather easy to leave to the reader the task of evaluating independently the distance between the different versions, which, it could be said, is almost tangible, as Daniell well explains (2003: 758-759). However, in this way, we would in fact have precluded access to the fibres of the text and left the readers only a vague and epidermal sensation stemming from their interpretation. Instead, we wanted to establish a deep, ductile and extremely pragmatic way of reading any type of text.

Of course, there is currently no standard of reference, but we can hope that the community will welcome our efforts and will use this tool also for further research.

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