The Literature-Linguistics Interface - Bridging the Gap Between Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Literary Texts

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Abstract. This issue of Umanistica Digitale is devoted to the conference "Bridging Gaps, Creating Links. The Qualitative-Quantitative Interface in the Study of Literature", which took place at the DiSLL (Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies), University of Padua, on June 7-9, 2018 and was convened by Rocco Coronato and Sara Gesuato. The conference focused on a topic that has recently raised the attention of several scholars both in linguistics and in literary studies, namely, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in the study of literature. Mixed-method approaches to the study of literary texts provide complementary insights into the formal encoding, rhetorical-narrative structure, topics and wording of various kinds of literary texts. The results obtained through such combined research methods cast light on the socio-historical themes, beliefs, ideologies and cultural constructs being conveyed. The papers of the conference, some of which appear in this special issue, showed how a mixed-method investigation can both detect patterns and themes that might otherwise go unnoticed without considering the overall content and context of literary works, and collect and systematize quantitative evidence for testing qualitative interpretations of those works.
Preface

The Conference “Bridging Gaps, Creating Links. The Qualitative-Quantitative Interface in the Study of Literature” took place at the DiSLL (Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari), University of Padua, on June 7-9, 2018. It was convened by Rocco Coronato (University of Padua) and Sara Gesuato (University of Padua), thanks to the generous funding provided by the Research Funding Committee of the University of Padua and the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies.

The aim of the conference was to bring together linguists and literary scholars who were willing to explore the depth and breadth of literary texts across languages, cultures and time periods in a true spirit of inter-disciplinary collaboration. All contributions showed how a qualitative analysis of literary texts may be enhanced by quantitative data, how a quantitative analysis of the same texts can be fruitfully informed by the insights of qualitative analysis, and how together they can provide a well-rounded description and account of the value and specificities of literary texts.

The Organising Committee of the Conference was joined by other experts whose research interests include mixed-method approaches to the study of literature.

Organising Committee
Rocco Coronato (University of Padua)
Sara Gesuato (University of Padua)

Scientific Committee
Rocco Coronato (University of Padua)
Michele Cortelazzo (University of Padua)
Sara Gesuato (University of Padua)
Aldo Nemesio (University of Turin)
Daniela Francesca Virdis (University of Cagliari)

33 submissions were received, among which 23 individual papers were selected. The submissions showed how keen all scholars were on investigating the formulation, structure, content, cultural salience and social import of literary communicative practices in a variety of languages and across time periods. There emerged a fruitful continuum rather a stark opposition between qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The conference brought together 38 scholars from 8 countries. Its programme, organized in 11 sessions, included 1 workshop, 3 plenary lectures, 1 round-table discussion, and 23 individual paper presentations on a number of topics relevant to literary criticism, stylistics and literary linguistic analysis such as: corpus-driven investigations of literary form; corpus and statistical methods for the study of literature; digital editing; computational literary history; trends and gaps in the history of literature; lexical, morpho-syntactic, stylistic-pragmatic and prosodic features of literary discourse; term mapping; point of view and character portrayal in narrative discourse; metaphor analysis and thematic description of literary texts; literary transfer; authorship attribution, genre identification and dating of literary works. All these
topics were approached from a combined qualitative-quantitative perspective. This closely
tight, mutually curious scientific community eagerly discussed the pros and cons of the
different approaches in an exceptionally lively debate that criss-crossed all plenary lectures and
papers.

The Conference opening session saw a plenary given by Nigel Fabb about the
representation of literary form as statistical generalizations over literary texts and the
contribution given by corpus studies.

Session II of the conference was devoted to two closely inked themes at the core of the
conference: the qualitative-quantitative assessment of literature as can be seen in phonology
(Valentina Colonna) and the mixed-method approach to the study of literature, analysed in the
linguistic make-up of literary texts (Marina Gorlach) and in a database on translation and
lyrical tradition between Italy and France (Tobia Zanoni and Sara Giovine).

Session III showcased the study of language in literary texts, for instance in Chateaubriand
(Geneviève Henrot) and Camus (Iride Santoro and Liana Tronci), and as a way of
reconstructing early modern syntax (Lucia Assenzi). A parallel session concerned the linguistic,
stylistic and prosodic features of literary texts, with an emphasis on theme and quantification
(Joseph Davis), prose rhythm (Scott Borgeson, Arto Anttila, Ryan Heuser, Paul Kyparsky), and
the use of adjectives (Erik Castello).

Session IV hosted a workshop held by Arjuna Tuzzi on the use of statistical methods for
the analysis of literary texts.

Session V was started by a plenary talk given by Michaela Mahlberg on the study of
fiction in the digital age.

In Session VI the papers dealt with two main topics: authorship attribution and genre
identification in Italian narrative (Fabio Ciotti), early modern English literature (Gabriel Egan-
Paul Brown), and Spanish literary history (Daniel Gutierrez-Trapaga); and metaphor analysis,
gauged through the study of megametaphorical expressions (Daniel C. Strack), the
classification and description of metaphors in Dante (Gaia Tomazzoli), and the presence of
metaphor in literature and the effect on translation (Christos Stavrou-Anna Chita).

Session VII included two themes: stylistics and literary transfer, with an application of
corpus stylistics to a contemporary work of fiction (Francesca Cocetta-Daniela Cesiri), and
corpus-driven investigations of literary form, for instance the dialogues in Pride and Prejudice
and in two of its cinematic versions (Francesca Bianchi-Sara Gesuato), the creation and
application of an interactive study platform for analytical genetic edition (Ersilia Russo-
Francesca Marocco- Teresa Gargano), and anaphoric markers in literary texts (Anna Bonifazi).

Session VIII was devoted to the theme of text and context, with a study of medical
terminology in Conan Doyle (Federica Vezzani-Giorgio Maria Di Nunzio-Geneviève Henrot),
and the topic of reconciliation and integration of language and literature, with a study of irony
from a cross-disciplinary perspective (Ines Lozano Palacio) and a survey on research practices
conducted among Italian and international scholars of language and literature (Rocco
Coronato-Sara Gesuato).

Session IX consisted of a plenary talk given by Jan Christoph Meister, “Phenomenology
vs. empirics? From qualitative to quantitative analysis of literature - and back”, and Session X of
a plenary talk given by Federica Perazzini on computational criticism and the quality of quantitative literary research.

Session XI hosted a round table discussion on the issues raised during the Conference. The discussant was Paul Brown, and the discussants were Nigel Fabb, Michaela Mahlberg, Jan Christoph Meister, Federica Perazzini, Arjuna Tuzzi.

PROGRAMME

June 7, 2018

SESSION I

10:00am-11:00am  Plenary talk - Nigel Fabb (University of Strathclyde), What do we know when we know a literary form? Corpus studies and weighted expectations

SESSION II

11:00am-12:30pm (parallel sessions)

The qualitative-quantitative assessment of literature
Valentina Colonna (University of Genoa and University of Turin) Prosodies of ‘Congedo’—Comparative Analysis of Twelve Readings
Kobie van KRIEKEN (Radboud University), Understanding perspective in narrative: from qualitative analysis to quantitative assessment

The mixed-method approach to the study of literature
Marina Gorlach (Metropolitan State University of Denver) The qualitative-quantitative analysis of ‘Fahrenheit 451’: mapping the linguistic make-up of literary texts”
Tobia Zanon (University of Padua), Sara Giovine (University of Padua), The TRALYT research project: translation and lyrical tradition between Italy and France (19th-21st Century)

SESSION III

2:00pm-3:30pm (parallel sessions)

Studying language in literary texts
Geneviève Henrot (University of Padua) Le Nom propre modifié dans les ‘Mémoires d’Outre-tombe’ de Chateaubriand. Pour un système des personnages entre Myth et (petite) Histoire
R. Coronato, S. Gesuato - The Literature-Linguistics Interface - Bridging the Gap Between Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Literary Texts

Iride Santoro (University for Foreigners of Siena, Italy), Liana Tronci (University for Foreigners of Siena), Les temps verbaux dans 'L’Étranger' de Camus: analyse distributionnelle et valeurs narratives
Lucia Assenzi (University of Padua) Quantifying auxiliary ‘tun’ to study 17th century German linguistic reflection?

Linguistic, stylistic and prosodic features of literary texts
Joseph Davis (The City College of New York) Theme and quantification in the service of linguistics
Scott Borgeson (Stanford University), Arto Anttila (Stanford University), Ryan Heuser (Stanford University), Paul Kiparsky (Stanford University) Prose Rhythm and Antimetricality
Erik Castello (University of Padua) Dickens’s ‘Pictures from Italy’ and Murray’s ‘Handbook to Northern Italy’: a quantitative/qualitative investigation of the use of adjectives in the two texts

SESSION IV

4:00pm-6:00pm Workshop - Arjuna Tuzzi (University of Padua) Statistical methods for the analysis of literary texts

June 8, 2018

SESSION V

9:00am-10:00am Plenary talk - Michaela Mahlberg (University of Birmingham) CLiC: studying fiction in the digital age

SESSION VI (parallel sessions)

10:30am-12:00pm

Authorship attribution and genre identification
Fabio Ciotti (University of Rome “Tor Vergata”), Italian narrative between Realism and Modernism: a computational analysis of verbal tenses
Gabriel Egan (De Montfort University) - Paul Brown (De Montfort University) N-gram Matching as a Test for Authorship, Genre, and Date-of-composition of London’s Early Modern Plays
Daniel Gutierrez-Trapaga (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Primary Sources in Spanish Literary History

Metaphor analysis
Daniel C. Strack (University of Kitakyushu) Pinnacles in Long-form Literary Texts: Cross-textual Evidence for the Pervasiveness of Megametaphorical Expression
Gaia Tomazzoli ("Ca’ Foscari” University of Venice), ‘Totus poema eius ubique mirabiliter figuratus’: Identifying, Classifying and Describing Dante’s Metaphors

Christos Stavrou (Technological Educational Institute of Epirus) - Anna Chita (Technological Educational Institute of Epirus) The Metaphor in Literature and the Effect on Translation

SESSION VII (parallel sessions)

1:30pm-3:00pm

Stylistics and literary transfer

Francesca Coccetta (“Ca Foscari” University of Venice) - Daniela Cesiri (“Ca’ Foscari” University of Venice) Narrative Descriptions in Meyer’s ‘Twilight Saga: a Corpus Stylistics Perspective

Corpus-driven investigations of literary form

Francesca Bianchi (University of Salento) - Sara Gesuato (University of Padua) The Adaptation of a Novel to Filmic Needs: Similarities and Differences Between the Dialogues in ‘Pride and Prejudice’ and the Subtitles of Two Cinematic Versions of the Novel

Ersilia Russo (La Sapienza University of Rome), Francesca Marocco (La Sapienza University of Rome), Teresa Gargano (La Sapienza University of Rome) PhiloEditor: an Interactive Study Platform for Analytical Genetic Edition

Anna Bonifazi (University of Stuttgart) Research on Anaphoric Markers in Literary Texts: How to Combine Qualitative and Quantitative Analyses?

3:00pm-3:30pm Coffee Break

SESSION VIII (parallel sessions)

3:30pm-4:30pm

Text and context

Federica Vezzani (University of Padua) - Giorgio Maria Di Nunzio (University of Padua) - Geneviève Henrot (University of Padua) (Not so) Elementary, my Dear Watson! A Different Perspective on Medical Terminology

Reconciling and integrating language and literature

Ines Lozano Palacio (University of La Rioja) Irony from a Cross-disciplinary Perspective: Towards an Integrated Account

Rocco Coronato (University of Padua) - Sara Gesuato (University of Padua) Out of One’s Comfort Zone into an Uncharted Territory: a Survey
SESSION IX

5:00pm-6:00pm  **Plenary talk** - Jan Christoph Meister (University of Hamburg), *Phenomenology vs. Empirics! From Qualitative to Quantitative Analysis of Literature - and Back*

6:00pm-6:30pm  Poetry reading by Josh Lonsdale

June 9, 2018

SESSION X

9:00am-10:00am  **Plenary talk** - Federica Perazzini ("La Sapienza" University of Rome), *The Figure in the Discourse: Computational Criticism and the Quality of Quantitative Literary Research*

SESSION XI

10.30am-12.00pm  **Round table discussion** “Nihil est in litteris humanioribus quod prius non fuerit in lingua” - Discussant: Paul Brown (De Montfort University); participants: Nigel Fabb (University of Strathclyde), Michaela Mahlberg (University of Birmingham), Jan Christoph Meister (University of Hamburg), Federica Perazzini (La Sapienza University of Rome), Arjuna Tuzzi (University of Padua)

12.00pm-12.30pm  Concluding remarks