Schwa

Language & Linguistics

Winter 2020
Issue 22

Schwa: Language and Linguistics is published by the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Brigham Young University. Its contents represent the opinions of the authors and editors, and not necessarily those of the faculty or administration of Brigham Young University.

We are always looking for submissions and staff members. If you are interested, please visit us at schwa.byu.edu.

© 2020 by Brigham Young University. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Kristin Pedersen

Table of Contents

Staff

Editor in Chief
Mikaela Wilkins

Managing Editors
Brooke James
McKinsey Koch

Design Director
Kristin Pedersen

Senior Editors
Emma Franklin
Amanda LaFrance
Sam Lambert
Kristin Pedersen
Meghan Wilson

Staff Editors
Andrea Candland
McKayla Lindman
Lydia Mercado
Shane Miller
Claire Parker
Kyla Rogers
Abby Siebers
Vanessa West

Designers
Brooke James
Paige Johnson
Kristin Pedersen
Mikaela Wilkins
Meghan Wilson

Faculty Advisors
Cynthia Hallen
Dirk Elzinga

About Schwa

We are an academic journal produced by the students of Brigham Young University. Our mission is to increase the amount and the accessibility of linguistic scholarship—especially for those without graduate school experience—while simultaneously training editors and designers in the ways of modern publishing.

Some of our articles are strictly theoretical and academic. Others are less technical and more personal in nature. Experiments, surveys, corpus analyses, and essays are all acceptable. We have published on all the following subdisciplines of linguistics and more:

—Phonetics, the perception and production of speech sounds.
—Phonology, the system of speech sounds used in a given context.
—Semantics, the meaning constructs of words and sentences.
—Syntax, the structure of permissible and meaningful sentences.
—Pragmatics, the real-world use of language and other speech-related actions.
—Sociolinguistics, the variation of language based on sociological factors.
—Psycholinguistics, the cognitive tasks necessary for language.
—Fieldwork, notes, or reports from living in a community speaking a foreign language.
—Forensics linguistics, the role of language in creating and carrying out the law.

We are always accepting submissions. Papers on any language are welcome, including cross-linguistic studies, but papers must be written in English. To maintain a high standard of quality, our staff includes both editors and graphic designers. We extend an open invitation for new staff members.

Go to schwa.byu.edu to submit a paper or join our staff.

Editor's Note

Hey there, reader,

Another edition of *Schwa: Language and Linguistics* has come into the world, and what a journey it has been. As the old adage goes, "better late than never," and though it is best to be on time, the learning value of a process is not lost just because it is late.

As I finish another edition as editor in chief, I have a moment to reflect on the things I have learned throughout this process, and my two greatest takeaways come back to people—namely, that people are good, and that we can't take things on alone.

In the last two semesters, I have been so thankful for the editing staff. By each person doing their part and completing their tasks, we are able to move smoothly toward our finished product. I'm thankful for the people who return, those who step into leadership positions as needed, and the new people who join us, add fresh blood, and bring new questions and insights. We need this mix. Thank you, editors.

I'm thankful for the team's designers. We had a small designing crew this semester, so I was heavily involved in the design process. It made me appreciate more the designers who know what they're doing and are patient with me. It also makes me realize even more that, considering how much time and effort publishing takes, how much one person really, really, can't do it on their own.

I'm also especially grateful this semester for my managing editors, Brooke James and McKinsey Koch, and for Kristin Pedersen, all three of whom helped me keep my head on straight, always offered ways to help out where needed, and lightened my load as editor in chief. They made me feel less alone.

I'm thankful that the authors have been patient with us while we worked through the kinks of distance publishing when almost all of campus went online because of COVID-19. They are patient with us

while we practice, develop, and apply our editing skills, and without them risking rejection, we wouldn't have anything to publish or articles to hone our editing skills on.

With sweet sadness, we wish our former faculty advisor, Cynthia Hallen, good-bye, since she retired this year and stepped into a new phase of her life. This also means that we now welcome Dirk Elzinga as our new faculty advisor. We are grateful that he is willing to step into this role as our liaison between *Schwa*'s editing staff and the linguistics department. By doing so, he keeps *Schwa* going.

And so, to each of the necessary participants of the production of *Schwa: Language and Linguistics*, I say thank you. Thank you for your patience, your skills, your talents, and your vulnerability. Each different cog in this publication machine is absolutely necessary and without you, we would not exist.

Thank you.

Mikaela Wilkins
Editor in Chief

More Than the Sum of Words:

Altered Syntax Explored in Two Poetic Examples

Rebecca McKee

English, unlike other languages, is a "word order language," so deviation from the expected sequence of lexical units may introduce ambiguity, unintended meanings, or even complete loss of communication. Using an interesting line from John Updike's poem "Topsfield Fair" and the entirety of E. E. Cummings' poem "Me up at does," this article will demonstrate one way that writers and poets create greater meaning from English by artfully disordering the words. The mixed-up syntax adds layers of additional meaning that invite the reader to untangle the words and ruminate on the implications raised by the unexpected word order. The linguistic alchemy achieved creates a work of art that communicates more than the lexical meaning of the individual words.

Unlike Latin and the romance languages that have descended from it, English is a "word order language." To deviate from the usual norms of expected word order in English is to risk misunderstanding or, more likely, to face the possibility that the unusually ordered sentence will have an unintended meaning. Ambiguity may also appear as a result of altered word order, leading the reader to see two or more meanings. Such multiplicity of meanings can be a tool or a curse. For poets, whose work includes playing with linguistic possibilities, the varied, changeable meanings provide a delight, not a problem. Although the words of a poem are only one element used to create meaning, they are an extremely important device. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in *Table Talk* on July 12, 1827, put it very succinctly when he described poetry as "the best words in their best order." That "best order" is unique to every poet and to every poem. The best word order is one that makes the poem more than the sum of its words. Unusual syntactic ordering can create meaning apart from the lexical semantics of the words the poet uses. By examining the poem "Me up at does," by E. E. Cummings, and a single line from John Updike's poem "Topsfield Fair," I will show two examples of how altered syntax enhances the poets' work, allowing them to express more ideas than the individual words can convey. Both authors use hyperbaton, the artful disorder of words, to great poetic effect. The reader who recognizes the altered syntax and follows the poet into the maze of disordered words will have an enriching experience and perhaps gain a new perspective on the issue treated by the poem.

John Updike's poem "Topsfield Fair" contains an interesting alteration of the usual English syntactical order at line three: "the rabbit's pink, distinctly, eyes" (Updike, Leithauser, & Carduff, 2016). The uncommon word order creates a stop, an emphasis that would not be there in the usual English construction—the rabbit's distinctly pink eyes. Updike's version places additional emphasis on *pink* and *distinctly*. The effect in the mind of the reader is to read it as *the rabbit's pink . . . distinctly . . . eyes*. First, we stop at *pink* and picture a

rabbit and the parts of it that might be pink—nose, tongue, inside the long ears. Then, as the reader stops at *distinctly*, the idea of pink is emphasized and deepened in color and importance as the poet then leads us to visualize the animal's eyes. The poet injects the arresting look of the rabbit's eyes into this line by switching up the order of the words. Those three words (*pink*, *distinctly*, and *eyes*) express an entire paragraph about that certain kind of rabbit. Updike's use of altered syntax, called hyperbaton, manipulates the reader's experience by injecting an altered rhythm, inviting the audience to stop, consider, imagine, and engage in the imagery expressed in the poem.

It is also important to recognize the form of the word *distinctly*. The use of the *-ly* suffix normally indicates the adverbial form. Yet in this fragment, Updike uses the word in an adjectival position. It is very subtle, but there is a difference that the reader must uncover. The use of the adverbial would indicate a typical English sentence structure such as "eyes that are distinctly pink." But the application of hyperbaton casts a bit of doubt: are the eyes themselves distinct or is the color distinctive, or is it the careful observation of the person who notices the eyes that makes the moment distinctive? The unexpected word order creates an experience for the reader, a moment of exploration, and a playful searching of the mind that would not exist had the poet used the usual English syntactical word order.

In contrast to Updike's mild use of hyperbaton, the poet E. E. Cummings gives us this very twisted, convoluted, messed up English syntactic construction:

Me up at does
out of the floor
quietly Stare
a poisoned mouse
still who alive
is asking What
have i done that
You wouldn't have

At first glance, this poem might appear to miss the level of art, or to not be poetry at all, because the disorder is so profound. Poets work to find just the right words and to place them into a perfect arrangement to express their ideas. However, sometimes linguistic perfection (following syntactic rules with precision) detracts from the poetic punch the author is seeking. This poem is far from perfect from an English linguistic perspective. Beginning as a disordered confusion of seemingly random words, it slowly unwinds its own knot to become a sharp statement, revealing the genius of the poet when the reader finally comprehends the meaning hidden in the hyperbaton. I imagine Cummings in a mighty struggle with the words and their order, finally coming to rest with the last half of the poem after the wild hyperbaton of the beginning. Because communication through language encompasses much more than the written word, I would like to have heard the poet read this poem. The artist's aural sense (his understanding of the enhanced expression possible through verbal communication) and his performance emphasis (his pauses, quickening or slowing of speech, vocal emphases, facial expressions, and physical mannerisms) would convey even more meaning than the written word expresses. Verbal language informs the audience in a different way from reading the poet's words on a page.

Cummings opens his verse with three lines of artfully dislocated syntax so different from the correct English sentence structure that they force the reader to follow the words like a maze and mentally reorder them to discover the poem's meaning. In the fourth line ("a poisoned mouse"), with a "normal" English word order (article + verb used as an adjective + noun), the poem begins to depart from hyperbaton. The fifth line uses a mild sort of hyperbaton ("still who alive"), while the final lines are easily understandable at first glance, without the need to discover the meaning hidden in a maze of confusion.

Those first four lines use the highly altered word order of hyperbaton to convey the extreme confusion of a dying mouse, thus enabling

the reader to sympathize with the mouse. The bafflement readers experience (when confronted with the unusual syntax) mimics the bewilderment of the mouse, leading the reader to sympathize with the plight of a nonhuman creature. Abandoning the expected syntax of English invites the reader to reconsider other structures of our society and what insights could be gained by a changed perspective. With this poem, Cummings invites us to value other creatures as we do ourselves. The usual English syntax that completes the poem helps, by its contrast from the rest of the poem, to make a punch of a statement. The poem's clarity at the end is part of the poet's intent; we are to comprehend that the mouse deserves to live his life. Such a notion might come as a surprise to many people. Poets work to use language to change the way we see our world. "Me up at does" is an example of E. E. Cummings inviting his audience to care for all living creatures as we do for ourselves. With the final question "What / have i done / that You wouldn't have?" (Cummings, pp. 6–8) the poet sympathizes with the mouse and asks his reader to join in a new understanding that every creature has a right to live.

In this poem, Cummings emphasizes certain thematic words by capitalizing them. The sparing use of capitalization in "Me up at does" indicates that *Me*, *Stare*, *What*, and *You* are important thematic words. *Me* and *You*, coming as they do in the first and last phrases of the poem, create a chiastic structure. Both pronouns refer to the person in the narrative, not to the mouse. *Stare* is the major verb of the piece as the mouse mutely asks with his eyes what he has done to deserve his fate. Cummings's mixed-up syntax fairly staggers at the beginning of the poem before it gains its balance and ends with an easily understood question. In doing so, it conveys Cummings's complex thoughts on mankind's relationship to other creatures.

Altered word order in poetry combined with the lexical meanings of the words can build a greater statement than the words alone could produce. The effect of word order, as demonstrated by hyperbaton, can be illustrated by Friedrich Nietzsche's reflection (1889) on the

syntax used by the ancient Roman poet Horace: "The mosaic of sounds in which every word, by sound, by position, and by meaning, diffuses its force right, left, and over the whole, that minimum in the compass and number of signs, that maximum thus realized in their energy." The two examples explored in this article show a tiny sample of the effects that poets create by playing with syntactic order. Writers achieve varied meanings and readers have the opportunity to contemplate the ambiguity in the written word, leading them to appreciate new ways of understanding old problems. Authors and editors who understand the enriching possibilities of altered syntax possess an artistic tool they can use to produce creative works that engage readers and encourage different ways of thinking about the world. Syntax is about much more than the order of the words; combining English words in an unorthodox order can express meanings that are much greater than the sum of the words.

References

Coleridge, H. N. (Ed). (1827). "Specimens on the Table-Talk of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge" *Spenser Encyclopedia*, (p.171). Baltimore, MD. John Hopkins University Press.

Cummings, E. E. (n.d.). Me up at does [webpage]. Retrieved from https://allpoetry.com/(Me-up-at-does)

Nietzsche, F. (1889). Twilight of the idols, or, how to philosophize with a hammer [webpage]. Retrieved from http://www.lexido.com/EBOOK_TEXTS/TWILIGHT_OF_THE_IDOLS_.aspx?S=11

Updike, J., Leithauser, B., & Carduff, C. (2016). *Selected Poems.* London: Penguin Books.

To Each His (or Her or Their) Own:
Reader Preferences for Gender-Neutral Language Options

Brooke James

This small-scale empirical study was conducted to measure college students' views of different pronoun options commonly used to avoid sexist language. The options for gender-neutral pronouns included (1) using generic masculine (e.g., "he"), (2) using generic feminine (e.g., "she"), (3) avoiding pronouns by repeating the noun, (4) using "they" in a singular sense, and (5) using "he or she." Two criteria were used to evaluate the options: clarity in conveying inclusivity and comfort in reading. The results indicated that, of the options, using the singular "they" as a gender-neutral pronoun was both the clearest and most comfortable to read.

Introduction

In today's social, cultural, and political climate, the members of younger generations are becoming increasingly aware of individual identity and are committed to promoting social justice, equality, and inclusivity. *The Chicago Manual of Style* is aware of this trend and notes that "a careful editor points out to authors any biased terms or approaches in the work (knowing, of course, that the bias may have been unintentional) [and] suggests alternatives" (5.254). The prevalence of these progressive trends makes it vital for editors to be able to navigate unbiased language options, including those which concern gender. In addition to social awareness, *The Chicago Manual of Style* elucidates other implications of correctness: "Biased language . . . distracts many readers and makes the work less credible to them" (5.251). Though editors are instructed on various ways to address gender-neutral pronouns, the question remains as to which of the common methods are not only grammatically and politically correct but comfortable and not distracting to readers.

In a 2001 study on credibility, Larry Beason asked business professionals to rate the level of annoyance caused by certain types of common errors in writing. Explaining the importance of such a study, he notes that "our effectiveness, perhaps our ethos, can be impeded if we stress matter that other professionals see as trivial—or if we trivialize points they deem consequential" (p. 34) and that readers use what they interpret as errors to "make judgments about more than the text itself" (p. 35). This basic idea of gauging reader responses can go beyond defining mechanical issues; Beason elaborates that perceived errors affect readers not "just as textual features breaking handbook rules but as mental events taking place outside of the immediate text" (p. 35). Therefore, although decisions on how to avoid sexist language are based on style rather than strict correctness, a survey similar to Beason's can be utilized to examine reactions to different options.

Research Question and Methods

Considering the importance of implementing unbiased language, the following question is a launching point to aid editors in creating unobtrusive, gender-neutral writing: Which of five common ways to implement generic pronoun use (as discussed below) is the most clear and comfortable for readers? Note that this study is a small-scale survey and is not meant to be comprehensive, and the following sections reflect these limitations.

Participants:

The participants in this study are from a subset of undergraduate students between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five studying various disciplines at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Since the research question deals with gender bias and preferences, the participant pool comprises an even mix of four females, four males, and four who do not identify with either gender (two self-described as nonbinary, one as genderfluid, and one as nonbinary/genderfluid).

Procedure:

The research question was investigated by distributing an online survey. After filling out basic demographic questions, participants read five short excerpts that were identical except for pronoun use. The methods of incorporating gender-neutral pronouns in the excerpts were specified and differed as follows: (1) using generic masculine, (2) using generic feminine, (3) avoiding pronouns by repeating the noun, (4) using "they" in a singular sense, and (5) using "he or she." After reading each excerpt, participants were asked to rate the effects of the pronoun use on the passage. The participants rated each passage using two Likert scales: one on clarity (very clear to very unclear) and one on readability (very easy to read to very distracting to read). The participants were then asked to comparatively rank all the methods based on the same criteria. (See the appendix for the full survey.)

Instruments:

The survey was created with Qualtrics and distributed by individually emailing anonymous links to the participants.

Data Analysis:

The first analysis focused on perceived clarity and readability based on the Likert scales. Each response was assigned a point value, with the "very" positive (clear, easy to read) options as +3, "moderately" positive options as +2, "slightly" positive options as +1, and neutral options as 0. The same point values, but in the negative form, were given for each "very," "moderately," and "slightly" negative (unclear, distracting to read) response. This determined overall clarity and readability scores for each method as either positively perceived or negatively perceived. The second analysis was of the ranking tasks; the purpose was to examine comparative clarity and readability to establish the overall most and least clear and overall most and least readable methods. After participants ranked the methods from one to five, one being the most clear or readable and five the least, points were assigned to each method, from +4 for rankings of one down to +0 for rankings of five. Overall rankings were found by adding together all the points for each method.

Results

Likert Positive/Negative Scores:

For the perceived clarity category, all methods resulted in a net positive score. The highest scored was the singular "they" (+27), followed closely by repeating the noun and avoiding pronouns (+24). A large drop in score separates the rest of the results from these top two, with the next being "he or she" (+6), generic feminine (+5), and lastly generic masculine (+4). Using the singular "they" was the only method without any negative responses, and using the generic masculine was the only method that had more negative than positive responses (although still achieving a positive net score). Results were similar for the category of readability: highest scoring was singular "they" (+27), and second highest was repeating the noun (+23). There was then another large gap before reaching the last three results. Following the score for generic feminine pronouns (+6) were the score for generic

masculine pronouns (+4) and, finally, the only net negative score, "he or she" (-8). Again, using singular "they" was the only method that received no negative responses (meaning it was never judged as distracting), and this time both the generic masculine and "he or she" had more negative than positive responses.

Comparative Ranking Scores:

For perceived clarity, the most preferred method was using the singular "they" (40 points), followed by repeating the noun (32), the generic feminine (18), the generic masculine (17), and "he or she" (13). The generic feminine was the only method never ranked as one, and the singular "they" was the only method never ranked as five. Interestingly, the data for readability was identical to the data for clarity. Though each participant did not assign the same ranking order in both questions, the overall number of times each method was given each ranking turned out to be the same. Hence, the number of individual counts, points per method, and overall ranking for both criteria are the same. (See the appendix for the full data results.)

Discussion

Based on the results, using singular "they" as a gender-neutral pronoun is both the most clear, inclusive method and the most readable, unassuming method to encounter despite not being an accepted form in formal writing. Not surprisingly, the once common but now outdated use of masculine pronouns as generic is seen as unclear in its scope of inclusion; what is more surprising is that masculine pronouns were rated as less clear in intent of inclusion and more distracting than using generic feminine pronouns. While I expected that the feminine pronouns—being semantically marked forms—would draw more attention than the unmarked masculine terms, the participants overall professed the opposite to be true. There was also an interesting discrepancy in the reception of using repetitiveness to replace generically used gendered pronouns: repeating the noun was very favorably judged as clear and unobtrusive, though repeating

"he or she" was very negatively viewed as being both distracting and, somehow, unclear. I predicted that the clunky nature of "he or she" would result in poor readability, but I did not expect its extremely low clarity scores. Because "he or she" does not use one gendered pronoun to stand in for everyone and is more explicit in that way, I assumed this option made the intended subjects obvious: both male and female. This may have been part of the clarity problem, however; for those who do not identify with either gender, this construction's lack of room for inferred inclusion (as generically used gendered pronouns have) would likely make this method seem the most exclusionary.

Conclusion

As I am an editor emerging into a more aware age, this study has given me an insight into how best to use neutral language to help create a more inclusive and tolerant world while maintaining my own credibility. While it is not always appropriate to use the singular "they," methods that avoid pronouns will be a safer bet than gendered pronouns with implied inclusivity, especially when working with younger audiences in the age demographic of the participants. And, as seen in the differences between reception of the generic masculine and feminine pronouns, making an effort to be inclusive is valued more highly by this demographic than quietly using more common, yet less inclusive, terms. While all editors must adhere to the given guidelines for a specific job (or even make their own decisions when not specifically instructed on this point), each should keep in mind the ever-changing standards of the English language as well as the needs and values of the intended audience when editing for any type of possible bias. Whether we are acting as editors or not, such considerations should always be taken to ensure the inclusion and comfort of anyone we communicate with—the same courtesies we would all like to be treated with.

References

Beason, L. (2001). Ethos and error: How business people react to errors. *College Composition and Communications*, *53*(1), 33–64.

University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. (2017). *Chicago manual of style* (17th Ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Appendix

Information Given in Survey:

"You will be evaluating the passages based on (1) clarity and (2) readability. **Clarity** means that the subjects of the passage were unambiguous and clear about who was intended to be included. **Readability** refers to whether the method used caused unwanted attention or distracted you as a reader. The context of the passage is a newsletter made by BYU and sent to parents of first-year students. It is general/standard genre writing: your everyday style between casual/conversational and formal/academic. (Original source: http://newsletter.byu.edu/story/tips-registration-creating-class-schedule?3817.)"

Directions for Likert Scale Questions:

"The next questions will ask you to evaluate your perception of a passage based off one of five common ways to create gender-neutral language in writing. The questions will include short excerpts, identical except for these different methods. The method used will be specified in each question. Please take time to read the whole passage each time; it's short and will help you more accurately compare the overall effects of the methods."

Excerpts:

1. Generic Masculine: Check out the Registration Cart! This feature allows your student to plan ahead. He can save class selections ahead of time in preparation for their priority registration date. He can make their selections before priority registration and then, sometime before midnight on his priority date, the cart will randomly be processed and all available classes will be added to the schedule. There's no guarantee that all classes will be added. He can also choose to be added to class waitlists if the desired classes are full.

2. Generic feminine: Check out the Registration Cart! This feature allows your student to plan ahead. She can save class selections ahead of time in preparation for their priority registration date. She can make their selections before priority registration

and then, sometime before midnight on her priority date, the cart will randomly be processed and all available classes will be added to the schedule. There's no guarantee that all classes will be added. She can also choose to be added to class waitlists if the desired classes are full.

3. Repeated noun [original]: Check out the Registration Cart! This feature allows students to plan ahead. Students can save class selections ahead of time in preparation for their priority registration date. Students can make their selections before priority registration and then, sometime before midnight on a student's priority date, the cart will randomly be processed and all available classes will be added to the schedule. There's no guarantee that all classes will be added. Students can also choose to be added to class waitlists if the desired classes are full.

4. Singular "they": Check out the Registration Cart! This feature allows your student to plan ahead. They can save class selections ahead of time in preparation for their priority registration date. They can make their selections before priority registration and then, sometime before midnight on their priority date, the cart will randomly be processed and all available classes will be added to the schedule. There's no guarantee that all classes will be added. They can also choose to be added to class waitlists if the desired classes are full.

5. "He or she": Check out the Registration Cart! This feature allows your student to plan ahead. He or she can save class selections ahead of time in preparation for their priority registration date. He or she can make their selections before priority registration and then, sometime before midnight on his or her priority date, the cart will randomly be processed and all available classes will be added to the schedule. There's no guarantee that all classes will be added. He or she can also choose to be added to class waitlists if the desired classes are full.

Directions for Ranking Questions:

"You have been looking at the passages individually. Now you will be asked to rank them on the same scales, but in comparison to each other. You can change the order by dragging and dropping the options to different places in the list. Feel free to go back and reference the passages as needed for your comparison. Please rank the different methods based on which was the ["most clear"/"easiest and least distracting"] to read, with 1 being ["most clear"/"easiest and least distracting"] and 5 being ["least clear"/"least easy"/"least distracting"]."

Table 1. Positive/Negative Likert Scale Data and Scores

Clarity (Number of responses per option per method)

	Very Clear	Mostly Clear	Slightly Clear	Neutral	Slightly Unclear	Mostly Unclear	Very Unclear	Total Points
Generic Masculine	1	4	0	1	5	1	0	+4
Generic Feminine	1	2	3	1	5	0	0	+5
Repeated Noun	6	4	0	0	2	0	0	+24
Singular "They"	7	2	2	1	0	0	0	+27
"He or She"	2	4	1	0	2	2	1	+6

Readability (Number of responses per option per method)

	Very Easy	Mostly Easy	Slightly Easy	Neutral	Slightly Distracting	Mostly Distracting	Very Distracting	Total Points
Generic Masculine	3	1	0	1	5	0	2	+4
Generic Feminine	3	1	0	3	5	0	0	+6
Repeated Noun	6	2	2	1	1	0	0	+23
Singular "They"	7	2	2	1	0	0	0	+27
"He or She"	2	2	0	0	3	0	5	-8

Table 2. Comparative Ranking Scores

Clarity (Number of responses per ranking per method)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total Points	Overall Ranking
Generic Masculine	1	2	0	7	2	17	4
Generic Feminine	0	1	7	1	3	18	3
Repeated Noun	3	5	2	1	1	32	2
Singular "They"	7	3	1	1	0	40	1
"He or She"	1	1	2	2	6	13	5

Readability (Number of responses per ranking per method)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total Points	Overall Ranking
Generic Masculine	1	2	0	7	2	17	4
Generic Feminine	0	1	7	1	3	18	3
Repeated Noun	3	5	2	1	1	32	2
Singular "They"	7	3	1	1	0	40	1
"He or She"	1	1	2	2	6	13	5

A Character by Any Other Name:
Sound Symbolism and Character Traits

Hannah Johnson

Existing research shows that connotations can be added to certain words by the power of sound symbolism. This article seeks to explore applications for existing research in sound symbolism. This function has useful implications for the connotations of fictional character names, but, upon inspection, seems to be currently underutilized. The most clearly applicable uses exist in middle-grade fiction, fantasy, and borderline genres by taking advantage of /i/ vowels, obstruents, and sonorants. Following these recommendations enables authors to more quickly convey character traits, and to thereby catch a potential reader's interest at a critical time.

It has been centuries since Shakespeare posited "that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet" (1984, 2.2.43–44), and, for the most part, linguists have concurred, citing the inherent arbitrariness of language. Yet the rising research on sound symbolism has not had its final say on the matter. Sound symbolism studies show how phonemes can carry inherent meaning, and the field's applications are increasing along with its visibility. Today, linguists are helping to name products and market politicians in ways consistent with these mental attachments we make to certain sounds. However, there is another professional field that needs to quickly communicate qualities through fabricated names: literature. The existing research that associates sound symbols in names to perceived personality traits is currently underutilized but could have tremendous application in naming fictional characters.

Right now, research on sound symbolism in fiction is relatively rare. But, in reviewing the top twenty-five protagonists in the fantasy, science fiction, and romance genres, there seems to be no significant correlation between stereotypical genre-based character traits and observed sound symbols. It seems unlikely this correlation would be due to a lack of awareness of the power of sound to imply meaning. In Ramachandran and Hubbard's (2001) redux of Kohler's classic experiments on sound symbolism, they found that, cross-culturally, ninety-five percent to ninety-eight percent of subjects agreed that the name "kiki" belonged to a sharp shape, while "bouba" was certainly a rounder shape. This only confirmed existing evidence that certain sounds like voiceless stops almost universally indicate "sharpness," and some voiced consonants, in turn, entail "roundness." Then, in 2013, Shinohara and Kawahara found that *sonorants*, or resonant sounds which use continual airflow, were related to cuteness, accessibility, and softness. Contrastingly, *obstruents*, sounds created by obstructing airflow, were discovered to be more commonly connected to inaccessibility and severity. This instinctual symbolism across the consonants as well must be felt by ninety-five percent of authors as well. However, in

mapping phonemically the names of the top protagonists, as crowd-sourced by goodreads.com, there seems to be no significant increase of sonorants in genres such as romance where one might expect characters to be portrayed as cuter or more accessible. There is also no increase in obstruents in genres where the protagonist is likely to be battle-hardened and severe. In sum, it can be concluded that writers pay little heed to the uses of sound symbolism as they create character names.

There are several reasons why an author may not use sound symbols that seem second nature to us as humans. Perhaps authors are relying on other, more cultural connotations of names. Or, perhaps authors see their characters as more than the traditional traits we attribute to their genre and would like readers to also see their character as a stereotype-subverting personality. This logic could explain why an author might use gentle sonorants for characters in more violent genres. Finally, it's possible that authors underestimate the ubiquity of sound symbols and the power of their connotations. Despite this, sound symbolism could be a valuable untapped resource, and the remainder of this article will attempt to demonstrate some ways in which symbolic phonetics might be useful to authors as they define their character within a genre.

Within a name, /i/ has one of the most recognizable implications. The moniker Billy (/bɪli/) is much more recognizable as a child's name than its relative Bill (/bɪl/). The phoneme /i/ is a known sound symbol, and it is believed that it appears in diminutives such as "teeny weeny" (/tini wini/) because the throat's airway gets narrower, creating a subconscious psycholinguistic relationship between small physical sensations and the concept of smallness. How might this effect be useful to a writer? Today, there is significant blurring between middle grade and young adult fiction, often with unforeseen effects, since an older reader is likely to avoid a middle grade book, or a younger reader might not be ready for older fiction. It would be simple for a middle grade writer to convey the relative youth of a

protagonist by giving them a name with the diminutive /i/, such as Johnny (/dʒani/). This kind of naming communicates to older and younger readers alike which stage of life the character is in. Thus, the diminutive effect of /i/ in a word with only one phoneme can imply a younger genre to a reader.

The fantasy, science fiction, and dystopian genres encompass readers and characters of all ages, but the genres also stand to gain from the application of sound symbolism. In fantasy, there is generally an external antagonist, often a powerful one. To combat this, a protagonist must be fast, smart, and tough—at least in some sense of those words. A protagonist is also often living in a foreign world, allowing the author complete freedom over name choice. Choosing names can be a daunting task, but authors' intrinsic understanding of sound symbols may likely lead them to convey a character's grit through obstruent sounds. Consider Katniss (/kætnɪs/) from *The Hunger Games*, a hardened character capable of taking down the government, in comparison to her symbolically meek younger sister, Primrose (/prɪmroz/). Just as unvoiced consonants can connote speed and sharpness, "Katniss," with major consonants "k" and "t" that create plosives in the mouth, conjures up the idea of a character who is similarly forceful. Because these phonemes contain symbolism, her name can place Katniss as a believable symbol of a revolution.

However, there is some ambiguity between genres, and fantasy novels walk the line between the romantic and the fantastic. In this context, sound symbolism can provide a quick and effective solution by conveying to a reader what the primary focus of the novel will be. A book about vampires could be classified in either genre, but with a main character named Bella Swan (/bɛlə swan/), something seems to tell the reader the book won't be too frightening. This is because the sonorant letters "l, w, n" and the lack of voiceless stops symbolizes softness and vulnerability to romance. While this is not a hard and fast rule, readers are experienced enough to recognize this pattern and feel when a name "fits" a genre.

Whether in romance, fantasy, or children's literature, sound symbolism has a powerful effect on the minds of readers. While this effect has long been understood in business and even politics, authors should begin to use the naturally powerful aspects of language to their advantage as well—especially by using purposeful sound symbolism in their characters' names.

References

Best Dystopian Fiction of All Time. (n.d.). Goodreads.com. Retrieved from https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/14541.Best_Dystopian_Fiction_of_All_Time

The Best Epic Fantasy (fiction). (n.d.). Goodreads.com. Retrieved from https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/50.The_Best_Epic_Fantasy_fiction_

Best Ever Contemporary Romance Books. (n.d.). Goodreads.com. Retrieved from https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/57.Best_Ever_Contemporary_Romance_Books

Collins, S. (2009). *The hunger games*. London: Scholastic.

Meyer, S. (2007). *Twilight*. New York: Little, Brown and Co.

Ramachandran, V. S., & Hubbard, E. M. (2001). Synaesthesia—A window into perception, thought and language. *Journal of Consciousness Studies 8*(12), 3–34.

Shakespeare, W. (1984). *Romeo and Juliet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shinahara, K., & Kawahara, S. (2013). The sound symbolic nature of Japanese maid names. *Proceedings of the 13th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Cognitive Linguistics Association*, *13*, 183–193.

Sidhu, D. M., & Pexman, P. M. (2015). What's in a name? Sound symbolism and gender in first names. *Plos One*, *10*(5). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0126809

Sidhu, D. M., & Pexman, P. M. (2017). Five mechanisms of sound symbolic association. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, *25*(5), 1619–1643. doi:10.3758/s13423-017-1361-1

Sidhu, D. M., Deschamps, K., Bourdage, J. S., & Pexman, P. M. (2019). Does the name say it all? Investigating phoneme-personality sound symbolism in first names. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *148*(9), 1595–1614. doi:10.1037/xge0000662

The Value of "the Other"

Rachel Hulet

The presented article evaluates how approaching language through the lens of descriptivism can lead to a greater acceptance of diversity. The descriptivist ideology also values the differences of language identity among individuals. Because language identity and cultural identity are two parts of a whole, if people can learn to accept and respect one, they can learn to accept and respect both. By adopting this ideology, people learn to identify variation as a necessary source of vibrance and vivacity, which are essential qualities of the human existence.

In the last century, America has become home to people of all different backgrounds and ways of life. It can be difficult to mesh a wide variety of peoples and ideas together without discord, especially since some cultures directly disagree with others because of either historical or current conflict. Because people tend to reject that which is different from them or give greater value to some characteristics over others, issues like racism, homophobia, supremacy movements, superiority of classes, gender discrimination, and other stereotyping arise. But ethics in society are pushing the public toward greater inclusivity by discouraging judgment and encouraging mutual respect and understanding. We participate in this approach by choosing to follow ideologies that are inherently inclusive.

In the realm of linguistics, there are two primary ideologies. Prescriptivism reveres uniformity of language, and descriptivism respects diversity of language. Descriptivism does not esteem status quo to the same degree that prescriptivism does, and, therefore, descriptivism looks at how we can celebrate linguistic differences and encourage mutual respect within language.

How can approaching language through the lens of descriptivism lead to a greater acceptance of cultural diversity?

Descriptivism

Descriptivists prefer to observe language usage rather than grammar. Grammar is the study of language as a system, and is a counterpart of usage. Usage is how language is actually used by the people. Unlike grammar, usage looks at forces that exist outside of the language, such as cultural and situational influences. A descriptivist simply observes how these forces cause language to deviate from a standard language. Therefore, it does not place a greater value on one and a lesser value on the other. "[These] linguists insist on a scientific, descriptive approach to language, and language varieties, and an associated adherence to linguistic relativism or linguistic equality—the notion that . . . there are no linguistic grounds for regarding one variety as superior to

another" (McKinney & Swann, 2001, p. 579). A descriptivist tries to contemplate the language of every individual objectively.

The concept of descriptivism may be difficult to approach for non-linguist language enthusiasts because both formal teaching and tradition have set up preconceived notions of what constitutes proper language use. Regardless of how they actually speak or write, many people are used to relating "good" with Standard English and "bad" with anything that deviates from it. This black-and-white perception is a characteristic of prescriptivism. But language is not always as simple as the binary of good and bad. Good and bad indicate that what is good will always be good and what is bad will always be bad. But, in reality, language is constantly changing. Therefore, descriptivism is purely linguistic relativity.

Further contrast of descriptivism with prescriptivism will help us understand the relativity of descriptive ideology. Prescriptivism follows the grammatical rules of a standard language and dictates these rules to all the speakers of that language, regardless of dialect. Prescriptivists believe that there is only one correct way to use language and that all deviations indicate a decay in language. In contrast, descriptivism seeks to celebrate the vitality of language and the diverseness of dialects. It recognizes a need for a standard language, but—unlike the correctional mindset of prescriptivism—descriptivism celebrates the change of language that occurs within society and the individual.

> What is standard in one century, or even decade, may not be standard in another; the language proper to one age group is not the proper language of another; men and women talk differently; pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure vary quite widely from one region of our country to another, all varieties being "correct" in their respective areas; our linguistic choices vary greatly from formal, to informal, to casual settings. (Norton, 2002, pp. 61–62)

Descriptivism acknowledges that language is a direct reflection of human life and societal culture; it finds this essence of life beautiful and valuable. The descriptive approach helps us look more objectively

at the unique possibilities of the English language and helps us "reconcile the competing claims of different standards" (Crystal, 2001, p. 117). Linguistic qualities that descriptivists view objectively may include varieties of English accents and dialects, social and stylistic variation, contemporary linguistic change, and code switching (p. 580).

Descriptivism takes common-sense language into account, and it understands that language is a means for communication and must therefore account for systematic aspects of language. However, if these fundamentals of language are embodied differently in divergent varieties of English, it makes no difference. McKinney and Swann (2001) discuss that the accounting of common-sense language is the difference between learner errors and systematic features of non-native varieties of English (p. 585). Language is more than just logical, intellectual artwork; it is functional and meant to be used—regardless of the way the speaker needs to use it to communicate effectively. Descriptivists know that the inability to use Standard English perfectly is not a direct reflection of intellectual capabilities.

Language Identity

Language wholly influences the way that we think. Language can be influenced by identities, but it can also create identities. Thus, language identity can be defined by discussing it in terms of psycho-sociolinguistics.

Because we are unique in our use of language, psycho-sociolinguistics focuses on analyzing discourse rather than the systematic aspects of language itself. Michael Forrester (1996) states that discourse analysis focuses on an individual's natural speech, the content of the speech, the speech as a social action, the "rhetorical organization of everyday talk and thinking," and the intentions of speech (pp. 188–189). All of these elements are indicators of an individual's language identity. They are influenced by our subsystems relating to language.

We all belong to a set of linguistic systems: a system of a native language, within which are innumerable subsystems that are directly influenced by era, age, gender, region, situation, social class, economic

status, education, tradition, religion, occupation, personal interests, and so on. Because we each have a unique combination of these factors, we all have our own unique dialect of language, which is called an idiolect.

Each person uses language in a different way based on previously developed speech habits and cognitive relations. Take metaphors, for example. Many different languages use metaphors in speech as a way to connect a symbolic representation to a solid object, circumstance, or abstract idea. Based on our personal language identities, each one of us is likely to produce a different metaphor for the same thing. Because the use of language is influenced by so many different variables—such as culture, personality, environment history, current discourse relations, and situation—it would be nearly impossible for two people to fabricate identical metaphors for the representation of the same idea. Even if the concepts of the metaphors were identical, the mental creations would be distinct. If a group of people were asked to give a metaphor for someone named Mary, who is a very kind and warm person, each would think of a different metaphor. Even if two people thought of the phrase "Mary is a ray of sunshine," the first person may think of a sunrise, and the second may think of a memory from their childhood of sitting on the back porch in the sunshine. Even if both people think of a memory from their childhood of sitting on the back porch in the sunshine, those porches would not be the same. Even if a pair of siblings, who grew up in the same home, were to think of a memory from their childhood of sitting on the back porch in the sunshine on the same day and at the same time, they would still have distinct mental creations. Perhaps one was sitting on the porch because he or she needed a break from homework, and the other was sitting on the porch because it was cold inside the house. The metaphors, though similar in speech ("Mary is a ray of sunshine"), would be different psychologically.

The principle of idiolect is that language and psychology are inseparably connected. Each of us develops a unique language identity, held in our

psyche, that reflects all of the past experiences in our lives. Our very speech mirrors who we are, or at least who we are trying to be—which is still indicative of a past event that has caused us to determine that we desire to be a certain way. To say that one person's psychological makeup could be identical to another's is inaccurate; we can deduce that, if our individual characteristics of language use are related to psychology, our language use must also be unique. Again, this does not mean that we do not share similar characteristics with others in our various discourse groups, but that one person's dialect is highly unlikely to ever be identical to another's.

Considering these focuses of discourse analysis, we can determine that psycho-sociolinguistics celebrates individual language identity. It is this very individuality and language diversity that fuels the discussion of language identity and discourse analysis.

Descriptivism and Language Identity

Descriptivism celebrates language identity because it celebrates language diversity. It recognizes that language is simply a means of expression and that all individuals express themselves in unique ways. It also recognizes that it would be wrong to judge individuals because they deviate from a standard language since there is no such thing as a deficient dialect. It acknowledges that standard dialects are chosen because of historical happenstance (in which prestige and imperialism of the wealthy dictated the qualities of language), not the dialect's intrinsic value. Descriptivists believe that, regardless of the background of the speaker—meaning gender, education level, age, or social class—the speaker's dialect has value. These factors, among many others, are the makeup of the speaker's language identity; therefore, descriptivists can agree that every human has an element of value. Of course, the human identity is made up of more than just language; one's human identity is profoundly and inseparably connected to one's culture.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is "the existence of a variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society" ("Cultural Diversity", n.d.). Similar to language, there are innumerable cultural or ethnic groups that an individual can belong to. Some of the more recognized demographics within society are categorized into groups of age, race, sex, marital status, employment, income, and education. However, we cannot define cultural diversity without also looking at recognized psychographics within society as well: opinions, values, religion, personality, hobbies, interests, and so on. The combination of ways in which we identify with each of these categories can be called our culture. Even though we group ourselves with others, we each have our very own combination, and we all have our own individual culture. It is safe to say that "cultural diversity is the one true thing we [all] have in common" (Belfield, 2012, para. 10).

Acceptance of cultural diversity "supports the idea that every person can make a unique and positive contribution to the larger society because of, rather than in spite of, their differences" (Belfield, 2012, para 9). Having everyone contribute to society seems like an ideal, so why is acceptance of cultural diversity even a debate? It is human nature to be cautious, if not afraid, of things that we do not understand. If we do not try to understand, things that are different can seem bad. It is also human nature to compare ourselves to others. "People naturally use their own culture as the standard to judge other cultures" (para. 9). But judgment because of fear or misunderstanding can, and does, lead to stereotyping and discrimination. Instead of seeing the positive impact that others can have on society, and the good that people can do when they collaborate with each other, it becomes easy to see only differences. The first step toward accepting other people is recognizing that they are people. The second step is remembering that cultural diversity is something that we all have in common, and it is probably not the only thing we have in common. The only way to know this is to invite others to teach about their cultures and to be willing to do the same. This line of communication

and understanding empowers people and creates a platform for positive change.

The term *cultural diversity* is often used interchangeably with *multiculturalism*; however, acceptance of cultural diversity can be considered the definition of multiculturalism. It is centered around recognition and respect for diversity within society, and it encourages inclusion and empowerment for individuals willing to contribute their differences for the betterment of society. Multiculturalism is less of an abstract definition and more of a guideline for action. The following are key actions that help constitute the definition of multiculturalism: recognizing the abundant diversity of cultures; respecting and acknowledging the validity of different cultural expressions and contributions; valuing and encouraging the contributions of diverse groups; empowering people to strengthen themselves and others to achieve their maximum potential by being critical of their own biases; and celebrating rather than just tolerating the differences in order to bring about unity through diversity (Belfield, 2012, para. 7). The main goal of accepting cultural diversity is to bring about inclusivity and unity through respect. This can only be accomplished by finding value in "the other."

Language Identity and Cultural Diversity

Language is just one of the many elements that make up our individual culture. Perhaps the best way to learn how to accept others for their differences is to start small. Instead of assuming stereotypes based on the words that someone says or the way they say them, a descriptivist asks why the language is different in this situation. The descriptivist tries to find out why the person has the language dialect that they do. It is never a question of quality or value but rather of learning. Because this is something that is practiced, eventually the habit of finding value in individuality replaces the habit of stereotyping. Developing a habit of understanding instead of judging within the small scale of language can become a habit of understanding instead of judging within the larger scale of cultural diversity. Because language identity

and cultural identity are two parts of a whole, if we can learn to accept and respect one, we learn to accept and respect both. Therefore, linguistic descriptivism can increase acceptance of cultural diversity because it celebrates language identity.

References

Belfield, L. D. (December, 18 2012). *Social and behavioral sciences: What is cultural diversity?* [Blog Post]. Retrieved from http://purdueglobal.edu/blog/social-behavioral-sciences/what-is-cultural-diversity/

Crisp, R. J. (Ed.). (2011). *The psychology of social and cultural diversity* (Vol. 10). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Crystal, D. (2001). The prescriptive tradition. *Verbatim*. New York: Harcourt, 2001.

Cultural diversity. (n.d.). In *Lexico.* Retrieved from http://www.lexico.com/definition/cultural_diversity.

Forrester, M. A. (1996). *Psychology of language: A critical introduction*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

McKinney, C., & Swann, J. (2001). Developing a sociolinguistic voice? Students and linguistic descriptivism. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *5*(4), 576–90. http://health.uct.ac.za/sitets/default/files/image_tool/images/104/mck2001.pdf

Norton, D. (2002). The truths of grammatical correctness. Address transcript, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

An Investigation into the Utah Card-Cord Merger

Kennadie Halliday

*This article investigates the features and influencing factors of Utah's unique phonetic merger, known as the card-cord merger. This type of merger is common in areas throughout the United States, and in most cases, the phonetic sound /*ar*/ shifts to /*ɔr*/. In the case of Utah's merger, however, the sound /*ɔr*/ predominantly shifts to /*ar*/. The aim of this article is to discuss the historical, social, and linguistic elements of Utah's merger–for example, the impact of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, marked speech patterns, and phonetic factors–in order to better understand the merger's unique nature.*

When I moved from Arizona to Utah, I thought the only thing that would be foreign to me was the leaves changing colors in autumn. However, I quickly discovered that I was on the outside of a seemingly hilarious inside joke shared by all Utahns. I became aware of this inside joke on my first Sunday in Utah while members were sharing their testimonies at a church meeting. One young woman introduced herself and said she was from "American Fork, not Spanish *Fark*." While I did not understand the reference, the entire congregation chuckled knowingly. I felt left out, but the joke soon made sense after I discovered that the joke refers to Utah's phonetic vowel merger between /ɔr/ and /ar/, or the card-cord merger. A merger is "a sound change whereby two or more contrastive sounds are replaced by a single sound" (Castaño, 2014). This specific phonetic merger occurs in other regions of the U.S. (St. Louis, Missouri, and central and eastern Texas), but the features of Utah's merger are markedly different (Bowie, 2003, pp. 34–35). In this article, I will investigate the historical origins and linguistic features of Utah's card-cord merger, explore the reasons for its rise and decline throughout Utah history, and attempt to determine why the original merging of /ɔr/ and /ar/ was so unique.

Discussion 1: Dialectal Origins

An 1870 state census shows that more than thirty-five percent of Utah's population was foreign-born during that time period, that foreign-born population being mostly composed of immigrants from England, Scotland, and British-America (i.e., English-speaking Canada) (Bowie, 2003, p. 32). During the nineteenth century, these different varieties of English from these different groups of immigrants came into contact and mixed with each other, a process known as "dialect leveling." By the end of the twentieth century, there were three dialectal regions of Utah: Northern, Central, and Southern (Bowie, 2003, p. 34). Over seventy percent of the total population was concentrated in the Northern region, and this is the region where we typically see

the card-cord merger. Because immigrants made up such a significant portion of the population throughout this time period, it is likely that contact with these foreign English dialects influenced the merger.

Discussion 2: Available Evidence

There is very little audible evidence from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Utah simply because there was very little recording technology and what exists is very poor quality. However, one significant source of evidence from the twentieth century is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints's General Conference radio broadcasts, which began in 1924. David Bowie (2003), co-author of *Religious Affiliation as a Correlate of Linguistic Behavior*, investigated the speech patterns from these broadcasts, focusing on the talks of speakers born in Utah in or before 1897 (pp. 39–40). His conclusions, illustrated in Figure 1, list the most common words with the /ɔr/ sound (excluding some words like "your", which are not statistically significant). In the last column of the table, Bowie shows the percent of words that were pronounced /ar/ rather than /ɔr/, the standard pronunciation. The most common words were "war" and "authority."

Word	*Number*	*Percent*	*Word Class*	*Percent* [ar]
for	566	16.95%	(ɔr)	2.83%
lord (n)	370	11.08%	(ɔr)	17.30%
more	196	5.87%	(ɔr/or)	2.04%
war (n)	114	3.41%	(ɔr)	61.40%
before	102	3.05%	(ɔr/or)	2.94%
four	80	2.40%	(ɔr/or)	0.00%
Mormon	62	1.86%	(ɔr)	9.68%
authority	52	1.58%	(ɔr/ar)	69.23%
forth	50	1.50%	(ɔr/or)	0.00%

Table 1. Words making up 1.50% or more of the sample.

Discussion 3: Five Main Linguistic Factors

Bowie explores five significant factors that affect the merger. The first and most influential factor is historical word class. "Essentially, words in the (ɔr/ar) class very strongly favor the production of [ar], while words in the (ɔr/or) class very strongly disfavor that form. The words in the (ɔr) class, on the other hand, fall in between the other two classes, favoring the production of [ar] rather mildly" (Bowie, 2003, p. 40–41). Bowie thus demonstrates that words with a single commonly used vowel were susceptible to further vowel change with specific speakers.

The next factor is the preceding sound, which can influence how the vowel is pronounced. Interestingly, glides—the palatal, high, unrounded /j/ and the labial, high, rounded /w/ ("Glides and Semivowels," 2001, p. 1) —favor the /ar/ sound very strongly (Bowie, 2003, p. 42); thus, we see why "war" is one of the most common words pronounced with /ar/ instead of /ɔr/.

The third factor is the "speaker's decade of birth" (Bowie, 2003, pp. 42). Investigating this factor revealed that in the nineteenth century, there was a "trend toward the use of [ar] instead of [ɔr]", while the trend seemed to reverse during the twentieth century. Joseph A. Stanley and Margaret E. L. Renwick found that the merger was "complete" in Salt Lake City by the 1930s (2016, p. 1). Thus, the merger occurred gradually over time until it was "complete" by the 1930s and then gradually fell out of use up until today. Further research might explain exactly how and why this trend occurred, but evidently the trend was instigated by waves of immigration during the nineteenth century, followed by a downward drop in the twentieth century due to standardization.

The next significant factor is grammatical category of words. The study found that nouns favored the /ar/ sound considerably more than verbs, which is especially interesting because many words for nouns and verbs overlapped. In other words, a word was more likely to be pronounced with /ar/ if it was used as a noun than if it was used

as a verb, even if the same word could be used as both a noun and a verb ("fork," for example, would be pronounced /fark/ as a noun and /fɔrk/ as a verb).

The fifth and final factor is syllable stress, and the study found that "the production of [ar] is more likely if the syllable receives primary stress" (Bowie, 2003, p. 43). We see this factor at work in the word "authority," which, as previously discussed, was one of the most common words pronounced with /ar/ instead of /ɔr/.

Discussion 4: Social Factors

Although evidence for this era and area outside of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is limited, it is safe to assume that the Church helped the merger stand the tests of time. The Church was a significant part of Utah culture during this time, and the General Conference broadcasts were some of the only audible Utah English media of the twentieth century. Furthermore, General Authorities were of very high status in Utah. Thus, the use of the card-cord merger among the leadership of the Church may have helped it survive through several generations of Utah speakers. A 2010 study shows that active members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints "exhibited significantly different linguistic behavior from those who self-described as non-Mormons" (Baker & Bowie, 2010, p. 1). Members of the Church speak differently than non-members, including their use of the card-cord merger. Therefore, the Church has likely had significant impact on the development and continuation of the merger, and those who actively participate in the Church are more likely to exhibit it to this day. This instance is an example of status of speakers impacting language usage.

Another contributing factor is the marking of word pronunciations. Within the last century the pronunciation of words with the /ar/ sound instead of the /ɔr/ sound (such as "born" as "barn") has become marked as uneducated among speakers. Here we see the inverse of the former example; whereas this pronunciation used to distinguish high-status figures in Utah culture, it later became associated with people

of low status—such as farmers—and was therefore marked as lower-class or uneducated. Today, pronouncing "fork" as "fark" is becoming progressively marked. Word pronunciations that are unmarked by such stereotypes, like "war," "warm," and "authority," perpetuate Utah English more consistently.

Conclusion

Throughout the U.S., the card-cord merger is typically defined as /ar/ collapsing into /ɔr/. However, in Utah the merger occurred in the opposite direction, with /ɔr/ typically collapsing into /ar/ ("fork" becomes "fark"), although there are also instances of /ɔr/ collapsing into /ar/ in Utah English ("barn" becomes "born") (Bowie, 2003, p. 35). This proves that although the merger is typically thought to be one sound collapsing completely into the other, in reality the merger is a swapping of the sounds in either direction. This blending was likely influenced by the early settlers of Utah, especially considering that it gradually came into use during the nineteenth century. Factors such as historical word class, preceding sounds, speaker's age, grammatical category of the word, and syllable stress all helped determine whether the sound changed to /ar/ in the speech of Utah inhabitants. Overall, the markedness of certain words has determined whether the swapped sound has remained; over time, words like "born" (barn) and "fark" (fork) became marked as uneducated and reverted to the sound of the standard dialect. This distinction is illustrated in the early General Conference broadcasts, in which only unmarked words (e.g., "war", "warm") are pronounced differently from the standard dialect. I initially speculated that the /ɔr/ and /ar/ were once almost completely swapped, and the standard English dialect has progressively degraded that switch. However, further research revealed that due mainly to the effects of immigration, social factors, and standardization, the merger occurred gradually over time and then gradually fell out of use.

References

Baker, W., & Bowie, D. (2010). "Religious affiliation as a correlate of linguistic behavior." *Scholarly Commons*. repository.upenn.edu/pwpl/vol15/iss2/2/.

Bowie, D. (2003). "Early development of the Card-Cord merger in Utah." *American Speech* 78, 31-51.

Castaño, E. (2014, March 11). "Merger." *Merger*. www.ub.edu/diccionarilinguistica/print/6814.

"Glides and Semivowels." *Glides and Semivowels*. www.sfu.ca/person/dearmond/220/220.glide.htm.

Renwick, M. E. L., & Stanley, J. A. (2016, July). "Phonetic shift /ɔr/ phonemic change? American English mergers over 40 years." Program of Linguistics, University of Georgia. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joseph_Stanley4/publication/309417974_Phonetic_Shift_r_Phonemic_Change_American_English_mergers_over_40_years/links/580f981908ae009606bb897c.pdf

Gender Neutrality in Language Over Time:

Understanding Shifts in Socio-Culture Bias and Language Adaptation

John Sharman

In Harvey Mansfield's (2002) political dissection titled "What Has Happened to Manliness?," Mansfield paints a picture of modern society where masculinity is actively eradicated from the English language. In its place, he argues, a new gender-neutral approach to communication is already on the way. Through the use of new linguistic tools (corpora) and by examining occupational titles and collocates, the following research investigates whether a higher frequency of gender-neutral language is actually occurring. This investigation shows not only the continued popularity of gender-specific language use but its larger implications on why we use language in this manner.

Introduction

I find myself, as many others find themselves, in a time when shared beliefs of male and female roles in society are in a state of flux. It is evident by following discussions online or with those closest to us that attitudes regarding these roles have dramatically shifted over time. According to a recent 2017 study by Pew Research Center titled "On Gender Differences, No Consensus on Nature vs. Nurture," it was found that while greater parts of the world see sexual orientation contrasts across different domains, one region where they see more likeness is seen is within the workplace: sixty-three percent of people in this region say men and women are basically similar when it comes to the things they are good at in the workplace, while thirty-seven percent say they are mostly different (Parker, Horowitz, & Rohal, 2017, p. 1). These recent trends and shifts in attitudes toward gender roles beg the question: how have these shifts in attitude been manifested? One such area of shift is in language.

I became fascinated with the topic of gender neutrality trends in language as a result of my readings in my Topics of Political Philosophy class, especially that of renowned American political philosopher Harvey Mansfield. His 2002 article, "What Has Happened to Manliness," is an enthralling discussion on the issue of equality in gender politics and the interpretations of what male and female roles in society mean in our day and age.

Mansfield's article discusses how the English language has been pushed to become less focused on the *man* and things connotating *manliness* and highlights a shift toward a gender-neutral society. He explains that these ideas became stronger ambitions in the eyes of society than ever before because of the freedom that gender-neutrality seemed to offer. The assertions Mansfield confers are most apparent in looking at gender roles in the workplace. Women's independence and ability to move about freely are examples of breaking what many have considered to be socially engineered constructions that have prevented women from such autonomy until recent years. However,

Mansfield is very careful with the way he debates the possible reality of this society today because many oppose the idea of true independence and autonomy between the sexes.

Mansfield's analysis ultimately deals with the impact of adopting progressive attitudes toward gender roles in language on the identity and role of the genders within areas of society. However, I found in Mansfield's article that there was no corpus or linguistic data supporting any of his assertions regarding shifts toward gender neutrality in modern language. Since we still lack evidence that would substantiate this assumption that we (and especially Mansfield) have of our world, I have endeavored to see what corpus technology can do to shed further light on the subject at hand and determine whether it supports Mansfield's claims. Thus, the following research seeks to accomplish these objectives:

- Provide a list of gender-neutral and gendered terms.
- Test the frequency of these terms over time.
- Compare the frequency of gender-neutral terms with that of gender-specific terms.
- Examine collocates and discuss context.
- Display data and draw conclusions from it.

Terms Used

Gender Neutral	Gender Terms
Police Officer	Policeman/Policewoman
Mail Carrier	Mailman/Mailwoman
Server	Waiter/Waitress
Performer	Actor/Actress
Salesperson	Salesman/Saleswoman
Chairperson	Chairman/Chairwoman

Occupational titles provide insight into the mechanisms of modern society in that they illustrate how we label the world around us.

Gender-neutral terms do not have definite gender labels such as *man* or *woman*. These terms are replaced with occupation-specific labels (e.g., officer) or the word *person* is inserted at the end (e.g., salesperson). Gendered suffixes like "-ess" are also replaced with occupation-specific labels (e.g., server). The more gender-labeled terms employed, the greater the assumption that can be made about these jobs being more male-dominated or specifically tailored toward men. The same is also true of female workers. These occupational titles provide the necessary framework for deciphering whether gender roles have become less prominent for certain professions. By using the corpora to map the frequency of the occupational titles' use over time, we can further develop our understanding of this cultural phenomenon.

Interpretation of Raw Frequency Data

I began my research with a generic search in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) using my list of words and set out to examine their frequency over time. After entering a word into the search bar, I selected "find matching strings" and recorded the frequencies from the corpus lists in an excel worksheet. I included several variations of the gendered terms in the searches I performed, including terms like *chairwoman* versus *chairman* and *waiter* versus *waitress* in order to compare the frequency of each term. It is important to note that when looking at words such as *server*, the gender-neutral term for *waiter* and *waitress*, utilizing the corpus part of speech options is necessary. Consider that *server* carries multiple meanings and that search results may vary depending on how limited the search is. *Server* (because it is a homograph) can be interpreted to mean an online server and not just an employee of a restaurant; thus, it was necessary to limit the search in the two corpora to ignore genres or articles relating to computer science, technology, or the internet in general. Thus, the results were able to home in on the *server* who works at a restaurant rather than on the online interpretation.

I found these three corpora to be beneficial for several reasons. First, each contains a high volume of words, so it is easier to paint a more vivid picture of the frequency of these words as they occur in the English language. Second, it's essential that each term be considered over the last one hundred to two hundred years in order to gain a stronger sense of its transformative nature. Third, to interpret their usage—or the lack thereof—we have to consider the modern usage of these terms as they appear in context to further our understanding of the linguistic complexity they exhibit.

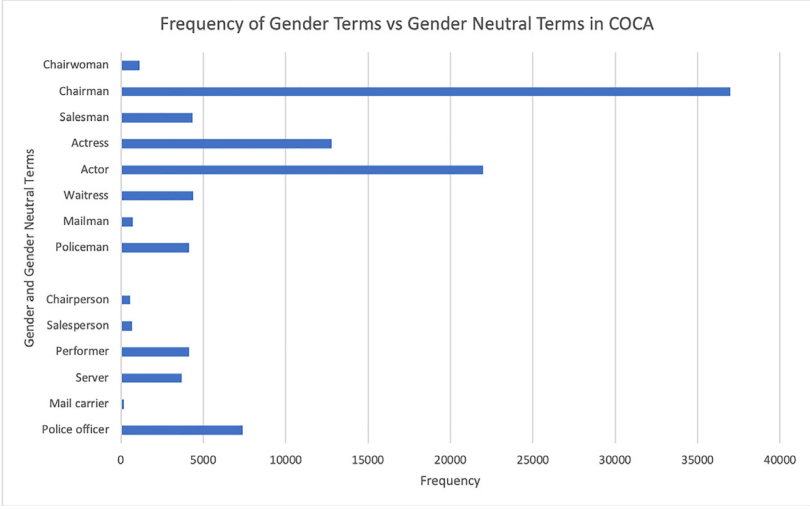


Figure 1. COCA's raw frequency results

What is startlingly clear is that, at least in terms of the COCA results, gendered terms outnumber the frequency of gender-neutral terms by a large margin. The one exception, *police officer*, will be briefly discussed later because the COHA provides additional insight. *Chairman* appears to have been the most used gendered term. Conversely, the COCA showed that *chairperson* was used infrequently. *Mail carrier* was only generated in one instance, indicating that it is principally unused in the English language. As has been stated previously, it is easy to attribute certain qualities and attributes of a given profession to that

of a specific gender—or even stereotype. Primarily, men are seen as the head of corporations. This is a seemingly convenient stigma that is easy to attribute because historically, events have shaped the stigma of men being in charge. This same idea is found in all the other terms in this list except with the term *actor*.

While *performer* has become a term that universally applies to all genders, people have attempted to make *actor* apply universally like *performer*. More and more female actresses (or should we call them *actors*) have felt motivated to use the term *actor*, the male variation, when describing their profession. Lending further to this idea of *actor* becoming more of a gender-neutral term is how it appears in various instances of the COCA outside of the film or theater contexts. Because the term *actor* is used in political discourse, it abruptly removes gender from the equation. Consider how the following sentence demonstrates how it is further used to exemplify gender neutrality: "Requiring the entities to work so closely together necessitates a process in which an individual *actor* cannot make a decision alone—this naturally requires more time." *Actor*, in instances of the law and politics, can be substituted for the term *individual*. This may be because *actor* may sound more professional or accurate. When referring to *actors* in many of these instances, the term connotes that *individuals* acted or did something noteworthy. However, the gender of said individual is not nearly as relevant as the simple fact that a person is the instigator of something.

Overall, at least as COCA demonstrates, there is no real push towards using more gender-neutral language. For now, it seems that these normal, gendered occupational terms are still largely in the contemporary limelight.

When we analyze the COHA's results, we see the graph on the following page (Fig. 2).

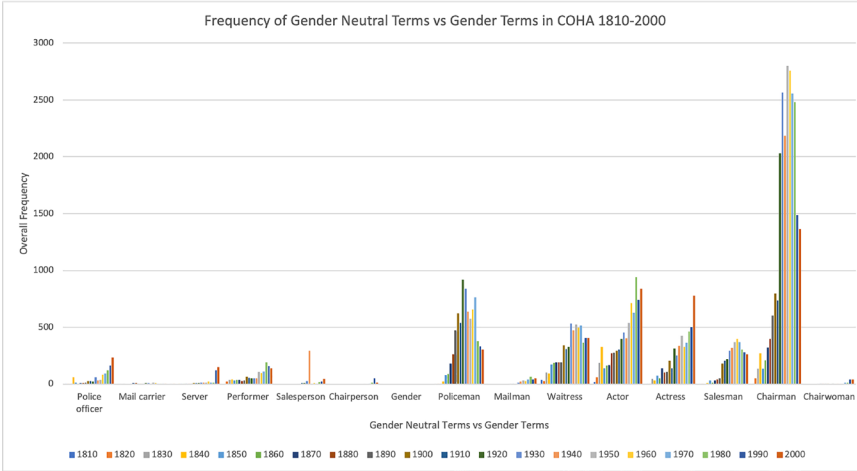


Figure 2. Frequency of gender-neutral terms vs. gender terms in COHA 1810-2000

The COHA generates similar results as the COCA in that over the course of time, it is evident that gender-neutral terms are largely avoided in place of their gendered counterparts. Historically, not only have gendered terms been employed more, but their frequency over time has likewise maintained a consistent upwards momentum. *Police officer* is surprisingly the only term to really show any means of gaining momentum as its gendered counterpart exhibits signs of slowing down. This is likely because police and law enforcement have often been an importance source in understanding history. Because moments of disruption, protest, and change occur in the homeland, undoubtedly law enforcement professionals are involved. Since they can often become the focal point of controversy or an element of the discussion on an issue or event, the language we use to refer to police officers may reflect a desire to exhibit respect or indicate an acknowledgement of equality to the men and women that participate in law enforcement activities. All in all, however, the results from the COHA further support the idea that gender neutrality has not been completely adopted and may be a result of how we easily find gender stereotypes a convenient measure by which we explain and understand the world around us.

Examination of Collocates in COCA and NOW Corpus

COCA Results for Each Term		NOW Results for Each Term	
Police officer	*Policeman/woman*	*Police officer*	*Policeman/woman*
Unidentified	Military	Senior	City
Former	Killed	Former	York
Killed	Former	White	August
Shot	Shot	Shot	Killed
Chicago	Standing	Killed	Former
Mail carrier	*Mailman/woman*	*Mail carrier*	*Mailman/woman*
Newspaper	Health	Newspaper	School
Union	School	Packer	Health
York	Public	Junk	Public
Between	University	New	Columbia
New	Columbia	Stamp	University
Server	*Waiter/Waitress*	*Server*	*Waiter/Waitress*
Workloads	Brought	Restaurant	Manuel
Restaurant	Asked	Table	Restaurant
Table	Table	Person	Food
Person	Restaurant	Food	Ingredients
Food	Brings	Person	Table

Another useful corpus I examined was the News on the Web corpus (NOW) that is updated online each month with fresh news articles and contains articles dating as far back as 2010. This corpus helps illustrate a contemporary view of language use as it relates to publicized material designed to inform.

I took each word and selected the collocates option on the NOW corpus interface and recorded the top ten closest terms between the list of gender-neutral and gendered terms. Police officers are typically

associated with more negative situations, as in shootings and shoot-outs, and servers and waitresses are likewise associated with food and customers. Thus, as these topics are discussed daily, in conversation and online, no clear discrimination or distinction exists in how we use these words, which is evidently interchangeably. One important note in replicating these results is the necessity to remove proper nouns from the collocate search because the names of actors is the top set of selections to choose from when examining collocates.

I then turned to comparing the collocates of the gendered terms themselves. Thus, I took every instance of the gendered term *policeman* and compared it against its female counterpart, *policewoman*, and the results provoked a more interesting discussion on how these gender stereotypes carry weight. This was done in the NOW corpus. The following is another brief examination of several terms compared against their gendered counterparts:

NOW Collocate Results for Gendered Terms

Policeman	*Policewoman*
Senior	Cruising
Former	August
White	Fletcher
Shot	Immigrant
Killed	Beautiful
Waiter	*Waitress*
Restaurant	Broadway
Table	Model
Person	Affair
Food	Hooters
Person	Strip

Actor	*Actress*
Gentlemen	Gorgeous
Snappy	Performance
Performance	Sultry
Award	Fashion
Producer	Sexy

The disparity between the context in which these gendered terms occur reveals a dichotomy regarding the way we think about and use these words within a given context. Outside of *actor*, male terms appear to deal descriptively with the functionality of their given profession. For *policeman* and *waiter*, each of the collocates demonstrates the conditions upon which their job functions, (e.g., *policeman*: shot, killed, senior; *waiter*: table, food, restaurant). Their female counterparts indicate a more shocking contrast: less concern is given to the function of the profession in context while more is given to how the individual looks when working in their profession. *Waitress* produces the most fascinating results because its collocates in the NOW corpus transparently highlight the sexual nature of the female terms for the server position. *Actor* and *actress* likewise produce another similarly jarring contrast. It is evident that gender stereotypes and stigmas associated with certain positions and their opposing gender are still relevant today.

Conclusion

Considering the full scope of the evidence and linguistic data presented, it is apparent that Mansfield's discussion on language trends moving towards gender neutrality is not happening in the way he describes. While the data indicates that the overall frequency of gender-neutral terms has indeed been increasing, the reality is that gendered labels remain a consistent and opportune pattern for us to employ in our everyday language use. As the revelation of the collocates further exposed, many of the stereotypes and biases with regards to men—and especially women—in workplace positions remain.

I believe these stereotypes remain because one of the ways we use language is by making phenomena that we encounter easier to rationalize as we converse with others. We construct the image of societal norms like the natural world, people we meet, and the types of jobs we do based on our preconceived beliefs. For example, the belief that a man is the wage earner and a woman is the caretaker who remains at home is easy for us to accept and refer to when we talk about work or occupations, since it has remained a quick frame of reference. Our beliefs are shaped within the rapidly changing world around us, and the increase of gender-neutral language is reflective of that. However, it is evident that while our language is in a state of change, it is still clinging to conformity, as indicated by the high frequency of gendered language. Sociolinguistics reminds us that as types of language usage grow higher in prestige, they become adopted by more and more people. Mansfield and I may be experiencing a world that is beginning to adopt new ideas that are associating gender-neutral language with higher prestige.

Still, it may take more time before we achieve the genderless language Mansfield envisioned. Nonetheless, I would predict—like the rise in popularity of the term *police officer*—that if these gender-neutral terms are further established as the norm, they could readily move away from gender stigmas and create a higher frequency of usage in the future. I find this to be an ideal outcome because language should never divide us but instead should enable us to better understand one another.

References

Davies, M. (2014, March). Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Distributed by Brigham Young University. https://www.english-corpora.org/

Davies, M. (2010, September). Corpus of Historical American English (COHA). Distributed by Brigham Young University. https://www.english-corpora.org/

Davies, M. (2016, May). News on the Web (NOW). Distributed by Brigham Young University. https://www.english-corpora.org/

Mansfield, H. C. (2002). What has happened to manliness? *Juniata Voices*, *2*, 5–17. https://www.juniata.edu/offices/juniata-voices/media/volume-2/2002-harvey-mansfield.pdf

Parker, K., Horowitz, J., K., & Rohal, M. (2017). *On gender differences, no consensus on nature vs. nuture*. Retrieved from https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2017/12/05/on-gender-differences-no-consensus-on-nature-vs-nurture/

Productivity of Borrowed Suffix *-ing* in French

Sonja Mecham

This article examines the productivity of the nominalizing suffix -ing *in French using Google Ngrams. This suffix was originally borrowed into French as part of whole English words in a greater trend of English borrowing, but there is new evidence that suggests the suffix is itself becoming productive. This evidence includes the existence of stems that are borrowed before corresponding forms with* -ing *arise, specific meanings and functions attached to the suffix* -ing, *and the presence of* -ing *words that exist in French and not in English.*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explore evidence that shows productivity of the suffix *-ing* [ɪŋ] in French. In this article, productivity will be defined as a morpheme's ability to form new words. Many words with the *-ing* suffix have been borrowed from English, and at first glance these words seem to have been borrowed whole. However, with further investigation, the *-ing* suffix may be being used productively in some of these words as well as being used to create additional new words. In this article, I will discuss the influence of English on French, general patterns of borrowing, the borrowing of *-ing* into French, functions and meanings of *-ing*, and evidence for the productivity of *-ing*. The complete list of data used is found in the appendix, though I will refer to specific pieces of data throughout the article.

2. Literature Review

As English has become more of a global language, many linguists have studied its influence on other languages. Foreign language educator Thogmartin (1984) studied pseudo-borrowings from English to French. He looked at several types of words that were borrowed, including words with *-ing*. Thogmartin found that words with *-ing* in French often had locative meanings. In an article titled "The Spread of English: From France to a More General Perspective," Truchot (1997) looked at the spheres in which English influences other European languages, specifically French. He found that English especially influenced scientific research, business, and education. Lewis (2007) conducted research about the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic aspects of *-ing* in French. Lists of French words ending in *-ing* by Walter (1983) and Lewis (2007) were used as references for this article.

3. Influence of English on French

After the Norman conquest of 1066, French began to have an enormous impact on English, resulting in thousands of borrowed words that are still in use today. Since then, English and French have interacted on many continents, exchanging words, morphology, and syntax.

However, the last century has seen an increase in the influence of English on French (and on other languages across the world) because English has become an international language of business, science, and technology. In France, children ages eleven to fifteen are required to learn a second language in school. English is taught at every secondary school, and 85 percent of students in this age group choose to learn English, making it the most learned foreign language in France (Truchot, 1997, p. 71).

Some countries, including France, have chosen to implement policies to preserve their languages and protect them from being infiltrated by English in an attempt to reduce the influence of American culture on their own cultures. In 1994, France passed the "Toubon Law," which states that all official documents, advertisements, and government-financed schools are required to use French. The Académie Française offers and recommends official French replacements for words that have been borrowed from English. For example, in official documents, one is required to use the term *courriel* (electronic letter) instead of *email*.

4. General Patterns of Borrowing

Why is it that French has borrowed so many words from English in recent history? One reason that languages borrow words is to make up for a lack of words for a particular concept. Truchot (1997) stated, "Nowadays, some fields like computing and electronics are so bound to the English language, scientifically, technologically, and industrially, that there are very few original productions in other languages" (p. 72). Because concepts like the internet, smartphones, and Facebook were invented and named in English, most languages did not have their own words for them. This was the case with French, so French speakers borrowed the English terms to be able to communicate about the same concepts.

Another reason that speakers borrow words from another language is that the other language has some kind of prestige. When this happens, the borrowing (substratum) language uses words from the higher status (superstratum) language to achieve higher social standing. When the French began borrowing words from the English language, the words were often used for their fashionable connotation—especially in advertising—

so that the user would be seen more positively (Martin, 2003). However, English words have become so common in French that now they are used among most social classes and in many situations (Truchot, 1997, p. 72).

5. Borrowing *-ing* into French

The specific instance of borrowing that this study examines is the borrowing of the English suffix *-ing* into French. There are over 1,000 words in French that end with *-ing* (see Table 1).

French	IPA	Translation
aquaplaning	[akwaplaniŋ]	aquaplaning
babysitting	[bebisitiŋ]	babysitting
brainstorming	[bʁenstoʁmiŋ]	brainstorming
camping	[kɑ̃piŋ]	camping
jogging	[dʒɔgiŋ]	jogging
marketing	[maʁketiŋ]	marketing
mixing	[miksiŋ]	mixing (music)
networking	[nɛtwɔʁkɪŋ]	networking
parking	[paʁkiŋ]	parking
shopping	[ʃɔpiŋ]	shopping
streaming	[stʁimɪŋ]	streaming

Table 1. Examples of French words with -ing

The earliest instances of this borrowing date back to the eighteenth century with the words *drawing-room* (1725) and *meeting* (1764) (earlier words ending in *-ing* include pudding and shilling, which are not parsable). Most words with the *-ing* suffix were borrowed during or after the twentieth century (Walter, 1983, p. 18).

6. Functions and Meanings of *-ing*

In English, *-ing* is used, among other things, as a nominalizer that turns verbs into gerunds. The suffix has a similar function in French. The closest approximation to *-ing* in traditional French is the morpheme *-age*, so the

Académie Française sometimes replaces *-ing* with *-age* in borrowed words to make them more traditionally French (Thogmartin, 1984, p. 451). Table 2 shows three such words with their English equivalents. Below Table 2 are the Google Ngram graphs for each pair from 1900 to 2008.

French	IPA	-age Variant	Translation
listing	[listiŋ]	*listage*	list
mixing	[miksiŋ]	*mixage*	mixing (music)
aquaplaning	[akwaplaniŋ]	*aquaplanage*	aquaplaning

*Table 2. -*ing *words with alternate forms that have -*age.

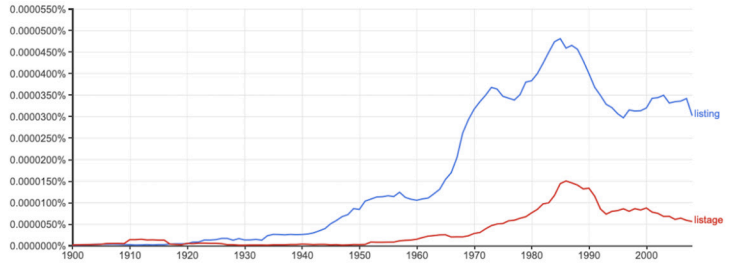


Figure 1.

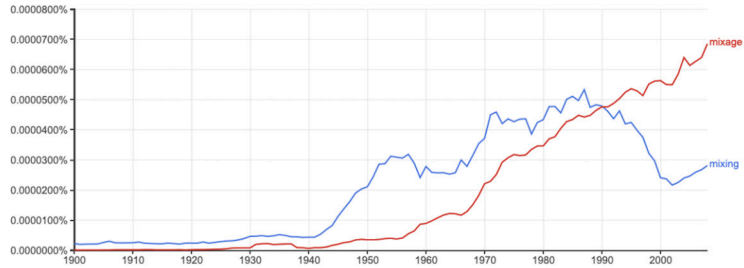


Figure 2.

Figure 3.

In the lexeme *list-*, the difference between the percentage of the two variants being used remained constant. However, in the lexemes *mix-* and *aquaplan-*, the suffixes switched places right before 1990, with the *-age* variants becoming more common. This was only four years before the Toubon Law and may have reflected a shift in attitudes toward anglicisms. However, that is not to say that there were not other factors involved.

In addition to having a nominalizing function, *-ing* shows semantic patterns in French. The most common categories that *-ing* words belong to in French include business, cosmetics, and sports. According to Thogmartin, *-ing* words can also express a locative meaning as shown in the following data (Thogmartin, 1984, pp. 451–452).

French	**IPA**	**Translation**
bowling	[buliŋ]	bowling alley
dancing	[dɑ̃siŋ]	dance hall
pressing	[pʁesiŋ]	dry cleaner's
skating	[sketiŋ]	skating rink

Table 3. Locative -ing *words.*

7. Evidence for *-ing* Productivity

As stated at the beginning of this article, productivity is defined as a morpheme's ability to create new words. If *-ing* is productive in French, that means it can be applied to new stems instead of simply being borrowed along with whole English words. One way to know if words that appear to be borrowed are actually instances of productive *-ing* is to investigate whether *-ing* words are borrowed whole or if the stem is borrowed first.

Most *-ing* words in French have stems that do not exist independently within the French language, suggesting that the *-ing* forms are borrowed whole. However, there are words with the *-ing* suffix in French that do not correspond to any English words. How do these words come about? One of the best examples of this is the word *relooking* (makeover).

relooking [ʁəlukiŋ] makeover

At first glance, this word appears to be English, but there is no such word as *relooking* in English, and if there were, it would not mean *makeover*. The fact that this word was not borrowed whole indicates that French is using *-ing* productively to build new words, even though the stem is originally English. (The prefix *re-* is also a French morpheme, so the stem *relook* might not be entirely English; however, the root *look* still comes from English.) This is one example of a stem that was borrowed before its *-ing* form arose (see Fig. 4). The English word *look* was borrowed into French to mean *style* or *the way you look*, similar to how we use it in English to mean *I like her look*. The term was recently derived as the French word *relooking*.

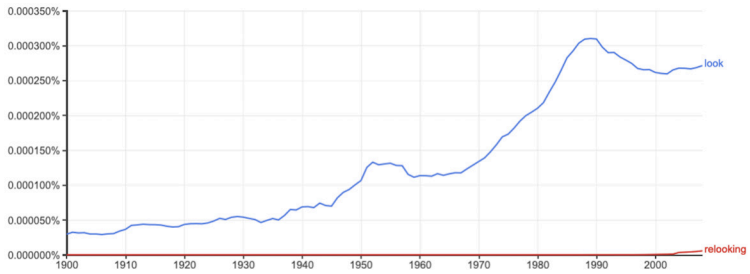


Figure 4.

There are also French words that do not occur in English with English stems that are not free morphemes in French (unlike *look*). An example of this is the word *fooding* (the art of cooking)—*food* is not, itself, a meaningful word in French. Since this French word does not occur in English, it could not have been borrowed whole, which suggests that it might have been built in French using the borrowed stem and borrowed *-ing* suffix.

Despite this rise in productivity, there is not yet definitive evidence of *-ing* being used on French stems. While Lewis (2007) claims that there are words that use a French stem and an *-ing* suffix, none of the seven words she suggested was attested in either the Linguee or the Google Books corpus (see Appendix for the full list of words). The fact that *-ing* is only used on English stems may be a similar phenomenon to what happened in English when affixes like *-ism* were

borrowed but were only used on words of a certain origin—in this case, Latinate words (Baeskow, 2004, pp. 49–51). As *-ism* became more productive and as English distanced itself from Latin, the suffix *-ism* became somewhat productive on stems of other origins as in *vandalism* (Germanic origin) and *Darwinism* (English origin). Perhaps as the suffix *-ing* becomes more common in French, it will become productive on stems of non-English origin.

8. Limitations

The biggest limitation of this study came from the limitations of the French Google Books (Ngrams) corpus. This corpus only has full data until 2008, meaning that the most recent data (the past twelve years) is left out of this study. The corpus also includes some French books with selections of English text, so the data is not entirely based on French. Additionally, it was somewhat difficult to determine whether certain stems were English or French since they are the same in both languages (such is the case with the word *dancing*). However, based on orthography and the meaning of the stems, most stems studied seemed to be of English origin.

9. Conclusion

Even though *-ing* is currently only used on English stems, it is still a productive morpheme in French because it creates new words in the language that could not have been borrowed whole. The suffix has a specific meaning and function (nominal, sometimes locative) that systematically occurs across many words. As the French language evolves, this suffix may become fully productive and may be applied to non-English stems.

References

Baeskow, H. (2004). *Lexical properties of selected non-native morphemes of English*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Lewis, J. C. (2007). *The -ing suffix in French* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of North Dakota.

Martin, E. (2003). Mixing English in French advertising. *World Englishes*, *21*(3), 375–402.

Thogmartin, C. (1984). Some "English" words in French. *The French Review*, *57*(4), 447–455.

Truchot, C. (1997). The spread of English: From France to a more general perspective. *World Englishes*, *16*(1), 65–76. doi: 10.1111/1467-971x.00047

Walter, H. (1983). La nasale vélaire /ŋ/, un phonème du français? *Langue Française*, *60*(1), 14–29. doi: 10.3406/lfr.1983.5172

Appendix

This is not a complete list of French words ending in *-ing* but examples of five types of *-ing* words in French.

1. English words with roughly the same meaning in French, used as gerunds

French	IPA	Translation
aquaplaning	[akwaplaniŋ]	aquaplaning
babysitting	[bebisitiŋ]	babysitting
brainstorming	[bʁenstoʁmiŋ]	brainstorming
camping	[kɑ̃piŋ]	camping
jogging	[dʒɔgiŋ]	jogging
marketing	[maʁketiŋ]	marketing
mixing	[miksiŋ]	mixing (music)
networking	[nɛtwɔʁkiŋ]	networking
parking	[paʁkiŋ]	parking
shopping	[ʃɔpiŋ]	shopping
streaming	[stʁimɪŋ]	streaming

2. English words with roughly the same meaning in French, used as nouns

French	IPA	Translation
booking	[bœkiŋ]	reservation
bowling	[buliŋ]	bowling alley
dancing	[dɑ̃siŋ]	dance hall
débriefing	[debʁifiŋ]	debriefing
listing	[listiŋ]	list
planning	[planiŋ]	schedule
shampooing	[ʃɑ̃pwɛ̃]	shampoo
skating	[sketiŋ]	skating rink
snacking	[snakiŋ]	snacks

3. French words made of English words and -ing, used as gerunds

French	IPA	Translation
brushing	[bʀœʃiŋ]	blow-drying
fooding	[fudiŋ]	the art of cooking
footing	[futiŋ]	jogging

4. French words made of English words and -ing, used as nouns

French	IPA	Translation
dressing	[dʁesiŋ]	wardrobe
lifting	[liftiŋ]	facelift
pressing	[pʁesiŋ]	dry cleaner's
relooking	[ʁəlukiŋ]	makeover
smoking	[smɔkiŋ]	tuxedo
training	[tʁeniŋ]	track suit

5. French words made of French stem and -ing (not attested)

**flouting*
**pubing*
**soiring*
**rentring*
**couding*
**canoping*
**frotting*

The Post-Date Text:
A New Social Script

Cody Daniels

This study attempts to determine common elements of post-date texts, a new type of social script born from computer-mediated communication, and how these elements are used to convey interest or disinterest in a relationship. Data consisting of post-date texts and numerical ratings of each date were collected via student surveys. Certain markers, such as the use of emojis, were found to be universally positive or negative, while others, such as the use of all caps, were found to be gender-specific or simply neutral. The results indicated that these texts are signals of affection and interest in future dating.

Introduction

A new and increasingly important social script has developed in the dating scene among high school and university students through the means of computer-mediated communication (CMC). Shortly following a date, it is expected for one of the date participants to send a *post-date text*. This text typically expresses appreciation for the other person involved in the date and for the time spent by the date participants. Appreciation for being asked on the date can also be expressed. There are many personal theories floating around about who is obligated to text first, when it is acceptable to send such a text, and what it means if no text is sent at all. It is often a source of great anxiety for the date participants attempting to decipher the pragmatic meaning behind their dates' words, especially if there is romantic interest.

Research has been conducted on how we express affection to one another, including on certain forms of CMC, such as Facebook. However, little research exists on the topic of the post-date text specifically. This article attempts to understand the scripts of post-date texts and their components as well as to develop a working theory as to their purpose. The article will also explore signs of affection in the text and differences between genders. It is anticipated that certain linguistic markers will be more common than others, that the strength of certain markers will differ by gender, and that the post-date text itself will prove to be a strong indicator of affection rather than just a pleasantry.

Literature Review

Previous research conducted by Kory Floyd and Mark T. Morman (1998) has established that affectionate communication plays an important role in the development and definition of interpersonal relationships. They found that affection is communicated in three main ways: (1) through verbal expressions ("I love you"), (2) through direct, non-verbal actions (hugging, kissing, etc.), and (3) through social support. From these findings, Floyd developed an Affectionate Communication

Index to be able to quantify affection in communication in a way that can be compared across multiple studies. The Index was constructed by administering a battery of tests to university students. Students were quizzed on what they personally acknowledged saying and doing to express affection to their loved ones. Another group of students was given the list of responses and rated the ones they viewed as legitimate expressions of affection.

A closer examination of affection expressed on the social media platform Facebook was conducted by Daniel H. Mansson and Scott A. Myers (2011). Drawing on previous research by Floyd and Morman, Mansson and Myers employed a similar process of asking university students to identify how they express affection on Facebook and to rate others' expressions for their validity. Some examples of expressing affection on Facebook include using emoticons, commenting, friending, complimenting, and wishing happy birthdays. Through their study, Mansson and Myers learned how close friends communicate affection online, how certain gender differences are communicated, and how appropriate the friends deemed the expressions. It was also found that women are more expressive than men are, and women perceive emoticons and similar expressions as more appropriate forms of affection than men do.

Methodology

Similar to the studies mentioned above, this study involves a survey of university students, namely first-year students at Brigham Young University who are dating and who live on campus. Respondents filled out a Google Form with the following questions regarding a recent date they went on:

1. What is your gender? (Male/Female)
2. Who planned the date? (Me/My date)
3. How enjoyable was the date? (1 to 5)
4. How likely are you to want a follow-up date? (1 to 5)
5. What was the first text you sent after the date? (May be left blank if no text was sent.)
6. Who texted first? (Me/My date/No text was sent.)

In an improvement upon the previous studies, this survey was designed to collect raw data about actual dates. This design eliminated bias caused by self-reporting and by knowing that one is being observed. Additionally, the real texts that correlated to the survey responses were studied. Since the texts were already sent, the data is an accurate representation of the respondents' typical language. Post-date text responses were tabulated in Google Sheets, and particular features of the texts were marked. The marked features include date-specific details, the use of the date participant's name, all-caps, emojis, and exclamation marks, and expressions of gratitude, terms of endearment, compliments, and concerns for the date participant's safety.

Results and Analysis

Metric	Average
How enjoyable was the date? (1 to 5)	4.137254902
How likely are you to want a follow-up date? (1 to 5)	3.725490196
Word count of text	11.96078431

Table 1: Rating Averages

There were fifty-one respondents in total (twenty-seven males and twenty-four females). The data appears to consist of mostly positive date experiences, although there were some negative experiences as well. For the purpose of this analysis, a positive result is one that correlates with a better-than-average rating about wanting a follow-up date (see Table 1). A negative result is one that correlates with a worse-than-average rating about wanting a follow-up date. The most common features of a post-date text in descending order are expressions of gratitude, the use of exclamation marks, emojis, and date-specific details, and expressions of concern for the date participant's safety. The most positive features of a post-date text in descending order are the use of terms of endearment, all-caps, compliments, emojis, and date-specific details. Any post-date text sent is a slight positive indicator, while no text sent at all is a strong negative indicator (the average desire for a follow-up date is 2.5 when no post-date text is

sent). Also, sending only pictures is a strong negative indicator, since the average desire for a follow-up date when this happens is also a 2.5.

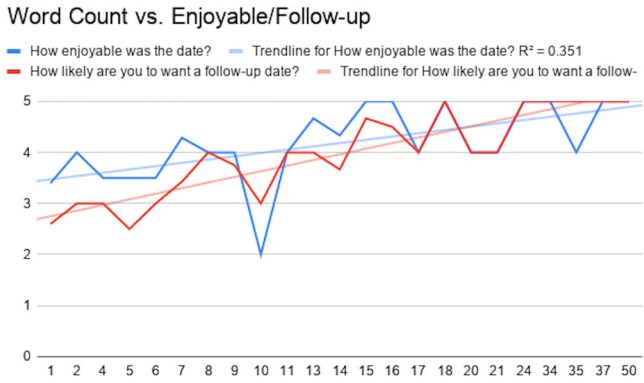


Figure 1. Word counts vs. enjoyable/follow-up

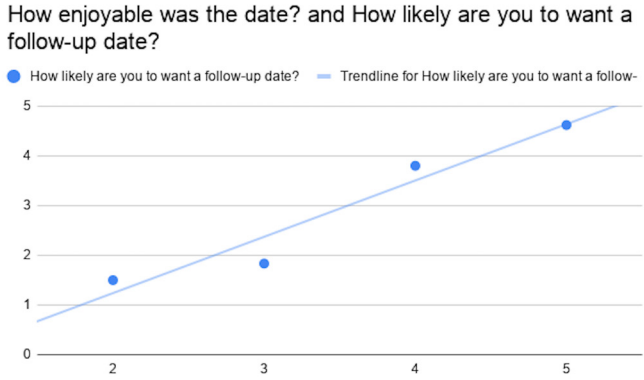


Figure 2. How enjoyable was the date? and How likely are you to want a follow-up date?

According to Figure 1, there is a strong positive correlation with the post-date text's word count and the date participant wanting a follow-up date (R^2 = 0.8). This trend can likely be attributed to the inclusion of detail and other indicators in the post-date text. These inclusions provide the strongest correlation between any of the indicators. Among other findings, around a tenth of female date participants had planned the original date. According to Figure 2,

the more enjoyable the date was, the more likely the date participants wanted a follow-up date. There is no real trend for knowing which gender is supposed to send the post-date text first, although there is a slight bias toward whoever planned the date.

Using Table 2, some of the most significant differences between genders can be postulated. For instance, a male expressing gratitude is a strong positive, while a female expressing gratitude is neutral (just a pleasantry) or possibly even slightly negative. Using all-caps is an especially female indicator and is a strong positive.

Discussion and Conclusion

The data suggests that the post-date text is more than a pleasantry and is generally employed as an expression of affection to the date participant receiving the text—or at least the post-date text is a signal that the date participant sending it would be interested in going on a follow-up date. The post-date text is a means of using CMC to continue developing the relationship after the date is over. While there is no set script for who should text first, it is important that a text is sent for the relationship to be maintained. A date participant who is unaware of the pragmatic significance of the post-date text may unintentionally damage the relationship that was created on the date by not sending a text. It is also important for those in the beginning of a relationship to be in tune to the indicators that their love interest uses to express affection, whether those indicators are individual-specific or one of the gender-specific indicators that this article examined. The post-date text is indeed proving to be an important part of dating for young people.

Indicator	Average: How likely are you to want a follow-up date?	Count Male
Endearment	5	1
Emoji	4.538461538	13
Compliment	4.5	4
Safety	4.4	5
Detail	4.285714286	7
Gratitude	4.117647059	17
!	4	15
Name	4	5
Average	3.703703704	27
Photos	2.4	5
All-caps	N/A	0
Indicator	Average: How likely are you to want a follow-up date?	Count Female
Endearment	5	1
All-caps	4.666666667	3
Compliment	4.666666667	3
Detail	4.6	5
Emoji	4.555555556	9
Safety	4.5	2
Average	3.75	24
!	3.666666667	15
Gratitude	3.642857143	14
Name	N/A	0
Photos	N/A	0

Table 2: Gender Differences

References

Floyd, K., & Morman, M. T. (1998). The measurement of affectionate communication. *Communication Quarterly*, *46*(2), 144–162. https://search.proquest.com/docview/85686327?accountid=4488

Mansson, D. H., & Myers, S. A. (2011). An initial examination of college students' expressions of affection through Facebook. *Southern Communication Journal*, *76*(2), 155–168. doi:10.1080/10417940903317710

Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama:
An Investigation of Speech and Style

Erica Bassett

Though set in different periods of American history, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 and Barack Obama's speech as the Democratic presidential nominee in 2008 echo one another. Both speeches had specific and similar political goals. This article analyzes how Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama both used unique linguistic styles to further specific, overarchingly political, goals. Each speech is analyzed according to word cloud, lexical diversity, function words, sentence type, and readability statistics measurements. Results demonstrate the diverse ways both individuals used the English language to accomplish their political objectives.

The comparison of Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama has fascinated me since Obama's campaign efforts in 2008 and 2012. Both figures have demonstrated remarkable resolve and noted publicly the odds against their efforts—Obama as a presidential candidate and King as a civil rights leader. I chose to analyze King's famous 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech and Obama's acceptance speech as the Democratic presidential nominee in 2008 because I am interested in comparing their use of language in two similar political circumstances. In his time, King boldly delivered his speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, fighting for the social and economic equality of African Americans in the 1960s. I have always loved King for his determination, resolve, and defense of human rights. In a more modern context, Obama boldly promised the American people reform in the midst of a presidential campaign. As potentially the first African American president, Obama earnestly sought the vote of the American public and even used some of King's rhetoric in an effort to bring about his own social reform. Because their circumstances appear to be so similar, I will examine how both individuals used their unique styles of English to advance and achieve their goals.

Word Clouds

Not surprisingly, by comparing what words each speaker spent the most time on, we can better understand what was important to each speaker—better yet, what their objectives and interests were. I have examined both speakers' word choice using word clouds, which displays words according to their frequency in a visual analysis. One specific difference between King's and Obama's speeches is the use of *nation* versus *country*. King often uses the word *nation* in his address, while Obama uses the word *country* more frequently. At first glance, this distinction does not seem that significant. However, King uses *nation* to connote a sense of unity for his audience—*nation* meaning a large group of people of common descent, history, or culture. Based on historical context, King appears to favor this word because it allows him to address Americans as a unified body, implying that regardless

of race, we are Americans who deserve equal rights and privileges. His emphasizing the universal rights of Americans is supported by his heavy use of words like *freedom*, *dream*, and *today*. These ideals are embodied well in King's use of *nation*. In contrast, Obama uses the term *country*, referring to an organized body of citizens under a government. Obama also dwells more on operational nouns, such as *economy* and *work*. Though he relies on similar principles and ideals, Obama views America in the realm of politics; his frequent use of *George* (referring to President George W. Bush) and *McCain* (Senator John McCain) demonstrate a conscious effort to distinguish himself from other important figures, something that does not appear in King's speech. Contrasted with King's use of *freedom* and other idealistic terms, Obama's use of *promise* signifies his aims as a presidential candidate to bring about change and earn public support.

Figure 1. King's word cloud

King also uses the modals *will* and *must* heavily, implying a future that is certain, along with a sense of urgency in his mission. Obama, on the other hand, prefers the modal *can*. This preference also holds implication—a possibility and hope of change that is dependent on voters. Thus, even King's and Obama's uses of modals demonstrate their differing aims and underlying strategies.

Figure 2. Obama's word cloud

Voyant

In analyzing a text, not only do content words matter, but lexical diversity is equally important. Voyant is a tool used primarily for analyzing lexical content, which is the ratio of word types to total number of words. In the case of comparing Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barack Obama, it was surprising to find that their lexical diversity percentages hardly differ. The parallel structure present in both texts most likely contributes to these results; the redundancy of certain words affects the diversity of the speaker's language.

	King	***Obama***
Lexical Diversity	**0.332 (33.2%)**	**0.34 (34%)**

Table 1. Voyant lexical diversity results for King and Obama by percentage

In this instance, the difference in lexical diversity is not significant between King and Obama, though one could argue that King still has a lower diversity percentage than Obama. This could be justified with King's frequent repetition of the phrase "I have a dream" at the conclusion of his speech. However, Obama seems to do the same with far more subtle phrases. Both speakers are, in comparison to one another, eager to use repetition, a feature of African American rhetoric, to emphasize their point. This repetition is the reason why the results are so similar.

More significant is the spread of certain words within each speaker's text. King, for instance, seems to employ words like *freedom*, *dream*, and *let* in an exponential fashion. *Freedom*, in particular, is used strategically throughout the text in a visible spread. Though rare in the beginning, *freedom* is gradually incorporated until the last moments of the text, when its usage practically skyrockets. King seems to use *freedom* and *dream* carefully, weaving together a picture of the time period, a time when African Americans experienced racial prejudice and segregation. By the end, King uses these words to depict a future of hope. The increased use of *let* is also noticeable, implying a hindrance or release from bondage. Rather than verbs like *make* or *have*, King uses *let* to demonstrate individual agency in bringing about desired social reform in the 1960s.

It is also important to note the difference between King's and Obama's word use patterns and models. While King relies primarily on "positive" words (e.g., *freedom* and *dream*) to advocate his quest for social change, Obama employs a mix of "positive" and "negative" words to highlight his own merits and discredit his political opponent. Obama's use of the words *promise*, *American*, and *work* seems to have an inverse relationship with the word referring to Obama's opponent, *McCain*. Obama seems to intentionally pair these "positive" words with himself and remove them when discussing words like *McCain*. For example, when Obama refers to McCain halfway through the speech, the "positive" words *American*, *country*, and *promise* drop out of use drastically. Thus, by inverting these words and disassociating his political opponent from these positive ideas, he presents himself as a presidential candidate who is able to enact change and benefit voters.

Figure 3. King's word spread.

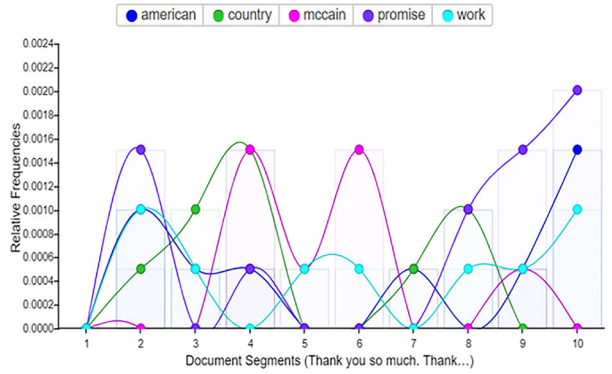


Figure 4. Obama's word spread.

Functions Words—Pronouns

Function words within a text are crucial in examining the style of a specific individual. Therefore, I manually examined the uses of certain functions words in each speech. The use of pronouns is an important consideration in comparing these two texts. King, for instance, uses the first-person plural *we* pronoun (we, our, and us) quite liberally: 65.33 percent of the pronouns he uses in his speech fall under this category, compared to the 22.67 percent of first-person singular and 12 percent of second-person that he uses. In a text of only 1,528 words, this preference for the subjective *we* pronoun is significant. King uses the *we* pronoun specifically because it connotes a unified body, or a

joint effort to perform a task. As an African American addressing fellow African Americans, King emphasizes his bond with them during a time of social violence and uncertainty. This is not his cause alone but the cause of every American. Certainly, the first- and second-person pronouns are also important. King uses the first person for personal anecdotes, showing his own investment in this cause. In the end, however, King would rather emphasize the collective unity of his audience than his personal history, rallying his audience to move forward and enact social change. Thus, it is no surprise that King uses the second-person plural *you* rarely, since it would draw away from his emphasis.

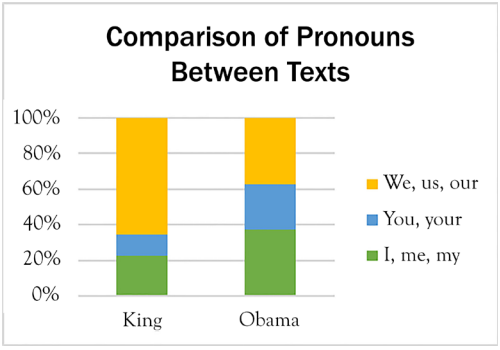


Figure 5. Comparisons of pronouns by person, based on percentages

Obama's use of pronouns offers a slightly different story. In his speech, Obama seems to prefer an approximate balance between all three pronoun types, equally split between *I* and *we* pronouns at 37.01 percent each, with 25.98 percent being second-person *you* pronouns. In this case, Obama hopes to make himself equal with his audience in terms of importance—not just by unifying his audience, but by defining a symbiotic relationship between a presidential candidate and the voters. Here, he persuades his audience that the political effort of the time is split jointly between him and the American public. Obama uses the *you* pronoun as well, emphasizing the necessity for voter action in order to bring about social change. While focusing on his own merits, he balances between all three pronouns and demonstrates that this is, after all, a presidential campaign, meaning

that Obama is seeking political visibility and favorable votes. In this way, King and Obama seem to take two different approaches to what could be perceived as a similar situation—King with a strong preference toward the first-person plural *we*, and Obama with a consistent use of all three pronoun types.

Grammar Construction—Sentence Type

The specific sentence types are also insightful clues as to King's and Obama's language mannerisms. In analyzing sentence type, I manually identified rhetorical questions and exclamations in both texts, as these sentence types were distinctly and intentionally utilized in each speech. It is worth noting that their usage of both sentence types have a practically inverse relationship. King and Obama both utilized rhetorical questions (e.g. Obama's "What is that American promise?") and exclamations (e.g. King's "Let freedom ring...!"), but each prefers one over the other. As shown in Table 2, King prefers the exclamative over the interrogative—five exclamations to one question. Obama, on the other hand, strongly prefers the rhetorical question (eight) over the exclamations (one) in his speech.

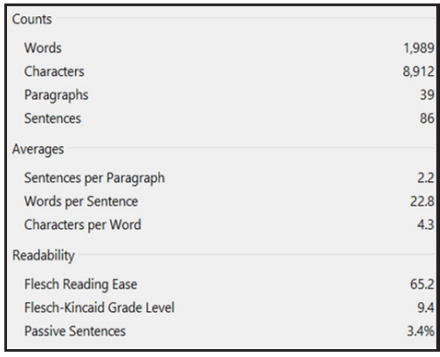
Sentence Type	*King*	*Obama*
Rhetorical Questions	**1**	**8**
Exclamation	**5**	**1**

Table 2. Raw counts for rhetorical questions and exclamations for King and Obama, based on select passages.

Both types of sentences place particular emphasis on a certain point or thought. King seems to use the exclamations at the end of his speech to energize his audience, compel them to action, and emphasize the nature of his message. Thus, he prefers the exclamations to arouse emotions in his audience and solidify his speech. This is not to say that Obama's speech lacked energy—far from it. However, in contrast to King's speaking style, Obama used more rhetorical questions than exclamations in giving energetic emphasis. Obama's questions were thought-provoking, emotionally charged, and directed

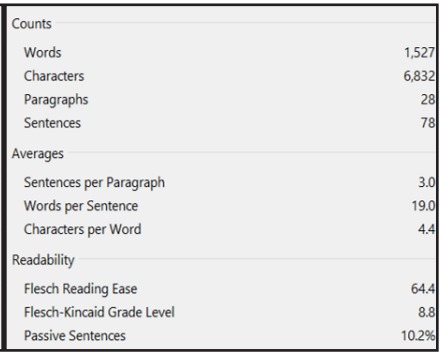
against his opponent John McCain and the then president George W. Bush. His questions compelled his audience to consider factors like McCain's influence in society and Bush's impact as a Republican president, which Obama sought to present as something negative without direct accusation. His preference for questions is evidence of his intent to remain subtle in his critiques of his opponents, thus directing his audience's frustrations toward them and securing loyalty to his own campaign.

Readability Statistics



Counts	
Words	1,989
Characters	8,912
Paragraphs	39
Sentences	86
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	2.2
Words per Sentence	22.8
Characters per Word	4.3
Readability	
Flesch Reading Ease	65.2
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	9.4
Passive Sentences	3.4%

Figure 6. Obama's readability statistics, pulled from Word analysis.



Counts	
Words	1,527
Characters	6,832
Paragraphs	28
Sentences	78
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	3.0
Words per Sentence	19.0
Characters per Word	4.4
Readability	
Flesch Reading Ease	64.4
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.8
Passive Sentences	10.2%

Figure 7. King's readability statistics, pulled from Word analysis.

Readability statistics for King and Obama are provided by Word analysis; these statistics highlight the average words per sentence for both speakers as well as the general readability according to the Flesch-Kincaid scale. The Flesch-Kincaid scale ranks readability for any text on a range of 1–100, with 100 being straightforward and easy to read. An analysis of these statistics for King and Obama provides an understanding of each speaker's lexical density, or the difficulty of reading their texts. Interestingly, the average words per sentence differs between the two texts; based on a comparison of both figures, on average, Obama speaks about four more words per sentence than King. This data demonstrates that Obama tends to speak in longer sentences. His Flesch-Kincaid results place this text at a ninth-grade

reading level, which may illuminate the political complexity of the text as well as his preference for longer, more complex sentences (evident from his Flesch Reading Ease score of 65.2). The average rate of words per sentence for King was slightly less than Obama's at 19.0 with a Flesch-Kincaid reading level of 8.8 (almost, but not quite, suitable for ninth-grade reading). Both King's and Obama's scores are fairly average in the United States. Since both audiences were the general American public rather than academics or professionals, it is appropriate that both King and Obama would use the speech and lexical complexity suitable for eighth- and ninth-grade audiences. However, the difference in scores between King and Obama is significant. Obama's higher scores, including sentence length and reading level, may simply reflect his background as an attorney, where lexical density is often the norm.

Conclusion

When analyzing Barack Obama's acceptance speech as the Democratic presidential nominee alongside Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, one can understand the unique ways in which King and Obama used the English language to convey their messages to the American people. Overall, King used features such as the *we* pronoun, careful application of the word *freedom*, lexical simplicity, and exclamative sentences to unite his audience and drive forward a social movement. Obama used features such as equal pronoun use, strategic distribution of "positive" and "negative" words, lexical density, and rhetorical questions to persuade his audience to support his campaign as the change America desired. Despite the similar circumstances behind each speech, it is interesting to note the different styles used by Obama and King to accomplish their respective purposes. Further research could provide more insight into individuals' stylistic tendencies within the political sphere, perhaps even individuals within the same historical or political context. Analysis of political speeches may help us understand the true

role of rhetoric in the political realm, particularly in understanding what stylistic features have and have not been successful in bringing about an individual's desired objective. Obama's and King's speeches provide a solid introduction into this realm of study.

References

King, M. L., Jr. (1963, August 28). *I have a dream* [Transcript]. Retrieved from https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/i-have-dream-address-delivered-march-washington-jobs-and-freedom

Obama, B. (2008, August 29). *Senator Obama's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention* [Transcript]. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/28/us/politics/28text-obama.html