

'I'VE BEEN NOWHERE AND DONE NOTHING'. THE CHARACTERIZATION OF DAISY MASON IN THE BRITISH DRAMA DOWNTON ABBEY

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ABSTRACT

The article investigates the characterization of Daisy Mason in the British television drama *Downton Abbey* (2010 – 2015) and is based on episode transcripts from Series One, Two and Three. The relevant background of the study is represented by Culpeper's and Bednarek's studies on characterization in drama and fictional

television. Drawing upon a combined methodology, in line with the Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies tradition, the analysis puts in relation the most relevant aspects of the personality of Daisy – the character traits obtained by applying Culpeper's framework on textual cues – with typical features of her speech revealed by corpus linguistics methodologies. Corpus evidence shows a relevant presence of negatives in Daisy's speech: *I don't know* is the most frequent three-word cluster around the pronoun *I*. Her sentences are shorter than the average of other characters and are often self-interrupted. Moreover, she asks a question every fourth sentence, while the average of other characters is one every fifth. Results point to a frustrated character, a silent rebellious who has difficulties in expressing her thoughts and does not accept to play a minor role in the story.

1. INTRODUCTION

The present study deals with the language used in the shooting scripts of a popular British television drama, *Downton Abbey* (2010 – 2015). More specifically, it explores how language is used in the series to build or reinforce the identity of characters. Conceived as a work in progress, in its initial phase the analysis takes into account the characterization of a female character: Daisy Mason, the kitchen maid.

Created by Oscar-winning writer Julian Fellowes, *Downton Abbey* is set in a grand manor house during the first decades of the 20th century and follows the lives of the Crawley family and of their servants downstairs. In the background of private events involving the Downton's inhabitants are some major events in history: among them, for instance, the sinking of the Titanic, the First World War, the Spanish flu pandemic, and the formation of the Irish Free State. The first season of the series aired in the United Kingdom in 2010. At the time we are writing, six seasons have been made and a film adaptation has been announced (Clarke 2017)¹.

The popularity of *Downton Abbey* has been put in relation with the evocation of feelings of nostalgia for a constructed, idealized and mythic world, "a form of Englishness epitomized by the country estate" (Baena and Byker 2015:259), not differently from its predecessor *Upstairs, Downstairs* (1971-1975), which aired in the 1970s and also gratified an intense English nostalgia. A sumptuous, big-budget production, *Downton Abbey* indeed owes its success to the accurate representation of life on an English estate in the Victorian era, to ravishing sets and costumes, but also to indelible characters, such as Lady Mary, Anna, Matthew, Daisy, Carson, O'Brien, Lady Edith and Lady Violet.

Language plays a very important role in shaping Downton's characters and has been used to depict them, no less than with costumes and sceneries, in a very powerful way. This would also explain why characters are so strictly associated with some of their most captivating quotes, which stick in the memory of audiences. For instance, any true admirer of the series would recognize that "I'm a woman, Mary. I can be as contrary as I choose" is part of Lady Violet's speech, while "It's better to know the truth than to live in a cloud of mystery and despair" belongs to Lord Grantham.

1 Clarke, Steven (2017). "Downton Abbey Movie Aims for Production in 2018". <http://variety.com/2017/film/global/downton-abbey-movie-for-2018-1202475729/> (last accessed: 20-10-17)



FIG. 1.1 - ENACTING ENGAGEMENT OF FANS ONLINE: AN EXAMPLE ON TWITTER



FIG. 1.2 - ENACTING ENGAGEMENT OF FANS ONLINE: AN EXAMPLE ON FACEBOOK

As it is often the case for successful television series, the *Downton* phenomenon is associated with a massive presence of resources available on the web for the enjoyment of fans worldwide: official and non-official sites, dedicated social media accounts, blogs, wiki-pages, episode guides, news, trailers, and many more (Tralli 2012). A common trait of these digital resources is the great emphasis placed on the lines spoken by characters. Not only are quotes from the series often reported below the images of related characters or frames from the show², but also the script in its entirety is cherished by fans as a piece of literature, to the point that a group of *Downton* lovers have manually transcribed each episode, on the basis of their personal listening. The so-obtained lines are made available for anyone on a blog³.

The drama's popularity has spread in part due to social media buzz. Campaigns running on *Downton*'s official social media deeply exploit the tendency of fans to memorize quotes from the show, even the ordinary and less salient ones. A typical strategy pursued by social media managers is to engage users through quizzes, putting the knowledge of fans to the test, as in figures 1.1 and 1.2.

The authors of *Downton Abbey* seem to be well aware of the paramount role played by the words spoken by characters in the series, as the official complete scripts have already been collected in a series of publications and merchandized as well. The first three volumes published (Fellowes 2012, 2013, and 2014) were also the primary source for the analysis carried out in this paper (see section 3).

The popularity gained by the spoken lines of *Downton Abbey* encourages to explore the reasons for this phenomenon from a linguistic perspective: what makes lines so special in the ear and memory of audiences? To what extent are characters constructed on the basis of what they say? And, lastly, is it possible to identify a prototypical quality in characters, based on their words and independent from the actor performances? In order to bring about some relevant insights into the questions outlined above, the shooting script has been analysed focusing on one, less exposed character of the series, Daisy Mason, thus adopting a very narrowed perspective, which is expected to produce very specific outputs.

It has to be made clear from the outset that the observation of performances is excluded from the present analy-

sis. Such methodological approach has been followed being aware that restricting the observation to dialogue could be limiting the analysis and its conclusions (Bednarek 2010: 18-9). As a matter of fact, television dialogue contrasts to prose fiction, where characters are described by means of words only, because of its inherent multimodality: television dialogue is the outcome of multimodal performance given by actors in a specific setting. For instance, it has been argued that "the dramatic discourse of television drama is heavily dependent upon the close-up shot of the face and the thoughts, emotions and reactions conveyed by that face" (Durham 2002: 87). Moreover, according to Bednarek (2010), scriptwriting for television does not reflect a unique author or writer expressing themselves 'artistically' as in the case of prose fiction, but rather a commercial multi-authorship, comprised of different writers having different roles. It is however likely that a script by Julian Fellowes, who, beside a screenwriter, is also a novelist⁴, might belong to those cases where the writer's voice come through to a certain extent (Selby and Cowdery 1995). We are therefore convinced that keeping a focus exclusively on language and intentionally avoiding multimodal performance features might reveal the inner specificity of characters as in the original idea of writers, beyond the interpretation given by actors: given their fixedness, words in the script could bring to the surface the prototypical quality of characters, which is independent from the adaptation that different actors might display at different times and in different ways, and that is what we are most interested in discovering.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical background of the study draws principally on Culpeper's (2001) model of characterization in fictional texts. According to this model, characters are constructed in the mind of viewers through explicit and implicit "textual cues that give rise to information about character" (Culpeper 2001: 163). On the one hand, explicit cues include those parts of speech where self-presentation and other-presentation are conveyed: for instance, in the case of Daisy, what she says about herself (DAISY: I know I'm a dogsbody), but also information given by other characters when they are speaking about her (ANNA: Daisy, don't be so daft!). On the

2 See, for instance, <http://www.tvfanatic.com/quotes/shows/downton-abbey/www.imdb.com/title/tt1608844/quotes> and the Twitter account <https://twitter.com/dabbeyquotes>.

3 <http://scriptline.livejournal.com/>

4 Among Julian Fellowes' books are *Snobs* (2004), *Past Imperfect* (2012) and *Belgravia* (2017).

other hand, implicit cues “have to be derived by inference” (Culpeper 2001: 172), for example, by taking into account the structure of dialogues, lexical, syntactic and other paralinguistic features.

In the light of the focus on televisual characterization, Bednarek’s work (2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012a, 2012b) is an essential premise for the underlying study. In particular, Bednarek has put forward the notion of expressive character identity (2011c), i.e. “those character traits that concern emotions, attitudes, values and ideologies, which [...] have a strong element of subjectivity [...]” (2011c: 9-10). Expressive character identity, she claims, is only one of the many different aspects to consider when investigating characterization. Pointing back at Culpeper (2001), she mentions other components, such as social role and group membership categories (2011c: 10). Of particular interest is that characters are often, at various levels, described and understood in terms of their expressive features - e.g. ‘exuberant’, ‘smiling tense person’ (2011c: 10); in addition, characters are often representative of a particular ideology (or attitude, or set of values) and are thus contrasted in narrative on the basis of what they stand for (2011c: 10).

Let us consider two main characters in *Downton Abbey*, for example: Lady Violet Crawley and Mrs. Isobel Crawley. Even though they share the surname, having married into different branches of the same family, they have a very different social status and are both extremely proud of it. While the Dowager Countess enjoys her privileged position as an aristocratic and stands for all that is traditional and conservative, Mrs. Crawley despises the worthless life of the aristocracy and campaigns for equality and social fairness. Their conversations and interactions are frequently comical as a result of the two opposite ideological extremes they stand for. This example is also useful to illustrate the last point made by Bednarek in clarifying the importance of investigating expressive character identity, i.e. that “expressive aspects are important in character impression formation” (2011c: 10). In describing the Dowager Countess, we said that she “enjoys her privileged position as an aristocratic”. This is not part of any script of official description, but it is rather the result of a long-term impression that the character made on us, as members of the audience. This impression is the result of our perception, but also and more importantly of the words she uses and attitudes she displays.

It is thus interesting, for a linguist, to explore how expressive character identity is constructed in televisual narratives by means of corpus linguistics tools, as they allow for the isolation of the idiomatic specificity of each character. Mostly

classics have been explored from this perspective (see for instance Fischer-Starke 2006, 2009; Mahlberg 2007a, 2007b; Stubbs 2005), but there are also some studies on popular fiction, such as Mahlberg and McIntyre 2011. In Mahlberg and McIntyre’s words “a corpus analysis can provide insights into characterization, the creation of particular stylistics effects and the construction of the fictional world of the text” (2011: 205). Applying a corpus stylistics approach to the study of a TV script implies that we can focus on phraseology as an aspect of characterization (Fischer-Starke 2006, 2009) and consider language as a primary component for the creation of the show’s atmosphere (Fischer-Starke 2006).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on the following corpora:

- a. DA CORPUS: transcripts for all the episodes in seasons One, Two and Three of *Downton Abbey*. The dialogues were taken from the original scripts published by the authors of the series (Fellowes 2012; 2013; 2014).
- b. DAISY CORPUS: a corpus of Daisy’s lines only, also derived from the wider corpus by means of simple tags (</DAISY>), identifying all her lines across the seasons.
- c. OTHERS-D CORPUS: a corpus of dialogue by all other speakers, excluding Daisy, also extracted by the wider corpus. This sub-corpus was created to be contrasted with the DAISYCORPUS.
- d. MARY CORPUS: a corpus of Lady Mary’s lines only, also derived from the wider corpus by means of simple tags (</MARY>), identifying all her lines across the seasons, as further term of comparison for DAISY CORPUS.

TABLE 3.1. THE DA CORPUS AND ITS SUBCORPORA – MAIN FEATURES

Corpus	Types	Tokens	Sentences	Mean Sentence Length
DA CORPUS	8,122	212,751	26,191	8.12
DAISY CORPUS	806	4,087	656	6.23
OTHERS-D CORPUS	8,075	208,664	25,536	8.17
MARY CORPUS	2,052	14,965	2,318	6.46

The main features of the corpora are outlined in table 3.1. Collected texts include dialogues and characters' names introducing each spoken line; scenes descriptions and comments by the author present in the original scripts were excluded.

The analysis followed a combined methodology, based on both qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative corpus methodologies, in line with the Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies tradition (Partington, Duguid and Taylor 2013). To analyse the scripts, a corpus stylistics perspective was adopted (see Semino and Short 2004). Such perspective concerns the study of mainly – but not exclusively – literary texts and brings together two empirical approaches to linguistic description, i.e. stylistics and corpus linguistics (Wynne 2005: 1). By entailing a combination of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques, corpus stylistics offers solutions to issues such as: (a) the selection of the examples to analyze (see Leech and Short 2007:2), and (b) supporting claims by means of quantitative evidence. It therefore allows linguists to focus on details while keeping an eye on the full text.

As a first step in the analysis, Culpeper's framework on textual cues (2001) has been applied. That means applying concordance analysis to the corpora, in order to explore how Daisy defines herself in her direct speech and how she is defined by other characters when they are speaking about her.

Secondly, a closer look has been taken at the linguistic specificity of Daisy's speech, in order to find out how her personality reflects into her language use. Using the linguistic analysis software Wordsmith Tools 6.0 (Scott 2012), a wordlist was created for Daisy's speech and concordances of the most relevant items were derived. Keyword lists were also derived in order to compare the most frequent words used by Daisy against those used by other characters (Gabrielatos 2018).

4. CHARACTERIZATION OF DAISY

Following Bednarek (2012a: 208), concordances for *I*, *I'm* and *me* in the DAISY corpus were extracted in order to highlight explicit cues (Culpeper 2001) about Daisy in her own dialogue. Those most likely to explain Daisy's personality were grouped into several, recurrent character traits, as shown by the following table (Table 4.1).

It is also interesting to look at the way the personality of Daisy comes across through the words of other characters, as their comments are still explicit textual cues, potentially revealing something more about her. The OTHERS-D corpus

TABLE 4.1. EXPLICIT CUES (CULPEPER 2001)
 ABOUT DAISY: SELF-PRESENTATION

Character Trait	Example dialogue
Daisy is frustrated in her job, although she loves it and is aware of being good at that. She feels exploited and underestimated by her boss, Mrs. Patmore.	I'm fed up... They promised me promotion. She said they'd get a new kitchen maid and I'd be Mrs. Patmore assistant. And I work well, but you wouldn't know it the way I'm treated. It may be wrong to complain with Mr Bates like he is, but it reminds me that life's short and I'm wasting mine. I just feel taken for granted. Sometime I think you don't notice that I'm human at all. No, I don't want to leave unless I have to, but I want to move on. I think I'm more than a kitchen maid now. I want to be a proper assistant cook, I know I can be. I'm running at full strength and always have been with no one to help me, neither.
She has low self-esteem and feels somehow inadequate, as if she did not deserve good things in life	I've never been special to anyone. I were only ever special to William. And why would he be when he's seen and done so much and I've been nowhere and done nothing? Maybe I should be more outspoken and say what I really think — I thought he might like me but I was wrong. I never had that in my childhood. Someone you could always trust. Me? Run this farm? Are you serious? But... I'm a cook. But I'm a woman. Nothing. I mean, I know I'm a dogsbody, but— But I don't deserve it. Not when I were only married to William for a few hours. I don't believe it! I've never won nothing before! 'Course not. He's too good for me, I know that.
She has high moral standards	I can't. It would be dishonest. Almost like cheating. Jane keeps making out I'm a war widow. But I'm not, am I? You all know that. I married William on his deathbed. That don't count. And I wasn't good to him. He thought I loved him, but I didn't. Not like he loved me. I can't lie to him at the end. Don't make me be false to a dying man.
She tries to please others, even against her own needs and has great empathy for others, despite social distance	I'd do anything for you. I led him on. When he was wounded, I let him think that I loved him. I thought it'd cheer him up, give him something to live for. This will be hard for you, but what would you say if I'd met a man I liked? Because the last thing I'd ever do would be to hurt you. Argh, I wish you'd cheer up. Please. I'd do anything to cheer you up. I know it was a while ago, but we knew him. I think of how we laid the fires for Mr Patrick, but he drowned in them icy waters. (Mr. Patrick Grantham) She was ever so nice. I still get sad when I think about her. (Mrs. Lavinia Swires) I only talked to her once, but I thought she was nice. (Mrs. Lavinia Swires) I never thought I'd feel sorry for an earl's daughter. (Lady Sybil) I swear I'd have to run and hide, in a place where no one knew me. (Lady Edith)

was explored in this regard and the relevant excerpts were transcribed in the following table (Table 4.2).

TABLE 4.2. EXPLICIT CUES (CULPEPER 2001)
 ABOUT DAISY: OTHER-PRESENTATION

Character Trait	Example dialogue
Although her name and role are barely known upstairs – as a kitchen maid she is the lowest of the low–, Daisy's reliability is recognized by her bosses and masters.	MARY: Daisy posted. The kitchen maid. MISS O'BRIEN: Well, it's Daisy, my lady...the kitchen maid. MR CARSON: And Daisy, we all know the value of your contribution. MARY: I am grateful to you, Daisy. You cannot know how much.
She is not good at expressing her thoughts and feelings verbally. She lacks of experience and can be easily misunderstood.	MASON: This is too modern for me, Daisy. I'd only say this: you have a pure heart, and if he's a proper man, he'll know that. But take your time, prepare what you'll say, make sure your words cannot be misconstrued. MRS PATMORE: Daisy, there's nothing wrong with one-sided loving. You should know that if anyone does... It's not Alfred's fault. It's not your fault. It's not Ivy's fault. ALFRED: Glad to see you speak up for your rights.
She does not get the attention she would from others	ALFRED: Sorry, Daisy. What were you saying? MRS. PATMORE: All in good time, Daisy. All in good time.
She can be sometime unexpectedly aggressive	IVY: [...] But here I'm bossed by Mrs Patmore and bullied by Daisy, and everyone seems to mistake me for a rag to wipe their shoes. DAISY: Him a fancy man? MR BATES: Don't be so nasty, Daisy, it doesn't suit you. MRS. PATMORE: What's happened to you? Have you swapped places with your evil twin?

So far, Daisy's personality has been described on the basis of what she says or what other characters say about her in dialogues. To widen the perspective of the analysis, it is worth looking more closely at Daisy's speech to identify the lexical and syntactic features typical of her character. Such an approach might confirm or reject the portrait of the character depicted so far on the basis of textual cues. More interestingly, language use may highlight hidden aspects in Daisy's personality, which cannot be brought about by a qualitative examination of her lines.

As a very first step, the wordlist of the DAISY corpus was examined and Daisy's language was evaluated in terms of frequency of items. Bearing in mind that a rough wordlist allows

only surface-level observations and, consequently, only educated guesses on typicality, the following aspects were noted:

- the pronoun *I* is the most frequent item in the DAISY corpus.
- the presence of negatives is relevant: eight instances within the first top 100 words spoken by Daisy [*don't* (49), *not* (47), *no* (29), *never* (13), *nothing* (13), *can't* (12), *won't* (11), *didn't* (10)]. Taking into account the entire frequency list and including all the negatives, they represent 5 per cent of her total words. We find only three negatives within the top 100 words spoken by OTHERS-D.
- only two proper names appear within the first top 100 words, *William* and *Patmore*; it looks like Daisy has a limited number of connections and is in relation with only a few characters.

Using Wordsmith (Scott 2012), it is possible to compare the frequencies in one wordlist against another in order to determine which words occur statistically more often in a first wordlist when compared with a second wordlist and vice versa. Using DAISY as node corpus and OTHERS-D as reference corpus, a list of keywords was obtained, i.e. a list of words that Daisy uses more frequently than other characters. Daisy's keyword list gives us only a small number of words (see table 4.3), partially confirming the results already provided by the analysis of most frequent items. The presence of the proper name *William* does not come as a surprise: he is the male character Daisy is most involved with in the first three seasons and they even will be married, although for a very brief time, as he dies soon after the wedding. Most occurrences of the personal pronoun *he*, which is another keyword of Daisy's speech, also refer to William. The personal pronoun *I* also appears as prominent, while the adjective *slow* is not salient, because used by Daisy when teaching the foxtrot to a colleague, Alfred. Its keyness is therefore due to the repetition of the words '*quick, slow*' step after step.

TABLE 4.3 KEYWORDS OF THE DAISY CORPUS

Key word	Frequency	%	Texts	Keyness	P
SLOW	10	0,24	2	64,90	0,0000000000
WILLIAM	28	0,67	12	49,86	0,0000000000
I	224	5,34	23	40,43	0,0000000000
HE	64	1,52	16	36,02	0,0000000001

Such surface-level observations based on frequency and keyness of items can acquire more depth when compared to another character in the series, Lady Mary, who is in many ways – for her social status and leading role in the drama – opposite to Daisy. The pronoun *you* is the most frequent word in Lady Mary's wordlist and it is possible to identify four different characters within her fist top 100 words (*Papa, Matthew, Mama, Granny*). Negations are five within the first top 100 words (*not, don't, no, can't, won't*). The strongest keyword of Lady Mary's speech is *Papa*, followed by

Granny, Mama and the personal pronoun *you*. These findings apparently suggest that Daisy is self-centred and introvert, while Lady Mary is more prone to interaction with other characters.

Putting aside grammatical words, the thirty most frequent lexical words in the DAISY corpus are those reported in table 4.3. Such a list allows a deeper insight into the 'aboutness' of Daisy's speech and, consequently, a more refined description of her language. A first curious aspect is that Daisy's workplace, the *kitchen*, which plays such an important role in her life, as well as the noun identifying her role in the house, *maid*, come only in the last part of the rank (respectively, as 23rd and 24th items in the list).

Almost half of the top thirty lexical words in Daisy's speech are lexical verbs (13 out of 30). In particular, the presence of many verbs of thinking and feeling in the list, such as *think, know, mean, feel, suppose*, might suggest that Daisy has more in her head (and in her heart) than she shows. As a term of comparison, only three verbs of thinking and feeling appear among the top thirty lexical words in Lady Mary's speech (*know, think, mean*), while only *know* and *think* feature among the top thirty lexical words of OTHERS-D.

Concordances show that in most occurrences Daisy is the subject of the verb, i.e. she expresses her thoughts directly, commenting on what is happening, for instance in the following way:

- 1 DAISY: I *know* it's my fault, but I wish I hadn't let him think that we're, like, sweethearts. Because we're not. Not by my reckoning, anyway.
- 2 DAISY: I *think* I'm more than a kitchen maid now. I want to be a proper assistant cook, I know I can be.
- 3 DAISY: I *think* Alfred's right. Isn't he first footman, like he says?
- 4 DAISY: No... I *thought* he might like me, but I were wrong. He's keener on someone else.
- 5 DAISY: I *thought* it'd cheer him up, give him something to live for.

Despite her apparent tendency to think and feel more than other characters, Daisy's communicative skills are limited: she uses short sentences, syntactically less complex than those of other characters. The mean sentence length of her

TABLE 4.3. TOP THIRTY LEXICAL WORDS
 IN THE DAISY CORPUS

N	Word	Freq.	%
1	THINK	34	0,83
2	KNOW	33	0,81
3	GO	29	0,71
4	WILLIAM	28	0,69
5	MRS	26	0,64
6	MR	20	0,49
7	WELL	20	0,49
8	PATMORE	18	0,44
9	RIGHT	18	0,44
10	MAKE	15	0,37
11	SAID	13	0,32
12	SAY	12	0,29
13	MEAN	11	0,27
14	THOUGHT	11	0,27
15	BACK	10	0,24
16	SLOW	10	0,24
17	THANK	10	0,24
18	MILADY	9	0,22
19	THOMAS	9	0,22
20	ALFRED	8	0,20
21	CARSON	8	0,20
22	FEEL	8	0,20
23	KITCHEN	8	0,20
24	MAID	8	0,20
25	NICE	8	0,20
26	SEE	8	0,20
27	SORRY	8	0,20
28	WRONG	8	0,20
29	SUPPOSE	7	0,17
30	TELL	7	0,17

lines is 6.23 words⁵, which is almost two words less than the average number of words spoken by other characters of the series in each sentence (8.19). Clearly, this disparity can be explained in the light of the minor role played by Daisy in the drama: her dialogues are about 2 per cent of the entire scripts of the first three seasons of the drama and *Daisy* is the 15th character name we encounter in the frequency list of the DA corpus, after *Mary, Robert, Carson, Matthew* and many others. However, this difficulty in communication could be a hidden feature in the personality of Daisy: a prototypical quality of the character, more or less consciously brought about by the writer when depicting Daisy.

Examining the concordances of two other verb forms in Daisy's top 30 words, *said* and *say*, which rank respectively 11th and 12th in the list, it can be observed that only a few occurrences are used in the first person. More often, Daisy refers to things said by others. More interestingly, the few occurrences of *say* or *said* having Daisy as grammatical subject show that she would like to express things verbally, but is not completely able to do that, or, at least, not in the way she would like. For instance:

- 6 DAISY: Maybe I should be more outspoken and *say* what I really think...
- 7 DAISY: I don't know what to *say*.
- 8 DAISY: In fact, there's something I've been wanting to *say*, but I don't want you to take it in the wrong way...
- 9 DAISY: I don't know why I *said* those things
- 10 DAISY: I'in't that what I just *said*?

It might be claimed that Daisy has a problem in expressing her thoughts and feelings verbally. This difficulty is also reflected by a recurrent scheme in her lines, which are often interrupted or end with suspension points (24 total occurrences). Daisy's speech is not interrupted by other characters who intervene in the scene: literally, she does not end sentences and remains speechless, as if she could not find a way to continue.

5 This value is based on a count that identifies sentences as a 'full-stop, question-mark or exclamation-mark [...] immediately followed by one or more word separators and then a capital letter in the current language, a number or a currency symbol' (Scott 2012).

The following concordances show some relevant instances:

- 11 DAISY: I don't know. I was thinking, first we had the Titanic–
- 12 DAISY: Nothing. I mean, I know I'm a dogsbody, but–
- 13 DAISY: But the way she flirts–
- 14 DAISY: That's not quite what I meant–
- 15 DAISY: But I never–
- 16 DAISY: Are you, Alfred? Because, if you are, I'd really like to say –
- 17 DAISY: But Miss Shore said –

It might be expected that Daisy completes her sentences in the following lines of the dialogue, or, at least, that she explains her ideas using different words, but, actually, her thoughts remain suspended. These non-fluency features can be considered as indicators of emotionality (Bednarek 2012b) and have been associated with 'impressions of nervousness, lack of confidence, shyness' (Culpeper 2001: 217). It is interesting to notice that three adversative sentences appear in the previous examples (13, 15 and 17); they begin directly with *but*. This adversative construction introduced by *but* is also a common trait in Daisy's speech (20 total occurrences), who often feels the urge to answer back or justify herself, *but...* does not fully clarify her stance, as following examples show:

- 18 DAISY: *But* he said he'd be here by now and he's not.
- 19 DAISY: *But* I'm a woman. I can't answer now.
- 20 DAISY: *But* I've not done it yet.
- 21 DAISY: *But* all them people freezing to death in midnight icy water.
- 22 DAISY: *But* that doesn't make it all right.
- 23 DAISY: *But* it's a lie.

The last two examples (22 and 23) suggest a further trait in Daisy's personality, which also reflects in her language: her strong sense of what is *right* and what is *wrong*. Both adjectives feature in the list of her 30 most frequent lexical words, respectively ranking 9th and 28th. When exploring textual cues relevant to the characterization of Daisy, it had been already pointed out that she has high moral standards. The following extracts from the DA corpus show that Daisy is not afraid of speaking out when something unfair happens around her; corpus evidence shows that in such situations her lines are not interrupted or suspended as elsewhere in the script.

24 MRS. PATMORE: His poor father's staying there with him, spending money he's not got, and travelling miles to do it.

DAISY: It's not *right*.

25 DAISY: But how? They can't talk back.

MARIGOLD SHORE: They can. That's the whole point.

THOMAS: Come on, Daisy.

DAISY: No, I don't think it's *right*.

26 MRS. HUGHES: Marrying him was a great kindness.

DAISY: No, it wasn't kind. It was *wrong*.

27 DAISY: I told you something that wasn't true.

CARSON: Why would you do that?

DAISY: I did it as a favour for a friend, but I know now he was *wrong* to ask it of me.

Another interesting aspect in Daisy's speech concerns the quality of her sentences. According to corpus statistics there are 656 total sentences spoken by Daisy in the script; 163 (25 per cent) are interrogative sentences, which implies that Daisy asks a question every fourth sentence. All the other characters in the series total together 25,536 sentences and 5,234 questions, with a ratio of one question every fifth. Lady Mary, our reference character, asks a question every fifth sentence too.

If interrogatives are to be interpreted as a specific feature of Daisy's language, it is worth examining more in depth the type of questions Daisy asks: 83 are yes/no interrogatives, eliciting a response which is either affirmative or negative; 80 are wh-interrogatives, introduced by a wh-word and eliciting an open-ended response. Only 12 question-tags, identified as a typical feature of Britishness in movies (Chiaro 2000), can be retrieved in her speech.

When concordances are manually explored, the general impression is that Daisy asks questions naively, as a child would; still, her questions are important, because they help us understand what is happening in the drama and mark the difference between upstairs and downstairs life. For instance, in extract 28, Daisy asks for an explanation that audience members not familiar with the traditions of British aristocracy would ask themselves, if they were in the scene. Similarly, in extract 31, after asking why Matthew's job cannot be accepted by the family, Daisy receives a very sharp reply, actually addressed to anyone in the audience who doesn't understand how unbearable it is for a British gentleman to work.

Different from the previous examples, but strategic for the plot, are questions raised by Daisy in examples 29, 30 and 32: these do not stress the social distance among characters but serve as a comment on crucial developments in the story, providing further explanation to the audience. They refer respectively to the police chase after Tom Branson, who had been involved in the political protests against land owners in Ireland; the birth of Lady Mary's son, which took place, significantly, at a hospital and not at home, after Sybil's death from preeclampsia, and the Spanish Flu pandemic that almost killed Lady Cora. The questions raised by Daisy, albeit candid, drive the story and offer the opportunity for a further recap of what has happened on screen.

28 DAISY: *Why are the papers ironed?*

MRS PATMORE: What's it to you?

MISS O'BRIEN: To dry the ink, silly. We won't want His Lordship's hands as black as yours.

29 DAISY: *Do you think he's on the run from the police?*

ANNA: Don't be so daft.

THOMAS: Well, he hadn't got the money for a taxicab from the station.

MRS. HUGHES: Maybe he fancied the walk

O'BRIEN: Yes, that's it. I should think he loves a night walk in the pouring rain without a coat.

30 DAISY: *Is it because Lady Mary's in the hospital?*

CARSON: It is.

DAISY: *Does that mean she's in danger?*

CARSON: No, it doesn't mean any such thing!

MRS. HUGHES: Lady Mary will be perfectly fine, but we have to make allowances.

31 DAISY: *Why shouldn't he be a lawyer?*

O'BRIEN: Gentlemen don't work, silly. Not real gentlemen.

32 DAISY: *What do you mean, 'she might die'?*

O'BRIEN: What do you think happens with a fatal illness?
 The fairies come?

5. FINAL REMARKS

At this point of the analysis it is possible to put in relation the most relevant aspects of the personality of Daisy – the character traits obtained by applying Culpeper's (2001) framework on textual cues – with some typical features of her speech revealed by corpus linguistics methodologies.

The following table (table 4.5) aims to combine these two complementary perspectives.

TABLE 4.5. DAISY'S LANGUAGE TRAITS
 VS. DAISY'S CHARACTER TRAITS

Daisy's Language Traits	Daisy's Character Traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The pronoun <i>I</i> is the most frequent item in the DAISY wordlist — Only two proper names identifying other characters in the series appear within the top 100 words of the DAISY corpus — <i>William</i> is the only proper name in her keywords 	Daisy is a self-centred character with little involvement to other characters in the drama
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — More interrogative sentences than the average of other characters 	As a character less involved in the plot, Daisy needs to ask questions in order to better understand what happens around her.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Sentences shorter than the average of other characters — Interrupted sentences — BUT-sentences 	Daisy has difficulties in expressing her thoughts, she suffers from low self-esteem and feelings of inadequateness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Eight negatives within the top 100 words in the DAISY corpus — <i>I don't know</i> is the most frequent three-word cluster around the pronoun <i>I</i> 	Daisy is insecure and frustrated, as a consequence of feeling exploited at work and unrequited in love
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Quantitative relevance of verbs of thinking and feeling in the first person — Lexical opposition <i>right/wrong</i> 	Daisy is capable of great empathy towards others and displays a variety of emotions. Her moral standards are high.

By combining language features and personality features, the character of Daisy comes across as multi-faceted and more complex than expected. It cannot be objected that she plays a minor role in the series, but, interestingly, she does not seem to accept this minority unconditionally. On the con-

trary, she truly suffers from being put on the background and strives to express herself as other more active characters do. Unfortunately, her feelings do not find full expression in speech: despite the quantitative relevance of verbs of thinking and feeling in first-person, Daisy's sentences are shorter than the average of other characters. The presence of BUT-sentences or even self-interrupted sentences contributes to shaping the portrait of a fragile, insecure, almost stuttering, kitchen maid. Her frustrated side is also reflected by a relevant use of negatives.

Despite lights and shadows in her personality, Daisy is a positive character, showing high moral values and capable of great empathy for others, be they servants or masters: the relevant frequency of verbs of thinking and feeling can be interpreted in these terms, so as the lexical opposition between adjectives *right/wrong* recurring in her speech.

As a character less involved in the plot, with only two proper names identifying other characters in the series in her top 100 words and just one proper name among her keywords – *William* -, Daisy often needs to ask questions in order to understand what is happening around her. Her curiosity is however useful, as it keeps the plot developing and allows audience members to be refreshed with a quick recap once in a while.

Moving back to the research questions which were initially raised, it can be affirmed that the analysis has made it possible to depict an in-depth portrait of the character of Daisy Mason, revealing aspects beyond those that appear on screen. It has been pointed out that Daisy embodies the typical post-Edwardian servant femininity, which was socially and spatially shaped by domestic work (see Miller 2018). *Downton Abbey* has been criticised for providing a romanticised stereotype of cross-class relations and for using working women to render the past benign (Lockett 2017). Yet, an in-depth analysis of her speech has shown that Daisy is much more than a cliché: she is a silent rebel, who cannot accept not to have her say in the story and strives for improvement. Her rebellion will not remain silent for long, as major developments await her character in the last series of *Downton Abbey*. The most important begins with an interest in education, first mentioned in Season Five (Suhren 2018). At that point of the story, Daisy realizes that she needs to grow up and take on responsibility for her own life. The impact of this realization will be remarkable: she will discover her talent and her ability to learn, “a perspective that is diametrically opposed to the assessment of her competence that she voiced at the beginning” (Suhren 2018: 199) and that can be summarized by the line ‘I've been nowhere and done nothing’.

Among the aims of this article was to offer a preliminary observation of characterization in *Downton Abbey* and to explore the prototypical identity of characters. More research, extended to a wider range of characters, would be certainly needed in order to make definite claims about that. For the time being and for the space of an analysis addressed to a single character, it can be concluded that the method proved valuable, as it contributed to highlighting the key-role played by language in building a character that stands out and can overcome stereotypes: by an in-depth examination of what Daisy says, profound and hidden aspects of character have been brought about, such as a rebellious trait that is at odds with the character of a timid and reserved young kitchen maid that audience members have learned to know. In this perspective, her incomplete sentences, her naïve questions and even her silences are important, because they let us sense her most authentic nature and foresee the unexpected developments that were already traced in her character from the very beginning.

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