Shakespeare: The Power of Language and the Language of Power

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1. Introduction

Over the centuries historical and socio-cultural events have at various extents affected languages promoting and favouring changes at different levels. In the fifteenth century the great humanist movement, known as Renaissance, and which had originated in Italy in late thirteenth century had wide-ranging consequences in all intellectual areas of interest all over Europe.

In England there was ferment as well. The renewed contact with the ancient classical culture moved thinkers to seek out learning from Latin and ancient Greek texts. In the meantime the introduction of printing into England, by William Caxton about 1476, brought books within the reach of many in the territory. Then, the development of means of communication brought together different parts of the world and increased commercial exchanges. All these factors influenced many aspects of everyday life, including communication and in particular one aspect of it, i.e. language. Books on the history of the English language document that a rapid expansion in the lexicon characterised the linguistic environment of the Renaissance. New words from classical and overseas origin were encompassed in the English lexicon, although the Purists widely rejected such "contaminations" (Baugh and Cable, 2002).

No less important was the historical situation of England in the sixteenth century which was characterised by the stable and powerful reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603). During her reign England was prosperous and acknowledged several social transformations, such as the establishment of large and profitable public theatres where professional players had the chance to perform with companies. It is in this period that Shakespeare lived and was able to exploit language changes by means of his cleverness, skills and sensitivity.

Many studies have sought to explain or theorise about Shakespeare's language, and still many investigations are being carried out. Perceived as complex, elaborate and at times difficult to understand, the language encompassed in Shakespeare's works is a mine of linguistic phenomena which can be analysed under different viewpoints.

2. Shakespeare and the use of language

Shakespeare's readers can find themselves caught in a series of implicit choices where, for example, a particular wording or phrasing may correspond to a specific stylistic effect which is used by the author to persuade the audience. All of Shakespeare's plays draw on the resources of rhetoric, which is not considered as a mere method of composition, but also a tool to experiment with language.

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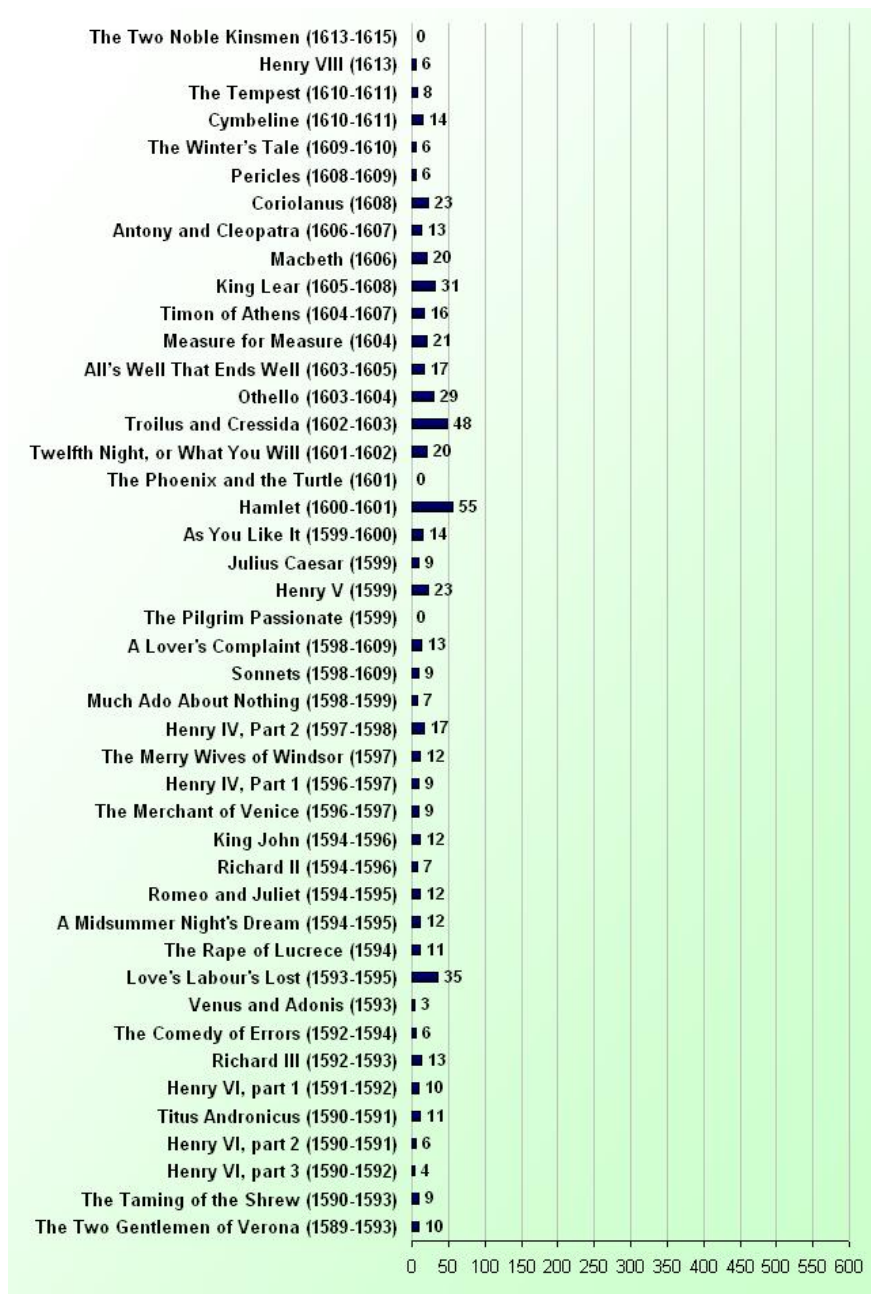 *e-mail*: adrianateresa.damascelli@unito.it

However, the originality and peculiarity of Shakespeare's language are not only a matter of rhetoric and confined to the surface of discourse, although *dispositio* or the organisation of the elements in discourse can determine the effectiveness in communication. Other features can be found at other levels, such as syntax. The experimental use of loosening structures which alternatively follow one another reflects the awareness of speech structure and the need to avoid monotony (Hussey, 1982: 97). Aspects connected to grammar are found in the use of multiple negation, namely with neither and nor, and the shift of use of the verb ending –eth with the newer –es ending, both providing researchers with useful diachronic data.

Between 1591 and 1611 Shakespeare wrote about thirty-seven plays covering all the major genres, i.e. comedy, tragedy, and history, besides two long narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* and 154 sonnets. All his productions are linguistically peculiar and show Shakespeare's consistent and increasing desire to experiment with the resources of the language and in particular with the lexicon.

The lexicon belonging to a particular language is the result of different aspects, mainly reflecting the history of one people. The English lexicon, for example, does not originate in one language, but encapsulates the basic roots and core vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon (450 - 1150), the Romance elements deriving from the Norman Conquest (1066) and the classical, and more learned, elements taken from Latin and Greeks authors (1500) (Hughes, 2000). In particular, the rediscovery of Latin and Greek literature provoked a reaction and triggered the temptation to transfer in English important Latin and Greek roots to the point that the English lexicon was enriched. According to Baugh and Cable (2002) the number of new lexemes added at this time is close to 10,000.

A careful examination of Shakespeare's works sheds light on particular techniques which bring to the creation of new words through the use of Latin bases (e.g.: *pedant*) or, at least, of one bound Latinate morpheme which can combine with Anglo-Saxon roots (e.g.: *contentless*). In his essay *Shakespeare's Latinate Neologisms*, Bryan A. Garner (1987) lists 626 Latinate neologisms and for each provides the bibliographic reference. The count was carried out by considering only new words and not old words with new meanings or used innovatively as a different part of speech. The list includes words with Latin bases, all of them containing at least one bound Latinate morpheme, and hybrid words made up of Anglo-Saxon roots with Latinate (or Gallic) prefixes or suffixes (Garner, 1987: 213). Garner (1987: 214) also points out that compound words as well participles and –ly adverbs of respective verbs and adverbs already currently used have been omitted. Italian and Spanish borrowings as well as comic inventions, malapropisms, and ignorant pronunciations are also discarded. As Garner states, many of Shakespeare's neologisms were ill-formed words deriving from violated rules of Latin word formation. Moreover, it should not be surprising that one third of them have not found a permanent place in the language. However, Shakespeare played with language and in particular with words to create specific effects for particular contexts.

Graph 1 shows the distribution of each item in all Shakespeare's works over the period 1589–1613.

Graph 1: Distribution of Latinate neologisms in Shakespeare's works

As can be seen the tendency to introduce Latinate items is constant over Shakespeare's production period, although after 1600 the number of occurrences is larger and coincides to his mature works, namely *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*.

A more detailed analysis would be desirable in order to shed light on the distribution of these items and provide data to test hypotheses. In fact, Shakespeare's innovation lies in his unique style which is characterised by the elevated language of his kings and great men. In this sense Latinate words can be considered as a device to elevate his most important characters' speeches and render them expressive of power. The aim of this study is to investigate all Shakespeare's plays in order to find out whether Latinate neologisms are used by politically powerful characters.

3. Methodology

For present purposes, Shakespeare's works have been collected in their electronic format in order to constitute a corpus of about 900,000 words. In Table 1 all works are ordered chronologically on the basis of the information provided by Stanley Wells and Gray Taylor's (1987) *Complete Oxford Shakespeare*. The corpus was processed through WordSmith Tools in order to obtain the number of words per each Shakespeare's work.

Shakespeare's works	N. of words
The Two Gentlemen of Verona (1589-1593)	18,243
The Taming of the Shrew (1590-1593)	22,127
Henry VI, part 3 (1590-1592)	22,861
Henry VI, part 2 (1590-1591)	25,913
Titus Andronicus (1590-1591)	21,722
Henry VI, part 1 (1591-1592)	26,811
Richard III (1592-1593)	31,427
The Comedy of Errors (1592-1594)	16,196
Venus and Adonis (1593)	10,216
Love's Labour's Lost (1593-1595)	23,027
The Rape of Lucrece (1594)	15,531
A Midsummer Night's Dream (1594-1595)	17,198
Romeo and Juliet (1594-1595)	25,885
Richard II (1594-1596)	23,895
King John (1594-1596)	21,777
The Merchant of Venice (1596-1597)	22,184
Henry IV, Part 1 (1596-1597)	27,965
The Merry Wives of Windsor (1597)	23,764
Henry IV, Part 2 (1597-1598)	26,153
Much Ado About Nothing (1598-1599)	22,558
Sonnets (1598-1609)	18,357
A Lover's Complaint (1598-1609)	2,646
The Passionate Pilgrim (1599)	3,260
Henry V (1599)	27,550
Julius Caesar (1599)	20,851
As You Like It (1599-1600)	22,821
Hamlet (1600-1601)	32,210
The Phoenix and the Turtle (1601)	375
Twelfth Night, or What You Will (1601-1602)	21,431
Troilus and Cressida (1602-1603)	27,590
Othello (1603-1604)	27,933
All's Well That Ends Well (1603-1605)	24,365
Measure for Measure (1604)	23,146
Timon of Athens (1604-1607)	19,633
King Lear (1605-1608)	27,805
Macbeth (1606)	18,231
Antony and Cleopatra (1606-1607)	26,958
Coriolanus (1608)	29,244
Pericles (1608-1609)	19,552
The Winter's Tale (1609-1610)	25,987
Cymbeline (1610-1611)	28,968
The Tempest (1610-1611)	17,473
Henry VIII (1613)	25,980
The Two Noble Kinsmen (1613-1615)	26,857
Total	964,676

Table 1: A corpus of Shakespeare's works

Although Shakespeare's works are often regarded as a combination of elements belonging to different genres, modern scholars usually refer to the first publication of his plays collected in the First Folio (1623) where division into comedies, histories, and tragedies is found. The First Folio did not include some plays which were subsequently added in the various re-editions, namely *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (Third Folio, 1664). In Table 2 the data concerning the distribution of the Latinate neologisms in comedies, histories, tragedies, and poetic compositions is illustrated.

Genre	n. of words	n. Latinate words	Latinate words per 1,000 words
COMEDY	327,377	192	0.59
HISTORY	260,332	106	0.41
TRAGEDY	326,582	287	0.88
POETRY	50,385	41	0.81
	964,676	626	2.69

Table 2: Distribution of Latinate words across genres

The data shows that there is a difference of usage between tragedy and poetry, and comedy and history. The use of Latinate neologisms is more common in tragedies (0.88). Poetic compositions (0.81), comedies (0.59), and histories (0.41) follow, although the smallest number of Latinate items is found in histories. The data suggests that Shakespeare's tendency was to mainly enrich his tragedies and poems with Latinate neologisms. A difference of occurrence in history plays and comedies is also shown and highlights that such devices are more frequently used in comedies. Scholars commonly agree when they state that some peculiarities of Shakespeare's language are to be attributed to specific communicative needs and such distribution of Latinate neologisms may reflect such expectations. In order to further investigate, Garner's list is considered as a source to retrieve more detailed information about the use of Latinate neologisms, namely the characters who speak them.

Among the several useful programmes for corpus investigation, WordCruncher reveals itself as an appropriate tool to explore literary texts. WordCruncher works with electronic texts which have been previously indexed and provided of bookmarks which enable the researcher to retrieve different kinds of information which are not exclusively related to word frequency or collocations. Information on the play, act, scene and line, as well as the characters is retrievable.

The following section reports on the information retrieved for each Shakespeare's work, i.e. the names of the characters pronouncing Latinate neologisms and their frequencies. The works have been gathered according to the genre and within each group in chronological order.

4. Latinate neologisms in Shakespeare's comedies, histories, tragedies, and poetic compositions

As shown in Table 3 the number of plays belonging to the comedy genre is larger as compared to the tragedy and history groups. A calculation per 1,000 words highlights that *Love's Labours Lost* includes the largest number of Latinate neologisms (1.52) as compared to the other comedies. *The Twelfth Night* (0.93) and *Measure for Measure* (0.91), proportionally, also include a large number of Latinate neologisms. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (0.70) and *All's Well That Ends Well* (0.70) follow. On the other hand, the comedies showing the lowest occurrences of Latinate neologisms are, in order, *Two Noble kinsmen* (0.19), *The Winter's Tale* (0.23), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (0.31). Nonetheless, the distribution of Latinate neologisms among the characters of each play is approximately equally distributed, although in *The Tempest* some differences are found.

Name of the play, date of production, and *dramatis personae*	Latinate Neolog.	Latinate neolog. per 1,000 wds
Two noble kinsmen (1613-1615) **2** Emilia (Hippolyta's queen), **1** Hippolyta (queen of Amazons and wife of Theseus), **1** Palamon (one of the two noble kinsmen), **1** Pirithous (friend of Theseus)	5	0.19
The Tempest (1610-1611) **5** Propsero (the rightful Duke of Milan), **1** Antonio (Prospero's brother and usurping Duke of Milan), **1** Gonzalo (an honest old councillor), **1** Stephano (a drunken butler)	8	0.46
The Winter's Tale (1609-1610) **2** Polixenes (king of Bohemia), **1** Camillo (one lord at the court of Leontes), **1** Paulina (wife of Antigonus), **1** Hermione (Leontes' wife)	6	0.23
Measure for Measure (1604) **6** Isabella (a sister to Claudio), **5** Angelo (the deputy), **4** Vincentio (the Duke), **3** Lucio (a fantastic), **1** Claudio (a gentleman), **1** Escalus (an ancient lord), **1** Marianna	21	0.91
All's Well That Ends Well (1603-1605) **5** Parolles (Bertram's friend), **4** King of France, **4** Helena (a gentlewoman protected by the countess), **1** soldier, **2** first French Gentleman, **1** second French Gentleman.	17	0.70
Twelfth Night (1601-1602) **7** Orsino (Duke of Illyria), **3** Sebastian (Viola's twin brother), **3** Sir Belch (Olivia's uncle), **2** Priest, **2** Feste (Olivia's jester), **1** Olivia (a countess), **1** Antonio (a sea captain), **1** Valentine (a gentleman)	20	0.93
As You Like It (1599-1600) **3** Jaques (nobleman, Duke Senior's attendance), **2** Celia (daughter, Duke Frederick), **2** Phebe (a shepherdess), **2** Orlando (son, de Boys), **1** one lord, **1** Adam (servant, Oliver), **1** Corin (one shepherd), **1** Oliver (son, de Boys), **1** Rosalind (daughter of Duke Senior), **1** Touchstone (the clown)	15	0.66
Much Ado About Nothing (1598-1599) **2** Leonato (Governor of Messina), **1** Beatrice (an orphan), **1** Benedick of Padua, **1** Claudio of Florence, **1** Dogberry, **1** Friar Francis (a priest)	7	0.31
The Merry Wives of Windsor (1597) **4** Sir John Falstaff, **2** Host at the Garter Inn), **1** Fenton (suitor for the hand of Anne Page), **1** Frank Ford (a citizen of Windsor), **1** Mistress Page (George Page's wife), **1** Mistress Ford (Frank Ford's wife), **1** Mistress Quickly (Doctor Caius' housekeeper)	11	0.46
The Merchant of Venice (1596-1597) **3** Bassanio (suitor of Portia), **2** Gratiano (a friend of Antonio and Bassiano's), **1** Lorenzo, **1** Prince of Morocco, **1** Portia (a rich heiress), **1** Salerio (a friend of Antonio and Bassiano's), **1** Solanio (a friend of Antonio and Bassiano's)	9	0.41
A Midsummer Night's Dream (1594-1595) **3** Titania (Queen, the fairies), **2** Lysander, **2** Helena (in love with Demetrius), **1** Hippolyta (queen, Amazons), **1** Egeus (Hermia's father), **1** Fairy, **1** Oberon (king, the fairies), **1** Puck (goodfellow)	12	0.70
Love's Labours Lost (1593-1595) **8** Holofernes (a schoolmaster), **7** Don Adriano de Armado (a Spanish braggart), **5** Berowne (a lord), **4** Boyet (a French lord), **3** Ferdinand (king of Navarre), **2** Costard, **2** Longaville (a lord), **1** Moth (Don Adriano's page), **1** Princess of France	35	1.52
The Comedy of Errors (1592-1594) **4** Adriana (wife to Antipholus of Ephesus), **1** Balthazar (a merchant), **1** Duke of Ephesus, **1** Antipholus of Syracuse	7	0.43
The Taming of the Shrew (1590-1593) **2** Biondello (Lucentio's second servant), **2** Grumio (Petruchio's personal lackey), **1** Hortensio (a gentleman of Padua), **1** Lucentio (a gentleman of Pisa), **1** Petruchio (a gentleman of Verona), **1** Tranio (Lucentio's servant), **1** Vincentio (a citizen of Pisa)	9	0.41
Two Gentlemen of Verona (1589-1593) **4** Proteus (one gentleman of Verona), **2** Silvia (the Duke of Milan's daughter), **2** Valentine (one gentleman of Verona), **1** Duke of Milan, **1** Eglamour (Silvia's accomplice)	10	0.55

Table 3: Distribution of Latinate neologisms in Shakespeare's comedies

Table 4 shows the Latinate neologisms distribution across the history plays. As can be seen Latinate neologisms are distributed differently. A clear-cut distinction is visible in *Henry V* (0.83), *Henry IV* (part 2) (0.65), and *King John* (0.51) and *Richard III* (0.41) where the occurrences show a high frequency rate. If then, each play is considered separately, the data shows that all the characters share approximately the same number of items and that no prominence is given to the main character of each play. Exception is made for *Richard III* and *Henry V*, where Latinate neologisms are predominantly used by the two main characters, i.e. King Richard III and King Henry V.

Name of the play, date of production, and *dramatis personae*	Latinate Neolog.	Latinate neolog. per 1,000 wds
Henry VIII (1613) **2** King Henry VIII, **2** Cardinal Wolsey, **1** old lady (friend of Anne Bullen),**1** Duke of Suffolk	6	0.23
Henry V (1599) **7** King Henry V, **4** Archibishop of Canterbury, **3** Duke of Exeter, **2** Duke of Burgundy, **2** Chorus, **1** Duke of Britaine, **1** Charles Delabreth, **1** King of France, **1** French lord, **1** Nym (camp-followers in the king's army)	23	0.83
Henry IV, part 2 (1597-1598) **3** Archbishop of York, **3** Sir John Falstaff, **2** Prince Henry, **2** Hostess, **2** the Lord Chief Justice, **1** Doll Tearsheet, **1** Lady Percy, **1** Falstaff's page, **1** Earl of Warwick, **1** Earl of Westmorland	17	0.65
Henry IV, part 1 (1596-1597) **2** King Henry IV, **1** Owen Glendower, **1** Earl of Douglas, **1** Harry Hotspur, **1** Poins, **1** Prince of Wales, **1** Sir Richard Vernon, **1** Earl of Worcester	9	0.32
King John (1594-1596) **2** Cardinal Pandulph, **1** Constance (mother of Arthur), **1** Hubert (a citizen follower of King John), **1** King John, **1** King Philip II, **1** Lewis the Dauphin, **1** Earl of Pembroke, **1** Philip the Bastard (illegitimate son of Sir Robert Faulconbridge), 1 Earl of Salisbury	11	0.51
Richard II (1594-1596) **2** Sir Stephen Scroop, **1** Duchess of York, **1** John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster, King's Richard uncle), **1** Earl of Northumberland, **1** Queen Isabel (King Richard's wife)	7	0.29
Richard III (1592-1593) **5** King Richard, **2** Duke of Buckingham, **2** Queen Elizabeth (King Edward IV's wife), **2** Richard (Duke of Glouchester), **1** Lord Hastings, **1** Sir Richard Ratcliffe	13	0.41
Henry VI, part 1 (1591-1592) **2** Duke of Bedford, **1** Bastard of Orleans, **1** Duke of Burgundy, **1** Sir William Lucy, **1** Joan la Pucelle, **1** Shepherd, **1** Earl of Sufforlk, **1** Earl of Warwick	9	0.32
Henry VI, part 2 (1590-1591) **2** Duke of Gloucester, **1** Lord Clifford, **1** Earl of Warwick, **1** King Henry VI, **1** Duke of Suffolk	6	0.23
Henry VI, part 3 (1590-1592) **1** King Henry VI, **1** King Edward, **1** Duke of Gloucester, **1** Duke of York	4	0.15

Table 4: Distribution of Latinate neologisms in Shakespeare's history plays

The data reported in Table 2 highlights that the largest number of Latinate neologisms is found in tragedies and a preliminary overview of the data which appears in Table 5 shows that most Latinate words are spoken by the main characters of Shakespeare's tragedies.

Name of the play, date of production and *dramatis personae*	Latinate Neolog.	Latinate neolog. per 1,000 wds
Cymbeline (1610-1611) **4** Imogen (daughter to Cymbeline), **4** Iachino (friend to Philario), **2** Cloten (son to the Queen), **1** Gentleman, **1** Frenchman, **1** Pisanio (servant to Posthumus), **1** Posthumus Leonatus (a gentleman)	14	0.48
Pericles, Prince of Tyre (1608-1609) **2** Pericles (prince of Tyre), **1** Bawd, **1** John Gower (the presenter), **1** Helicanus (one lord of Tyre), **1** Sailor of Mytilene	6	0.31
Coriolanus (1608) **7** Coriolanus, **5** Menenius Agrippa (friend of Coriolanus), **3** Junius Brutus (Tribune of the People, opposed to Coriolanus), **2** Volumnia (Coriolanus' mother), **1** Valeria (Coriolanus' wife Virgilia's friend), **1** Sicinius Velutus (Tribune of the People, opposed to Coriolanus), **1** Cominius, a general against the Volscians, **1** Tullus Aufidius (General of the Vosces) **1** A Volscian guard, **1** A servant of Tullus Aufidius	23	0.79
Antony and Cleopatra (1606-1607) **8** Cleopatra, **2** Antony, **2** Dominitious Enobarbus (Antony's officer), **1** Iras (Cleopatra's attendant)	13	0.48
Macbeth (1606) **8** Macbeth (thane of Glamis, later king of Scotland), **3** Banquo (Thane of Scotland), **3** Lady Macbeth, **2** Malcom (Duncan's son), **1** Porter, **1** Wich, **1** All, **1** Macduff (Thane of Scotland)	20	1.10
King Lear (1605-1608) **6** King Lear, **5** Gonerill (Lear's eldest daughter), **4** Earl of Kent, **3** Edgar (son to Gloucester), **3** Edmund (bastard son to Gloucester), **2** Duke of Albany (Husband of Gonerill), **2** Cordelia (Lear's youngest daughter), **2** Gentlemen, **2** Oswald (Gonerill's steward), **1** King of France, **1** Regan (Lear's second daughter)	31	1.11
Timon of Athens (1604-1607) **6** Timon (a noble Athenian), **3** Apemantus (a churlish philosopher), **2** Poet, **1** Senator, **1** Soldier, **1** Merchant, **1** Flavius (Timon's steward), **1** Lucullus (flattering lord)	16	0.81
Othello (1603-1604) **11** Othello, **8** Iago (Othello's ancient), **2** Messenger, **2** Brabantio (Desdemona's father), **2** Cassio (Othello's lieutenant), **1** Desdemona (Othello's wife), **1** Gratiano (the duke of Venice's brother), **1** Herald, **1** Othello's ensign, **1** Montano (Othello's predecessor) , **1** Gentleman of Cyprus	29	1.07
Troilus and Cressida (1602-1603) **15** Troilus (a son to Priam), **10** Ulysses (Greek leader), **9** Agamennon (Greek general), **3** Hector (a son to Priam), **2** Paris (a son to Priam), **2** Cressida, **2** Thersites, **2** Nestor (a Greek leader), **1** Priam (king of Troy)	48	0.87
Hamlet (1600-1601) **19** Hamlet, **10** Claudius (King of Denmark), **7** Horatio (Friend of Prince Hamlet), **4** Polonius (cousellor to the king), **3** Laertes (son to Polonious), **3** Ghost, **4** Player as a king, **1** Barnardo (soldier), **1** Doctor of divinity, **1** A Messenger, **1** Rosencratz (member of the Danish court)	55	1.68
Julius Caesar (1599) **2** Marcus Brutus, **5** Caius Cassius (a conspirator against Caesar), **1** Casca (a conspirator against Caesar)	9	0.38
Romeo and Juliet (1594-1595) **4** Romeo (son of Montague), **2** Juliet (daughter of Capulet), **2** Mercutio (Kinsman of the Prince of Verona Escalus/friend of Romeo), **1** Benvolio (nephew of Montagne/friend of Romeo and Mercurio), **1** Nurse (nurse of Juliet, her foster -mother), **1** Paris (a young count, Kinsman of the Prince of Verona/suitor of Juliet), **1** Friar Laurence (a Franciscan)	12	0.46
Titus Andronicus (1590-1591) **3** Saturninus (elected emperor of Rome), **3** Marcus Andronicus (Roman tribune, Titus' brother), **2** Titus Andronicus (Roman general), **1** Aaron (a Moor and Tamora's – queen of the Goths-lover), **1** Demetrius (one of Tamora's son), **1** Lucius (one of Titus Andronicus' sons)	11	0.51

Table 5: Distribution of Latinate neologisms in Shakespeare's tragedies

The tragedy which shows the largest numbers of Latinate neologisms is *Hamlet* (1.68). Other tragedies which include a conspicuous number of occurrences are *King Lear* (1.11), *Macbeth* (1.10), and *Othello* (1.07). Relevant data is also found in *Troilus and Cressida* (0.87), *Timon of Athens* (0.81), and *Coriolanus* (0.79) where the frequency of Latinate neologisms is high as well. A more accurate analysis sheds light on other aspects. In most tragedies the largest numbers of Latinate words are found in the characters playing the most important roles in the plays, i.e. those who lend their names to the title of the plays. Moreover, the data shows that there are relevant differences between the number of occurrences in the main characters' and in the interlocutors' speeches. In *Titus Andronicus* (0.51) and *Julius Caesar* (0.38) the occurrences of Latinate words are low and found in characters whose roles can be considered as secondary. The data also shows that *Romeo and Juliet* (0.46) includes a small number of Latinate neologisms and that they are shared by the main characters, i.e. Romeo and Juliet. A controversial issue might be raised if the data appearing in *Antony and Cleopatra* are considered. Contrarily to the general tendency, here the major number of Latinate occurrences is found in Cleopatra's speeches. The explanation, however, is found in the structure of the English Language where some pairs prefer a certain order of the constituent elements, e.g.: *bed and breakfast* and not the other way round, hence Antony and Cleopatra and not Cleopatra and Antony.

Analysis of Shakespeare's poetic compositions shows that Latinate neologisms are used as well.

Name and date of the composition		n. of Latinate neologisms	Latinate neologisms per 1,000 words
A Lover's Complaint	(1609)	13	4.92
Phoenix and Turtle	(1601)	4	10.66
The Pilgrim Passionate	(1599)	0	0
The Rape of Lucrece	(1594)	11	0.71
The Sonnets	(1593-1595)	9	0.49
Venus and Adonis	(1593)	4	0.39

Table 6: Distribution of Latinate neologisms in Shakespeare's poetic compositions

Although the data appearing in Table 6 attributes the largest number of occurrences to the poem *A Lover's Complaint*, a calculation per 1,000 words reveals that *Phoenix and Turtles*, the shortest composition, made up of 375 words, includes 4 Latinate neologisms (10.66). *A Lover's Complaint* follows showing a high proportion of Latinate neologisms as well (4.92). No occurrences are found in *The Pilgrim Passionate*.

5. Discussion of the findings

The data retrieved from the analysis of Shakespeare's works gives insights into the distribution of Latinate neologisms. Tragedies are shown as the plays including the largest numbers of Latinate neologisms. The data also shows that such items are spoken by kings or

very important people who usually play as the main characters in each play and whose fate is to be subject to and govern the events narrated in the plots. The importance or predominant personality of one character over the others can be brought out in several different ways, for example through the use of long soliloquies. Shakespeare, however, also exploited the lexicon. The fact that Latinate neologisms are spoken by the main characters can be seen not as a casualty, but as a strategy adopted by Shakespeare to enhance the power and reinforce the role of the main character. The date of production can be meaningful as well. Most tragedies were written by Shakespeare in maturity, period in which an author has generally acquired experience and techniques as a composer, as well as language competence and awareness. In this way the scarcity of Latinate neologisms in *Titus Andronicus* and *Julius Caesar*, respectively written in 1590 and 1599, can be explained.

The fact that such characteristics are not clear-cut in the data appearing in the history and comedy genres does not mean that the plays there included are not valuable and important. On the contrary, the use of a limited number of Latinate neologisms can be symptomatic and reveal different aspects. In histories, Shakespeare might have considered as unnecessary to use such linguistic devices in plays where everything is fictitious or seemingly true. In fact, such linguistic devices reflected the language changes that were actually taking place during the Renaissance. However, the data also shows that in *Henry V* the occurrences of Latinate neologisms is 0.83 which is above the average (0.66) calculated by considering all the occurrences appearing in this genre. Chronologically, *Henry V* appeared in 1599 when Shakespeare's writing career was at midpoint and began to show radical changes in the use of language. "Speeches can be colourful and various, as we hear in the dialects of the English, Irish, Scots, and Welsh soldiers in Henry's army" (McDonald, 2001: 170). It is in such context that Latinate neologisms are exploited by Shakespeare. On the one hand, they contrast language varieties and the apparent conveyed meaning of *confusio linguarum* and lack of purity (Baugh and Cable, 2002); on the other hand, they represent the elevated language of a king.

It might also be argued that the moderate use of such linguistic items in comedies can be explained by the presence of aristocratic figures which through language distinguish themselves. In juvenile works the limited use of Latinate neologisms can indicate an experimental phase in which Shakespeare was linguistically "playing" with morphological processes. Such experiments are at times more clearly shown by a peak of Latinate usage in the plays where there is the need to achieve particular communicative effects. An example is provided by *The Tempest*.

The occurrences of Latinate neologisms in Poetry could seem redundant, since poetry is inherently a prestigious way of using language to enhance feelings of every kind. Poetry, in fact, makes use of metrics where rhythm and language entwine and achieve refined effects. However, the fact that Shakespeare includes some can suggest that Latinate elements represent that kind of learned language which was supposed to be poets' characteristics.

6. Conclusions

The changes which took place in Europe between the fifteen and sixteenth century had a great impact on every social aspect. Languages were acquiring new words by means of international trade exchanges and the diffusion of printing. However, contributions made by the humanist movement of Renaissance should be considered as well for a comprehensive

view. Such factors, in fact, contributed to the intellectual ferment of those who were sensitive and were prone to make experiments, and Shakespeare was one of them.

This study was an attempt to further investigate Shakespeare's language under a different viewpoint. The use of computational tools can contribute to more precisely detect linguistic phenomena and analysing them in isolation or contextually. In particular, the study of Latinate neologisms has revealed that it is true that the use of such devices is meaningful in tragedies and that they bring power and importance to the main characters. The number of occurrences confirms this tendency and show that there differences between the main character and the other characters of each play. In all other cases, the data seems to highlights other aspects. The comedies and history plays which belong to Shakespeare's earlier production provide evidence of experimental usage of language through a moderate use of new linguistic items which tentatively appear in the plays regardless of the role of characters, but at times denoting communicative strategies. In some instances, Latinate neologisms occur more frequently and reflect the use of elevated language to empower the role and enhance the greatness and importance of a character, as it is then found in Shakespeare's tragedies. No less important is the data found for poetry which can be meaningful if the features which characterise this genre are considered. The language of poetry, in fact, includes anything which can enhance the language as the expression of inner feelings which the perception of the surrounding world provokes in poets.

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