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Susanna Bonaldi, Louann Haarman, Donna R. Miller, Paola Nobili, Eva-Maria Thüne

E' sempre un immenso piacere presentare un nuovo contributo alla serie degli *Occasional Papers*, la collana collocata all'interno dei *Quaderni del Centro di Studi Linguistico-Culturali (CeSLiC)*, il centro di ricerca del quale sono responsabile scientifico e che svolge ricerche nell'ambito del Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere e Moderne dell'*Alma Mater Studiorum* – Università di Bologna.

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Finora sono stati pubblicati i seguenti *paper*:

- (2005) **Fusari, Sabrina**, Il direct mail per le organizzazioni nonprofit: analisi retorica interculturale italiano-inglese
- (2005) **Louw, Bill**, Dressing up waiver: a stochastic collocational reading of 'the truth and reconciliation' commission (TRC)
- (2005) **Nobili, Paola**, 'Saper vivere' con gli altri
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- (2008) **Alida Maria Silletti**, La traduzione del futuro verbale in ottica contrastiva italiana-francese-inglese
- (2008) **Jane Helen Johnson**, Corpus Stylistics and Translation
- (2009) **Sabrina Fusari**, Il filmato turistico multilingue come discorso specializzato: il caso di studio della Val Gardena
- (2009) **Alida Maria Silletti**, Analisi della "futurità" verbale in ottica comparativa italiana-francese-inglese
- (2009) **Antonella Luporini**, Frames, Transitivity Structures e gerarchie di potere tra personaggi: Harry Potter affronta Lord Voldemort in The Sorcerer's Stone

A questi *papers* si aggiungono le altre pubblicazioni del CeSLiC – ossia, gli E-Libri – che includono:

1) la serie di manuali dei *Quaderni del CeSLiC: Functional Grammar Studies for Non-Native Speakers of English*

http://www2.lingue.unibo.it/ceslic/e_libri_1_func_grammar.htm

che già vanta quattro volumi pubblicati;

2) gli Atti dei Convegni patrocinati dal centro:

a) a cura di D. Londei, D.R. Miller, P. Puccini, Gli atti completi delle giornate di studio del CeSLiC del 17-18 GIUGNO 2005:

“**Insegnare le lingue/culture oggi: Il contributo dell’interdisciplinarietà**”, a <http://amsacta.cib.unibo.it/archive/00002055>,

disponibile anche in versione cartacea: Londei D., Miller D.R., Puccini P.(a cura di), 2006, **Insegnare le lingue/culture oggi: Il contributo dell'interdisciplinarietà**, Quaderni del CeSLiC, Bologna, Edizioni Asterisco.

b) a cura di Miller D.R. e Pano A., *Selected Papers* di quelli presentati al convegno nazionale CeSLiC del 4-5 dicembre, 2008:

“**La geografia della mediazione linguistico-culturale/ The Geography of Language and Cultural Mediation**”, a

<http://amsacta.cib.unibo.it/2626/>,

la versione cartacea dei quali è attualmente in corso di stampa.

Inoltre gli E-libri del CeSLiC comprendono:

3) la recente collana di *Studi grammaticali*

http://www2.lingue.unibo.it/ceslic/e_libri_studi_grammaticali.htm

È con grande piacere che il CeSLiC ora propone un pregevole contributo su un tema del quale da tempo si occupa con dedizione: la traduzione. Il saggio è di **Jane Helen Johnson**, ricercatrice in Lingua e traduzione inglese presso il Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere e Moderne dell’Università di Bologna. Tra i suoi vari interessi di ricerca vi sono la linguistica e la stilistica dei corpora, e la loro applicazione alle problematiche traduttive. Di fatto, la studiosa è già autrice di un *Occasional Paper* pubblicato nel 2008 che ha per argomento “Corpus Stylistics and Translation”. In questo nuovo lavoro, Johnson porta avanti il discorso intrapreso in quella occasione con un’applicazione rigorosa dell’impianto teorico-metodologico ai romanzi di Grazia Deledda e alla loro traduzione in inglese, di cui lei si occupa da tempo, avendo portato determinati risultati delle sue ricerche anche all’estero, ultimamente al colloquio organizzato da PALA (l’associazione internazionale di poetica e linguistica) a Liverpool (luglio 2009).

Il titolo del saggio è:

Towards an identification of the authorial style of Grazia Deledda.

A corpus-assisted study

Il lavoro parte da recenti sviluppi nell'ambito della linguistica dei corpora applicata alla stilistica, e in particolare all'analisi di elementi stilistici di opere letterarie, che hanno spostato l'attenzione sull'importanza delle *sequenze* di parole, anziché delle parole singole, dalla convinzione che si arrivi con maggiore accuratezza alla corretta attribuzione di testi ai loro autori attraverso l'analisi di sequenze di parole frequenti rispetto alle analisi delle frequenze di parole prese singolarmente.

Allo scopo di sperimentare tale ipotesi, e facendo riferimento ad un corpus appositamente creato e composto di 16 romanzi di Deledda, l'articolo di Johnson presenta i risultati di una particolareggiata analisi stilistica dell'autrice sarda. Allo scopo di evidenziare possibili elementi del suo stile narrativo caratteristico, le sequenze di parole più frequenti sono state estratte tramite il confronto del corpus Deledda con un corpus di riferimento.

Con riferimento costante alle *concordances* nel co-testo, le varie sequenze sono state raggruppate secondo campi semantici. Una prima analisi quantitativa mostra una particolare frequenza di frasi contenenti processi di tipo mentale, congiuntivi, nonché riferimenti a parti del corpo e al paesaggio.

L'autrice poi sottopone ad un'analisi qualitativa diverse frasi chiave che si sono rivelate particolarmente frequenti, passando così, in maniera convincente, dal testo e dalla stilistica dei corpora al romanzo ed al significato letterario.

Data la sua intrinseca validità, ma anche in considerazione della scarsità di linee guida pratiche per traduttori letterari, la metodologia applicata in questo saggio si rivela assai utile, anche in un'ottica propedeutica, per chi si avvia alla traduzione di testi letterari.

Concetti chiave:

traduzione; linguistica dei corpora; stilistica dei corpora; *authorial style*; sequenze di parole

Donna R. Miller

Bologna, li 13 dicembre, 2009

Jane Johnson

Towards an identification of the authorial style of Grazia Deledda.

A corpus-assisted study

1. Introduction

One of the questions that have long fascinated both readers and researchers alike as regards literary works is how the particular style of an author may be distinguished. Most agree, like Leech and Short, that there must be some sort of linguistic ‘thumbprint’, in other words “an individual combination of linguistic habits which somehow betrays [the writer] in all that he [sic] writes” (Leech and Short 1981: 12). Style is “distinctive: in essence, the set or sum of linguistic features that seem to be characteristic” (Wales 2001: 371) and it may be possible to “identify features of text which remain constant whatever the artistic or other motives of the writer” (Leech and Short 1981: 14). A corpus study based on a collection of texts by a particular author would thus seem appropriate for this purpose, given that “the soundness of statements about wider matters such as authorial style relies ultimately on the statements we can make about particular texts” (ibid. : 12). Particular elements of style have been investigated by researchers such as Hori (2004) who investigates collocations in Dickens, Starcke (2006) who looks at clusters in Austen, and Mahlberg (2007a) who examines clusters as local textual functions in Dickens. The study described in this paper attempts to use corpus evidence to characterize different elements of the style of the Italian writer Grazia Deledda, the Nobel-prizewinning author of a number of literary works.

Style may be measured quantitatively (ibid.: 42) by determining the frequency of stylistic features, then highlighting the quantitative deviation from the norms of the linguistic code, a deviation which may be artistically motivated and plays a part in foregrounding (ibid.: 48). Though Stubbs (2005: 11) notes that “textual frequency is not the same as salience, and does not necessarily correspond to what readers notice and remember in a text”, he recognises that “there must be some relation, even if indirect, between frequent vocabulary and content, and frequency lists are one essential starting point for a systematic textual analysis”. This starting point may also be used for a qualitative analysis for the purpose of investigating authorial style, though it is important to exercise due caution in extending the interpretation of

any findings resulting from frequency lists to the novel as a whole. After all, as Widdowson (2008: 295) rightly points out, literary significance is assigned to the novel, whereas corpus stylistics investigates the text.

In order to delimit such a broad field as style, a prior decision was taken to investigate multi word items as significant style markers. In the next section of this paper, the rationale will be given for this, after which I shall provide an introduction to Grazia Deledda and her works. This will be followed by a description of the methodology and finally some findings will be presented. Since the ultimate purpose in conducting this study is to provide a way into a text for translators, the conclusion will thus focus on implications for translation studies in general.

Indeed, the definition of literary style has particular relevance for literary translation. Preparation for literary translation would require “a description of the dominant structure of every individual work to be translated” (Cluysenaar 1976: 49), with a “prior stylistic analysis of certain dominant features” (ibid.: 41) vital to meaning and perceptual outline, though little seems to have been written in practical terms about how this should materialise and how it may be useful.

2. Multiword items as a means for identifying authorial style

Using multivariate analysis, Hoover (2002: 158) compares the wordlists of a number of novels in order to isolate features indicative of authorial style and claims that lists of multiword phrases or n-grams rather than single words give more accurate results in attributing texts to their authors, since “the order of words within sequences provides information that is not contained in the frequencies of the constitutive elements alone”. The greater utility of frequent word sequences, or clusters is also highlighted by Mahlberg (2007a: 225), who illustrates how “clusters can be taken as pointers to meanings and textual functions”. Stubbs and Barth (2003) show that multiword units can discriminate accurately between text-types, and Stubbs (2005) focuses on recurrent phraseology for his stylistic interpretation of *Heart of Darkness*. Bettina Starcke (2006) analyses frequent phraseological units as carriers of meaning in *Persuasion*, and Mahlberg (2007b) considers how clusters as characterising features which emerged as significant in the original Dickens were translated into German.

Most of the work in this field however has been done on texts in English and little has been published regarding other languages. In my study I have used the same principles of investigation to consider works of fiction in Italian.

3. The Grazia Deledda corpus

Grazia Deledda (1871-1936) wrote and published a great many full-length novels and short stories, the popularity of which eventually led to her being awarded the Nobel prize for Literature in 1926. Her works mainly dealt with the lives of people from different social classes in her native Sardinia, with particular focus on the place of religion, nature and the forces of destiny and fate.

For this study a corpus¹ of sixteen of her works was compiled from those texts that were freely available electronically, consisting of 894,515 words or tokens. To create a corpus that was as homogeneous as possible, it was decided initially to include novels rather than short stories. The works span the author's literary career, ranging from one of her earliest works *Fiore di Sardegna*, published in 1892, to *Cosima*, published posthumously in 1937.

4. Methodology

Multiword keyword lists were created using WordSmith Tools (Scott 2004) and comparing the Deledda corpus with a reference corpus. There does not as yet seem to be any consensus about how to define the ideal reference corpus (the issues are summarized in Toolan 2009: 25 ff.). For the purpose of this study, a selection of Italian novels more or less contemporary to the works of Deledda herself was used as a reference corpus². More specifically, the corpus of 931,066 tokens was compiled from the works of both male and female writers of the *verismo* movement of which Deledda is now acknowledged to be part, deriving from French naturalism and differing from this in the emphasis given to the regional problems of Italy, particularly southern Italy (Ferroni 1991: 404). Words and phrases emerging as positive keywords, in the sense that they occurred more frequently than would be

1 The Deledda corpus - *Canne al Vento* (1913); *Cenere* (1904); *Colombi e sparvieri* (1912); *Cosima* (1937); *Elias Portolú* (1903); *Fiore di Sardegna* (1892); *Il paese del vento* (1931); *Il vecchio della montagna* (1900); *La chiesa della solitudine* (1936); *La giustizia* (1899); *La madre* (1920); *La via del male* (1896); *L'edera* (1908); *L'incendio nell'oliveto* (1918); *Marianna Sirca* (1915); *Nel deserto* (1911).

2 The Reference Corpus - Giovanni Verga: *Eros* (1875), *Eva* (1873), *I Malavoglia* (1881), *Il marito di Elena* (1882), *Storia di una capinera* (1871), *Tutte le novelle*, *Una peccatrice* (1866); Luigi Capuana: *Giacinta* (1879);

expected in comparison with the reference corpus, were thus assumed to be typical of Deledda's style, since other parameters were equal (e.g. historical period, literary movement, gender of author).

However, it is important to bear in mind the problems with examining keyword lists highlighted by Paul Baker (2004: 349 ff.) and relating to the issues of difference ("a key word analysis will focus only on lexical differences, not lexical similarities"); frequency, whereby a word may be frequent only in one part of the text; and sense ("key words only focus on lexical differences, rather than semantic, grammatical or functional differences"). These problems were addressed in various ways. For example, though keyword lists pointed out differences rather than similarities between the Deledda corpus and the reference corpus, plain word lists of Deledda were also consulted to put the keyword analysis into perspective. As regards frequency, the range or dispersion (Rayson 2008) of the keyword was examined to ensure that frequent words were not limited to one part of the text. Likewise, frequent words were checked to make sure they occurred in most if not all of the texts in the corpus. As regards sense, keywords of course highlight differences in lexis but lexical choice is also a component of style, and the use of multiword phrases rather than single words in the keyword lists helped to eliminate part of this problem. Throughout, constant reference was made from wordlist to concordance in order to examine the words with their co-text.

In order to isolate features typical of Deledda's style and not typical of a particular novel or group of novels or period of writing by Deledda, only those keywords which appeared in more than thirteen – or three-quarters – of the novels were considered. The reason for this was to allow for the possibility of encountering a totally different style of writing in any of the novels included, since there had been no selection procedure prior to compiling the corpus. The decision to include only keywords appearing in most of the text resulted in the exclusion of many of the longer n-grams which initially emerged, since longer clusters tended to characterise specific texts, as previous studies (e.g. Stubbs and Barth 2003: 76; Mahlberg 2007a: 7) have found. Indeed, the longer they were, the more likely they were to appear in just a few texts or even in just one text, as in ex.1:

Matilde Serao: *Il romanzo della fanciulla* (1893), *Il ventre di Napoli* (1884), *La virtù di Checchina* (1884); Emilio De Marchi: *Arabella* (1892), Demetrio Pianelli (1890)

ex.1 I padroni coi padroni i servi coi servi [L'incendio nell'oliveto]

The masters with the masters, the servants with the servants [LIT]

This phrase relating to the supposed destiny of the two social classes occurred 6 times in this one text only, being a catchphrase typical of the character Mikedda, whereas the trinitarian formula below (ex.2), reflecting the religious thread present in most of Deledda's novels, figures seven times in four different texts:

ex. 2 del padre del figliuolo e dello spirito santo

(in the name) of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

These phrases were thus not taken into consideration in the final study. Other n-grams to be excluded were those which appeared as key because they contained proper names. The first twenty-four n-grams after this initial sorting process are given below in order of keyness:

2-grams: *con la; ed egli; con le; il viso; sul cielo; la figura; il vecchio; egli disse; davanti a; di gioia; con gli; gli sembrava; per il; tutto era; ma egli; sullo sfondo; ed ecco; le pareva; dopo tutto; sollevò il; la luna; per terra; il cavallo; ed ella*

3-grams: *con gli occhi; a sua volta; i suoi occhi; il suo viso; un senso di; scosse la testa; e di nuovo; un impeto di; la figura di; con la sua; sollevò il viso; con la mano; ma egli non; dopo un momento; ma in fondo; con le mani; con la testa; e nello stesso; intorno a lui; ed egli non; si alzò e; il desiderio di; con le sue; la sua voce*

4-gram: *e i suoi occhi*

The key n-grams (228 2-grams, 40 3-grams and 1 4-gram) were then grouped semantically. This proved most difficult in the case of the 2-grams due to their being mainly function words. Thus more manual analysis was required to identify their function in the context, whereas the longer n-grams were easier to disambiguate. With reference to Hallidayan (1985, 1994) terminology, the final groups were: place adverbials, time adverbials, Mental

processes and feelings, Behavioural processes, other verbal groups, body parts, phrases with a conjunctive function, and character role (see Appendix).

A calculation of the cumulative numbers of n-grams falling into the semantic groups identified in the keywords of the Deledda corpus showed that Mental processes, body parts, phrases with conjunctions and references to natural landscape were the largest groups. I shall consider each of these groups in turn through a qualitative analysis of the most significant key words and phrases, involving examination of concordances and collocates of the words and phrases themselves.

5. Some findings

5.1. Mental processes of perception: SEMBRARE/PARERE

As may be seen from the list of 2-grams above, the most key verb phrases were *egli disse*, *gli sembrava* and *le pareva*. As regards the first, the core reporting verb *disse* appeared much further down the single keyword list, suggesting that the 2-gram appeared as key because of its combination with the pronoun *egli*. This point will be discussed later.

The next most key verb phrases feature 2 synonymous lemmas, the word forms of which also appear very high on the single keyword frequency list, particularly word forms of PARERE. Word forms of its synonym SEMBRARE are half as frequent, but their combined use makes this process very frequent indeed.

The lemmas SEMBRARE and PARERE are examples of Mental processes of perception commonly used to refer to consciousness. The adverbial phrases *come un/una* (= like a) and *come se* (= as if), which may be used to express the same idea as SEMBRARE/PARERE, also appeared in the Deledda corpus (1.95 ptw – per thousand words), but did not emerge as key since they were even more common in the reference corpus (2.51 ptw).

It might be mentioned at this point that Deledda has been noted as being repetitive by literary critics (e.g. Ferroni 1991: 470), and evidence of this may be seen in an almost exaggerated usage of the lexical items SEMBRARE/PARERE in her work. Indeed, the combined use of verbal word forms of both lemmas amounted to 3.79 times ptw in the Deledda corpus, whereas in the reference corpus this figure was 1.44 times ptw. The corpus evidence certainly suggests that Deledda makes great use of simile, with an idiosyncratic predilection for expressing this lexicogrammatically through the Mental process of perception.

These phrases may also help to construct a particular narrative point of view. Indeed, in 33% of the clusters of these lemmas (973 out of 2921), an indirect object pronoun directly preceded the word form (e.g. *le sembrava, gli pareva*), as in ex.3:

ex.3 Là dentro a quel palpito batteva il sangue di Giacinto, ed Efix sentiva voglia di piangere pensando a lui. Eccolo, gli sembra sempre di vederlo, alto, sereno, bianco di farina come una giovine pianta coperta di brina, purificato dal lavoro e dal proposito del bene. Tutti lo amano, ed egli è gentile con tutti. [CV]

Within that palpitation beat Giacinto's blood, and Efix felt like weeping thinking of him. Here he is, it seems to him that he sees him, tall, serene, white with flour like a young plant covered with frost, purified by work and good intentions. Everyone loves him and he is good to everyone. [LIT.]

The use of the indirect object pronoun preceding the Mental process of perception in ex. 3 suggests that it is the perception of a particular character that is being called into play, perhaps indicating the presence of a focaliser, or reflector character, the “Reflector of fiction who has [...] become the site of [...] perception modalities and not the external narrator” (Simpson 1993: 66). Other indications of narration by a reflector character in this example lie in the shift to the use of the present tense and the use of the spatial deictic, *eccolo*, typical of direct speech. Close examination of other concordances of indirect object pronoun + Mental process of perception suggested that they were often found in the proximity of similar shifts in tense as well as occurrences of direct or Free Direct Speech or Thought (Leech and Short 1981: 322). A more detailed qualitative study is currently underway (Johnson, forthcoming) to investigate whether this evidence could contribute to constructing a particular point of view in the narration.

5.2. Mental processes of perception and Participants

Besides the lemmas SEMBRARE/PARERE, phrases containing other Mental processes of perception and their relative Participants also emerged as key. Examples of these are *sentì il, sentiva che, si sentì, provò un, ne provava*, and nominalisations such as *un senso di, un impeto di, and il desiderio di*.

The phrase *un senso di* occurred 0.22 times ptw in the Deledda corpus but only 0.06 times ptw in the reference corpus and was thus one of the most key 3-grams in Deledda.

Right-hand collocates of this phrase in the Deledda corpus frequently created nominalisations of Mental processes, as exemplified in ex.4:

ex. 4 di tanto in tanto però un senso di ribellione lo costringeva a fermarsi [CV]

however, from time to time a sense of rebellion forced him to stop [LIT.]

The single most frequent collocate to the immediate right of the phrase *un senso di* was *solievo*, but cumulatively there was a prevalence of negative collocates such as *paura*, *angoscia*, *terrore*, *solitudine*. There were also collocates which could be classed as ‘neutral’, including *sonnolenza*, *vertigine*, and *attesa*. Overall the proportions were 52% negative, 37% positive, 11% neutral, suggesting that there is a local negative semantic prosody (Louw 1993) attached to the phrase *un senso di* in Deledda which might ‘prime’ (Hoey 2005) the reader to expect a negative collocate to follow. Indeed it is not just the artistically motivated quantitative deviation in the phrase that stands out in Deledda but also the fact that it tends to be accompanied by a negative emotion that is a feature of style.

Other key phrases (*gioia di*, *aveva paura*, *al pensiero*, *con disprezzo*, *triste e*) also reflect an emphasis on feelings and attitudes, as do the abstract nouns found in certain phrases (*di speranza*, *la speranza*, *la verità*, *del male*).

These nominalisations of feelings and attitudes create the effect of distancing the character from the feeling, making the real subject a passive recipient of the feeling. An extract featuring both nominalisation and Mental processes relating to feelings (underlined) is given in ex.5:

ex. 5 E tutta la sua giornata di fuga gli appariva ridicola e vile: il suo dovere era quello, di andare da lei, di darle coraggio: si sentiva lieve, quasi felice, attraversando il prato fresco, argenteo di luna; gli sembrava di essere una grande farfalla notturna attratta da un lume. E scambiava questa sua gioia di rivedere fra pochi attimi Agnese con la gioia del dovere di andare a salvarla. [MA]

And his whole day of flight appeared to him ridiculous and vile: his duty was that, to go to her, to give her courage. He felt light, almost happy, crossing the fresh meadow, silvery in the moonlight, it seemed to him that he was a great moth attracted by

a light. And he mistook his joy at seeing Agnese again in a few moments for the joy of doing his duty in going to save her. [LIT.]

The emergence of the nominalisations of these Mental processes as key in comparison with the reference corpus suggests that though Deledda often makes explicit reference to interior mental ‘activity’ in her works, relating to the character’s feelings and thoughts, in rendering this as a nominal phrase she creates detachment between the character and the feelings. By way of illustration, if we compare a more congruent lexicogrammatical realization of feelings in English, *he felt sad*, for instance, with something more typical of Deledda - *a sense of sadness struck him* - it becomes clear how in the second case nominalisation of the emotion removes responsibility for the emotion from the character who becomes the passive recipient.

5.3. Body parts

A great number of phrases make reference to body parts. Four main body parts *occhi/mano/viso/testa* appeared in the key clusters. The top key phrases were *con gli occhi*, *i suoi occhi* and *il suo viso* as first, third and fourth 3-grams overall, while *e i suoi occhi* was the first 4-gram. An example of this is in ex. 6 below:

ex. 6 Efix guardava come dal fondo di un pozzo quel punto alto lontano; ma d'improvviso gli parve che il raggio deviasse, piovesse su lui, illuminandolo. Tutto era chiaro, così. I suoi occhi oramai distinguevano tutto, gli errori scuri intorno, il centro luminoso, che era il castigo di Dio su lui.[CV]

As though from the bottom of a well Efix looked at that high distant point, but suddenly it seemed like the ray deviated so that it rained on him, illuminating him. Everything was clear like this. His eyes now distinguished everything, the dark errors around him, the luminous center that was God's punishment of him.[RW3]

In many concordances featuring body parts, these phrases are frequently used in the sense of agent metonyms, as above, where ‘he’ could easily be substituted for ‘his eyes’. Where this type of phrase is used extensively, “often an effect of detachment or alienation,

between an individual and their physical faculties, is conveyed”, as well as a “diminished responsibility of someone for how their own body is acting” (Toolan 1998: 95).

The keyness of body part phrases may also be explained in part by the fact that looks and smiles also play an important role in Deledda’s narrative technique as a means for conveying information as in ex.7 below.

ex. 7 I suoi occhi grandi, foschi, fissano subito il cestino della frutta depresso sulla tavola, poi avvolgono con uno sguardo profondo la donna che sta ad aspettare, e un sorriso rapido, che è di gioia ma anche di derisione, le illumina la bocca triste e sensuale. E il primo dubbio della madre, ella ancora non sa perché, nasce in quel momento. [MA]

Her large dark eyes fell instantly on the basket of fruit standing on the table, then turned with a searching look upon the woman who stood waiting, and a swift smile, half joy, half contempt, passed over the sad and sensual curves of her lips. And in that moment, though she knew not how or why, the first suspicion stirred in the mother’s heart. [MO]4

In this excerpt, the mother’s suspicions are aroused by Agnese’s smile and the look in her eyes, betraying the romantic involvement between herself and Paulo.

5.4. Phrases with conjunctions

Many key n-grams contained the adversative *ma*: e.g. *ma egli non, ma in fondo, ma non, ma perché, ma poi, ma subito*. Indeed, this conjunction is the most key single word overall, occurring 8.25 times ptw in the Deledda corpus compared with a much lower 3.99 ptw in the reference corpus, thus suggesting that co-ordination of this type plays an important role in Deledda’s work. In MA in particular, the Plot function of WordSmith Tools (Scott 2004) showed that *ma* (7.82 ptw here) occurred in ‘bursts’ (Katz 1996), giving visual evidence that the conjunction was key in certain parts of the novel. Subsequent manual investigation showed that these ‘bursts’ were clustered around significant dramatic points in the novel where the focus was on inner conflicts.

3 English translation from *Reeds in the Wind* by M. King, 1999, Italica Press, New York.

The first ‘burst’ of *ma* towards the beginning of the novel provides a linguistic marker for the mother’s incapacity to stop Paulo going to Agnese (ex.8):

ex. 8 Ma una forza superiore alla sua volontà fermava lei. Le ginocchia tremavano, come cercando di ribellarsi a quella forza infernale: le ginocchia tremavano, ma i piedi non volevano muoversi; era come se due mani possenti li fermassero al pavimento.

Così il suo Paulo poté scendere silenzioso la scaletta, aprire la porta e andarsene: il vento parve portarselo via d'un colpo. Solo allora ella riuscì ad alzarsi, a riaccendere il lume, ma anche questo con difficoltà, perché gli zolfanelli lasciavano lunghe scie di luce violetta sul muro ov'ella li sfregava ma non si accendevano. [MA]

But a force greater than her willpower stopped her. Her knees trembled as though trying to rebel against that infernal power; her knees trembled, but her feet did not want to move; it was as though two powerful hands were holding them to the floor.

Thus her Paul could go silently downstairs, open the door and go away: the wind seemed to take him away in a flash. Only then was she able to rise, to light her lamp again, but even this was achieved with difficulty, because the matches left long violet streaks on the wall wherever she struck them but did not ignite. [LIT.]

The second ‘burst’ comes where the mother’s suspicions about Agnese appear to be borne out, with the constant conflict between appearance and truth showing in the eyes, as in ex.9:

ex. 9 E quegli occhi, e quel modo di rivelare con impeto di sincerità ma poi subito di nascondere la propria anima, rassomigliavano straordinariamente a quelli del suo Paulo; [MA]

4 English translation from *The Mother* by M. Steegmann, 1923, Macmillan, New York.

And those eyes, and that way of revealing her soul in a rush of sincerity but then immediately hiding it again, were extraordinarily like those of her Paul. [LIT.]

There is another ‘burst’ of *ma* where the mother confronts Paulo with what she imagines are his feelings about Agnese and he tries to deny it. The next comes when the mother tells him of her encounter with Agnese on taking her the letter. Here, once again, his body betrays what he cannot say in words (ex.10):

ex. 10 «Basta, basta», egli impose, senza sollevare gli occhi; ma la madre vide le ciglia di lui sbattersi e il viso farsi bianco come s'era fatto quello di Agnese; [MA]

“Enough! Enough!” he cut in, without lifting his eyes; but the mother saw his lashes quiver and his face turn as white as that of Agnese had. [LIT.]

Again the adversative conjunction occurs in the linguistic description of the mother’s inner torment as she waits to hear Paulo come in. These examples and their occurrence in ‘bursts’ suggest that the adversative conjunction tends to mark points where inner struggles take place in the characters’ thoughts.

Though *ma* is the top single keyword overall, the additive conjunction *e* also occurs high on the single keyword list: 11th overall, and 4th if proper names are eliminated. It also appears, as *e* or *ed*, frequently in key 2-3-4-grams, such as *e con le, e il suo, e nello stesso, ed egli non, e neppure, e pareva, e sentì*. It is impossible to state accurately without a detailed manual analysis what role the conjunction plays in the clause. However most of the top fourteen 2-grams contain *e/ed* followed or preceded by grammatical words such as pronouns, suggesting that *e* is not used to link adjectives in nominal groups but as a co-ordinating conjunction at clause level, and so has a textual function. This would then confirm, also given the above evidence of frequency of the conjunction *ma*, that coordination rather than subordination is used as text organisation in Deledda's work.

Though *e/ed* is key in its own right, the keyness of phrases containing *e/ed* can also be explained in part by the fact that Deledda uses the 3rd person singular subject pronoun *egli/ella* much more than the reference corpus, with *egli* being the 2nd most key single word in the Deledda corpus. The inclusion of *egli* where standard Italian would use the verb alone (e.g. *egli disse* rather than *disse*) is now considered to be rather archaic or formal but even in

Italian literature contemporary to Deledda it was clearly no longer standard usage, as suggested by the fact that *egli* was a key single word, and n-grams containing *egli* such as *ma egli non* and *ed egli* also figured very high. Thus the high incidence of *egli/ella* may add a certain archaic feel to Deledda's work.

5.5. References to natural landscape

Many of the key phrases in the Deledda corpus contain reference to the setting of the novels. These have been grouped under the category 'references to natural landscape', including lexical items such as *cielo*, *vento*, *bosco*, *luna* and natural features such as *canne*, *pietre* and *sughero*, as well as *cavallo*, the common means of transport in this rural setting.

Critics have already pointed out the close relationship in Deledda's work between the character's feelings and the surrounding landscape, and the fact that this corpus study confirms this feature is evidence of the usefulness of corpus stylistics (see Stubbs 2005: 6; Mahlberg 2009: 63). Scrivano (1990: 24) mentions that:

*“il paesaggio è sempre impostato funzionalmente allo scatenarsi di eventi e sentimenti, e al tempo medesimo conserva una staticità che ne fa cornice entro cui collocare le singole storie individuali”*⁵

while Massaiu (1972) writes that:

*i colori, le luci e le voci della natura [hanno] una precisa e primaria funzione nella Deledda: essi in effetti permettono di penetrare indirettamente nell'anima dei personaggi che [...] più naturalmente si distendono e si aprono in mezzo agli alberi, alle bestie, all'aperta campagna. (1972: 133).*⁶

This connection between the 'soul of the character' and the surrounding landscape may also be confirmed by an examination of the lexical collocates of *PARERE* and *SEMBRARE* within a 5L/5R word span. Lexical words such as *cielo*, *vento*, *mare* and *terra*, belonging to the semantic group of natural landscape, emerged with the frequencies shown in Table 1:

5 “the landscape is always laid out functionally for the unleashing of events and sentiments, and at the same time preserves a static quality which creates a frame for the individual stories” (my translation).

| Word | Rank in lexical collocate list | frequency |
|-------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Cielo | 6 | 47 |
| Vento | 18 | 32 |
| Mare | 21 | 31 |
| Terra | 23 | 30 |

Table 1 – lexical words as collocates of PARERE/ SEMBRARE within a 5L/5R word span

Samples of concordances show that these collocates were indeed used to draw a comparison between the character's state of mind and the surroundings, as in the description of Paulo in ex.11 below.

ex. 11 andò qua e là senza sapere perché, aprì la finestra, immerse la testa nel vento: e gli parve di essere una delle mille foglie del ciglione protese nel vuoto, ora nel grigio dell'ombra, ora nella luce radiosa della luna, in balia del vento e del gioco delle nuvole: [MA]

He moved here and there without any reason, opened the window and thrust his head out into the wind, feeling as helpless as one of the million leaves whirled about in space, now in the dark shadow, now in the bright light of the moon, playthings of the winds and clouds. [MO]

Through the words of the character Efix in CV, the parallel between a natural feature and human destiny is stated explicitly, as in ex. 12 below:

ex. 12 “Sì”, egli disse allora, “siamo proprio come le canne al vento, donna Ester mia. Ecco perché! Siamo canne, e la sorte è il vento.” [CV]

“Yes,” he then said, “we’re just like reeds in the wind, Donna Ester. That’s why! We are reeds, and fate is the wind.” [RW]

Incidentally, the biblical reference (Matthew 11:7) evoking the reeds so typical of that landscape also gives the title to the novel.

6 “the colours, lights and voices of nature play a specific and primary role in Deledda: allowing to penetrate indirectly into the soul of the characters, who [...] more naturally open up and relax amidst the trees, animals and open countryside.” [my translation]

5.6. Character roles

Phrases referring by role and not by proper name to characters in the Deledda corpus were particularly visible in the key 2 grams, as shown in Table 2:

| Phrase | Freq |
|------------|------|
| Il vecchio | 453 |
| La serva | 206 |
| Serva e | 29 |
| Un pastore | 36 |
| Mia madre | 149 |
| La madre | 297 |
| La donna | 295 |
| Le donne | 287 |

Table 2 – Character roles in 2-grams in the Deledda corpus

The list shows how these character roles reflect the rustic country setting of the novels, and also the particular emphasis on the figure of the mother in Deledda's work, since it should be recalled that these key grams were present in at least 13 of the 16 novels and much less frequently in the reference corpus. Though it might be imagined that the first, *il vecchio*, occurred so frequently because it was the premodifying part of a nominal group (e.g. *il vecchio falegname gobbo*), a manual investigation showed that 78% of these actually constituted the nominal group itself, as in ex. 13:

ex. 13 *Il vecchio tremava di rabbia, ma non apriva bocca; [CV]*

The old man trembled with rage, but did not open his mouth; [LIT.]

5.7. Final considerations

From examination of the above key n-grams in their semantic groupings and subsequent analysis of the concordances, it was thus possible to move from corpus stylistics and the text to literary significance and the novel in order to identify some frequent stylistic elements in the novels of Grazia Deledda, with the help of their linguistic markers. It is important not to overgeneralise however and the following description should not be taken as being a reductive summary of the whole of Deledda's literary production.

As regards lexical features, there were many references to elements of the natural landscape, often accompanying reflections of characters' moods and states of mind, possibly suggesting that the characters are victims of events, blown 'like reeds in the wind'. Lexically

there was also much repetition of Mental processes of perception, thus hinting at a focus on characters' feelings and internal struggles, and again often connected with the surrounding natural elements. This could also be indicative of a certain narratorial point of view. Lexical features also highlighted body parts as agent, reinforcing the idea of a relinquishing of responsibility for actions on the part of the character. Lexical references to character roles highlighted many general nouns reflecting the rural or domestic setting of most of Deledda's work.

Grammatical features worthy of note were a preference for simple co-ordination of both the adversative and additive type, an atypical usage of the otherwise optional third personal singular subject pronoun *egli/ella*, perhaps creating a vaguely archaic impression for the modern reader, as well as an emphasis on certain repeated adverbial and prepositional phrases of place and direction.

The use of simile stood out particularly as regards figures of speech, and the similes often involved comparison between the natural elements and the character's mood and feelings.

Cohesive features included a marked lexical repetition of *SEMBRARE/PARERE* and other mental processes of perception.

As will be appreciated, many features have emerged which would be worthy of more detailed consideration and more research would be required in order to create a full stylistic profile of this author.

6. Conclusions and implications for translation studies

In this paper we have tried to create a 'thumbprint' of the style of the author Grazia Deledda by using a corpus stylistics approach, involving analysis of the key n grams in a corpus of her work. It must be borne in mind however that it is dangerous to overemphasize the distinctiveness of personal style (Leech and Short 1981: 12), and certainly not all the features found in Deledda's work may be highlighted with a study of this type. One example is the typicality of certain figures of speech. While simile, a noted feature in Deledda's work, is comparatively easy to identify using corpus techniques through the linguistic markers of *SEMBRARE/PARERE*, and *come se/come un*, as in this study, metaphor is not so easy to identify without an attentive 'traditional' reading of the text.

Though bearing these considerations in mind, a quantitative stylistic analysis of the type illustrated in this paper can still provide a practical way into a text. For example, translators and trainee translators would find it helpful to have access to or be able to create a wordlist of phrases rather than single words. Even without a reference corpus and keyword list it is still possible to gain useful information: the 3-gram wordlist of *La Madre*⁷, for example, contains features already described in the key wordlist of Deledda overall, including phrases related to Mental processes, word forms of SEMBRARE/PARERE, body part references, place references and character references. This could then be exploited following Snell-Hornby's (1995) suggestions for tackling translation with a top-down approach, from macro to micro levels, from syntax to semantics and lexis.

Such an analysis may thus be of practical use to both literary translators and trainee translators, by enabling them to focus on key features such as narratorial point of view, the structure of the novel, and lexical repetition, as well as highlighting nominal and verbal style and metaphorical representation.

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⁷ Top 24 3-grams in *La Madre: il suo Paulo; con gli occhi; l'impressione di; d'un tratto; con la testa; nella sua camera; un senso di; gli parve di; in fondo al; madre del prete; con la mano; con le mani; gli occhi di; il mio Paulo; in fondo alla; l'antico parroco; non c'è; tutto il suo; al suo posto; con la sua; gli occhi e; in chiesa e; lo spirito del; non c'era.*

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APPENDIX

2-3-4 grams as keywords in the DELEDDA corpus compared with REF CORP, divided according to semantic groups

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|------------------|
| <u>Character roles</u> | | Cavallo e | Sentì il |
| Il vecchio | Intorno a | | Sentiva che |
| Del vecchio | Intorno alla | <u>Time adverbials</u> | Si sentì |
| | Intorno a lui | Dopo tutto | Provò un |
| La serva | Per terra | D'un tratto | Ne provava |
| Serva e | Per terra e | Dopo | Si accorse che |
| Un pastore | | momento | |
| | Un luogo | A sua volta | Gioia di |
| Mia madre | In un luogo | Sua volta | Gioia e |
| La madre | | Fra poco | Di gioia |
| | <u>Natural landscape</u> | Solo allora | |
| La donna | I boschi | Solo quando | Paura di |
| Le donne | | Sempre più | Aveva paura |
| | La valle | Piano piano | |
| Figura di | Valle e | Ogni tanto | Pensò che |
| La figura | Della valle | Di nuovo | Al pensiero |
| La figura di | | E di nuovo | |
| | Le montagne | | La guardò |
| <u>Place names and place adverbials</u> | | <u>Mental processes and nominalisations</u> | Si guardò |
| A letto | Di rugiada | | Guardava e |
| Al focolare | | | Aveva veduto |
| Nella cucina | Alla luna | Gli pareva | Con disprezzo |
| | Della luna | Gli parve | Con tristezza |
| A fianco | La luna | Gli sembrava | Triste e |
| Davanti a | Sul cielo | Gli sembrò | Tristezza e |
| Davanti al | Il cielo | | |
| Davanti alla | Di nuvole | Le pareva | Non ricordava |
| | Le nuvole | Le parve | Il ricordo |
| Il cortile | | Le sembrava | Ricordava la |
| Del cortile | Il vento | | |
| Nel cortile | Dal vento | Pareva che | Suo sogno |
| | Del vento | Pareva di | Il desiderio |
| Lo sfondo | | Parve di | Il desiderio di |
| Sullo sfondo | Di sughero | Sembrava di | Desiderio di |
| | Di canne | L'impressione | |
| La porta | La terra | che | Nel silenzio |
| Della porta | Le pietre | L'impressione di | |
| | Di pietra | | Della solitudine |
| Il sentiero | Di pietre | Senso di | Di solitudine |
| In lontananza | | Un senso | |
| In paese | Il cavallo | Un senso di | Di speranza |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------------|
| La speranza | Grammatical features: <u>Prepositional phrases</u> | E solo | Il tuo |
| La verità | | E triste | Io non |
| Del male | | E tu | Io sono |
| L'idea di | | E va | Io ti |
| Impeto di | | Ecco che | Se tu |
| Un impeto | | Ed a | Sei tu |
| Un impeto di | | Ed ecco | Tu non |
| | | Ed egli | Tu sei |
| | | Ed ella | |
| | | Ed io | <u>body parts</u> |
| Un odore | Su un | Suo viso | |
| | Su una | Il suo viso | |
| | Su uno | Il viso di | |
| | | Il viso | |
| | Sul suo | | |
| | Fino al | | E i suoi occhi |
| | Fino alla | | Suoi occhi |
| Di ritornare - Il ritorno | Entro il | | Grandi occhi |
| | | | Con gli occhi |
| | | | I suoi occhi |
| | <u>Possessives</u> | | |
| Disse con | La cui | Anche i | La testa |
| Parlare così | I suoi | Anche se | Con la testa |
| Parole di | Il cui | Che anche | La testa e |
| Le parole di | Il suo | | |
| La sua voce | Le sue | Eppure non | Con la mano |
| A voce alta | La sua | Ad ogni modo | Con le mani |
| Disse con voce | | | |
| | <u>Conjunctions</u> | <u>Adverbial phrase</u> | <u>other key grams</u> |
| Scosse la | E adesso | Del resto | A se |
| Scosse la testa | E anche | | In avanti |
| Sollevò il viso | E di | <u>Pronouns</u> | In dio |
| Si sollevò | E forse | Egli cominciò | In fondo |
| Sollevò il | E guardò | Egli disse | La piccola |
| | E i | Egli è | Le cose |
| Si volse | E con le | Egli la | Le macchie |
| Alzò e | E il suo | Egli non | Le provviste |
| Si piegò | E nello stesso | Che egli si | Lo stesso |
| Balzò in piedi | Ed egli non | Egli si | Notizie di |
| Si alzò e | E i suoi | Ella disse | Più che |
| Da bere | E lei | Ella rispose | Se stesso |
| | E neppure | Che egli | Sfondo della |
| Tutto era | E pareva | | Simili a |
| Tutto fu | E parve | <u>Direct speech:</u> | Un vago |
| Lo aveva | E provava | A te | |
| | E sentì | Ah sì | |
| | E sentiva | Che tu | |