



Center for Open Access in Science

Open Journal for
Studies in Linguistics

2022 • Volume 5 • Number 1

<https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojssl.0501>

ISSN (Online) 2620-0678

OPEN JOURNAL FOR STUDIES IN LINGUISTICS (OJSL)

ISSN (Online) 2620-0678

www.centerprode.com/ojsl.html

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Publisher:

Center for Open Access in Science (COAS)

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Consonant Epenthesis in Greek Child Speech: A Phonological Perspective

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Received: 19 March 2022 ▪ Revised: 11 June 2022 ▪ Accepted: 30 June 2022

Abstract

In this paper a less well-studied process is discussed, namely, segmental insertion in child language. The main question of the study is why children use consonant epenthesis in their speech. Our assumptions are based on picture naming and spontaneous speech collected from four monolingual Greek-speaking children varying in age from 1;6.26 to 2;10.9. Their data reveal that it is a systematic process which helps them simplify their speech by forming unmarked structures (Oller, 1974). The position of the epenthetic segment as well as its quality are also examined. We observe that an epenthetic consonant is inserted at the left or right edge of the word in order for an unmarked CV syllable to emerge. In a few cases with cluster simplification, a consonant is inserted to the syllable that does not contain the cluster in order to maintain in number all the segments of the adult's form. Further, the epenthetic segment, which arises in one of the two edges of the word, constitutes a full copy of a consonant located at the other edge. This interaction seems to support the view that edgemost syllables are psycholinguistically prominent positions (e.g., Pater, 1997, Smith, 2002) and children tend to pay more attention to them (Slobin, 1973). For the analysis of children's tokens, Optimality Theory is adopted (Prince & Smolensky, 1993) and how this model can account for all the properties presented in consonant epenthesis is explained.

Keywords: language acquisition, consonant epenthesis in Greek, prominence of word edges, optimality theory.

1. Introduction

This research deals with *epenthesis* in child speech in order to investigate how it facilitates language acquisition. Epenthesis is considered the process in which one or more segments are inserted in a word in order to usually create an *unmarked* CV syllable (cf. Kappa 2002: 23-24, Tzakosta 2003: 259). The epenthetic segments can be a consonant, vowel, glide or a CV syllable (see Lombardi 2002; Demuth, Culbertson & Alter 2006, among others). Representative examples from adult and child speech follow (1-2).

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1) ['la:dua] → ['la:duʷa] | (Washo, Midtlyng, 2005: 60) |
| Adult's form → Child's form | |
| 2) ['natin] → ['natine] ¹ | (Greek, Tzakosta, 2003: 262) |

¹ The brackets [...] indicate the adult's and child's output respectively.

In the first example the glide [j] is inserted in order to resolve hiatus, while in the second example a vowel [e] is added at the end of word in order for an open syllable to arise with the resyllabification of consonant [n] from coda to onset position. In the present study, data which show consonant epenthesis are examined. Some properties of epenthesis such as the quality and position of the epenthetic segment are additionally discussed. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: in section 2 cross-linguistic research findings are presented. Section 3 includes the research methodology, while in section 4 the children’s data are described in detail. In section 5 the analysis of data based on *Optimality Theory* (Prince & Smolensky 1993) is presented. Finally, in the last section we summarize the basic findings and in the end after the references, the tokens with consonant epenthesis drawn from each child for the needs of the study are cited in appendix.

- Children’s insertion of consonantal segments seems to be reflected as epenthesis in preference to partial reduplication.
- Insertion takes place in words with consonantal clusters in order for unmarked CV syllables to emerge while maintaining in number the segments of the adult’s form.
- The domain of epenthesis supports the primacy of the edgemoſt syllables in words.

2. Epenthesis in adult and child language

In the literature ſeveral reasons have been proposed for the function of epenthesis in adult or child language. Initially, it constitutes a common process in Creole languages which favor CV syllables (Alber & Plag 2001, Example 3).

3) English [smook] → Saramaccan Creole English [sumuku] (smoke) (Alber & Plag, 2001: 812)

Epenthesis can also resolve consonant clusters that are not permitted from one language to another, as shown for instance in a study which investigates Farsi ſpeakers learning English as L2 (Boudaoud & Cardoso 2009). In English [sC] clusters are allowed, while in Farsi they do not (Example 4)

4) English [stop] → Farsi [es.top] (stop) (Boudaoud & Cardoso, 2009: 1)

So, the insertion of vowel [e] creates an extra syllable which allows the resyllabification of consonant [s] to coda position breaking this way the illicit cluster [st] in Farsi. Depending on the position in which an epenthetic vowel is inserted, epenthesis can be divided into *anaptyxis* and *prothesis* (Abrahamsson, 1999: 474). The former emerges when a vowel ſplits up a cluster (Example 3), while the latter when a vowel precedes the cluster (Example 4). Loanwords are considered another environment where vowel epenthesis plays a crucial role by helping the borrowing language repair structures which come from other languages and are not permitted in it. In Japanese for instance, only a [nasal] consonant or the first half of a geminate is allowed in coda position (Itô & Mester 1995). So, this language inserts an epenthetic vowel to fix illegal codas in loanwords (Example 5).

5) English [festival] → Japanese [fesutibaruw] (festival) (Itô & Mester, 1995: 826)

In child ſpeech vowel or consonant epenthesis is argued to take place in order for an unmarked CV syllable to arise (e.g., Stemberger, 1996, Kappa, 2002, Tzakosta, 2003), as illustrated in the following examples (6-8).

Adult's form	→ Child's form	Child: Age
6) ['bluza] 2002: 23)	→ ['belula] (blouse)	Sof: 2;5.9 ² (Greek, Kappa,
7) ['istera] 2003: 262)	→ ['titela] (later)	Dion: 2;2.12 (Greek, Tzakosta,
8) ['aloyo] 2003: 262)	→ ['ðiloyo] (horse)	Mar: 2;8.22 (Greek, Tzakosta,

The inserted segment can be default (6), a *full* copy of a nearby segment (7) or to share some *distinctive features* with a nearby segment (8) (e.g., Kitto & Lacy, 1999, Tzakosta, 2003).

3. Research methodology

Before the meetings between researcher and children, all parents provided written and verbal consent. Children who were selected to participate in the research came in contact with the researcher in order for a relationship of trust and familiarity to be established between the two sides till the recordings begin. The data collection comes from four subjects, two twin and two non-twin monolingual children with typical linguistic development. Standard Modern Greek is considered as their mother tongue. The professional tape recorder Marantz PMD661MKII is the basic tool for the collection of children's data. In total 35.677 tokens transcribed from picture naming via a laptop and spontaneous child speech have been gathered. The pictures were drawn from research concerning child speech in Greek (Kappa & Paracheraki, 2014) with some modifications for the needs of the present study, which include everyday words, such as foods, animals, plants, professions, vehicles, buildings, household utensils. They were designed to give the children the opportunity to utter all types of consonants and clusters regarding their distinctive features in every position within a word (initial, middle, final stressed or unstressed syllable). The spontaneous speech resulted through various activities either inside kindergartens or in their courtyard, such as reading books, playing with bricks, balls, dolls, cars, painting with markers, fun in slide, swings, seesaw. Most of the recordings took place between researcher and children in rooms that were colorful and full of toys or in the yard of kindergartens in order for them to feel as comfortable as possible and not to be distracted so that their utterances do not come from lack of concentration or haste. Children's speech was recorded 1-2 times per week. The research lasted about 15 months, while the duration of each recording ranged from 15-30 minutes for each of the four children separately. The age of twin children is 1;8.15 to 2;10.9 years old, while of non-twin boy 1;7.5 to 2;7.18 and of non-twin girl 1;6.26 to 2;9.12. From the total tokens, we rely our assumptions on 40 that present consonant epenthesis. The reproduction, processing and conversion of audio material into phonetic tokens were done via Audacity software, while the recording and organization of tokens via Microsoft Office Word. Since we did not use any software for the phonetic analysis of children's tokens and the transcription was done by ear only, we include data in which we have a high degree of certainty of children's utterances. For the phonetic rendering of words, the *International Phonetic Alphabet* is used.

² The numbers indicate the child's years, months and days. E.g., 2;5.9 means that the child is two years, five months and nine days old.

4. Findings from Greek

Consonant epenthesis is observed in all four children in monosyllabic and disyllabic words. Indicative examples of the former are given next (9-24)³.

Adult's form	→ Child's form	Child: Age
9) ['ði.o]	→ ['ði.ðo] (two)	boy (twin): 2;4.20
10) ['ce.i]	→ ['ce.ci] ((he / she / it) burns)	boy (twin): 2;5.13
11) [a.'ftu]	→ [ta.'tu] (his)	boy (twin): 2;6.12
12) [a.'fto]	→ [ta.'to] (this)	boy (twin): 2;6.19
13) ['i.se]	→ ['si.se] ((you) are)	girl (twin): 2;4.24
14) ['i.ne]	→ ['ni.ne] ((he / she / it) is)	girl (twin): 2;8.21
15) ['i.ne]	→ ['ni.ne] ((he / she / it) is)	girl (twin): 2;9.18
16) ['i.ne]	→ ['ni.ne] ((he / she / it) is) (m ⁴)	girl (twin): 2;10.2
17) ['a.lo]	→ ['la.lo] (other)	boy (non twin): 1;7.7
18) [a.'fto]	→ [ta.'to] (this)	boy (non twin): 1;7.16
19) ['a.lo]	→ ['la.lo] (other)	boy (non twin): 1;8.6
20) ['a.lo]	→ ['la.lo] (other)	boy (non twin): 1;9.11
21) [a.'fto]	→ [ta.'to] (this)	girl (non twin): 2;3.8
22) [a.'fto]	→ [ta.'to] (this)	girl (non twin): 2;5.8
23) ['i.ne]	→ ['ni.ne] ((he / she / it) is)	girl (non twin): 2;5.22
24) ['i.ne]	→ ['ni.ne] ((he / she / it) is)	girl (non twin): 2;6.13

Before discussing the properties of children's tokens, it should be clarified at this point whether their examples constitute consonant epenthesis or *partial reduplication*. Partial reduplication is considered the production of two partially identical syllables and involves *consonant* or *vowel harmony* (cf. Klein, 2005: 71, examples 25-26).

Adult's form	→ Child's form	
25) ['gɹæmpə]	→ [mima] (grandpa)	(English, Klein, 2005: 71)
26) [buk]	→ [buku] (book)	(English, Klein, 2005: 71)

However, even though both reduplication and consonant harmony involve melody copy (Goad unpublished results), we follow in the current study the view which mentions that reduplication takes place at the upper levels of the prosodic hierarchy, namely, the syllable and *foot*, while consonant harmony at the lower levels, that is, the segment and distinctive feature (Tzakosta, 2007). Thus, we assume that in children's tokens the process of consonant epenthesis is applied rather than reduplication, since in almost all of them the sequence of vowels differs.

³ In the examples the age begins from the smallest to the biggest per child.

⁴ (m) = mimicry. Mimicry is considered the direct utterance of a token by the child faithfully or with different distinctive features immediately after the utterance of the same token by the adult. The strategy of mimicry from child constitutes a learning process. In other words, the child hears the token, processes it and utters it after having heard it again by itself. The process of information's transfer between adult and child we assume that it contributes to the in depth understanding of the information. So, data that are uttered as mimicry have been included in the present study.

Returning to children's examples (9-24), a consonant is inserted in order for an unmarked CV syllable to emerge and agree with researchers' views, who point out that this is the main reason for the use of epenthesis in child speech (e.g., Stemberger, 1996; Kappa, 2002; Tzakosta, 2003). In some tokens with cluster simplification, it additionally maintains in number the segments of the adult's form. So, it seems to constitute also a strategy of preserving the same length between adult's and child's form. Regarding the properties of epenthesis, the inserted consonant is observed in one of the two edges of the word and simultaneously constitutes a full copy of the consonant located at the other edge. This interaction between consonants at the edges of word seems to support their specification as psycholinguistically prominent positions (see Pater, 1997; Smith, 2002, among others) and that edgemoost syllables attract children's attention more than others (Slobin 1973). In terms of stress, it does not play any role, since the participating consonants can equally occur in stressed or unstressed syllable. The features of epenthesis traced in disyllabic words are also observed in trisyllabic words (examples 27-34).

Adult's form	→ Child's form	Child: Age
27) ['A.ʒe.lo]	→ ['La.ʒe.lo] (Agelo, name)	girl (twin): 2;8
28) [e.'ci.nos]	→ [ne.'ci.nos] (that)	girl (twin): 2;8.14
29) ['e.la.to]	→ ['te.la.to] (fir)	girl (twin): 2;8.21
30) ['e.xu.ne?]	→ ['ne.xu.ne?] ((do they) have?) (m)	boy (non twin): 2;2.24
31) [Ma.'ri.a]	→ [Ma.'ri.ma] (Maria, name)	girl (non twin): 2;3.20
32) ['e.pe.se]	→ ['se.pe.se] ((he / she / it) fell)	girl (non twin): 2;5.3
33) ['e.pe.se]	→ ['se.pe.se] ((he / she / it) fell)	girl (non twin): 2;5.3
34) [pe.'ta.i]	→ [pe.'ta.pi] ((he / she / it) flies)	girl (non twin): 2;6.8

These tokens strengthen the hypothesis of the primacy of the edges, since the consonant of the intervening syllable, which can be stressed or unstressed, does not affect the way consonant epenthesis is applied. Generally, intervening consonants in processes such as consonant harmony are characterized as *transparent* (e.g., Rose & Walker, 2004: 484), namely, they do not act as blockers or have any effect to the participating segments.

5. Data analysis based on Optimality Theory

In Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky, 1993) a set of universal and violable constraints ranked in a language specific way is provided by *Universal Grammar*. Language acquisition in Optimality Theory proceeds via constraint demotion and more specifically, in the initial stages where the structures uttered by children are unmarked, *markedness* constraints dominate *faithfulness* constraints, while in the final stage faithfulness constraints dominate markedness, as in adult's grammar (e.g., Demuth, 1995; Gnanadesikan, 2004).

CV syllables in children's words are ensured by the markedness constraint Onset, which requires all syllables to have consonants in onset positions (Prince & Smolensky, 1993: 191). In some cases, CV syllables are achieved with consonant epenthesis and simplification of clusters. For these tokens the markedness constraint *COMPLEX is also adopted, which prohibits consonant clusters (Demuth 1995: 19). For the properties of the epenthetic consonant, the markedness constraint AGREE is used, which requires *agreement* between consonants to all their distinctive features (Lombardi, 1999: 272). The proposal of agreement allows copying from distance due to not being bound by the *Strict Locality* requirement that governs feature *spreading* (cf. Hansson, 2010: 25). In order to fit with our data, we modify AGREE to OnsetEdges-AGREE, which demands agreement between the consonants located to the onsets of the edgemoost syllables. We consider that this constraint drives the distinctive features of the epenthetic consonant and

the *domain* of epenthesis. The faithfulness constraints MAXIMALITY-IO and DEPENDENCY-IO are also adopted, which require every segment of the input to have a correspondent in the output and to not insert any segments to the output that do not appear in the input respectively (McCarthy & Prince, 1995: 264). The ranking leading to consonant epenthesis in children’s tokens is Onset >> *COMPLEX >> MAX-IO >> OnsetEdges-AGREE >> DEP-IO. Disyllabic words are presented first in the following table (1).

Table 1. Consonant epenthesis in disyllabic words

['ce.i] ⁵	Onset	*COMPLEX	MAX-IO	OnsetEdges-AGREE	DEP-IO
☞ ['ce.ci]					*
['ce.ti]				*!	*
['ce]			*!		
['ce.i]	*!				
[a.'fto]	Onset	*COMPLEX	MAX-IO	OnsetEdges-AGREE	DEP-IO
☞ [ta.'to]					*
[ka.'to]				*!	*
['to]			*!*		
[ta.'fto]		*!		*	*
[a.'fto]	*!	*			

The adult’s outputs ['ce.i] and [a.'fto] are rejected due to an open syllable at initial or final position violating fatally this way the higher ranked constraint. The second one penalizes outputs with clusters ([ta.'fto], [a.'fto]), while the third ensures that epenthesis is preferred over other processes such as deletion in order for CV syllables to arise (['ce], ['to]). OnsetEdges-AGREE disallows epenthesis with partial copy between the edgemost syllables. So, it prohibits outputs as ['ce.ti], [ka.'to], [ta.'fto]. As optimal the tokens ['ce.ci] and [ta.'to] are selected that violate due to insertion the constraint DEP-IO, which is though the lower ranked. The same ranking applies to all the other disyllabic words with or without consonants cluster as well as to trisyllabic words (Table 2).

Table 2. Consonant epenthesis in trisyllabic words

['e.pe.se]	Onset	*COMPLEX	MAX-IO	OnsetEdges-AGREE	DEP-IO
☞ ['se.pe.se]					*
['te.pe.se]				*!	*
['pe.se]			*!	*	
['e.pe.se]	*!				
[pe.'ta.i]	Onset	*COMPLEX	MAX-IO	OnsetEdges-AGREE	DEP-IO
☞ [pe.'ta.pi]					*
[pe.'ta.ti]				*!	*
[pe.'ta]			*!	*	
[pe.'ta.i]	*!				

The only difference traced in trisyllabic words is that the consonant of the intervening syllable does not participate in epenthesis, which is ensured by the OnsetEdges-AGREE constraint and there is no need to modify it or to add a new one.

⁵ The adult’s output is taken as input, namely, the linguistic stimuli that the child hears and receives from its parents.

6. Conclusion

In sum, a constraint-based approach is taken in this study that explains the use of consonant epenthesis in child speech as well as its properties, which can be captured in the same ranking. The results show that it constitutes a simplification strategy which helps children accomplish unmarked CV syllables and, in some cases, to keep the same length of adult's words. The domain of its application seems to be very specific and to support the primacy of the edgemost syllables, while the epenthetic segment bears the same distinctive features of the consonant it copies. The aforementioned features are found in disyllabic words with or without consonant clusters as well as in trisyllabic words. Finally, stress is irrelevant when the process of consonant epenthesis is applied.

Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The author declares no competing interests.

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Appendix

Twin children - Boy

	Adult's Form	Child's Form	Age	Translation
1	'ði.o	ði.ðo	2;4.20	two
2	'ce.i	'ce.ci	2;5.13	(he / she / it) burns
3	a.'ftu	ta.'tu	2;6.12	his
4	a.'fto	ta.'to	2;6.19	this

Twin children - Girl

	Adult's Form	Child's Form	Age	Translation
1	'm̩a.u	'm̩a.mu	2;4.22	meow
2	'i.se	'si.se	2;4.24	(you) are
3	'A.je.lo	'La.je.lo	2;8	Agelo
4	e.'ci.nos	ne.'ci.nos	2;8.14	that
5	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;8.21	(he / she / it) is
6	'e.la.to	'te.la.to	2;8.21	fir
7	'e.la.to	'te.la.to	2;8.21	fir
8	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;8.28	(he / she / it) is
9	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;9.18	(he / she / it) is
10	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;9.18	(he / she / it) is
11	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;9.18	(he / she / it) is
12	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;9.18	(he / she / it) is
13	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;9.18	(he / she / it) is
14	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;10.2	(he / she / it) is
15	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;10.2	(he / she / it) is
16	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;10.2	(he / she / it) is
17	'i.ne	'ni.ne (m)	2;10.2	(he / she / it) is

Non twin children - Boy

	Adult's Form	Child's Form	Age	Translation
1	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;7.7	other
2	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;7.7	other
3	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;7.7	other
4	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;7.7	other
5	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;7.14	other
6	a.'fto	ta.'to	1;7.16	other
7	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;8.6	other
8	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;9.11	other

9	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;9.11	other
10	'a.lo	'la.lo	1;9.16	other
11	'e.xu.ne?	'ne.xu.ne? (m)	2;2.24	(do they) have?

Non twin children - Girl

	Adult's Form	Child's Form	Age	Translation
1	a.'fto	ta.'to	2;3.8	this
2	Ma.'ri.a	Ma.'ri.ma	2;3.20	Maria
3	'e.pe.se	'se.pe.se	2;5.3	(he / she / it) fell
4	'e.pe.se	'se.pe.se	2;5.3	(he / she / it) fell
5	a.'fto	ta.'to	2;5.8	this
6	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;5.22	(he / she / it) is
7	pe.'ta.i	pe.'ta.pi	2;6.8	(he / she / it) flies
8	'i.ne	'ni.ne	2;6.13	(he / she / it) is





“Our Message Can Be Summarized with These Words: Britain First”: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of the Speech of Oswald Mosley’s character from the Peaky Blinders Series

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Received: 11 June 2022 ▪ Revised: 26 July 2022 ▪ Accepted: 31 July 2022

Abstract

Fascism is a radical and polemic political movement that had its origin in Italy after World War I. Thereupon, different versions of this ideology emerged in several European countries such as England, where Oswald Mosley was its precursor and the founder of the British Union of Fascists. Through his powerful speeches, he achieved to persuade the English elite to help him position himself as a leader and establish fascism in Britain. This article addresses a fictitious interpretation of Oswald Mosley giving a political speech in the middle of a sophisticated party. The main intention of this work is to explore the mechanisms of persuasion employed by the fictitious version of Mosley to address his audiences and convince them to accept his message. Some findings reveal that the use of polite expressions as well as remarkable confidence in his speech, helped Mosley gain the sympathy of his listeners.

Keywords: multimodal critical discourse analysis, Oswald Mosley, fascism, mechanisms of persuasion, British Union of Fascists.

1. Introduction

Sociopolitical movements are originated in particular contexts and by social agents performing a role within those environments. Furthermore, politicians making powerful speeches have been a relevant influence for the inspiration of this type of movements. For instance, Hitler had a crucial impact on history to the extent of provoking catastrophic consequences for humanity, and this is partly due to his energetic political speeches. Similar to Hitler, Oswald Mosley, a fascist politician that created the British Union of Fascists in the 1920s, influenced a sector of British society with his speeches.

For this paper, a speech of Oswald Mosley’s character from the Peaky Blinders TV series was thoroughly analyzed. The analysis was conducted based on two research questions.

RQ1: *What specific mechanisms of persuasion did Oswald Mosley utilize to move his audience?*

RQ2: *What are the visual elements that denote Oswald Mosley’s positionality concerning his audience and own speech?*

- Modal verbs of politeness, request, and invitation were mainly used by Mosley to address his sophisticated audience, keep their attention, and gain their trust.
- The use of a considerable majority of declarative sentences in Oswald Mosley's speech made him seem confident and interesting in his message.
- His enthusiasm, the energetic and dynamic use of his body, as well as his facial expressions, gave Mosley an authoritarian and determining aspect that influenced the listeners' acceptance and sympathy towards his speech.

To answer the above research questions, an extract of an episode from the series “Peaky Blinders”¹ was analyzed by using the multimodal critical discourse analysis approach and with the support of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics framework. Moreover, a visual semiotic analysis was employed in order to address the visual elements found in the aforementioned extract.

1.1 *Oswald Mosley*

Oswald Mosley was a politician that began his political career in the Labour Party, however, he was expelled from that organization, and therefore, he founded the British Union of Fascists. McCloud (2006) mentions that “Mosley envisioned a one-party state, a coerced cooperative economic arrangement between Britain and her white dominions, a limit on the power of parliament, a dictatorship in literal fact, and a reduction in the power of Jewry” (p. 691). The above summarizes what Mosley aspired to achieve in Britain in terms of politics. Moreover, and as mentioned above, his ideological and political stance contained a hate message that was openly against different racial and social communities. In addition, his aspirations also implied an extremist and oppressive control of society and the government. According to Worley (2010), “Mosley concluded that only fascism provided the wherewithal to ‘save’ Britain from socio-economic ruin and a possible communist takeover” (p. 68). Based on this, Mosley was apparently concerned about the future of England, however, his concern was mainly related to protecting the England elite from external influences such as American capitalism or Marxism.

1.2 *Defining and characterizing fascism*

Fascism is a political movement that started in Italy after the first world war as a consequence of a social and economic crisis in Europe (Love, 2007). Its existence has not only been limited to the Mediterranean country, but it has also had a presence in several territories during different periods in history. For instance, and as mentioned above, fascism had a strong presence in England during the 1930s with the British Union of Fascists (BUF), a political organization that was led by Oswald Mosley.

Regarding defining this movement, Griffin (1993) mentions that “fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism” (p. 26). In this definition, the term “mythic” makes reference to a utopic and idealistic model for society conceived by fascists, while the word “permutations” implies that each manifestation of fascism in different countries has involved distinct and particular characteristics. Moreover, the term “palingenetic” makes allusion to a concept of rebirth or re-creation, thus giving a new version of nationalism that in this case, is defined as “populist nationalism”.

In relation to the permutating nature of fascism mentioned above, Love (2017) employs the word generic when referring to British fascism. This is because this political

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiSCEnnhBaM>

movement was originally developed and characterized for and according to the Italian sociopolitical context, and therefore, the variations that emerged in other countries are viewed as “generic” since the original model was conceived for Italy. However, and despite its different versions, fascism involves several characteristics that distinguish it from other political movements or ideologies. Regarding this, Richardson (2017) states that:

Fascism is a political movement. The mass, or “popular”, nature of fascism is vital, since it is the mass nature of fascism that distinguishes it from other forms of right-wing, authoritarian rule. The first three ideological components (nationalism; capitalism; anti-Marxism) are features common to many right-wing political ideologies, ranging from the traditional right-wing through radical- and populist- varieties; it is the anti-democratic *weltanschauung* and violent methods which set fascism apart from parliamentary right-wing politics. (p. 455)

Regarding the above, fascist movements have distinguished for striving to gain popularity in society based on an excessive exaltation of nationalism or blaming others for a nation’s decadency or failure. Nevertheless, the characteristic of “popular” in fascism, does not imply that people have the right to exert any type of power, religion, or behavior that goes against this political movement. On the contrary, this social diversity is highly prohibited in fascism as it opposes its authoritarian unique model of how things, and especially people, must be. In relation to this, Renton (2000) mentions that fascism is focused “on a radical elitism, that is on the notion that certain human beings were intrinsically, genetically better than others, who consequently could be treated as if they did not have the right to exist” (p. 77). Therefore, the people in a fascist regime are what they consider the elite among other inferior human beings that do not deserve to be treated as equals.

In order to briefly summarize the above, Richardson (2017) mentions three major characteristics of fascism: “(1) strong-to-extreme nationalism; (2) anti-Marxism, and indeed opposition to any mobilisation of the working class as a class for itself; and (3) support for a capitalist political economy” (p. 448). The above clearly indicates that fascism does not advocate for the lower classes, but only for the elite and the people they consider acceptable. Also, its extreme nationalism usually goes hand-in-hand with issues such as racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism. Hence, “fascist discourse is vitally important to analyse, understand and oppose” (Richardson, 2017, p. 448). This is because its discourse has several negative implications for society due to its discriminatory, repressive and hateful nature. Thus, it is essential to be critical of any manifestation of fascism and oppose it, as mentioned above. Finally, “CDS² should be aimed at analysing and counteracting power abuse, and how this is variously represented, enacted, justified and achieved in and through discourse; fascist political projects (whether ideology, party or movement) epitomize power abuse in extremis” (Richardson, 2017, 451). The importance, therefore, of critically analyzing fascist discourse resides in the danger it represents for social and ethnic communities that have historically been oppressed. Since fascism is openly explicit in its social exclusivity and its discourse has been usually convincing throughout history, its negative repercussions must be evinced through critical discourse analysis in order to advocate for the aforementioned oppressed social classes.

² Critical discourse studies.

1.3 *Mechanisms of persuasion*

Political speech is not a simple act of saying words, communicating ideas, or being polite for the occasion. It goes beyond as it is a complex act of convincing others to accept a message. In regard to this, Voicu (2013) states that:

Speech is the use of a language as well as of other communication resources in a given situation: language, vocabulary, addressing conventions, communication channels, and the identity of the interlocutor. All these, collected, converge on the idea that political speech can be treated as a project of social interaction. Producing a speech, the resources that are in this situation are used, first language, so the action must be directed to the audience and therefore to the situation. (p. 211)

Based on the previous statement, political speech implies interacting with people and using certain resources that include specific use of language, body gestures, visual elements and symbols, and so forth in order to persuade them to consent to an idea or point. Furthermore, involving the audience during a speech and connecting it to a certain situation is a common resource employed by politicians so that the public generates a feeling of interest and relevancy on the addressed issue. Expanding on the verbal and visual relationship between a speaker and their audience during a speech, Voicu (2013) declares that:

The act of communication is always an attempt to influence the other. To the extent that any exchange of communication and especially the political one stakes bears and to the extent that it represents the joint construction of a reality, this exchange is attempted as an alienation of one from the other and / or vice versa, namely the attempt to impose a possible world that would provide one or the other the control over the stakes. (p. 210)

The quote stated above provides us with remarkable elements such as “an attempt to influence the other”, “the joint construction of a reality”, “an alienation of one from the other” and “the attempt to impose a possible world” that can be present in many political speeches. In a few words, influence, construction of reality, alienation, and imposition are aspects that are widely common in convincing political speeches according to Voicu (2013). Regarding influence, Voicu (2013) adds that it “is a human resource and skill as it is to motivate the other, i.e. to make him/her able to think or act in the desired direction” (p. 210), and that is one of the main goals of politicians when giving a speech: leading people to a specific ideological target. The case of fascist speakers is not different as they seek to convince a specific audience to accept their discourse by employing influential resources and by implicitly imposing ideas and conceptions of how the world should be.

Thus, in order to influence an audience or impose an idea or message, politicians employ different mechanisms of persuasion to achieve their purpose and receive a positive reaction from the public. Therefore, these mechanisms are essential in political speeches. Regarding persuasion, Macpherson (2018) mentions the following:

The starting-point of all persuasion, of ourselves or others, is a belief or wish. Holding a certain belief, or desiring that a certain course of action shall be pursued, we set out to justify our belief and the conduct that it implies. Thus, before he begins to speak, the orator whose aim is persuasion has already present in his mind a belief or wish, fully formed, from which all his arguments and appeals flow; and the effectiveness of his persuasion will be proportionate to the clearness and fulness with which the belief has been defined, and the degree of conviction with which it is held. (p. 12).

In regard to the above, persuasion starts with a belief or a wish that an orator aims to share with an audience with the purpose of convincing it to agree with it. The success in the persuasion of a message depends on how it is transmitted. For instance, Macpherson mentions

that the degree of conviction and the clearness and fulness to express a belief has a considerable impact on the extent to which an audience is persuaded. Therefore, in this analysis, we can see below that Mosley achieved to persuade the majority of his audience as he was firmly convinced and confident about his beliefs and wishes regarding the acceptance of fascism in England.

In relation to the clearness, fulness, and conviction mentioned by Macpherson (2018), Voicu (2013) adds that “the more quality of the arguments contained in the message generates more favorable (positive) ideas in the audience, the more the persuasion effect increases and the attitudinal and behavioral exchanges will be higher” (p. 215). Thus, fascist politicians have elaborated well-structured arguments that helped them achieve their purpose of persuading people to accept their beliefs and wishes.

In a study conducted by Prihandari and Yohannes (2021), they found two persuasive strategies utilized by the Japanese military regime during World War II to inspire soldiers and make them feel more confident: the use of request and invitation forms. Likewise, these strategies were employed hand-in-hand with exalting adjectives to refer to the soldiers and to the wish that the regime was expecting to achieve in war. These mechanisms of persuasion resulted in more committed and motivated soldiers that were also firmly convinced of the regime's beliefs and wish.

Prihandari and Yohannes (2021) also address the relationship between power and language, and how the latter is used to achieve and reflect the former. Therefore, “language and power is a complementary unit. When a person has power, the language he uses will be referred to, both his choice of words and his communication style either verbally or non-verbally” (p. 588). In the video analyzed for this article, we can see that the character of Oswald Mosley does not only employ words to evince his positionality of power, but also his body by moving energetically his hands and showing imposing facial expressions. Therefore, verbal and non-verbal communication has been key in fascist speeches so as to reflect their power and also, to firmly persuade their audience.

2. Method

2.1 *Multimodal discourse analysis*

According to O'Halloran (2011), multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) “is an emerging paradigm in discourse studies which extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound” (p.1). Therefore, I decided to employ MDA as an approach for this work since it does not only involve language but elements such as the ones mentioned above. Furthermore, I must remark that the material utilized for this paper is a video about an interpretation of Oswald Mosley giving a political speech. Thus, MDA was the most appropriate choice to carry out the analysis as the material contains verbal and visual elements that are useful for the purposes of this paper.

In addition to what the above approach consists of, and based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2001, as cited in Machin, 2013), MDA addresses “texts which linguists study create meanings not only through language but also through visual features and elements such as images, colour, the layout of pages, even though material objects and architecture” (p. 347). The previous statement refers to the analysis of written texts, however, it can also be related to the analysis of materials such as videos or images which, as mentioned above, contain more than words and which have plenty of meaning.

2.2 Systemic functional linguistics

In order to complement and assist the multimodal critical discourse analysis, I employed Halliday’s (1978) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach. This is because “explicit CDA needs a solid ‘linguistic’ basis, where ‘linguistic’ is understood in a broad ‘structural-functional’ sense. [...] Systemic Functional Linguistics plays a crucial role in critical discourse study” (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018, p. 16). Hence, this linguistic approach helped me to examine the linguistic features employed by Mosley in his speech with the purpose of interpreting their actual connotation beyond the explicit superficial message he communicates to his audience. In addition, Almurashi (2016) mentions that:

SFL, with regards to data, does not tackle the manner of language representation or process in the human brain, but would rather try to see discourses produced in the form of written or oral language and what is contained in the texts that are produced. (p. 71)

Based on the above, SFL was not used in this analysis to explore how language is structured per se in Mosley’s speech, but to thoroughly examine what the language employed is implicitly communicating between the lines.

2.3 Visual Semiotic Analysis

As mentioned above, the analysis conducted regarding Mosley’s speech was not limited to examining the use of verbal language, but it also included visual elements that can be perceived in the video. This inclusion was considered since “language and visual communication both realize the same more fundamental and far-reaching systems of meaning that constitute our cultures, but that each does so by means of its own specific forms, and independently” (Machin, D., & Van Leeuwen, T., 2007, p. 17). Thus, for this paper, I took into consideration several visual elements to analyze as they transmit a specific message that verbal language does not communicate by itself.

3. Analysis and discussion

Table 1. Description of the multimodal discourse and its social context

Field	A political speech introducing the foundation of a new political party to members of high society in the middle of a sophisticated party.
Tenor	Speaker: Oswald Mosley. Audience: Members of high society, the host’s family, musicians, and a dance company.
Mode	Spoken and visual elements are part of the communication. Use of persuasive language during the interaction between Oswald Mosley and the audience.

3.1 Interpersonal function

Interpersonal function is the second level of Halliday’s (2003) framework and it is “concerned with the interaction between speaker(s) and addressee(s)” (Almurashi, 2016, p. 73). Since this MCDA seeks to analyze the communication between Oswald Mosley and his audience, as well as the elements that have an influence on them, I decided to focus this study on the aforementioned function. In addition, Almurashi (2016) also mentions that this level “is used to

establish the speaker’s role in the speech situation and relationship with others” (p. 73). Thus, it allowed me to clarify Oswald Mosley’s positionality towards his spectators and his own speech.

3.1.1 Mood analysis

Table 2. Mood types and their repetitions

Mood type	Number of sentences
Declarative	28
Interrogative	0
Imperative	6

As shown in the previous table, a considerable majority of sentences employed by Oswald Mosley are declarative, which indicates that his speech is mainly constructed by affirmative statements, “facts”, arguments, and/or beliefs. This also reflects a strong political stance and confidence in what he declares. Furthermore, Mosley utilizes imperative sentences in his speech that denote commandment, but also request and invitation to follow his steps and accept his message.

3.1.2 Modality analysis

Table 3. Modal verbs and their repetitions

Type	Modal verbs	Number of repetitions
Certainty	Must, Will	13
Permission Request Politeness	Can, Could, Will, Would, May	5
Ability	Can, Could, Be able to	1
Inability	Can’t, Couldn’t	1
Obligation	Must, Have to, Should	1

Table 3. shows us the character of Oswald Mosley’s speech and how he delivers his message to his audience. As seen above, and in relation to the majority of declarative sentences employed by him, Mosley’s speech is full of confidence as he shows to be highly certain about the message he is expressing. This serves as a mechanism of persuasion since his audience perceives him as someone wise and objective. Moreover, he used modal verbs that implied politeness in the way he addresses his audience, and that helped him to transmit more effectively his message with acceptance. Furthermore, these modal verbs are also employed to politely invite and request the sophisticated audience to agree with him. To conclude, certainty and politeness functioned as mechanisms of persuasion to move and convince Mosley’s listeners.

Table 4. Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns		Number of repetitions
First person	I	16
	We	1
Second person	You	2
Third person	She	0
	He	1
	It	5
	They	5

In regard to Table 4., we can see that the pronoun “I” has a significant presence in Oswald Mosley’s speech. This overuse and reference to himself denote Mosley's positionality of

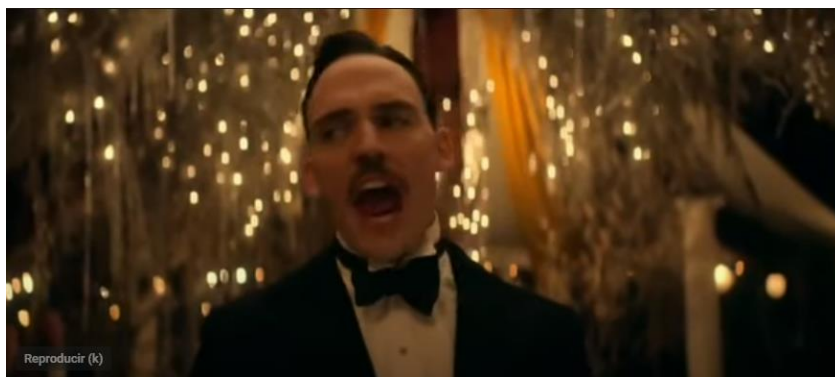
him as a political leader and even as a dictator. This is related to one of the characteristics of fascism, which is the absolute centralization of power and the exclusion of others in governmental matters. Also, the excessive use of the pronoun mentioned above suggests that he is above everyone, thus showing the relation of power between him and his audience.

3.2 Visual semiotic analysis of images from the video



Images 1 & 2. A sophisticated and attentive audience

In images 1 & 2, we can see that Oswald Mosley’s speech takes place on a dais, a platform that can potentially appeal to an audience’s attention and that might implicitly denote superiority and relevance in relation to a speaker giving a speech there. We must also notice that the audience is composed of the host’s family and sophisticated people who are members of high society as well as politicians. Therefore, Mosley is elegantly dressed and he addresses his listeners with politeness in order to persuade them and keep their attention positively.





Images 3 & 4. Oswald Mosley's gestures and enthusiasm

As for images 3 & 4, some remarkable aspects that served as mechanism of persuasion for Oswald Mosley are his gestures and enthusiasm to give his speech. For instance, he energetically moves his hands, looks firmly at his audience, and widely opens his mouth. The use of these physical resources helped him transmit confidence, authority, and conviction. Thus, the audience trusts and agrees with Mosley's words due to the strong stance and lack of hesitation shown by him.



Images 5 & 6. Applauses and sympathy for Oswald Mosley's speech

The majority of the audience, as seen in Images 5 & 6, manifest a clear sympathy for Oswald's speech and they even applaud him more and more as he develops his oral performance. This positive reaction can be due to the elements mentioned above such as the confidence, the enthusiasm, or the politeness expressed by Mosley in his speech. This is also a proof that the mechanisms of persuasion employed in this case were highly effective to the extent of moving an audience that was not expecting a speech.



Images 7 & 8. Rejection towards Oswald Mosley’s speech

On the other hand, Images 7 & 8 show that some members of the audience, specifically the host and his family, reject Oswald Mosley’s speech as they exhibit body posture that reflects displeasure and incredulity. This is due to the implicit hate message contained in Mosley’s speech towards several ethnic and political communities and how this message pertains to the host's family.

4. Critical discourse analysis of utterances from the video

Table 5.

Utterance	Analysis
This has been a wonderful evening. And not only for the music and the dancing. It has also been about us, the people gathered here. English people in the very heart of England.	Mosley starts his speech by addressing the whole audience and by using charming words to refer to them and the party. This allows him to catch the public's attention and gain their confidence and sympathy. Moreover, remarking belonging to the country of England denotes nationalism, exclusivity, and pride, which helps to move his audience as well.
There are no people I would rather be among, no place I would rather be and no time I would rather be alive, because ever since the terrible events of October, when the money markets betrayed us all... I have known that change is coming.	Here, Mosley shows to be empathetic about a common tragedy and expresses belonging to the people of England in order to gain their confidence and acceptance. His message promotes resentment and separation between the English people and other individuals.
In the lives of great nations... there are moments of destiny... which have swept aside small men of convention and discovered men of the moment.	The use of words such as “great nations” and “men of the moment” has a positive influence on most of the audience since they are used to refer to them.
I want to tell you good folk first... that with the dawn of a new decade... I will be setting a new course, setting up a new political movement here in the very heart of England.	The poetic tone in his message in addition to the positive adjectives employed to refer to the audience, helps Mosley inspire his public and position himself as a savior and leader for them.

The men of money, the capitalists in New York, the Jews... the money-power, they... they run an international system in which the infinite mobility of money, its capacity to create financial chaos and panic, can bring down any government that dares for one moment to oppose it.	Once Mosley politely flattered his audience and proved to be of reliance for them, he was able to explicitly name enemies and guilty parties of England's decadence. In this part of his speech, it was easy for him to express his hate speech since he had already inspired his listeners with mechanisms of persuasion such as the use of polite words and his enthusiasm.
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5. Conclusion

In this paper, I explored the mechanisms of persuasion employed by Oswald Mosley and his positionality with regard to his audience during a political speech given in the middle of a sophisticated party. I must remark that this work is based on a popular TV series called 'Peaky Blinders', and therefore, the words and visual elements analyzed are fictitious. Nevertheless, the character addressed for this analysis is a faithful representation of the aforementioned fascist politician, who had a considerable presence during the 30s in the political environment of England. To achieve the objectives of this study, I employed a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach along with Halliday's (1978) systemic functional linguistics. These two approaches helped me to analyze critically and thoroughly the language employed by Mosley and the actual meaning conveyed in his speech. In addition, I carried out a visual semiotic analysis to address some visual elements of the video that contained elements that were worth interpreting for this work. Finally, the findings reveal that Mosley employed a wide range of resources to persuade his audience such as the use of polite words to address his public, remarkable confidence in his speech, the use of request and invitation forms, a clear definition of his beliefs and wishes, a strong and authoritarian positionality expressed with gestures and body movements, and so forth. These mechanisms helped him to introduce and develop his message with his audience despite the hateful and extreme connotations it contained. Hence, critical discourse analysis is useful to identify the real and hidden message of political speech so as to reveal its authentic intention and meaning.

Acknowledgements

I would especially like to extend my gratitude to Professor Dr. Alejandra Núñez Asomoza from the University of Guanajuato, for being always attentive, supportive, and helpful in the preparation of this article. Likewise, I thank CONACyT for financing my postgraduate degree and helping me develop my professional career.

The author declares no competing interests.

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“A Dense and Maddening Dream”: Horror and Domesticity in the Stories of Amparo Davila

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Received: 7 June 2022 ▪ Revised: 17 July 2022 ▪ Accepted: 31 July 2022

Abstract

Amparo Dávila is considered one of the most prolific Mexican horror writers of the 20th century. Her literary techniques have been compared to some of the most famous horror writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Franz Kafka. However, her writing is indicative of further social orders present in Mexican culture and other spaces. In this study, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is implemented as an approach to analyze how horror in two short stories is used to reflect Mexican and American social issues. The findings suggest that there is a critique on the social order in societies by transforming these encounters into horrifying experiences.

Keywords: discourse analysis, domesticity, femininity, horror, literature.

1. Introduction

Amparo Dávila is a Mexican horror writer who was born in Pinos, Zacatecas in 1928. She was an avid reader due to her father's extensive library. At the age of seven, she moved with her family to San Luis Potosí. Dávila's entry into the literary world began when she published two poetry books in 1950 and 1954 (Schneider, 1991). She won the coveted literary award Xavier Villaurrutia in 1977 (Pitol, 1996). Amparo Dávila continued to be involved in the academic and literary world until her death in 2020.

Dávila is an essential figure in Mexican literature (Batis, 1964). This is because she is considered to be one of the most original horror writers in the literary tradition (Schneider, 1991). Additionally, she is one of the few female writers that was considered prolific during her time (Pitol, 1996). She is a writer from the 20th century whose work is mainly focused on short stories. There has been much analysis regarding her work through a feminist lens (Bianchini, 2009; Borgia, 2009; Martinez, 2008). Seminal work conducted by Borgia (2009) explores the use of ghosts and supernatural beings to critique and subvert gender roles. Furthermore, Pitol (1996) discusses how her prose intersects and plays with the genre of fantastic literature. In addition, critics discuss the marvel of her universe of unexpected situations that stem from reality but become sinister and inhabitable (Enríquez, 2022; Pitol, 1996). Although Dávila did not write extensively, she continues to be considered one of the finest figures that Mexican literature has to offer (Enríquez, 2022; Pitol, 1996; Schneider, 1991).

In this paper, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is employed to explore the horror elements Dávila uses to critique aspects of Mexican society that extend to other spaces. In order

to conduct the analysis, I will first provide a literature review of key concepts such as *machismo*, prevailing gender roles, and feminism. Then, I present the methodology and research questions along with an overview of CDA. Furthermore, I will describe the procedure followed for this analysis. Next, a linguistic analysis of two short stories will be carried out to elucidate social orders of Mexican society and gender roles. Finally, a conclusion on the topic will be offered.

2. Literature review

In this section, the main concepts which integrate the theoretical framework of this paper will be discussed: Mexican *machismo* or chauvinism, Mexican gender roles, and feminism and Amparo Dávila.

2.1 Mexican *machismo*

The discussion of the term *machismo* is considered complex and dynamic; furthermore, its definition is the subject of much controversy and ambiguity (Arciniega et al., 2008). However, a basic definition of the term may still be provided for the purposes of this paper. In general, the concept is associated with negative sexist behaviors of men and hypermasculinity (Anders, 1993; Ingoldsby, 1991). Some of the characteristics of *machismo* include negative aspects such as violent, sexualized behaviors, and drinking problems (Alaniz, 1996; Beaver et al., 1992; Neff et al., 1991). In Mexican or Latino culture, *machismo* involves the domination of men over women; women are regarded by men in traditional roles such as rearing children and serving men (Arciniega et al., 2008). Furthermore, *machismo* is strongly associated with aggressive and violent manners.

This paper will focus on the term as considered in the mid-20th century when the stories were written and take place. It is in this context where *machismo* implies the following characteristics and understanding of society according to Daros (2014):

- a. A social position of physical and psychological superiority of men over women;
- b. as complement of the previous point, a de-evaluative attitude towards women's capacities; and, in consequence,
- c. a discriminatory attitude towards women in the social, work, and legal field. In this way, women occupy a subordinate role and serves domestic and sexual needs.¹

In other words, a society where *machismo* is deeply ingrained depends on the subservience of women in favor of men. Although the 20th century signals the beginning of female autonomy and subversion of gender roles, domestic work continues to be assigned to women (Daros, 2014). Furthermore, Daros (2014) explains that the position of the woman in the household continues, and they must carry the majority of the household tasks. These traditional expectations within the home also imply motherhood and its responsibilities. While some women resign themselves to uptake this, others consider this unpleasant and find that the position of their male partners is enviable and straightforward in comparison to their own (Daros, 2014).

The manner in which Mexican *machismo* enables men's violent and aggressive behaviors further perpetuates traditional gender norms in Mexican society. In addition, this also serves to subjugate and oppress women into subservient positions in favor of men. It may be said that *machismo* validates the patriarchal standards to which Mexican society subscribes to.

¹ Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

2.2 Mexican gender roles and feminism

Arellano (2003) clarifies the differences between sex and gender. According to this author, sex refers to a biological category and gender to a social construction that differentiates between men and women. Furthermore, these gender differences include expectations and values, power differences, and subordination to one gender from another.

In Mexican society, stereotypes about men and women are deeply rooted in the culture; stereotypes refer to a cluster of beliefs about characteristics such as femininity for women and masculinity for men (Montes de Oca et al., 2013). According to Magally (2011), these stereotypes are perpetuated until they become gender roles. In Mexico, researchers have concluded that the stereotypes and gender roles are ingrained into the culture and society (Chia et al., 1994; Gibbons et al., 1991; Lara-Cantu, 1989). Lara-Cantu (1989) explains the following common gender roles and traditions in Mexican culture: (1) male-to-male relationships are characterized by *machismo* in the form of extreme aggressiveness; (2) male-to-female relationships with *machismo* characteristics such as sexual aggression and contempt; (3) Mexican women possess dependent and submissive traits.

Regarding this last role, Lara-Cantu (1989) describes the female gender role as self-sacrificing because as mothers, they are expected to make sacrifices for their family. Some of these sacrifices include giving up their education, careers, and a social life in favor of their family and children (Martin, 1989). Contrastingly, men and fathers are expected to economically provide for the family, but they are allowed to play a minimal role in making the family function (Schmitz & Diefenthaler, 1989). In other words, women are expected to bear children and sacrifice their lives and goals to focus on their children and husband. However, men are given economic power and responsibilities that extend only to economic sustenance; their goals, education, and social life do not suffer in the same manner.

Nevertheless, the Mexican feminist movement emerged in the 1970's and began to question the gender roles described above (Lugo, 1985; Marcos, 1999; Morgan, 1985). According to Marcos (1999), this movement reflected the demands of the western waves of feminism. Mexican feminism aimed to unmask the sexist double standards in terms of sexuality, requesting abortion rights, and challenging traditional gender norms such as a woman's identity characterized by marriage and a maternal role (Marcos, 1999). In the following section, feminism will be approached from the context of Dávila's work.

2.3 Feminism and Amparo Dávila: The female gothic

Gothic as a literary term has existed since the 18th century. It is widely accepted that "The Castle of Otranto" (1764) was the first classic gothic novel. Gothic initially referred to the medieval world and dark passions in juxtaposition with the gothic castle; however, as Childs and Fowler (2006) explain, this definition had shifted to the implication of evil forces and ghostly apparitions by the end of the 18th century. Furthermore, Childs and Fowler (2006) discuss the basic characteristics of a gothic tale: a setting that consists of castles, monasteries, or ruined homes; characters that embody good and evil; sanity and chastity are threatened; the suggestion that irrational and evil forces threaten individual integrity and social order.

In addition to this initial term, other ramifications of gothic literature have appeared since its origin in the 18th century. The concept of the female gothic first appeared in 1976 in the work of Ellen Moers titled "Literary Women". Moers defined the term as literary work written by women since the 18th century in the gothic tradition. According to Williams (1995), there is a lack of consensus about the differences between female and male gothic; it is unclear if the differences lie in techniques, plot, uses of paranormal elements, etc. Amparo Davila, the author of the stories analyzed in this paper, is considered to follow the tradition of the female gothic in the 20th century;

in her work, it is customary for female characters to be trapped in domestic spaces in a wide variety of contexts such as rural and cosmopolitan (Horner & Zlosnik, 1998).

Wisker (2004) suggests that literary work in the female gothic uses defamiliarization of roles and expectations of female lives as a technique. Defamiliarization occupies a significant role in gothic literature. This term is known in literary criticism as ominous or *unheimlich*. The term was first explored in literary criticism by Sigmund Freud in 1919. According to Freud, that which is ominous has two faces: the first is that which is familiar and the second is secret and hidden. In other words, it is a paradox of something which was considered known but becomes unfamiliar and threatening; an experience of *déjà vu* is often cited as an example of something ominous or *unheimlich* (Errazuriz, 2001). Therefore, the female gothic is characterized by the approach of topics and themes that are considered for women such as domesticity, motherhood, etc. However, these female roles and expectations are defamiliarized to give an ominous effect and explore how horror is intrinsic in these roles.

Frouman-Smith (1989) cites Amparo Dávila as a representative of the gothic literary tradition. In her seminal work on Dávila, Frouman-Smith explains that the female characters in these stories are trapped in gender roles imposed by a patriarchal system. Therefore, the space and gender norms the characters confined in also function as a horror element in the gothic style of Amparo Dávila.

3. Methodology

In this section, the methodology for analysis of these texts will be described. First, the research questions for undertaking this analysis will be explained. A CDA approach was undertaken to conduct this analysis. In specific terms, the two short stories were analyzed using CDA and exegetical interpretation which is discussed below in procedure.

3.1 *Research questions*

The objective for this analysis is to depict the horror elements that exist in two short stories by Amparo Dávila and how these reflect traditional gender roles in society. Therefore, the research questions for this paper are the following:

1. What are the horror elements related to traditional gender roles in Amparo Dávila's short stories?
2. What do these elements reflect about Mexican and American societies in the 20th century?

I now approach the analysis that will be conducted out by employing CDA which will be further explained below.

3.2 *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), CDA is a cross-discipline which emerged in the early 1990's through the work of scholars such as van Leeuwen, Kress, van Dijk, and Fairclough. Additionally, critical discourse analysis is regarded as an approach with an interdisciplinary nature (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018; Bloor & Bloor, 2007). This implies that this approach may be used in a variety of areas and fields including literary analysis.

Van Dijk (2003) explains that CDA is characterized by several components instead of subscribing to a specific definition. Some of these characteristics are: CDA focuses on social issues,

power relations are found in discourse, discourse forms society and culture, discourse does ideological work, discourse is found in history, the intersection between texts and society are mediated, discourse analysis is interpretative, and discourse is social action (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2003). Therefore, work in this area will approach notions such as “power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social structure, and social order, besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions” (p. 354). In this analysis, the topics to be discussed will be power, gender, and social order. In the following section, the analytical procedure will be explained.

3.2.1 Procedure

The procedure for the analysis of these short stories was carried out through exegesis. This term refers to “a critical explanation of a text” (Krauth, 2002). This concept originally referred to critical interpretation of religious texts but has since been extended to literary work. Through exegesis, salient themes and elements in these two stories were identified and interpreted according to a CDA framework. In other words, the literary topics and details were critically deciphered in order to relate them to social aspects of Mexican gender norms, and their reproduction and critique of social orders in Mexico.

4. Analysis and discussion of results

4.1 *El huésped* (1959)²

This story was published in *Tiempo destrozado* in 1959. In this book, an unnamed woman tells the story of a mysterious houseguest her husband invites into their home. Ironically, the husband is never around the guest because he works long hours. The head of the household is left alone with her young children, the maid, and her young child. This guest is described by the narrator as sinister, with big yellow eyes and no eyelids. This being invades and threatens their lives while the husband accuses the wife of being hysterical and delusional because she fears his guest. Finally, she and the maid decide to take matters into their own hands when the guest attacks one of the children. They devise a plan which will deprive the being of air, light, and sustenance; it is this plan that finally kills him and frees them from his presence.

4.2 *Arthur Smith* (1961)³

Arthur Smith is a short story published in the book *Música concreta* in 1961. This narration tells the tale of Mrs. Smith who becomes worried when her husband, Arthur Smith, breaks his daily routine by refusing to drink coffee and read *The Financial Times*. While he leaves for work, Mrs. Smith dedicates herself to domestic life including caring for the children, grocery shopping, and leisurely activities. During her day, she continues to reflect on the oddity of her husband deviating from his routines. However, before dinner, she discovers that her husband has been playing marbles all day in the backyard with the children. Upon this discovery, she despairingly realizes that she now must care for three children instead of two because Arthur Smith appears to have horrifyingly reverted to a mental childlike state. The context of this story is unclear as are her reasons for writing it. It is clear that the characters are not Mexican due to their

² The complete short story may be found at the following link:

<http://www.materialdelectura.unam.mx/images/stories/pdf5/amparo-davila-81.pdf>.

³ The complete short story may be found at the following link:

<https://www.revistadeluniversidad.mx/download/6042a11f-9534-4697-84bc-f5a9d1996b53?filename=arthur-smith>.

names. Furthermore, this story describes spaces which at the time were more common to American culture such as the office as a workspace and the theater as entertainment. However, it is clear that these gender roles expand to contexts and societies outside of Mexican culture. The use of a seemingly American family is commentary on the social order which is reproduced in other countries.

4.3 *Self-sacrificing women*

In both of these stories, the traditional norm of self-sacrificing women in society can be observed. In *Arthur Smith*, Mrs. Smith spends the entirety of her day dedicated to domestic affairs such as childcare, housework, grocery shopping and cooking. While Arthur leaves early to fulfill his role as the sole economic provider of the home, she is required to devote her entire day to her family. A scene in this story additionally reflects the gender norm of the sacrifice a woman must commit in order to submit to domestic affairs. In this scene, Mrs. Smith goes grocery shopping and encounters several of her housewife friends. They gossip and discuss how Emily, a friend, is divorcing: “Although it could not be denied that Emily at times would neglect the house and did not serve Harry very well. And some days, when he arrived from the office, there was no food and Emily was at the Warren’s playing poker”⁴ (p. 91).

The excerpt above presents a reflection of the expectations the social order has of women whereas a man may have careers and social lives while women are subservient and their role is only within the home (Lara-Cantu, 1989; Schmitz & Diefenthaler, 1989). Following this theme, *El huésped* also exemplifies this norm of the woman sacrificing her social life in favor of her husband and children.

In *El huésped*, it is riveting to note the husband is only home when he brings this strange guest into the house. He is said to be away at work or on business trips: “he arrived really late. He once said he had a lot of work. I think that other things kept him too...”⁵ (p. 39). Again, the husband is free to pursue a career and travel, while the wife spends her day in the house. Additionally, while she has a maid, the wife describes a series of chores during the day that she must carry out to ensure the house is in order.

It is improbable that Dávila is attempting to keep the social order in place. As Frouman-Smith has clarified, the women in her stories are trapped not in a physical space but in their gender roles. Furthermore, this entrapment functions as a horror element where the protagonists cannot escape from the norms imposed upon them by the patriarchal system. In the next section, the entrapment of a physical space will be approached.

4.4 *Trapped domesticity*

Besides the entrapment in patriarchal gender norms, the women in these two stories are trapped in physical spaces that are related to domesticity. In *Arthur Smith*, Mrs. Smith appears to leave her home to continue focusing on tasks related to the house. While she gossips with her friends at the supermarket, she mentions one instance where she has left the house with her husband to see a play. This is told in an almost secretive manner because it seems the theater piece was somewhat daring. After this, she recalls that that weekend at mass, the reverend appeared to direct his sermon to them when he warned against “dangerous and censurable spectacles” (p. 92). This also reflects the role the church plays in maintaining social orders.

⁴ Excerpt translated by author, original in Spanish.

⁵ Original in Spanish.

As mentioned in the literature review, Dávila's horror technique does not only give a sense of despair by physically trapping her protagonists, but also serves as a critique of the role women serve. By highlighting the condition of Mrs. Smith, she discusses the sinister aspects of obligatorily existing in one physical space for a lifetime.

El huésped reveals an analogous situation for the unknown protagonist; in the opening lines, she describes her life as follows: "We had been married for almost three years, we had two children and I was unhappy. We lived in a small town, uncommunicated and distant from the city. A town that was almost dead or on the brink of disappearing" (p. 37). The protagonist lives uncommunicated from a larger city in a depressing town. Furthermore, during the entire story, she does not leave the house because of her domestic obligations and because of the strange houseguest her husband has invited into her home. Additionally, she is trapped in this domestic space which becomes torturous when she must serve this being as well. Besides navigating her ordinary chores, she must now feed and serve this hostile presence in her home.

Once again, Dávila uses the *unheimlich* or defamiliarization technique to give a sinister effect and explore how horror is intrinsic in the gender role the protagonist of *El huésped* must continue to represent. Part of the terror in this story is that she is trapped in a domestic environment where she is expected to serve her home. In addition, her role as a housewife and mother must remain stable even in the face of a sinister and threatening being. This is reflective of gender roles in Mexican society where the woman must remain in the home and her identity continues to be that of a homemaker regardless of her circumstances (Martin, 1989).

However, it may be argued that the most vital enactor of these gender roles described above is the patriarchal society that is deeply rooted in Mexico. In the following section, *machismo* and the looming threat of the male presence is analyzed in these two stories.

4.5 *The horrifying male presence: Machismo*

As previously mentioned, the term *machismo* implies the domination men have over women. Because of *machismo*, women are seen by men as individuals who live to serve men and have children (Arciniega et al., 2008). In *Arthur Smith*, Mr. Smith has only financial responsibilities in the household. The role of Mrs. Smith is to maintain the entire functioning of the family. However, he is not her equal, as she must also take care of him as she does for her children. In the story, it is explained that she cooks and feeds her children as well as her husband. This seemingly normal patriarchal expectation becomes sinister when she makes the terrifying discover that her husband is now a child:

Without saying another word, because of the lump in her throat, the woman turned and walked to the house, completely destroyed, as if she had suddenly fallen into a dense and maddening dream, which dulled her reason and shook her soul. She could not think of anything or any explanation and only wished ardently to wake from that cruel nightmare she was trapped in. The children and Arthur Smith entered the kitchen behind her and sat at the table.

"I don't have any food," Arthur Smith lamented when he saw only two sets of cutleries, "I haven't been served my food," he repeated desolately, and thick tears rolled down his cheeks. Mrs. Smith leaned on the stove to keep her balance. She felt, at moments, that she would collapse, that everything spun around her, and that enormous pain ripped through her. A drowned sob shook her body. She knew she had lost Arthur Smith, that in front of her, seated at the table, there were three children. (p. 94)

The presence of Arthur Smith is equated with that of a child in an eerie manner. Since Arthur Smith is served by Mrs. Smith as one of her children, he mentally becomes a real child. The

husband, which was once a familiar element of Mrs. Smith’s life, is defamiliarized to emphasize the parts each of them play in the social order. Mrs. Smith assembles the family and ensures its function, while Arthur’s role is that of a helpless child. Once again, Dávila uses horror elements to expose the power relations and differences between men and women in Mexican society. Additionally, this reflects how Mexico is widely considered to be sexist and patriarchal while the same impositions occur in American society. This is important to note due to the perceptions Western society has about Mexico while their societies and culture perpetuate the same social orders.

In *El huésped*, a comparable technique is used to discuss patriarchal impositions on women. First, it is necessary to intervene and explain that there is much discussion over what the houseguest actually is. There is no consensus as to what this eerie figure represents in this story. However, using CDA, it may be interpreted that this guest represents a *machista* masculine presence in the home. To make this interpretation, it is useful to consider that the protagonist of this story describes that she was in an unhappy marriage and “represented something as a piece of furniture for her husband, that you become accustomed to seeing in a determined space, but that does not cause the least impression”⁶ (p. 37).

She has an unhappy marriage where her husband does not care about her or the home. Additionally, it is compelling to note that the husband brings this presence into the house where she and the maid reside with the children. Furthermore, she explains that while she thought of leaving the house, she had no money or means of communicating with any loved ones. Once again, the discourse is present and the economic power men have over women in Mexican society may be observed in this story. Additionally, this houseguest leaves the maid alone but stalks the wife and terrorizes her almost exclusively. This may be representative of the implied power her husband and his patriarchal presence has over her even in his absence. This being has complete power over her life and has trapped her within the home; an interpretation may be given based on these elements and conclude that Dávila attempts to use horror to reflect the innate horror in the patriarchal system and imposition of gender roles.

5. Conclusions

The results of this analysis conclude that the horror elements in Dávila’s short stories are reflective of the oppressive patriarchal societies they are set in. Furthermore, these reproduce aspects such as the sacrifices women must make to provide for their families, the entrapment that domesticity represents, and the horrifying implications the male presence has for women in these societies. Furthermore, it may be concluded that the author offers a critique on the social order in American and Mexican society alike by transforming these experiences into terrifying otherworldly encounters.

In conclusion, CDA is a useful tool when paired with exegesis in order to analyze literary texts and elucidate situations of power and oppression. In this instance, it may be said that Amparo Dávila uses horror elements, techniques, and themes to portray the gender roles and oppression that women must face in Mexican society. Furthermore, these roles and oppressive societal orders are furthered by the patriarchal and sexist nature of Mexican culture. The approach the author gives to these issues may be a feminist critique of the inner workings of what it means to be a woman in Mexico and the intrinsic horror found in this state of being.

⁶ Original in Spanish.

Acknowledgements

I extend my thanks to Dr. Alejandra Nuñez Asomoza for her support.

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The author declares no competing interests.

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