
Constructing Perceptions of Sexual Orientation: A Corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis of Transitivity in the Irish Press¹

Leanne Bartley and Encarnación Hidalgo-Tenorio
Universidad de Granada, Spain

Copyright (c) 2015 by Leanne Bartley and Encarnación Hidalgo-Tenorio. This text may be archived and redistributed both in electronic form and in hard copy, provided that the author and journal are properly cited and no fee is charged for access.

Abstract. During the Celtic Tiger period, Ireland grows faster than the Eurozone only to later suffer the harsh impact of the recession. This coincides with increased in-group essentialism leading to prejudice against minorities (Zagefka et al. 2013). Whilst extremist politicians justify anti-immigration beliefs, racism becomes a problem in Ireland. Attacks on certain groups rise dramatically: Women, Travellers, Africans or homosexuals endure verbal and physical mistreatment. Financial crises cause social and discursive marginalisation (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008), and intolerance inevitably contributes to discriminatory views underpinning old-fashioned values. In such a context, we argue that there will be a tendency to nurse the demonisation of the Other (Said 1978), and that the ideological bent of the media sources (see Fowler 1991, Rosen 1999, Barnhurst 2005, van Dijk 2006) will have some impact on how otherness is portrayed. The latter justifies an analysis of how bias fostering exclusion is reinforced in the public domain (Wodak and Chilton 2005). Given Irish gays' new status following the controversy around same-sex marriage, here we examine newspaper articles to observe the discourse construction of homosexuality (Collier 1995, Stychin 1995, Naidoo 1997, McGhee 2001, Baker 2005), and detect any instances of homophobia. To do so, a corpus-based critical discourse analysis is conducted with our focus on the notion of transitivity (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) as a means to reveal people's perspectives on the topic at hand.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Experiential Metafunction, System of Transitivity, Representation, Irish Press, Homophobia.

Resumen. Durante el llamado "Celtic Tiger", Irlanda crece con mayor rapidez que el resto de Europa para, a continuación, sufrir una recesión brutal. Todo ello coincide con la extensión de un esencialismo exclusivista que genera, a su vez, todo tipo de prejuicios en contra de las minorías (Zagefka et al. 2013). Mientras que el extremismo justifica las políticas anti-inmigratorias, el racismo se convierte en un problema acuciante en Irlanda. Las agresiones a ciertos grupos se multiplican; de hecho, parece generalizarse el maltrato tanto verbal como físico hacia la mujer, el pueblo gitano, la comunidad africana, o gays y lesbianas. Las crisis económicas pueden provocar la marginación social y discursiva (Gabrielatos y Baker 2008), y la intolerancia contribuir a la discriminación. En un contexto como éste, en el que se tiende a la demonización del "Otro" (Said 1978), la ideología de los medios de comunicación deja su impronta en su representación de la "otredad". Ello justifica el análisis

1. The research reported in this article has been conducted under the auspices of the project "The Construction of Otherness in the Public Domain: A Critical Study of the Case of Ireland" (reference number FFI2011-25453) supported by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, and the European Union FEDER funds.

de la perpetuación en el ámbito público de ciertas creencias que fomentan la exclusión (Wodak y Chilton 2005). Superada la controversia en torno al matrimonio homosexual, tras la aprobación de una legislación cuyo fin último es equiparar a gays y lesbianas en derechos, en el presente artículo pretendemos analizar un corpus de artículos periodísticos con el objetivo de observar la construcción discursiva de la homosexualidad en Irlanda (Collier 1995, Stychin 1995, Naidoo 1997, McGhee 2001, Baker 2005), y detectar, en su caso, posibles actitudes de homofobia más o menos sutiles presentes en el mismo. Para ello, practicaremos un ejercicio de análisis crítico del discurso basado en corpus, centrándonos en la noción de la transitividad (Halliday y Matthiessen 2014), como medio que permite revelar la visión del mundo de quien habla o escribe.

Palabras clave. Análisis crítico del discurso, metafunción experiencial, transitividad, representación, prensa irlandesa, homofobia.

1. Introduction

The State of Ireland becomes a reality after centuries of oppression, when very restrictive legislation, such as the Penal Laws, was enforced on religious grounds. This was followed by several rebellion attempts, the Easter Rising insurrection against British rule in 1916, the Anglo-Irish 1921 Treaty, and a subsequent one-year Civil War that divided the nation politically and geographically. The Republic is built on a Constitution which, although in need of amending to better meet the needs of society, from 1937 onwards has reinforced Irish ethics. Likewise, it has also been shaped by the violence of the Troubles shaking the south at various times, in direct contraposition with a literary tradition of incontestable influence world-wide; or the most recent debate on nationality becoming gradually harsher after a referendum against automatic entitlement to such a condition was encouraged by anti-immigration positions (Chopin 2006: 236). Very influential pillars of contemporary Ireland are leading figures of the height and diametrically opposite personalities of Éamon de Valera and Mary Robinson, or science Nobel Prize winner Ernest Walton, lead singer of U2 Bono, Golden Globe winner Colin Farrell or Tony Ryan, the controversial founder of the low-cost airline. Furthermore, the present time of the so-called Emerald Isle relies very heavily on both social and financial changes that, by the end of the 20th century, definitely transform the profile of a largely rural and Catholic country (Ferriter 2010).

The Irish economic miracle was due to several factors (Murphy 2000, Brener 2006, Sweeny 2004): Governmental expenditure cuts in health, education, infrastructure or housing helped to lower corporate tax rates. This policy

encouraged the inflow of capital from abroad; the establishment of pharmaceutical, food and high-tech companies; the reduction of the unemployment rate; and a new migratory movement resulting in an increase of about 10% of the country's population; accordingly, from 1995, low- and high-skilled young people, many of them from Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, others from Irish ancestry, were incorporated into the labour market.

On the other hand, the decline of the Church's power, after revelations of scandals involving paedophilia and sexual abuse,² has eventually affected the perception of issues such as gender and sexuality (Bacik 2007, McGonigle 2013). At the same time as women start adopting new roles in the public sphere,³ the traditional form of family coexists with new alternatives, whilst marriage is less common and divorce is more frequently occurring (Fine-Davis 2011, Lunn and Fahey 2011). Although in 2013 abortion was legalised in cases of risk to life for pregnant women,⁴ right up until 1996, women had still been sent to Magdalene Laundries for having children outside of marriage (see Ramblado Minero and Pérez Vides 2006), and it is only in 1993 when contraception without prescription became

2. See *Report by Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin*, released on 29 November 2009,

<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB09000504>.

3. Ward (2010); "Changing role of Irish women over past 50 years reflected in relationships", <http://www.thejournal.ie/changing-role-of-irish-women-over-past-50-years-reflected-in-relationships-382725-Mar2012/>.

4. "Abortion in Ireland: Legal timeline", <http://www.ifpa.ie/Hot-Topics/Abortion/Abortion-in-Ireland-Timeline>

available.⁵

In the last twenty years or so, the legal framework of homosexuality has evolved so that male same-sex relations are no longer an “outrage on decency”, as once claimed in the Labouchère Amendment (1885-1967).⁶ Its de-criminalisation in 1993 has allowed for a fairer reading of both Irish history, and the biographies of some Irish politicians and sports players such as Leo Vardkar or Donal Óg Cusack (Walshe 2005, Lacey 2009, Duffy 2011). On 22 May 2015 a referendum will be held in which the Irish Parliament will encourage society to back same-sex unions. Before this historic event, violence against gays (including, for instance, the murders of Declan Flynn and Michael O’Connor in the 1980s) is one of the tragic consequences of homophobia.⁷ All in all, suicide risk among young students suffering homophobic bullying at school (Minton et al. 2008; O’Higgins-Norman 2008, 2009), which seems to be a social malady in Northern Ireland and the Republic,⁸ has been evidenced so often that it must have been addressed in various forms. The most relevant ones are governmental campaigns,⁹ and the actions carried out by private initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Ireland (<http://antibullyingireland.nfshost.com/>),

or LGBT support organisations such as BeLonGTo (<http://www.belongto.org/>), Gay Switchboard Dublin (<http://www.Gayswitchboard.ie/>), GLEN (<http://www.glen.ie>), Outhouse (<http://www.outhouse.ie/>), LGBT Noise (<http://www.lgbtnoise.ie/>), NIGRA (<http://www.nigra.org.uk>), The Rainbow Project (<http://www.rainbow-project.org/>) or SO ME (<http://www.SoMe-NI.co.uk>). The teaching profession has taken an ambiguous position here; although it is true that many educators are currently fighting to eradicate this new form of victimisation,¹⁰ it is not uncommon to see how the victims complain that either their teachers did little to stop the harassment, or that they were, in fact, the ones launching a verbal attack on young gay students (UNESCO 2012: 17, 18).¹¹

Pro-gay right activism is the cornerstone of the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010.¹² In 1988, Independent Senator David Norris was able to overthrow the Irish anti-homosexuality law in the European Court of Human Rights, by claiming that, under the light of Ireland’s legal system, gay people were liable to criminal prosecution on account of their homosexual conduct; this implied, among other things, that he himself, as an active gay man, may have felt victimised throughout his life.¹³

Norris’ victory was an important step forward in a process that would still have to face many obstacles, like the angry reaction of the most conservative critics, led by Presbyterians and Roman-Catholics. The changing attitude of a growing large section of the population, like the members of the Church of Ireland,¹⁴ as to same-

5. “The condom train; the fight for contraception in Ireland”, <http://allergictopatriarchy.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/the-condom-train-the-fight-for-contraception-in-ireland/>

6. “Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885”, http://www.swarb.co.uk/acts/1885Criminal_Law_AmendmentAct.shtml

7. “Ireland’s progress on gay rights offers hope”, <http://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/features/irelands-progress-on-gay-rights-offers-hope-234374.html>

8. “Statistics on bullying in Irish schools”, <http://bully4u.ie/bullying-in-schools/understanding/statistics-on-bullying-in-irish-schools/>; “A survey of teachers on homophobic bullying in Irish second-level schools”, <http://corkgayproject.com/files/2010/06/A-Survey-of-Teachers.pdf>; New report reveals widespread nature of cyber-bullying among teen girls, <http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/education/stop-cyber-bullying/new-report-reveals-widespread-nature-of-cyberbullying-among-teen-girls-28941597.html>

9. “Initiative on homophobic bullying in schools”, <http://www.equality.ie/en/Press-Office/Initiative-on-Homophobic-Bullying-in-Schools-Launched1.html>; “Action plan on bullying”, <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf>

10. “Tackling homophobic bullying”, http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/groups/public/@equalityandtraining/documents/nas_download/nasuwt_009350~1.pdf

11. <http://thecircular.org/serious-homophobic-bullying-in-irish-schools/>

12. <http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2010/a2410.pdf>

13. “Case of Norris v. Ireland”, <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-57547#%22itemid%22:%22001-57547%22>

14. Bernd Biege, “Gay travel in Ireland”, http://goireland.about.com/od/preparingyourtrip/qt/gay_ireland.htm

sex couples entering into civil partnerships, is reflected in some of the polls published from 2005 onwards,¹⁵ and especially with the upcoming referendum PM Enda Kenny is so optimistic about.¹⁶ Nevertheless, some hot issues have yet to be resolved. In fact, adoption is not a matter agreed on even by those who believe gay couples are entitled to marry; they must have equal tax, property, succession and maintenance rights; or should inherit their partner's properties and receive a pension partner benefit in the same way as non-same-sex couples do. From our reading of the Act, we infer that their treatment is not equal in its current version; a list of prospective amendments to the Constitution of Ireland could, therefore, change some obvious unfair inconsistencies: It is only by application to the Court that gays and lesbians may have access to some of the abovementioned; furthermore, they cannot have a judicial separation, their children can still be denied their rights, and the partners' protection against domestic violence is tackled differently.

After witnessing a very serious attempt at achieving equality for homosexuals on the part of the institutions, in general, as well as Irish society, in particular, interest lies in a key phenomenon such as other-identity construction (see, for instance, Fourier 2008, Becker 2013), as enacted in the media (Kuhar 2003, Peebles 2004, Hoskan 2006). What makes it more stimulating to approach this type of distinct discursive domain is its potential for "mediat[ing] symbolic communication" (Taylor 2010: 42), and shaping perceptions about the

subjects it represents, at the risk, sometimes, of misrepresentation or underrepresentation, as in the case of minority groups (Mahtani 2008). In our attempt to explore how sexual orientation is represented from a corpus-based critical discourse analysis perspective, this paper aims to address the following objectives:

1. To discover similarities and differences between the ways in which tabloid and broadsheet newspapers in Ireland construe non-conventional sexuality; to do so, we examine the transitivity patterns employed, and observe whether homosexuality is portrayed in a positive or negative light;
2. And to subsequently detect strategies that may naturalise prejudiced thought.

2. Theoretical background

Amongst the different schools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), one of the most influential has been that proposed by Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995), in which Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) occupies a central role. An SFG approach to language description and textual investigation first appeared, however, in the works of Fowler (1966, 1977, 1986), and Fowler and Kress (1979), as well as more recently by van Leeuwen (1996) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). At a very early stage, Halliday (1971), in his paper on William Golding's *The Inheritors*, also provided insights into the relevance of applying a functional-grammatical framework to literature, and SFG has since continued to extend its analysis to a wide range of text types.

Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014) contend that the study of language entails reference to, and consideration of, three metafunctions, namely the experiential (one's inner and outer experiences), interpersonal (one's interactive exchanges) and textual metafunctions (the internal organisation of the message). Each works in conjunction with the others, continuously and simultaneously, whilst also characterised by the different linguistic phenomena they are responsible for (Halliday 1985: 53). Underpinning the experiential metafunction is the system of transitivity, a

15. See "80% believe gay couples deserved legal recognition – Survey", 24 November 2006, <http://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/?jp=CWIDGBEYCWOJ>; "Increased support for gay marriage – Survey", 31 March 2008, <http://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/mhojojeyauid/>; "Nearly three-quarters of Irish people in favour of gay marriage", 6 March 2011, <http://www.thejournal.ie/nearly-three-quarters-of-irish-people-in-favour-of-gay-marriage-2011-03/>

16. Chris Johnston, "Irish voters to decide on same-sex marriage in May referendum", 20 February 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/20/irish-voters-to-decide-on-same-sex-marriage-in-may-referendum>

notion that has been considered from different angles (see, for instance, Hopper and Thompson 1980, Rice 1987, Martínez Vázquez 1998), although, perhaps, the most well-known is the Hallidayan perspective. An alternative which is also of paramount importance is offered by the Cardiff Grammar model (see Fawcett 2000, Neale 2002). Both maintain that this system comprises particular process types, although they differ in their ideas as to what these are and what they entail. For this paper, our focus is on the former.

Transitivity centres on how language users construe versions of reality in discourse. Simply put, human beings can convey experience differently through employing a wide range of syntactic structures and ~~resorting to~~ specific vocabulary choices, thereby ensuring information is arranged in a way that can indicate their ideological positioning. It is understood that both what we choose to say and the way in which we organise our expression will essentially convey a given meaning and, thereby, act as a reflection of how we perceive particular events and happenings (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 217). More specifically, Halliday (1973: 134; 2002: 181) defines it as “the set of options whereby the speaker encodes his [sic] experience of the processes of the external world, and of the internal world of his [sic] own consciousness, together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances”. Therefore, it comprises three components: (1) A process; (2) the participants involved in that process; and (3) the circumstances associated with that process. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), there exist six process types: *Material*, *mental*, *relational*, *verbal*, *behavioural* and *existential* processes. However, only three (*material*, *mental* and *relational* processes) are actually considered to be, not just the major categories within the system (Li 2011: 205; Morgan 1998: 80), but also the most frequent ones (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 215). Unlike *verbal*, *behavioural* and *existential* processes, the other three consist of additional subcategories. All six process types reflect different kinds of experience and entail distinct participant configurations; these are outlined below.

To begin with, *material* processes (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 224) are those that

concern actions or events, both abstract and concrete, and emphasise the idea of bringing about a change of some sort. The chief participant in *material* processes, the one responsible for bringing about a change, that is, the actual agent, is referred to as the Actor. When the process is extended to another participant affected by the change, this is referred to as the Goal. As previously mentioned, there are also subtypes of *material* processes, namely *material creative* ones, in which the Goal is construed as being brought into existence as the process unfolds; and *material transformative* ones, which involve the transformation of the Actor or Goal. Other possible participants include Recipient (the one goods are given to), Client (the one a service is done for), Scope/Range (the one to infer the domain over which the process takes place or the actual process itself, e.g. have a *shower*) or Attribute (used to represent the resultant qualitative state of either the Actor or the Goal, after the process is complete, e.g. They stripped *her* [Goal] *clean* [Attribute] of all her clothes) (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 242).

Mental processes (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 248) are concerned with our inner world experience, and include notions such as cognition, perception, emotion and desire. The main participants are the Senser, or conscious being that understands, likes, hears, etc., and the Phenomenon, which may denote any type of entity, conscious or not, understood, liked, heard, etc. The subcategories of *mental* processes are *mental cognitive*, denoting thought and reflection (e.g. believe); *mental perceptive*, denoting sensorial perception (e.g. see); *mental emotive*, denoting feelings and emotions (e.g. abhor); and *mental desiderative*, denoting volition (e.g. want).

The third and final major process type to consider is *relational* processes, which, as opposed to sensing or doing, can comprise both inner and outer experiences, and concern the notions of being and becoming (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 259). The three subcategories of relational processes are *relational intensive*, *relational possessive* and *relational circumstantial*. Furthermore, each of these subcategories may either be of an attributive or an identifying nature, with the distinction being largely based on whether the relational clause

in question is reversible (identifying) or not (attributive). In any type of relational attributive clause, there are two participants labelled the Carrier and the Attribute (e.g. *Nathan* is *happy*). There does also exist the option of adding up to two more participants, namely a Beneficiary (e.g. It cost *him* an arm and a leg) and an Attributor (e.g. *They* made me happy). In the case of relational identifying clauses, the two participants are labelled Token and Value (e.g. *Caroline* is *my friend*), with the option of also incorporating a third participant, an Assigner (e.g. *They* made Mary the boss).

In addition, there exist three further categories that have become processes in their own right, but remain minor in that they are on the borderline of two major process types. *Verbal* processes, for example, are situated in between *mental* and *relational* processes, and in fact, were originally classified as part of the *mental* category (Halliday 1976). These processes of saying cover any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 303). Their inherent participant is referred to as the Sayer, although they may accommodate a further three participants: Receiver (e.g. They told *me* to go), Verbiage (e.g. They said *that your family are very nice*) and Target (e.g. They accused *them* of possession of charms). A second marginal process is that of *behavioural* clauses (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 215), claimed to be somewhere along the scale between material and mental processes. This category comprises verbs that represent physiological or psychological behaviours (e.g. cough, smile, watch). The key participant in these clauses is called the Behavior. Lastly, reference must be made to *existential* processes, which are deemed to come between the relational and material types (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 215); these represent the existence of an entity X, which is known as Existent, and can be either a person, an object, an institution, an event, an action or an abstraction.

Having detailed the system of transitivity following the SFG model, it is now worthwhile providing a brief account of some of the research that to date has employed this theoretical framework, paying special attention to those studies found to have applied

transitivity as a basis for determining the way in which marginalisation is represented in the public domain.

Numerous scholars have so far explored the role of the linguistic strategies employed in a wide range of genres (e.g. the written press, political speeches, advertisements, legal proceedings), and, particularly, the way in which transitivity offers insights into the ideological stance adopted by those involved in their production. Thus, whilst in Clark (1992) and Adampa (1999) we read how differently one victim of violence and her male perpetrator can be construed in a specific news item, in Fowler (1991), Matu and Lubbe (2007) or Seo (2013), we see that the same participants are portrayed in a different way by different newspapers on the grounds of the media positioning.¹⁷ Similarly, the studies by Gallardo (2006), O'Halloran (2007), Cunanan (2011) or Nguyen (2012) help shed light on plot development and the shaping of fictional characters in literature through the analysis of transitivity choices. Of particular relevance here is research by Szuchewycz (2000) and Teo (2000), who deal with the portrayal of racism in the Canadian and Australian media as a strategic means to marginalise minorities. Additionally, Huckin (2002) and Israel (2014) reveal the intricate nature of the discourse of condescension in voter-politician and doctor-patient interaction. Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010) find that the linguistic representation of males and females in EFL textbooks points towards some attempts to move women away from the fringe of society. Finally, Stamou et al. (2008) show how transitivity provides an indication regarding the representation of disability and able-bodiedness by a group of primary school children.

To now turn to the research specifically looking at transitivity and sexual orientation, Lillian (2005) examines the written discourse of Canadian neo-conservative William Gairdner. She concludes that the now retired athlete tended to discredit homosexuals, and infers that they are dangerous, violent and

17. See Burroughs (2015), for an analysis of representation of illegal immigration in the Irish media based on the notion of 'control' topoi.

unhealthy (Lillian 2005: 128). Rodrigues (2008) analyses the same topic in a collection of gay stories originally published in 1966 in the USA, and republished in Brazil thirty years later, with the aim of illustrating how the viewpoint in a text is explicit via the author's linguistic choices. Gouveia (2005) invites the reader to comprehend the depiction of gays and lesbians in a Portuguese quality newspaper, again looking at the transitivity patterns employed; in line with Koller (2008), who carries out a comprehensive analysis of the lesbian community, Gouveia (2005: 238) claims that "[t]his type of representation serves the purpose of confining the social group under consideration to a set of characteristics... which helps to differentiate them from other social groups".

Having outlined the relevant theoretical framework and provided a brief account of some important studies available in relation to the aims of this paper, the subsequent section shall describe the corpus and methodology employed before proceeding to relate the findings of our research to the literature discussed.

3. Materials and method

Corpus linguistics is a very efficient methodology for the examination of real language use; it encourages one to go

beyond intuition and is thought to contribute towards minimising researcher bias (McEnery and Wilson 1996); furthermore, it embraces both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data analyses, which may be combined to produce a more exhaustive discussion of the findings. That is the reason why this paper uses the corpus-linguistics approach to CDA (Baker et al. 2008).

Leaving aside those written in Gaelic, the list of daily, evening and Sunday newspapers published at local, regional and national levels, in online and printed-paper format, amounts to a total of around ninety with the ones circulating where the Irish Diaspora is based.¹⁸ For our research to be manageable as well as the various existing newspaper types well represented, an analysis was carried out of one subsection of the Irish newspaper corpus we have accrued so far, of one and a half million words; this comprises two tabloids and one broadsheet which were available: *The Evening Herald* (EH), *The Irish Post* (IP) and *The Irish Independent* (II) (see Table 1 below).¹⁹

18. See <http://www.world-newspapers.com/ireland.html>, <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/ireland.htm>, <http://www.regionalnewspapers.ie/>

19. See <http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/>

Table 1. Corpus metadata

Newspaper	Type of newspaper	Year period	No. of texts	Word Tokens
EH	Tabloid from Dublin	2008-2009	182	101,026
IP	Tabloid from London	2008-2011	29	15,848
II	National broadsheet	2006-2012	2,120	1,460,765
TOTAL			2,331	1,577,639

The data were collected through access to the LexisNexis Academic database. The time span covered was a seven-year period between the end of the Celtic Tiger era, and those following the recession, the bank crash and the bailout, from 2008 to 2012. The star wild-

card query helped us retrieve the texts exhibiting the most frequent sexual-orientation-related terms, all their derivatives and some others very much connected with attitudes towards sexuality (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Query terms

gay*	homo*	lesbian*	queer*
Gay	Homosexual	Lesbian	Queer
Gays	Homosexuals	Lesbians	Queers
Gayness	Homosexualist	Lesbianism	Queer-bashing
Gay-bashing	Homosexualists		Queering
	Homosexuality		
	Homoerotic		
	Homo		
	Homos		
	Homophobe		
	Homophobia		
	Homophobic		

Later, we designed a coding system suitable to handle the .txt files of the corpus. Each code consists of a four-digit combination containing information about the category of newspaper, its name and the article's publication date; with regards to the last digit, it is always 1, except for those cases when more than one article is published on the same day, and in which case the filename ends with 2, 3, etc. (e.g. BR-II-300312-7). By means of the software package *AntConc 3.4.1w* (Anthony 2014), concordance, frequency and cluster lists were generated.²⁰ Subsequently, an Excel

spreadsheet was filled in with the former, the code of the .txt files from which these were extracted, the process type associated with homosexuality, its evaluative content, the semantic roles assigned to homosexuals and the circumstances when available. Table 3 shows an example of how the *Mental processes* category was classified.

·/· A concordance line shows the similarities or differences between the cotexts of a node word/phrase taken from a corpus (e.g. “[...] had expected the test to be positive. I was a very **happy** gay man. There was clearly a need to adapt my lifestyle”). A cluster allows you to look at a given number of words that occur most frequently surrounding the query term (e.g. **you know, you have, you are, you can, you remember**).

20. In a frequency list, *AntConc* ranks all the words a corpus consists of by frequency of occurrence. ·/·

Table 3. Mental processes

Process	Participant	Evaluation	Example
Cognitive	Senser	Positive	... a gay man who understood human problems (BR-II-200210-2)
		Neutral	... late-blooming lesbians... discover same-sex feelings in their thirties (BR-II-110810-1)
		Negative	... involves a misunderstanding between him and an older homosexual. Schlesinger was gay himself (BR-II-121111-1)
	Phenomenon	Positive	... his sexuality has been warmly welcomed by gay and lesbian groups (BR-II-201009-4)
		Neutral	... I thought I was the only lesbian woman who was married with children (BR-II-110810-1)
		Negative	... conservative views on homosexuality (BR-II-160709-2)

<i>Emotive</i>	Senser	Positive	<i>But lesbians ... like sex</i> (BR-II-051010-1)
		Neutral	No data retrieved
		Negative	<i>... conducted by lesbians who hate men</i> (BR-II-070909-2)
	Phenomenon	Positive	<i>We adore Tegan and Sara [the best Canadian lesbian sister duo]</i> (BR-II-110610-1)
		Neutral	<i>Country music has never openly embraced homosexuality in the same way that other musical genres</i> (BR-II-150510-1)
		Negative	<i>I hate you f***ing queers</i> (TA-EH-070508-2)
<i>Volitional</i>	Senser	Positive	<i>Newman was... gay, and wished to be buried with his gay companion</i> (BR-II-010908-1)
		Neutral	<i>... the gay man and the lesbian couple will have to come to an arrangement over access to the boy</i> (BR-II-111209-1)
		Negative	<i>... a lesbian wouldn't want to go back there</i> (BR-II-160709-1)
	Phenomenon	Positive	<i>I fully agree with gay people being allowed to adopt</i> (BR-II-101111-1)
		Neutral	<i>The idea that people choose to be gay or lesbian...</i> (TA-EH-091008-1)
		Negative	<i>Mr Glatze recently rejected the homosexual lifestyle</i> (BR-II-240608-1)
<i>Perceptive</i>	Senser	Positive	No data retrieved
		Neutral	<i>... any sensible gay bloke out there... saw his comments</i> (BR-II-240409-1)
		Negative	<i>... they have heard homophobic comments</i> (BR-II-091010-2)
	Phenomenon	Positive	No data retrieved
		Neutral	<i>he received "snide comments" from colleagues when they heard he was gay</i> (TA-EH-281108-1)
		Negative	No data retrieved

One important decision taken concerns the structure that receives particular attention in this piece of research. Our initial objective was to analyse clause and sentence patterns, which happens to be the most frequently applied procedure in the field, just like (1) below:

(1) Gays demand legislation now to make them equal in eyes of the law (BR-II-041006-3).

Nonetheless, despite their obvious different formal realisations, noun phrases, especially with deverbal Head nouns, may show syntactic relationships very close to those at clausal and sentential levels, as well as the same semantic potential to that encoded in a clause or in a sentence (see Eggins 2004, Benítez Castro 2013). In (2), we can see the behaviour of the noun 'assault', derived from the homonymous verb.

(2) ... to launch yet another whingeing assault on gay marriage (BR-II-230610-1).

The scenario this *Material* process activates is as follows: An animate, human Actor intends to cause some effect of a very negative nature on the semantic role directly undergoing the happening denoted by the verb. The Actor is implicit in this case, although sometimes it may be expressed by means of genitive or prepositional phrases, like in (3), where "the homosexual propaganda machine", in Reverend David McCullough's words, is claimed to be making a certain effort to reach a certain goal.

(3) ... another subtle effort of the homosexual propaganda machine (TA-EH-221108-1).

The manual analysis of the whole corpus was complemented with the application of some statistical measure tests to assess the degree of significance of the results obtained. The next section focuses on the description and discussion of the research findings.

4. Findings and discussion

The following section aims to address each of the three objectives detailed in the introduction of this paper. As a starting point, we will first consider the range of transitivity patterns present within our corpus of Irish newspapers dating from 2008-2012 (4.1); subsequently, the extent to which homosexuality is portrayed more or less negatively across newspapers will merit some attention (4.2); and thirdly, we shall determine any similarities or differences that could be observed when comparing the representation of non-conventional sexuality across different newspaper types, whilst at the same time, taking account of the different lemmas examined in this paper (4.3). Through attempting to answer these questions, it is our intention to demonstrate how particular strategies that have been uncovered, whether used consciously or not, allegedly reinforce

bias and, as a consequence, homophobic discourse, or help to show how the values of a traditionally conservative society are currently being subverted.

4.1. What transitivity patterns are present in our corpus?

An initial look at the overall distribution of transitivity patterns across all newspapers under analysis allowed for some general conclusions to be drawn regarding the more global portrayal of homosexuality in Ireland. As evidenced in Figure 1 below, material processes, which make reference to actions, happenings, activities and so on, are found to be the most frequent category, followed by relational, verbal and then mental processes. Due to the considerably low number of behavioural and existential processes in the dataset, these two types will, from now onwards, be disregarded.

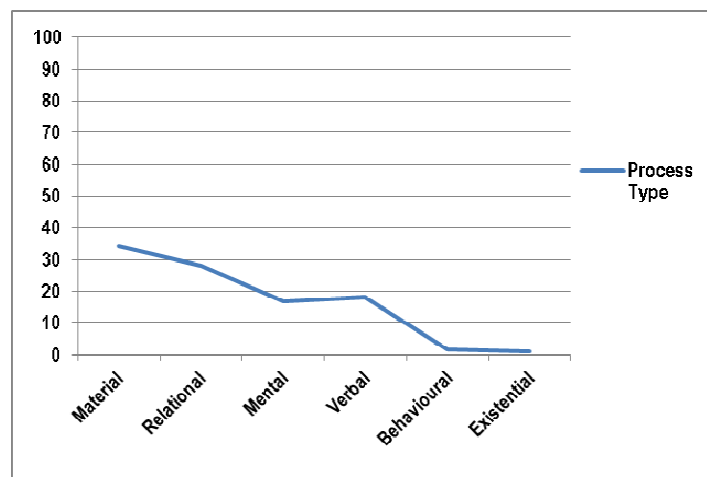


Figure 1. Distribution of process types

The fact that material processes are common in our corpus (34%) is, in large part, a result of the fact that the newspaper coverage examined tends to report on the events that homosexuals participate in or the (beneficial) things they do, as in (4) below; journalists also make reference to what, from their perspective or the perspective of the people reported in their news items, are immoral activities that this minority may engage in, as in (5); and finally, mention is made of the good and, especially, bad things

that happen to homosexuals, as evidenced in (6) and (7).

(4) As you know, this relates to gay people serving in the military who are encouraged not to express their sexuality... (BR-II-220910-1).

(5) ... letter by Pastor Boisson in which he lambasted gay rights organisations for introducing what he saw as pro-gay propaganda into schools and for thereby attacking “the precious sanctity of our innocent children and youth” (BR-II-080509-1).

(6) Gay rights groups praised the order as a significant step for ensuring that gays and lesbians are treated equally (BR-II-071211-2).

(7) ... the tremendous discrimination the gay community has suffered over the years (TA-EH-060608-2).

The concordances retrieved denoting agentive roles show, in the main, gays' direct or indirect involvement in politics and LGBT advocacy groups; their concern with their legal status, parenting and the institution of marriage; and their association with disease, and criminal or stereotyped activities. Less often than not, they are also reported to carry out things that, arguably, may help them look normal. Furthermore, homosexuals are claimed to take risks, to abuse and cause destruction; they can also consciously do things to deliberately hide their sexuality; and when their condition causes too much pain, they resort to self harm or committing suicide. As for lesbians, they participate in sports and other social events; they obtain different jobs that they sometimes feel forced to defend, and, of particular interest is their immense capacity for love. Finally, the lemma 'queer' is used in opposing contexts since they are portrayed as participating in social life, with all its positive implications, as well as avoiding social inclusion.

The examples of affected roles illustrate the extent to which homophobic discourse prevails in the Irish press, whereby silence, discrimination, persecution, exclusion, violence, rights violations, disease and death are patently manifested in the representation of gays; moreover, despite their reliance on familial and institutional support, their morality and their mental health are still put to the test. Likewise, homosexuals are demonised, victimised, although they are also described as curable. Homosexuality, in contrast, is decriminalised as well as something that is researched about. Similarly, lesbianism, although banned according to some news items, appears to be generally welcomed by society, which empowers lesbians to obtain their rights. Interestingly, queers are depicted in the same light, whereby we see how they gradually acquire more control over their life, and witness them provided with some help to overcome the difficulties faced as a result of their sexual orientation.

With a slightly lower count of relational processes emerging in our corpus (28%), we observe how the majority of examples in this category either deal with cases in which someone is described as 'being gay', as in (8), or alternatively examples that denote, on the whole, the kind of negative traits associated with homosexuality, as in (9).

(8) HE USED to joke he was 25pc gay. Last week, he was wrongly accused of being 50pc gay (BR-II-090710-2).

(9) She says homosexuality is not natural and seems to think that somehow they can be cured as if they had vertigo (TA-IP-180608-1).

The corpus proves that (real, assumed or alleged) sexual identity still remains a problem for the individual and the society which is not ready to accept it yet, an issue gays are often questioned about or even forced to reveal, or a topic taken lightly by those fully confident in themselves and comfortable with whom they are. Meanwhile, homosexuality is defined as an unnatural choice, a disease similar to cancer, a deviation. Homosexual acts are said to be evil and sinful, whilst homosexuals are described in a wider and less biased range of contexts although the idea of difference is unavoidable. Many articles making reference to lesbians emphasise their roles as daughters, sisters, aunts, and especially, mothers; others link lesbianism with feelings of repulsion, distress and disgust. Finally, the relational processes in which queers are participants tend to convey a rather negative picture of these individuals; they are said to be bastards, outsiders and filthy.

Verbal processes are the third most common process type in our corpus, ahead of mental processes, which is somewhat unusual (see, for example, Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 215). In any case, there is a minimal difference between both of them in terms of frequency (18.1% verbal processes vs. 16.7% mental processes). Verbal processes often concern instances whereby gay people talk about or reveal their homosexuality, as illustrated in (10). In addition, verbal processes are used when they speak of anything that directly affects them as a gay individual (e.g. the passing of laws in relation to marriage); this is exemplified in (11) below.

(10) Last year, Cusack confirmed he was gay in his best-selling sports memoir (BR-II-111010-2).

(11) Gay-rights activists say the bill promotes hatred and could set back efforts to combat HIV/AIDS... (BR-II-080110-2).

In our corpus we can see that, to learn about their sexual orientation seems to cause gays as much distress as to disclose it, in light of the possible social consequences, which is why they may make every effort to keep this under wraps. It is also clear that they need political organisations to become their voice in the public domain and the stories told by some exemplary citizens who have already come out can help them resolve the situation. Gays, lesbians, homosexuals and queers are Sayers of their own (adverse) childhood experiences, and they express how they feel about themselves as non-conventional individuals. Homosexuals and homosexuality are also found to be the topic of discussion in the newspapers under analysis, be it to criticise or condemn them, due to fear, prejudice, lack of knowledge or lack of sensitivity towards them; nevertheless, some also try to defend them and the choices they have made. An example is (12), (13) and (14) below.

(12) Michael Barron of BeLonG To, the support organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered young people, said: "Teachers are still ill-equipped to talk about gay and lesbian identity (TA-EH-290808-1).

(13) Quite how talking about gay people at a private gathering of 50 Oklahoma republicans is dangerous is never truly explained and let's face it, if you're going to go on a rant about filthy queers and the dangers they pose to society, such a gathering would seem like the ideal place (BR-II-240308-1).

(14) Does Kuwait resound to the chatter of female students discussing the maternal rights of lesbians? (BR-II-270511-1).

Homophobia surfaces in many of the examples with gays or gay-related matters as Verbiage. Rumours, sarcastic comments, insulting remarks reinforce the image of an underprivileged minority that the Catholic Church officially reprimands, politicians and bloggers compare with criminals or animals, and

the wo/man in the street disapproves of, on the grounds of traditional values. At this point, it is worth mentioning Bristow's (2010: 46) recollection of how Oscar Wilde was charged in 1895 for acts of "gross indecency with other men" under the eleventh section of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Finally, the mental processes employed in the newspapers considered in this piece of research make reference to either what homosexuals think, as in (15); what homosexuals do or do not want, as in (16); what homosexuals do or do not feel, as in (17); and the way others feel towards homosexuals, as in (18) below.

(15) Until I joined LinC's parent support group, I thought I was the only lesbian woman who was married with children (BR-II-110810-1).

(16) Newman was, so the claim goes, gay, and wished to be buried with his gay companion, and that should be respected (BR-II-010908-1).

(17) Maybe the gay players are afraid the attitude of the heterosexuals might change if they discovered one of their team-mates was homosexual (BR-II-100508-1).

(18) But the Strangford MP has repeatedly denied her remarks were homophobic, insisting she had Christian love for gay people themselves and condemned anyone who would attack people for their sexuality (TA-EH-280708-1).

As exemplified, gays and lesbians think that they are a minority and, consequently, they often feel alone. Other emotions that they tend to experience include shock and surprise, rejection and, moreover, fear of actually being rejected. In relation to their wants and desires, they are really quite simple; what they wish for is what everyone, presumably, wishes for, which is equality, to be treated fairly and considerately, and to have the right to live their life as they see fit. The more or less late realisation of their sexual orientation is also key in the papers analysed, as well as other people's ill-intentional or gossipy speculations about it, followed by the debate on whether this is a lifestyle choice or not. If ignorance and radicalism explain the dislike, hatred and anger felt towards gays and lesbians, acceptance and respect are mostly founded on personal involvement, sometimes on pity as well.

4.2. Is homosexuality portrayed more or less negatively in our corpus?

Having provided a brief overview above of the general process types present, and their frequency in our corpus, we now address the question of whether homosexuality is construed

in a more or less negative light. On this basis, all positive and neutral examples were grouped together. In Figure 2, with 1/3 of examples corresponding to the negative category, it is evident that the overall portrayal of homosexuals is largely positive or neutral.

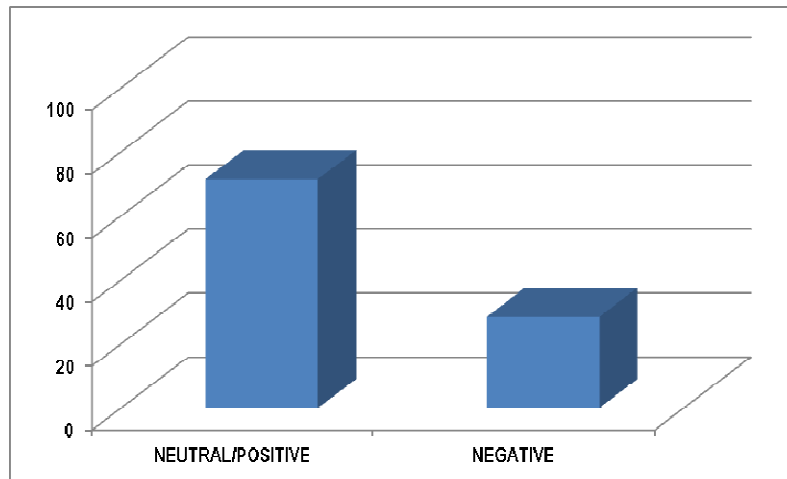


Figure 2. Distribution of neutral/positive and negative process types

In light of the above distribution, it is worthwhile looking at whether certain process types occur more consistently with neutral/positive or negative associations. Material and relational processes share an equal number of neutral/positive implications (28.8%), with both ranking highest in terms of frequency. To delve into slightly more detail, the vast majority of neutral/positive examples make reference to material agent processes, whereby male and female gays are the ones acting upon something, as in (19). They are known to not only partake in protests and marches in order to petition for equality, but are also frequently referenced as working tirelessly for the LGBT network that assists young homosexuals in coming to terms with their sexuality.

(19) AN estimated 250,000 gay, lesbian and other revellers marched and danced in Berlin for the German capitals annual gay pride celebration, which features a colourful parade through the city (BR-II-210610-4).

With regard to neutral/positive relational processes, the most common by far are relational ascriptive (59.4%), whereby mention is given

to individuals simply because they are gay, as in (20); other examples describe the role gays adopt and repeatedly focus on the idea of normalcy, as in (21).

(20) DeGeneres is, fair to say, America's most famous lesbian (BR-II-240508-1).

(21) The presence of children has little to do with marriage – a childless wife is still a wife, as much as a gay dad is still a dad (BR-II-110411-2).

It is important to clarify that the aforementioned examples appear recurrently, all be it with slightly altered wording, but nevertheless maintaining the same ideas. As such, one is led to believe that homosexuals in the Irish press are thought of, on the one hand, as people who have to fight for equality, as well as individuals who are still human beings that are shy, intelligent and, on the whole, good people, as illustrated in (22) and (23).

(22) I have to say that homosexuals are very intelligent people... (BR-II-260408- 1).

(23) ... back in the real world, homosexuals are human beings too and should not be subjected

to such blatant discrimination as shown by Cardinal Brady (BR-II-250809-1).

To now turn to those instances with more negative connotations and the worst social implications, we note that the most common cases are material process types followed by mental ones. In the case of the former, material affected types are the ones that seem to occur most often, with homosexuality and so-called homosexual acts being outlawed, criminalised, attacked, punished and condemned. Similarly, homosexuals are ridiculed, discriminated against, marginalised, abused, bullied, persecuted, beaten, murdered and/or targeted by legislators, some sections of society, and especially ideologically radical groups, as in (24).

(24) ... who has embraced Islamic extremists, such as Sheikh Yusufal-Qaradawi, who supports the execution of gay people, while at the same time inviting the Scissor Sisters, the gayest band you could find, to play at a party (BR-II-220811-1).

Meanwhile, in the case of the latter, the most recurrent types are mental emotive phenomenon (32%) and mental emotive senser (19.3%). Some examples of each are provided below.

(25) Of course, in an ideal world there shouldn't be a problem, but in Latin America the concept of 'machismo' forces many men to conceal their homosexuality for fear of being shunned or worse (BR-II-190909-2).

(26) Better to tell it straight if you worry that you are gay (BR-II-300810-1).

(27) Apparently, the feminists and lesbians don't like it, but seeing as none of that lot are actually capable of getting a man, their opinions are entirely worthless (BR-II-050908-3)

(28) Modern Ireland has still not come to terms with homosexuality according to two support networks, one of which says that some parents have simply disowned their gay children (TA-EH-290808-1).

(29) Surveys show that 60pc of Serbians disapprove of homosexuality, and one-third of those say violence should be used to interrupt gay public events (BR-II-111010-1).

In line with the above examples, the newspapers

under analysis show a tendency, then, to imply that gay people are terrified of how the public will react to them as a result of their sexuality. This is understandable given the frequent references of gays receiving maltreatment in addition to finding themselves the object of strong dislike from Irish society. That is also why they are also reported to be worried about discovering that they themselves are gay. In addition to examples like (28) and (29) denoting more explicit emotion towards gays or disapproval of them, we also come across other cases in which the negative spin is far more implicit, as in (30).

(30) He was a private man by nature, and protecting himself was part of it. He still wanted to be like everyone else, and outwardly he was. But it was mainly to protect our parents. They were lovely, ordinary people who wanted everyone to be ordinary and it would have been impossible for Richard to come out in their community. (BR-II-070408-1)

The author of the text above conveys what, on the surface, appears to be love and support for his gay brother. Nevertheless, his description of the situation, unbeknown to himself until very recently, leaves the audience feeling that his underlying belief is that homosexuality is not normal. In (31) below, it is further reiterated in his account that homosexuality is damaging through comments he makes about how their parents would have endured great suffering, if they had known of their son's sexuality.

(31) They could not have coped, they would have felt it as some sort of slur. Our father belonged to a world where men sat in the corner of a bar with a bottle of whiskey and talked about football (BR-II-070408-1).

4.3. What similarities or differences come to light when comparing the representation of homosexuals in broadsheets and tabloids?

Based on the fact that different newspaper types adopt different views, ideologically speaking, it seemed most worthwhile to make comparisons between them in terms of how they represent non-conventional sexuality in Irish society. Having done so, a number of interesting findings emerged. First and foremost, one can see, in Figure 3 below, a comparison of transitivity patterns across newspaper types.

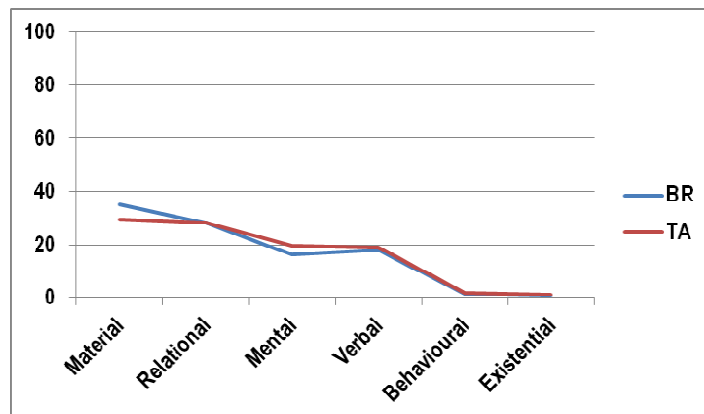


Figure 3. Comparison of transitivity patterns across newspaper types

Whilst only showing a minimal difference, Figure 3 would appear to indicate that, whereas there are more material processes in *The Irish Independent*, there are slightly more mental processes in *The Irish Post* and *The Evening Herald*. Although this is indeed the case, when the results were tested for statistical significance using the log-likelihood measure of $p < 0.01$ (critical value = 6.63),²¹ it becomes apparent, as illustrated in Table 4 below, that

21. See log-likelihood calculator at <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>

with the exception of behavioural processes, there is a significant underuse of all process types in broadsheet newspapers by comparison to tabloids.²² In the case of behavioural types alone, no significant difference could be established.

22. The log-likelihood significance test compares two corpora in terms of which words are used more frequently in each. The critical value (6.63) corresponds to 99% percent possibility that the results are not due to chance.

Table 4. Comparison of process types across newspaper types

Process	BR	Log-likelihood	TA	Significance
Material	873	39.72	132	Underuse in broadsheet
Relational	700	58.05	126	Underuse in broadsheet
Mental	402	58.58	88	Underuse in broadsheet
Verbal	447	42.31	84	Underuse in broadsheet
Behavioural	38	6.79	9	Underuse in broadsheet
Existential	23	3.39	5	No significance

As described in Section 3, four wildcard searches (*gay**, *lesbian**, *homosex** and *queer**) were carried out across the different newspapers in order to make more detailed comparisons between them; thus, at the same time, the discursive construction of homosexuality became clearer and the media portrayal of Irish society more exact. On

completing the analysis of each of the lemmas, the log-likelihood test again confirmed that there were several significant differences found between both newspaper types. In the case of *gay**, the occurrence of material, mental, relational and verbal processes proved to be significantly overused in both tabloids in comparison to the broadsheet under analysis.

With regard to both *homosex** and *queer**, there turned out to be a significant underuse of mental processes, whilst in the case of *lesbian**,

there appeared to be a significant shortage of verbal processes in the broadsheet newspaper. These results are exemplified in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparison of wildcard searches for different process types across newspaper types

	Material			Relational			Mental			Verbal		
	BR	Log	TA	BR	Log	TA	BR	Log	TA	BR	Log	TA
<i>Gay*</i>	247	69.86	71	186	103.24	74	170	46.18	48	127	66.42	49
<i>Homosex*</i>	270	0.11	20	315	0.28	28	114	7.36	19	153	5.21	5
<i>Lesbian*</i>	337	3.67	38	181	3.08	22	111	4.19	16	150	9.68	25
<i>Queer*</i>	19	1.01	3	18	0.18	2	7	10.80	5	17	5.06	5

The aforementioned suggests that, whilst the examples analysed may be grouped under the generic label of homosexuality, their individual portrayal, nevertheless, differs depending on the newspaper type in question. We perhaps expected a pervasive presence of the topic in the sensationalist press, which is the case, and subsequently a rather negative attitude towards gays; nonetheless, in contrast to previous literature (see Baker 2005), homosexuality in the Irish press does not seem to be so problematic in the tabloids selected.

Before concluding, some attention will now be paid to comparing the more specific process types in relation to each of the lemmas under examination. To consider *gay**, we noted, first and foremost, that there were some similarities with *queer**. The broadsheet tends to reference both in material agent negative process types as well as in verbal sayer negative and verbal verbiage negative processes. Initially, thus, this finding would lead to the understanding that those labelled as *gay* or *queer* in *The Irish Independent* are frequently represented as acting in a wrong and, perhaps, wicked way, or alternatively as using spoken language inappropriately. *Homosex** and *lesbian**, on the other hand, show the opposite tendency in that both are portrayed as neutral or positive verbal Sayers. This serves to reiterate the fact that not only do newspaper types represent homosexuality in different ways, but also the lemma in question can itself trigger different descriptions of essentially the same phenomenon.

When looking at the depiction of *homosex**,

interestingly enough, we also come across some similarities with *gay**. On this occasion, the associations are inclined to be neutral or positive, although it must be noted that these examples arise more often in both tabloids. In these newspapers, *gay** and *homosex** are commonly found in material agent neutral or positive processes as well as verbal verbiage neutral or positive ones. This would imply that tabloids present gays as people who do things deemed as socially acceptable and, moreover, infer that this minority group are spoken of in either a neutral, if not positive light.

When we compare *gay** and *lesbian**, a larger number of relational ascriptive negative process types surface in tabloids for both. *Homosex**, in contrast, is associated with significantly more relational ascriptive negative process types in the broadsheet. Therefore, the use of the terms *gay** and *lesbian** are prone to denoting negative traits of a person in one type of press, whilst *homosex** does so in another newspaper type.

A final remark that is worthwhile making concerns the mental emotive phenomenon process type, which covers the range of feelings of like and dislike. Once again we encounter a discrepancy across terms, when examining this process subtype in tabloids. Whilst *homosex** is more frequently portrayed as the object of some kind of positive emotion, as in (32), *queer** and *lesbian** are, on the contrary, recurrently the object of a negative emotion, as in (33).

(32) Senator believes the Irish people would have no problem with a homosexual president... (TA-IP-130411-1).

(33) The gay party-boy called the gardai after alleging that the driver hurled homophobic comments at him and his male friend, including claims that he said to them: “I hate you f***ing queers” (TA-EH-070508-2).

Hence, the latter indicates that within the same newspaper type, conflicting views can emerge. This is arguably due to the fact that the two examples are taken from two different newspapers, albeit both of them tabloids. On the other hand, when one bears in mind all of the findings abovementioned, it is highly feasible that, as much as newspaper type may influence the representation of a particular minority group, in this instance homosexuals, the same phenomenon may also be characterised in one way or another depending, to some extent, on the lemma employed.

5. Conclusions

This paper revolves around a fascinating concept. The act of representation is a privilege for those holding symbolic power in the media and the public domain, and those who get access are likely to have a voice in constructing the dominant discourse; they decide who can and cannot be represented, and under which terms and conditions. Hiding participants in specific situations, highlighting certain attributes instead of others, and obscuring actions or states can serve to favour some groups and silence so-called minorities. The social reality does not change as a result of reordering syntactic structures in a particular way; however, perceptions may be modified depending on how this is portrayed. Whenever phenomena, events and participants are discursively constructed, these are bound to be subject to distortion, which can result in them being magnified, mystified or overlooked. Misrepresentation, under-representation and over-representation, though often unintentional, provide clues as to the collective set of beliefs and practices reinforced in writing and speaking. The importance of such an issue was recognised by Hallidayan linguistics when it pointed at the system of transitivity as a resource of experiential meaning. Due to its capacity to evidence our conception of our internal and external worlds, in this research we have considered it convenient to observe how

this interface between syntax and semantics operates in our newspaper corpus.

Having examined a considerably large amount of data, we can now draw the following conclusions. Methodologically speaking, a corpus-based critical discourse analysis proves very useful in an attempt to avoid researcher bias, by allowing preliminary assumptions to be reconsidered in light of the textual evidence. We took it for granted that homosexuality would be a hot issue in a country such as Ireland and that this fact would be reflected in the texts analysed. In truth, the picture portrayed by journalists, newspapers and readers in their articles, through their editorials and with their letters, respectively, provides an example of heteroglossic discourse. In the end, the media sell the ideology of corporate communication lobbies. The people who work for them aim to act accordingly even when reporting others' views. Their readership, however, does not need to agree and it is here where, interestingly, mental models may clash.

While the Parliament passed new laws concerning the status of gays and lesbians in 2008, and society on the whole supported same-sex marriage in Ireland by this point, several cases were worthwhile mentioning. The Church's attitude was not surprising; in the texts concerning this institution the reader perceives an abundance of negative mental emotive processes with gays as Phenomenon, or of verbal processes with homosexuality-related topics as Verbiage which actually have negative implications.

(34) ... the Pope “hates” homosexuals (BR-II-060707-2).

(35) THE POPE in his infinite wisdom has declared that saving the world from homosexual behaviour was as important as saving the rainforests (TA-IP-090109-1).

Likewise, it is relational ascriptive processes with a negative evaluative nature that proliferate in the comments by Democratic Unionist MP Iris Robinson, wife of the Northern Ireland First Minister. She explicitly expresses her dislike of gay sex when describing it as “an abomination which made her feel sick” (BR-II-291209-2), and homosexuality as “more vile than child abuse” (TA-EH-020808-1); in her own words, she

maintains that homosexuality is “an offence to God, an offensive act and something that God abhors” (TA-IP-180608-1). As one might expect, following the controversy, she resigned from politics, but not because of the outrage caused by her comments, rather due to personal problems, or so she claimed.

Another feature of this corpus is a well-known tendency for lesbians to face a double-glazed glass ceiling so that homophobia and sexism can operate at the same time: The lemma *lesbian* normally occurs with other sexual-orientation terms, in examples such as ‘gay or lesbian’ or ‘gay and lesbian’. Nonetheless, their sexual orientation along with their gender is made visible in other examples where the author prefers the collocation ‘lesbian women’ as opposed to ‘gay men’. In the former cases, they are Actors or Goals of material processes connected mainly with what the law allows them to do or not to do; in the latter, physical and behavioural stereotypes seem to be reinforced.

The last aspect we would like to focus our attention on is the contrast between national and international affairs in connection with marginalisation. Many of the news items in which gays and lesbians are reported to undergo the worst forms of discrimination, physical abuse included, make reference to scandals and illegal activities taking place in

Africa or Asia, and can, in the main, be explained on the grounds of the alleged homophobia pervasive in those communities or the radicalism of their religious beliefs. Nevertheless, when the articles report on stories about Ireland, two different perspectives are encouraged: What could be regarded straightaway as homophobic attacks in any other country, in Ireland is explained in connection with criminal activity rather than with sexual orientation only; if mistreatment is clearly based on homosexuality, the writer will employ terms such as bullying or snide comments.

Example (36) below encapsulates the two principles upon which exclusion is enacted, that being fear and lack of knowledge. The Irish, however, are on the road to changing this situation for the better.

(36) Indeed, there are many leading minds in Ireland who are gay, from barristers to doctors, media presenters to senior civil servants and economists – the type of people who could change popular beliefs that it’s a choice or a mental illness. However, you can still understand how their love for their work and need for a steady income comes before jeopardising their careers due to other people’s ignorance (TA-EH-091008-1).

Works Cited

- Adampa, Vasiliki. 1999. “Reporting of a Violent Crime in three Newspaper Articles. The Representation of the Female Victim and the Male Perpetrator and their Actions: A Critical News Analysis”. *Centre for Language in Social Life Working Paper No 108. Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language*. Lancaster University, United Kingdom.
- Anthony, Laurence. 2014. *AntConc 3.4.1w*
<http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html> [retrieved: 01/01/2014]
- Baker, Paul. 2005. *Public Discourses of Gay Men*. London: Routledge.
- Baker, P., C. Gabrielatos, M. Khosravini, M. Krzyzanowski, T. McEnery and R. Wodak. 2008. “A Useful Methodological Synergy? Combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics to Examine Discourses of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK Press”. *Discourse and Society*, 19.3: 273-306.
- Bacik, Ivana. 2007. “From Virgins and Mothers to Pop Stars and Presidents: Changing Roles of Women in Ireland”. *Irish Review*, 35: 100-107.
- Barnhurst, Kevin G. 2005. “News Ideology in the Twentieth Century”. *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850-2000*. Svenik Høyer and Horst Pöttker (eds.). Gothenburg: Nordicom, 239-262.
- Becker, Josephine A. 2013. *Curriculum and Intradialogic Spaces: Consciousness and Becoming in Identity Construction Based on Human Rights Value*. PhD Thesis, North West University.
http://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/call%20for%20papers/Becker_JA.pdf [retrieved: 01/03/2014]

- Benítez Castro, Miguel Ángel. 2013. *Formal, Syntactic, Semantic and Textual Features of English Shell Nouns*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Universidad de Granada.
- Brener, Reuven. 2006. "The Irish Economic Miracle". *National Review Online*.
<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/218835/irish-economic-miracle-reuven-brenner?target=author&tid=902043> [retrieved: 01/03/2014]
- Bristow, Joseph. 2010. "Picturing his Exact Decadence: The British Reception of Oscar Wilde". *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*. Evangelista, Stefano (ed.). New York: Continuum, 20-50.
- Burroughs, Elaine. 2015. "Discursive Representation of 'Illegal Immigration' in the Irish Newsprint Media: The Domination and Multiple Facets of the 'Control' Argumentation". *Discourse & Society*, 26.2: 165-183.
- Chopin, Isabelle. 2006. "Administrative Practices in the Acquisition of Nationality". *Acquisition and Loss of Nationality. Volume I: Comparative Analyses. Policies and Trends in 15 European Countries*. Rainer Bauböck, Eva Ersbøll, Kees Groenendijk & Harald Waldrauch (eds.). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 221-268.
- Clark, Kate. 1992. "The Linguistics of Blame: Representations of Women in *The Sun* Reporting of Crimes of Sexual Violence". *Language, Text and Context: Essays in Stylistics*. Michael Toolan (ed.). London: Routledge, 208-224.
- Collier, Richard. 1995. *Masculinity, Law and the Family*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Cunanan, Bonifacio. 2011. "Using Transitivity as a Framework in a Stylistic Analysis of Virginia Woolf's *Old Mrs. Grey*". *Asian EFL Journal*, 54: 69-79.
- Duffy, Gavin. 2011. *Perceptions of Same Sex Marriage in Irish Society in 2011*. MA Thesis, DBS School of Arts, Dublin.
http://esource.dbs.ie/bitstream/handle/10788/290/ma_duffy_g_2011.pdf?sequence=1 [retrieved: 01/03/2014]
- Eggins, Suzanne. 2004. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Grammar*. London: Pinter.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1989. *Language and Power*. New York: Longman.
- _____. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- _____. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London, New York: Longman.
- Fawcett, Robin. 2000. "In Place of Halliday's 'Verbal Group', Part 1: Evidence from the Problems of Halliday's Representations and the Relative Simplicity of the Proposed Alternative". *Word*, 51.2: 157-203.
- Ferriter, Diarmaid. 2010. *The Transformation of Ireland: 1900-2000*. London: Profile Books.
- Fine-Davis, Margaret. 2011. *Attitudes to Family Formation in Ireland. Findings from the Nationwide Study*. Family Support Agency, Dublin.
<https://www.tcd.ie/Communications/content/pdf/AttitudestoFamilyreport2011.pdf> [retrieved: 01/03/2014]
- Fourier, Pieter J. (ed.). 2008. *Media Studies: Policy, Management and Media Representation*. Vol. 2. Cape Town: Juta & Co.
- Fowler, Roger. 1977. *Linguistics and the Novel*. London: Methuen.
- _____. 1986. *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford: OUP.
- _____. 1991. *Language in the News. Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London, New York: Routledge.
- _____. and Gunther Kress. 1979. "Critical Linguistics". *Language and Control*. Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew (eds.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 185-213.
- _____. (ed.). 1966. *Essays on Style and Language: Linguistic and Critical Approaches to Literary Style*. London, Boston, Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Gabrielatos, Costas and Paul Baker. 2008. "Fleeing, Sneaking, Flooding: A Corpus Analysis of Discursive Constructions of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK Press 1996-2005". *Journal of English Linguistics*, 36.1: 5-38.
- Gallardo, Barbara. 2006. "Analysis of a Literary Work Using Systemic Functional Grammar". Paper presented at 33rd International Systemic Functional Congress,
http://www.naswt.org.uk/groups/public/@equalityandtraining/documents/nas_download/naswt_009350~1.pdf [retrieved: 07/07/ 2013]
- Gouveia, Carlos Alberto Marques. 2005. "Assumptions about Gender, Power and Opportunity: Gays and Lesbians as Discursive Subjects in a Portuguese Newspaper". *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse*. Michelle Lazar (ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan, 229-250.
- Halliday, Michael A.K. 1971. "Linguistic Function and Literary Style: An Inquiry into the Language of William Golding's *The Inheritors*". *Literary Style: A Symposium*. Seymour Chatman (ed.). New York, London: OUP, 330-368.
- _____. 1973. *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- _____. 1976. "A Brief Sketch of Systemic Grammar". *System and Function in Language*. Gunther Kress (ed.). London: Oxford University Press, 3-6.

- _____. 1985. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- _____. 2002. *Linguistic Studies of Text and Discourse. Vol. 2*. London: Continuum.
- _____ and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen. 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- _____ and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen. 2014. *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Hopper, Paul J. & Sandra A. Thompson. 1980. "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse". *Language*, 56.2: 251-299.
- Hoskan, Özlem. 2006. *The Media Portrayal of Homosexuality in the Turkish Press between 1998 and 2006*. PhD Thesis, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara, Turkey. <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12608008/index.pdf> [retrieved: 01/03/2014]
- Huckin, Thomas. 2002. "Critical Discourse Analysis and the Discourse of Condescension". *Discourse Studies in Composition*. Ellen L. Barton and Gail S. Cresskill (eds.). New Jersey: Hampton Press, 155-176.
- Israel, Peace Chinwendu. 2014. "A Study of Power Relations in Doctor-patient Interactions in Selected Hospitals In Lagos State, Nigeria". *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 5.2: 177-184
- Koller, Veronika. 2008. *Lesbian Discourses: Images of a Community*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Kress, Gunther and Theo Van Leeuwen. 2006 [1996]. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2nd edition.). London: Routledge.
- Kuhar, Roman. 2003. *Media Representation of Homosexuality: An Analysis of the Print Media in Slovenia, 1970-2000*. http://mediawatch.mirovni-institut.si/eng/media_representations_of_homosexuality.pdf [retrieved: 01/03/2014]
- Lacey, Brian. 2009. *Terrible Queer Creatures: Homosexuality in Irish History*. Dublin: Wordwell.
- Li, Juan. 2011. "Collision of Language in News Discourse: A Functional-cognitive Perspective on Transitivity". *Critical Discourse Studies*, 8.3: 203-219.
- Lillian, Donna. L. 2005. "Homophobic Discourse: A 'Popular' Canadian Example". *SKY Journal of Linguistics*, 18: 119-144.
- Lunn, Pete and Tony Fahey. 2011. *Households and Family Structures in Ireland: A Detailed Statistical Analysis of Census 2006*. Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute. <http://www.esri.ie/UserFiles/publications/SUB002/BKMNEXT202.pdf> [retrieved: 01/03/ 2014]
- Mahtani, Minelle. 2008. "How are Immigrants Seen – and What do they Want to See? Contemporary Research on the Representation of Immigrants in the Canadian English-language Media". *Immigration and integration in Canada*. John Biles, Meyer Burstein and James Frideres (eds.). Kingston, Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 231-253.
- Martínez Vázquez, Montserrat (ed.). 1998. *Transitivity Revisited*. Huelva: Servicio de Publicaciones.
- Matu, Peter M. and Hendrik Johannes Lubbe. 2007. "Investigating Language and Ideology". *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6.3: 401-418.
- McEnery, Tony and Andrew Wilson. 1996. *Corpus Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- McGhee, Derek. 2001. *Homosexuality, Law and Resistance*. London and New York: Routledge.
- McGonigle, Lisa. 2013. *Post-Catholic Ireland in Literature and Popular Culture*. PhD Thesis, University of Otago, New Zealand.
- Minton, Stephen J., Torunn Dahl, Astrid M. O'Moore and Donnely Tuck. 2008. "An Exploratory Survey of the Experiences of Homophobic Bullying among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Young People in Ireland". *Irish Educational Studies*, 27.2: 177-191.
- Morgan, Candia. 1998. *Writing Mathematically. The Discourse of Investigation*. London: Falmer Press.
- Murphy, Antoin E. 2000. "The 'Celtic Tiger' - An Analysis of Ireland's Economic Growth Performance", RSC No. 2000/16. *EU Working Papers*. European University Institute. http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/WP-Texts/00_16.pdf [retrieved: 01/06/ 2013]
- Naidoo, Pravani. 1997. "Of Pansies, Perverts, and Macho Men': Researching Homosexuality through a Discursive Lens". *Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Qualitative Methods Conference*. Martin T. Blanche (ed.). <http://www.criticalmethods.org/pravani.htm> [retrieved: 01/03/ 2014]
- Neale, Amy C. 2002. *More Delicate TRANSITIVITY: Extending the PROCESS TYPE System Networks for English to Include Full Semantic Classifications*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Cardiff University. http://www.itri.bton.ac.uk/~Amy.Neale/thesis_online/final_thesis.pdf [retrieved: 01/06/ 2013]
- Nguyen, Hanh Thu. 2012. "Transitivity Analysis of Heroic Mother by Hoa Pham". *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 2.4: 85-100.
- O'Halloran, Keiran. 2007. "The Subconscious in James Joyce's 'Eveline': A Corpus Stylistic Analysis that Chews on the 'Fish Hook'". *Language and Literature*, 16.3: 227-244.
- O'Higgins-Norman, James. 2008. *Homophobic Bullying in Irish Secondary Education*. Palo Alto, California: Academica Press.

- _____. 2009. "Straight Talking: Explorations on Homosexuality and Homophobia in Secondary Schools in Ireland". *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 9.4: 381-393.
- Peebles, Amy E. 2004. *Sexual and Spiritual Identity Transformation among Ex-gays and Ex-ex-gays: Narrating a New self*. PhD Thesis, University of Texas, Austin.
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2004/peeblesa57738/peeblesa57738.pdf> [retrieved: 01/03/ 2014]
- Ramblado-Minero, María de la Cinta and Auxiliadora Pérez-Vides. 2006. *Single Motherhood in 20th Century Ireland: Cultural, Historical and Social Essays*. Lewiston, N.Y., Edwin Mellen Press.
- Rice, Sally. 1987. *Towards a Cognitive Model of Transitivity*. PhD Thesis, University of California, San Diego.
- Rodrigues Junior, Adail S. 2008. "An Exploratory Study of Representation of Gay Characters in a Parallel Corpus of Short Stories: A Systemic Functional Approach".
<https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/traducao/articulo/download/6734/6207> [retrieved: 01/06/ 2013]
- Rosen, Jay. 1999. *What are Journalists for?* Yale: Yale UP.
- Sahragard, Rahman and G. Davatgarzadeh. 2010. "The Representation of Social Actors in Interchange Third Edition Series: A CDA". *Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 2.1: 67-89.
- Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London, New York: Penguin Books.
- Seo, Soa. 2013. "Hallidayean Transitivity Analysis: The Battle for Tripoli in the Contrasting Headlines of two National Newspapers". *Discourse and Society*, 24: 774-791.
- Stamou, Anastasia, Anastasia Alevriadou, Pipini Eleftheriou & Ifigenia Vamvakidou. 2008. "Constructing an Identity of Able-bodiedness: Discourses of Disability by Primary School Children". *Reflecting on Identities: Research, Practice and Innovation, Proceedings of the 10th Conference of the Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network*. Alastair Ross and Peter Cunningham (eds.). London: CiCe, 643-651.
- Stychin, Carl F. 1995. "Unmanly Diversions: The Construction of the Homosexual Body (Politic) in English Law". *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, 32.3: 503-536.
- Sweeny, Paul. 2004. "The Irish Experience of Economic Lift Off". Paper presented at 'The Workplace of the Future,' a Colloquium Celebrating Ireland's Presidency of the European Union. Montreal, May.
http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/celtic_tiger.pdf [retrieved: 01/06/ 2013]
- Szuchewycz, Bohdan. 2000. "Re-Pressing Racism: The Denial of Racism in the Canadian Press". *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 25.4: 497-515.
- Taylor, Paul A. 2010. *Žižek and the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Teo, Peter. 2000. "Racism in the News: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Reporting in two Australian Newspapers". *Discourse in Society*, 11.1: 7-49.
- UNESCO. 2012. "Education Sector Responses to Homophobic Bullying". *Good Policy and Practice in HIV and Health Education Booklet 8*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002164/216493e.pdf>
 [retrieved: 07/07/ 2013]
- Van Dijk, Teun A. 2006. "Ideology and Discourse Analysis". *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11.2: 115-140.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo. 1996. "The Representation of Social Actors". *Texts and Practices. Readings in CDA*. Carmen R. Caldas-Coulthard & Malcolm Coulthard (eds.). London: Routledge, 32-70.
- Walshe, Eibhear. 2005. "The First Gay Irishman? Ireland and the Wilde Trials". *Éire/Ireland*, 40.3/4: 38-57.
- Wodak, Ruth and Paul Chilton (eds.). 2005. *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Zagefka, Hanna, Dennis Nigbur, Roberto González and Linda Tip. 2013. "Why does Ingroup Essentialism Increase Prejudice against Minority Members?". *International Journal of Psychology*, 48.1: 60-68.

Received 5th February 2015 Last version 6th March 2015

Leanne Bartley started working in academia in 2008 as a research assistant at the University of Jaén, Spain, within a research project examining learner corpora. At that time, Leanne also completed her MA and subsequently took up a contract at the University of Granada as a Visiting Scholar. She is currently embarked on her PhD for which she was awarded a scholarship in 2013. Her main interests are forensic linguistics and discourse analysis.

Encarnación Hidalgo-Tenorio is a senior lecturer in English linguistics at the University of Granada, Spain, where she has been teaching undergraduate and master courses since 1997. Her main research area is Critical Discourse Analysis, where she focuses on notions such as representation and power enactment as manifested mainly in public discourse. She has published on language and gender, as well as Irish theatre, and has also paid attention to the analysis of the way identity can be discursively constructed.