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**LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY HALLMARKS IN E.A.
POE'S NARRATIVE: A CORPUS – DRIVEN
ANALYSIS**

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*My life has been a whim, an impulse,
a passion, a yearning for solitude, a
mockery of the things of this world*

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of texts via corpora methodology has become a useful and profitable research tool within the field of language and applied linguistics. Also in the literary arena, stylistic features can be studied on the basis of quantifications and interpretations allowed by digital corpus calculus. In this way, multiple textual sources are allowed to be analysed at a time and compared to other text references to underscore distinctive traits.

Bearing in mind this scientific framework and by using Poe's main short narrative production, this study aims at describing the main linguistic and stylistic features in the American writer's most well-known short stories. Simultaneously, we try to verify how the evolution of the writer's creative flair runs parallel to his life experience and events. A total of sixty-eight short stories were compiled in a target corpus to be compared with two reference corpora, one of them collecting British English texts (BNC) and the other American English ones (AmE06). An analysis of both the lexical and grammatical component was carried out making use of the concordancing software toolkit *AntConc* 3.5.8. (2019) for Windows. To track the evolution of literary developments in Poe's narrative genre, five works out of the whole set were chosen, being sorted chronologically by date of publication.

Conclusions confirm previous findings concerning Poe's narrative style and pose other results in regard to lexical, linguistic and artistic peculiarities. An exposition of the parallelism between Poe's life and the way his literary production evolves as for different aspects is also shown under the prism of data reported by corpus analysis.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, analysis tools in corpus linguistics, automatic text analysis, literary analysis, linguistic research.

RESUMEN

El análisis de textos a través de la metodología de corpus se ha convertido en una útil y beneficiosa herramienta de investigación en el área del Lenguaje y de la Lingüística Aplicada. También en la vertiente de la Literatura, las características de estilo pueden estudiarse sobre la base de cuantificaciones e interpretaciones por medio del cálculo a través de corpus. De esta manera, múltiples fuentes textuales pueden ser analizadas a la vez y comparadas con otros textos de referencia para destacar rasgos distintivos propios.

Desde este marco científico y usando las principales narraciones breves de Poe, este estudio persigue describir las características lingüísticas y de estilo de los más célebres relatos

breves del escritor americano. Al mismo tiempo, se pretende verificar cómo la evolución creativa del autor se produce en paralelo a sus experiencias vitales. Un total de sesenta y ocho relatos breves fueron compilados en forma de corpus a analizar con respecto a otros dos corpus de referencia en lengua inglesa, uno de ellos de textos en inglés británico (BNC) y otro en inglés americano (AmE06). Se llevó a cabo un análisis del componente léxico y gramatical haciendo uso de la herramienta informática de concordancia (corpus) *AntConc* 3.5.8. (2019) para Windows. En aras a hacer un seguimiento de la evolución del estilo literario de la narrativa en cuestión, cinco obras de entre el total fueron seleccionadas por orden cronológico de publicación.

Las conclusiones confirman hallazgos previos sobre la obra de Poe y plantean otros resultados en relación a peculiaridades léxicas, lingüísticas y artísticas. Se describe también el paralelismo entre la biografía del autor y la forma en que su obra evoluciona en distintos aspectos, bajo el prisma de los datos que proporciona el análisis de corpus.

Palabras clave: Lingüística de corpus, herramientas de análisis en Lingüística de Corpus, análisis automático de textos, análisis literario, investigación lingüística.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

According to McEnery (2012:448-463), Corpus is described as a large body of linguistic evidence composed of attested language use. Thus, corpora are sets of texts integrated in a digital system allowing the reader to access and analyse them under both statistical and linguistic perspectives.

From this point of departure, endless possibilities do open for the field of linguistic and literary research and in this sense the most frequent words in a set text can be evinced. Outstanding combinations of words can also be shown or even comparisons between different sets can be undertaken, just to pose two instances.

Corpora benefits have been used in many areas of language and applied linguistics. Following Schmitt (2013:89-104), among many others we can cite:

- Description of language and language use. Or the way a certain language organizes its own grammar, vocabulary, morph-syntax, discourse analysis, pragmatics and other linguistic features which vary from one language to another.

- Second Language Acquisition. No doubt corpora may show us the different stages (and its characteristics) through which learners go before acquiring a language. This can be of great importance for the teaching process.

- Psycholinguistics. It studies not only acquisition but also comprehension and production of language. Again, corpora analysis may well have access to a myriad of language performances as a basis for further and deep study of how it is elaborated and produced.

- Sociolinguistics. In this field, linguistic indicators of power and culture are made evident. With the help of corpus methodology, the search for more data to ascertain findings proves crucial.

- Focus on the language learner (styles, strategies). Personal features are always a key factor in the process of learning a language. Variables such as age, race, gender, personal strategies or a particular linguistic flair for languages are to be considered indeed. All of them can be widely studied through the observation of multiple oral and written texts submitted to corpus analysis.

- Forensic linguistics. This discipline focuses on legal aspects of language to discern such important elements as disputed meaning, social profile, origin determination, plagiarism,... Since corpora include millions of words compiled which can be sorted by different aspects or statistically compared to other corpora acting as a referent, the help which can be offered is more than valuable.

- Multilingualism. Currently, language teaching values the contribution of multilingualism to language learning. The role of the mother tongue and other languages in the learning of new languages can benefit from corpus analysis, e.g. by comparing salient elements in the output of multilingual learners to that of those who are not.

- Language skills and assessment. Strategies for developing skills and sub-skills in a language can be multiple (cognitive, meta-cognitive, social, affective,...). Knowing about them implies a great advance for linguistic pedagogy and also for the way of assessing them. Corpora provide with a potential repertory of all kinds of examples which define every strategy used and even those still to be discovered and studied more in depth.

1.1 Corpora

There can be many varieties of corpora according to different criteria and uses, running a whole gamut of collections from monolingual, multilingual, written, oral, multimodal, raw or annotated, to special-purpose corpora (Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:8, t.1). Some authors

like McEnery & Wilson (1996:29, as cited in Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:5, t.1) assert that for a corpus to be considered as such in modern linguistics, it must meet the following features: sampling and representativeness, finite size, machine readable form and a standard reference. In this vein, they can be sampled from different sources and in different statistical ways, and be more or less representative of a particular aspect. Their size increases more and more with recent developments of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). An example is *The Bank of English (BoE)* with 4.5 billion words (Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:8, t.1).

Probably the two most well-known types of corpora are the so-called *raw* and *annotated* corpora. According to Beißwenger & Storrer (2008:1-15), in annotated corpora the data have been submitted to a process of annotation such as e.g. an SGML/XML-based annotation of data segments which can be significant for the sake of analysis. On the other hand, data in raw corpora remain just the same way they were originally found in their primary source.

Just to name a few of them, among the most renowned corpora in English we can count on the British National Corpus (BNC), elaborated by Oxford University Press in the eighties and early nineties and with more than 100 million words coming from varied sources of texts (spoken, academic, fiction, press and magazines). Also very tapped into is the Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen Corpus (LOB), with one million words and which was created in the seventies by the universities of Lancaster, Oslo and Bergen (Norwegian Computing Centre for the Humanities). In fields like language acquisition research, we can rely on the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) which allows a huge number of contrastive applications and also developments in discourse studies (Virtanen, 1996:157-166). As for academic writing, we have at disposal the British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE), arranged by Master's students and undergraduates from several disciplines (Alsop & Nesi, 2009:71-83) and concerning spoken English it is widely known the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE). In regard to literature, a good instance is the Corpus of Dickens's Novels (DNov) encompassing all fifteen novels by Dickens and with a total of 3,8 million words (Egbert & Mahlberg, 2017:1-5).

1.2 Corpus analysis. Tools and key concepts

Corpus investigation has a methodology of its own and probably the initial point to consider is how to analyse corpora. To do that, we can count on several processes. Two of them, which imply a basic analysis procedure and initial approach to the exploitation of

corpora are the *two corpus-handling techniques* (Evison, 2010:122). These two first approaches to corpora dissection deal with, on the one hand, the generation of *frequency lists* and *concordances* on the other. The software we will be using to obtain both is *AntConc* (Laurence, 2020), which is a free tool that can be easily downloaded from Laurence Anthony's website (2020). Other theoretical aspects to be considered in this study concerning corpora analysis are *token*, *type*, *lemma*, *collocates*, *keywords*, *keyness* and *n-grams*.

Frequency lists show the whole set of elements in a corpus, ordered by frequency of appearance or alphabetically. This data can give us an idea about the lexical content of the texts being analysed. Typically, we will find that several words show a high frequency of incidence whereas the vast majority of the remaining ones only appear once in the set text. Words can even be classified according to their frequency (Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:6, t.4) in *frequent words* (mostly closed-class words such as determiners, prepositions and pronouns), *mid-frequency words* (more lexical words, located in the centrality of the list) and *infrequent words* or very odd words appearing only once in the text collection (normally codes, non-words and the like). These latter words, due to the fact of being unusual, are also called *hapax legomena* or following Lardilleux & Lepage (2009:440) definition, *what has been uttered once* (translated literally from the equivalent in Greek, ἄπαξ λεγόμενον).

Concordances. They are “a formatted version or display of all occurrences or tokens of a particular type in a corpus” (Sinclair, 1991:247). In concordances, the item looked for appears in every context that surrounds it in the corpus. Hence, the key word in context is called KWIC (acronym). The software used to carry out this task is called a *concordancer*.

Tokens. They are the total number of words existing in a text, irrespective of the number of times they are repeated. It must be said, first of all, that for a computer, any string of characters that has a blank space before and after, is *a word* (Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:1, t.4). The majority of corpus analysis digital programs do not take punctuation as a distinctive word, so hyphenated words are considered two different words. Contractions are *words*, no matter if they indicate a genitive form or the verb *to be* in the third person singular. Furthermore, and if no other change is made, the digital package will consider symbols (percentages, currency...) as *words*.

Types (Turner, 2015). It refers to the amount of distinct words appearing in the text. In this sense, they can also be referred to as *word-forms*. Thus, the sentence *a good wine is a*

wine that you like contains nine tokens, but only seven types, as *a* and *wine* are repeated (Turner's example, 2015).

Lemma. It represents the *family* a word belongs to. For instance, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were* are word-forms included within the lemma *be*, which is then something more abstract than the family of particular words it encompasses. Lemmas are normally written in capital letters, whereas word-forms appear in lower case letters. This way both can be distinguished.

Collocation and collocates. According to Sinclair (1991:170), *collocation* is “the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other”. *Collocates* are separate words, every independent word that combines to form a collocation. For instance, *fast* and *food* are collocates, and *fast-food* is a collocation. Corpus software is able to work out, by means of statistical calculus, the degree of association between words so as to be considered a collocation or not.

Keywords. By comparing two wordlists, we can have access to knowledge about keywords. They are calculated statistically, and according to Bondi (2010:3), “keywords are those whose frequency (or infrequency) is statistically significant, when compared to the standards set by a reference corpus”. Therefore, to obtain the keywords in a set of texts, we must compare them with a reference corpus and we will obtain from the statistical comparison which words are *salient*, *outstanding* or significant. We should pay attention to Bondi's (2010:3) words, yet:

Identifying elements that are repeated to a statistically significant extent does not in itself constitute an analysis or an interpretation of the text or corpus. It does however point to elements that may be profitably studied and need to be explained. It certainly does point to fundamental elements in describing specialised discourse or in placing a text in a specific domain. The problem for the researcher, of course, lies both in the design of appropriate and adequately representative corpora and in the delicacy of the analysis, with its capacity to isolate specific questions and avoid overgeneralisation. (Bondi 3)

Keyness. Closely related to keywords, *keyness* is the quality a word or phrase has of being *key* in its context (Wikipedia 2020). Keyness then not only does reflect the *topic* of our text or corpus, but also other important features, such as style, register, or the variety of

language in question. A keyword list, in this vein, *characterises* with its words the text or corpus we are dealing with. Like a *key* in the lock, it *opens* the content of a text.

N-grams. They are fixed combinations of three or more words which inform us about bigger units than the word, that is to say, how they combine to form longer phrases or their own *phraseology*. As Damashek (1995:843) defines them, they are “consecutive sequences of *n* characters”.

1.3 Corpus linguistics in literary analysis. A proposal for E.A. Poe’s main narrative texts

If we consider stylistics as the linguistic analysis of literary texts and corpus linguistics as the electronic analysis of language data, we can combine both functionalities to reach corpus stylistics or the linguistic analysis of texts electronically dealt with (Fischer-Starcke, 2010:1).

The two main goals of corpus stylistics are (Fischer-Starcke, 2010:1):

- The study of meaning encrypted in language and to apply proper developments and procedures to decode that meaning.
- To deepen in the literary meaning of texts.

Fischer-Starcke (2010:16-23) also considers the following criteria for the consideration and evaluation of corpus linguistic analysis:

- Growth of knowledge. Research must always imply an increase in the amount of knowledge included in a certain discipline.
- Replicability of results. It alludes to the capacity of a study to be reproduced within the scope of a similar framework and goal with a different work team. Therefore, transparency is assured for the reader.
- Checkability of results. Implying that, if we make our own analysis by using (and testing) the methods, techniques and some settings of a study, we would obtain the same results. Results must be *testable* by other researches.
- Innovations derived from analyses. We have to bear in mind the importance of any contribution, whatever the result may be. According to Fischer-Starcke (2010: 23):

Not everything that furthers the growth of knowledge in corpus linguistics, stylistics or literary studies is innovative. Also, conclusions that are not innovative might be of interest for specific questions since, for instance, an analysis might highlight a different detail or the author might take a different theoretical perspective on a question. (Fischer-Starcke 23).

This work is based in essence on these principles and tries to contribute to the corpus-driven stylistic analyses by dint of adding some findings related to the narrative work of the North American writer Edgar Allan Poe.

E.A. Poe (1809-1849) is said to be one of the most original, disturbing and powerful writers in North American literature (Gibert, 2001:73). His literary interest focused more on *aesthetics* than on *ethics* and so tried to foster an intrinsic taste for beauty instead of morality in literature. Unlike most of his contemporary authors, he showed a great tendency towards delving into eccentric and odd issues in his writings, since *commonness* was not a synonym of good taste for him (Gibert, 2001:73). Much probably he stuck to the German romantic dictates of *Art for Art's sake* (a motto associated to Walter Pater in the late 19th c. English literary decadentist context) and spread a movement that was to impinge even upon the French symbolists. From this perspective, Poe applied a series of revolutionary techniques to his fiction which made it unique and innovative. In this vein, he has been told to be the pioneer of modern detective story and even science fiction tale (Gibert, 2001:73). Although he was calumniated for his odd style and charged with unfavourable legends and a bad reputation, his achievements have been widely acclaimed by contemporary critics. His beleaguered life no doubt influenced his writing style, in which he found a way of unleashing misfortunes and scourges affecting him. His father abandoned the family after his mother's death and Poe was brought up by a tobacco dealer who never supported his aspirations. He was dismissed from the U.S. Military Academy due to personal rebelliousness and the first writings he published were esteemed unsuccessful. Financial breakdown was a constant in his life and he used to find it extremely difficult to maintain a job for long. Suffering from mental bouts of depression and losing her wife at an early age due to tuberculosis, took him to excessive drinking, which profoundly affected his renown as a writer despite his brilliant literary achievements.

Poe initially wrote poetry, like *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827) or *The Raven and Other Poems* (1845) but later in life he devoted himself to short story, a genre he hugely

cultivated with amazing results. The intensity, totality and concentration of short story provoked the aesthetic impact to which Poe aspired, the so-called “theory of the unity of effect or impression” (Gibert, 2001:77). Probably his most famous short narratives, which we will be analysing in a basic way and according to corpus linguistics, are included in his two-volume *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840). There the Gothic tradition with the use of supernatural, incomprehensible elements and dark as well as remote places is perfectly depicted and shown as an antagonist reaction to the *Age of Reason* of previous times.

1.4 Overview of previous research

1.4.1 Poe’s studies

Probably one of the most representative works concerning Poe and his writings may be attributed to Dean & Boyd (2020:482-491), with an interesting research about the reflection of Poe’s mental characteristics on his literary production. It was made through the automatization of the writing materials and later computerised study. A proper corpus prepared on the basis of his letters, some poems and novels was arranged and analysed, with interesting results about the influence of possible depressive episodes on Poe’s written style.

Another important revelation, again in the same vein, is the study carried out by Cantos-Gómez (2012:51-76). Forty-two tales among the whole set of this genre by Poe were chosen and analysed through corpus-based methodology (type-token ratio, mean word length, long words, *hapax legomena*). Typical linguistic features were put in parallel with the different stages and main life events in Poe’s vital line, showing a correlation between his mood changes and the type of language used. This way, it is once more evinced that Poe’s mental impairment ought to have impinged upon his literary output.

1.4.2 Other authors’ corpus-based research

Analyses of other authors’ literary work are notorious as well. Mahlberg’s book *Corpus Stylistics and Dickens’s Fiction* (2013) deals with fanciful meanings, collocates, patterns in the narrator’s diction, settings and multiple aspects such as body language and names of people and places, relating them to Dickens’s fiction. Also Mahlberg (2007:1-31) studies Dickens from the perspective of corpus analysis and on the grounds of the concept of clusters and local textual functions. In this case, she took a fiction corpus as a comparative source instead of using a general corpus and established five categories of local textual functions described by different frequencies of clusters.

Wijitsopon (2018:1-22) conducted a research study on Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. Not only did she focus on the meaning of keywords from a corpus analysis, but also on the grammatical form they showed as a contribution to meaning. Concordance of keywords was crucial to establish the grammatical function assigned to them and thus the meaning conveyed. The same author and novel are studied in turn by Starcke (2006:87-104) under the prism of corpus methodology, obtaining an analysis of phrases and collocates which provides new layers of meaning to literary criticism.

Stubbs (2005:5-24) also used computer analysis to describe stylistic features of Joseph Conrad's *Heart Of Darkness*. No doubt, the study was a landmark for sceptical linguists and literary critics who still disapproved of these techniques as a useful resource to add new knowledge to existing data concerning linguistics and literary evidence in the scenario of criticism. This work simply supplied with groundbreaking data by showing words frequencies, distributions and other quantitative figures that suggested new nuances of critical interpretation. The author supported his data with comparisons made against the British National Corpus (BNC) as a reference corpus.

Culpeper (2009:29-59) gets keywords, different discourse categories, words' semantic features, keywords' classifications and the like on the basis of a corpus study. It is all referred to characters from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and appeals to the benefit of studying the surrounding co-text of keywords as well as semantic prompts aroused by them.

Callejas (2001:17-18), through cognitive linguistics and the *conceptual metaphor study model* by Lakoff & Johnson (1980:195-208), studies the relationship between language and thought. She does so by means of Seamus Heaney poetic texts, observing the link between conceptual structures and language. She highlights the role of *synaesthesia*, an element that helps understand the neurophysiologic mechanism of the cognitive phenomenon we call conceptual metaphor. Corpus methodology proves paramount in this study to locate synaesthetic metaphors within a whole corpus of sixty poems.

Nakamura (1993:29-48) studied the presence of verbal features in a set of texts, evincing in the Brown and LOB corpora patterns for verbal writing behaviour (*imaginative* and *informative*-like type of writing). Additionally, he identified the main modal verbs used in both corpora for the aforementioned types of writing.

Potter (1969) observed a quantitative evolution in the use of the *be going to* form informing several literary works and Mair (1997:1537-1544) was able to pose interesting conclusions regarding the same verbal form on the basis of other cardinal projects and studies comparing corpora and their evolution through time.

Berglund (1997:7-20) focused on the study of British, American and Indian varieties of the English language through pertinent corpora, obtaining differences in the use of the future forms *will/won't + inf.*, *'ll + inf.*, *shall + inf.*, *be (pres) going to + inf.* and *gonna + inf.* The results were obtained discriminating data according to *informative* and *imaginative* prose following the Brown Corpus' approach and criteria.

From a more linguistic point of view, but closely related to literary expression, Peitsara (2004:77-94) examined contractions of the pronoun *it* and the verb *to be*, paying attention mainly to the non-negative forms of the present tense in regard to two different forms: with a reduced pronoun (*'tis*) and accompanying a reduced verb (*it's*). He addressed the colloquial nature of contractions, chronologies of the variants *'tis* and *it's*, a possible dialectal pattern for them and other elements which might affect the selection of variants. He enhanced the importance of tapping into different computer corpora, showing different historical periods, varieties of English and text types. In the same linguistic vein, Biber (1987:99-119) dealt with negative contractions in different types of texts from the 1960s on, taken from the LOB and BROWN corpora, containing both British and American English language varieties respectively. The set of texts encompassed different levels of formality and Biber (1987:99-119) established fifteen text categories within them, choosing nine for his study (two of them related to fiction).

For the sake of completeness and concerning American English language analysis by dint of corpora, we cannot forget the pertinent work of Liu (2003:671-700). He was able to find the main idiomatic expressions within the American spoken language and compared them to the most frequent ones illustrating learning environments. Only by searching for concordance real sources will we be able to learn the authentic meaning of idioms as well as their frequency or importance of use within a language. Current and reliable English linguistic and literary patterns are to be found in corpora, being the latter by all means the best source to inspire updated and authentic learning.

2 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives which this study aims at may be considered the following:

- To describe the main short narrative production by E.A. Poe in the light of corpus methodology, by using his most famous short novels and narrative works and having as a reference two large-scale corpora on British and American English language.
- To find stylistic features in Poe's writing, derived from the analysis of the automatic display of its most salient quantitative features.
- To ascertain, from a simple descriptive view, the main literary stylistic values attributed to Poe by the accessible and critical canon and to suggest, if any, new contributions found.
- To analyse descriptively both the form of language as well as aspects of meaning derived from words and phrases used by Poe in the literary set analysed.
- To evince the feasibility and benefits of corpus-centred techniques for language and literature studies, as a token of how new technologies have barged in the field of humanities.

All in all, this work pursues to find possible genuine elements in Poe's style as well as to discern if his life events could have been mirrored somehow (from a descriptive analysis) in his narrative literary yield.

3 RESEARCH QUESTION

Throughout this study, we aim at describing Poe's main narrative characteristics, making use of the main tenets postulated by corpus analysis methodology. In a descriptive way, we will be delving into aspects of Poe's rhetoric according to:

- Concordance.
- Wordlists, keyword lists and keyness (via positive and negative words).
- Collocation and collocates.
- Clusters and n-grams.

From them, we will try to elucidate corpus-informed grammatical patterns of use following the layout of other corpus studies of grammar and lexicon: vocabulary, grammatical co-text, discourse-level factors and context of situation (Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:1-3, t.7).

This way, we will be tracing the path towards the search of exclusive and authentic aspects of Poe's prose and in turn toward a parallelism between Poe's vital experiences and his artistic production.

Even though, as seen previously, there are studies dealing with corpus analysis to obtain conclusions on works of many authors, there seems to be no great evidence of the topic concerning E.A. Poe. Only a few of them among the published literature found focus on psychological aspects of the author influencing in a significant way the literary output.

Despite being only a descriptive paper, the present document simply aspires to briefly present findings concerning Poe's short narrative production submitted to corpus analysis research. This way, we no doubt try to pave the way for deeper and later investigation on the issue.

4 DATA

The selection of works by E.A. Poe was taken from the *Project Gutenberg* website (*The Works Of Edgar Allan Poe, The Raven Edition*). A total of sixty-eight tales were selected, all of them belonging to the same narrative genre (short novel or tale), based on the following chronological order:

	Title	Year of Publication
1.	<i>Metzengerstein</i>	1832
2.	<i>The Duc de L'Omelette</i>	1832
3.	<i>A Tale of Jerusalem</i>	1832
4.	<i>Ms. Found in a Bottle</i>	1833
5.	<i>The Assignment</i>	1834
6.	<i>The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaal</i>	1835
7.	<i>Berenice</i>	1835
8.	<i>Morella</i>	1835
9.	<i>King Pest</i>	1835
10.	<i>Lionizing</i>	1835
11.	<i>Shadow –a Parable</i>	1835
12.	<i>Four Beasts in One –The Homo-Cameleopard</i>	1836
13.	<i>Maelzel's Chess-Player</i>	1836
14.	<i>Mystification</i>	1837
15.	<i>Silence –a Fable</i>	1838
16.	<i>Narrative of A. Gordon Pym (chapters 1-25)</i>	1838

17.	<i>Ligeia</i>	1838
18.	<i>How to Write a Blackwood Article</i>	1838
19.	<i>A Predicament</i>	1838
20.	<i>The Fall of the House of Usher</i>	1839
21.	<i>William Wilson</i>	1839
22.	<i>The Devil in the Belfry</i>	1839
23.	<i>The Man that was Used Up</i>	1839
24.	<i>The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion</i>	1839
25.	<i>Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling</i>	1839
26.	<i>The Business Man</i>	1840
27.	<i>Philosophy of Furniture</i>	1840
28.	<i>The Man of the Crowd</i>	1840
29.	<i>The Murders in the Rue Morgue</i>	1841
30.	<i>A Descent into the Maelström</i>	1841
31.	<i>The Island of the Fay</i>	1841
32.	<i>Eleonora</i>	1841
33.	<i>Three Sundays in a Week</i>	1841
34.	<i>The Colloquy of Monos and Una</i>	1841
35.	<i>Never Bet the Devil your Head</i>	1841
36.	<i>The Mystery of Marie Roget. A Sequel to "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"</i>	1842
37.	<i>The Oval Portrait</i>	1842
38.	<i>The Masque of The Red Death</i>	1842
39.	<i>The Pit and The Pendulum</i>	1842
40.	<i>The Landscape Garden</i>	1842
41.	<i>The Gold-Bug</i>	1843
42.	<i>The Black Cat</i>	1843
43.	<i>The Tell-Tale Heart</i>	1843
44.	<i>Diddling</i>	1843
45.	<i>The Balloon-Hoax</i>	1844
46.	<i>The Purloined Letter</i>	1844
47.	<i>The Premature Burial</i>	1844
48.	<i>A Tale of the Ragged Mountains</i>	1844
49.	<i>The Spectacles</i>	1844
50.	<i>The Angel of the Odd</i>	1844
51.	<i>The Oblong Box</i>	1844
52.	<i>Thou Art the Man</i>	1844
53.	<i>The Thousand-and-second Tale of Scheherazade</i>	1845

54.	<i>The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar</i>	1845
55.	<i>The Imp of The Perverse</i>	1845
56.	<i>The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether</i>	1845
57.	<i>The Power of Words</i>	1845
58.	<i>Some Words with a Mummy</i>	1845
59.	<i>The Cask of Amontillado</i>	1846
60.	<i>Loss of Breath</i>	1846
61.	<i>The Sphinx</i>	1846
62.	<i>The Domain of Arnheim</i>	1847
63.	<i>Von Kempelen and His Discovery</i>	1849
64.	<i>Mesmeric Revelation</i>	1849
65.	<i>Landor's Cottage</i>	1849
66.	<i>X-Ing a Paragraph</i>	1849
67.	<i>Mellonta Tauta</i>	1849
68.	<i>Hop-Frog</i>	1849

Table 1. Poe's works included in the focus corpus

A total of 396,257 words shape the whole set of Poe's sixty-eight tales.

To proceed to analysis, the corpora used were:

1. **BNC wordlist.** Made of 90,350,013 word tokens, it is a word frequency list from the British National Corpus (BNC) which can be uploaded into *AntConc* and be used as a reference corpus wordlist to generate keyword lists. Words in the wordlist belong to British English, so we will have the chance to compare differences and similarities between both registers British and American English.

2. **The AmE06 Corpus.** It is composed of 1,000,000 words (American English) and follows the same sampling method as the LOB and FLOB (Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus and Freiburg-Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus), by choosing words from fifteen different genres of writing (most of them published in 2006). In being a corpus of American English, we can find the connection frequency-importance (Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:9, t.4) of words from the same English register.

3. A .txt file with **all the tales** by Poe was also used as a raw file in *AntConc* to function as a reference corpus to which compare some of the different short narratives (focus corpus) detachedly. This way results are referred to every single tale's *aboutness* (Díez Bedmar & Philip, 2015:1, t.5), leaving aside points such as author's style.

The **concordancing software toolkit** used, as mentioned before, was Laurence Anthony's *AntConc* 3.5.8. (2019) for Windows.

5 METHODS

We started the study by focusing on the **lexical content** of the corpus of texts. Firstly, we extracted a **wordlist** from the total amount of tales included in the focus corpus. From this finding, we tried to put words in context by obtaining **concordances** which could shed light on basic discursive aspects. To prepare wordlists, *lemma word forms* were excluded and all words were *treated as lower case* in the *tool preferences* tab. Options to show *rank*, *frequency* and *word* were activated indeed. Concerning concordances, the proceedings were as follows; first, the wordlist was sorted alphabetically and then the most frequent content words were elected to see their concordance (*Key Word In Concordance* or *KWIC*) selecting as alphabetically sorted environments those of 2L, 2R and up to 3R.

Clusters and **n-grams** were also arranged by means of the unique presence of the focus corpus. Once selected in the software the option *clusters/n-grams*, the boxes *rank*, *frequency* and *clusters* were checked and all data were *treated as lowercase*. Our basic parameters for length and frequency of clusters and n-grams were min. 3, max 3 and as a *minimum cluster frequency*, 2 setting was the election in most cases.

Then, wordlists in comparison to reference corpora were obtained, leading to the aforementioned concept of *keyness* (made patent in the so-called **keyword lists**). Combinations of different reference corpora were made (all tales vs. BNC or AmE06 as reference corpora, chronologically sorted independent tales vs. all tales as a reference corpus) in the search for salient features to highlight. Concerning the settings, we configured the *keyword list* option by treating all data as *lowercase* and choosing in *keyness values* the statistical measure called *log likelihood*, also allowing the display of negative keywords (whose poor appearance in comparison to the reference corpus is significant). We used indistinctly BNC or AmE06 word lists as reference corpora (through the *word list* option) and particularly the whole set of Poe's texts as a reference corpus for several individual stories (via the *raw files* option in this case). So as to check possible changes in the findings, we opt for analysing individually and with the focus corpus as a reference corpus works written in regular intervals throughout the time span in which all short stories were written (1832-1849).

In this vein, these were the chronologically sampled tales to study against the whole set of them:

- *Metzengerstein* (1832)
- *Four Beasts in One -The Homo-Cameleopard* (1836)
- *The Business Man* (1840)
- *The Cask of Amontillado* (1846)
- *Mesmeric Revelation* (1849)

And to finish this stage, some **collocations** and **collocates** were also analysed. This study centers only on a focus corpus and there is no comparison with any other literary one as a reference. It should be noted that the statistical significance was calculated on the basis of the *t-score test* option. The span for the length of collocates was normally that of 2:2 or the indicated one if other. Both to the right and to the left options were used in their analysis.

Finally, we described **grammatical aspects** mainly by tapping into the search of tenses and exploring their possibilities and distribution. Within this stage grammatical co-text is evinced. To run grammatical (tense) concordances, we uploaded the focus corpus into *AntConc* and used the pertinent *wildcards* to find the tenses desired. Therefore and for instance, to find concordance tokens for future perfect tense, we introduced as a search term the expression *will have *ed*.

6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Lexical content

6.1.1 Wordlists

Building a first table with the top twenty-five words in the wordlist obtained from all Poe's short stories, we get the following result:

Rank	Frequency	Word
1	30020	the
2	17795	of
3	11872	and
4	9842	to
5	9483	a
6	8395	in
7	7077	i
8	4709	that

9	4700	was
10	4661	it
11	3616	with
12	3346	as
13	3277	my
14	3122	at
15	3027	which
16	2924	is
17	2900	had
18	2820	he
19	2741	for
20	2735	his
21	2517	this
22	2481	by
23	2462	not
24	2305	but
25	2247	be

Table 2. All Poe's tales wordlist

As it is typical from a wordlist, many closed-class words are found (articles, prepositions, pronouns). By their frequency, we can observe the abundance of *the* as a determiner and *of* as a preposition. Also the coordinating link *and* is among the top three most appearing words and the preposition *in* occupies range 6. The first pronominal form appearing in order of frequency is *I* and the first verbal tense is past simple, *was*.

If we now leave out closed-class words, we get the following results for content words (thirty-four top registers selected):

Rank	Frequency	Word
80	536	time
83	516	great
84	513	say
85	500	two
87	497	being
89	487	man
111	377	length
112	373	mr
117	360	day
125	337	three
126	333	head
130	321	eyes
137	308	thought

139	301	water
143	283	old
144	270	manner
149	266	feet
150	263	thing
152	260	night
156	252	hand
160	250	course
161	248	back
164	245	matter
166	244	body
167	244	mind
174	226	words
176	222	fact
177	220	death
178	220	point
180	217	idea
185	214	nature
189	208	light
191	208	place
192	207	moment

Table 3. Content words in all Poe's tales wordlist

From both tables we can deduce a genre where the expositive narrative style is highlighted, with a preference for determined noun phrases (*the, of*) as if in an attempt to attract the reader to a closer position in relation to the stories. Also, and conveying a certain sense of intimacy, the first person pronoun is hugely salient, pointing at an authorial narrative voice as a distinctive feature. The past simple tense also prevails in an outstanding way, showing the preference of the author for past and remote events.

The most frequent content words no doubt seem to look for abstract and metaphysical semantic fields (*time, thought, nature, idea*) as well as enigmatic and *obscure* topics (*death, night*).

Other salient content words also evince a marked distinction between the self and one's external setting (*head, hand, body, feet, place, moment, time*).

6.1.2 Concordances

Let us now support with more evidence the aforementioned statements concerning most frequent words in Poe's narrative.

To begin with, we will analyse the co-text for *the* determiner, thus obtaining instances like:

2 *my ears from the distance of a mile. **The** ship and all in it are imbued with*
3 *, could resist it as little as a feather **the** hurricane, and must disappear bodily and at*
 once.
4 *the exception of somewhat too determined a stare. **The** fingers and the nails were*
 brilliantly gilded.
5 *der—our unpicturesqueness picturesque, in a word, **the** earth-angels, for whose*
 scrutiny more especially

Again, definiteness or preciseness is made evident in the text surrounding this word.

As for *of* behaviour, here we can corroborate its use in prepositional phrases preceded by nouns, contributing to specificity and to discriminate the part from the whole:

1 *side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher **of** water. A burning thirst consumed me, and I*
2 *, betrayed his sense of inferiority by a sanctity **of** deportment, a debasement of the*
 ears, and a
3 *sum. About all this there was a nobility **of** soul—a dignity of candor—which*
 delighted—which
4 *. We have, for example, a metal, a piece **of** wood, a drop of water, the atmosphere, a*
5 *he sketched upon the wall, with a bit **of** charcoal a little carbuncle-nosed gentleman,*
 out

And turning to content words, we first show some tokens of the co-text in which *thought* is embedded:

1 *of human beings had we entertained a single **thought** of perfidy on the part of a*
 people
2 *instrument, when, as if struck by a second **thought**, she resumed it, and so continued*
 to regard
3 *did the first simpleton; but then a second **thought** will suggest that this is too simple a*
4 *out what he meant—but soon a hideous **thought** flashed upon me. I dragged my watch*
 from
7 *ediate availability of the sum bewildered all who **thought** on the topic. The possessor*
 of any appreciable

Apart from showing psychological intricacies within the human mind, sentences built around words like *thought* awake anxious feelings, such as bewilderment, hideousness, obsession (repetitiveness) or treason. We will further reflect on possible reasons for this mere descriptive appearance of such words, but they are by all means suggesting outstanding features in Poe's work as well as probably in his life events. Corpses, illnesses, mental distress, graves, deliriums... are also recurrent in his speech if we explore the concordance for another highly frequent word, *death*:

5 *before—unless it was a skull, or a **death**'s-head—which it more nearly resembles than*
7 *That the result would be death, and a **death** of more than customary bitterness, I knew*
 too
8 *of escaping the most appalling of **deaths**—a death for the most appalling of*
 purposes—every particle
9 *the sufferer and what we conceive of absolute **death**. Very usually he is saved from*
 premature intermen
10 *the corpse presented in a few minutes after **death** one of the most horrid and*
 loathsome spectacles
17 *the body 'thrown into the water immediately after **death** by violence.' Thus, in the*
 latter instance, the
18 *—throwing a mildew upon all pleasures! Una. Ah, **Death**, the spectre which sate at*
 all feasts! How
23 *bited district to gloom, silence, pestilence, and **death**. It was by one of the terrific*
 barriers
32 *, by its infection or freedom from disease before **death**. Thus it is evident that we can*
 assign
33 *and of mental distress, as is burial before **death**. The unendurable oppression of the*
 lungs—the stif
62 *! In delirium—no! In a swoon—no! In **death**—no! even in the grave all is not*

Let us have a look at parts of the body as very common words in the focus corpus and how they relate to physical impairment as well:

1 *agony of joy, opened it with a trembling **hand**, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and*
2 *time several lines of MS. in a large **hand**, and apparently in red ink, became distinctly*
vis

3 , by a blow from a handspike. A strong **hand** held him on the cabin floor, with a
5 an Englishman, who had shipped as a raw **hand**, came up, weeping piteously, and
entreating the m
6 presence.—At this moment I felt a light **hand** placed upon my shoulder, and that ever-
remembered
7 invalids, upon whom death had placed a sure **hand**, and who sidled and tottered
through the mob,
8 I rubbed, he ran his nose against my **hand** with a slight snarl; but I was too
9 mediately arose, purred loudly, rubbed against my **hand**, and appeared delighted with
my notice. This, the
10 paused awhile, and, rubbing his nose against my **hand**, appeared to be waiting for my
approval of
11 ration and profundity. Suddenly there came an icy **hand** upon my forehead, and an
impatient, gibbering voi
14 heat of the water still increased, and the **hand** could no longer be endured within it.
Peters
15 face was paler than any marble, and his **hand** shook so excessively that he could
scarcely retai

We can pinpoint the purely aesthetic use of words in Poe's prose by posing some examples including a very prominent word in the general wordlist as well, *time*:

2 ! hang him and welcome. But, once upon a **time**, a certain rich miser conceived the
design of
6 an enormously large one approached us. At one **time**, a lurch throwing the deck very
far beneath
7 as excessively painful; and, having felt for some **time** a moisture about my cheeks, I at
length
13 precluded him from raising his voice at any **time** above a very low whisper. Of this
defect
16 His richly philosophical intellect was not at any **time** affected by unrealities. To the
substances of ter
19 night? Why shall I pause to relate how, time after **time**, until near the period of the
24 ." "It is generally so, but not always. Some **time** ago, there were about twenty-seven
patients here;

25 that every fiction has. Philip Melanchthon, some **time** ago, wrote a commentary upon
the “*Batrachomyomach*

27 I have mentioned, formed, for so long a **time**, almost the sole conversation of Morella
and myse

35 which Mussulmen say is the only pathway between **Time** and Eternity. This mist, or
spray, was no

36 appeal for aid to all lovers of correct **time** and fine kraut. Let us proceed in a

We can perceive a source of concern in regard to the question of *body and mind* worth
studying (they both are very relevant content words in the wordlist we are dealing with in this
section). If we analyse the concordances of both terms, we find instances such as:

18 without its terrors. I felt a numbness of **body and mind**—a dreaminess of sensation
but this

19 beneath him. I felt that my powers of **body and mind** were fast leaving me—in a

21 our common hog in the **structure** of the **body** and snout; the tail, however, was bushy,
and

22 discretion of a madman, is to gain him **body and soul**. In this way we were enabled

23 ; I, living within my own heart, and addicted, **body and soul**, to the most intense and
painful

24 which I then endured have broken me up **body and soul**. You suppose me a very old

25 to his body and tightly compressed between his **body** and the side of the Automaton,)
or else

28 seen by witness, was entirely **separated from the body**, and was also greatly
shattered. The throat had

29 of my **countenance** proved the salvation of my **body**. Aroused by the pain, and
burning with indignation

50 will have a distinct idea of the ultimate **body** by conceiving it to be entire **brain**. This

53 rejected. For example—“*Ex nihilo nihil fit*”; “a **body cannot act where it is not**”;
“there cannot

174 . In a word, I conceived that, as the **body** should become habituated to the want of
atmospher

233 tirely prostrate every active faculty of **mind and body**. We had seen and felt, but we
could

Definitely, and as Grayson (2005:56) states, “Poe deliberately uses elements of both phrenology and physiognomy to enhance the authenticity of his characterisations and to emphasize the indissoluble bond linking the physical to the spiritual and psychological.”

6.1.3 Clusters and N-grams

When obtaining clusters of words (3 n-gram size in our case, min. range 1) we find again the almost overwhelming presence of the first person authorial narrator:

Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram
2	141	1	i could not
12	68	1	which i had
19	61	1	i had been
27	55	1	that i had
29	54	1	of which i
48	43	1	i did not
50	43	1	that i should
72	39	1	that i was
73	38	1	as i have
78	38	1	which i have
96	35	1	i had no
98	35	1	in which i
100	35	1	that i could
105	34	1	i am not
114	33	1	with which i
123	31	1	i had not
127	31	1	which i was
131	30	1	i have been
132	30	1	me in the
138	29	1	i have already
144	29	1	that i have
2	141	1	i could not
12	68	1	which i had
19	61	1	i had been
27	55	1	that i had
29	54	1	of which i
48	43	1	i did not
50	43	1	that i should
72	39	1	that i was
73	38	1	as i have
78	38	1	which i have
96	35	1	i had no

98	35	1	in which i
100	35	1	that i could
105	34	1	i am not
114	33	1	with which i
123	31	1	i had not
127	31	1	which i was
131	30	1	i have been
132	30	1	me in the
138	29	1	i have already
144	29	1	that i have

Table 4. N-grams from Poe's target corpus

Interestingly enough, we can observe the highly frequent use of the modal verb *could*, as if it was an element that imbues the stories with a mood of uncertainty and intriguing probability. In this vein, let us observe the first positions in the table concerning the use of modals and the presence of verbs expressing possibility (we must bear in mind that the total number of n-grams entries was that of 33,221, so a position of 6 in the rank implies a really high prevalence):

Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram
6	79	1	might have been
8	76	1	would have been
32	52	1	could not have
43	44	1	could not be
44	44	1	seemed to be
47	43	1	appeared to be

Table 5. Modals/possibility expressions in N-grams

If *of* was the second word in order of appearance in the wordlist for all Poe's tales, now we find out again its presence in 3 n-gram size chunks, as part of prepositional phrases mostly specifying the parts of a whole:

Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram
1	172	1	one of the
4	89	1	of the most
5	80	1	that of the
7	77	1	portion of the
12	67	1	by means of
14	64	1	part of the
16	63	1	on account of

23	57	1	out of the
38	48	1	the whole of
50	43	1	the bottom of
52	42	1	account of the
57	41	1	of the water
61	40	1	surface of the
62	40	1	the purpose of

Table 6. Top of n-gram (3 size) chunks

6.1.4 Keyword lists

In this section the corpus target (E.A. Poe's works) is compared to a reference corpus. In this way, we can discover the significance of words in Poe's production.

In order to have different registers to compare with and observe a possible evolution in the style according to the author's main life events, several corpora have been chosen (BNC, AmE06 Corpus, and five chronologically sorted tales). BNC and AmE06 corpora have been considered reference corpora with respect to the whole narrative. To study every single tale chosen (five in total), the whole set was considered the reference corpus and every tale in question the target corpus.

6.1.4.1 Poe's work and BNC corpus

Let us show first the top thirty key words elicited by *AntConc* when comparing all the narrative with BNC and thereupon analyse their significance:

Rank	Freq	Keyness	Effect	Keyword
1	1952	+	7777.4	upon
2	3246	+	5844.47	my
3	7001	+	4010.03	i
4	1651	+	1672.68	me
5	17420	+	1478.45	of
6	374	+	1080.38	length
7	423	+	1075.18	myself
8	2949	+	991.67	which
9	137	+	887.75	augustus
10	154	+	760.48	portion
11	265	+	757.18	manner
12	453	+	752.19	thus
13	122	+	743.42	peters
14	107	+	743.28	bon

15	81	+	741.97	0.0004	afterward
16	72	+	729.26	0.0004	dupin
17	2883	+	651.57	0.0073	had
18	187	+	640.53	0.0009	altogether
19	29357	+	626.43	0.0095	the
20	1643	+	626.26	0.0056	no
21	108	+	601.75	0.0005	singular
22	112	+	556.75	0.0006	corpse
23	1048	+	536.58	0.0041	very
24	104	+	535.9	0.0005	balloon
25	903	+	520.84	0.0037	our
26	84	+	514.04	0.0004	countenance
27	61	+	512.72	0.0003	automaton
28	82	+	510.47	0.0004	brig
29	111	+	491.5	0.0006	proceeded
30	126	+	487.27	0.0006	scarcely

Table 7. Top 30 keywords comparing Poe's works and BNC

The preposition *upon* appears in the first place, significantly, as a prominent word in reference to BNC. According to the online *Cambridge Dictionary* (2020), in American English the word is defined as follows: “*Upon* can be used to show that something happens soon after, and often because of, something else”. We can infer from the profusion of this preposition a literary device to convey action, depiction, experience and impending facts to happen, as if trying to comprise facts in a short framework of reference.

Then we come across the significant first person authorial narrative voice again, through instances such as *my*, *I*, *me*, *myself*. These instances, marked as prominent keywords, show the statistical weight of their importance if we compare them with their use in British English register (BNC).

Words also pointing at higher significant appearance in Poe's work are *Augustus*, *Jupiter* or *Scarabaeus*. These characteristic names in Poe's short narrative suggest a particular interest in classic language expressions, thus creating an atmosphere of scholarship, prestige and authority.

On the other hand, we can notice the inextricable relationship between the name of characters and allusive meanings added: *Dupin*, very likely from *duping* in English (*to deceive*, *to play a trick on someone*), *Morella* (term no. 121 in order of frequency in this keyword list, which reminds us of *morel*, a toxic plant).

Curiously enough, the use of some French terms seems to be included in parody-like passages, almost reaching a certain degree of sarcasm:

1 *affection of a friend. You knew Plato, **Bon-Bon**?—ah, no, I beg a thousand pardons. He*
2 *and none other.” “Hic-cup!” here replied **Bon-Bon**, and his majesty proceeded: “But if I*
have
5 *twice as much for an “Idée de **Bon-Bon**” as for all the trash of “Idées” of*

On another note, the statistical prevalence of words such as *corpse*, *countenance*, *automaton*, *soul*, *appearance*, *arouse*, *savages*, *horror* firmly exhibit Poe’s allure for mental issues and crime.

Definitely, this depiction given prompts (and should be a matter for) further and deeper research and comparative analysis with other existing criticism findings.

6.1.4.2 Poe’s work and AmE06 corpus

Now we turn to examine Poe’s work with a more terminologically similar background, the AmE06 Corpus (American English). In this case, we are trying to match both sets of words as much as possible, in an attempt to find significant differences emerging from Poe’s production. Paying attention to the keyword list obtained, we come across the following data:

Rank	Freq		Keyness	Effect	Keyword
1	1952	+	3677.32	0.0097	upon
2	2949	+	2047.1	0.0146	which
3	7001	+	1949.56	0.0337	i
4	3246	+	1945.78	0.016	my
5	17420	+	1592.86	0.0778	of
6	29357	+	983.28	0.12	the
7	1048	+	794.36	0.0052	very
8	1651	+	625.76	0.0082	me
9	2883	+	578.99	0.0142	had
10	374	+	566.23	0.0019	length
11	1643	+	541.7	0.0081	no
12	423	+	469.52	0.0021	myself
13	453	+	464.9	0.0023	thus
14	3091	+	432.67	0.0152	at
15	187	+	381.16	0.0009	altogether
16	4676	+	357.49	0.0227	was
17	420	+	349.21	0.0021	having

18	265	+	345.85	0.0013	manner
19	367	+	343.23	0.0018	whole
20	1034	+	338.78	0.0051	now
21	137	+	327.26	0.0007	augustus
22	2127	+	323.83	0.0105	we
23	1497	+	316.29	0.0074	so
24	4541	+	299.38	0.022	it
25	324	+	298.49	0.0016	indeed
26	509	+	296.23	0.0025	great
27	529	+	292.24	0.0026	however
28	122	+	289.74	0.0006	peters
29	160	+	271.84	0.0008	difficulty
30	1386	+	252.29	0.0069	been

Table 8. Top 30 keywords comparing Poe's works and AmE06

Let us focus on the most outstanding occurrences, such as the second word detected sorted by frequency, *which*. It deserves attention, since the second position in the rank clearly points at a significant production of the term in relation to an American English background. The finding may be unveiling another distinctive hallmark in Poe's narrative, that of highly formal style (and hence a search for the aesthetic sense of art). According to Rissanen (1984:420), and in regard to relative pronouns and their use in early modern English texts, "it has been suggested that the growing popularity of the *wh*- forms was due to Latin influence and that those forms were characteristic of formal expression while *that* was favoured in colloquial style".

Henceforth, and it shall be noted later as for grammatical aspects, most uses of *which* are embedded in restrictive relative sentences:

- 1 *the epoch of which I speak, the analogy **which** a casual observation of a star offered to*
- 2 *deprived me of the insight into this matter **which** a continued experiment might have afforded. In pa*
- 3 *side might have some unevenness on its surface, **which** a delicate sense of feeling might enable me*
- 4 *up was found to be a Spanish knife **which** a dozen persons at once recognized as belonging*
- 5 *of iron—six in all—by means of **which** a firm hold could be obtained by six*

And just to single out another significant presence, we can observe number ten position, *length*. Putting the word in context through KWIC we find it as a collocation along with the preposition *at* and the meaning of *eventually*:

- 1 *smiling waters of Paradise, and be rendered **at length** a fit dwelling-place for man:—*
for man
- 4 *betook myself again to my nap, and **at length** a second time awoke, when, to my utter*
5 *nnot imagine how stealthily, stealthily—until, **at length** a simple dim ray, like the*
thread of
- 6 *general sentiment when the comet had attained, **at length**, a size surpassing that of*
any previously recorde
- 7 *, as the wines gained the ascendancy, became **at length** a sort of pandemonium in*
petto. In the

Again, we stand witness to the shocking aesthetic effect of an expression mostly used during the 18th century but showing a declining tendency in its appearance in Poe's time and virtually unusual at the present time recorded usage (*Collins Dictionary* online, 2020).

We cannot leave this section without mentioning that against both BNC and AmE06 corpora, Poe's first most significant negative term (it stands out by its low usage in Poe's output in comparison to the far higher one shown in reference corpora) in a pronominal form is *she*. This indicates the scarce presence of female characters in Poe's prose or at least, the fact that they go quite unnoticed. In addition to their unmarked presence, they are described as weak, demoted, meek, shy, submissive, *sufferer*, and probably in parallelism with Poe's wife's life story, ill.

- 1 *, and having already a bride in his Art; **she** a maiden of **rarest beauty**, and not more*
2 *and the most patient of **sufferers**. One day **she** accompanied me, upon some*
household errand, into
- 3 *a second time **avert** her head, but that **she** actually took from her girdle a double*
eyeglass—
- 4 *our first knowledge of each other. And then **she** adverted, with a **blush**, to the extreme*
recency
- 7 *stubby duk, so stubby dun Duk she! duk **she**!” Alas! and are not her words too true?*
8 *afterward, having again glanced furtively around, **she allowed** her bright eyes to set*
fully and

9 ; still, for me, every sacrifice should be made. **She** alluded to the topic of age. Was I
 11 no equivocal disposition to **coquet** with the men. **She amused us** all very much. I say
 “amused”—
 13 hand her a chair, for I saw that **she** appeared **fatigued** with her exertions—and it was
 16 my exertions to reassure her would be fruitless. **She** appeared to be **fainting**, and no
 attendants were
 28 phantasmagoric influences of the chamber itself. **She** became at length **convalescent**—
 finally well
 32 spect, her connections, her standing in society. **She begged** me, but with a sigh, to
 reconsider
 35 last lesson of love sufficed to soften it. **She bestowed** it upon Bossuet. She returned no
 more

6.1.4.3 Poe’s word and Metzengerstein (1832)

From this section on, our discussion centres on the study of isolated narrative works by Poe in contrast to the whole set of tales. What we intend with this purpose is to identify features essential to every particular short story (*aboutness*) within Poe’s contextual style as well as to detect emerging revelations under the prism of time evolution.

As it is usual in our discussion, we can dissect the table for the top fifteen terms appearing in the keyword list of the aforementioned corpora (All Poe’s tales as a reference corpus and *Metzengerstein* as the target corpus):

Rank	Freq		Keyness	Effect	Keyword
1	19	+	131.66	0.0118	metzengerstein
2	18	+	99.02	0.0111	baron
3	17	+	98.71	0.0105	horse
4	13	+	90.06	0.0081	berlitzing
5	68	+	63.11	0.0228	his
6	7	+	48.48	0.0044	stables
7	7	+	48.48	0.0044	steed
8	6	+	41.55	0.0038	frederick
9	12	+	41.31	0.0073	young
10	6	+	40.26	0.0038	rider
11	6	+	39.1	0.0037	nobleman
12	5	+	28.71	0.0031	tapestry
13	5	+	24.15	0.0031	chateau
14	5	+	23.71	0.0031	un

15	4	+	22.82	0.0025	castle
16	305	+	21.21	0.0186	the
17	3	+	20.77	0.0019	equerries
18	3	+	20.77	0.0019	hunting
19	3	+	20.77	0.0019	rivelled
20	5	+	19.08	0.0031	palace
21	4	+	18.54	0.0025	flames
22	4	+	17.77	0.0025	fiery
23	9	-	61.13	0.0018	i
24	2	-	37.5	0.0006	my
25	9	-	29.4	0.0023	it

Table 9. Keywords comparing *Metzengerstein* with all Poe's production

The first and most significant word on the list speaks by itself, *Metzengerstein*. Everyone could guess that it is a person's name written in German, the language of novels considered the epitome of classic Gothic fiction. Notwithstanding, when turning to KWIC to situate the word in a wider context, we breathe traces of a somehow *dissolute* or *atypical* character behind *Metzengerstein*, as if the conventions he is expected to follow were not the proper ones. In the tokens shown, satirical or parodic signs seem subtly suggested:

- 1 *forest to the main entrance of the Chateau **Metzengerstein**, a steed, bearing an unbonneted and disordered ri*
- 2 *uscle in his countenance. One tempestuous night, **Metzengerstein**, awaking from a heavy slumber, descended like a*
- 3 *join us in a hunting of the boar?"—"Metzengerstein does not hunt;" "Metzengerstein will not attend,"*
- 5 *meanor of the dissolute young Baron Frederick Von Metzengerstein. Indeed, his behavior disappointed every expectat*

Another important word to focus on is *horse*. It is the third word in the ranking order and it seems to be a metaphorical device for the spiritual dimension inherent to humankind and its main traits. According to Ferber's *Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (1999:94):

Probably the most influential symbolic horses are those that Plato describes in his simile for the soul. The soul is a union of three parts, a charioteer (judgment or reason) and two horses, one of which is noble and obedient (honor or mettle), the other base and disobedient (appetite or will) (...); the charioteer must learn the difficult art of managing two different steeds ('manage' in its earliest English sense referred only to

horses). Whether driving several or riding one, the reason could be disobeyed or overthrown by the willful bestial, or irrational part of the soul. (Ferber 94).

In *Metzengerstein* we are able to perceive how Poe relies on the symbolism of horses to express, in this case, the *bestial*, irrational side, even sometimes in *convulsive plunges*, of the human soul:

1 *battlements in the distinct colossal figure of—a **horse**.*
4 *the demeanor of a noble and high-spirited **horse** are not to be supposed capable of exciting*
6 *young nobleman for the fiery qualities of his **horse**; at least, none but an insignificant and misshape*
10 *and the distended lips of the apparently enraged **horse** left in full view his gigantic and disgusting*
11 *he figure of an enormous, and unnaturally colored **horse**, represented in the tapestry as belonging to a*
14 *of a gigantic and fiery-colored horse. “Whose **horse**? Where did you get him?” demanded the youth,*
15 *eed, that unnatural, impetuous, and fiery-colored **horse**, which he henceforward continually bestrode, had*
16 *onvulsive plunges of a gigantic and fiery-colored **horse**. “Whose horse? Where did you get him?” demanded*
17 *seemed rivetted to the saddle of that colossal **horse**, whose intractable audacities so well accorded wi*

We can also remark the symbolism of colours, which could be posed as another important feature in Poe’s prose (notice *fiery-colored* or *unnaturally colored*).

Other words in the table clearly point out to allegorical images which could be autobiographical (Poe grew up in an aristocratic mansion) or typically belonging to the Gothic tradition (such as castles, flames, palaces):

2 *are seldom friends; and the inhabitants of the **Castle** Berlifitzing might look, from their lofty buttres*
4 *vast and desolate upper apartment of the family **palace** of Metzengerstein. The rich although faded tapest*

Let us delight with the following example illustrating not only the Gothic terminology, but also the aesthetic effect and representation of visual and auditory images by dint of s alliteration:

1 *sharply and shrilly above the roaring of the **flames** and the shrieking of the winds—another, and,*

And just to pose an example (it would surpass the objective of our work to linger on showing more of them), here again the solemnity of the word *castle* clashes with the more corny-evoked tone of the French term *chateau*. Besides, the figure of an avenue and a castle strongly contrasts with that of stables. Traces of satirical stance seem to appear here and there:

5 *, down the long avenue which extended from the **chateau** to the stables of Metzengerstein. “No!” said the*

We must notice the nature of negative terms. The first one in significant absence is *I*, indicating a narrative voice in this stage of Poe’s writing still far from being an authorial one.

6.1.4.4 Poe’s work and *Four Beasts in One –The Homo-Cameleopard* (1836)

Let us take now this novel, published four years later as a case in point to consider biographical influences and evolution in style. The keyword list obtained as in the previous case shows the following results:

Rank	Freq	Keyness	Effect	Keyword
1	80	+	105.9	is
2	15	+	105.42	mille
3	9	+	64.8	antiochus
4	15	+	59.2	king
5	16	+	56.37	thousand
6	7	+	50.4	cameleopard
7	7	+	50.4	epiphanes
8	6	+	43.19	epidaphne
9	6	+	43.19	hippodrome
10	26	+	36.49	what
11	15	+	36.37	let
12	5	+	35.99	antioch
13	6	+	33	temple
14	7	+	28.7	east
15	4	+	27.53	syria

16	4	+	24.66	0.0029	beasts
17	18	+	22.52	0.0105	us
18	6	+	22.3	0.0042	thou
19	3	+	21.59	0.0022	bravo
20	3	+	21.59	0.0022	jews
21	3	+	21.59	0.0022	syrians
22	21	+	21.05	0.0113	are
23	3	+	20.37	0.0022	ashimah
24	3	+	20.37	0.0022	divinity
25	3	+	20.37	0.0022	wreath
26	4	+	19.61	0.0029	glory
27	6	+	18.88	0.0042	art
28	10	+	18.33	0.0066	see
29	3	+	17.75	0.0022	yonder
30	4	+	17.19	0.0029	prince
31	3	+	17.09	0.0022	poets
32	3	+	17.09	0.0022	rabble
33	16	+	16.41	0.0092	will
34	2	-	49.86	0.0005	was
35	3	-	26.96	0.001	my
36	21	-	20.08	0.0043	i
37	4	-	19.12	0.0014	had

Table 10. Keywords comparing *Four Beasts in One...* with all Poe's production

We can perceive at first glance a driving force out of this keyword list, which is the lexicon related to Near East culture (*temple, east, Syria, beasts, jews, Syrians, Ashimah,...*). We can think of biographical reasons; first of all, Poe's foster father was a merchant. Furthermore, the short novel was written to be published in *The Southern Literary Magazine* in a time when Poe strived to take it forward (Fernández-Palacios, 2007:141-164). Probably the topic of Eastern culture, in a time when every now and then news about discoveries in the East appeared, was the perfect appeal for people to read a literary journal. We must bear in mind that Poe's stories and writings in this journal contributed to its higher selling (Gibert, 2001:76), which produced a promotion in Poe's post within the magazine. During this stage thus, there seems to be a more *objective* tone and a less troubled *pathos* in Poe's writings.

But we can also think of a deep interest towards the enigmatic, strange and peripheral as a leitmotiv for Poe's inspiration. To illustrate both hypotheses, we can show the following examples:

1 **Alexander the Great**, in memory of his father **Antiochus**, and became immediately
the residence of the Syri

2 is true, that he is entitled, at times, **Antiochus Epimanes**—Antiochus the madman—
but that is because

3 dear sir, that cameleopard is no other than Antiochus Epiphanes, **Antiochus the
Illustrious, King** of Syr

6 his approach in the **pompous phraseology** of the **East**. We shall have a glimpse of his
person

7 this is the most populous city of the **East**! What a **wilderness** of people! what a **jumble**

And once more, visual imagery is widely displayed in significant words such as *temple*:

5 the little village of Daphne, where stood a **temple** to that divinity. It was built
(although about

6 take a peep at the divinity of the **temple**. You need not look up at the heavens;

Another peculiarity worth mentioning is the statistical evolution suffered by the word *I* as an indicator of an authorial narrative voice appearance. Its absence gradually becomes less significant, being overtaken by words such as *was* or *my*. Anyhow, the objective discourse demanded to narrate factual or almost historical events and the successful stage in Poe's life surely kept his most beleaguered inner voice aside for the time being.

Contrasting the previous tale analysed with the one we have just addressed, we can perfectly agree with the two famous trends in Poe's canon, the *grotesques* alluding to northern European conventions, with comic reminiscences, disharmony and clash of opposites; and the *arabesques*, which advocate for more serious and terror-like feelings by means of elements such as setting or characterisation (Gibert, 2001:89).

6.1.4.5 Poe's work and *The Business Man* (1840)

The keyword list for this narration with all Poe's work as a reference corpus shows us again the idiosyncrasy of the work:

Rank	Freq	Keyness		Effect	Keyword
1	27	+	130.55	0.0142	business
2	7	+	38.51	0.0038	trade
3	8	+	33.34	0.0043	method
4	5	+	33.19	0.0027	aug

5	6	+	32.9	0.0032	profession
6	5	+	28.88	0.0027	cents
7	63	+	27.62	0.018	my
8	4	+	26.55	0.0022	snap
9	12	+	25.39	0.0062	t
10	5	+	25.32	0.0027	mud
11	4	+	25.3	0.0022	sore
12	107	+	23.52	0.0198	i
13	5	+	23.21	0.0027	habits
14	7	+	22.83	0.0037	genius
15	4	+	21.69	0.0022	merchant
16	131	+	20.65	0.0199	a
17	35	+	20.43	0.0132	or
18	5	+	20.39	0.0027	july
19	6	+	20.24	0.0032	system
20	3	+	19.91	0.0016	comeagain
21	3	+	19.91	0.0016	dickey
22	3	+	19.91	0.0016	sham
23	12	+	19.35	0.0061	thing
24	5	+	18.81	0.0027	capital
25	4	+	18.76	0.0022	gruff
26	3	+	18.69	0.0016	customer
27	3	+	18.69	0.0016	dandy
28	3	+	18.69	0.0016	jan
29	16	+	17.89	0.0077	man
30	16	+	17.1	0.0076	well
31	3	+	16.83	0.0016	mem
32	3	+	16.83	0.0016	messrs
33	3	+	16.83	0.0016	promenade
34	183	-	33.99	0.011	the
35	1	-	23.08	0.0004	were
36	6	-	20.79	0.0019	his
37	3	-	20.48	0.001	from

Table 11. Keywords comparing *The Business Man* with all Poe's production

By 1840, Poe's contributions to journalism kept on bringing success to whatever firm he worked for. He was even trying to set up his own business (the famous newsletter *Stylus*), which later on would become nothing but a frustration for the writer. It is henceforth, a period of literary success, working plans and initiative.

The story of his foster father appears again in terms such as *business*, *trade* or *method*, whose context within KWIC distils new layers of meaning:

1 and commission **merchant** doing a capital bit of **business!**" *A capital bit of*
fiddlestick! However, the cons
20 whatever. Especially, you cannot make a man of **business** out of a genius, any more
than money
1 varieties of **snuff**. He had been in the **trade** a long time, and, I may say, understood
7 manufacturer, or going into the **cotton** or **tobacco trade**, or any of those **eccentric**
pursuits; or getting
1 here, I conceive, is a positive **paradox**. True **method** appertains to the ordinary and
the obvious alone,
2 the leading feature of my mind. A scrupulous **method** characterized my actions as
well as my accounts.
3 nothing to be made in this way without **method**. I did only a retail business myself, but
4 —a clear **fraud** of fifty per cent—no **method** in any respect. I left at once the

The word *business* (clear reminiscence of his foster father's job, who was a merchant and used to trade with tobacco, tea, coffee, spirits and even horses) is inserted in chunks of text where the issue of commerce is relativised and downplayed (*A capital bit of fiddlestick!*). Quite likely this proves a symptom of the strained relationship that Poe always maintained with his father. Other expressions supporting this statement are the ones conveying that genius and business are incompatible, like *you cannot make a man of business out of a genius* or the qualification of the job as *eccentric pursuit*.

When dealing with the significant word *method*, we are suggested the commonplace of the American self-made man. Concerning the constant, methodological effort and moral virtues the topic alludes to, Poe verges almost on the farcical when referring to *method* in exceedingly serious terms, thus triggering the opposite effect (comic, called into question): *A scrupulous method characterized my actions as well as my accounts, nothing to be made in this way without method, a clear fraud of fifty per cent—no method in any respect*. For some reason, the myth of the self-built American citizen is dispelled with mistrust by Poe. We may lean towards the presupposition that it could be a consequence of Poe's personal beliefs and sceptical attitudes towards those pretending a system of values not their own, which with much probability led him to get the reputation of *the tomahawk man* always in perpetual trouble with owners and journal editors (Gibert, 2001:76).

We might also infer an outstanding weariness of Poe in the human condition, pointing at some traces of misanthropy. We are reminded of Jonathan Swift's misanthropic streak, a stance perfectly reflected (according to Bartra, 1997: 155) by the Irish satirical writer in a 1725 letter to Alexander Pope, where he remarked that *Gulliver's Travels* was the concretion of his desire of vexing the human being more than entertaining people. His aversion towards that animal called *man* led him to state the famous aphorism expressing that man cannot be considered rationale, but only *rationis capax*. This dictum embodies, to Swift's mind, the foundations of misanthropy. In the same vein, Poe's words of disbelief about mankind lead us to justify his far from reality production and his wish to examine the intricacies and horrors of his similar fellows.

Continuing the study of negative words, we notice now the absence of *I* as a negative word, becoming instead the twelfth position among positive words, which shows the tendency of the narrator authorial voice to be more and more present in Poe's prose.

6.1.4.6 Poe's work and *The Cask of Amontillado* (1846)

Let us present first as already done so far with the rest of isolated narrations, the keyword list and then we will be ready for analysis once more:

Rank	Freq	Keyness		Effect	Keyword
1	17	+	126.77	0.0143	amontillado
2	14	+	105.49	0.0118	fortunato
3	15	+	95.2	0.0125	ugh
4	111	+	82.38	0.0235	i
5	52	+	49.11	0.0201	he
6	24	+	48.68	0.016	said
7	6	+	45.19	0.0051	luchesi
8	6	+	41.67	0.0051	catacombs
9	7	+	38.72	0.0059	bones
10	5	+	36.37	0.0042	nitre
11	5	+	36.37	0.0042	vaults
12	5	+	35.24	0.0042	bells
13	5	+	32.48	0.0042	recess
14	4	+	28.86	0.0034	tier
15	4	+	27.78	0.0034	cough
16	25	+	24.96	0.0137	you
17	8	+	24.62	0.0065	replied
18	3	+	22.59	0.0026	crypt

19	3	+	22.59	0.0026	jingled
20	3	+	22.59	0.0026	trowel
21	7	+	22.01	0.0057	yes
22	3	+	21.36	0.0026	engagement
23	3	+	21.36	0.0026	flambeaux
24	3	+	20.35	0.0026	medoc
25	3	+	20.35	0.0026	palazzo
26	3	+	19.49	0.0025	doubts
27	3	+	18.08	0.0025	niche
28	3	+	16.45	0.0025	damp

Table 12. Keywords comparing *The Cask of Amontillado* with all Poe's production

In parallel with his life, the terms of his work in this case reflect a darker phase, full of passages related to terror and the supernatural, metaphysics, the mind and its perversions, as well as symbolic images. Notwithstanding and contrary to his personal situation, the literary output acquires its best artistic climax. As late as 1846, Poe's wife was severely down with tuberculosis and by then Poe had witnessed the famous fatal episode of his wife's profuse haemorrhage. Furthermore, his brother had also died of tuberculosis, all of which is embodied in the significance conceded to the word *cough*:

3 *sick—on account of the dampness of the **catacombs**. I hastened to make an end of my*
1 *bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the **bones**. Come, we will go back ere it is*
2 *masonry I re-erected the old rampart of **bones**. For the half of a century no mortal*
1 *with which I perceive you are afflicted. The **vaults** are insufferably damp. They are*
encrusted with ni
5 *gait of my friend was unsteady, and the **bells** upon his cap jingled as he strode. “The*
3 *low **moaning cry** from the depth of the **recess**. It was not the cry of a drunken*
4 *, endeavored to pry into the **depths** of the **recess**. Its termination the feeble light did*
not enable
2 *go back ere it is too late. Your **cough**—” “It is nothing,” he said; “let us go*
3 *kill me. I shall not **die of a cough**.” “True—true,” I replied; “and, indeed, I had*
4 *,” I replied. “How long have you had that **cough**?” “Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh!*
ugh!—ugh! ugh!
1 *on, and descending again, arrived at a deep **crypt**, in which the foulness of the air*
caused
2 *flame. At the most remote end of the **crypt** there appeared another less spacious. Its*
walls

3 *which the foulness of the air caused our **flambeaux** rather to glow than flame. At the most*

1 *position. But now there came from out the **niche** a low laugh that erected the hairs upon*

As if in a final stage of his life, Poe gives his feelings of tiredness and rebuff full rein. The significant word *trowel* makes us think metaphorically in a man carving his own tomb, disillusioned and angry at a world full of hardships:

1 *at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the **trowel**, and finished without interruption the fifth, the*

2 *said. “It is this,” I answered, producing a **trowel** from beneath the folds of my roquelaire. “You*

3 *these materials and with the aid of my **trowel**, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance*

From his feelings of disenchantment, some odour of moral breakdown can be thought of through the results for the word *engagement*:

3 *your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi—” “I have **no engagement**;—come.” “My fr*

Even in some cases a looming glimpse of black humour seems present:

1 *many a rich laugh about it at the **palazzo**—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he!*

And just to finish the discussion about this tale, we should notice how the word *I* climbs to the fourth position, showing its greatest relevance among the short narratives studied so far. The evolution towards the use of the authorial narrative voice seems more than evident.

6.1.4.7 Poe’s work and *Mesmeric Revelation* (1849)

Published in the same year of his death, *Mesmeric Revelation* unveils the aesthetic features of Poe’s prose in his final stretch. We look for keywords in this short story against all the narrative production dealt with in this research and the results are the ones that follow:

Rank	Freq	Keyness	Effect	Keyword
1	34	+	219.41	v
2	34	+	194.65	p

3	45	+	176.27	0.0222	matter
4	105	+	133.35	0.0316	is
5	16	+	105.65	0.0084	rudimental
6	16	+	100.62	0.0084	ether
7	15	+	99.04	0.0079	unparticled
8	16	+	87.66	0.0084	ultimate
9	12	+	75.46	0.0063	organs
10	20	+	72.87	0.0102	god
11	19	+	53.49	0.0096	life
12	9	+	50.97	0.0048	mesmeric
13	11	+	43.78	0.0058	motion
14	6	+	39.6	0.0032	organic
15	7	+	33.84	0.0037	law
16	7	+	33.32	0.0037	beings
17	5	+	33	0.0027	inorganic
18	5	+	33	0.0027	luminiferous
19	9	+	31.12	0.0047	sleep
20	5	+	30.6	0.0027	divested
21	12	+	29.93	0.0061	things
22	8	+	29.52	0.0042	pain
23	6	+	28.41	0.0032	perception
24	5	+	27.86	0.0027	waker
25	4	+	26.4	0.0021	permeates
26	4	+	26.4	0.0021	unorganized
27	7	+	23.95	0.0037	thinking
28	9	+	23.04	0.0046	spirit
29	26	+	22.78	0.0111	are
30	12	+	20.58	0.006	mind
31	31	+	20.44	0.0122	you
32	4	+	20.22	0.0021	volition
33	5	+	19.86	0.0026	beginning
34	3	+	19.8	0.0016	atomic
35	3	+	19.8	0.0016	metamorphosis
36	3	+	19.8	0.0016	vankirk
37	4	+	19.64	0.0021	phenomena
38	5	+	19.54	0.0026	external
39	9	-	41.43	0.0021	was
40	67	-	19.43	0.0087	and

Table 13. Keywords comparing *Mesmeric Revelation* with all Poe's production

On a first note about the top two words in the table *v* and *p*, we must explain that *AntConc* application for the study of texts in the light of corpus analysis considers a word the set of elements with a blank space before and after them. That is why *v* and *p* are considered

words in the story, even though they are referring to the roles of the patient and of Poe himself:

P. *Are you asleep?*

V. *Yes – no I would rather sleep more soundly.*

P. *[After a few more passes.] Do you sleep now?*

V. *Yes.*

As *p* and *v* are significantly found in this tale in comparison to the reference corpus (all Poe's tales), they appear as statistically meaningful in the first and second position.

With that reservation, we now turn to the rest of significant words on the list. In the first place, we are surprised by the amount of words related to the duality of body and soul:

1 *luminiferous ether. Now we call all these things **matter**, and embrace all matter in one general definition*

3 *. P. But you now speak of “mind” and “**matter**” as do the metaphysicians. V. Yes—to avoid*

6 *say “mind,” I mean the unparticled or ultimate **matter**; by “matter,” I intend all else. P. You*

1 *of that body; or, more distinctly, our rudimental organs are adapted to the **matter** of which is*

2 *mate, unorganized life. P. Unorganized? V. Yes; **organs** are contrivances by which the individual is broug*

4 *. But why this necessity? V. In the inorganic **life**, as well as in the inorganic matter generally,*

5 *mode by which the mind of the rudimental **life** communicates with the external world; and this ex*

1 *gh what we consider its immateriality, eludes the **organic**. As the sleep-waker pronounced these latter word*

1 *appreciate as existing at all. But to the **inorganic** beings—to the angels—the whole of the*

Then we are confronted with the presence of a word that is included in the title of the short story, *mesmeric*. Mesmerism (with his discoverer Franz Anton Mesmer, Austrian physician) became extremely famous in late 18th and early 19th centuries both in Europe and

the United States. According to Mills (2013:323), mesmerism postulated that “there exists an invisible fluid between bodies that can be acted upon to produce visible effects” and based its foundations on animal magnetism and electric and heavenly forces. Its appeal to Poe suggests the mysticism and spiritual depth experimented by Poe in this time of his life:

3 *my meaning than by the hypothesis that the **mesmeric** exaltation enables me to*
perceive a train of
6 *convinces, but which, in full accordance with the **mesmeric** phenomena, does not*
extend, except through its ef
8 *. A few passes threw Mr. Vankirk into the **mesmeric** sleep. His breathing became*
immediately more easy
9 *life. P. You have often said that the **mesmeric** state very nearly resembles death. How*
is this?

Through words such as *ether* or *sleep* we perceive Poe’s desire to escape from reality, hence his relationship with alcohol abuse or the suicidal attempt with laudanum in 1848 (Meyers, 2000:252):

4 *passage through an ether: for, however rare this **ether** be supposed, it would put a*
stop to
8 *ether than even the luminiferous; and to this **ether**—in unison with it—the whole body*
vibrates,
9 *through its effect, into my normal condition. In **sleep**-waking, the reasoning and its*
conclusion—the caus

Finally, it is worth mentioning the appearance of the word *God*. In his final sprint, Poe seems to change his vision of an afterlife and turns to an attempt to explain God’s role in it:

5 *. Man is a creature. Creatures are thoughts of **God**. It is the nature of thought to be*
8 *the motion of the whole is that of **God**. P. You say that divested of the body*
17 *the most profound veneration.] P. What then is **God**? V. [Hesitating for many*
minutes.] I cannot tell

6.2 Grammatical aspects

Some of the most outstanding grammatical aspects have already been commented, such as the abundance of *the* determiners and *of* preposition (6.1.1), profusion of the coordinating

link *and* (6.1.1), high frequency of the modal verb *could* and use of another modals (6.1.3), preposition *upon* (6.1.4.1) and the significant presence of *which* in restrictive relative sentences (6.1.4.2).

However, we are going to focus on two other and most significant aspects concerning grammar. We would have liked to devote more specific study to every one of them, but bearing in mind the generic view this study pursues to present in regard to Poe's narrative work, that goal escapes its scope.

6.2.1 Verbal tenses

As for verbal tenses, we are going to trace the main groups within the English language verbal system. We consider quite important to look into verb forms from the corpus methodology perspective, since verbs in a clause determine the other clause elements and specify the meaning relationship among them (Biber et al., 2010:103).

We count on previous evidence about the study of verbs within a given set of texts, such as the work of Nakamura (1993:29-48). As cited in Wilson (2005:152), he was able to detect in both the Brown and LOB corpora two patterns for verbal behaviour, that of *imaginative* features and the one concerning *informative* writing. Interestingly enough, he brought to light the fact that in the Brown corpus, the modals most frequently found for imaginative writing were *would*, *used*, *ought* and *might*. On the other hand, *dare*, *need*, *may*, *shall* and *could* prevailed in informative writing, while *will* remained neutral.

In our case in point, we find it interesting to focus on two verbal distributions worth mentioning to our mind in Poe's work, namely progressive forms and the future tense.

6.2.1.1 Progressive forms

We have searched for progressive forms by using *AntConc wildcards* functionality. This tool allows that a simple asterisk may be replaced by a whole string of characters. Thus, by writing *is *ing* for instance, we can get all the expressions containing *is* + verb ending in *-ing* (figure 1).

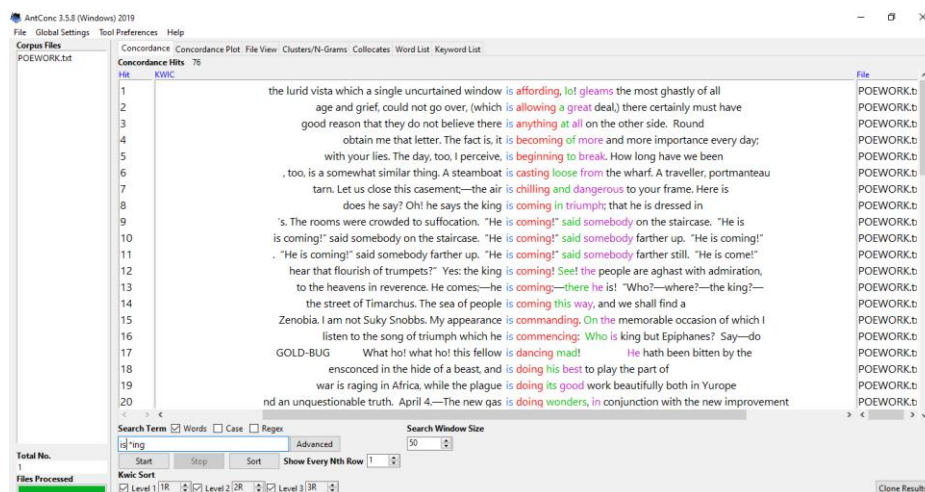


Figure 1. Concordance for *is + ing* forms

Following this process, we have found the following data for progressive forms in the wordlist for all the incumbent short stories:

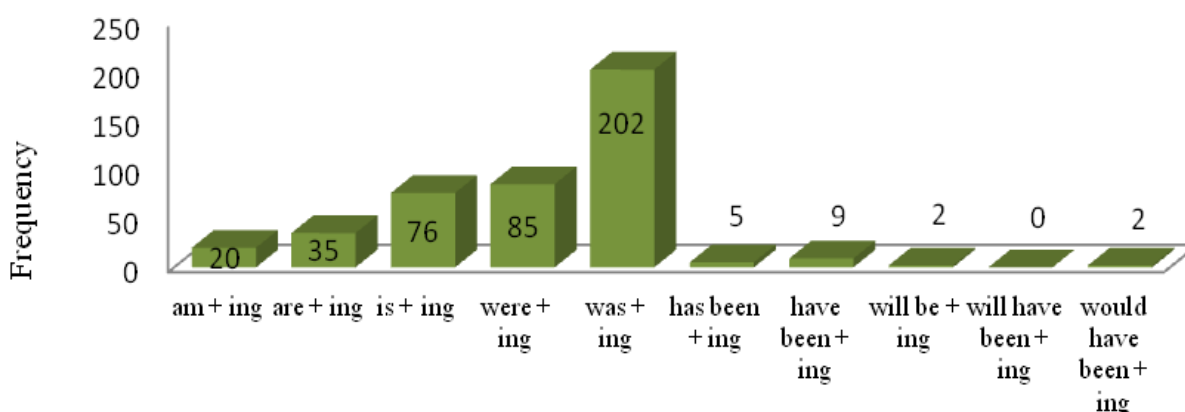


Chart 1. Frequencies of the different verbal progressive forms in Poe's target corpus

As we can see, perfect progressive future forms are virtually absent in Poe's narrative work. As for the rest of progressive forms, we may see the prevalence of *was + ing* (for singular person and past), but only with 202 hits. Other present and past progressive forms do not reach a frequency of 100 occurrences in total. Future or conditional progressive tenses are almost not in use. These figures point at a quite scarce use of the progressive form in Poe's production, with the subsequent effect on the reader of a quiescent, static action progress. On the other hand, the preference for the use of progressive tenses mainly in the past reflects the intention on the part of the author of creating a suitable atmosphere of temporality and impermanence or the inevitability of the passing of time and the advent of death. Furthermore, this tense's use gives the text a proper mysterious background, prompting in the reader a

feeling of suspense, as if an impending horrific event was about to happen. Probably the semantic nuance given by a progressive action in the past suddenly interrupted by another one expressed in the simple past helps to build this atmosphere:

1 . And at length the period of our nuptials **was approaching**, when, upon an afternoon
in the winter

2 ! ugh! ugh!—I was saying,” said he, “I **was saying when** Mr. King Pest **poked** in his
29 most willingly have declined it; for the night **was coming** on, and I felt much fatigued
with

56 Augustus was going with him. While the brig **was getting** ready, he frequently urged
upon me the

58 . But I could not decypher them. And I **was going** back into the morass, when the
moon

59 hour of sailing.” The morrow having arrived, I **was going** from my hotel to the wharf,
when

64 I listened with all my ears to what **was going** on in the room, I came to

6.2.1.2 *Be going to form*

According to Potter (1969:125) and as cited in Mair (1997:1539), the *be going to* form has been scarcely used in literature but he checked out a gradual degree of implementation with the passing of time:

Shakespeare employs this expression very rarely indeed. In all his plays and poems you will not find more than eight examples whereas in ‘Oliver Twist’ alone you will find 24 instances (nearly 4 per cent) of *going to* as against 650 of *shall* and *will*. One century later, in Jerome Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), you will find 75 instances (over 30 per cent) of *going to* as against 240 of *shall* and *will*. (Potter 125).

Mair (1997:1541) poses that the rapid spread of *going to*, more than a sign of grammatical change, is a stylistic development possibly to be attributed to factors such as the *colloquialisation* of English writing.

If the presence of progressive forms was scarce in Poe’s narrative, *be going to* is conspicuous by its absence. In consonance with the words of the authors mentioned in the paragraphs above and to do justice to their claims, Poe’s production no doubt looked for a formal and rigorous use of the English language, marking a gap between the spoken and

written forms of language which would turn smaller in subsequent literary periods. The following chart may help understand it:

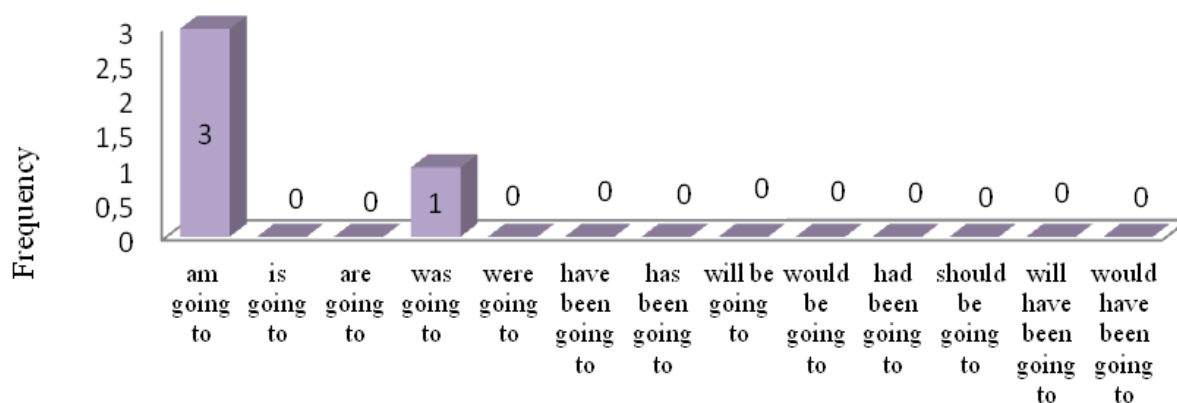


Chart 2. Frequencies of *being going to* in different forms

Just for the sake of inquiry, let us observe the three only uses given to *am going to*:

- 1 *gossiping letter. I tell you distinctly that **I am going to** punish you for all your impertinences*
- 2 *a few minutes, and then said crustily: "**I am going to** sea—you may go home if*
- 3 *few days of three years since what **I am going to** tell you occurred. It was on*

Curiously enough and as we can see from the three hits, the last concordance uses the first person singular in *be going to* form just to assert the authorial narrative voice of the tale. The same happens in the case of the unique use given to *was going to*:

- 1 *explore its depths, even at the sacrifice **I was going to** make; and my principal grief was*

6.2.1.3 Future

In its simple form, the future in Poe's short narrative is more frequent, as the following figure shows (*will* hits as a noun term have been removed from the wordlist):

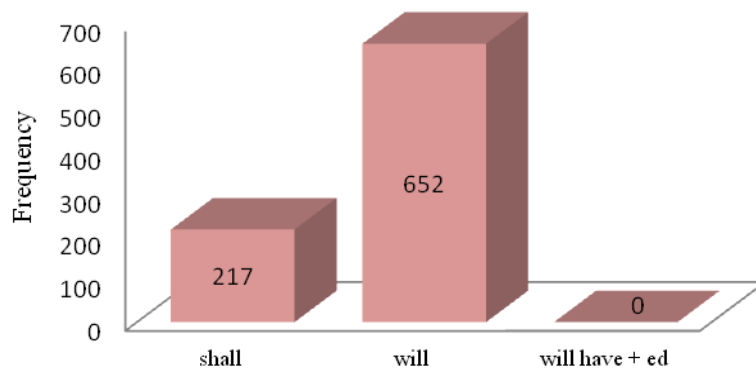


Chart 3. Frequencies of *shall*/*will*/perfect future

No instances of future perfect are to be found, though. We must also consider that the future simple form list includes varieties for courtesy. So many instances of *will* are not indicative of future time whatsoever:

682 *can do nothing but roll over and die. **Will** you be kind enough to write? “In Greek*
 687 *, pulling him by the shoulder, “listen to me **will** you? Do you see the stage—box?—*
there!—
 689 *you know her?” “Yes; I have the honor.” “**Will** you introduce me?” “Assuredly, with*
the greatest
 692 *be back, at all events, by sunrise.” “And **will** you promise me, upon your honor, that*
when

Concerning *shall*, we must stop to reflect about the debate on its real use to express future. Quirk et al. (1985: 4.58n), as cited in Berglund (1997:7), assert that “a further restricted use of *shall* with a third person subject occurs in legal or quasi-legal discourse, in stipulating regulations or legal requirements. Here *shall* is close in meaning to *must*”. Poe is not far from this maxim when we notice the semantic nuance given to expressions such as:

1 *consented to wear them, for my sake. You **shall** accept the little toy which I now hold*
 2 *when a blaspheming and idolatrous upstart of Rome **shall** accuse us of appropriating*
to the appetites of
 3 *by any of the Myrmidons of police. “I **shall** add but one to the arguments against a*
 4 *the box visible upon opening doors 2 and 3, we **shall** always call it the main*
compartment) is lined

At the same time, it is notoriously significant the use of *shall*, not necessarily bound to the first person singular or plural:

19 *Ermengarde, thou art absolved, for reasons which **shall** be made known to thee in
Heaven, of*
20 *'s Sunday—isn't it? Well, then, you **shall** be married precisely—precisely, now
mind!—when th*
21 *e excited simultaneously with any principle which **shall** be merely a modification of
combativeness, but in*
22 *leisure in the morning. In the meantime, you **shall** be my escort home to-night. My
friends*
23 *abilities and love you as a son. You **shall** be my heir. When I die I will*
24 *of the document to a third person, who **shall** be nameless, would bring in question the
honor*

All in all, the formal, strict, sententious or semi-biblical tone exerted by *shall* contributes to the severe and conniving diction always pursued by Poe.

The real future meaning in the works analysed is achieved by the contracted form *'ll*, which also in consonance with Berglund (1997:16) appears mainly in speech-like passages:

6 *Bob, with a wink and a frown—**I'll** be into 'em, I'll let 'em know*
15 *? As sure as you drop that beetle **I'll** break your neck. Look here, Jupiter, do you*
18 *you know what. Let me alone, and **I'll** explain it all in a minute. It's*
19 *back now, that's a darlint, and **I'll** give ye yur flipper." But aff she wint*
20 *Jove! Three Sundays all in a row! **I'll** go, and take Dubble L. Dee's opinion*
21 *tell us all about your voyage, and **we'll** have a game of whist and—" PRATT. "Wist,*

6.2.2 Contractions

According to Peitsara (2004:78), contractions are “combinations of two forms in such a way that one of the elements is reduced and the combination functions like a single word. The reduction can be proclitic (*'tis*) or enclitic (*it's*)”. This author asserts the colloquial nature of contractions, justifying its origin in spoken language. This statement goes hand in hand with Poe's few instances of colloquialism or informal passages where spoken language is also intended to be reflected:

3 *the making, yer leddyship? Come back now, **that's** a darlint, and I'll give ye yur*
4 *home and go to bed. Come now!—**that's** a fine fellow. It's getting late, and,*
5 *I tell you what you do, Bob, **that's** a good boy—you go over the first*
46 *own—why thin—thin it wasn't—**that's** all. And maybe it wasn't mesilf that*

Concerning *'tis*, as cited in the same source (Peitsara, 2004:77), “in the 1989 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (...), the variant *'tis* is characterised as being used ‘dialectally or colloquially, and to some extent in the literary language (though less now than formerly)’ and ‘formerly common in prose, now poet., arch., dial., or colloq.’ ” This is also the case for Poe’s literary context, where only six instances of *'tis* are to be found:

1 *before. I obeyed her.—They were these: Lo! **'tis** a gala night Within the lonesome*
latter ye
2 *do you mean?” “Why I mean de bug. **'Tis** berry hebbly bug. Spose I drop him down*
3 *for to ventur pon dis limb berry far—**tis** dead limb putty much all de way.” “Did*
4 *debbil take me if I don't blieve **'tis** more dan he know, too. But it's*
5 *?” “Yes, I nose dat—nose all bout dat—**tis** my lef hand what I chops de wood*
6 *vat you ave for say to dat name? **'Tis** ver goot name; and so is Voissart—dat*

When comparing Poe’s contractions to those included in corpora, the first striking finding to remark in relation to BNC and AmE06 corpora is that *'s* contraction is the most significant negative word:

Rank	Freq	Keyness	Effect	Keyword
2297	4	+ 22.31	0	swooning
2298	4	+ 22.31	0	ungentlemanly
2299	10	+ 22.29	0	clothed
2300	6	+ 22.28	0	impediments
2301	32	+ 22.24	0.0002	engaged
2302	823	- 2354.54	0.0015	s
2303	1292	- 1227.55	0.0024	on
2304	188	- 1071.81	0.0006	t
2305	517	- 709.07	0.0015	she
2306	907	- 626.38	0.0022	are
2307	726	- 572.2	0.0019	they
2308	321	- 521.56	0.0011	can
2309	108	- 494.77	0.0004	new
2310	91	- 486.34	0.0004	people

Figure 2. First negative keyword (BNC-Poe)

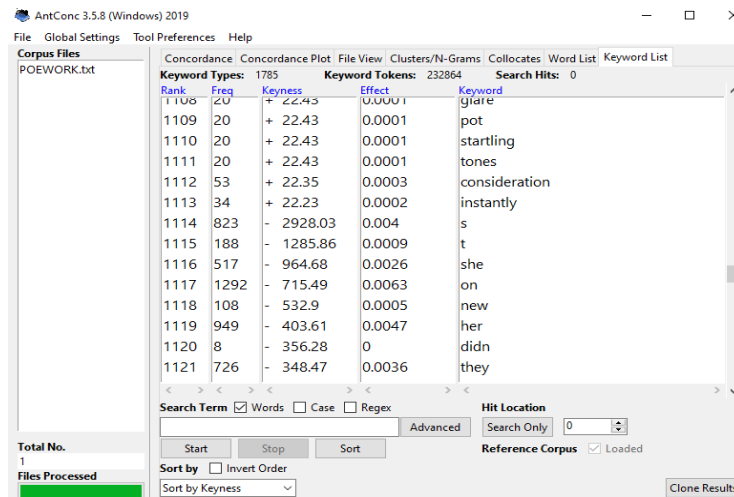


Figure 3. First negative keyword (AmE06-Poe) 1

Thus, there is a strong negative significance of contraction uses of ‘s to refer to the verb *to be* and the *Saxon genitive*. This involves the fact that, unusually enough, Poe’s narrative set shows less ‘s contractions accounting for *to be* and the genitive than expected according to BNC and AmE06 corpora. It thus emerges that the formal intention on the part of the author becomes apparent again.

The same happens regarding the use of ‘t with a negative purpose (we are able to ascertain it by means of figures 2 and 3 above). Again, we can attribute the only 188 instances of ‘t for negation in our target corpus to the level of formality the author wants to convey. The use of ‘t associated to informal text-types was described in Biber (1987:99-119), as cited in Castillo-González (2007:28), which substantiates our finding. Some examples from the ‘t concordance may illustrate our statements:

- 11 . Somehow thus: Can’t be too brief. **Can’t** be too snappish. Always a full stop. And
 17 know, and debbil take me if I **don’t** blieve ‘tis more dan he know, too. But
 20 him down fuss, and den de limb **won’t** break wid just de weight ob one nigger.”
 30 the fellow, “hu! hu! hu! dat you **can’t** do.” “Can’t do!” said I, “what do
 37 crowing, old cock! Don’t frown so—**don’t!** **Don’t** hollo, nor howl nor growl, nor

7 CONCLUSIONS

By means of this study, we have been able to provide quite a general overview of Poe’s main short narrative through the prism of corpus analysis. Additionally, we have accounted for key stylistic and linguistic features comparing them to previous research in the field. We

have also given a description of Poe's literary traits on the basis of quantitative methods showing iterative nuances pointing at general features which made Poe's style a genuine one. At the same time, we have attempted to show the evolution of his prose in parallel with those events which paramountly took place in his turbulent lifetime.

From the lexical point of view, we perceive in Poe's narrative speech abundant expositive expressions consisting of determined noun phrases in the form *the...of*, properly creating a close stance of the reader with regard to the narrative. The first person singular pronoun *I* is particularly underscored as an element of intimacy and authorial narration, which is well in tune with other authors' standpoints, such as that of Gibert (2001:88). Content words associate themselves to metaphysical semantic fields but there is always a clear split between the mental and spiritual self narrating the story and the outer, concrete and practical world. This finding supports Grayson (2005:56-77) view of the influence of phrenology and physiognomy in Poe's work as for the issue of the inextricable link among the physical, spiritual and psychological human spheres. Outstandingly, words pointing at psychological entanglement as well as at anxious and obsessive distress become relevant in the analysis. Words belonging to notional categories such as bewilderment, hideousness, death, or treason are also landmarks in the anatomy of the stories. Against the background of BNC as a reference corpus, the preposition *upon* stands as a significant revelation in Poe's narrative, being closely linked to detailed descriptions and imminent upcoming incidents.

Other important readings from corpora analysis are the inclusion of terms from classic languages such as Latin to create in the text a formal, serious and highly intellectual ambience. Curiously enough, modern languages other than English, namely French, are used to induce a mockery-like tone in some passages. The analysis of *she* as a personal pronoun against both reference corpora revealed the unstressed presence of female characters in Poe's narrative outcome being in addition associated to subordinate, docile and subservient roles.

By studying some short stories in isolation as target corpora of analysis, written in different stages of the author's life, we were granted the chance to detect subtle changes in his style to be compared with significant life occurrences. Noteworthy hints of parodic invectives against the classic Gothic fiction conventions are visible in Poe's first novels, probably in a writer fully indebted to literary commitments and a search for innovation and authenticity. In an intermediate stage, we observe then a deep concern for a prose intended to attract the readership (coinciding with Poe's struggles to survive in the world of journalism) by state-of-

the-art topics at the moment, like Eastern culture in *Four Beasts in One- the Homo Cameleopard* (1836). Gradually, showing some prodromal signs of declivity in his personal life (like the American self-made man myth-debunking intent in *The Business Man*, 1840) and misanthropy, Poe reaches an obscure final stage in life, reflected in his richest but most pessimistic and disillusioned production (*The Cask of Amontillado*, 1846; *Mesmeric Revelation*, 1849).

Concerning grammar, verbs in the past tense make a prominent appearance as an indicator of the preference for past developments, contributing to idealise the action and to insert it in a mysterious atmosphere. The modal verb *could* deserves special recognition as an element arousing feelings of uncertainty and intrigue. Concurring with Rissanen (1984:420), the use of *-wh* relative pronoun in restricted clauses is quite frequent, following the influence of Latin and the formal writing conventions. The scarce use of progressive verbal forms in Poe's short narrative prompts a static development of the story progression and the few uses observed pursue to achieve the mysterious effect of suspense before an ongoing action being disrupted by another one suddenly happening. *Shall* with a future value is to be used not only with the first singular and plural persons and it is commonly used to impinge a quasi-legal and authoritarian mood upon the discourse of the text.

Finally, the study of contractions in the set of tales mirrors a rejection of contracted forms of *'s* for *to be* and the Saxon genitive, when compared to BNC and AmEO6 corpora. The same phenomenon is perceived with *'t* contraction for negations.

With this research we hope to have blazed a trail for future enquiries and questions about Poe's work. We are well aware of limitations such as the restrictions imposed by the limited number of corpora used as well as the selected amount of individual tales studied to find correlations between biographical hallmarks and literary outcomes. A wider sample of tales, accompanied also by poetical texts would have been welcome as a means to shed light on the issue. Every single feature studied could have probably been a potential target matter of exhaustive re-analysis and extension, since corpora methodology has become a useful quantitative linguistic tool to elucidate a myriad of encrypted features within inter and extra-textual contexts.

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