

Factual Mentality vs. Emotional Make-up: A Lexical Featural Analysis of Characters' Dialogue in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*

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ABSTRACT

This paper is mainly concerned with making a systematic and objective lexical analysis of the language used by the main dynamic characters (Gradgrind and Louisa) in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*. This lexical analysis is mainly conducted in light of the lexical category in Leech and Short's (2007) checklist of stylistic categories, each containing several subcategories. Some of the questions under each subcategory are answered in an attempt to unravel the stylistic significance underlying the language used by these characters, which enables the researcher to track their inner dynamicity throughout. This invites the researcher to stylistically tackle selected sentences uttered by these dynamic characters before the change, during change and after the change. As far as the lexical features are concerned, some lexical items (i.e., nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs) are used for characterization.

Key words: Character Change, *Hard Times*, Lexical Analysis, Louisa, Gradgrind

INTRODUCTION

Hard Times was written in 1854. It is regarded as one of the works through which Dickens earned a high stature. It should be noted that the first half of the 19th century is marked by its stress on emotions, while the second half witnessed the birth of science with its concern with materialism, realism and industrialism. The importance of this novel stems from the fact that it addresses several themes mirroring the age in which it was written. Brantlinger (1971, p. 279) maintains that "Hard Times reveals Dickens' ambivalent feelings towards industrialism as clearly as any of his other novels." The dilemma of English people at that time is that they were taught to disassemble and disguise their emotions by "facts" and 'tabular statements' and 'enlightened self-interest' and doctrines and dogmas of all sorts" (ibid.).

This rigid, emotionless atmosphere affected many aspects of life, such as education, marriage, the role of women in society and the role of parents. Rote factual education was a popular scholastic trend adopted by most of the English schools in the Victorian age. Fielding (1956, p. 148) illustrates that in England "there is certainly evidence that such factual cramming went on in schools, and even that it was encouraged by some of the inspectors." Marriage also was significantly affected by this utilitarian atmosphere. Boege (1953, p. 172) asserts that Dickens "had an 'abhorrence of, and contempt for, the Victorian bourgeois conception of marriage,' the latter point buttressed by references to the many unhappy marriages, and exclusively the unhappy ones, described in the novels."

Another reason for this novel's reputation is Dickens's mastery at depicting his characters that represent the polar opposites: the world of reality and the world of imagination. The two opposites in *Hard Times* are best represented by Gradgrind and Louisa respectively. The dichotomy between the emotional characters and the factual ones is mirrored in their language. Kearns (1992, p. 859) notes that the portrayal of characters and the language used in this novel can bear double meanings: one that "precisely illustrates industrialism's ugly realities" and another which "problematizes the notion of realism."

In this paper, the researcher sheds light on how Gradgrind's world of reality and statistical mentality is contrasted with Louisa's world of imagination and emotional make-up through the lexical choices in their dramatic speeches with each other throughout the novel. This analysis is based on the Leech and Short's (2007) checklist of stylistic lexical features which is concerned with the features of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs and other general features.

PRE-CHANGE PHASE

In the beginning of the novel, the reader is introduced to the character of Gradgrind as a teacher, as a father and as a friend. In all cases, he is shown to be intransigent, strict, adherent to facts, and averse to imagination. Fahmy (2012, p. 93) points out that "in his initial phase, Gradgrind is portrayed as a confident and domineering being whose verbal language explicitly conveys his power and certitude." On the

other hand, Louisa's lack of self-expression and emotional confusion are displayed by her lexical choices, especially in her speech with her father in the circus.

Gradgrind's Speech with Louisa and Thomas in the Circus

Gradgrind's character as an educator is not so different from his paternal character. He sets forth that learning facts "is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children" (3; bk.1, ch. 1). Gradgrind binds all his life as well as the life of his family to facts only. This results in the fact that "the children are themselves concretized fragments produced by a hard father formed from a hard system" (Kearns, 1992, p. 862). This hard system is affected by the harsh principles of industrialism and utilitarianism. Hence, desire, enjoyment and imagination are completely precluded in the industrial state. However, the result of that preclusion of every sort of enjoyment leads Louisa and Tom to secretly seek it since, as stated by Hughes (2013, p. 122), "when a man disapproves of legitimate amusements in his family his condemnation of what is improper will have little weight with his children." Consequently, we see Louisa "peep[ing] with all her might through a hole in a deal board" and Tom, "abasing himself on the ground but to catch a hoof of the graceful equestrian Tyrolean flower-act" (14; bk.1, ch. 3). Once their father catches them, he gets so infuriated that this fury comes to the surface in his language and choice of lexis. The lexical items "wonder," "folly" and "idleness" imply his surprise and amazement, and his idea that going to such places is a stupid and silly action as well as a monumental waste of time. It is noticeable that Gradgrind's use of the lexical item *wonder* is very ironical. This irony is created once we learn later that Gradgrind prevents his daughter from wondering "Louisa, never wonder!" (5; bk.1, ch. 2). What is lexically eye-catching also is that Gradgrind's reproachful sentences evince how much he is convulsed with rage and disappointment. This leaks out in his choice of some lexis and phrases such as "difficult to believe," "sorry," "worse," "no better," "degraded position," "amazed" and "childish." All these lexis and phrases belong to the sematic field of negative emotions. His intemperance is displayed by the lexical repetition of "Thomas and you" in a long minor sentence.

On the other hand, Louisa's lexical choices in this speech, though few, are very suggestive of a troubled self, inner agony and weakness. The dynamic verb "see" in "wanted to see what it was like" (5; bk.1, ch. 2) implies that it is Louisa's first visual experience with such places. This shows how so harsh and joyless her life is that she has never been visually exposed to such entertaining places though she might be spiritually and unconsciously attached to them and eager to penetrate them. Her psychological exhaustion is reflected by the lexical repetition of the adjective "tired" which indicates her emotional suffering. Moreover, though the generic pronoun "everything" in "I don't know of what – of everything, I think" (15; bk.1, ch. 3) explicitly refers to general and indefinite reasons for Louisa's tiredness, it may implicitly indicate more specific and definite reasons, i.e., facts or learning facts,

a matter which Gradgrind intentionally overlooks. This view can be supported by the fact that the non-factive verb "think" in the comment clause "I think" presupposes that she may or may not know of what she is tired.

Her selfless devotion especially to her brother is demonstrated by her attempt not to stitch her brother up for going to the circus when her father blames him, through using the first-person singular pronoun *I* instead of the plural pronoun *We* twice in two successive sentences. Using the physical verb "brought" before the affective verb "asked" suggests that her brother had no deliberate intention to come to such places or perhaps no idea about where he is taken to. The verb "ask" signifies that he came due to her request and invitation.

IN-CHANGE PHASE

Time has left its traces on both Gradgrind and his daughter. It is not until we read Gradgrind's speech with Louisa in chapter 15 that we realize that both have undergone some sort of development. On one hand, Gradgrind's direct and straightforward style of speech inclines to be indirect, and his language tends to be persuasive rather than directive. The reason is probably that he is supposed to consider a difficult topic with his daughter; that is, the proposal of marriage offered by Bounderby for Louisa. Gradgrind is quite aware that such subject is not an ology that is taught at school. This is probably why he tries to hedge around the topic, using the possible persuasive techniques to get his daughter's consent. Louisa's inability to express herself, emotional loss and deprivation are also evident.

Gradgrind's Speech with Louisa about Bounderby's Marriage Proposal

Through examining Gradgrind's linguistic choices of lexis in this long conversation with his daughter, we could see how much persuasive his style is. Obviously, the way he prepares his daughter for the topic is quite significant. The endearing noun "dear" and the possessive adjective *my* help establish an emotional bond between Gradgrind and his daughter so that she can cordially listen to what he is going to say. The lexical repetition of the vocative "my dear" reinforces this cordial bond. Significantly, Gradgrind draws Louisa's attention to the importance of the topic in question through many lexical preferences. The lexical item "woman" helps give Louisa the impression that this topic needs mature reflection and decision. The adverb "seriously" suggests that Gradgrind's topic needs careful attention and consideration as he is going to turn his teaching into reality. The adverb "alone" implies that he does not want to be defeated.

It is notable that Gradgrind's dynamicity is seen in his inclination toward using persuasive language instead of the directive language. Darr (2014, para. 5) makes a stark distinction between the directive language and the persuasive one. According to him, "language serves a directive function when one uses it to immediately (not temporally but contrasted with immediately) affect the behavior of another person (*an overt invitation to act*)." By contrast, "language

serves a persuasive function when it is used in an attempt to influence the behavior (beliefs) of another individual indirectly - *a covert invitation to action*" (ibid., para. 6). Accordingly, Gradgrind's speech with his daughter is characterized by indirectness. Gradgrind's persuasive language is lexically marked by the use of emotional language which he used to reject before. Words like "dear," "serious," "alone," "cheerful," "well," "together," "happy," "romantic," "assurance," "interest and pleasure," "favourable," "fanciful," "fantastic" and "sentimental" are emotive lexis. Indeed, emotive language is not the sort of language Gradgrind prefers. However, he is trying to change his style since he has a plan in mind. He wants to address Louisa's emotions in order to convince her of the topic.

There is also a propensity in Gradgrind's speech to use adverbs of degree such as "rather" and "a little." This may create the feeling that for Gradgrind, things are now relative and should not be taken for granted. This could be simply an attempt to win Louisa's approval and get her agreement. Another persuasive technique in Gradgrind's speech is demonstrated by his attempt to make the conversational situation two-sided rather than one-sided. This is made lexically explicit through his employment of the inclusive plural pronoun *We* and the adverb "together" in "the conversation we are now going to have together" (106; bk.1, ch. 15). Gradgrind's intent of including Louisa in the conversational situation and making her one of the schemers is premeditated.

Using persuasive techniques, Gradgrind tends to furnish the topic emotionally for Louisa by praising her sharp intellect and rational understanding. This fact is achieved by the employment of phrases connoting rationality such as "perfect confidence," "good sense" and "do justice." It is also accomplished through negating emotionally connotative phrases such as "not impulsive," "not romantic" and "strong dispassionate ground of reason and calculation." This change in Gradgrind's style of speech is intentional and planned. He is indirect because he cannot find an easy way to tell his daughter about the proposal of marriage. This circumlocution is only a contrivance to get the required outcome of the conversation; i.e., her consent.

On the other hand, Louisa's physical change is accompanied by a mental one. She is now quite aware of herself and her suffering; however, she still cannot express it directly. The degree adverb "quite" in her response to her father's question about her physical condition implies her dissatisfaction about her suffering. It could be meant to draw her father's attention to this suffering. Nevertheless, when this implicit remark is met by her father with great indifference through asking another question about her emotional condition, her answer to this second question comes ironical. The irony is reflected by the lexical repetition of the frequency adverb "usually" which suggests her dissatisfaction with her father's reaction toward her suffering.

Louisa's non-verbal reaction toward her father's offer "surprised him, as to induce him gently to repeat, 'a proposal of marriage, my dear'" (ibid.). The lexical repetition depicts Gradgrind's hesitancy and uncertainty. However, her verbal reaction is much more surprising for him: "I hear you, father.

I am attending, I assure you." Gradgrind's cunning ploy to find an emotional entrance to the topic is in vain. He endeavors to incite her to open the awkward subject of marriage by pushing her into mutual interest, but she proves to be wiser than he thought her to be. Her blank answer is apprehended by Gradgrind to be due to either her unexpected severe clinical thinking or her readiness for the topic: "Well! You are even more dispassionate than I expected, Louisa. Or, perhaps, you are not unprepared for the announcement I have it in charge to make?" (ibid.). The interjection "well" with the exclamatory in the first sentence and the introductory *or* in the second belies Gradgrind's surprise and uncertainty. The same idea is emphasized by the negation of a morphologically negated word "not unprepared," which denotes that he expected her to be unprepared. The lexical items "even" and "perhaps" support this view. The phrase "in charge" depicts the subject of marriage as a heavy burden on Gradgrind's shoulder.

Louisa's response proves that there is no real dialogue between her and her father. He has the news, and she only wants to listen to him, which makes it more difficult to impart. Her reluctance to respond to her father's news emotionally is represented by the lexical repetition of the verb "hear" three times. She is wise and intelligent enough to discern her father's change of rhetoric. She wants him to be clear and direct as he used to be. This is evident in her repetition of the counter-factive verb "wish" which presupposes the falsity of the proposition expressed in the complement clauses "to hear it all from you" and "to hear you state it to me." Before taking a decision, she wants to listen to the details of the news directly as shown by the lexical items "all" and "state." Louisa's unresponsive replies heighten the tension that Gradgrind undergoes so much that it becomes evident in his lexical choice. Gradgrind's comment on her responses with the AjP "perfectly reasonable" is ironical. It shows as if Louisa expressed a point of view, which is not the case. He tries to deceive her to accomplish his target.

As a result of his failure to find an emotional entrance to the topic, Gradgrind finds the task of delivering the details of the subject quite burdensome. This increases the tension he experiences to the extent that it becomes apparent in his language. In a long complex sentence, Gradgrind attempts to distance himself from the emotional topic "marriage" using phrasal and clausal embedding. This psycho-syntactic distance is lexically strengthened by the repetition of the introductory conjunction "that," which is also indicative of Gradgrind's hesitancy. The employment of the PP "in short" is ridiculous as Gradgrind does not speak in brief but he utters a very long sentence. He is not in good terms with anything that belongs to the strange, unacceptable and fanciful outside world. The use of some lexis here may attest to this idea. The verb "undertaken," for instance, denotes how talking to his daughter, who is brought up not to fancy, is a heavy burden over his shoulder and how long he thought before raising this emotive issue. Another lexical feature which should not be missed here is the use of the modal verbs "might" and "should." Both are used to show the probability of something. It is not Bounderby who is not certain

about the suitable time to speak to her about the proposal of marriage, but it is Gradgrind himself who is.

Louisa's self-discovery and her ability to comprehend what she is missing are seen in her emotive vocabulary represented by the abstract noun "love. The fact that she does not love Bounderby is seen in the non-factive verbs "think" in "Do you think I love Mr. Bounderby?" (107; *ibid.*), as well as "ask" in "Do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?" (*ibid.*). These verbs do not commit Louisa to the truth of the proposition expressed in the comment clause, i.e., the fact that she loves Bounderby. Louisa's repetition of the vocative "father" in the beginning of her questions may be intended to drag her father's attention to the fact that she does not love Bounderby and hence she is not supposed to accept this proposal.

Louisa's resistance to this kind of marriage is encountered by her father as he explains:

I would advise you (since you ask me) to consider this question, as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of tangible fact. The ignorant and the giddy may embarrass such subjects with irrelevant fancies, and other absurdities that have no existence, properly viewed – really no existence - but it is no compliment to you to say, that you know better. (*ibid.*)

The lexical item "accustomed" is meant to remind Louisa of the kind of upbringing and cramming she has received so that she can feel it incumbent upon her to apply the same to the issue of marriage and accept it as a real fact without any discussion. The use of the adjective "tangible" may be an implicit request to dismiss any intangible parameters such as emotions regarding marriage. The adverb "simply" facilitates this task for her. Furthermore, the elevation of facts is achieved by debasing imagination. The use of the adjective "irrelevant" is meant to reduce fancy. Moreover, the determiner "other" lists fancy as one of the absurdities. The use of "such" reduces the subjects based on non-facts. The gradable superlative adjective "better" is meant to address Louisa's intellect by crediting her stock of knowledge.

The focus shifts from argument strategy and tactics to a more microscopic level in which Gradgrind resorts to statistics and facts in a final attempt to convince Louisa. His lexical choices, here, tend to be entirely objective such as "statistics," "figures," "contract," "contracted," "three-fourths," "law," "computation," "results" ...etc. The reference to marriage as being a "contract" displays marriage as a mere emotionless relationship. However, he is not entirely confident and does not trust the criterion according to which he thinks marriage should be measured. This is evident in the use of lexical items that unearth his uncertainty such as the adverbials "all but," "virtually," "almost" and "so far as"; the adjective "round"; and the non-factive verbs "think" and "appear". The lexical repetition of "nothing can be plainer" supports this view. The use of the comparative adjective "plainer" is ironical as it contradicts with the reality: Gradgrind is not plain and direct in his speech. The same irony is felt in his final sentences before leaving Louisa to judge for herself. The clarity and directness that are suggested by

the verb "stated" in "I have stated the case" contradict with the indirect style of Gradgrind's speech. Moreover, the freedom of choice suggested by the NCLI "you to judge for yourself" and the PCLI "for you to decide" contradicts with the restriction suggested by the lexical items "confining," "rigidly" and "sole remaining."

On the other hand, Louisa's internal anguish is made clear by her remark to her father when he wonders about her unjustified silence while looking to the "chimneys of the Coketown works" (109; *ibid.*): "There seems to be nothing there but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, fire bursts out, father!" (*ibid.*). The lexical items "languid" and "monotonous" underlie how much her present life is humdrum and meaningless. This meaning is further intensified by the excluding items "nothing ...but." Louisa's psyche is torn apart. She is sandwiched between two choices: either to satisfy her father or to respond to her heart. The metaphor of "fire" is an implication of her psychological conflict. She is entirely aware of the destructive outcomes of repressing emotions. Bodenheimer (1991, p. 204) elucidates this when he states that Louisa's "ability to intuit the explosive consequences of the repressions her father has imposed on her is expressed, on the verge of her unwilling engagement, in her enigmatically compressed reference to Coketown chimneys." Although Louisa's felicity is crystal clear for the reader, it is not so for her father. He is detached from his daughter's world. He cannot understand her remarks because they are figurative, and they belong to the emotional world. Thoroddsen (2011, p. 13) claims that "Gradgrind seems to unconsciously try to suffocate the feelings of his daughter, but she is aware of them although she cannot define her emotions." Contrary to her subjective remarks, his comments are objective. This objectivity is reflected by the lexical choices "the average duration," "the calculations of various life assurance and annuity offices," "figures," "governed by the laws" and "in the aggregate."

Torn between two extremes (i.e., her father's actualities of life and her emotional desires), Louisa finds no escape from this suffering but to "accept his [Bounderby's] proposal" (Dickens 110; bk.1, ch. 15). Although she may be aware that Bounderby is not an appropriate suitor for her, she is too weak to express this directly. This is simply because she has never been taught to balance her reason and heart. Therefore, she decides to accept Bounderby's proposal and go into "a loveless union because she can come up with no convincing reason not to." (Davis 1999, p. 151). This simply means that she is not taught to work out her fancy or consult her heart. Interestingly enough, her vision of marriage to Bounderby is expressed in the physical verb "take" in "since Mr Bounderby likes to take me thus." According to her, this marriage will not be based on emotional parameters but physical attraction.

Moreover, Louisa's emotional deprivation can be perceived through the lexical items "heart's experiences," "part of my nature," "tastes," "fancies," "aspirations," "affections," "the baby-preference," "child's heart" and "child's dream;" all of which belong to the semantic field of emotions. This feeling is emphasized by the antonymous

items, "problems" and "realities." The verb "nourish" denotes how much all-important the emotional faculties are for the vitality of one's life. They are the food of the soul. She is emotionally dead since she is divested of the emotional and spiritual nourishment. The phrase "all that part of my nature" indicates that she is living against her feminine nature. The lexical choice "escape" depicts her world as a prison. The personification of "baby-preferences" in "resting place in my breast" connotes a feeling of emptiness and nothingness.

POST-CHANGE PHASE

Not surprisingly, Louisa's marriage to Bounderby proves unsuccessful. Her marital house is not so different from her father's. It is as bleak with facts as her father's Stone Lodge. As a result of this loveless marriage, Louisa falls an easy prey for Mr Harthouse's seduction. The novel reaches its climax when both Louisa and Harthouse decide to flee together. However, Louisa's sound reason directs her to her father's house instead of eloping with her lover. Drabble, (2000, p. 457) maintains that "the better side of her nature is awakened by this experience, and at the crisis she flees for protection to her father, who in turn is awakened to the folly of his system." The lexical analysis of her speech with her father depicts the change both she and her father undergo. She is not the old submissive Louisa, and he is no more the hard-headed father.

Louisa's Confrontation with Gradgrind

Having a cursory look at the beginning of the speech makes it clear that Gradgrind's tone is imploring. This tone manifests itself in the use of the verb "conjure." He adjures his daughter to speak her mind. The interjection "good Heaven" reflects not only his shock and surprise at her miserable state but also his feelings of regret about his lifelong belief in industrialism and utilitarianism. Besides, the speech shows Louisa as being brave enough to seek out her true self by freeing herself from his father's yoke. As a result of this change, she starts expressing her thoughts directly, confronting her father with the devastating effect of his philosophy on her life. Although he has devoted himself to educating them, she is not appreciative at all this futile devotion. The lexical item "curse" bespeaks the trouble she faces. The use of "such" in "to such a destiny" is meant to demean her fate. Her miserable state is stressed by the antonymous relationship between the lexical items "give" and "take," "life" and "death," and "garden" and "wilderness."

Notably, Louisa's speech is characterized by figurative language, a type of expression consistent with her poetic nature. For instance, the lexical item "garden" depicts fancy and imagination as flowers in order to spotlight their charming impact on life, whereas its antonymous "wilderness" depicts her heart as an arid land, suggesting her emotional vacancy. This feeling is intensified by the amplifying adjective "great." Moreover, the lexical item "ashes" portrays fancy as a fire which has never been ignited in Louisa's heart. The emphatic item "ever" supports this meaning. The absence

of ashes signifies the absence of fire. In other words, Louisa never experiences emotional sentiments. The image in "the void in which my life sinks" likens the void to a big ocean, connoting the profundity and vastness of her profound emptiness.

In a final encounter with her father, Louisa forces a new perspective on by drawing a comparison between her previous weakness and her newly acquired strength. This comparison is supported by the antonymous relationship between the adverbs of time "now" and "then," and the adverb of place "in this room." This comparison which is meant to set Louisa's previous cowardice against her present courage is reinforced by the use of comparative adjectives. She uses these adjectives to compare her real self with her would-be self. Adjectives like "better, happier," "more humble," "more trusting," "wiser," "more loving," "more contended" and "more innocent and human" shed light on the gradual transformation that she underwent and finally lift her above her present circumstances.

Louisa's personal transformation will be only cosmetic until she achieves reconciliation with her past, and easy reconciliation based upon understanding and new insight. Recalling the scene of her speech with her father about Bounderby's proposal of marriage allows her to effect a reconciliation with the past. This is quite essential for her emotional healing. Amen (2008, p. 181) elucidates the effect of this process on the better change of a person, stating that "uncoupling painful past memories helps us live in the present free from unwanted unconscious influences." The clause "I feared" echoes the lexical phrase "a child's fear" in her talk with her father before marriage. In that kind of talk, she uses the indefinite article *a* to indirectly imply her deprivation as a child by attributing the fear to an unknown-deprived-of-self child. The intensity of this suffering as a child is emphasized by the lexical items and phrases "my task," "against every natural prompting," "strive," "lingered," "defying" and "hate." The lexical item "task" unravels past obligation imposed upon her as a helpless child and how much important obedience to this obligation was. The lexical phrase "natural prompting" suggests that emotions are inborn in a child and they should not be suppressed but should be nurtured. The compound items "frost and blight" as well "hardened and spoiled" depict the influence of cold, hard facts on her life. The juxtaposition of blindness in "stone blind" with the happiness of Louisa in "a million times wiser, happier, more loving, more contended, more innocent and human," on the condition of Louisa's freedom to fancy in "free...to exercise my fancy," delineates emotional deprivation as much more destructive to the human soul than the loss of sight.

The internal conflict that afflicts Louisa's psyche is strengthened by the antonymous relationship between the lexical items "hunger and thirst" on the one hand, and "rules, and figures, and definitions" on the other. The intensity of this conflict is underlined by the emphatic "never" and "every." The adjective "ardent" suggests how much her inclination toward the world of no-facts is strong. The same idea is applied to the antonymous lexical items "angle" and "demon." The lexical items "defeat," "battling,"

“strife,” “repulse” and “crushed” depict a psychological war whose victim is Louisa. On the other hand, the collapse of Gradgrind’s “never-wonder” school can be inferred by Louisa’s lexical choices “doubting, misbelieving, despising, regretting” and with the non-factive verb “think.” The order of these adjectives is semantically significant. Louisa’s pervasive disbelief comes as a result of her scepticism which finally breeds her extreme hatred and regret.

The memories of Louisa’s marital life are not much better than those of her childhood. The misery of her marriage is brought about by the fact that this marriage is not based on love but financial and practical standards. This idea is made manifest in Louisa’s lexical preferences. The lexical choice “took” in “I took him” echoes the same word in “if her like to take me thus” mentioned in Louisa’s speech with her father before marriage, implicating that Louisa’s marriage is a bargain made between her father and her husband. The lexical phrase “deadened state” emphasizes this fact. Unable to identify her father’s true motives of pushing her to marry such a hard-headed old man, she justifies her consent to the marriage. It is not only out of her indifference but also out of her desire to help her brother Tom. The AjP “wholly indifferent” signifies that her father’s system was so rigid that she hoped to find a way out from that system by marrying Bounderby. This idea is emphasized by the lexical choice “wild escape.” Then, Louisa remarks that the disparity between her and her husband results in the rebellion of her long-repressed emotions against her marriage.

The growing disparity between her and her husband is counterbalanced by an increased affinity between her and her lover, Mr Harthouse. In her speech about this affinity, Louisa appears to be indirect. First, the personification of “chance” in “chance threw into my way” – instead of, say, *I met* – may imply that she does not want to shoulder the blame. The lexical item “threw” suggests that this affair is unplanned and unexpected. Second, she refers to her lover with indefinite lexical items. She identifies him first as “a new acquaintance,” then as “a man.” This indirect reference to him may be understood as an attempt not to distract her father from the primary purpose; i.e., the good qualities of that man which make her fall in love with him. However, the enumeration of that man’s qualities may be taken as an implicit attack by Louisa against her father’s personality and thoughts. The question now is: does this implicit attack manage to change the way Gradgrind view life? Yes, it does. This can be discerned through the following lexical analysis of Gradgrind’s speeches with Louisa and Bounderby near the end of the novel.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, some lexical preferences made by Gradgrind and Louisa could assist us in approaching their characters before change, during change and after change. In the pre-change phase, these lexical features show Gradgrind’s imposition, authoritarianism, factualism and rejection of fancy and advocacy of factual knowledge; as well as Louisa’s

confusion and emotional suffering. During the in-change phase, a group of lexical features and choices in his speech with Louisa about Bounderby’s proposal of marriage contribute to reflecting Gradgrind’s strong character, which renders his language economical, indirect and circumlocutionary. Other features mirror Louisa’s self-awareness, fear of self-expression, implicit feeling of loss and perplexity and emotional deprivation. However, In the post-change phase, Louisa’s extended conversation with her father at the end of the novel reveals how much they have changed. The lexical preferences used by Louisa show her strength and ability to defend her desires, which shocks Gradgrind and brings all his beliefs into question. Gradgrind has also changed by altering from a rigid father into a passionate one.

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