

Johan de Joode, Michaela Mahlberg, and Peter Stockwell

Research context

- Prose fiction is typically treated as a single register without distinguishing between fictional speech and narration.
- Typically the focus of stylisticians is on the presentation of speech, thought, and writing (Leech and Short 2007).
- In previous work we have shown that patterns of body language play an important role as a textual technique of characterisation.
- This poster outlines how we investigate these patterns with the help of suspensions. We build on previous studies, but do so at scale.

Definitions and examples

- suspension** A narratorial interruption of character speech that does not end with sentence final punctuation.
- non-quote** Any textual unit that is not a quote.
- quote** A textual unit that starts and ends with respectively single or double quotation marks. It can represent speech, writing, or thought.

Rosa has been crying and is yet in distress. On her coming in, the ironmaster leaves his chair, takes her arm in his, and remains with her near the door ready to depart.

"You are taken charge of, you see," says my Lady in her weary manner, "and are going away well protected. I have mentioned that you are a very good girl, and you have nothing to cry for."

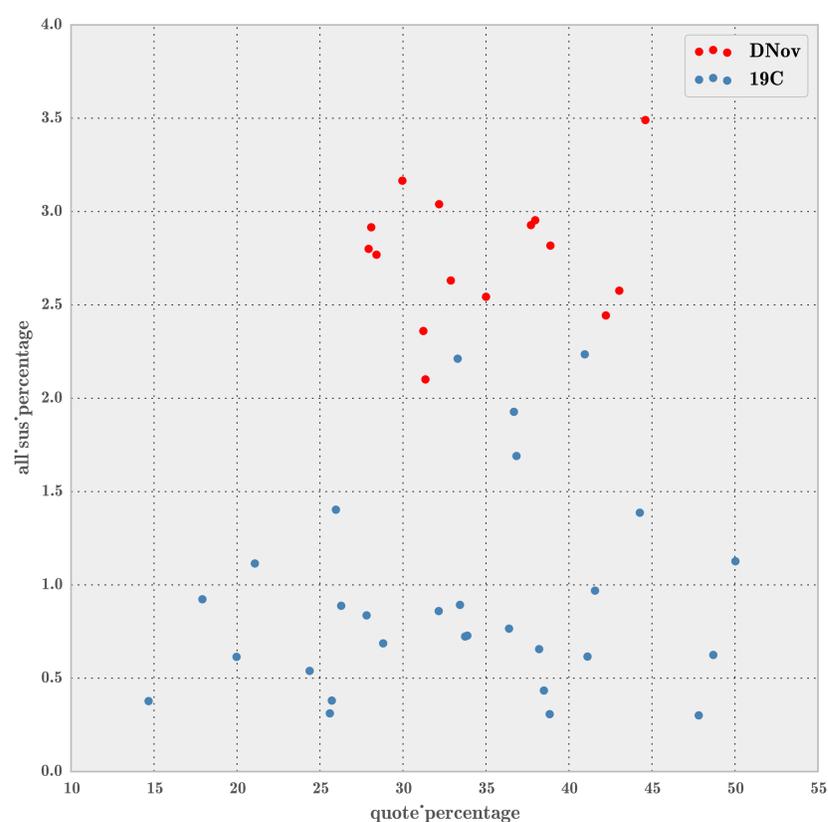
"She seems after all," observes Mr. Tulkinghorn, loitering a little forward with his hands behind him, "as if she were crying at going away."

Corpus

	Content	Tokens	Tokens in quotes	Tokens in suspensions
DNov	15 novels by Dickens	3,837,284	1,326,893	108,634
19C	29 novels by other 19C authors	4,501,633	1,480,800	42,201

Suspension and quote counts

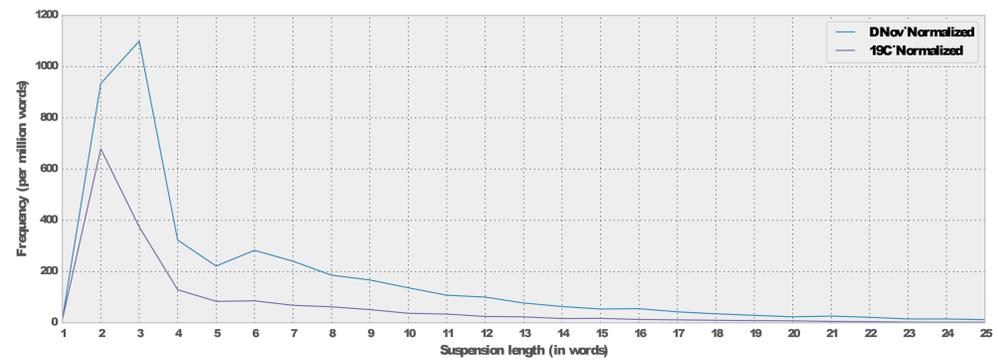
In DNov there are proportionally more words in suspensions, than in 19C. Dickens has a tendency to interrupt his characters.



X-axis = percentage of words in quotes / total word count
Y-axis = percentage of words in suspensions / total word count

Suspension length

Dickens uses more suspensions than 19C, also attested at different suspension lengths.



Clusters in suspensions

These suspensions reveal interesting patterns in Dickens's characterisation.

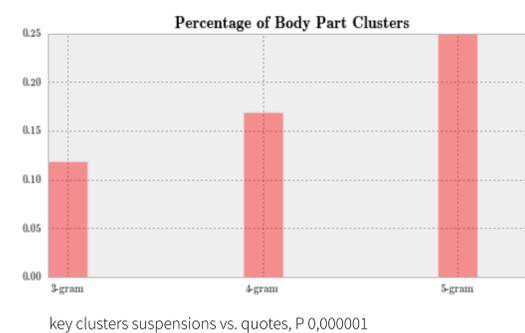
n-gram alignment

3-grams	4-grams	5-grams
shaking his head	shaking his head with	shaking his head with a
shaking his head	said shaking his head	he said shaking his head
said the old	said the old man	said the old man with
the old man	said the old man	said the old man with
the old man	the old man with	the old man with a
said mr pecksniff	said mr pecksniff with	said mr pecksniff with a
as if he	as if he had	as if he had been
a low voice	in a low voice	said in a low voice
a low voice	in a low voice	in a low voice as
a low voice	in a low voice	observed in a low voice
a low voice	a low voice as	in a low voice as
shaking her head	shaking her head and	shaking her head and her
laying his hand	laying his hand upon	laying his hand upon his
with his hand	with his hands in	with his hands in his
...

key clusters suspensions vs. quotes, $p < 0,000001$

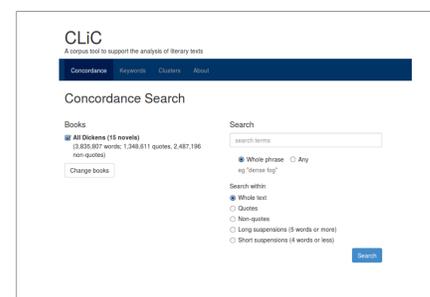
Body Part Nouns

The percentage of body part clusters, for instance, increases with the length of the cluster.



key clusters suspensions vs. quotes, $P 0,000001$

The CLiC Interface



Future research

Other features that influence the characterisations of people and relationships:

- imperatives
- length of the interaction
- the intensity
- the keywords
- colloquialisms
- neologisms
- the length of the interventions

References

Korte, B. (1997). *Body Language in Literature*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
 Lambert, M. (1981). *Dickens and the Suspended Quotation*. New Haven / London: Yale University Press.
 Leech, G., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*. New York: Pearson Longman.
 Mahlberg, M. (2013). *Corpus Stylistics and Dickens's Fiction*. New York / London: Routledge.
 Stockwell, P. & Mahlberg, M. (2015). *Mind-modelling with corpus stylistics in David Copperfield*, *Language and Literature* 24(2), 129-147.