Miss Man?

Languaging Gendered Bodies

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Edited by

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER NINE

LIVING AS A WOMAN:
THE BRITISH PRESS ON TRANS IDENTITIES

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1.   Introduction

One of the main features of media discourses is the power of rapidly
changing. Alongside, media discourses have the potential to impact on
society, giving attention to specific events while backgrounding others.
This is due to the recognition our society gives to news sources and to the
massive circulation of given news outlets. In line with this, news media,
either more traditional printed ones or web-based, are able to channel the
attention of large groups on specific issues, possibly overshadowing other
information. As Umberto Eco (2015, 147) argues:

> The point is that newspapers are not there for spreading news but for
> covering it up. X happens, you have to report it, but it causes
> embarrassment for too many people, so in the same edition you add some
> shock headlines – mother kills four children, savings at risk of going up in
> smoke, letter from Garibaldi insulting his lieutenant Nino Bixio
> discovered, etc. – so news drowns in a great sea of information.

In the past few years, we observed that a notable number of TV series and
films started featuring transgender characters, such as *Orange is the New
Black* (2013), *Transparent* (2014), *Sense8* (2015), *Boy Meets Girl* (2015),
Dallas Buyers Club (2014), *The Danish Girl* (2016); while newspapers,
magazines, and television programs increasingly started talking about this
topic. Relevant news stories were attracting the attention of the media,
including the transition of former athlete Caitlyn Jenner, or issues
concerning gender-neutral toilets in the USA, triggering a worldwide
discussion. The terms *transgender* and *transition* appeared to be more
commonly referenced to, and the impression was that sometimes some

confusion was made in the use of terminology or in the representation of these non-binary, fluid and non-heteronormative identities. This research aims at being a pilot study and act as a springboard for an extensive investigation of the representation of trans identities in the British press. It will investigate the way cisgender people describe, talk and depict trans identities. Against this backdrop, a small corpus of newspaper articles was created, namely the Transgender Identity in the Press Corpus (from now TIP Corpus). This corpus of newspaper articles will be investigated bearing in mind the following research questions:

1) How is terminology related to transgender identities used in the TIP Corpus?
2) Which linguistic features are being used to refer to trans identities?
3) Does the representation of trans identities change in reference to the quality press and the popular press?

Previous to proceeding with the investigation, this work requires a disclaimer. As of today, the term *transgender* is considered an umbrella term. It is inclusive of various definitions of gender identity that do not align with the binary male/female dichotomy. Thus, it is impossible to define a better or more appropriate use of terms such as *transgender*, *transsexual* or *trans*, as gender identity is subjective to each individual and no definition, labeling or category will ever be satisfactory for a generalization. To ensure the use of non-discriminatory language, guidelines offered by GLAAD,[1] GIRE[2] and the National Center for Transgender Equality[3] were considered. These websites, in fact, have a long history in fighting discrimination towards trans people and offer a number of materials and suggestions to support transgender people's allies to use language in an inclusive way.

The study makes use of Corpus Linguistics methods that allow examining data from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. This methodology enables to spot recurring patterns and unpredictable use of lexical items. Critical Discourse Analysis will also be considered, in fact, we believe news discourse is an ideal subject for critical analysis, as news is often "reflective of the social mainstream" and can offer insight into the

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[1] The GLAAD guidelines are available online at
http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender (Last accessed: August 8, 2017).
[2] The GIRE guidelines are available online at
https://www.gires.org.uk/terminology#Transsexual (Last accessed: August 8, 2017).
[3] The National Center for Transgender Equality's guidelines are available online at
http://www.transequality.org/issues/resources/transgender-terminology   (Last accessed: August 8, 2017).

dominant discourses circulating in society as a whole (Mautner 2008, 32). The following sections will address the way the TIP Corpus was collected and designed (Section 2), the main theoretical and methodological pillars considered for the investigation of the data collected (Section 3), the analysis and results emerged from it (Section 4) and a conclusive reflection on the use of language in reference to transgender identities.

2.   The TIP Corpus

The TIP Corpus contains 519,292 word tokens. In order to address the comparison between the quality press and the popular press (Baker *et al*. 2013; Jucker 1992),[4] the main corpus was divided into two sub-corpora: the QUALTIP (384,703 tokens) and the POPTIP (134,589 tokens) representative respectively of the quality press and the popular press. The newspaper articles were collected from the British press within a time span that stretches from January to June 2015. They were downloaded from the online platform, namely LexisNexis,[5] an electronic database containing legal and journalistic documents in different languages. In order to choose which articles to include in the TIP Corpus the following search words were used: *transgender*, *transsexual*, *transvestite*, *trans*, *transgendered*, *tranny*, *trannie*, *cross-dresser*, *sex change*, *shemale, genderbender*, *intesex*, *intersexed*, *gender reassignment*, *dysphoria*, *MTF* (male-to-female), *FTM* (female-to-male). The search words were chosen based on the search list used by Baker (2014a, 215). He compiled a similar corpus in order to analyze the representation of transgender people in the British press in 2012. The same seed words used in his work were used here. Other seed words were added as they were considered relevant to this topic following an in-depth reading of the guidelines for non-discriminatory language consulted for this study.

The TIP Corpus comprises eight national British newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times,* representative of the quality press; and the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun*, representative of the popular press. These newspapers were selected according to the figures of circulation available through the Audit Bureau of Circulation (2015), and are the most

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[4] See Jucker (1992) and Baker *et al*. (2013) for further information on the distinction between quality and popular press in the UK.
[5] LexisNexis can be accessed online at http://academic.lexisnexis.eu/ (Last accessed: August 25, 2017).

distributed national editions in 2015.[6] The corpus collected is comprised of 677 articles, 469 in the QUALTIP and 208 in the POPTIP.

The software chosen to analyze the corpus under investigation is AntConc (Anthony 2014), which provides users with a variety of tools to search the data. In particular, this study uses the Word List tool and the Concordance Tool, about which more details will be given in the next section.

The corpus search was conducted with the support of the wild card function, through the use of an asterisk (*) at the end of the designated term. This allows the software to search not only the term indicated but also its morphological variations. This function facilitated the inquiry as some of the terms investigated could be grouped together under the same search, for example when seeking for the term *transgender** also *transgenders*, *transgenderism* and *transgendered* were included in the results.

3. Language, gender and corpus-based discourse analysis: an overview

The assumption that guides this study is that everything that is said/written can be biased from the point of view of the speakers/writers and listeners/readers. In fact, when we say that the aim of this research is to discover how other people represent transgender identities, we precisely mean that the goal is to understand what is the thinking behind statements made by the speakers, or in the case of the press the writers, and how those ideas emerge and influence the readers' understanding of the matter.

Language is not only a sequence of words, but it is a set of grammatical elements, charged with a connotation and an ideology that come together to create meaning. Consequently, everything that is said or written carries an evaluation, a judgment, and a hint to the extent of likelihood or dislike from the part of the speaker/writer. Thus, the data requires an investigation from a critical perspective. The TIP Corpus was analyzed within the framework of Corpus-based Discourse Analysis (CBDA) (Baker *et al*. 2008; Baker *et al*. 2013). Conforming to the explanation given above, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seemed to offer the necessary tools to bring this analysis forward but, at the same time, corpus tools were employed to facilitate the investigation. In fact, on the one hand, Corpus Linguistics (CL) allows for a systematic analysis of

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[6] *The Financial Times* was excluded as the general topic of the newspaper is highly specialized.

data, large but also relatively small, in order to identify specific linguistic patterns in discourse, going beyond the dimension of analysis of a single text, and enabling the generalization of given patterns as representative of specific discourses. On the other hand, CDA provides the researcher with a framework that focuses on the study of context and the socio-political implications of language use, as well as a much more in-depth analysis of the ideological implications of the linguistic choices employed. The framework applied in this analysis, Corpus-based Discourse Analysis (Baker *et al.* 2008; Baker *et al.* 2013), suggests a combination of CL and CDA. This approach moves from qualitative to quantitative analysis and back, and it is based on a circular investigation, engendering new formulations of hypotheses and further investigations of the data collected as the analysis proceeds (Baker *et al.* 2008; Baker *et al.* 2013). The circular analysis consists of nine steps, starting from a context-based analysis of the topic under investigation from an historical, political, cultural and etymological perspective. The context-based analysis allows the researcher to have a general understanding of the topic and begin the analysis considering both the quantitative aspect by means of frequencies, clusters, keywords, dispersion and other corpus tools, and the qualitative one focusing on a smaller, representative set of data taken from the overall corpus. The strengths of this approach are precisely the ability of operating as a magnifying glass on a sample of the data while bearing in mind the greater picture possibly leading to new findings and perhaps to the formulation of new hypotheses or research questions (Baker *et al.* 2008; Baker *et al.* 2013).

From a corpus perspective, the frequency tool and the concordance tool provided by AntConc (Anthony 2014) were used. The first generates a frequency list, basically the list of all the words occurring in the corpus under investigation in order of frequency, other orders can be chosen as well (i.e. alphabetically), but the main aim of a frequency list is to underline which terms occur more in the data. Occurrences can be displayed with the plain number of occurrences (i.e. raw) or as a percentage in comparison with the whole corpus (Baker 2014b, 12). Kirk (2009, 33) argues that the significance of a specific term in a corpus is not the mere frequency number, but the interpretation of that frequency figure in relation to the context in which this term is found. In line with this, the analysis of the TIP corpus focused on the most occurring among the seed words, using concordances. A concordance list is the product of the concordance tool. We can define a concordance line as "[…] a list of all the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context they occur in" (Baker 2006, 71). This type of visualization of the term investigated

allows for an in-depth analysis of the context in which the term is presented.

The corpus tools described so far enabled us to uncover the linguistic patterns used to represent trans people in the small corpus under investigation. The choices made by journalists when writing articles influence, and in a way educate, the reader, standing as example to reproduce. In order to evaluate these choices the concept of semantic prosody (Louw 1993; Stubbs 1995; Partington 1998) was also acknowledeged in the analysis. Considering the context in which discourses and, more specifically given terms, are set in, it is evident that lexical items are sorrounded by patterns of meaning that influence our understanding of any issue discussed. In other terms, if a word can be judged by the company it keeps (Firth 1957), this means that the semantic 'halo' (Louw 1993) surrounding it defines and shapes the very same meaning of that word. If we think of the *sun*, for example, this can be understood in a 'favorable' way if we find it together with *beach* and *tan* or in an 'unfavorable' way if it is associated with *drought*, *desert*, and *death* (Partington 1998, 66). This linguistic behavior is defined as semantic prosody (Sinclair 1987; Louw 1993; Stubbs 1995; Partington 1998). Partington (1998, 68) maintains that "[s]emantic prosody refers to the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries". This approach is used in this study to determine if transgender people are discursively depicted favorably or unfavorably in the British press.

The following section will look more closely to language in relation to gender and transgender identities.

3.1.   Language and (trans)gender identity

The analysis of transgender identity inevitably links this work to the greater framework that interconnects the representation of gender with the use of language, thus of Queer Linguistics.

The seminal role of Queer linguistics is to boost that shift in the study of language, gender and sexuality from gay and lesbian identity to all those identities that in a way or another are considered to be outside the boundaries of the heteronormative, mainstream and binary categories in which society is enclosed. However, as Baker (2008, 196) reminds us, Queer Linguistics should not be considered as a replacement framework for studies and theories developed so far in the field of language, gender, and sexuality, but an additional perspective to take into consideration in the analysis of the relationship between these three areas.

News discourse contributes significantly to this representational system that enables to discursively shape non-conforming identities in society, since "[…] newspapers are a prime public site for moral arguments and for constructing values and ideologies" (Litosseliti 2002, 136). For this reason, news discourse is a substantial source for the analysis of how ideologies, power relations and cultural values of a society are expressed and represented through language. The language of news media has proven to be useful to identify those discourses that pervade, influence and shape the way people see and understand society, its beliefs and values.

So far, we have discussed queer identity to a certain extent, but trans identity has not been mentioned. Following we will look in more detail at transgender identities and how they are linguistically represented. This exploration can begin through the words of Stephen Whittle, professor of Equalities Law at Manchester Metropolitan University, transgender activist and one of the most prominent expert in this field. He begins the foreword of the book edited with Susan Stryker in 2006, *The Transgender Studies Reader*, by saying that "trans identities were one of the most written about subjects of the late twentieth century" (Stryker and Whittle 2006, xi). We believe we must disagree with this conclusion, in fact, especially in the field of linguistics, the literature is still not as extended as other topics. Perhaps it would be more precise to say that it is not as popular and publicized as other fields of inquiry related to identity, gender and sexuality. Linguistic studies on trans identities are mostly recent, and it is only in the past two decades that this topic started flourishing among the interests of scholars who dedicate their research to language, gender, sexuality and identity.

Some of the first studies, which had transgender people as the core of the investigation, initially dealt with how trans women should talk. Based on the work by Lakoff and Tannen regarding women's language, some books were published with the aim of giving advice to trans women on how to change their communicative behavior in order to resemble women as much as possible. A famous example is Lou Sullivan's *Information for the Female to Male Cross Dresser and Transsexual* (1990). But still, this had not much to do with transgender identity and how it is linguistically constructed and represented, which is the aim of the study presented here. Some of the first studies on the linguistic representation of transgender identities can be traced to Kira Hall and her research on Indian Hijras (1997, 2002, 2013; Hall and O'Donovan 1996) and to Don Kulick (1998) who investigated the language and identity representation of *travesti* in Brazil.

More recently, in 2014, Duke University Press launched the *Transgender Reader Quartely (TSQ)*, the first non-medical scientific journal on issues related to trans people, edited by Susan Stryker and Paisley Currah, which is to the present at its fourth volume. Before this, the only academic journal focusing specifically on this topic was the *International Journal of Transgenderism*, a medical journal initiated by Routledge in 1998, edited by Walter Bockting, mainly discussing issues related to gender dysphoria, gender reassignment and the psychological effects of such medical processes on patients.

Apart from the medical journal cited above, the list of other works from a medical and psychological perspective can be very long (see, for example, Delemarre-van de Waal and Cohen-Kettenis 2006). The same can be said for the field of cultural studies and history, with the work of scholars such as Susan Stryker (1994, 2008), Sandy Stone (1991) or Vivienne Namaste (2000); and also, in the field of law, with scholars such as Stephen Whittle (1995, 1998a, 1998b; Witten and Whittle 2004) and Bryan Turner (1996). In the past decade we saw the rising of studies that tried to bring all these topics together like *The Transgender Studies Reader* mentioned above. In 2013, a second volume came out edited by Stryker and Aren Aizura with the aim of complementing the first one and expanding the horizon to more recent works and emerging trends. Both volumes give little to no space to linguistic perspectives.

Previously, Kira Hall and Anna Livia (1997) edited the book *Queerly Phrased*, a collection of essays on language, gender and sexuality as the subtitle reveals, one of the first displaying researches on transgender identity, with the essay by Bagemihl on the linguistic reaction of lesbian and gay people to transsexual identity and the study on Indian Hijras by Hall. In 1999, Don Kulick wrote *Transgender and Language: A Review of the Literature and Suggestions for the Future*, tracing a sort of literature review of the various studies related to language and transgender people's identity found in academic research up to that time. Starting from the early twentieth century scholars began to take an interest in the different aspects which comprise trans identity, especially as it became evident how binary heteronormativity was shaping the world in every aspect and non-conforming identities were struggling to find a safe space in which they could freely express themselves.

Transgender identity can be discussed from a cross-cultural point of view, like the study by Hall mentioned above, and following her example other scholars have dedicated their research to the investigation of the representation of transgender identity in non-western cultures and society. Niko Besnier (2003), for example, focused on the linguistic construction

of trans identity in Tonga. Besnier analyzed the way the English language influenced the Tongan society which still remains essentially monolingual, coming to the conclusion that among the minorities which use English in that society a big part is constituted by transgender individuals who find in this form of code-switching an escape from marginality and oppression (Besnier 2003, 296).

The November volume of *TSQ* 2014 dedicated the issue to the ways in which transgender identities are represented in translation. Cinema and television have an important role in the dissemination and acknowledgement of trans identities. As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, transgender people are becoming increasingly popular on the big and small screen. Therefore, many scholars have been devoting their attention to the representation of trans identities in this form of media. Hess (2017) investigates how ageing of trans people and more generally queer people is represented in TV series through the show *Transparent*. Capuzza and Spencer (2017) take into consideration nine scripted US TV series which feature a transgender character and conclude that the way trans people have been represented across the years has evolved from a "wrong body" (Capuzza and Spencer 2017, 216) narrative to a more diverse and inclusive representation of different trans identities and subjectivities. In 2015, Hartner concludes that the representation of trans characters in films tends to realign trans identity with heteronormative identities, drawing on the notion of love and family. Zottola (forthcoming) looks at the linguistic representation of the character of Sophia Burset in *Orange is the New Black*. She focuses on the way the character uses language to talk about herself and the way the other cisgender characters use language to talk about Sophia. Among other findings, Zottola highlights how the Italian translation of the scripts tends to tame down some more explicit or even offensive expressions or parts of dialogues used in the original English version. These four examples bring forward the diversity in representation of trans identity in television and the cinema. The character of Sohia Burset and the actress who played this role, Laverne Cox, attracted the attention of quite a few scholars. Di Martino (2018) investigates the representation of trans identity given by the actress and the way it influences the perception of masculinity and femininity.

Lal Zimman makes a rather important contribution to this field as he takes interest in the specificity of transgender men, usually less discussed in comparison to MTF identities. Zimman (2009) first concentrates on the coming out genre arguing that trans people's coming out narratives, as a genre, cannot be included in the same category as gay and lesbian coming out stories. In fact, this process for trans people can occur before or after

the change in gender role. A work falling into the framework of sociophonetics was published by Zimman in 2013. He considers how the pitch of the voice changed in FTM transgender individuals after the use of testosterone. A more recent study focuses on the linguistic representation of the gendered body on behalf of trans men in on-line communities. Zimman (2014, 14) "[focuses] on the power of language to redefine the body in the face of compulsory gender and sexual normativity". These very different, and at the same similar, researches are a clear example of the varieties of linguistic research that can be done on transgender identity. Language can be analyzed from the point of view of how trans people use it to communicate, create their own identity and talk about themselves, or it can be analyzed to see how cisgender people use it to talk about and represent trans identity. For the purpose of the study presented here, the second approach will be taken into consideration.

This research took inspiration from an influential work from Paul Baker published in 2014. In that work Baker collected a corpus of newspaper articles from the year 2012 and through the use of corpus linguistic tools he analyzed the way the British press depicted trans people in that year, as it will become clear in later chapters this research takes Baker's study as starting point and develops along similar lines, considering a different time span. Among the major findings highlighted by Baker (2014a, 233), he points out that:

> The analysis did find a great deal of evidence to support the view that trans people are regularly represented in reasonably large sections of the press as receiving special treatment lest they be offended, as victims or villains, as involved in transient relationships or sex scandals, as the objects of jokes about their appearance or sexual organs and as attention seeking freakish objects.

Baker also adds that some positive representations were retrieved but with much less frequency.

In line with the literature presented so far it is possible to affirm that the media has become a fundamental space in the analysis of the representation of trans people. We have discussed about television, cinema and the press, but the internet has been a fruitful field of inquiry as well. Lexi Webster (2016) analyzed self-identification of trans people in the social media platform Twitter and (2017) the identity performance by trans people on web-based forums, demonstrating how trans identity cannot be generalized or described homogenously. Laura Horak (2014) looked at the consumption of vlogs created by transgender individuals on YouTube, and how these productions at the same time served as forms of acceptance and

acknowledgment of their own identities. Lucy Jones (forthcoming) investigates the identity construction by two transgender vloggers, concluding that they strongly use normative discourses to perform their own identities.

All in all, this section tried to highlight the major studies on the representation of transgender identity. The following section will address the analysis of the data collected for this study with the hope of providing further insights on the representation of transgender identity.

4.   Living as a woman: analyzing the TIP Corpus

The results emerged from the analysis of the TIP corpus highlighted several different patterns in the use of language in the first six months of 2015 in the British Press. This section discusses the most recurrent language choices related to identity labels used in the representations of transgender identities in the corpus.

The following Table (1.4) presents the frequency of the seed words used to create the TIP corpus. We consider this survey of the corpus the starting point of our analysis. In fact, on the one hand it is true that merely considering frequency of occurrences might be reductive (Baker 2006; Taylor 2013), therefore, a further investigation of the context in which each occurrence is set is needed; on the other hand, it is a useful and necessary point of departure.

Seed Words	QUALTIP	POPTIP	Total occurrences
transgender*	924	242	1,166
trans	770	39	809
gender reassignment	35	61	96
transsexual*	57	38	95
sex change*	25	61	86
transvestite*	34	20	54
dysphoria	28	17	45
intersex*	31	4	35
cross-dresser*	8	10	18
trannie*	7	2	9
shemale*	2	1	3
genderbender	0	0	0
MTF	0	0	0
FTM	0	0	0

Table 4.1. Frequency of seed words.

Table 4.1 shows the seed words in order of frequency. This discussion will start from the absences in the TIP corpus. Some of the seed words searched did not give any results, like *genderbender*, *mtf* and *ftm*. This absence suggests, in the case of the two last terms, that despite the topic is discussed in the press, a more specialized terminology is still not in use, acknowledged or diffused. Although, we must point out that 9 occurrences of the full version (female-to-male) of the acronym *ftm* and 7 of the full version (male-to-female) of *mtf*, are found in the TIP corpus. This low frequency relegates the use of this type of terminology to a very restricted niche of the press; all the hits are retrieved in the sub-corpus QUALTIP, and only in *The Guardian* and *The Times*. Similarly, in terms of frequency figures, as perhaps confirmed by the analysis of other terms presented later in this section, the absence of the derogatory term *genderbender* suggests the increasing use of non-discriminatory language in the press.

The terms *trannie** and *shemale**, which some trans people consider derogatory, are not frequently represented in the corpus. These terms are considered controversial at the moment, as some people in the LGBT+ community find them offensive and derogatory, while some other are reclaiming their use by associating them to positive attributes (Baker 2014a; Zottola forthcoming). In particular, *shemale** only occurred 3 times, once in the POPTIP and twice in the QUALTIP. The contexts in which this term occurs are very different in the two sub corpora. In the QUALTIP both articles highlight the fact that it is preferable not to use this term, and that it is usually employed in a demeaning way; while in the POPTIP it is used in a manner that creates a pun, which is unlikely to be welcomed by trans people. The same type of context is retrieved for the term *trannie** in the QUALTIP, as we can see from the following example:

> (1)   But ironically, while the rest of Britain catches up slowly on ideas such as the slang word "**tranny**" now being seen as derogatory. (*The Independent*, April 28, 2015).

In 6 out of 9 occurrences the term is presented in inverted commas, as example (1) shows, suggesting that the term is being discussed about and not used as part of the sentence to indicate a person.

Following a concordance analysis of the terms *intersex** and *cross-dresser** we were able to establish that they always occur in articles which mention one of the terms *transgender**, *trans* or *transsexual**. Despite this, as the main aim of the study is to investigate trans identity, and in line with the understanding that these two definitions do not fall under the

transgender umbrella, we decided not to proceed to an in-depth analysis of their context.

The frequency table also highlights the great importance given to the actual practice of transition in the TIP corpus, as the very frequent use of *gender reassignment* and *sex change** signals. As observable in Table 4.1, these phrases are mostly found in the popular press. Both phrases suggest a medicalization of the concept of trans identity, associating it simply to a matter of changing the body of a person. The difference lies in the fact that while *gender reassignment* is acknowledged as the endorsed terminology, used also in legal settings, the latter phrase is labelled in the guidelines consulted for this work as derogatory and putting an accent on the physical aspect of transition. Moreover, a generalization in terms of associating trans identity to transition is incorrect as not all trans people wish to transition to the chosen gender. A similar discourse can be made for the term *dysphoria*, of which the frequency figures are also fairly large among the seed words. This term could be seen as controversial as it aligns trans identity to a medical disorder. Gender dysphoria is, in fact, defined as a gender disorder, therefore representing trans identity and gender dysphoria as the same thing is incorrect. The use of this term builds up on the narrative that correlates trans identity to a mental disorder.

Transgender* appears to be the most frequent word among the seed words, followed by *trans*, while *transsexual** is in fourth place following *gender reassignment*. These three terms are the most used to refer to transgender individuals. The following section will look in more detail at the lexical choices related to the contexts in which these terms are set in.

4.1.   Transgender*, trans or transsexual*?

As we mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the meaning of transgender identity is mostly related to one's inner experience, so while certain labels and categorizations might be acceptable for some people others may reject them. One aspect on which all guidelines consulted for this work agree upon is that the term *transgender* should not be used as a noun but only as an adjective. This recommendation extends to the terms *trans* and *transsexual* as well. The POPTIP uses *transgender** with the function of a noun 8 times (3%) out of 242, moreover, in 3 cases we find the use of the term *transgendered*. About the use of this term the GLAAD[7] terminology guide suggests that:

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[7] Available online at https://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender/ (Last accessed: August 25, 2017).

> The adjective *transgender* should never have an extraneous "-ed" tacked onto the end. An "-ed" suffix adds unnecessary length to the word and can cause tense confusion and grammatical errors. It also brings transgender into alignment with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer. You would not say that Elton John is "gayed" or Ellen DeGeneres is "lesbianed," therefore you would not say Chaz Bono is "transgendered".

This term is defined in these guidelines as problematic, similarly to the use *trans* and *transsexual* as nouns. Describing a person as being 'a transgender' or 'a transsexual' defines this person solely according to this, while gender identity is one of the many aspects that come together to build a person's identity.

Trans occurs 39 times in the POPTIP and it is never used as a noun. *Transsexual** is used as a noun 10 times (26%) out of 38 overall occurrences in the POPTIP.

> (2)   The incident again highlighted the problems of man-to-woman **transsexuals** held in female nicks. (*The Sun*, February 8, 2015).

Example (2) shows the context in which this term is used as a noun and, most of the times, it is used as a plural noun. The prosody surrounding these occurrences is not negative as the context is generally pointing to issues that trans people are facing or to ways to acknowledge their rights, although the incorrect use of terminology does inevitably reinforce an incorrect linguistic behavior. It could be argued that the positive representation of trans people is also transposed on the terminology, making it rightful to use it in a way that some transgender people might view as offensive.

The QUALTIP uses *transgender** with the function of a noun 3 times (0.3 %) out of 924, *trans* is used as a noun 3 times (0.4 %) out of 770 occurrences. Similarly to the popular press, the frequency of use of this term as a noun is extremely low, the effort made by the press in using inclusive language in this case must be acknowledged. On a more negative note, 10 occurrences of the term *transgenderism* were retrieved. In line with the discussion presented above with regards to the term *transgendered*, the GLAAD[8] guidelines suggest that:

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[8] Available online at https://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender/ (Last accessed: August 25, 2017).

> This is not a term commonly used by transgender people. This is a term used by anti-transgender activists to dehumanize transgender people and reduce who they are to "a condition".

Likewise, we believe that also other linguistic choices contribute to building this unfavorable discourse that associates trans identity with "a condition", as pointed out previously. As a matter of fact, many occurrences of the adjective *transgender* paired with nouns which refer to a thing and not a person were retrieved, such as "transgender announcement" or "transgender as an immigration issue", "trans-ness", "transgender sitcom" or the very definition of the "transgender bathroom bill", as we believe that a preferable wording would be "bathroom for/accessible to transgender people". Associating this adjective to things that do not normally have a gender identity leads to a general misuse of the term.

A completely different situation is found for the use of the term *transsexual**, used as a noun 29 times (51%) out of 57. Of the overall occurrences, 4 were of the term *transsexualism*. For the latter term we can see a strong similarity with the issues pointed out previously for the term *transgenderism*. Additionally, we can observe a strong use of the term *transsexual** - more than half of the occurrences -as a noun. The results are retrieved from the quality press, and this pattern comes as a surprise following the analysis of the use of the other terms.

> (3)   Lennox Lewis's former manager, who caused a sensation last year by coming out as a **transsexual** before undergoing gender reassignment surgery, revealed her determination yesterday to prove she could succeed in a "macho, male-dominated world that's locked in a time-warp" (*The Daily Telegraph*, April 24, 2015).

As example (3) shows, the prosody surrounding this term does not imply a negative representation, but such a frequent use of the term as a noun does suggest it as a standard to follow.

The analysis of the concordance lines also revealed two further patterns of representation worth mentioning here. The first pattern relates to the use of the preposition 'as', the application of which implies a discursive construction of a similarity:

> (4)   The make-up artist, who has been **living as a woman** for four years, believes she is entitled to the surgery and should not have to miss out

just because the United States does not have the free health care. (*The Sun*, January 20, 2015).

Saying that someone is *living*, *dressing*, *known* or *passing* as a woman/men hints at the suggestion that these people are actually not women or men but just acting as one. This type of pattern is retrieved in both sub-corpora. The POPTIP displays 42 occurrences of this pattern, as showed in Table 4.1.1:

POPTIP	*Occurrences*
Living as a full-time woman	1
Diagnosed as transgender	2
Lives as a girl	2
Living as a boy	2
Living as a female	2
Passes as a woman	2
To be referred to as a boy	2
Liv* as a woman	5
Formerly know as + name	10
Liv* as a man	14

Table 4.1.1. 'As' pattern in the POPTIP.

The QUALITIP has 75 occurrences of this pattern, has shown in Table 4.1.2. The asterisk following some term in both tables stands for all morphological variations of the verbs.

QUALTIP	*Occurrences*
Accepted as a woman	1
Debut as a transgender man	1
Identifies as a girl	1
Live as a girl	1
Living as a male	1
Living as men	1
Presented as a woman	1
Recognized as a woman	1
Dress* as a girl	2
Identif* as female	2
Identif* as a male	2
Identif* as women	2

QUALTIP	*Occurrences*
Live as a boy	2
Liv* as women	2
Masquerading as a boy/man	2
Identif* as a male	3
Treated as a male	3
Baptised as a girl	4
Life as a trans woman/men	4
Pass* as a woman	4
Known as Bruce	5
Reintroduced/ such/ emerged as Caitlyn	7
Dress* as a woman	10
Liv* as a woman	10

Table 4.1.2. 'As' pattern in the QUALTIP.

The second pattern highlighted in the corpus under investigation sees the use of the temporal adverb 'now':

(5)   A transgender employee who is **now a woman** claims she was fired from her job for using the female toilets. (*The Daily Telegraph*, January 24, 2015).

This construction suggests a parallelism by specifying the gender identity of the person at the time of the occurrence. The specification of a 'now' implies a 'then' or a different time in which this person had a different gender identity. This pattern occurs in the POPTIP 30 times out of the 318 overall occurrences of the adverb, while it only occurs 8 times in the QUALTIP out of the 500 overall occurrences. Both patterns build on a narrative that we could define as the 'before and after', as well as on an implied significance which aims at positioning trans people in a constructed and artificial reality.

5.   Conclusion

Transgender identity, similarly to the definition of any other type of identity, is a complex and delicate matter. More so when we consider "transgender [as] an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity transgress traditional definitions of 'male' and 'female'" (Burnes and Chen 2012, 116) as well as the stereotyped categorizations. Within this umbrella term many different self-representations and disparate shades

of identity that distance themselves from binary, heteronormative and stereotyped labels are included. This type of evolution, in terms of what society now acknowledges and recognizes as being a gender identity calls for a new way of using language, which represents and enhances new definitions, categories and labels.

The study presented here demonstrates that many steps forward have been done towards the awareness and the dissemination of knowledge about trans issues, including the use of terminology related to this identity. Despite this, the attention given to narratives which unnecessarily highlight certain aspects of trans identity inevitably result in a misgendering of transgender people through a continuous reference to their gender assigned at birth, or their birth name. The choices of the press related to the use of terminology in ways that are not shared and agreed upon by some transgender individuals definitely sets a standard for their readers. As proved in the analysis this is a standard that should not be followed.

The main difference highlighted between the two sub-corpora relates to the amount of space each newspaper grants to the coverage of news related to trans identity. Starting from the number of articles in each sub-corpora, we can see that the QUALTIP corpus has more than double the number of articles compared to the POPTIP corpus. In terms of content, both the quality and the popular press rely on narratives such as that of trans identity as a mental disorder or "a condition", and similarly to what we mentioned earlier in this section to a frequent use of the "before and after" narrative representation.

It goes without saying that there is always room for improvement, and it is our duty, as scholars, through the analysis of language and its use, to make sure that the following statement becomes an everyday reality (World Professional Association of Transgender Health 2011, n.p.):

> [T]he expression of gender characteristics that are not stereotypically associated with one's assigned sex at birth is a common and culturally diverse human phenomenon that should not be judged as inherently pathological or negative.

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