La Sapienza

Revisione esterna tesi dott. REMO APPOLLONI (36 ciclo)

APPOLLONI REMO

Za zgodność z oryginałem

Podpis ....

Wydział Humanistyczny
Starszy specjalista
w Biurze Ewaluacji i Obsługi Instytutów

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Evaluation form for PhD dissertation

Evaluation form

Title of the thesis

The standardisation of suffixes and definitions in noun taxonomies: a preliminary corpus-based and data-based analysis of the early modern English microlanguage of economics (1572-1664)

Affiliation of the reviewer

University of Florence

Report

The dissertation of Remo Appolloni explores the development of early modern English terminology in economics between 1572 and 1664, a time when economics was not yet an established discipline. The research focuses on the standardization of suffixes and definitions in noun taxonomies of the EmodE macrolanguage of economics and examines the two aspects through the lenses of diachronic variation and functional elaboration. The candidate constructs a sample corpus of EModE economic texts for the period of study by using specific software and examines it through a quantitative and a qualitative approach. Frequency of use is established as the major statistical criterion of analysis. The study contributes to the understanding of historical corpus linguistics as a method capable of providing significant insights into the standardization process of EModE specialized discourse.

This study represents a significant and innovative contribution to the field of historical corpus linguistics, particularly in analyzing the diachronic evolution of the EModE discourse of economics. The author presents compelling reasons for undertaking this research, situating it effectively within the existing literature, specifically regarding content (the EmodE or Middle English, language of business and economics), methodology (corpus-based approaches), and the availability of data (existent historical specialized corpora). He also employs robust corpus-based methodologies, leveraging the advancements in statistics and corpus linguistics. The research questions are articulated with clarity and depth, guiding the reader logically through the text and reinforcing the study's overarching purpose.

In Chapter 1, the historical context is clearly established, highlighting the importance of exploring the microlanguage of economics in Early Modern England. This area of study is crucial for understanding the dissemination of new ideas and concepts during the rise of English mercantilism as a transformative intellectual framework.

Chapter 2 showcases the candidate's strong grasp of historical corpus linguistics and the application of statistical methods within this domain. The design, compilation, and normalization phases of the sample corpus are presented in detail. Notably, the criteria for constructing the sample corpus—such as size, proportionality, and representativeness—are systematically justified through relevant literature. The candidate demonstrates exceptional skill in utilizing various software tools to maximize the corpus's potential and enhance the accuracy and reliability of the findings, all the while being mindful of the significant

challenges inherent in corpus-based research.

In Chapter 3, the analysis of data—both quantitative and qualitative—related to the research questions is meticulously executed. The candidate exhibits a solid command of specialized terminology and effectively links statistically significant patterns in suffix usage and definitions to broader trends, while maintaining an appropriate level of caution in interpreting preliminary data.

The concluding section on future work opens exciting avenues for expanding this doctoral study, not only within the realm of the EmodE microlanguage of economics but also across other specialized discourses through corpus linguistics. The potential to incorporate new texts into the sample corpus transforms it into a valuable tool for ongoing research.

The bibliography is extensive and relevant, reflecting a comprehensive engagement with existing literature and providing a solid foundation for the research presented.

Below are just some minor suggestions :

1.1.3 This section seems to align more with the methodology than the cultural background. Perhaps it could be moved to section 2.1.3 on page 54.

1.2.1 Along with scientific discoveries, also geographical explorations, the expansion in the New World and the development of transoceanic trade have contributed to the growth of the English vocabulary in general, and to the emergence of new economic theories and concepts in particular. The candidate may wish to refer to the following volume in the bibliography: Brownlees, N. (ed.) (2020) The Language of Discovery, Exploration and Settlement. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholar Publishing.

Some specialized terms introduced for the first time in Chapter 1 are defined in the subsequent chapters. A preliminary definition could be provided in Chapter 1 to facilitate reading. For example:
pag 18: horizontal and vertical dimension
Pag 21: lectal and diatypic variations
Pag 22: monitor corpus, web as a corpus, opportunistic corpus
Pag 42: diachronic, diaphasic, diatopic and diamesic nature

3.1.1. Categorization of economic texts in terms of genre:
The pamphlet category is somewhat controversial. While it is true that pamphlets were often used in controversies, particularly for argumentative purposes and political/religious topics, they could also serve other communicative functions, such as news reporting. The reason Malynes defines a text as both a pamphlet and a treatise (page 89) may be because pamphlets are seen more as a publication type than as a genre. It would be helpful to clarify this point, perhaps in a footnote, by noting that: Malynes's classification of a text as both a pamphlet and a treatise (page 89) likely reflects the view that pamphlets are considered more as a publication type than a genre. The wide range of topics covered, their borrowing of different text types (e.g., epistolary correspondence, polemical argumentation, dramatic dialogue, trial proceedings, and news discourse), and their appeal to a diverse audience make it difficult to categorize pamphlets as a single genre (see Claridge 2005, Schmied and Claridge 1997, Halasz 1997, Brownlees 2015). However, specialized pamphlets (e.g., witchcraft pamphlets, murder pamphlets, polemical pamphlets) could be considered a distinct genre if we adopt a more dynamic view of genre that allows for variation and multiplicity of texts. For an interpretation of specific pamphlets as a genre, see C. Suhr (2011) Publishing for the Masses. Early Modern English Witchcraft Pamphlets.Helsinki: Société Néophilologique"

Page 93: "Malynes and Misselden refer to each other's works using the term "pamphlet" but adopted the term "treatise" for their own texts".
For further evidence of the negative connotation of the word 'pamphlet,' the candidate may refer to the following book in the bibliography: Brownlees, N. (2015) "We have in some former books told you". The significance of metatext in 17th century English news". In B. Boes and L.Kornexl (eds.) Changing genre conventions in Historical English News Discourse, Benjamins, pp. 3-22. Between 1620-1642 the term pamphlet was generally

avoided by news editors in reference to their own publications whereas it was used to refer to rivals' publications (Brownlees 2015: 13).
Confidential report (it will not be shown to the candidate)

The thesis presents a noteworthy contribution to its scientific field. The work is firmly rooted in a robust theoretical and methodological framework, demonstrating a deep understanding of (historical) corpus linguistics and its application to the study of EmodE specialized discourse. The research questions are clearly articulated and explored in a thought-provoking manner, prompting further reflection and discussion.
The results of the study are interesting and pave the way for future research, highlighting potential avenues for exploration that could significantly enhance our understanding of the topic. This innovative approach underscores the thesis's relevance and importance within the academic community.
In summary, my assessment of the thesis is overwhelmingly positive. Given its originality, rigor, and the valuable insights it offers, I believe it merits a laudem distinction. Not only does this work advance knowledge in the field, but it also establishes a commendable foundation for future research endeavors.

Evaluation file (optional)

Presentation and clarity

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The reviewer should be able to read the text without difficulty. This implies that the dissertation is clear and 'user friendly', without duplications or repetitions.

Integration and coherence

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [X] Good   [ ] Excellent

The manuscript should present logical and rational links between different parts of the thesis.

Introduction to scientific background

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The text should contain a satisfactory introduction to the scientific background which is relevant to the research, preparing the reader to the exposition of the problem.

Review of relevant literature

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The candidate must have a detailed knowledge of original sources, have a thorough knowledge of the field, and understand the main theoretical and methodological issues.

Statement of research problem

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

A clear statement of the research problem should be made, together with specific hypotheses, predictions, or questions which the research is designed to address.

Originality

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The research must be the candidate's own work. The degree of independence may vary according to the research topic.

Contribution to knowledge and scientific relevance

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The dissertation should be substantial enough to be able to form the basis of two articles on refereed journal, a book or research monograph.

Mastery of the English language

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [X] Good   [ ] Excellent

The candidate must be proficient in written English and show mastery of appropriate scientific/technical language.

The thesis can be considered for a 'cum laude' award

[X] Yes   [ ] No

A major goal of the review process is to evaluate if the present version of the thesis is:

1) adequate as is

2) require minor revision

3) require major revision

for admission of the candidate to the defense of the work in front of a national evaluation board.

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[**X**] Accept as is   [ ] Minor revision   [ ] Major revision

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Date: 12/2/2024
Reviewer: Cecconi Elisabetta