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**A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF EPONYMS ORIGINATING FROM
PUBLIC FIGURES AND FICTION CHARACTERS USED TO
DESCRIBE ATTITUDES OR ACTIONS**

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Barcelona, 11 de juny de 2020



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ABSTRACT

Eponyms are words that enter a language lexicon by applying the name of a person or a place to a common noun and are a feasible proof of the growth of the English vocabulary. The goal of this paper is creating a corpus-based analysis of eight eponyms adjectives coming from historical figures and literary characters (*Sadistic, Masochistic, Kafkaesque, Machiavellian, Thatcherite, Herculean, Platonic, Quixotic*) taken from the *British National Corpus (BNC)* that describe human behaviours, and analysing aspects such as their origin, semantic aspect, lexicalization, collocations, position in the clause and the genre of the media they appear. 579 samples from the *British National Corpus (BNC)* have been analysed and interpreted thoroughly, assisted by graphics and statistics in order to facilitate their comprehension.

Keywords: Eponyms, adjectives, vocabulary, corpus-based analysis, historical figures

RESUM

Els epònims són paraules que entren al vocabulari d'una llengua quan s'agafa el nom d'una persona o d'un lloc per crear un nou substantiu i són una mostra irrefutable de com creix el vocabulari de la llengua anglesa. L'objectiu d'aquest treball és crear una anàlisi basada en un corpus lingüístic de vuit epònims que són adjectius derivats de figures històriques i personatges literaris (*Sadistic –Sàdic–, Masochistic –Masoquista–, Kafkaesque –Kafkià–, Machiavellian –Maquiavèl·lic–, Thatcherite –Thatcherista–, Herculean –Herculi–, Platonic –Platònic–, Quixotic –Quixotesc–*) agafats del *British National Corpus (BNC)* que descriuen comportaments humans, i analitzar característiques com el seu origen, aspecte semàntic, lexicalització, els substantius que els acompanyen, la ubicació a la frase i a quin tipus de mitjà apareixen. S'han agafat 579 mostres del *British National Corpus (BNC)* i s'han analitzat i interpretat amb profunditat, amb l'ajuda de gràfiques i estadístiques per facilitar la seva comprensió.

Paraules clau: Epònims, adjectius, vocabulari, anàlisi basada en un corpus lingüístic, figures històriques

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	3
2.1. The growth of the English vocabulary.....	3
2.1.1. Borrowings.....	3
2.1.2. Internal resources.....	4
2.1.2.1. Semantic change.....	4
2.1.2.2. Creation of new words.....	6
2.2. Eponyms.....	7
3. METHODOLOGY.....	9
4. RESULTS.....	10
4.1. Thatcherite.....	10
4.2. Sadistic.....	13
4.3. Platonic.....	15
4.4. Masochistic.....	17
4.5. Machiavellian.....	18
4.6. Quixotic.....	19
4.7. Herculean.....	21
4.8. Kafkaesque.....	22
5. DISCUSSION.....	23
6. CONCLUSION.....	28
7. REFERENCES.....	29

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons why I chose to study a degree in English studies is -apart from my love to the English language and British culture- my curiosity in the origin of the words, their wide range of meanings and how these meanings evolved. Not only in English, but in other languages I speak, too; I am constantly learning, discovering new words or trying to use old-fashioned words as if I was a linguist from the 18th century. I am fond of literature, politics and history, especially some excerpts and rarities (e.g. the BBC series *Horrible Histories*), and when I discovered that some words were coined after actual people or fiction characters, I started to collect some of these words as a hobby and investigate their origin. I did not know that these words are called *eponyms* until I learned it here in university. This was my motivation to decide that the topic in my End of Degree Paper (EDP) was going to be the *eponyms*, and more precisely, the use of eponyms as adjectives to describe some human behaviours.

The origin of the word *eponym* is ancient Greek *eponumos* that means “named on” (MacArthur, 1992, p.378). As Lalić (2004) states, eponyms have been used “to denote different linguistic phenomena: a lexeme derived from a personal name; the name from which such a lexeme is derived; the person whose name is thus used; any proper noun that has become a common noun, especially brand names” (p.64).

Eponyms play an important role in everyday vocabulary, not only in English, because they are like universal words that are practically similar in all languages (there are few differences in pronunciation and spelling) as we can see with *Machiavellian* (*maquiavélico* in Spanish, *maquiavèlic* in Catalan, *machiavélique* in French, *machiavellico* in Italian) which share most of the phonemes and its meaning is the same in those languages (according to the Oxford English Dictionary, *Machiavellian* means “elaborately cunning; scheming, unscrupulous”).

The aim of this paper is creating a corpus-based analysis of eight eponyms –which are adjectives– that I collected (*Sadistic*, *Masochistic*, *Kafkaesque*, *Machiavellian*, *Thatcherite*, *Herculean*, *Platonic*, *Quixotic*) following the criteria of words that are very common and constantly repeated in the areas of history, literature and politics, fields which I have great fondness for.

The reference corpus used in this study is the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, which, according to Aston & Burnard (1998, p.xiii) is a “collection of over 4000 samples of modern British English, both spoken and written, stored in electronic form and selected so as to reflect the widest possible variety of users and uses of the language” with over 100 million words.

The present EDP consists of different sections. First of all, in the *Review of the literature* I want to illustrate the growth of the English vocabulary focusing on eponyms and its classification according to their lexical semantic field and their part of speech. Then, in the *Methodology* I want to describe the corpus-based study and justify the data collection, who the historical or literary figure behind each eponym is, with their importance in history and in our cultural background, the process of lexicalization and how they were transformed into adjectives and entered the lexicon to describe people’s attitudes or actions. Next, in the *Results* section, some aspects such as the following will be shown: capitalization, the analysis of these adjectives in terms of their semantic aspect, their position in the clause, the nouns they collocate with, their gradability and the genre (source of material) they appear in according to the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, which is the reference corpus used in this study. Graphics and statistics will be used to accompany the results and compare its frequency. In the *Discussion*, the results will be interpreted thoroughly and finally some final notes will be given in the *Conclusion*.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 THE GROWTH OF THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY

English is a language whose vocabulary is always growing. Words are constantly being lost or added to the lexicon to satisfy speakers' needs, and this is a proof that vocabulary is the mirror to society. Therefore, the words that speakers use "faithfully reflect the social conditions, the culture, the political events, the way of living, the influences, and the experiences of the speakers of that language" (Verdaguer & Poch, 2006, p.47).

There are mainly two strategies contributing to the growth of the English vocabulary (that can be applied to any language) and content the speaker's needs for new words: borrowing words from another language and using English internal resources to create new words, such as changing the meaning of existing words and creating new words out of nothing or from existing items.

2.1.1 BORROWINGS

According to Campbell (2013), *borrowing* is the "process to take words from another language and make them part of its own vocabulary" (p.56). These imported words are called *loanwords*. Borrowings reflect the contact of two languages and display much information about the relation established between two communities; this process show how a particular country influences the people's customs from another country. The language which borrows these words is called the *recipient* language and the language which these words are borrowed from is called the *donor* language.

Borrowing is not only taking words from one language (the *donor* language) into another (the *recipient* language). Furthermore, as Campbell (2013) expresses it: "Borrowing is not restricted to just lexical items taken from one language into another; any linguistic material – sounds, phonological rules, grammatical morphemes, syntactic patterns, semantic associations, discourse strategies or whatever – can be borrowed, that is, can be taken over from a foreign language so that it becomes part of the borrowing language" (p.56).

We can organise the borrowings into *loanwords*, *loanshifts* and *pragmatic borrowing*. On the one hand, *loanwords* are “words that are borrowed from the donor language into the host language can be grouped into two kinds: (a) those that are adopted wholesale, with minimal changes in pronunciation and morphology (*pure loanwords*), and (b) those that are adopted only partially (*loanblends*).” (Mott & Laso, 2020, p.3) Some examples are *kindergarden*, -pure loanword- which comes from German *Kindergarten* and Spanish *googlear* -*loanblend*-, which comes from internet search engine Google and Spanish suffix *-ear*. Basically, loanwords are words from another language that have been imported or adopted. On the other hand, *loanshifts* consist of “extending a word’s meaning to accommodate a new concept or sense acquired” and are divided into *calques* (loan translations), such as in Spanish *luna de miel* (English *honeymoon*) and *loan renditions*, when the translation of the foreign word is less than literal, such as in Catalan *cap de setmana* -English *weekend*- (Mott & Laso, 2020, p.6). As Katamba (1994) claims, a “loanshift involves taking on board the meaning represented by a word in a foreign language, but not the word form itself” (p.153). Finally, *pragmatic borrowing* is the transfer of discourse and pragmatic features from a source language to a recipient language. E.g. certain English uses of *please* and *thank you* as politeness markers that have been transferred to other languages (Mott & Laso, 2020, p.14).

2.1.2 INTERNAL RESOURCES

Internal resources are the most common strategies to increase the vocabulary of a language. As Katamba (1994) puts it, “using the internal resources of the language, speakers are able to produce an indefinitely large number of words” (p.5). Strategies used by the English language in order to increase its vocabulary using its internal resources are changing the meaning of existing words (*semantic change*) and creating new words.

2.1.2.1 SEMANTIC CHANGE

Semantic change is an alteration in the lexical meaning of words and morphemes. According to Campbell (2013), “semantic change deals with change in meaning, understood to be a change in the concepts associated with a word, and has nothing to do with change in the phonetic form of the word” (p.222).

The meaning of a word can change because it rises or falls on a scale of *specificity* (the number of semantic features that a word conveys can increase or decrease), *goodness* (the connotations that a word conveys can become more positive or negative) or *strength*.

Regarding specificity, the different types of semantic change are *generalization* and *specialization*. Campbell (2013, p.223) states that *generalization* (also called *broadening*) is the widening in scope of a word's meaning allowing it to denote a greater variety of referents (the meaning becomes more general). In consequence, the number of contexts in which a word can be used increases. The opposite of *generalization* is *specialization* (also called *restriction*). *Specialization* is the narrowing in scope of the meaning of a word. The number of semantic features of the denotation increases and hence, the number of referents of the word decreases. Therefore, the restriction of meaning in *specialization* increases the information conveyed by the word.

Concerning the scale of goodness in semantic change, there is *amelioration* and *pejoration*. *Amelioration* (also called *elevation*) is the acquisition of a more favourable meaning (Campbell, 2013, p.227). The opposite of *amelioration* is *pejoration* (also called *degeneration*), which is the acquisition of a less favourable meaning, since there is a lowering in the value judgement associated with the referent (Campbell, 2013, p.227).

Finally, in relation to the strength a word has, there is *weakening* -using words that are stronger than required by the circumstances- and the opposite, *strengthening*, the use of words that are weaker than required by the circumstances. One example of *strengthening* are *euphemisms*, which are the use of socially accepted words to avoid linguistic taboos. Taboo is related to superstition and topics such as birth, death, parts of the body, sex, disease or unpleasant jobs and therefore we use euphemisms to feel comfortable talking about those topics. There are several ways to form euphemisms: borrowing words (pseudo-technical terms), semantic shift (the use of the name of a part of the process to denote another part), phonetic distortion (alteration of the phonetic form of the word), and using diminutives, more decent terms or acronyms or initialisms.

Metaphors are also part of the semantic change: they “involve extensions in the meaning of a word that suggest a semantic similarity or connection between the new sense and the original one” (Campbell, 2013, p.224).

2.1.2.2. CREATION OF NEW WORDS

In the process of creating new words we can differentiate from creating new words *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) and creating new words from existing items. The creation of words *ex nihilo* is not very common. One of the few examples is *Kodak*; that word, according to its inventor, George Eastman, is a “purely arbitrary combination of letters, not derived in whole or in part from any existing word”, as Verdaguer & Poch (2006, p.52) state.

Instead, the creation of words from existing items is very common in English language. Katamba argues that *affixation (derivation)* is the commonest method of forming words (1994, p.42). *Derivation* is based on the creation of new words by adding affixes (bound morphemes), either prefixes (*prefixation*) or suffixes (*suffixation*), to existing roots. *Pseudo-suffixation* is a type of derivation that consists in using the second part of a word as a suffix to form new terms, basically informal terms. One example of pseudo-suffixation are words ended in *-(a)holic*. By analogy to “alcoholic”, we get words such as *workaholic* or *sexaholic*. The form *-holic* is treated as a suffix meaning ‘someone who overindulges in something’ although that was not its original meaning (Katamba, 1994, p.134).

Compounding is combining two or more bases (free morphemes) to form a new lexical unit with a meaning in some way different from that of its parts. According to the structural point of view, there are *endocentric* (bedroom) and *exocentric* (white collar) compounds. According to the semantic point of view, there are *transparent* compounds (which are self-explaining, such as *dishwasher*) and *lexicalized* (which are opaque, such as *acid house*). Apart from that classification, we can find *amalgamate* compounds (such as *Sussex*, which is a combination of *South* and *Saxons*) and *neoclassical* compounds (*teleshopping*).

Conversion is converting words from one grammatical category to another (changes grammatical category) with no changes in form. *Clipping* is the process where words are formed by dropping one or more syllables from a longer word with no change in meaning; the clip form replaces the original form (*gent* < gentleman). *Blending* is combining elements from two different words (*flexitarian* < flexible + vegetarian “a vegetarian who occasionally eats meat”).

Alphabetisms are words formed from the initial letters of a series of words but they pronounced as sequences of letters (*CD, PC*) whereas *acronyms* are abbreviations formed from the initial letters or syllables of a series of words and are pronounced as an ordinary word (*LASER*: light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation).

Finally, we have *eponymy* –the topic of this paper– that consists of applying the name of a person or a place to a common noun (it can be applied as well to a verb or adjective).

2.2 EPONYMS

The process of eponymy follows several of the previous techniques used. Lalić (2004, p.64) maintains that the most frequent technique is *conversion* and it produces common nouns (proper noun to common noun as in *Casanova*) but there are cases that the morphosyntactic class of the input unit changes (proper noun to common noun and then to a verb as in *boycott*).

After conversion, *suffixation* is the most productive process, particularly in scientific terminology (especially in biology, chemistry and mineralogy). Different suffixes are used: –*ite*, when it comes to form nouns (*dawsonite*), names of mineralogists, geologists or (al)chemists, but sometimes also names of mine officials, financiers, politicians, rulers or any other celebrities, –*ia* in plants (*gardenia*) and bacteria (*listeria*), –*ium* in chemical elements (*einsteinium*), –*ella* in bacteria (*brucella*), –*ize*, to subject to a process denoted by its originator (*pasteurize*), –*ism*, in principles, doctrines or practices: (*Buddhism, Thatcherism*) or disorders (*masochism, sadism*), –*ic*, in the style of (*Platonic*), –*esque*, in the style of (*Kafkaesque*), –*ist*, to name a supporter or follower of the celebrity (*Blairist*) such as the suffix –*ite* in *Clintonite* (Lalić, 2004, pp.65-66).

Other techniques used are *composition* (*saxophone*), *clipping* (gal < *Galileo*), *blending* (*gerrymander* [< Gerry + (sala)mander]), *acronymy* (*MiG* < *Mikoyan i Gurevich*) and *back-formation* (*mentee* < mentor < *Mentor*) as Lalić (2004, pp. 66-67) argues.

We can classify eponyms according to their lexical semantic field and according to the part of speech. The following examples are excerpts from *A New Dictionary of Eponyms* (Freeman, 1997). On the one hand, in relation to the semantic field, eponyms can derive from important people or historical figures (*Silhouette* –a French author and politician from the 18th century, who instituted strict reforms to help the failing economy under the influence of *Madame de Pompadour*), from gods or mythological figures (*Nemesis* –the goddess of retributive justice and vengeance in Greek mythology) and even from places such as *Magenta*. The colour *magenta* was named after the *Battle of Magenta*, which took place in the city of *Magenta* (Lombardy) in 1859, where the French and the Piedmontese defeated the Austrians to liberate Italy due to that blood-spattered battlefield.

On the other hand, in relation to the part of speech, eponyms can be nouns (*Saxophone* – instrument named after the 19th century Belgian instrument maker *Antoine Joseph Sax* (who patented his wind instrument in 1846), adjectives (*Herculean* –which comes from *Hercules*, the Roman god and hero, the equivalent of Greek *Heracles*), verbs (*Boycott* –which comes from *Charles Boycott*, a British land agent living in the 19th century, who was ostracized by his local community after he refused his tenants' demands for reduction in rates) and even interjections (*Jesus!* –the cornerstone of Christianity).

One of the topics to be treated in this paper is capitalization as a sign of lexicalization. When eponyms are used as adjectives, they are usually capitalized as we find in *Shakespearian*, *Kafkaesque* or *Thatcherite*. The reason why is their origin in proper nouns, which are capitalized in English. Yet, in the case of adjectives, some eponyms are shown in some dictionaries in lowercase when “they have evolved a common status, no longer deriving their meaning from the proper-noun origin”, as Merriam-Webster dictionary states (1993). For example, *Herculean* is capitalized when it has to do to Hercules himself, but often is in lower-case when it refers to the figurative meaning, of “unusual size, power, or difficulty” as *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000) defines the word. It also states: “Often herculean” which means that capitalization is not always applied in this word. To sum up, as *The Chicago Manual of Style* (2017) argues, “personal, national or geographical names, and words derived from such names, are often lowercased when used with a nonliteral meaning” (p.486) and remarks that there are some of these words that are capitalized in Webster's, although Chicago have a preference to lowercase them in their nonliteral use.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to search eponyms to write this corpus-based study, I wanted them to be adjectives that describe people, actions or human behaviour. Besides, for selecting eight eponyms, I was focused in the fields of literature, politics and history –which I am fond of– and my intention was to collect eight historical figures or celebrities and fiction characters from these areas.

The first eponym I had in mind was *Thatcherite* but in order to collect more examples I needed sources. I consulted a quite useful article by Gordana Lalić called “Eponyms in English” from the *Romanian Journal of English Studies* (2004) and a book by Morton S. Freeman called *A New Dictionary of Eponyms* (1997) that gave me dozens of the eponyms to choose that fit the selected criteria (adjectives describing people, actions or human behaviour).

After doing a thorough research of the eponyms I was provided, I chose the final eight, which are very known words and constantly repeated in the areas of history, literature and politics, and, the most important of all, in everyday language. The eponyms I added to *Thatcherite* in order to create a corpus-based study are *Sadistic*, *Masochistic*, *Kafkaesque*, *Machiavellian*, *Herculean*, *Platonic* and *Quixotic*.

Once I had selected these eight eponyms, I explored their meaning and origin. Then I searched examples of utterances including these eight words. Looking for a corpus was a the solution and I introduced those eponyms in the *British National Corpus (BNC)* in order to check how many times appear these words in the corpus: it turned out to be 579 times: *Thatcherite* (201), *Sadistic* (140), *Platonic* (102), *Masochistic* (60), *Machiavellian* (51), *Quixotic* (44), *Herculean* (35) and *Kafkaesque* (6).

I examined each and every one of the 579 sentences in order to look for capitalized eponyms, analyse their semantic aspect (if it refers to the character or it is used in a figurative way), examine the position of the adjective (attributive vs predicative [or post positive]) in the sentence, if the adjective stands on its own because the noun is elided, looking for nouns that they collocate with (if there is a pattern in collocations), if these eponyms show gradability and the genre (source of material) they appear in. All of these will appear in the *Results* section.

4. RESULTS

In this section the corpus-based analysis will be scrutinized thoroughly for every eponym, and tables and graphics will help clarify the eight words analysed -*Thatcherite*, *Sadistic*, *Platonic*, *Masochistic*, *Machiavellian*, *Quixotic*, *Herculean* and *Kafkaesque*-, having read each and every one of the 579 sentences in the sample.

Eponym	Times appeared
Thatcherite	201
Sadistic	140
Platonic	102
Masochistic	60
Machiavellian	51
Quixotic	44
Herculean	35
Kafkaesque	6

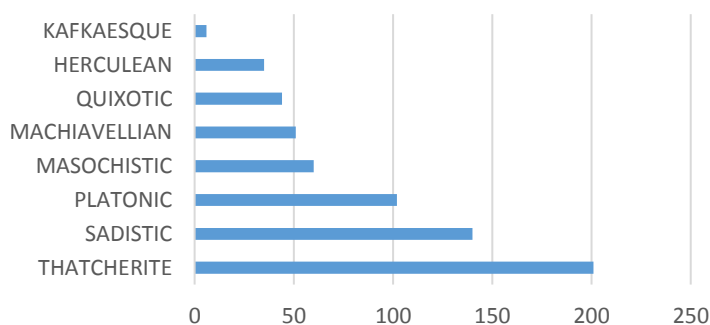


Figure 4.0 Number of times appeared in the BNC sample

Table 4.0

4.1 THATCHERITE

According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2020), a *Thatcherite* is a follower of the political system that *Margaret Thatcher* (1925-2013) -a member of the Conservative Party and the first woman elected Prime Minister in Europe- imposed in Britain in the eighties based on the dismantling of welfare state, privatisation of industry and deregulation of the British economy. Subsequent conservative policies that are similar to Thatcher's are also called *Thatcherite*. *Margaret Thatcher* won three consecutive elections (1979, 1983 and 1987) becoming Prime Minister from 1979 until 1990 when she resigned because of internal pressures in the party. Apart from promoting conservative values and the "traditional" English family, she was very implacable towards striking miners when she closed the pits. Due to these policies, she was called the "Iron Lady". She became the most renowned British political leader since Winston Churchill.

The eponym *Thatcherite* appeared 201 times, 191 as an adjective and 10 as a noun. When working as an adjective, it had an attributive use 184 times (96.3%), a predicative use 6 times and once it acted as a post-positive adjective. It showed gradability once (“I thought it was a *very* Thatcherite contribution” and all 201 times the adjective was capitalized.

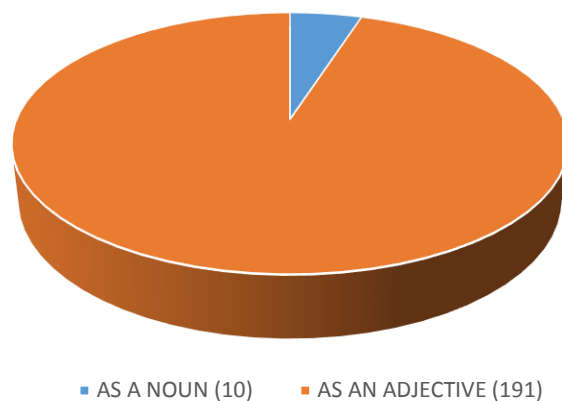


Figure 4.1.1 THATCHERITE

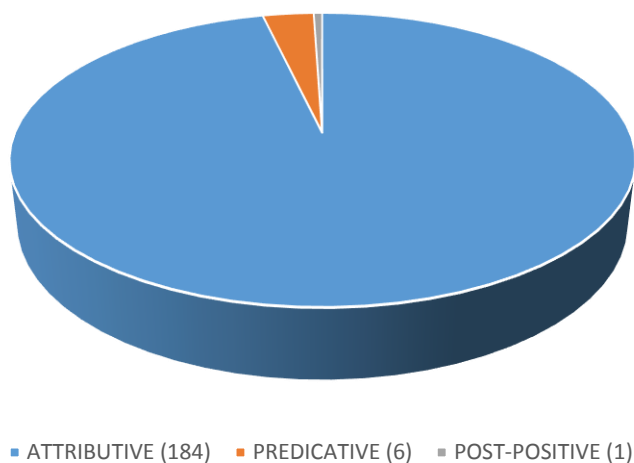


Figure 4.1.2 THATCHERITE AS AN ADJECTIVE

In the following graphic and table, the most common words (nouns) that *Thatcherite* collocates with are shown.

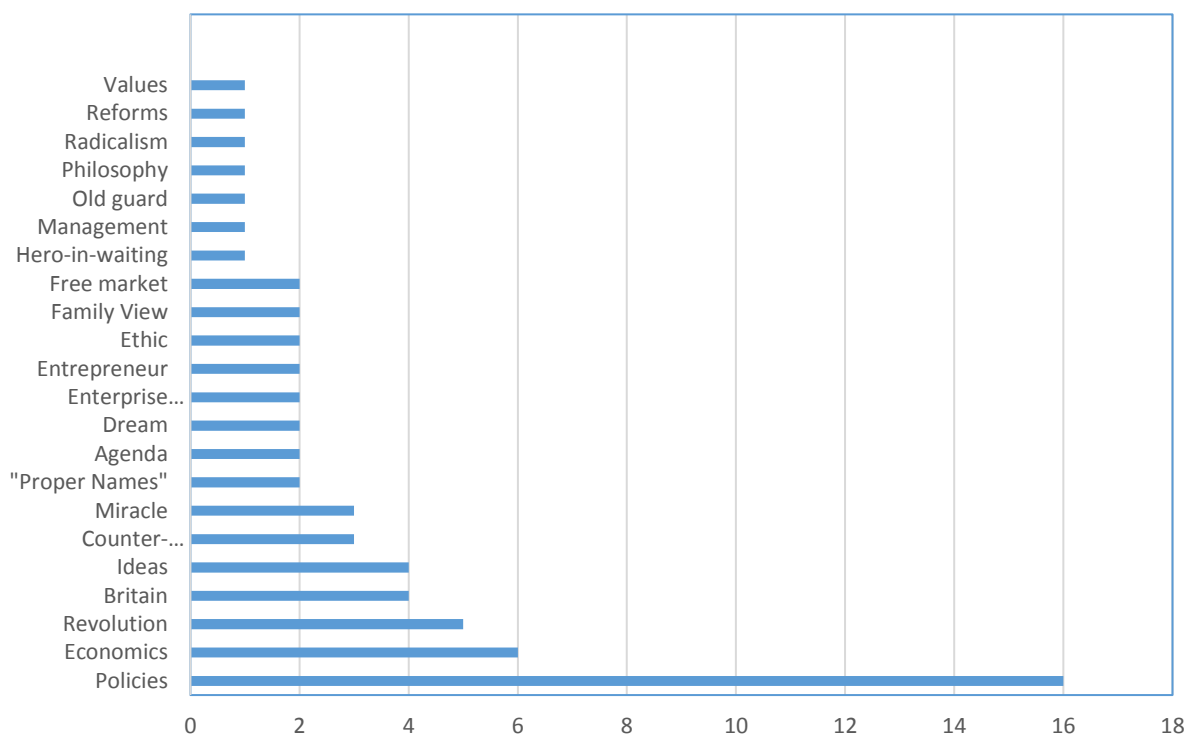


Figure 4.1.3 NOUNS THAT *THATCHERITE* COLLOCATES WITH - Nº TIMES

Nouns <i>Thatcherite</i> collocates with	Number of times
Policies	16
Economics	6
Revolution	5
Britain, Ideas	4
Counter-revolution, Miracle	3
"Proper Names", Agenda, Dream, Enterprise culture, Entrepreneur, Ethic, Family view, Free market	2
Hero-in-waiting, Management, Old guard, Philosophy, Radicalism, Reforms, Values	1

Table 4.1

According to the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, the most common sources where *Thatcherite* appears are academic sources (68 times) and newspapers (64).

SECTION	ALL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	NON-ACAD	ACADEMIC	MISC
FREQ	201	4	1	15	64	24	68	25
WORDS (M)	100	10.0	15.9	7.3	10.5	16.5	15.3	20.8
PER MIL	2.01	0.40	0.06	2.07	6.11	1.45	4.44	1.20
SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE								

Figure 4.1.4

4.2 SADISTIC

As Freeman (1997, p.224) expresses, a *sadist* is a person who delights in cruelty, and *sadism* is the association of sexual gratification with the infliction of pain on others. The origin of this word is the Count *Donatien Alphonse François de Sade* (1740-1814), a French philosopher and writer who preferred to be called Marquis (*The Marquis of Sade*). When having affairs with women, he enjoyed a form of sexual perversion that consisted of abusing sexually and even torturing his partner. He eventually escaped a death sentence and later evaded the guillotine during the French Revolution.

Sadistic appeared 140 times, 138 as an adjective and 2 as a noun. When working as an adjective, it had an attributive use 126 times (91.3%), a predicative use 11 times and once it acted as a post-positive adjective. It showed gradability once (“Someone with a *very* sadistic outlook committed that murder”) and all times the adjective was in lower case.

■ AS A NOUN (2) ■ AS AN ADJECTIVE (138)

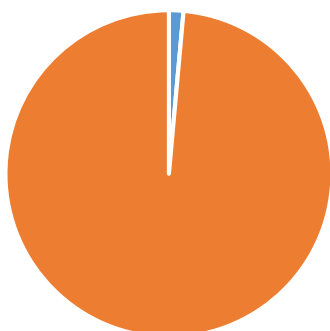


Figure 4.2.1 SADISTIC

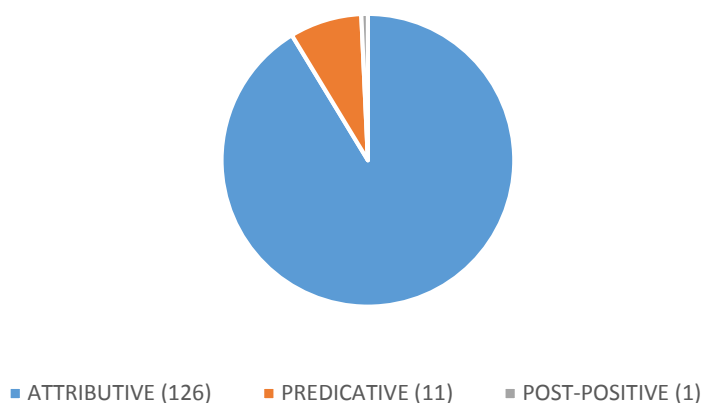


Figure 4.2.2 *SADISTIC* AS AN ADJECTIVE

In the following graphic and table, the most common words (nouns) that *Sadistic* collocates with are shown.

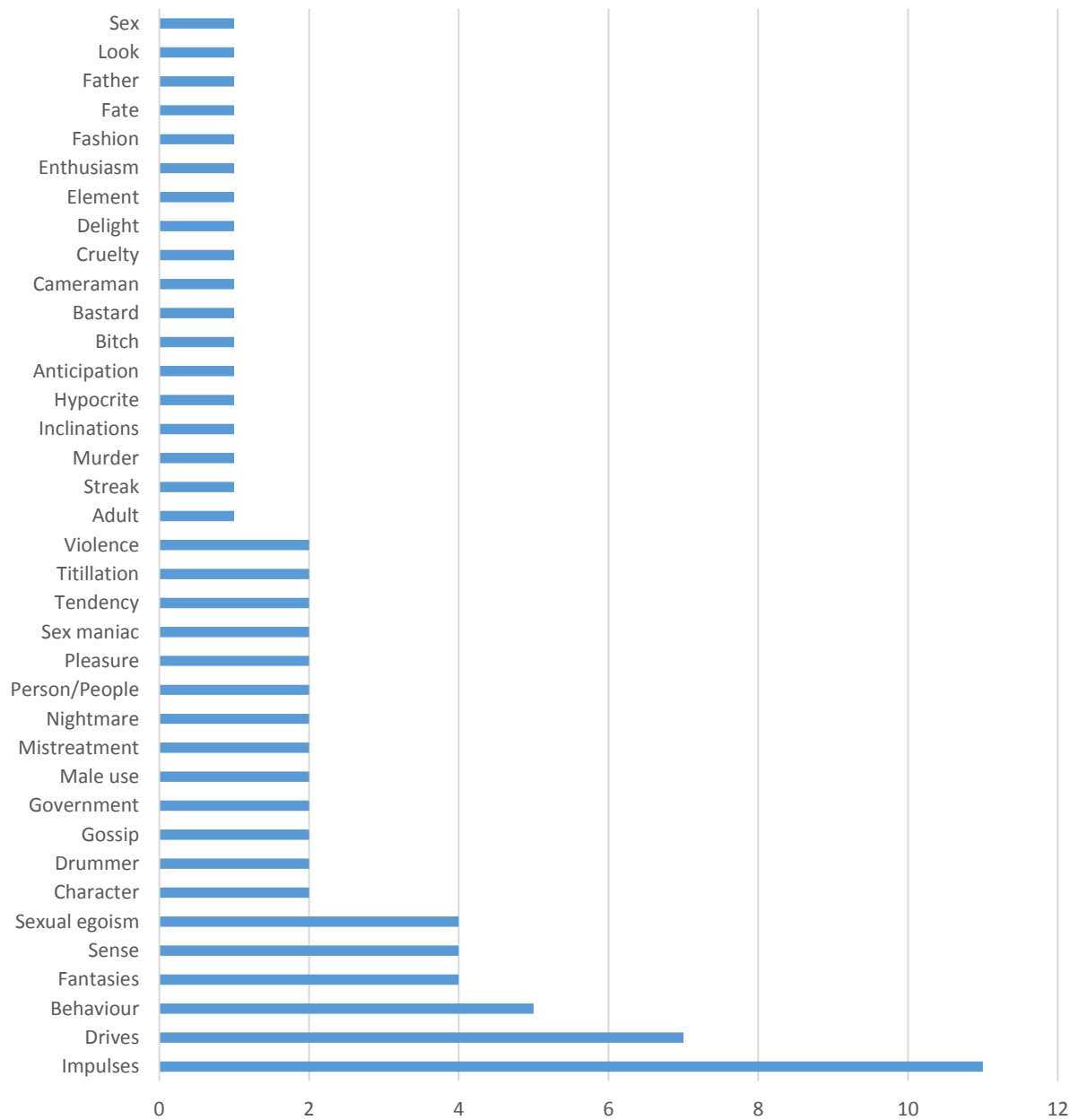


Figure 4.2.3 NOUNS THAT COLLOCATE WITH *SADISTIC* - N° TIMES

Nouns <i>Sadistic</i> collocates with	Number of times
Impulses	11
Drives	7
Behaviour	5
Character, Drummer, Gossip, Government Male use, Mistreatment, Nightmare, Person/People, Pleasure, Sex maniac, Tendency, Titillation, Violence	2
Adult, Streak, Murder, Inclinations, Hypocrite, Anticipation, Bitch, Bastard, Cameraman, Cruelty, Delight, Element, Enthusiasm, Fashion, Fate, Father, Look, Sex	1

Table 4.2.1

The most common sources where *Sadistic* is present in the *British National Corpus (BNC)* are academic sources (35 times) and fiction (34).

SECTION	ALL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	NON-ACAD	ACADEMIC	MISC
FREQ	141	3	34	9	18	13	35	29
WORDS (M)	100	10.0	15.9	7.3	10.5	16.5	15.3	20.8
PER MIL	1.41	0.30	2.14	1.24	1.72	0.79	2.28	1.39

Figure 4.2.4

4.3 PLATONIC

According to *Thesaurus.com* (2020), synonyms of *Platonic* are idealistic, utopian, spiritual or intellectual. *Platonic love* (or *platonic friendship*), which derives from the Latin *amor Platonicus*, is the nonphysical attraction between a man and a woman. This view of friendship comes from *Plato's Symposium*, where Greek philosopher *Plato* (c. 428-347 B.C.) -a student of Socrates- tells of the pure love of Socrates for young men, as Freeman (1997, p.201) remarks. After the death of Socrates, Plato founded the Academy in 387, the first university, which offered courses in philosophy, mathematics, logic, and government. Aristotle was one of his pupils.

The eponym *Platonic* appeared 102 times, all of them as adjective. It had an attributive use 78 times (76.5%) and a predicative use 24 times. It showed gradability once (“in some *more Platonic* way”) and it was capitalized 53 times and 49 times it was in lower case. *Platonic* had a figurative meaning 90 times and 12 times a literal meaning.

■ ATTRIBUTIVE (78) ■ PREDICATIVE (24)

■ UPPER-CASE (53) ■ LOWER-CASE (49)

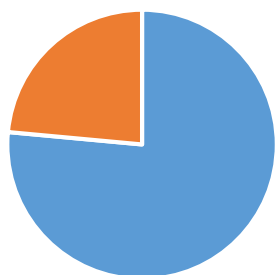


Figure 4.3.1 PLATONIC AS AN ADJECTIVE

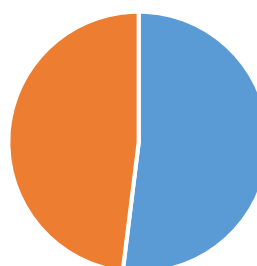


Figure 4.3.2 CAPITALIZATION OF *PLATONIC*

■ LITERAL (12) ■ FIGURATIVE (90)

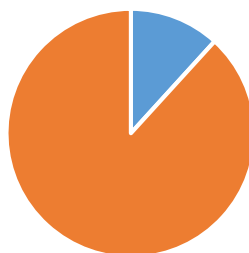


Figure 4.3.3 MEANING OF *PLATONIC*

In the following table, most common nouns *platonic* collocates with are shown.

Nouns <i>Platonic</i> collocates with	Number of times
Solids	6
Friendship, Relationship, Dialogues, Love	3
Behaviour	5
Love affair, Lovers, Way, Myth, Universe, Ideal	2
Idealism, Archetypes, Comfort, Cosmogony, Cosmology, Devotion, Distinction, Elitism, Evaluation, Existence, Guardians, Marriage, Metaphysics, Nonsense, Passion, Point, Republic, View	1

Table 4.3.1

Based on the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, the most common sources where *Platonic* appears are academic sources (31 times) and fiction (19).

SECTION	ALL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	NON-ACAD	ACADEMIC	MISC
FREQ	102	8	19	3	7	14	31	18
WORDS (M)	100	10.0	15.9	7.3	10.5	16.5	15.3	20.8
PER MIL	1.00	0.80	1.19	0.41	0.67	0.85	2.02	0.86
SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE								

Figure 4.3.4

4.4 MASOCHISTIC

Freeman (1997, p.160) defines a *masochistic* as a person who derives sexual gratification from their own pain or humiliation. The word *masochism* has its origin in Austrian novelist *Leopold von Sacher-Masoch* (1836-1895). He did not invent masochism *per se*, but “submission to physical abuse was the central theme of *Sacher-Masoch*’s life and his books”, as Freeman (1997, p.160) claims. As a curiosity, all *Sacher-Masoch*’s relationships ended in disaster.

The eponym *Masochistic* appeared 60 times, all as an adjective. It had an attributive use 51 times (85%) and a predicative use 9 times. It showed no gradability and all 60 times the adjective it was lower cased.

■ ATTRIBUTIVE (51) ■ PREDICATIVE (9)

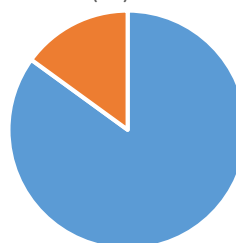


Figure 4.4.1 *MASOCHISTIC* AS AN ADJECTIVE

In the following table, most common nouns *Masochistic* collocates with are shown.

Nouns <i>Masochistic</i> collocates with	Number of times
Way, Pleasure, Desire, Streak, Ritual, Patients	2
Aspects, Character, Determination, Emissary, Fascination, Focus, Fringe, Identification, Impulses, Lines, Manner, Moments, Passion, Phrase, Relation, Role, Sensation, Sensuality, Sexuality, Torment, Use, Vice	1

Table 4.4.1

According to the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, the most common sources where *masochistic* is present are fiction (20 times) and academic sources (13).

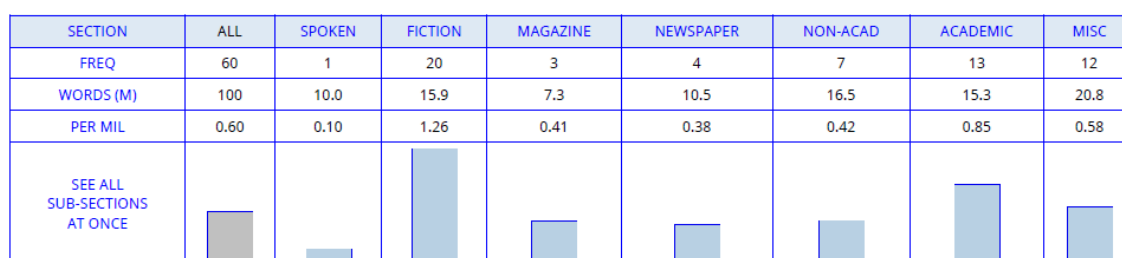


Figure 4.4.2

4.5 MACHIAVELLIAN

The eponym *Machiavellian* appeared 51 times, 47 as an adjective, 2 as a noun and 2 as a proper noun. When working as an adjective, it had an attributive use 41 times (87.2%) and a predicative use 6 times. It showed no gradability and it was capitalized 43 times and 8 times it was in lower case.

Machiavellian means “characterized by political intrigue, duplicity, unscrupulousness, and brilliant dissembling” (Freeman, 1997, p.153). The word comes from the Italian Renaissance diplomat, philosopher and writer, *Niccolò Machiavelli* (1469-1527) best known for his book *The Prince*. As Freeman (1997, p.153) argues, he had power in the Florentine government but when the *Medicis* returned to power, he was tortured, imprisoned and had no choice to resume his public life. *Machiavelli* is the founder of political science with his famous motto “rulers rightfully could maintain their power by any means necessary”.

■ AS A PROPER NOUN (2) ■ AS A NOUN (2)
■ AS AN ADJECTIVE (47)



Figure 4.5.1 MACHIAVELLIAN

■ ATTRIBUTIVE (41) ■ PREDICATIVE (6)

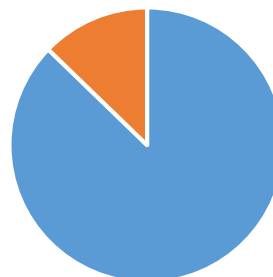


Figure 4.5.2 MACHIAVELLIAN AS AN ADJECTIVE

■ UPPER-CASE (43) ■ LOWER-CASE (8)

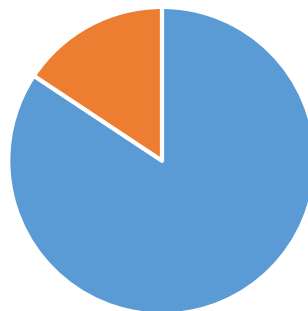


Figure 4.5.3 CAPITALIZATION OF MACHIAVELLIAN

In the following table, the most common words *Machiavellian* collocates with are shown.

Nouns <i>Machiavellian</i> collocates with	Number of times
Behaviour, Manipulation, Motives, Plot, Skills	2
Determination, Elements, Games, Gestures, Intelligence, Intention, Leadership, Manoeuvres, People Plan, Rule, Schemes, Strategy, Terms, Unscrupulousness, Ways, Wisdom	1

Table 4.5.1

Based on the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, the most common sources where *Machiavellian* appears are non-academic (17 times) and academic (11 times).

SECTION	ALL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	NON-ACAD	ACADEMIC	MISC
FREQ	51	1	6	6	6	17	11	4
WORDS (M)	100	10.0	15.9	7.3	10.5	16.5	15.3	20.8
PER MIL	0.51	0.10	0.38	0.83	0.57	1.03	0.72	0.19
SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE								

Figure 4.5.4

4.6 QUIXOTIC

The adjective *quixotic* is used with a person who is an “impractical idealist with lofty visions but little common sense”, according to Freeman (1997, p.213). The word originates from the main character in *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616). This book is considered to be the all-time best-seller because of its criticism of chivalry novels, its metaliterature (fiction within fiction) and being the first modern novel. The idealism of the eponym *quixotic* has to do with the fact that *Don Quixote* (*Alonso Quijano*, a man from La Mancha) was a humble visionary who, after reading books on knight errantry, believed he had to redress the wrongs of the world becoming a knight with a skinny horse, and accompanied by his squire, *Sancho Panza*, a short, rude and sane farmer who blindly believes *Don Quixote*. The adventures they lived ended badly, in part because of *Don Quixote*’s madness (that made him see giants instead of windmills) and finally they returned home.

The eponym *Quixotic* appeared 44 times, 42 as an adjective and 2 as a noun. When working as an adjective, it had an attributive use 31 times (73.8%), a predicative use 10 times and once it acted as a post-positive adjective. It showed gradability once (“Constanza did some *extremely* quixotic things”) and it was capitalized 8 times and lower cased 36 times.

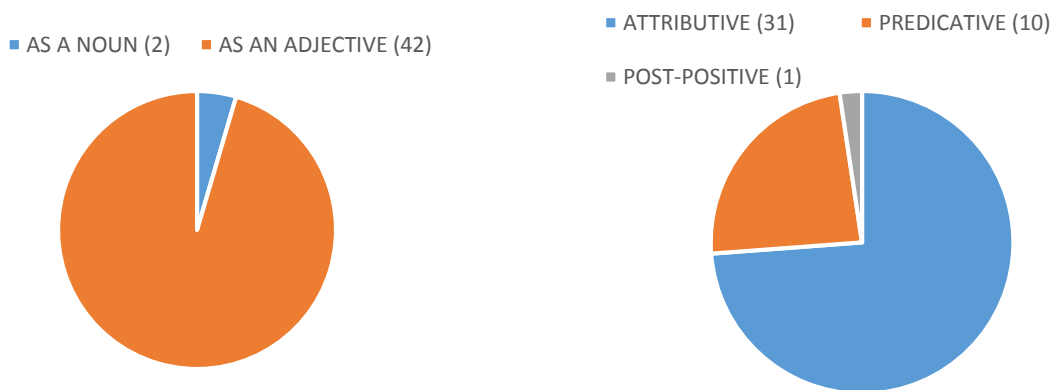


Figure 4.6.1 QUIXOTIC

Figure 4.6.2 QUIXOTIC AS AN ADJECTIVE

In the following table, most common words (nouns) *Quixotic* collocates with are shown.

Nouns <i>Quixotic</i> collocates with	Number of times
Errand	2
"Proper Name", Attempt, Charge, Choice, Decision, Eccentric, Entrepreneur, Features, Gestures, Honour, Ideas, Journeying, Moment, Notion, Personality, Project Replica, Resignation, Rising, Skills, Soul, Suggestion	1

Table 4.6.1

The most common sources where *Quixotic* appears in the *British National Corpus* (BNC) are non-academic (14 times) and fiction (8 times).

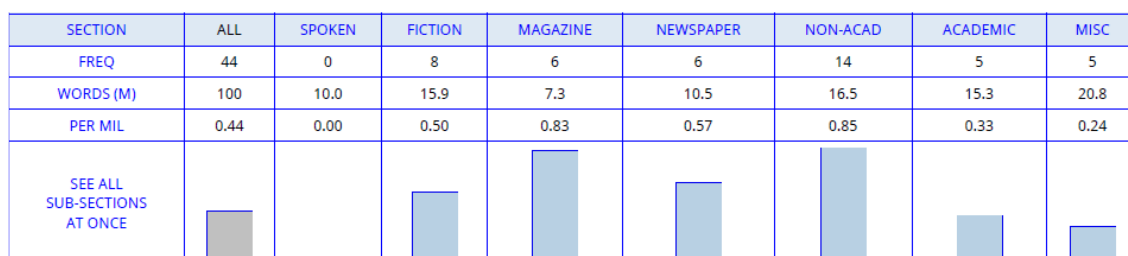


Figure 4.6.4

4.7 HERCULEAN

Herculean means “needing great strength and determination” and is usually attached to “task” or “effort”. A *Herculean* task implies a prodigious task, possibly a seemingly impossible one. Freeman (1997, p.121) indicates the origin of the word: *Herculean* comes from *Hercules*, the Roman god and hero which in Greek mythology is the equivalent of *Heracles*, the son of *Zeus* and *Alcmene*, a mortal woman. *Hera*, *Zeus*'s wife, was furious because of his infidelity and wanted to dispose of his bastard offspring. She tried to kill *Heracles* in his cradle, but did not succeed. Later on, sent serpents, but *Heracles* strangled them all. He became the servant of *Eurystheus* and was imposed the famous “twelve labours”. For all these reasons, the adjective *Herculean* is associated with strength.

The eponym *Herculean* appeared 35 times, all of them as an adjective. It had an attributive use 34 times (97.1%) and once had a predicative use. It showed no gradability and it was capitalized 20 times and 15 times it was in lower case.

■ ATTRIBUTIVE (34) ■ PREDICATIVE (1)

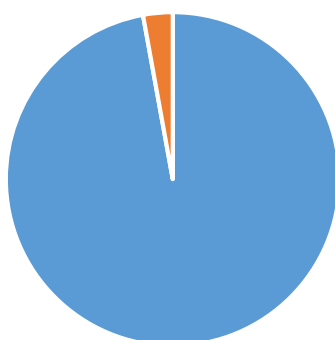


Figure 4.7.1 *HERCULEAN* AS AN ADJECTIVE

■ UPPER-CASE (20) ■ LOWER-CASE (15)

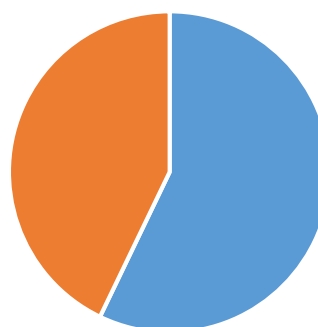


Figure 4.7.2 CAPITALIZATION OF *HERCULEAN*

In the following table, most common nouns *Herculean* collocates with are shown.

Nouns <i>Herculean</i> collocates with	Times
Task	14
Effort	11
Achievement, Attempt, Battles, Legend, Proportions, Struggle, Virility	1

Table 4.7.1

According to the *British National Corpus (BNC)*, the most common sources where *Herculean* appears are non-academic (9 times) and fiction (8 times).

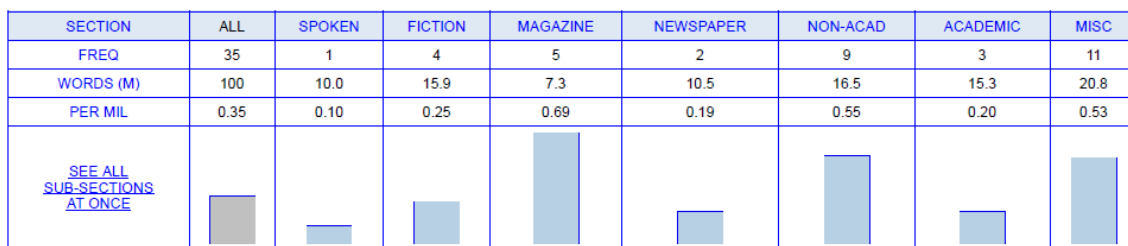


Figure 4.7.3

4.8 KAFKAESQUE

The *Cambridge Dictionary* (2020) defines *Kafkaesque* as something “extremely unpleasant, frightening, and confusing, and similar to situations described in the novels of *Franz Kafka*”. Franz Kafka (1883–1924) was born in Prague and considered one of the major key writers of 20th-century literature. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Kafka expressed existential anxiety and alienation in his works *Die Verwandlung* (“The Metamorphosis”) and *Der Process* (“The Trial”).

The eponym *Kafkaesque* appeared 6 times, 5 as an adjective and 1 as a noun. When working as an adjective, it had an attributive use all 5 times (100%). It showed no gradability and all times the adjective was upper-case. As there was only 6 utterances found in the British National Corpus (BNC) with *Kafkaesque* was, no graphics or tables will be shown. The nouns *Kafkaesque* collocates with in this sample are *Sensation*, *Accuracy*, *Honeycombs*, *Fog*, *Dungeon*. Finally, according to the sources in *British National Corpus (BNC)*, *Kafkaesque* appears twice in academic sources, once in fiction, once in biography, once in a journal and once in prose.

5. DISCUSSION

Once displayed the sample of eight adjectives eponyms in 579 sentences found in the *British National Corpus (BNC)* and thoroughly scrutinized, it is time to analyse the results found. It can be said that the sample selected was very heterogenic and the frequency they appeared in BNC was quite unlike - *Thatcherite* (201), *Sadistic* (140), *Platonic* (102), *Masochistic* (60), *Machiavellian* (51), *Quixotic* (44), *Herculean* (35), *Kafkaesque* (6) - but in line with I expected, although I expected to find more entrances of *Kafkaesque*. As a curiosity, there is one sentence where *Quixotic* and *Herculean* appear together (“To attempt such a thing would be *herculean* and *quixotic*”). This example is a proof that some of the meanings of these two eponyms are related.

To begin with, analysing their semantic aspect, all of these eponyms are used in a figurative way (its meaning according to the dictionary) in practically all cases (100%) except for *Platonic*, which is used in a figurative way 90 times (88.3%) and 12 times in a literal way (11.7%). In these 12 cases the meaning is related with Plato himself or some of his theories (*Plato’s dialogues* or *Plato’s solids*).

Eponyms’ semantic aspect is likely deducible when they work as adjectives because of the nouns that collocate with these eponyms. Moving backwards, when one hears *Platonic* automatically associates it to the nonphysical or intellectual attraction between two people, and we expect to hear collocations such as *Platonic love*, *Platonic friendship* or even *Platonic relationship*. Analysing the nouns that accompany *Platonic* (See *Table 4.3.1*) *love*, *friendship* or *relationship* are some of the most repeated (3 times each), but the first one is *solids* (6 times) and *dialogues* is also repeated 3 times. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2020), *Platonic solids* are “any of the five geometric solids whose faces are all identical, regular polygons meeting at the same three-dimensional angles.” In *Plato’s dialogues*, also known as *Socratic dialogues*, moral and philosophical problems where *Socrates* is the interlocutor who guides the conversation are discussed, (*Britannica*, 2020). *Metaphysics*, *Idealism*, *Myth* or *Universe* are used only once or twice. Still on *Platonic*, the adjective has an attributive use (internal pre-head modifier) in 76.5% of the examples and a predicative use (it is a predicative complement) in the remaining 23.5%. This leads us to the conclusion that *Platonic* can be used either as attributive or predicative adjective, although in the corpus sample is widely used in an attributive position.

Among the sample of eight eponyms, *Platonic* and *Herculean* are paradigmatic in the issue of capitalization as a sign of lexicalization. According to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (2017:486) when eponyms are used with a nonliteral meaning it is recommended to lowercase them, although they are capitalized in Webster's dictionary. The fact that *Platonic* is capitalized in 48% of the cases and *Herculean* in 57% shows that these words do not follow a pattern in capitalization and whoever wrote these words that ended in the sample could either capitalize them or not. Instead, there is a pattern in capitalization in the other eponyms: *Thatcherite* (100%), *Kafkaesque* (100%) and *Machiavellian* (84%) are usually capitalized whereas *Sadistic* (100%), *Masochistic* (100%) and *Quixotic* (82%) are commonly displayed in lower case. Apart from *Platonic* (88%), all the eponyms in the sample present the figurative meaning (100%) instead of literal (referring to the historical person or fiction character). Whichever option seen (upper case or lower case) all eponyms entered the English lexicon and are widely used, according to the sample from *British National Corpus (BNC)*.

Despite the fact that these eponyms analysed are adjectives, no gradability was detected in morphology and only *Thatcherite*, *Sadistic*, *Platonic* and *Quixotic* were pre-modified once by the adverbs *very*, *extremely* and *more*. This leads to the conclusion that these eponyms are not usually pre-modified by adverbs.

An adjective can stand on its own when the noun is elided and therefore it works as a noun. When it comes to analyse this fact in the sample, only *Thatcherite* presents significant data working as a noun (10 times). Results in *Sadistic* (2), *Machiavellian* (2), *Quixotic* (2) and *Kafkaesque* (1) are not relevant. In the example of *Sadistic* and *Masochistic*, they have its equivalent noun, *Sadist* and *Masochist* and as a result, *Sadistic* and *Masochistic* are mostly used as adjectives.

In relation to the position in the sentence, the vast majority of the eponyms analysed are attributive adjectives, that is, they premodify a noun: *Kafkaesque* (100%), *Herculean* (97%), *Thatcherite* (96%), *Machiavellian* (87%), *Sadistic* (85%), *Masochistic* (85%), *Platonic* (76%) and *Quixotic* (74%). In the rest of the cases, these adjectives are in predicative position (after the verb) and only 3 times (out of 579) were post-positive adjectives.

There are two more features to be treated: examine the nouns that these eponyms collocate with and the source of material they appear in. First, I will analyse the collocations appeared in the sample. Collocations can be defined as “combinations of two or more words which frequently occur together and can refer to any kind of typical word combination” (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017, p.6). They claim that collocations can be *strong*, when the words are very closely associated with each other, *fixed*, when those combinations cannot be changed in any way –*idioms*–, and *weak*, when the words used can collocate with a wide range of other words (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017, p.8).

I consulted *The LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations* by Jimmie Hill and Michael Lewis (1997) as a support to check if some of the collocations found in the sample from the *British National Corpus (BNC)* were present in the book to verify that they are very common collocations. When comparing the eponyms selected with the collocations in the book, only these collocations appeared: *sadistic cruelty*, *platonic love*, *platonic relationship*, *Machiavellian device* and *Herculean task*. I have to point out that *Machiavellian device* does not appear in the corpus sample.

Then, as the collocations found in Hill and Lewis (1997) were not significant to compare with the ones in the corpus sample, a pattern in the selected collocations has to be found. To start, the most common noun that collocates with *Thatcherite* is *Policies* (16 times) and then *Economics* (6), *Revolution* (5), *Britain* (4), *Ideas* (4), *Counter-revolution* (3) and *Miracle* (3) as seen in *Table 4.1*. The pattern followed is that *Thatcherite* collocates with words related to politics, economy, nation, morality and history. Being Margaret Thatcher a recent historical figure, the eponym *Thatcherite* is quite common in English utterances due to the impact she had, for better or worse, in the British unconscious collective.

According to the sample, the nouns *Sadistic* most collocates with are related to strong desires people have in order to execute some actions or acting in a particular way, such as *Impulses* (11 times), *Drives* (7), *Behaviour* (5) as table 4.2.1 shows. Other words that accompany *Sadistic* in the sample that are commonly used in everyday English but here appear only once or twice are *Character*, *Nightmare*, *Person*, *People*, *Pleasure*, *Sex*, *Tendency*, *Murder*, *Inclinations*, *Bitch*, *Bastard*, *Cruelty*, *Delight* and *Sex*, among others.

In the sample, there are no nouns that collocate with *Masochistic* many times, possibly due to appearing only 51 times in attributive position in the sample and most of them appear once or twice (see *Table 4.4.1*). What is remarkable is that some of these nouns (*Pleasure, Streak, Character, Impulses* or *Sexuality*) are also collocated in the sample with *Sadistic*. This could be due to the “reciprocal meaning” they have these two adjectives; whereas *Sadistic* relates to a person who likes *inflicting* pain, *Masochistic* associates to a person who likes *receiving* pain.

Partly due to the frequency (it has an attributive use 41 times) in the sample, collocations with *Machiavellian* only appear once or twice. Most of them (see *Table 4.5.1*) have to do with politics and human conducts and abilities. When it comes to analyse *Quixotic* collocations, (see *Table 4.6.1*) there is a strong relation of these words with the meaning of the eponym *Quixotic*: “impractical idealist with lofty visions but little common sense” (Freeman, 1997, p.213), as it can be seen in *Errand, Attempt, Choice, Decision, Gestures, Honour, Ideas, Journeying, Personality* or *Resignation*.

Herculean is the perfect example in collocations because as it is usually attached to *task* or *effort*, these words appear the most in the sample: *task* 14 times and *effort* 11 times (see *Table 4.7.1*). As *Herculean* means something that needs strength and determination, these other words that appear once are quite related: *Achievement, Attempt, Battles, Legend, Struggle* or *Virility*. Finally, collocations with *Kafkaesque* are not significant because there are only five and there is no relationship between them (*Sensation, Accuracy, Honeycombs, Fog, Dungeon*).

To conclude this section, I will analyse the sources these eponyms appear and study if there is an association between the eponyms selected and the genre they appear. For a start, *Thatcherite* appears basically in written sources (in spoken sources only 4 out of 201) so it is not a common spoken word out of politics. Press was the most important source since *Thatcherite* appeared 64 times in newspapers and 15 times in magazines, due to the importance of Margaret Thatcher nowadays in British society. Besides, it was present 68 times in academic sources (most of them related to politics, society and humanities) and 24 times in non-academic sources, related to politics, society and humanities as well (see *Figure 4.1.4*).

Analysing the sources where *Sadistic* appears we can deduce that it is a popular word as it is present 34 times in fiction, 18 times in newspapers, 9 times in magazines and 7 times in biographies. It should be remarked, though, that this eponym appears 35 times in academic sources as a consequence of being a word widely used (see Figure 4.2.4). Its counterpart, *Masochistic*, follows a similar pattern because, out of 60, it is present 20 times in fiction, 13 in academic sources, 4 in newspapers and 3 in magazines (see Figure 4.4.2). Both eponyms are settled in the lexicon of English and used in a wide range of written genres.

In the corpus sample, *Platonic* appears 8 times (out of 102) in spoken sources. In written sources, it is present 31 times in academic sources (related to humanities), 19 times in fiction, 15 times in biographies and 14 times in non-academic sources 14, related to humanities too (see Figure 4.3.4). *Machiavellian* is present 17 times in non-academic sources (society, politics, humanities and science) and 11 times in academic sources, relating the same areas of non-academic sources: society, politics, humanities and science. 6 times it was present in fiction, 6 in newspapers and 6 in magazines (see Figure 4.5.4).

Quixotic is an eponym whose distribution in the sources where it appears is more balanced: 14 times in non-academic sources (humanities, politics and science), 8 times in fiction, 6 times in magazines, 6 times in newspapers, 5 times in academic sources (humanities) and twice in biographies (see Figure 4.6.4). To conclude the revision of the sources the selected eponyms appear, *Herculean* is present 9 times in non-academic sources (related to science, society and politics), 5 times in magazines, 4 times in fiction, 3 times in academic sources, 3 in biographies and 2 in newspapers (see Figure 4.7.3). Finally, *Kafkaesque* appears twice in academic sources, once in fiction, once in biography, once in a journal and once in prose, being irrelevant data due to the number of times the eponym *Kafkaesque* appeared in the sample (6).

6. CONCLUSION

The goal of this project was to create a corpus-based analysis of eight eponyms, adjectives, which describe human behaviours or actions. The eponyms selected were *Sadistic*, *Masochistic*, *Kafkaesque*, *Machiavellian*, *Thatcherite*, *Herculean*, *Platonic*, *Quixotic*, coming from the areas of history, literature and politics and a research in *British National Corpus (BNC)* was done. Before this End of Degree Paper, my knowledge in eponymy was very limited, but after doing this research I learned much about it and my curiosity has risen.

Apart from analysing the previous eponyms mentioned, the present paper reviews how English vocabulary is growing constantly, going into detail about the techniques used (borrowings from other languages, semantic changes and creation of new words) focusing on eponymy, which is the main topic of the paper, highlighting its classification according to their lexical semantic field and their part of speech with clarifying examples.

Once analysed the eponyms selected, their origins and the results found in the sample from the *British National Corpus (BNC)* some aspects had to be examined. As mentioned in the *Discussion*, the meaning those eponyms present is mainly figurative and not literal and these words are lexicalized although half of them are not capitalized; hence the pattern in capitalization is present in these eponyms *Thatcherite*, *Kafkaesque* and *Machiavellian* whereas *Sadistic*, *Masochistic* and *Quixotic* are written in lower case in the sample. *Platonic* and *Herculean* are capitalized in approximately half of the cases. Consequently, there is no clear pattern of capitalization. Moreover, in most of the eponyms, there are some collocations that are typical (*herculean task*, *platonic love...*) and in some cases are quite helpful to decipher its meaning.

To conclude with, it has been an enormous pleasure doing this corpus-based research. Eponyms have become a *Platonic love* of mine, and this paper sometimes has been a *Herculean task*, with some *sadistic* and *masochistic* desires, making me feel like *Don Quixote* against the windmills or like *Gregor Samsa* in *Kafka's Die Verwandlung*. I did not have to follow that *Machiavellian* quote to finish paper "by any means necessary" or use any of *Thatcherite policies* to succeed, just being myself and follow my tutor's advice.

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