The Armenian Genocide in Letters to the Editor of *The Irish Times*

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Abstract:

Selected by newspaper editors to keep specific topics current in the news, Letters to the Editor (LTE) have long intertwined with historical events, among which the twentieth century Armenian genocide. At that time international humanitarian workers and political personalities made appeals to the reading public and expressed their indignation for the violence perpetrated to Armenian civilians. Rarely, however, have LTE been studied for their linguistic features. Since they were to meet the ideological agenda of the newspaper's readers of the time, which recurrent linguistic strategies were used to achieve this? This contribution is part of a more extensive research combining corpus linguistics and discourse analysis to study the representation of the Armenian genocide in historical news discourse.

Keywords: *Corpus Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, Historical News Discourse, Historical Pragmatics, Letters to the Editor*

1. Introduction

The massacre of the surviving Armenians (1915-1923) and the strategies of denial on the part of its perpetrators became a matter of contemporary political relevance when official acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide was set as one of the conditions for Turkey to enter the EU. Furthermore, what is now the Republic of Armenia has been suffering from territorial claims that led to the recent renewal of hostilities triggered by the military occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh area by Azerbaijan. Nowadays, as well as during the second wave of twentieth-century massacres of Armenians that started in 1915, after the 1909 massacres of Adana, the events affecting the Armenian population have continued to have wide international news coverage.

The tragic events concerning the Armenians from 1915 were not only reported in editorials and in news articles, including from war and local correspondents from Turkey, but also in

letters to the editor in the international press. International humanitarian workers and political personalities denounced the massacres in LTE published in major international newspapers (Peltekian 2013; Chabot Godin, Kappler, *et al.* 2016), making appeals for intervention and expressing their viewpoints by commenting on the events. Notable Armenians, anonymous residents of Smyrna, Greek and Russian delegates, as well as local citizens and politicians actively involved in relieving the sufferings of the Armenians formed a cross-cultural variety of voices. Although mediated for publication, these letters are still significant of the position of the international press as far as the representation of the Armenian genocide was concerned, with only a minority of dissenting voices (Walsh 2018; Martini 2023a, 2023b).

My research stems out of the substantial difference observed in the reception of the Armenian genocide (*Medz Yeghern*) and the Holocaust, which has raised doubts as to whether the textual strategies of the news discourse on the Armenian genocide had somehow influenced its newsworthiness. Despite massive coeval press coverage, and many letters to the editor published on the topic, which was therefore considered newsworthy, little is generally remembered, and international recognition of the massacres as a genocide has been delayed, and, as of today, is far from being achieved.

So far, contributions on the topic have been published discussing linguistic aspects of the representation of the Armenian genocide in the British press, namely in *The Times* between 1914 and 1926 (Martini 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022, 2023a, 2023b forthcoming, 2024 forthcoming). A corpus of 186 LTE of *The Times* about the Armenian question (LEAQ) was built and analysed combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Keywords and their frequent collocates and clusters were examined using first a corpus-driven approach (Tognini-Bonelli 2001); then, corpus-assisted discourse analysis (Partington 2004, 2010, 2015) was applied to extended co-textual reference searching for non-obvious meanings of quantitative results. The same analytical method was applied to LTE of *The Irish Times*, and a corpus of 32 LTE was built and named Letters to the Editor on the Armenian Question Irish Times (LEAQIT). Although its limited size prevented statistically relevant results, the same quantitative and qualitative analysis was performed to answer two research questions:

– What were the linguistic strategies used to represent the Armenian genocide in The Irish Times?
– Were the linguistic strategies in place in LTE of The Irish Times different from those in use in *The Times*? And if so, to what extent?

From their appearance in eighteenth-century newspapers, Letters to the Editor (LTE) have consolidated as a public privileged space for high-profile readers to voice their ideological stance and comment on news topics (Torres da Silva 2012; Chovanec 2012; Sturiale 2018; Cavanagh 2019) relevant to a newspaper's ideological agenda. Which leads to a potentially broader research question: which ideological agenda was represented to the reading public through the news values expressed in the linguistic strategies detected in the *Irish Times*? Discussing political implications related to this question would go beyond the scope of this contribution; however, the linguistic analysis conducted in this article will consider ideological matters as well as elaborating on linguistic results.

2. The Armenian Genocide. A Brief Historical Contextualisation

The Turkish government has always denied that the massacre of Armenian civilians was a genocide, blaming reports with inflated statistics on the number of victims, and regarding the massacres as unfortunate but ordinary wartime violence. Recent studies have focused on the distorting effects of the denial of the genocide on the Turkish population (Aybak 2016), with school textbooks perpetuating the erasure of the cultural and physical memory of the Armenian people (Ferrari 2016). However, connivance with the official governmental line of denial has recently been questioned by Turkish and Armenian intellectuals, who, together, have started to support a more objective narration of the events (Suny, Göçek, Naimark 2011) of what has been considered the first genocide of the twentieth century (Dadrian 2003).

The Christian populations living under the Ottoman empire had already been a target of nationalist violence. The genocide was not an isolated outburst of premeditated violence; it was preceded by the Hamidian massacres in 1895-1896 and the Adana massacres in 1909 (Mayersen 2014; Alayrian 2018). Formally accusing the Armenians of having contributed to the defeat of the Turkish army against the Russian army in January 1915, during World War I, on 24th April 1915 the order was issued to eliminate all male Armenian residents throughout the empire, to evict all Armenian civilians from their homes and escort them to their death towards the Syrian desert (Rafter 2016).

3. LTE Theoretical-methodological Framework and Previous Results with LEAQ

LTE have been studied in their political function to express democratic participation (Wahl-Jorgensen 2002; Pounds 2005, 2006; Romova, Hetet 2012) and in their sociological features across different historical and cultural contexts (Cavanagh, Steele 2019), but rarely they have been the subject of linguistic analysis (Chovanec 2012; Sturiale 2018) before this research project on the Armenian question. LTE originated as a space to share hard news, and have increasingly become a privileged space for selected high profile contributors, where they respond to either an article published in the same newspaper as an editorial, or to a previous letter. They may also initiate a new conversation on a publicly relevant topic (Brownlees, Del Lungo, Denton 2010). Comments and personal opinions, as well as openly expressed ideological stance, are common; moreover, LTE in quality newspapers such as *The Times* (Hobbs 2019) ensure visibility and public recognition. LTE are also likely to discuss newsworthy matters of international and make public what is otherwise privately discussed (Cavanagh 2019).

As newsworthiness is among the principal selection parameters of LTE, studying how it is constructed in LTE would be pivotal to isolate linguistic features specific to such letters. So far, studies have demonstrated that newsworthiness is construed through language choices and textual strategies that shape the news discourse, of hard news in particular, to meet the desired effect on readers; newsworthiness has also been studied in relation to how it is subject to variations across time, places, and cultures (Matheson 2000; Bednarek 2006, 2010; Bös 2015; Bednarek; Caple 2019).

As far as the study conducted so far on the LTE in LEAQ is concerned, keywords and their frequent collocates and clusters have been analysed, and results have shown recurrent grammatical patterns of discourse organisation that reduce the impact of the representation of the Armenian genocide (Martini 2021a), and a semantic prosody of condemnation of the genocide expressed through the lexico-grammatical features of recurrent evaluative language (Martini 2021b, 2021c). When analysing recurring patterns and clusters of the keywords related to the

Armenian national identity (*Armenia, Armenian, Armenians*), frequently occurring collocations in LEAQ showed that these keywords were usually associated with other words related to other national identities (usually to the Greek Christian minority) through the coordinator *and*, thus depriving the victims of their own individual narrative and potentially confusing the reader.

Drawing from existing lines of research on news discourse that examine the construction of newsworthiness through the use of evaluative language, one methodological framework of analysis applied on LEAQ relied on the findings of Bednarek (2006, 2010) and of Bednarek and Caple (2019). A corpus-assisted quantitative and qualitative analysis was performed in Martini (2022b), and the results showed that a combination of the news value of timeliness with the evaluative parameter of negative emotivity (Bednarek, Caple 2019) constructs newsworthiness of LEAQ LTE. Frequently occurring words related to the expression of timeliness were investigated (such as *recent, new,* and *last*). Findings showed that a consistent semantic prosody of condemnation, related to the attributive use of the adjectives *recent, new*, and *last*, is expressed through collocating evaluative language, or through evaluative language connected through anaphoric or cataphoric reference.

An analysis of the most recurrent term to indicate genocidal violence (massacres) was also performed in Martini (2024 forthcoming), and results showed that negatively connoted evaluative language (adjectives, nouns, verbs), pertaining to the news value parameter of emotivity (Bednarek, Caple 2019), frequently occurred in extended co-textual references to reinforce the node (massacres), as if the word massacres itself was no longer enough to convey the scale of the atrocities.

A further examination was conducted on the lexico-grammatical features expressing ideological stance (Martini 2022). Following the ideological square and the polarisation of positive ingroup Us vs. negative outgroup Them elaborated by van Dijk (2009), a controversial ideological polarisation emerged as far as the representation of the conflicting sides of the genocide is concerned. Results showed linguistic strategies used to reinforce an ideological polarisation which not only involves Turks and Armenians but extends to the sides fighting World War I and, ultimately, to the underlying centuries-old tension between Christians and Muslims.

Martini (2022) showed that the analysis of L1, L2, R1, and R2 most frequent collocates of polarised keywords (*Turks, Turkish, Turkey* vs. *Armenians, Armenian, Armenia*) has shown that similar grammatical structures are used to validate the polarisation between the victims of the genocide (Armenians) vs. its perpetrators (Turks) or, at times, to reverse it. Agency, represented through the use of the preposition *by*, is also always made explicit, which is not a recurrent feature in general news discourse.

The methodological and analytical framework applied on LEAQ was therefore applied on LEAQIT, and findings obtained so far on LEAQ were referential to elaborate similarities and differences in the linguistic representation of the Armenian question in LEAQIT. Quantitative and qualitative analysis results were elaborated in comparison with those already available to collect further evidence and, in a more general and comprehensive perspective, to identify the features of the news discourse in use in LTE.

4. Construction of the LEAQIT Corpus

The Irish Times Archive was searched using Armenia as search word between 1st January 1914 and 31st December 1926, thus covering the same time span of the search performed to build the LEAQ corpus on The Times. Using *Armenia* as keyword allowed me to collect results of the occurrences of *Armenian* and *Armenians* as well. Searching *The Times Archive* required to conduct three separate queries to also obtain the occurrences of *Armenian* and *Armenians*.

In order to select LTE, the search word *editor* was added to refine the already obtained search results. The word *editor* is indeed always recurring in LTE in *The Times* and in *The Irish Times* inside the formulaic opening of each letter.

Twenty-seven LTE were therefore collected to build the Letters to the Editor on the Armenian Question Irish Times (LEAQIT) corpus. Being a small corpus, no general statistically relevant results are to be expected. However, the corpus size not only makes a thorough reading of textual materials easier, but it might be interpreted as a first sign of some sort of a different type of interest on the subject. Combining a corpus-driven approach, following Tognini-Bonelli (2001) and Hunston (2002), with corpus-assisted discourse analysis (Partington 2004, 2010, 2015), keywords and their frequent collocates and clusters have been analysed, replicating the methodology applied on LEAQ. As mentioned in the previous section, the results showed grammatical patterns of discourse organisation that reduce the impact of the representation of the Armenian genocide, and a semantic prosody of condemnation of the genocide expressed through the lexico-grammatical features of recurrent evaluative language.

The aim of the analysis performed on LEAQIT is to establish which linguistic strategies are in use to represent the Armenian Question in *The Irish Times* and to what extent they differ from those used in *The Times* – if they differ at all. It was first necessary to extract the keywords of the LEAQIT corpus. Keywords are crucial in Linguistics software-aided analysis because they represent those words that are unusually frequent in the corpus under examination when compared with a larger corpus of similar texts, termed a reference corpus. The results thus obtained gives a clear quantitative indication of the core lexical items of a corpus that will therefore undergo further qualitative analysis (Scott 2020). To obtain the keywords of LEAQIT, a wordlist of LEAQIT was created using WordSmith Tools v8.0 (*ibidem*) and it was compared with the wordlist of the written section of the BNC XML Edition corpus (2007). The written BNC section was used since no larger corpus of LTE has been built yet, while the BNC is a 100-million-word collection of samples of written and spoken language that also includes extracts from regional and national newspapers. Table 1 shows the first ten relative most frequent keywords by their ranking position on a 500 keyness scale:

Key word	Freq.	%	Texts	RC. Freq.	P
ARMENIANS	49	0,79	20	95	0,0000000000
ARMENIA	46	0,74	27	322	0,0000000000
TOWNLEY	22	0,36	22	24	0,0000000000
ARMENIAN	25	0,40	17	258	0,0000000000
BALFOUR	21	0,34	21	237	0,0000000000
REFUGEES	27	0,44	16	1.830	0,0000000000
SUBSCRIPTIONS	19	0,31	13	347	0,0000000000
YOURS	27	0,44	26	3.092	0,0000000000
FRIENDS	29	0,47	19	13.527	0,0000000000
ALEXANDRETTA	6	0,10	4	0	0,0000000000

Table 1 – Keywords of the LEAQIT corpus. Created with WordSmith Tools 8.0 KeyWords

Table 1 shows keywords and their frequency in LEAQIT source texts in the first and second column respectively; the third and fourth columns display the percentage of the frequency and the number of texts in which each keyword occurs in LEAQIT; the fifth column indicates the frequency of each keyword in the reference corpus (the written section of the BNC XML Edition corpus) and the last column shows the p value referring to the keyness value of the items under consideration.

Among the most frequent keywords, three are related to the Armenian national identity (Armenians, Armenia, Armenian), while two refer to the author of most letters (Townley and Balfour). One keyword only is immediately detectable as relating to the genocide (refugees), with another keyword mentioning one of the locations related to the genocide (Alexandretta, now Iskenderun). Other two keywords (subscriptions and friends) are implicitly related to the genocide as well, once their co-textual references are expanded. The keyword yours is instead the recurring closing formula of all LTE.

It is interesting to remark how keywords in LEAQIT differ significantly from those of LEAQ, shown in table 2 below and displaying the same categories as table 1:

Key word	Freq.	%	Texts	RC. Freq.	P
TURKISH	398	0,34	110	1.408	0,0000000000
TURKS	271	0,23	100	463	0,0000000000
ARMENIANS	227	0,19	102	95	0,0000000000
ARMENIAN	247	0,21	108	258	0,0000000000
TURKEY	266	0,23	90	2.014	0,0000000000
CONSTANTINOPLE	166	0,14	62	249	0,0000000000
ARMENIA	141	0,12	75	322	0,0000000000
GREEKS	145	0,12	53	694	0,0000000000
EDITOR	190	0	180	3.826	0,0000000000
MAHOMEDAN	67	0	29	0	0,0000000000

Table 2 – Keywords of the LEAQ corpus. Created with WordSmith Tools 8.0 KeyWords

In the LTE of *The Irish Times*, reference to the perpetrators of the genocide is not detectable in the first keywords; this could be interpreted as the first sign of a different representation of the Armenians in LEAQIT, which is then reinforced by the words directly related to the genocide. Some further context is needed as far as the two keywords *Townley* and *Balfour*. The qualitative analysis of the corpus shows that both *Townley* and *Balfour* refer to the author of 22 out of 27 letters, Blayney Reynell Townley Balfour (1845-1928), who signed the letters as B.R. Balfour. Some preliminary research conducted online provided a general outline of the author, regarding his lineage and the house he used to live in, Townley Hall, nearby Drogheda, which he mentioned when signing his letters. The same B. R. Balfour is listed as B.R. Balfour, Esq., a member of the executive committee of the *Friend of Armenia*, the quarterly magazine established in 1897 by the association *Friends of Armenia*, in the immediate aftermath of the 1894-1896 Hamidian massacres of the Armenians (Tusan 2017).

5. Data Analysis

The LEAQIT corpus was analysed with WordSmith Tools 8.0 (Scott 2020), to compute concordance lines and examine frequent collocations and clusters of the keywords. Following the analysis conducted on LEAQ, concordance lines of the keywords relating to the Armenian identity (*Armenians, Armenia, Armenian*) will be examined, as well as concordance lines of keywords related to the genocide (*refugees, Alexandretta*) and of the keywords *subscription* and *friends*. Data will be examined to answer the research questions through extended co-textual references, according to the corpus-assisted methodology, to access non-obvious meaning "constructed and reinforced by the accumulation of linguistic patterns" in the extended co-text of the selected words, or "nodes" (Partington, Marchi 2015, 220). A focus on evaluative language and on which news value parameter newsworthiness is constructed, complements the qualitative analysis of the corpus.

5.1 Armenians, Armenia, Armenian

The keywords related to Armenian national identity are among the most frequently occurring lexical words in the corpus: *Armenians* (x49), *Armenia* (x46), *Armenian* (x25). *Armenians* most frequently occurs in the initial parts of the LTE in LEAQIT, as shown by the plot elaborated with the concordance lines of *Armenians*, and it most frequently collocates with emotive language (*destitute* x4; *suffering* x4; *refugee* x3). All the occurrences of these words are immediate L1 collocates of the node. Table 3 below shows the occurrences of the collocate *destitute*:

THE **DESTITUTE** ARMENIANS. TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES
THE**DESTITUTE** ARMENIANS. TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES
for funds to relieve suffering among **destitute** Armenians and to provide for the orphans of
funds are always needed for relief of the **destitute** Armenians in Turkey. A noble work seems to
DESTITUTEARMENIANS. TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES

Table 3 – Concordance lines of the collocation *destitute + Armenians* in the LEAQIT corpus. Created with WordSmith Tools 8.0 Concord

Three occurrences of the noun phrase the destitute Armenians appear in the title of three distinct letters, all signed by Balfour, and published respectively on 6th November 1915, 6th December 1915, and 31st July 1922. The strongly connoted adjective destitute is associated as a recurrent emotive connotation of Armenians in the title of the letters. This same representation with strong emotively connoted adjectives appears in other letter titles, which use other adjectives or verbs used as adjectives, such as persecuted (6th June 1922), refugee (20th March 1924), suffering (22nd December 1916 and 20th July 1923). Letter titles act as the first connection with the readers to grasp their attention and have them read the body of the letter. Therefore, part of the construction of the newsworthiness of the letters on the Armenian question in the LTE section of The Irish Times relies on the use of emotive language in the titles in association with the plural form of the noun of nationality Armenians, which differs from the LEAQ corpus. In that corpus only one occurrence of Armenians in the title of the letter collocates with negatively connoted emotive language in a letter published on 5th October 1915 with the title "Persecution of Armenian" and signed by Edward Atkin, Hon. Secretary of the Anglo-Armenian Association.

The other two occurrences of the collocation destitute Armenians listed in table 3 appear in two letters, published on 22ndDecember 1916 and 12th June 1916. Example (1) and (2) expand the co-text of their occurrence in chronological order:

(1) The Armenian Committees are now endeavouring to assist in <u>restoring</u> many of the <u>refugees</u> to settle again in the districts which have been occupied by the Russians. A <u>considerable sum</u> will be needed for this work, and <u>funds</u> are always needed for <u>relief</u> of the **destitute Armenians** in Turkey. [12th June 1916, signed by B.R. Balfour]

(2) Sir,--May I call attention to an advertisement in another column, again <u>appealing for funds</u> to <u>relieve suffering</u> among **destitute Armenians** and to <u>provide for</u> the orphans of the late and previous massacres? [22nd December 1922, signed by B.R. Balfour]

Both (1) and (2) represent the victims of the genocide as *destitute*, highlighting the condition of the victims not only as extremely poor, but also as lacking the means to provide for themselves. Further linguistic choices reinforce this specific representation by mentioning the current political state of the Armenians after the Turkish persecutions (*refugees*), the violent actions (*massacres*), their most piteous consequences (*orphans*), the appeal for money (*a considerable sum; fundsare always needed; appealing for funds*), and the expected outcome of the appeal (*restoring; settle again; relief; relieve suffering; provide for*).
Suffering and *refugee* are used as collocates of *Armenians* in two more occurrences in the body of the letters; *unfortunate* and *remaining* are also used to collocate with *Armenians* in the body of one letter each. Example (3), (4), (5) and (6) show extended co-textual reference of these further collocates of *Armenians*:

(3) Sir,-I have again to thank many of your readers for their contributions for relief of destitute and **refugee Armenians**. The greater part of the money is being sent to the Lord Mayor, of London's Fund for **Refugee Armenians**, but I include in the following <u>list a few contributions</u> to the Friends of Armenia, whose work is still being continued in Turkey, notwithstanding difficulties caused by the war. [6th November 1915, signed by B.R. Balfour]

(4) Sir,--I think my last appeal for the **suffering Armenians** appeared in your columns on the 27th May. I subjoin a <u>list of subscriptions</u> received since that date. [4th October 1921, signed by B.R. Balfour]

(5) SIR, -I have received <u>several subscriptions</u> in response to my own and Canon Darling's appeals for the **suffering Armenians**. Most of them have come in within the last few days, and I hope to <u>acknowledge</u> all in your columns as soon as possible. [18th October 1915]

(6) Whether or not this remarkable prophecy will now be fulfilled to the letter, it is <u>utterly unthinkable</u> that the **unfortunate Armenians** will ever again <u>be forcedunder the yoke of the Turkish savages</u>. [31st July 1916, signed by C. Gough]

The extended co-text in examples (3), (4) and (5) illustrates how emotive language is here used to thank the readers for their contributions to the fund established to help the Armenian victims of the genocide. To all three letters, the author (B.R. Balfour) added a list of contributors with their contribution to the fund, to express his gratitude and to disclose their names and make them appear in the newspaper. This seems to be presented as a most valuable acknowledgement

of their help. Example (6) is one of the few letters not authored by B.R. Balfour and it provides a strong viewpoint on the current political situation involving the Armenians. In particular, it expresses the specific wish for the Armenians to be liberated from their situation, using strong negatively connoted language again when referring to the perpetrators of the genocide (*forced under; joke; Turkish savages*), placed in end-weight position of the sentence (Biber, Johansson, Leech, *et al.* 1999). This is on the side of the sentence occupied by the most important part of the information provided.

5.1.1 Armenia

Armenia is the second most frequent keyword in LEAQIT, contrary to LEAQ, where it ranks seventh. The most frequent left-collocate of Armenia is the noun *friends* (x28), which in all occurrences is embedded in the phrase *friends + of + Armenia*. The Friends of Armenia was among the most active associations to gather funds and to provide concrete support to the victims of the genocide (Tusan 2017). B.R. Balfour, the author of all the letters including the cluster *friends of Armenia*, signed some of them as Hon. Sec. and Treasurer. As already anticipated, most letters plead the Armenian refugees' cause and the readers of *The Irish Times* for donations, therefore it is not unexpected to find such frequent reference to the humanitarian association. Table 4 below shows the first ten lines extracted from the concordance lines of *Armenia*:

the Lord Mayor of London's Fund. The "**Friends of Armenia**" are now giving relief to Syrians and
Application should be made to the Secretary, **Friends of Armenia**," 47 Victoria street, Westminster,
and can be obtained from Miss Hickson, "**Friends of Armenia**", 47 Victoria street, Westminster.
received the following telegram sent to the **Friends of Armenia** from Tiflis, dated 23rd February.
as being practised on the Greeks. The "**Friends of Armenia**" have recently extended their aims so
se to Captain Gracey's appeal for the "**Friends of Armenia**", and the Lord Mayor of London's
THE "**FRIENDS OF ARMENIA**" (IRISH BRANCH). TO THE EDITOR OF THE
and the money will be divided between "**Friends of Armenia**" and the Lord Mayor of London's Fund.
work of relief are published in the "**Friends of Armenia**", which appears every quarter, and can

Table 4 – Concordance lines of the collocation Friends + of +Armenia in the LEAQIT corpus. Created with WordSmith Tools 8.0 Concord

The concordance lines illustrate how the phrase *Friends of Armenia* recurs with the address of the association (*47, Victoria Street Westminster*); the mention of further funds collected for charity reasons (*Lord Mayor of London's Fund*); people working for the organisation (*Secretary; Miss Hickson*); the reference to the sums collected (*money*); the actions of the organisation (*giving relief; work of relief; extended their arms; appeal*). Being entirely factual information, the representation of the Friends of Armenia provides the idea of an established, transparent organisation, devoted to charity purposes and to improving the conditions of the refugees. Example (7) and (8) provide extended co-textual reference out of the concordance lines listed in table 4:

(7) I have now received a joint appeal from the "**Friends Of Armenia**" and from the Lord Mayor of London's Fund for Armenian refugees. They have authorised Captain Gracey, who has been working among the Armenians for many years, to travel through Great Britain and Ireland on their behalf in order to obtain help and sympathy for these suffering people. [4th October 1921, signed by B.R. Balfour]

(8) A systematic attempt appears to have been made, and, I fear, is still in process, to <u>exterminate the Christians in Asia Minor</u>. <u>Terrible cruelties</u> are reported <u>in your columns</u> as being practised on the Greeks. The "**Friends of Armenia**" have recently <u>extended their aims</u> so as to enable their workers <u>to relieve distress</u> among Syrians and <u>other sufferers</u> in the Near East. [6th June 1922, signed by B.R. Balfour]

Example (7) presents the action of the organisation and names Captain Gracey, giving credit to his figure through his activity with the victims, as the one who has collected in person help for the victims. Such factual information provides credibility to the actions of the organisation, and are complemented with the use of emotive language (*suffering people*) in end position, preceded by the aim of Captain Gracey's tour (*obtain help and sympathy*). The same strategy is in place in example (8) and (9). Example (8), however, does not provide factual information to support the legitimacy of the organisation's doings in the immediate co-text surrounding the phrase *Friends of Armenia*; the only factual information provided here is related to an intratextual reference to the news published in the newspaper. This could also be interpreted as an overt acknowledgment of how these LTE comply with the agenda of *The Irish Times* in relation to the Armenian question. The information on further atrocities on other Christian populations is therefore used to show how the organisation is not only helping the Armenians, but also other fellow victims of the massacres (*extended their arms; Syrians and other sufferers*), with the similar lexical material describing the aim of the organisation (*relieve distress*).

A specific area of action of the *Friends of Armenia* concerns the female victims of the atrocities, as reported in example (9):

(9) We are constrained to appeal once more to the generosity of your readers on behalf of the Armenian Christians, <u>especially the women and girls</u>. It is, perhaps, <u>not generally known</u> that there are many thousand <u>women and girls practically captives</u> in Turkish houses and harems. Miss Keren Jeppe, a Commissioner of the League of Nations, and also the "**Friends of Armenia**", have homes ready to receive these <u>women and girls</u> when they can <u>effect an escape</u>. [19th March 1926, signed by B.R. Balfour; E.B. Cullen; John Macmillan]

The coordinate phrase *women and girls* (x3) is repeated in the extended co-text of Friends of Armenia together with the estimate number (*many thousands*) and with news on their conditions (*captives*), combining the news value of superlativeness related to a large scale of the victims affected (*many thousands*) and the evaluative parameter of emotivity by making reference to their conditions as prisoners (*captives*) by the perpetrators of the genocide (*in Turkish houses and harems*). This letter, in particular, is jointly signed as follows: "B.R. BALFOUR, D.L, Townley Hall, Drogheda, Joint Honorary Secretary; E.B. CULLEN, Seymourstreet, Lisburn, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; John MACMILLAN, Dinanew House, Ravenhill road, Belfast, Joint Honorary Secretary". The utmost urgency, to receive donations to save Christian women enslaved by Muslims is therefore highlighted by having two joint secretaries and the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland sign, this appeal. This is also connected to the ideological conflict between polarised ingroups and outgroups outlined in Martini (2022), where Armenians are assimilated to a positive local ingroup in view of their religious beliefs against a negative outgroup of Turkish Muslims. Such opposition also extends to further ideological oppositions related to the opposing sides fighting World War I, and ultimately, to the conflicting representations of the victims and of the perpetrators of the genocide.

5.1.2 Armenian

The adjective of nationality *Armenian* most frequently right-collocates with *refugees* (x14), with words related to the atrocities of the genocide (*massacres, horrors, sufferers*), with words and phrases related to society (*orphans, men, women and girls*), and with words related to religion (*Catholicos, Christians*). *Refugees* is a political term which evokes a series of specific conditions embodied by those who are referred to as refugees; it involves destitution, the loss of their homeland, and almost intolerable life conditions. Without being *per se* a negatively connoted term, in view of the semantic associations evoked, *refugees* therefore complies with a negative emotive evaluative parameter, and therefore orients the representation of the Armenians. Five out of fourteen occurrences of *Armenian + refugees* are letter titles; one of them is preceded by the noun phrase subscriptions and appeals, thus immediately clarifying the aim of the letter. A sixth occurrence displays refugees as R3 collocate in the title "ARMENIAN ORPHANS AND REFUGEES". The collocation with *refugees* is therefore used to attract the readers' attention and to trigger an emotive reaction. Table 5 shows some further concordance lines of the collocation *Armenian + refugees* in the body of the LTE of the corpus:

and from the Lord Mayor of London's Fund for **Armenian refugees**. They have authorised
on the borders of Turkey and Persia, as well as of the **Armenian refugees** in the Caucasus, some of
have sent me some of their recent news of the **Armenian refugees** in the Caucasus, which
Friends of Armenia," and the Lord Mayor of London's **Armenian Refugees** Fund. Captain Gracey has
an appeal for further contributions in aid of the **Armenian refugees**, especially for those now at

Table 5 – Concordance lines of the collocation Armenian + refugees in the LEAQIT corpus. Created with WordSmith Tools 8.0 Concord

The collocation occurs with words and phrases mostly related to charity work (*Lord Mayor of London's Fund; appeal for further contributions; Friends of Armenia; appeal; aid*) and to locations (*Turkey; Persia; Caucasus*). This reinforces the representation of what is being done to help the refugees and to provide more specific information on where the refugees are located, after being forced to leave their land and having survived the massacres. Example (10) provides further co-textual reference:

(10) <u>Distressing accounts</u> have arrived of the condition of <u>thousands</u> of Armenians and Syrian <u>Christians</u> on the borders of Turkey and Persia, as well as of the **Armenian refugees** in the Caucasus, some of whom are now being assisted to return to their former homes in Turkish Armenia. [22nd December 1922, signed by B.R. Balfour]

Negative emotive language (*distressing*) is used to modify the opening subject of the sentence (*accounts*), which relates to the evaluative parameter of reliability expressed by *accounts*. Therefore, thus combined, *distressing + accounts* negatively connote the opening of the sentence and anticipate the reliability of what follows. The reliability is then reinforced by the use of *thousands*; conveying an unspecified and astonishing large quantity; the evaluative parameter of expectedness is therefore used to further construct the emotive impression of the opening. Moreover, the reference to *Christians* makes the victims ideally closer to the readers of the newspaper, appealing to their sense of belonging to the same religious group to urge them to donate.

5.2 Refugees

It is interesting to note that *refugees* (x27) is also one of the keywords of the LEAQIT corpus, occurring in 16 out of 27 LTE, while in the LEAQ corpus there are only 31 occurrences of the term in 186 letters. This provides further textual evidence that shows how *The Irish Times* seems to use more emotively connoted language when presenting letters on the Armenian questions. Apart from the already discussed collocation Armenian + refugees, the noun frequently occurs with place names (*Turkish Armenia; Turkey; Persia; Syria; Caucasus; Russia; Corfu; Greece; Beirut; Asia Minor; Adana; Tiflis; Cilicia; Alexandretta*) and words indicating quantity (*300,000; thousands*). Similarly, a tendency was identified in the LEAQ corpus when examining frequent prepositional phrases collocating with Armenians (Martini 2022), whereby recurrent linguistic strategies are used to locate refugees. This might be of help for the reader to understand the proportions of the massacres and the extent of the tragedy in view of the most disparate places mentioned, and also to prompt them to help. Example (11) is particularly significant of the evaluative strategies in use to persuade the reader to donate:

(11) Delayed <u>telegraphing</u> until I could see the <u>actual conditions</u> myself. Much has been done for the **refugees**, but their condition is still <u>pitiablein the extreme</u>. We are giving clothing, bedding, soap, sugar, ten, petroleum, and fuel to <u>twenty thousand</u>, but there are <u>one hundred and eighty thousand</u> no better off than those we are helping. <u>Funds</u> in hand permit us to do no more than we are doing. We are now in a position to distribute <u>wisely and quickly</u> any <u>funds</u> sent in our care, either for general <u>relief</u> or particular objects.

The text is a reported telegram included in a letter by B.R. Balfour, published on 6th March 1916. The effect is of a first-hand account of the gruesome situation, which uses negatively connoted emotive language (*pitiable in the extreme; relief*), quantities (*twenty thousand; one hundred and eighty thousand*), words related to charitable purposes (*funds* x2; *distribute wisely and quickly*), and a list of the objects given to refugees (*clothing; bedding; soap; sugar; ten; petroleum; fuel*) to meet their primary needs. The entire paragraph relies on the evaluative parameter of reliability to convince readers of the inhuman situation of the refugees and again convince them to donate. The same strategy appears in another letter, published 21st December 1921 and signed by B.R. Balfour, as reported in example (12):

(12) <u>Latest information</u> received from their representatives in Cilicia says: "<u>Thousands</u> refugees <u>stranded</u> at <u>Alexandretta</u>. No shelter, No food. Situation heart-breaking". I feel that we cannot let such an <u>appeal</u> pass without making an effort to send immediaterelief. These people have fled to Alexandretta from <u>terror</u> of the Kemalists.

Here the same linguistic strategies applied in examples (10) and (11) are detectable. The news value of timeliness (*latest*) and the evaluative parameter of reliability (*information*) are used to open the excerpt and construct the credibility of what follows. Geographical locations are then mentioned to confirm that it is a matter of first-hand reliable information provided from the places where the events are unfolding (*Cilicia; Alexandretta*); information which is further reinforced, and made persuasive, mentioning an unspecified considerable number (*thousands*), negatively connoted language (*stranded; fled; terror*), charity-related words (*appeal; relief*), and the perpetrators of the violence (*Kemalists*).

5.3 Subscriptions

Subscriptions (x19) is the last keyword discussed in this article, and it pertains to a very specific aim of the majority of LTE of the LEAQIT corpus. The letters sent by B.R. Balfour are not only trying to convince the readers of *The Irish Times* to donate, but each single donation is then mentioned on a regular basis in the LTE published on the newspaper, disclosing name and surname of the donors. *Subscriptions* most frequently collocates with *received* (x10), *acknowledged* (x3), and *response* (x3). *Subscriptions + and + appeals* is a pattern identified by WordSmith Tools v.8.0, and it corresponds to three different letter titles, published on 19th March 1926, 10th April 1926, 23rd April 1926. *Subscriptions* and its frequent collocates construct a specific lexical net related to charity work and to the recurrent aim of the letters to ask for donations and at the same time to openly acknowledge them. Example (13) provides further co-textual reference of the keyword:

(13) SIR, -I have received several **subscriptions** in response to my own and Canon Darling's appeals for the suffering Armenians. Most of them have come in within the last few days, and I hope to acknowledge all in your columns as soon as possible. [16th October 1915, signed by B.R. Balfour].

Emotive language is used to qualify the recipients of the charitable purpose of the letter (Armenians), which are modified with the left collocate *suffering*, and surrounded by language referring to the quantity of the donations (*several*), related to the news value of superlativeness and to timeliness (*within the last few days; as soon as possible*). The construction of the opening sentence reinforces the reliability of the charitable operation and confirms that donors will be mentioned in the news and be publicly thanked for their effort (*acknowledge all*).

Example (14) below is taken from a later letter, published on 23rd April 1926, signed by B.R. Balfour, and it further confirms the linguistic strategies in use when mentioning the donations and the victims which have partially emerged above:

(14) SIR, -I beg to enclose a list of **subscriptions** received since the 1st February, and to send the best thanks of our Committee to your readers for their continued generosity. This persecuted race deserve all that we can do for them. They were our allies in the war, and they are fellow-Christians. [23rd April 1926, signed by B.R. Balfour]

The extended co-textual reference mentioned in example (14) shows how the keyword *subscriptions* introduces and further expands the conditions and treatment of the money received, i.e., the explicit acknowledgement of donors in the body of the letter (*enclose a list*), combined with expressions of gratitude towards the donors (*the best thanks; your readers; continued generosity*). Negatively connoted emotive language (*persecuted*) is used to refer to the beneficiaries of donations and to stir an emotional reaction in the readers that will prompt readers to increase donations. The common political and religious grounds for donating are also made explicit with reference to the Armenian position in World War I (*our allies in the war*) and to the shared religious upbringing (*fellow-Christians*). To make the message more effective in persuading the readers to donate, Balfour then tries to appeal to the similarities of Armenians and the Irish readers, usingt the news value of proximity, and establishing an ideological similarity between the two groups, polarising them as positive ingroups against the implicit negative outgroup of the Turks.

6. Conclusive Remarks

The LEAQIT corpus is a collection of LTE on the Armenian question that, despite its limited size (ca. 36,000 tokens), provides a significant contribution in understanding how the Armenian question was represented in one of the most significant Irish broadsheet newspapers during and immediately after the years of the Armenian genocide. As discussed by Martini (forthcoming 2024), the word *genocide* was still to be invented at the time of the LEAQIT letters (1914-1926), and this study provides linguistic findings that contribute to better understand the evolution of the representation of systematic massacres that ultimately led to Lemkin coining the word *genocide* in 1944 (Lemkin 1944). Moreover, the findings of this study on a small but significant portion of the Irish press on the Armenian question shows some noticeable differences in its representation.

The LEAQIT corpus is mainly composed of letters appealing for donations to support the humanitarian effort needed to take care of the Armenian refugees and are almost all written by one same author, B.R. Balfour, whose figure would be worth further research that goes beyond linguistic investigation to reconstruct his role for the Friends of Armenia humanitarian association. Linguistic strategies specific of LEAQIT are in place that differ from those already emerged from the study of the LEAQ corpus of LTE of *The Times*, and that are related to the keywords analysed so far.

Names and adjectives related to the Armenian national identity, are top LEAQIT keywords, while the top most recurring keywords of LEAQ are *Turkish* and *Turks*; this suggests a representation of the Armenian question in LEAQIT that focuses most exclusively on the victims. Moreover, the three keywords *Armenian, Armenia and Armenians* frequently occur with negatively connoted emotive language in extended co-textual references, which further contributes to their representation as victims of genocidal violence. This connoted representation is reinforced by the collocates connoting the keyword *refugees*, which is not a keyword in LEAQ. The frequent use of the news values of timeliness and reliability and the use of geographical locations to show how refugees are dispersed across multiple areas represent the Armenians as needing assistance in dire straits. Frequent mentions of different geographical locations provide a realistic and reliable picture of how Armenian refugees are looking for safe areas outside of their former homeland in order to survive the violence. The last keyword analysed, *subscriptions*, makes explicit reference to the aim of the largest part of the corpus, i.e., collecting donations to help the Armenians. Extended co-textual evidence shows not only all the previous linguistic strategies used when constructing the co-text of subscriptions, but also evidence of a multiple ideological polarisation of the victims and perpetrators of the genocide, of the fighting sides in World War I and of Christians against Muslims, as detected in LEAQ (Martini 2022).

Therefore, the results of this study show evidence of similar linguistic strategies to represent the victims of the Armenian genocide. This comprises emotive language and consistent reference to cultural and ideological proximity between the readers and the Armenians, to which language[,]appealing to a fair and transparent management of donated sums, occurs to underline the humanitarian emergency of a people. A significant difference, however, should be highlighted as a final remark. When adjectives and nouns of national identity are mentioned, there is no coordination with immediate left- or right-collocates referring to other national identities, as was the case in the LEAQ corpus. The LEAQIT corpus, therefore, grants the Armenian question its own individual narrative.

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