

Fascist Terminology in English Lexicography: Considerations from the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*

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Abstract

This paper analyses how English lexicography has received the fascist terminology derived from the Italian party ideology and put into practice by Mussolini during his leadership. The research has examined the online *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online* after taking into consideration the huge literature on Mussolini's language and cultural policy. In addition, several lexicographical sources such as the *Dizionario di politica* (1940), the new *Dizionario del fascismo* (De Grazia and Luzzato 2002) and current Italian lexicographic data banks such as the TRECCANI and DIFIT online have been consulted to compare collected data. Findings have suggested interesting lexicological and cultural considerations, mainly by exploring the handling of specific keywords such as *FASCISMO*, *FASCISTA*, *FASCISM*, *FASCIST*, *MUSSOLINI* and *DUCE* in both the English dictionary texts. A significant number of terms related to Italian fascism entered English as adapted or non-adapted borrowings, or as calques and semantic loanwords. Some neologisms acquired just their negative connotation related to fascist ideology while the meaning of others has evolved over time. Finally from a cultural standpoint, several OED quotations have given an outlook on the authoritative literature of reference chosen by lexicographers and on their regard for the Italian regime and its dictator.

Keywords: fascism, fascist terms, Mussolini, English lexicography.

1. Introduction

During the Italian fascist regime, the autarchic government of Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) planned a national linguistic policy that considered every aspect of the Italian language (e.g. *de facto* influence of foreign languages on Italian, its teaching at school, its usage at home and its diffusion abroad). Also, *il Duce* himself used language strategically, characterizing his speeches and works with

specific linguistic devices that aimed to gain political consensus, through mass media, among Italians and foreigners all over the Western world.

The main research on what today is labelled as the fascist language policy has been carried out by scholars interested in investigating the history of Italian or the development of education in Italy (Còveri 1981-82; Dardano and Trifone 1985; De Blasi 1993; 2002; De Mauro [1963] 2005; Gensini 2005; Golino 1994; Jocteau *et al* 1984; Klein 1986; Lazzari 1975; Raffaelli A. 2010a; Rossi and Marongiu 2000).

Others have analysed the so-called fascist 'cultural diplomacy' as a special key feature of Mussolini's foreign policy that aimed at spreading Italian language and culture among the generations of Italians living abroad to preserve their 'Italianness' (Baldoli 2003; Berthona 2003; Garzarelli 2002; 2004; Pretelli 2006; 2010).

Finally, historians and political thinkers have studied the echo of fascist terms across times and the development of new fascist political movements and concepts all over the Western world (De Felice 2005; Dell'Era 2007; Diggins 1972; Parisi and Cappellano 2013; Richardson 2017; Thurlow 1998).

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned works on fascist language, the present paper analyses how the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online* (MWU) and the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) received fascist party terminology, which was an expression of fascist ideology. In particular, the authoritative literature on Mussolini's linguistic devices has been consulted to outline some significant steps of the fascist language propaganda as necessary background for this study (see section 2), and to get an idea of the *Duce's* favourite semantic fields from which new terms arose during fascism.

Both the MWU and the OED have been examined through the 'advanced search' tool by introducing keywords such as *FASCISMO*, *FASCISTA*, *FASCISM*, *FASCIST*, *MUSSOLINI* and *DUCE* in order to study their lexicographic handling in the entire dictionary texts. These terms have been chosen firstly because they are easily ascribed to the Italian regime in the wider category of fascist terms and secondly because their entries, as well as the inclusion of their derivatives in the macrostructure of each reference, whatever the lexicographic source is, reveal the attitude of these dictionaries towards fascism and its political terminology. The 'advanced search' allowed the

author to find the above-mentioned fascist terms wherever recorded in each dictionary, as lemmas, as part of citations, or within the definition of lexical items.

Other lexicographic sources, such as the well-known *Dizionario di politica* (1940) edited by the National Fascist Party (see Pedio 2000), the new *Dizionario del fascismo* (De Grazia and Luzzato 2002), the current TRECCANI dictionary online, and the *Dizionario degli italianismi nel francese, inglese, tedesco* (DIFIT) have been consulted to detect those Italian and foreign terms referring to or derived from Italian fascism and its ideology.

The analysis of English headwords, definitions, derivatives or citations recorded in entries such as *FASCISTIZE*, *FASCISTICALLY*, *FASCISTIC*, *FASCISTOID* have suggested some interesting lexicological and cultural considerations on the Anglo-American lexicographic view of Mussolini and his regime, allowing us to realize to what extent the English dictionaries have included fascist terminology, and what earlier meanings have been carried over into new contexts or have evolved over time.

From a lexicographic standpoint, it is well known how each dictionary portrays the social life, the culture and the existing values of its linguistic community of reference (Glinert 1998). Particularly in the past, dictionaries reflected the ideological positions of their compilers, who expressed their vision of the world, their feelings or values, either in the lines of the entries or through the inclusion of specific headwords.

For example, the presence or absence of keywords referring to an ideological movement like fascism could be the result of a precise lexicographer's choice, namely an expedient to distance his work from the movement itself. This can also be revealed by formulae such as fascism is “*una dottrina che pretende...*” or “*un movimento di idee e di azioni che afferma...*”, in which the verbs *pretendere* and *affermare* (*claim* and *affirm*) signal that others have expressed those ideas, not the lexicographer himself (Dardano and Trifone 1985: 370). In general, nowadays scholars agree that the art of compiling and editing dictionaries continues to involve culture, politics, economics and ideology even for dictionaries that pursue ideals of completeness and neutral linguistic authority. Moreover, as in the past, a written literature of reference, strategically selected and assembled, determines the dictionary entries and this process

implies that lexicographers contribute to deciding what and who can be considered worthy of note in the literature, poetry, philosophy or culture of a given language (Hartmann 2001; Marazzini 2009; Durkin 2018).

2. The language of fascism and Mussolini's 'cultural diplomacy'

The Duce's interest in language was nationalistic, but also bound to his experience as a teacher, journalist, labour leader, politician and statesman. His use of specific rhetorical devices led scholars to identify the *stile mussoliniano*, characterized by short and simple sentences placed one after another and marked only by intonation. Also, Mussolini's repetitive use of binary and ternary elements in political discourse privileged the propagandistic spread of numerous fascist mottos, such as "*ordine, autorità e giustizia*" or "*chi si ferma è perduto*", a textual genre that through synthesis and verbal dynamism encapsulated the fascist beliefs and ideals by reaching and influencing people immediately and effectively (Isnenghi 1996; Raffaelli A. 2010a).

As far as his vocabulary is concerned, the Italian dictator was a constant researcher of lexical innovation that would serve the apologetic and polemic tones of fascism. He often deformed words, coined neologisms and used current and archaic words with semantic extensions or new metaphoric shades, which were promptly time-honoured by Italian newspapers.

Lazzari (1975) and Simonini (1978) have collected the keywords highlighting the semantic pillars on which the Duce based the fascist culture and ideology. Most terms displayed his political tendencies e.g. *demoliberalesco*, *socialmassonico* and *liberaldemosocialmassonico*. Other terms referred to conflicts within the party e.g. *diciannovismo*, *carrierismo* and *pressappochismo*. Several neologisms were coined such as the well-known '*alfierismi*' (*borghesoide*, *radicanaglia*, *dollaresco*, *stranfischarsene* and so on). Semantic neologisms were introduced such as *totalitario* and *corporativo*. Lexical variants were largely used such as *combattitore* (for *combattente*) or *ritornanti* (for *reduci*). Eponyms and new metaphoric connotations were also spread, such as *voronofizzare* (from the biologist Serge Voronoff, 1866-1951), which meant to make somebody younger and more virile, or *bagnasciuga*, originally referring to a part of a motorboat, which

meant 'shoreline'. Furthermore, *il Duce* was inclined to use archaic words deriving from the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages, such as *console* or *centurione*, to glorify his new Italy by echoing the magnificence of the Romans. He even used Roman terms to rename Britain *Albione* (*la perfida Albione*, *perfidious Albion*) from the ancient Latin term *Albion* (OED, *ALBION*) while, according to Partridge (*ALB*, para 4), it derives from Celtic.

The importance given by Mussolini to language was also shown by the language policy of his government. Legislative acts banned the use of regional dialects to prioritize the learning of Italian all over the country, or prohibited the use of foreign words to achieve purism in the national language (e.g. Decrees 352/1923; 1769/1937; 2042/1940; 720/1942). In 1940 the Royal Academy of Italy and language experts, among whom Luigi Federzoni, Ettore Tolomei, Tommaso Tittoni, and Bruno Migliorini, were committed to Italianizing all the foreign words that had entered Italian in the past centuries. So, Italian equivalents such as *scrittoio*, *assegno*, *rimessa*, *arresto* were promptly coined to replace the loanwords *bureau*, *cheque*, *garage*, *stop* (see Raffaelli A. 2010b; Fanfani 2011). The aim was to achieve purism in the national language, leading Italians to trust that the lexicological self-sufficiency of their national language would enhance the dignity and prestige of the whole country (Raffaelli S. 1984: 79).

Scientific papers defending the Italian language (e.g. Tittoni 1926), national competitions to find the right Italian equivalent of loanwords (e.g. the competition by 'La Tribuna' in 1932), daily newspaper columns (e.g. 'Una parola al giorno' in *Gazzetta del Popolo* by Monelli from 1933 onwards) and numerous other initiatives carried out the linguistic task that was later to become an active component of xenophobic fascist behaviour.

The fascist language campaign censored media news reporting (e.g. about crimes, suicides and theft) and Mussolini obliged journalists to use certain terms when writing news, transforming them into the main propagandistic means to achieve his political target and to idealize the cult of his personality, creating a heroic and reverent image of him as leader. In the meantime, not only did the foreign press represent the principal vehicle for transferring Italian fascist terms into other languages, but it also celebrated the new Italian state abroad by adopting Mussolini's magniloquent language and terminology, thereby also counteracting the foreign

press, which in the 1940s was hostile to the regime and ridiculed the Duce.

Broadly speaking, fascist propaganda was mainly carried out in those countries where a significant number of Italians had migrated, such as the USA and the UK. After 1940, the suspicious attention paid by the US government to organizations of immigrants representing the political interests of their mother country (e.g. the US immigrant *Fasci* in 1920, later disbanded in 1929) led Mussolini to carry out a new and moderate form of propaganda in which culture was used to improve diplomatic relations. This 'cultural diplomacy' consisted of new initiatives such as the establishment of organizations for the young (e.g. the Italian Lictor Youth abroad), the creation of Italian cultural institutes (e.g. *Casa Italiana* in New York), the creation of International Italian schools or the promotion of tours of Italy (i.e. *Bagni di Italianità*), which were advertised even by well-known newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Italian News*. In addition, the notion of Italian 'greatness' was spread through the special columns of already existing newspapers such as *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* or in new magazines for Italians living abroad such as *Il Legionario* or *Aquilotti d'Italia* (Pretelli 2006).

All these activities led to Italian-American pro-fascist feelings that reflected ideological implications, since the new fascist 'greatness' represented a way of compensating for the social alienation that most immigrants had been experiencing. Consequently, between the two wars Mussolini represented a charismatic figure interested in their lives, a leader who was also addressing the problem of the stereotypes discriminating Italians abroad (Pretelli 2006).

With regard to the UK, there was a concrete political and cultural interaction between the two countries at that time, part of a more general cultural diplomacy involving some European nations, mainly France, Germany and the UK. Tours of Italy for British students and courses of Italian language and literature were promoted in British universities to popularize the Italian language, culture and ideology (Garzarelli 2004; Colacicco 2018). Furthermore, in 1932 the Labour minister (and former Conservative MP) Oswald Mosley, founded the *British Union of Fascists* (BUF). This fascist party – later renamed *British Union of Fascists and National Socialists* (1936) – was anti-communist and protectionist. Its members, who wore black uniforms, acquired the nickname of 'Blackshirts' and the

enthusiasm for Mosley's own oratory – supported by newspaper publishers, such as Viscount Rothermere – was so significant that it led to publications like Mosley's *Tomorrow We Live* (1938) and Thomson's *The Coming Corporate State* (1938).

In conclusion, Mussolini's strategic use of language through the mass media was one of his most useful weapons to win national and foreign popular consensus. His propaganda abroad led to a concrete interaction between Italy and all the Western countries, so much so that language contacts existed, as we can see even by glancing quickly at DIFIT. Therefore, lexicography could not remain indifferent to the fascist party terminology, at least regarding the keywords that illustrated party doctrine and structure of the state during fascism. In general, the fascist terms – here selected from the above-mentioned literature on fascism – include nouns and adjectives describing the structure of the Corporative State, terms designating the movement and its leading actors, titles specifying the political roles of fascist hierarchy, and acronyms naming fascist organizations; examples are: *autarchico*, *avanguardista*, *balilla*, *camicie nere*, *centurione*, *cimice*, *console*, *corporativismo*, *Duce*, *fascio*, *fascismo*, *fascista*, *federale*, *gerarca*, *labaro*, *legionario*, *littorio*, *manipolo*, *Opera di vigilanza e repressione dell'antifascismo* (OVRA), *Opera nazionale dopolavoro* (OND), *Opera nazionale lavoro* (ONL), *podestà*, *ras*, *squadra*, *squadrismo*, *totalitario*, *veterano*, etc.

3. Exploring English words related to fascism

The inquiry of the MWU and OED, by searching for the keywords *FASCISMO*, *FASCISTA*, *FASCISM*, *FASCIST*, *MUSSOLINI* and *DUCE*, has given a significant number of headwords, definitions and quotations referring directly or indirectly to the Italian fascist ideology.

In detail, the MWU lists the non-integrated loanwords *FASCISMO*, *FASCISTA*, *FASCIO*, *RAS* or *DUCE*, the adapted borrowings *FASCISM*, *FASCIST*, *NEOFASCISM* and *NEOFASCIST*, the calques *BLACKSHIRT* and *POPULAR FRONT*, some derivatives such as *FASCISTIZE* and some terms such as *PROTOFASCISM*, *ANTI-FASCIST* and *CRYPTO-FASCIST*. It also includes loan meanings such as *CORPORATISM* or the title *PODESTA'* (sense 3), which was “a chief executive of an Italian commune appointed by the central government in the fascist regime”. Lastly in the MWU we can find nouns such as *AMERIKA*, *ENDEK*, *FALANGIST*, *HISPANIDAD*, *NAZISM*,

NAZI (sense 1), *PERONISM* and *REXIST*, referring to the European and American movements ideologically linked to fascism.

The OED contains more entries than the MWU, such as the borrowings *FASCIO*, *FASCISMO*, *FASCISTA*, *FASCISM*, *FASCIST*, *BLACKSHIRT*, *SQUADRA*, *SQUADRISM*, *SQUADRIST*, the title *DUCE*, *MUSSOLINI*, and the derivatives *FASCISTIC* and *FASCISTOID*. It also includes *POPULAR FRONT*, *TOTALITARIAN* and *CORPORATIVE* (sense 1b), and a couple of non-adapted fascist acronyms such as *MSI* (*movimento sociale italiano*) and *OVRA* (the secret policy of fascist Italy) under the letter 'O'. Finally, the OED gives a considerable number of entries which refer to new forms of fascism such as *NEOFASCISM*, *NEOFASCIST* and *MOSLEYITE*, while others are listed merely as examples under their respective combining forms, i.e. *CRYPTO-FASCIST*, *PRE-FASCIST*, *PRO-FASCIST*, *PROTO-FASCIST*, *QUASI-FASCIST* and *SEMI-FASCIST*.

In addition, what is worthy of consideration is the OED inclusion of terms related to non-Italian fascist movements or to the fascist and anti-fascist communist phraseology, for example the noun and adjective *MONARCHO-FASCIST* designating "an extreme right-wing form of government with a king as titular head of state, such as that established in Greece after the Second World War". Most of these terms, which are traceable thanks to the numerous OED citations taken from two frequently recurring sources by Seton-Watson (1967) and Poulantzas (1974), were used in the 1960s by communists to mean not only the members of any right-wing party, but also the members of any other left-wing party, implying the identity of non-communist socialism with fascism. We refer here to terms such as *LEGALITARIAN*, *SANCTIONIST* (sense 2), *INTEGRALIST*, *LEFTISM*, *MAXIMALIST* or *RENOVATIONIST*, or others referring to Western and Eastern pro-fascist movements such as *JUSTICIALISM*, *PERONISM*, *SPARTACIST*, *AMERIKA*, *FALANGE*, *SINARQUISTA*, *REXISM*, *REVANCHIST*, *USTASHI*.

The book *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism 1870-1925* (Seton-Watson 1967) has been considered the fairest and best-balanced study on the Italian political history from the *Risorgimento* to the advent of Mussolini's regime (Delzell 1968). On the other hand, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (Poulantzas 1974) was:

the first comprehensive work of this kind to appear in English [...] Poulantzas' goal was not to write a history of fascism in Italy and Germany

[...] but rather to provide a theoretical framework based on the notion of the ‘exceptional’ character of the fascist state, derived from Marx’s analysis of the Bonapartist dictatorship in *Der 18te Brumaire des Louis Napoleon Bonaparte* (1852) and applied to fascism in the 1930s by Otto Bauer, Trotsky and August Thalheimer. (Rabinbach 1976: 157).

So, it emerges that the OED lexicographers quoted these works because they represented the most authoritative English literature on fascism in the post-war period, so much so that they have suggested the entrance of other terms related to pro- and anti-fascist movements.

Furthermore, if compared to the MWU, the OED appears more inclined to record terms referring to the spreading of fascist ideology all over the world including the UK and the USA. Just think of the already-quoted item *MOSLEYITE*, which designates the followers and supporters of Sir Oswald Mosley who modelled himself on Benito Mussolini; or the headword *AMERIKA* (including the alternative forms *AmeriKKKa* and *Amerikkka* referring to the *Ku Klux Klan*), which is defined as “American society viewed as racist, fascist, or oppressive, esp. by African-Americans”.

The MWU, on the other hand, does not mention Mosley’s movement anywhere, and briefly defines *AMERIKA* as the “fascist or racist aspect of American society”.

Another category of terms worthy of note in both dictionaries are the concepts of *TOTALITARIAN* and *CORPORATIVE*.

The adjective *totalitarian* was coined to distinguish Italian fascism from conventional dictatorship. The same term was later used by Mussolini’s supporters with a positive meaning (e.g. in Giovanni Gentile’s writings), referring to the regime as ‘totalitarian’ because representative of the nation and guide of national goals¹. The MWU defines *TOTALITARIAN* as “relating to centralized control by an autocratic leader or hierarchy” and the lemma records the following quotation which includes the word fascism: “fascism

¹ Different scholars have put forward different theories regarding the origins of *totalitarismo* and *totalitario*. According to some studies the translation of Luigi Sturzo’s writings, during his exile in the USA (1940-1946) for being anti-fascist, made ‘*totalitarianism*’ one of the most common words of twentieth-century political terminology. For a quick clarification on the topic see Parisi and Cappellano (2013).

... is totalitarian by necessity". The author was the liberal Carlo Sforza, who was numbered among the Italian expatriate anti-fascist intellectuals in the USA. So, even though the entry lemma *TOTALITARIAN* (sense 1) does not refer directly to fascism, the MWU citation allows the users to guess the link with the movement.

Neither does the definition of *TOTALITARIANISM* refer directly to fascism although its sense 1b – "the political concept of man as the servant of the state" – provides the reader with a cross reference to *COLLECTIVISM* defined as the "extreme control of the economic, political and social life of its subjects by an authoritarian state as under communism or fascism" (MWU, *COLLECTIVISM*, sense 1b).

Something similar happens with the definition of *CORPORATISM*. This is an ancient political ideology that, implemented in various political systems including fascism, was among the most widely debated issues during Mussolini's regime. The term, from the Latin word *corpus*, originally designated a society organized in corporate groups according to their common interests (e.g. agricultural, labour, economic, military). Each group was asked to perform its function efficiently in order to contribute to the general functionality of society, just as each organ in the human body contributes to its general health.

In this regard, the MWU defines *CORPORATISM* or *CORPORATIVISM* as a

system or principle in which a whole society is organized into industrial and professional corporations *serving* as organs of political representation and *controlling* to a large extent the persons and activities within their jurisdiction with emphasis on labor-management cooperation (MWU, *CORPORATISM*; author's italics).

In the above definition the verbs *serve* and *control* imply a negative connotation of the lemma that might apply to fascist corporatism, the same as the Duce's plan to gain political loyalty and reduce opposition. The reference to the Italian movement is confirmed by the following citation: "the corporativism of Fascist Italy – A. J. Bruwer". In a nutshell, the MWU omits the positive connotation given to *CORPORATISM* from ancient times and later referring to the well-known Christian corporatism in which politics and society represent an organic body consisting of people and components

that are functionally united to safeguard and protect citizens². At the same time, as for *TOTALITARIANISM* when defining *CORPORATISM*, the MWU compilers include senses and/or loan meanings that are easily linkable to fascism, but avoid a direct reference to the Italian dictatorship. The inclusion of specific quotations referring to fascism appears as an indirect invitation to the reader to learn more about the headword concepts, distancing the lexicographers from the movement and maintaining their autonomy to include only the negative connotation of a term such as *CORPORATISM*.

The OED too lists *TOTALITARIANISM*, *TOTALITARIAN* (including *TOTALITARIANIZATION* i.e. the act of rendering totalitarian), *CORPORATIVISM* and *CORPORATIVE* but its definitions appear more general than those of the MWU. For example, *TOTALITARIAN* is defined as “pertaining to a system of government which tolerates only one political party, to which all other institutions are *subordinated*, and which usually demands the *complete subservience* of the individual to the state” (OED, *TOTALITARIAN*; author’s italics). So, although the entry *TOTALITARIAN* carries over a negative connotation underlined by verbs such as *subordinated* and nouns such as *complete subservience*, the only reference to fascism is given in some quotations, among which the earliest one stands out, “Anti-Fascism has, however, a positive sense if it is taken to represent an element antagonistic to the ‘totalitarian’ and absolute position of Fascism”, taken from Sturzo’s well-known work *Italy and Fascismo* (1926). Similarly, the entries *CORPORATIVISM* and *CORPORATIVE* basically refer to a state “organized into corporations representing the employers and employed of various industries and professions” (OED, *CORPORATIVE*, sense 1b) without any reference to fascist corporatism, but with a unique positive meaning that is closer to the above-mentioned Christian corporatism and is mainly associated to the functional interchange between politics and labour organizations.

4. Further lexicological and cultural considerations

With regard to the lexicographic handling of terms such as *FASCISMO*, *FASCISTA*, *FASCISM*, *FASCIST*, *MUSSOLINI* and *DUCE*, which – as mentioned

² On the concept of *Christian corporatism* compared to *fascist corporatism* see Sturzo (1950) and Parisi and Cappellano (2013).

above (see section 1) – are easily ascribed to the Italian regime, it is worth underlining here that the term *fascista* (1915-19), from *fascio* (Latin *fascis*, *fascis*) plus the suffix *-ista*, acquired its first political connotation in 1872 to mean those belonging to ‘*i fasci operai*’, the Italian organizations of workers. At the beginning ‘*i fasci*’ were primitive trade unions and mutual-benefit societies, but after the *Fasci Siciliani* (1893) and the *Fasci di azione rivoluzionaria* (Milan, 1914) they were identified as revolutionary movements inspired by socialism. When Mussolini founded ‘*i fasci di combattimento*’ (1919) and ‘*i fasci littori*’ (1926), the term *fascismo* was introduced to designate his movement. In the following years, after the proclamation of the Italian Empire and the onset of the Spanish Civil War, both in 1936, the term *fascismo* was to acquire a much more negative connotation, soon becoming the opposite term to any form of Bolshevism, communism or Marxism (Rossi and Marongiu 2000: 234-35, *FASCISTA*).

Both English dictionaries include the non-adapted borrowings *FASCISMO/FASCISTA* and the adapted *FASCISM/FASCIST*, giving detailed definitions only under the lemma *FASCISM*. Nevertheless, if the headwords *FASCISMO/FASCISTA* refer only to the Italian movement, the corresponding English words include the semantic extension acquired by the original term after the 1930s. The difference between the two dictionaries is that the MWU gives two meanings, defining *FASCISM* as a “political philosophy, movement, or regime” that, comparable to the Italian *fascisti*, “exalts nation and often race” under the leadership of a dictator (sense 1); and “any tendency toward or actual exercise of severe autocratic or dictatorial control [...]” (sense 2). So, the MWU comprises mainly the semantic extension acquired by the original term after 1936 and underlines the xenophobic character of the movement. On the other hand, under *FASCISM*, the OED refers to Mussolini’s regime (sense 1a), to the fascist involvement with the German government (sense 1b) and, finally, to its extended depreciative use i.e. “any form of behaviour perceived as autocratic, intolerant, or oppressive [...]” (sense 2a). So, it emerges that in the OED, *FASCISM* refers to the Italian regime as well as to any other right-wing autocratic, intolerant, oppressive, dictatorial form of movement or government. Something different happens when the MWU defines *FASCISTA* and *FASCIST*.

In the MWU, *FASCISTA* (noun) is the most complete entry and refers to the Italian movement (sense 1) without disregarding a general use of the word (sense 1b). Lastly, it suggests looking for *FASCIST*, briefly defined as one who practises fascism. On the other hand, the OED deals with *FASCISTA* just as it has defined *FASCISMO*: direct reference to the Italian movement (sense 1a), its general use as “supporter of a similar group” (sense 1b) and its extended use as “a person who is intolerant or authoritarian” (sense 2). Under *FASCIST*, the OED also includes the compound *FASCIST SALUTE*, referring to the singular fascist gesture of acknowledgement subsequently adopted by most fascist movements.

As regards pronunciation, both the OED and the MWU provide two phonetic transcriptions for *FASCISM* and *FASCIST*. These show the most used pronunciation [ˈfæfɪz(ə)m] [ˈfæfɪst] and an occasional pronunciation [ˈfæsɪz(ə)m] [ˈfæsɪst], without neglecting the Italian ones [faˈfɪzmo] and [faˈfɪsta]. With regard to spelling variants of *FASCISM* and *FASCIST*, in both dictionaries labels underline their possible capitalization (*FASCISM* and *FASCIST*) as happens for most denominations of political parties. Nevertheless, it is well known that most authors write these terms in small letters as an expedient to distance themselves from the movement.

Finally, the headwords *MUSSOLINI* and *DUCE* (from the Latin word *dux*, *ducis* meaning *guide*, *warlord*) deserve attention. *MUSSOLINI* entered English as an eponym, while *DUCE* carried over the old and new meanings of *leader* and *dictator*. In particular, the MWU lists *DUCE* merely as a synonym of *DICTATOR*, and specifies that, if in Italian *IL DUCE* means literally *the leader*, it was also the title given to the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

On the other hand, the OED records both the headwords *MUSSOLINI* and *DUCE*. *MUSSOLINI* is defined as “a person who embodies the characteristics of Mussolini; a person with fascist or domineering tendencies; a dictator, a tyrant”. Under *DUCE*, the OED states “a leader; spec. *Il* or *The Duce*, title assumed by Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), the creator and leader of the Fascist state in Italy”. The first citation goes back to 1923. In addition, the OED lists some derivatives of the name Mussolini, such as the adjectives *MUSSOLINESQUE* and *MUSSOLINIAN* and the noun *MUSSOLINISM*. The first two terms obviously refer negatively to a person having the features mentioned under the headword *MUSSOLINI*, while *MUSSOLINISM*

(1928), as its suffix easily suggests, refers to the “political principles or policies of Mussolini, or the Fascist Party in Italy under his leadership”, as happens for the eponyms Marxism or Stalinism.

As far as the figure of the Italian dictator is concerned, the OED is once again the more interesting source, suggesting as it does the UK attitudes towards the fascist regime. Indeed, not only does the dictionary give some citations that – under different headwords – highlight the alliance of Mussolini with Hitler and the fascist anti-Semitism, but it also ridicules the Duce’s personality.

Under the headword *EYE*, for example, we find *EYE-BUGGING*, an American adjective that means “having or characterized by bulging eyes” (OED, *EYE*). The first citation recorded under this entry is “on the walls of the houses were stencilled eye-bugging portraits of Mussolini” from Hemingway’s collection of short stories *Men without Women* (1927). Another citation quoting Mussolini is given under the verb *RATCHET* (sense 1a), “to move with, or as with, a ratchet [...] jerkily, or by degrees”. The second citation reads “the movie director, age 34, ratchets, thrusts his chin like Mussolini”. The latter was taken from an article on the filmmaker Martin Scorsese, published in *Rolling Stone* magazine (1977). The two citations reveal how the low esteem that fascism and its leader had in the UK was early reflected in English literature and lexicography, even though, as highlighted by Pinnavaia (2001: 178), and notwithstanding its negativity, fascism attracted attention abroad maintaining the cultural contact between Italy and the English-speaking world.

In conclusion, the above-mentioned quotations mirror the negative, popular-culture image of Mussolini abroad from 1936 until his death, when the foreign press started to ridicule him severely by caricaturing his image and personal style. From a linguistic standpoint, the two citations deny two important semantic fields referring to the Duce’s personality: ‘*magnetismo*’ and ‘*virilità*’ (see Lazzari 1975: 11-18; 30-34). The adjective *EYE-BUGGING* denies the semantic field revolving around the adjective ‘magnetic’. Indeed, the dictator’s eyes had an important role in attracting and involving people emotionally and they highlighted the special relationship between Mussolini and his audience. In the minor literature, such as the *Odi al Duce*, or some novels of *Squadrisimo*, his eyes are described as ‘*lucidi*’, ‘*magnetici*’, ‘*scintillanti*’, ‘*sfavillanti*’, ‘*saettanti*’, ‘*lampeggianti*’, ‘*suggestivi*’ (Lazzari in Jocteau *et al.* 1984: 49-50) and never as ‘bulging eyes’.

The second citation, referring to the movie director who ‘spirals’, ‘ratchets’, ‘thrusts’ his chin out like Mussolini, ridicules the Duce’s way of presenting himself in front of the people and denies the semantic fields revolving around the words ‘*virilità*’, ‘*grandezza*’ and ‘*orgoglio*’, where the fascist leader is described through antonomasia as *il Salvatore d’Italia*, *l’Eroe combattente*, *La guida*, *il Magnifico Duce*, *l’Uomo del Comando* (see Lazzari 1975: 90-91).

5. Conclusion

Mussolini’s interest in language, his national language campaign, the fascist cultural diplomacy and his use of the press to achieve every kind of political aim, inevitably led to an interchange of fascist terms between Italian and other languages, including English. Therefore, the present study has aimed at giving an idea of the treatment of fascist terminology in English lexicography, without any claim to be all-inclusive, especially considering the huge amount of historical and political literature on fascism. The research has shown that English lexicography, with reference to the MWU and the OED online, has not ignored the above-mentioned phenomenon of language interchange notwithstanding the historical negativity of the Italian fascist movement.

Both dictionaries include a considerable range of words linked to Mussolini’s dictatorship, with some differences in the manner they handle the items related to fascism. We can find, for example, the inclusion of *FASCISMO/FASCISTA* and *FASCISM/FASCIST* with evidence of a slight variance in their use. *FASCISMO* and *FASCISTA* are directly linked to the Italian party, while the adapted borrowings *FASCISM* and *FASCIST* have acquired a more extensive meaning referring to all the right-wing movements whose members or leaders have recalled the Duce’s ideology.

In detail, the OED lists terms and loan meanings coined during Italian fascism (e.g. *RAS*, *PODESTA’*, *MSI* and *OVRA*) giving, at the same time, significant space to other terms related to non-Italian fascist movements (e.g. *MOSLEYITE*) and to the fascist and anti-fascist communist phraseology by quoting two important British works on the movement (Seton-Watson 1967 and Poulantzas 1974). On the other hand, it is worth noting that the OED gives general definitions of other important terms linkable to fascism such as *TOTALITARIAN*

and *CORPORATISM* above all in comparison with the definitions of the same terms given by the MWU. Finally, the OED inclusion of headwords such as *MUSSOLINI*, *MUSSOLINESQUE*, *MUSSOLINIAN* and *MUSSOLINISM* reveals the choice to list these terms and, at the same time, the tendency not only to underline the negative connotation that these eponyms have acquired over time, but also the decision to give citations (under general English headwords) which ridicule the Duce's bulging eyes and his thrusting chin.

Differently from the OED, the MWU lists terms related to fascism and its evolution all over the western World, highlighting when possible the xenophobic character of fascism (e.g. under *AMERIKA* defined as the 'fascist or racist aspect' of American society). Also, in comparison with the OED, the American dictionary does not deal with most of the terms used in scholarly theorizations on fascist and anti-fascist movements or related to the anti-fascist communist phraseology. As regards the definitions of specific terms such as *TOTALITARIAN* and *CORPORATISM*, the MWU defines them without direct reference to the Italian dictatorship. Under *TOTALITARIAN*, the dictionary includes quotations and cross references that seem to invite the reader, if interested, to learn more about the link between the expressed concepts and fascism. On the other hand, the definition of the ancient term *CORPORATISM*, as a "political system in which corporations *serve* as organs of political representation and *control* the members and activities within their jurisdiction" carries a negative connotation that recalls fascist corporatism without referring to its traditional and positive meaning. These choices can be considered strategies to deal with the political ideology, distancing the lexicographical work from the movement.

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