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Exploring the use and intonation of tag questions in TV series: the case of Bridgerton

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This journey has been incredible, and these three years have flown by.

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<div align="center">Never stop learning!</div>

ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to explore the use, the functions and intonation of tag questions in TV series, in particular regarding "Bridgerton" season two. It is divided in three chapters: chapter one and chapter two provides information about previous studies. Chapter one highlights the formation, the main functions and intonation of tag questions while chapter two illustrates some characteristics and features of scripted language. Chapter three is instead an actual analysis of the elements described through Bridgerton season two dialogues and conversations. Some of the results of this research study will be very useful to notice some similarities but also differences with previous analysis on the topic.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

TV series and films are forms of entertainment that require a specific language, therefore scripted language differs widely from natural conversation, due to its communicative context (Bednarek 2010). Scripted language is incredibly fascinating and from its features we can understand a lot about the characters, the place and the time in which the tv series is set. This type of language is prepared in advance, but it needs be as close as possible to a real conversation. For this reason, it has been developed considering many linguistic phenomena of spontaneous conversation. In my dissertation I decided to focus my attention of one widely spread speech act typically belonging the spoken language: tag questions.

In the first chapter I will introduce tag questions by explaining the main characteristics of the anchor and the tag present in some previous studies on the topic. Related to that, I will outline the functions connected to tag questions considering three models: those of Holmes (1982, 1995), Algeo (1990), Tottie & Hoffmann (2006). The functional models are based on the aim and the message that the speaker wants to convey to the addressee. The tone and the attitude towards the addressee are other two relevant aspects involved in the development of the functional models. Through the formation of tag questions, some formal features can differ in the frequency both in conversation and in the language of fiction. Therefore, the tag questions components (verbs, subjects, negations) will be compared between spoken and fiction language. Intonation plays an important role in delivering the message hence rising and falling intonation will be taken in account to highlight tag questions as an important linguistic phenomenon.

Scripted language will be introduced in the second chapter, and I will illustrate the peculiarities of this type of language. I will mention also the characteristics of conversation because they are also relevant to understand the whole phenomenon. it is important to analyse scripted language as it is developed to be as close as possible to the quality of conversation. In fact, the scriptwriter's role is to make the dialogues more credible by hiding their artificial origin.

The last chapter will be the most significant: the theoretical notions and a practical analysis will be combined. The analysis will be carried out on season two of Bridgerton through the transcriptions of the episodes. After collecting all the data, I will determine the frequency of the tag questions and of all the relevant components: constant or reversed polarity, tag subjects, verb auxiliaries and types of negation. Then I will look at functions and I will consider the model of Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) to analyse them. The number of functions included in the model is higher than the actual number identified in the TV series and for each function I will provide two examples. The last part of the chapter will be about intonation, and I will try to understand whether there is falling or rising intonation in eight tag questions identified in the transcripts. I will use the software Praat that provides the contour lines of the tag questions recorded.

CHAPTER 1: TAG QUESTIONS IN SPOKEN LANGUAGE

In this chapter, I will firstly introduce tag questions as a linguistic spoken language phenomenon, not only related to ordinary conversation but also regarding fiction dialogues. Then, I will discuss how tag questions are formed, and which elements shape the structure. Subsequently, I will give a brief overview of the main functions of tag questions based on previous academic studies. As the focus of this dissertation is to explore tag questions in Bridgerton, I will provide examples and insights into fiction dialogues and compare them with the English conversation language. At the end I will focus my attention on intonation patterns and how they reflect the speaker's message.

1.1 Formation of Tag Questions (TQs)

In English spoken language it is possible to recognize different linguistic phenomena and many of them have been discussed in literature (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006). A noticeable aspect of English spoken language is tag questions, used to explain a speaker's perceptions, expectations, and suppositions regarding the content of their own discourse (Bublitz 1979). The "canonical" type of tag questions contains two elements: an *anchor* and a *tag* (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006; Axelsson 2011).
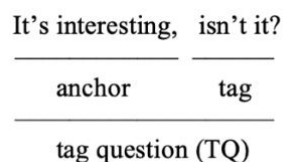
Figure 1.1: Example of a canonical tag question (Tottie and Hoffmann 2006)

The term *anchor* was established to underline that tag is "anchored" to the first sentence i.e. the second element of the whole complex depends on the first component (Axelsson 2011; Huddleston & Pullum 2002).

Often the tag has been called *question tag,* but this may generate confusion because the term *question* indicates the function of a clause not the syntactic form (Axelsson 2011). For this reason, *interrogative tag* might be the best choice since the tag itself holds a syntactic position of an interrogative (Huddleston & Pullum 2002). In general, it is beneficial to use the term *tag questions* when dealing with the whole concept (Axelsson 2011).

The *anchor* could be declarative, exclamative, interrogative or imperative and therefore the *tag* explains the same assumption and purpose of the preceding clause. The criteria considered to define the *tag* are inverted word order, a structure similar to the interrogative syntax which includes an operator, a personal pronoun as a subject or the existential *there* and a possible enclitic negation *n't* or non-enclitic negation *not* (Axelsson 2011; Barron, Pandarova & Muderack 2015).

The subject of the *anchor* can be a full noun phrase, a pronoun or the existential *there* while in the *tag* the subject could be a pronoun, *there* but also *one* (Barron, Pandarova & Muderack 2015). The anchor subject may not be present but implied, consequently the tag subject is co-referential with the anchor one (Barron, Pandarova & Muderack 2015; Axelsson 2011). In the case of *imperative anchor,* the tag subject is *we* when the anchor tag is in the first-person plural, as in the case of *let's* (e.g. Let's go shopping, shall we?) (Axelsson 2011).

The tag operator could be finite forms of the verbs *do, have, be* but modal verbs are also a possible choice such as can/could, may/might, will/would […]. The tag operator is also identical to the *anchor*, but it could be substituted with the forms of *do* when there is a lexical verb in the *anchor*: it is implied that the forms of *do* are the same in the tense, number and person of the preceding *anchor* (Axelsson 2011).

Canonical tag questions are typically characterised by reversed polarity (Tottie & Hoffmann 2006; Al-Nabtiti 2014; Baker 2015, Axelsson 2011):

- Positive anchor followed by a negative tag
   e.g. it's ready, isn't it?
- Negative anchor followed by a positive tag
   e.g. it isn't interesting, is it?

Tag questions also have the option of a constant polarity (see Tottie and Hoffmann's examples below):

- Positive anchor followed by a positive tag
   e.g. So, this is the letter he sent you, is it?
- Negative anchor followed by a negative tag
   e.g. Yes, they don't come cheap, don't they?

The latter (constant negative polarity) is not commonly used (Huddleston & Pullum 2002).

Some elements of the spoken discourse could be negative in the meaning or in the use, but they don't affect the polarity of the anchor. A relevant example is the particle *no*, whose connotation is normally negative. Despite its definition, in the *anchor* clause it doesn't affect the polarity e.g. We were friends in no time, weren't we? (Huddleston & Pullum 2002) because the statement remains still positive.

In addition to canonical questions, it is possible to find in *invariant conversation tags*. They consist only of words such as *right, eh, okay, yeah* and they don't have to change their form to shape the tag questions (Al-Nabtiti 2014:9).

1.2 Functions of TQs

Tag questions fulfil a large variety of functions in English spoken language. Many scholars have focused their attention on the topic and the studies of Holmes (1982, 1995), Algeo (1990) and Tottie & Hoffmann (2006) are believed to be the most attested in literature.

The functional systems proposed by Holmes (1982, 1995) and Algeo (1990) were introduced and presented independently, whilst Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) mentioned and incorporated all these previous works.

Holmes (1995) theorised two functional classes of tags:

1. *Epistemic modal tags* define the speaker doubts or uncertainty
   e.g. Fay Weldon's lecture is at eight /isn't it (Holmes 1995)
2. *Affective* (with three subtypes):
   2.1. *Facilitative tags* serve as a tool to be more polite, and they invite the referent to take part in the conversation
   e.g. Host to a guest at her dinner party: You've got a new job Tom, haven't you? (Holmes 1995)
   2.2. *Softening tags* are "negative politeness devices, used to attenuate the force of negatively affective utterances"
   e.g. Make a cup of tea, would you? (Holmes 1995)
   2.3. *Challenging tags* are "confrontational strategies which may pressure a reluctant addressee to reply or aggressively boost the force of a negative speech act."

e.g. Superintendent criticizing a detective constable's performance:

A: Now you er fully understand that don't you?

B: Yes, Sir, indeed, yeah. (Holmes 1995)

Commenting on the use of tag questions, Holmes (1995) states that women tend to use more facilitative tags than men, because women tend to assume a more positive and supportive behaviour in conversation.

A broader perspective has been adopted by Algeo (1990) who concentrates his study in the impolite use of tag questions, especially between British English and American English.

Algeo (1990) divided the functions of tag questions in five categories:

1. *Informational tags* are "genuine requests for information"
   e.g. Q: You don't have to wear any sort of glasses or anything, do you?
   A: Well, I wear glasses for reading sometimes. (Algeo 1990:445)

2. *Confirmatory tags* ask for obtaining approval
   e.g. Q: But you don't have Swindon on you little map, do you?
   A: No, I don't have Swindon on my map. (Algeo 1990:445)

3. *Punctuational tags* have the role to emphasize the point of view of the speaker by involving the addressee in the conversation.
   e.g. You classicists, you've probably not done Old English, have you? Course you haven't (Algeo 1990:446)

4. *Peremptory tags* are said to be anchor clauses considered obvious in the meaning and its purpose is to leave the addressee speechless.
   e.g. I wasn't born yesterday, was I? (Algeo 1990:447)

5. *Aggressive tags* realise the aim of being rude and provocative to the addressee. It is implied that the interlocutor must know the message.
   e.g. A: I rang you up this morning, but you didn't answer.
   Q: Well, I was having a bath, wasn't I? (Algeo 1990)

In the comprehensive study of Tottie and Hoffmann (2006), the researchers merge the categories of Algeo (1990) and of Holmes (1995) as shown in table 1:

Macro Category	Holmes	Algeo	The Present Work
Epistemic modal	Modal	Informational	Informational
		Confirmatory	Confirmatory
Affective	Facilitative	Confirmatory	Facilitating
	Softening		
		Punctuational	Attitudinal
	Challenging	Peremptory	Peremptory
		Aggressive, antagonistic	Aggressive

Table 1.1: Functions of tags taken fromTottie and Hoffmann 2006)

1.3 Frequencies of tag questions' formal features in fiction vs in conversation

One of the aims of this dissertation is to understand whether there are differences in the uses, functions and formal features of tag questions between spoken English and fiction dialogues. Several studies have examined the frequency and the distribution of these components.

A consistent analysis of the distribution has been conducted by Nässlin (1984) based on 309 examples of *A corpus of English Conversation* (CEC) from Svartvik and Quirk (1980) and 335 examples of *Fiction Corpus* (FC) based on fiction dialogues of novels and plays.

1.3.1 Frequency of tag subjects of TQs

Nässlin (1984) collected the data in different tables regarding every component of the Tag Questions. Table 1.2 shows the distribution and the frequency of the pronouns of TQs in CEC and in FC.

	CEC Total No.	CEC Rank	FC Total No.	FC Rank
it	163	1	95	2
you	50	2	131	1
he	30	3	23	4
they	28	4	22	5
there	13	5	7	8
we	11	6	16	6
I	7	7-8	28	3
she	7	7-8	12	7
	309		334	
that			1	9
			335	

Table 1.2: Frequency of tag pronouns in CEC and FC (Nässlin 1984)

As it is possible to denote from the data, the most frequent pronoun of the corpus conversation is *it*, while the most repeated in fiction dialogues is *you*. The least frequent pronouns in CEC and FC are respectively *I/she* and *there* (Nässlin 1984:94). The results are interesting because they suggest that in spoken conversation inanimate things are frequently discussed while in fiction dialogues the addressee is usually the interlocutor or people in general (Nässlin 1984, Tottie and Hoffmann 2006).

1.3.2 Frequency of tag auxiliaries in TQs

Along the similar lines, Nässlin (1984:97) collected the same data to represent the distribution and the frequency of tag auxiliaries in CEC and in FC.
Table 1.3 shows the results obtained.

	Total No.	CEC %	Rank	Total No.	FC %	Rank
'be'	180	58.3	1	164	50.0	1
'do'	68	22.0	2	83	24.8	2
'have'	24	7.8	3	28	8.4	4
'will'	19	6.2	4	32	9.6	3
'can'	14	4.5	5	24	7.2	5
'must'	3	1.0	6	0	.0	9
should	0	.0	7	1	.3	7-8
ought	1	.3	8	2	.6	6
'may'	0	.0	9	1	.3	7-8
	309			335		

Table 1.3: Frequency of tag auxiliaries in CEC and FC (Nässlin 1984)

From the data given, the most frequent tag auxiliary in both spoken conversation and fiction dialogues is *be* followed by *do*. As a general overview, the distribution of the auxiliaries has a limited variety in spoken conversation rather than in fiction dialogues (Nässlin 1984:96).

1.3.3 Frequency of tag negations in TQs

Another linguistic scholar Axelsson (2011:90) took in consideration the frequency of tag negations and which types of negation are used both in fiction and conversation English. The corpus is based on 1066 tag questions of *Fiction Subcorpus* and 1315 tag questions of the spoken demographic part of the *British National Corpus* (BNC) (Axellson 2011:98).

	FICTION		CONVERSATION	
	n	%	*n*	%
negative	651	61.1%	930	**70.7%**
positive	415	**38.9%**	385	29.3%
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%

Table 1.4: Negative/positive in tags in TQs in fiction vs in conversation (Axelsson 2011)

	FICTION		CONVERSATION	
	n	%	*n*	%
enclitic	628	**96.5%**	808	86.9%
non-enclitic	20	**3.1%**	2	0.2%
integrated	3	0.5%	120	**12.9%**
Total	651	100.0%	930	100.0%

Table 1.5: Types of negation tags in TQs in fiction vs in conversation (Axelsson 2011)

Table 1.4 shows the negative and the positive tags in fiction and in conversation. The data of Table 1.5 are specific of tag negations, and they indicate which types of negation are preferred among *enclitic*, *non-enclitic* and *integrated*[1]. In both corpora, the most chosen negation is enclitic while non-enclitic form is almost never used in conversation but sufficiently present in fiction (Axelsson 2011:98). Non-enclitic negation is, in reality, a very interesting phenomenon because it was found widespread from the 16th century up

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[1] These are negative forms such as *innit* and *dunnit* which have been reduced and have received a standard orthographic structure (Axelsson 2011:38)

to 20th century (Rissanen 1994, Hoffmann 2006). For this reason, the usage of non-enclitic negation in fiction often reflects the time in which the drama is set (Axellson 2011:99).

e.g. Eloise could find that with someone else, could she not? (Bridgerton, episode 2, season 2, 2022)

1.3.4 Frequency of vocatives in TQs

A vocative could be present in the structure, and it usually accompanies speaker-centred tag questions (Axelsson 2011). Biber (1999) defines it as "a retrospective qualification of a message in the sense that it often signals an attitude to the addressee". Vocatives are also relevant for maintaining human and personal relationships and they can be resumed in many categories (Biber 1999: 1109).

- Endearments: baby, darling, etc.
- Familiarisers: guys, brother, etc.
    e.g. Swept away by many nimble-footed young lady, brother? (Bridgerton, season 2, episode 1, 2022)
- Familiarised first names: Pen, Tom, etc.
    e.g. Not a devotee of mystery, Pen? (Bridgerton, season 2, episode 2, 2022)
- First names in full: Paul, Prudence, etc.
    e.g. Do you not wish to be lady of this household, Prudence? (Bridgerton season 2, episode 3, 2022)
- Title and surname: Mr Graham, Mr Johnson, etc.
- Honorifics: sir, madam
- Others: everyone, boy, etc.

Vocatives can be present both in fiction and in conversation, but the frequency and the use are not equal.

	FICTION		CONVERSATION	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
vocative	123	**11.5%**	30	2.3%
no vocative	943	88.5%	1,285	**97.7%**
Total	1,066	100.0%	1,315	100.0%

Table 1.6: Vocatives in TQs in fiction vs in conversation (Axelsson 2011)

As shown in Table 1.6 the number of vocatives is not so significant 11.5% in fiction and 2.3% in conversation. The results of the corpus analysed reveal that the number of vocatives in fiction (123) are greater than the ones in conversation (30) probably because the viewer needs to understand to whom the question is addressed while in conversation gaze in enough (Axelsson 2011:122).

1.4 Intonation patterns in tag questions

Tag questions provide a clear example of how intonation influences meaning, and it can be distinguished falling and rising intonation (Reese & Asher 2007:4). *Falling intonation* normally indicates a high degree of certainty (Bublitz 1979:7). The speaker requests confirmation to the addressee of what is said in the preceding clause (anchor) and moreover the interlocutor agrees with the expectations of the speaker (Bublitz 1979:7; Reese & Asher 2007:5). This example will illustrate the purpose of the tag question:

e.g. A: Julie wouldn't do it that way.

B: Well, Julie isn't here, \ [2] is she? (Reese & Asher 2007)

In this case B does not have any doubt about the preceding proposition but wants the addressee to be aware that Julie is not present (Reese & Asher 2007:5).

Rising intonation expresses instead speaker's uncertainty about what is said in the anchor clause, and it awaits the verification of the addressee (Dehé & Braun 2013). This is a similar example to the one given in *falling intonation* but with other intentions of the speaker:

e.g. A: Can Julie do it for us?

B: Julie isn't here, / is she? (Reese & Asher 2007)

In this example B is not sure of the truth of the preceding clause and there is the possibility that it is wrong. The speaker uses the tag to ask the addressee for anchor's verification (Reese & Asher 2007:5).

This chapter has covered the formal features, the functions and the frequency of tag questions both in English spoken language and in fiction dialogues. Furthermore, it has described the basic features of intonation of the phenomenon. The second chapter will

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[2] This is the orthographic convention that indicates a rise in the anchor and a fall in the tag (Reese & Asher 2007).

shift to scripted language, in particular to the fiction spoken language on television, giving a general outline of its feature.

CHAPTER 2: SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN TV SERIES AND FILMS

In this chapter, I will firstly introduce what authentic language is and in which categories it can be divided. Then, I will define scripted language by explaining its general linguistic features and non-verbal patterns that can enhance its purpose. I will also focus my attention on a multidimensional analysis, designed to find the co-occurrence of linguistic characteristics in different registers (Biber 1988). Immediately after I will provide a brief overview of the main features of conversational dialogues. At the end I will give a general outline of the linguistic approach adopted by screenwriters to construe a character in television products.

2.1 Authentic language

Many definitions of authentic language have been given but for Rogers and Medley (1988) authentic texts "reflect a naturalness of form and an appropriateness of cultural and situational context that would be found in the language as used by native speakers". They associate authentic with natural because the aim of presenting these texts is to show examples of natural conversation for teaching or learning aims. Natural conversation is described as a spontaneous interaction between individuals in their daily environment, using the predominant language of their community. This type of conversation occurs for everyday communication purposes and not for teaching or instructional reasons (Al-surmi 2012). An authentic conversation could be also defined as a non-spontaneous conversation that takes place between or among interlocutors in a specific setting (such as a stage, TV show, classroom, etc.) with the intention of reproducing, imitating, or mimicking a real, natural conversation. So, an authentic discourse is reflected by its naturalness (Al-surmi 2012). Byrnes (1984) classified discourse in four categories from more to less authentic:

1. Spontaneous free speech: the conversation is interactive. Some features are initiating, turn and leave-taking strategies, overlapping speech but also the syntax is fragmented and there are some rephrased sentences with different word choices.

2. Deliberate free speech: typical in interviews and discussions. The information of the speech is more relevant, but the interactional features are more similar to the spontaneous conversation.

3. Oral presentation of a written text: the main purpose is the transmission of information and there isn't much interaction. Normally they are commentaries and lectures.

4. Oral presentation of a fixed, rehearsed script: This will lead to highly stylized delivery styles that prioritize aesthetic and artistic considerations more than the actual message being conveyed. This type of oral presentation is typical on stages or in films.

Another description of authenticity could be *genuineness* since it is a feature of everyday conversations. Some of its peculiarities are (Rost 2013:166):

- Natural speed by speaking with irregular timing;
- Natural phonological phenomenon with natural pauses and intonation;
- High frequency of vocabulary due to little time to plan the discourse;
- Colloquialism, e.g. short formulaic utterances and slang;
- Hesitations and self-corrections;
- Listener-oriented behaviour since they should provide responses and backchannelling

2.2 Scripted language

Bednarek (2010) classified fictional characters in four factors communicative context, multimodality, the code of realism and character's identity in television. Communicative context involves both the spectators' and the producers' world knowledge. i.e. the dialogues are understandable thanks to inner and cultural experience (Bubel 2006; Bednarek 2010). Multimodality means instead that in television series many aspects are considered for the final product. It can be expressed both in the characters and in the moving image itself (Bednarek 2010).

The code of realism refers to a higher level of reality and it can be achieved through filmic conventions (Bubel 2006; Bednarek 2010). Character identity in television, in term of scriptwriting, it is considered how the character is construed (Bednarek 2010).

Scripted language differs widely from natural conversation, due to its communicative context (Bednarek 2010). It is designed to satisfy audience's expectations: dialogues need to be very clear avoiding long or vague conversations and the interaction between the speakers should be more realistic and closer to a natural conversation as possible (Bednarek 2010; Quaglio 2009). Moreover, the words used are important for evoking emotions to the hearer and therefore they need to attract a large number of spectators (Bednarek 2010). For this reason, scripted dialogues are normally prepared in advance and not an instinctive talk of the speaker (Bednarek 2010).

Fiction television dialogue is considered a subcategory of scripted language. Many research studies focused their attention much more on drama dialogues rather than television ones (Bednarek 2010). Television Dialogues are not written as an expression of one author's or writer's ideas but as a cohesive teamwork. They include creativity but they have also to pursue a commercial aim (Bednarek 2010).

Fiction dialogues must not only be functional and follow linguistic rules, but they must be created through many linguistic devices: the volume of voice, intonation patterns and speech rate (Quaglio 2009). In addition, non-verbal features are relevant for the tone of conversation such as gestures and facial expressions (Quaglio 2009).

Television texts not only take account of words or of the language itself that carries a meaning but also that the whole speech must be understood together with the images and television tools. For instance, every kind of text needs a different camera's adaptation: in domestic drama the camera focuses more on people talking rather than on the setting because the aim is to show human feelings and intimacy while in television advertising images and music are supportive in getting the audience's attention (Marshall and Werndly 2002).

A large and growing body of literature investigated the features of television dialogues (Bednarek 2010; Quaglio 2009; Bubel 2006; Sanger 2001; Kozloff 2000; Channell 1994) and the following have been identified:

- Avoidance of repetitive discourse markers and fillers;
- Less linguistically variation in term of settings, interaction types and topics;
- Use of repetition and rhythm;
- Presence of characteristics of stage dialogue
- Avoidance of false starts, overlaps, interruption and unclear words

Moreover, the frequency of some kinds of language in television dialogues have been determined. Vague language it is incredibly functional in conversation. It is used not only with hedging and vague coordination tags but also with vague reference nouns and some discourse markers. Vague expressions are realized to convey a message. In this case it has been identified with a lower frequency in television dialogues together with narrative language. A higher frequency of emotional and emphatic language has been measured in television interactions. This language is referred to any emphatic form of expression and it can be associated with intensifiers, stance markers, slang words and expletives. Informational language has also been registered with a higher frequency in television conversations. It is characterised by the use of vocatives, slang terms and informal greetings.

Other conversational features are avoided or occur less frequent such as unclear words, false starts repetition and many others. Sometimes they can occur and so they provide realism and come close to a real conversation in order to seem more natural and not scripted (Bednarek 2010). Realism is essential in the evaluation of a television programme, because the viewer enjoys the fictional constructs when it appears to be as natural as possible. Realist codes are processes used to achieve a higher level of realism. The word *code* means, in this case, a *system of signification* that works like a language. An example of realism code in television is the *mise en scene* which is the information the camera gives in a scene (Marshall and Werndly 2002). Realist codes can include some items in the space of recording but also characters through their speech, clothes and gestures. Another convention of realism is the use of production techniques such as cameras, sounds and lightning. These tools can be helpful in reproducing a real setting and they allow the spectator to enjoy the drama and for a moment offer an illusion of reality (Marshall and Werndlt 2002).

2.3 Multidimensional analysis

Biber (1988) conducted a study of register variation in English. This analysis, namely Multidimensional analysis, is a based on different registers with the purpose of finding and interpreting co-occurrence patterns of certain linguistic features in a corpus. The corpora used by Biber (1988) are basically two: the Lancaster Oslo-Bergen Corpus of British English (LOB) and the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English (LLC). The first corpus is made of 500 written texts taken from fifteen genres while the second has 87 texts of spoken British English taken from six speech situations. The aim of the analysis was to find the frequency of defined linguistic features and from them he designed 5 major dimensions of English. Every feature can get a score which varies from 1.0 to -1.0 and and the features with higher score represents the best the dimension they define (Biber 1988; Quaglio 2009). Dimension 1 is the most relevant for this thesis (see Figure 2.1).
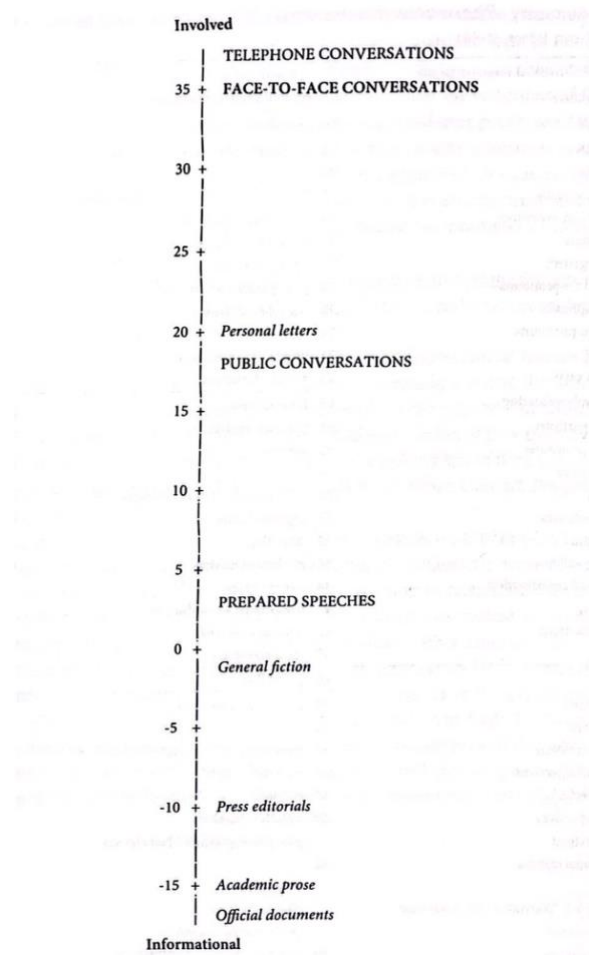
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Involved
        | TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS
    35 + FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATIONS
        |
        |
    30 +
        |
        |
    25 +
        |
        |
    20 + Personal letters
        | PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS
        |
    15 +
        |
        |
    10 +
        |
        |
     5 +
        | PREPARED SPEECHES
        |
     0 +
        | General fiction
        |
    -5 +
        |
        |
   -10 + Press editorials
        |
        |
   -15 + Academic prose
        | Official documents
Informational
```

Figure 2.1: Dimension 1 – involved versus informational production

25

Figure 2.1 shows the scores of the nine registers of dimension 1. One of the highest scores is obtained by face-to-face conversation because it is one of the most involved while academic prose got -15 because it is considered one of the most informational registers (Biber 1988; Quaglio 2009).

This analysis becomes more interesting if it is applied to a tv series. Quaglio (2009) used this model to analyse the tv series *Friends*.

Dimension	Register	Mean	Min Value	Max Value	Range	St Dev
D1	*Friends*	34.4	23.7	45.8	22	4.3
	F-T-F Conv	35.3	17.7	54.1	36.4	9.1

Figure 2.2: Scores of Friends and face-to face conversation

It is interesting to see in Figure 2.2 is the score for *Friends* is similar to that for face-to-face conversation but the standard deviation (st.dev.) value is lower in *Friends* than in face-to-face conversation, which means that the range of variation of Friends is lower (Quaglio 2009). This analysis is very helpful to compare the two registers and to understand from which patterns they both differ.

2.4 Features of conversation

Many aspects can be considered in the circumstances of conversation and often these factors are related between each other, and they characterise particularly this area:

- *Conversation takes place in shared context*: while having an interaction, it is important not only to be aware of the nearby context but also of the background information e.g. personal details. In fact, in analysing a conversation we need the whole informational context. Shared context has some common linguistic features such as first and second pronouns, this/that, substitute pro-forms and ellipses (Quaglio 2009).

    e.g. You and Nancy took it out, didn't you? (Quaglio 2009)
- *Conversation avoids elaboration of meaning*: interlocutors don't need to specify their intentions because in conversation they rely on shared context. The linguistic features are, in this case, the reflection of the lack of elaboration in the meaning

such as conversational hedges, nouns of vague reference (e.g. thing) and vague coordination tags (e.g. or something) (Quaglio 2009).

> e.g. I wonder if there's some sort of building code (Quaglio 2009)

- *Conversation takes place in real time:* in a conversation, the speaker doesn't have enough time to think and plan the discourse. The results of the conversation are hesitations, repeats and incomplete sentence. Moreover, discourse markers are helpful for the speaker, since they can organise their concepts (Quaglio 2009).

> e.g. … Let's do what other magazines do. Um, you know, so that just got kind of out of control… (Quaglio 2009)

- *Conversation is interactive:* the interactive nature of conversation it is given also by discourse markers, single word responses e.g. okay, ellipsis and polite formulas (Quaglio 2009).

> e.g. Well let's see, tonight should be much more active I think (Quaglio 2009).

- Conversation expresses stance: in conversation speakers may express their feelings and evaluations. The use of adverbials, adjectives and mental verbs are supportive and essential in developing emotions through discourses (Quaglio 2009).

> e.g. Uh huh. I think Anna is actually doing adoption (Quaglio 2009).

2.5 Construing a character

Television characters are construed by writers together with actors, producers and other screen creatives (Mittell 2015: 119). The collaboration involves the creation of dialogues based on the identity of the character for example their passions and interests and also their sense of humour (Bednarek 2023). Some showrunners don't involve actors in changing the script while other tend to be more collaborative. This can happen because the showrunner must check that the script fits the standards and the general features of the television production (Bednarek 2023). Another aspect is the relation of characters with the audience. In fact, the general belief is that characters are thought and construed to catch the attention of the audience (Bednarek 2010; Bubel 2006). There are many recipients of television series or dramas in general and the most remarkable ones are fans (Mittel 2015:128). They are very close to characters, and they feel emotionally attached

to them. For instance, they buy t-shirts with parts of dialogues written on, they speculate about characters' reactions and relationships, they remix videos and they create fandoms (Bednarek 2023:8). Characters are normally described as deep, complex and stable. They don't change significantly over time; despite the fact that they collect experiences and friendships (Bednarek 2023:10). Usually changing the linguistic behaviour may indicate an elevation of the character's status (Reichelt 2018). Numerous studies have developed models of *characterisation* but Culpeper (2001) focused on textual cues which can be *explicit, implicit and authorial* (see Table 2.1).

Explicit cues	Self-presentation (character gives explicit information about self)
	Other-presentation (character gives explicit information about other character[s])
Implicit cues	Conversational structure (e.g. turn length, turn-taking, turn allocation, topic shift, topic control, incomplete turns/hesitations, interruptions)
	(Non)adherence to conversational maxims; conversational implicature
	Lexis (Germanic vs. Latinate, lexical richness/diversity, surge features/affective language, terms of address…)
	Syntactic structure
	Accent and dialect
	Verse and prose
	Paralinguistic features (e.g. tempo, pitch range/variation, loudness, voice quality)
	Visual features: kinesic features and appearance (e.g. stature, clothing, facial expression, posture)
	Context: a character's company and setting
	(Im)politeness strategies
Authorial cues	Proper names
	Stage directions

Table 2.1: Explicit, implicit and authorial cues in characterisation (Culpeper 2001)

Explicit cues are those where the character gives information about themselves or about another character. *Implicit cues* are instead features that can be inferred by language or also by the character's appearance. Lastly, there are authorial clues which depend only on the director of the televisional product (Culpeper 2001).

This chapter has highlighted the main features of scripted language based on previous studies on the topic and they are related to both linguistical and non-verbal elements. Characteristics of conversation are given in order to show why and how these two

registers differ. In the last chapter, I will combine information collected in chapter 1 and 2 with the corpus of Bridgerton season two transcripts in particularly I will focus on the frequency of tag questions, their functions and the features of scripted language.

CHAPTER 3: USE AND INTONATION OF TAG QUESTIONS IN BRIDGERTON SEASON 2

In this last chapter I will analyse the use and the frequency of tag questions in the eight episodes of season two of Bridgerton. First I will explain the methodology and the procedure. I will then compare my findings with the previous studies mentioned in chapter one and two. Firstly, I will identify the frequency of tag questions in the whole season, then I will determine their polarity, the tag subjects, the auxiliaries and the negation forms. I will then investigate the functions of eight tag questions based on the Tottie and Hoffmann (2006). At the end I will investigate the intonation of a small selection of the tag questions of the whole season.

3.1 Data

For this corpus-based study I will use the transcriptions of the dialogues of Bridgerton season 2, which have been downloaded from *8flix.com*. This website provides access to all the transcriptions of the dialogues of the four seasons of TV series Bridgerton. This corpus includes the transcripts of the characters from the second season, which is made up of 8 episodes. The tv series is set in the 19th century so the language represents that time, and many idioms or grammatical structures are typically from that era. The conversations are certainly not spontaneous since the dialogues are scripted and invented by the screenwriters. The eight episodes are developed by the same creator Chris Van Dusen but the screenwriters are different almost for each episode. In the first two episodes the writer of the dialogues is Tricia Brock, then in episodes 3 and 4 the writer is Alex Pillai. In the last four episodes the screenwriters are different respectively Abby Mcdonald, Lou-Lou Igbokwe, Oliver Goldstick and Jess Brownell. Each episode lasts on average one hour and four minutes and the eight episodes count 512 minutes. The number of words in every episode is on average 9,500 and the whole season counts 72,000 words.

3.2 Methodology and procedure

In order to collect these data, I have downloaded the dialogues transcriptions from 8FLiX: Film & Television Scripts Database which includes many scripts or transcripts of many television series but also of stageplays, screenplays or dramas. The dialogues have been

downloaded in PDF format and then they have been read. First, I did read all the dialogues item by item, then I will underline all the types of tag questions found, and made note of all the auxiliary verbs, vocatives, negatives forms.

After having counted them manually, I created some tables which contain the component of the tag questions.

First, I will look at the frequency of tag questions in each episode of the season, then I will identify whether there is reversed or constant polarity. After that I will identify the tag subjects and how frequently they occur I will do the same procedure with auxiliaries in the tag. Later, I will determine whether there are positive or negative tags, and in the latter case I will also determine which types of negation between enclitic and non-enclitic can be found

The last analysis will be about intonation and the functions of tag questions in relation to the pitch. This analysis will be carried out through the software Praat. Praat is an open-source software suite that was developed at the University of Amsterdam by Paul Boersma and David Weenink. The main functions of the software are speech analysis, labelling and segmentation, graphics, speech, synthesis and speech manipulation. In this case I will put a record of a tag question, one for each episode and I will determine if it is falling or rising by looking at the contour lines provided by Praat graphics.

3.3 Frequency of tag questions

As mentioned in chapter one, the focus of this analysis will be on tag questions and specifically in this paragraph I will look at the number of tag questions identified in the eight episodes of Bridgerton season two, their structure in term of negation and auxiliaries and their functions in the TV series' dialogues.

NUMBER OF EPISODES	NUMBER OF TAG QUESTIONS
EPISODE 1	17
EPISODE 2	15

EPISODE 3	16
EPISODE 4	6
EPISODE 5	13
EPISODE 6	9
EPISODE 7	11
EPISODE 8	8
	95

Table 3.1 Frequency of tag questions in the eight episodes of Bridgerton season two

As shown in Table 3.1 the number of tag questions in the season two of Bridgerton is 95. Episodes one (17), two (15), three (16) and five (13) contain the majority (63) of tag questions found. An interesting result is that the change in the number of tag questions between the first four episodes and the last four has emerged possibly due to the change of the screenwriters.

3.2.1 Frequency of reversed or constant polarity

EPISODES	REVERSED POLARITY	CONSTANT POLARITY	NON-DEFINED
EPISODE 1	8	1	8
EPISODE 2	9	0	6
EPISODE 3	10	1	5

EPISODE 4	4	0	2
EPISODE 5	11	1	1
EPISODE 6	5	1	3
EPISODE 7	4	1	6
EPISODE 8	5	0	3
	56	5	34

Table 3.2 Frequency of reversed or constant polarity in tag questions in the eight episodes of Bridgerton season two.

After I collected all the tag questions, I checked if there is reversed or constant polarity. As can be seen in Table 3.2, most of the tag questions identified (56) show *reversed polarity* while 5 tag questions present a *constant polarity*.

> Example 1 (reversed polarity): We should certainly not give him too much credit, now, should we? (Bridgerton, season 2, episode 2, 2022)
>
> Example 2 (constant polarity): A mere clerk, was he? (Bridgerton, season 2, episode 5, 2022)

Many of them are *non-definable* because the *tag* is substituted with yes or a vocative and for this reason is not possible to understand if there is a positive or a negative form in the *tag*.

> Example 3 (tag substituted with yes): Last edition's takings, yes? (Bridgerton, season 2, episode 1, 2022)
>
> Example 4 (tag substituted with a vocative): Did you hear that, Bon? (Bridgerton, season 2, episode 2, 2022)

As mentioned in chapter one, tag questions with constant polarity are rarely used forms in fact I identified just few of them (Huddleston & Pullum 2002).

> Example 5: Shocking that Eloise Bridgerton was not named the season of the diamond, was it not? (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022).

Example 6: And all for what? A mere clerk, was he? (Bridgerton, episode 5, season 2, 2022)

Example 7: Come for books, did you? (Bridgerton, episode 7, season 2, 2022)

Another interesting finding is that in some tag questions reversed polarity is given by the negative subject or by adding never while the others tend to have the negative form in the verb.

Example 8: Lady Mary's parents, the Sheffields, never lived down the shame, did they? (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022)

Example 9: But she never really wanted to come back here, did she? (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022)

Example 10: Nothing ever rattles you, does it? (Bridgerton, episode 3, season 2, 2022)

3.2.2 Tag subjects in tag questions

TAG SUBJECTS

IT	29
YOU	12
SHE	7
THEY	4
HE	4
WE	3
THERE	2
NON-DEFINABLE	34
	95

Table 3.3 Frequency of tag subjects in tag questions in the eight episodes of Bridgerton season two.

As we can denote from Table 3.3 the most used pronoun as a subject of the *tag* is *it* (29) while the existential *there* is the one counting the least, just two times and after *it*, we can find *you* occurring 12 times. The latter represents quite an interesting result because other studies of Nässlin (1984) and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) highlight that normally the most frequent pronoun is *you* in fiction since the addressee are normally people. According to their studies, *it* is more frequent in daily conversation because inanimate things tend to be more the object of the conversation.

> Example 11: It's quite a generous gesture, is it not? (Bridgerton, episode 2, season 2, 2022)
>
> Example 12: A respectable family is headed by a gentleman, is it not? (Bridgerton, episode 7, season 2, 2022)
>
> Example 13: They're quite lovely, are they not? (Bridgerton, episode 3, season 2, 2022)

Sixty-one subjects have been identified, while the remaining 34 are non-definable because the *tag* is substituted with a vocative (see Example 4)

3.2.3 Auxiliaries of tag questions

AUXILIARIES

BE	43
DO	27
WOULD	8
HAVE	8
CAN	4
COULD	2
SHOULD	1
WILL	1
MIGHT	1

Table 3.4: Frequency of auxiliaries in tag questions in the eight episodes of Bridgerton season two.

According to Table 3.4, *be* is the most frequently used auxiliary occurring 43 times in all episodes. It is followed by *do,* with a still high frequency occurring 27 times. The other auxiliaries identified occurred with less frequency. These results reflect those of Nässlin (1984) who also found that *be* is the most occurring auxiliary in tag questions and after it, the most frequent is *do.* Moreover, as Nässlin (1984) stated, in this case the distribution of auxiliaries is less varied too. In this case I took in consideration the tag questions with the vocatives in the tag too since the verb of the *anchor* is taken up in the *tag* even if it is implied.

> Example 14: It is a wonder I have found the two of you in the midst of all this opulence, is it not? (Bridgerton, episode 6, season 2, 2022)
> Example 15: You have read Locke, have you? (Bridgerton, episode 4, season 2, 2022)
> Example 16: It is not as if you have even more private information you wish at last to share with me, do you? (Bridgerton, episode 6, season 2, 2022)

3.2.4 Negation in tag questions

TAG

POSITIVE	14
NEGATIVE	47

Table 3.5: Frequency of positive and negative tags in the eight episodes of Bridgerton season two.

TYPES OF NEGATION

NON-ENCLITIC	47

Table 3.6: Frequency of types of negation tags in the eight episodes of Bridgerton season two.

As shown in Table 3.5 the vast majority of *tags* are in a negative form while *positive tags* occur only 14 times. Another finding that stands out from the results reported earlier is the types of negation identified in Table 3.6. *Non-enclitic negations* occur 47 times, which is interesting because it corresponds to all the tag negations found. This outcome is contrary to that of Axelsson (2011) who found that the most chosen negation is *enclitic* while *non-enclitic* form is almost present in fiction (see examples 17-18). A possible explanation for this might be the fact that Bridgerton is set in the 19[th] century and in that time *enclitic* forms in negations were not so common and people mostly preferred to use *non enclitic* ones (Rissanen 1994, Hoffmann 2006).

> Example 17: Every man needs a muse, does he not? (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022)

> Example 18: Smell rather foul, does it not? (Bridgerton, episode 3, season 2, 2022)

> Example 19: You vouched for this family, did you not, Lady Danbury? (Bridgerton, episode 6, season 2, 2022)

3.3 Functions of tag questions

In the analysis of the functions of tag questions in Bridgerton season two I took into consideration the model of Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) which is based on a combination of Algeo (1990) and Holmes (1995) studies of functions in tag questions. For each type, I analysed two examples in the dialogues. Not every function is present in these dialogues so I will consider only the ones with clear examples. The first type of tag questions based on functions are *informational tags* which are "genuine requests for information" (Algeo 1990).

> Example 20: BENEDICT: Did someone catch your eye at the presentation, Brother?

ANTHONY: Not particularly. And all the young ladies looked the same. Like ladies. (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022)

In Example 20, the tag is a vocative, and the function of the tag is to catch attention of the interlocutor by addressing him directly (vocative) and it is clear Benedict is requesting for information.

Example 21: VIOLET: It has been some time since you have been on English soil, has it not?

LADY MARY: Not since I left with my late husband. (Bridgerton, episode 3, season 2, 2022)

In Example 21, the tag question has reversed polarity. The function expressed is to request information about something related to the life of Lady Mary. Lady Mary is answering the question with the information requested.

Then we have *confirmatory tag questions* with the aim of asking for approval.

Example 22: LORD FEATHERINGTON: I do relish weddings. Don't you, Mrs. Varley?

MRS. VARLEY: [hesitantly] Oh. Certainly, my lord. (Bridgerton, episode 2, season 2, 2022)

In Example 22, the tag question has a reversed polarity. Lord Featherington is asking Mrs. Varley for approval and in fact the tag is asking for confirmation. Mrs. Varley confirms what Lord Featherington is saying.

Example 23: EDWINA: It seems the two of them do not exactly see eye-to-eye on occasion. A good plan, is it not?

DAPHNE: Well, certainly an intriguing one. (Bridgerton, episode 4, season 2, 2022)

In this conversation between Edwina and Daphne (example 23), Edwina is asking Daphne to approve what she is saying. In this case the tag question has constant polarity.

Peremptory tags are said to be anchor clauses considered obvious in the meaning and its purpose is to leave the addressee speechless (Algeo 1990).

> Example 24: ANTHONY: A respectable family is headed by a gentleman, is it not?
>
> BENEDICT: Brother... Is there something more we should know? (Bridgerton, episode 7, season 2, 2022)

In Example 24, it is implicit and widely known that a respectable family is headed by a gentleman, so the purpose of Anthony is to leave his brother Benedict speechless.

> Example 25: EDWINA: But love moves swiftly, does it not? (Bridgerton, episode 5, season 2, 2022)

In Example 25, Edwina makes a question that make the addressee speechless, in fact there is no answer.

The last function of the tag questions which can be identified in season two of Bridgerton is the *aggressive* one, whose aim is to be rude and provocative to the addressee (Algeo 1990).

> Example 26: ANTHONY: Every man needs a muse, does he not? (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022)

In Example 26, Benedict is joking, and he asks this question using a sarcastic tone. The purpose is to provoke the addressee.

> Example 27: BENEDICT: You do love gloating about your victories, do you not, Brother? [laughing]
>
> ANTHONY: Mmm. [coughing, laughing] (Bridgerton, episode 6, season 2, 2022)

Here Benedict is trying to be sarcastic and provocative with his brother. This function can be identified through the indication in the parenthesis.

3.4 Intonation

As mentioned in chapter one a distinction is made between falling and rising intonation in question tags. *Falling intonation* normally indicates a high degree of certainty (Bublitz 1979:7). The speaker requests confirmation of what is said in the preceding clause (anchor) and moreover the interlocutor agrees with the expectations of the speaker (Bublitz 1979:7; Reese & Asher 2007:5). *Rising intonation* expresses instead speaker's uncertainty about what is said in the anchor clause, and it awaits the verification of the addressee (Dehé & Braun 2013). I will now analyse examples 20-27 with the software Praat to understand whether there is falling or rising intonation. Then I will compare the results with the functions, trying to find a correspondence between the two.

Example 20: BENEDICT: Did someone catch your eye at the presentation, Brother? (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022)
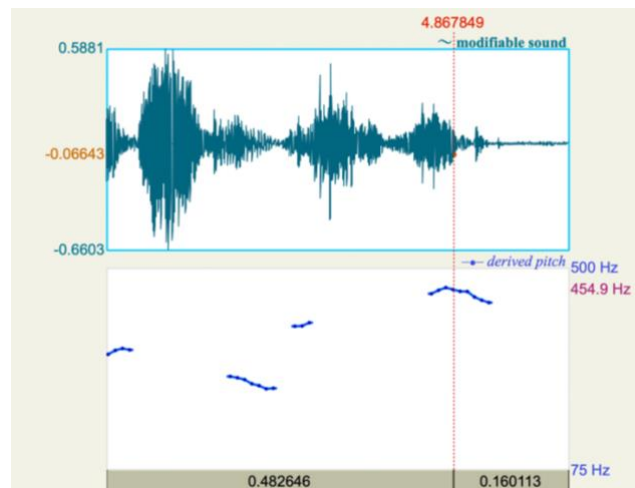
Figure 3.1: Did someone catch your eye at the presentation, Brother?

In Figure 3.1 the intonation is *falling* because the very last part of the contour line is falling. The function of this tag question is *informational* which means that the speaker is requesting for information. The function and the intonation don't match because the function indicates a high degree of certainty while the function indicates that the speaker needs more information.

Example 21: VIOLET: It has been some time since you have been on English soil, has it not? (Bridgerton, episode 3, season 2, 2022)
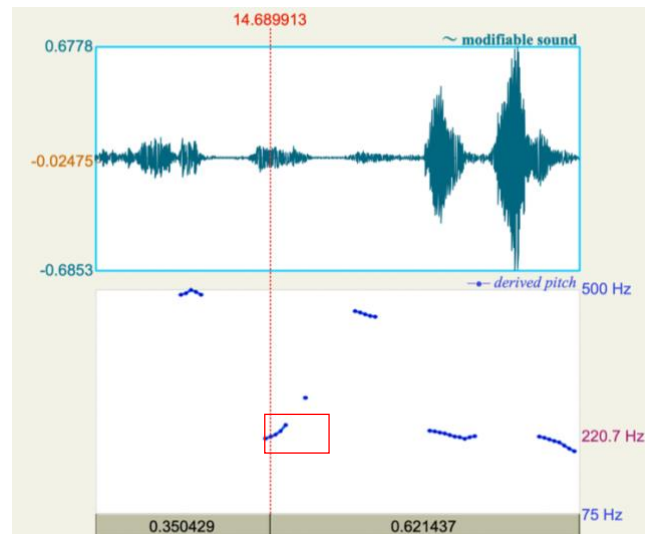

Figure 3.2: It has been some time since you have been on English soil, has it not?

In Figure 3.2, we have *rising* intonation as we can see in the red box. Rising intonation matches in this case the function which is informational because both express a need for information.

Example 22: LORD FEATHERINGTON: I do relish weddings. Don't you, Mrs. Varley? (Bridgerton, episode 2, season 2, 2022)
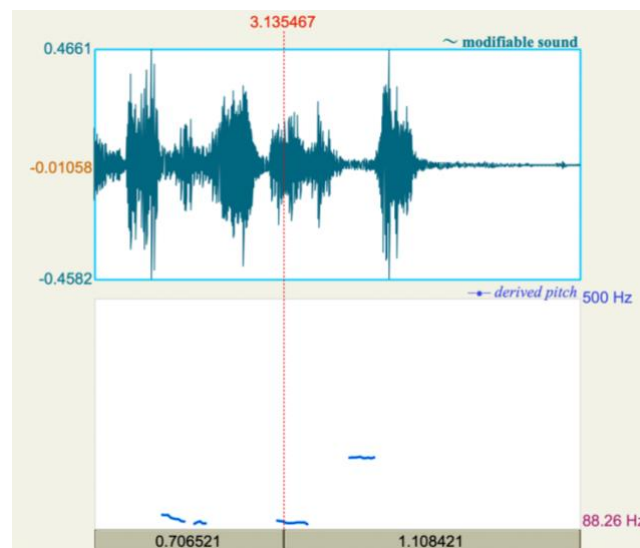
Figure 3.3: I do relish weddings. Don't you, Mrs. Varley?

In Figure 3.3, I identify *falling* intonation and in respect to the definition, I can say that the intonation matches the function which is *confirmatory* because both intonation and the function request for confirmation.

Example 23: EDWINA: It seems the two of them do not exactly see eye-to-eye on occasion. A good plan, is it not? (Bridgerton, episode 4, season 2, 2022)
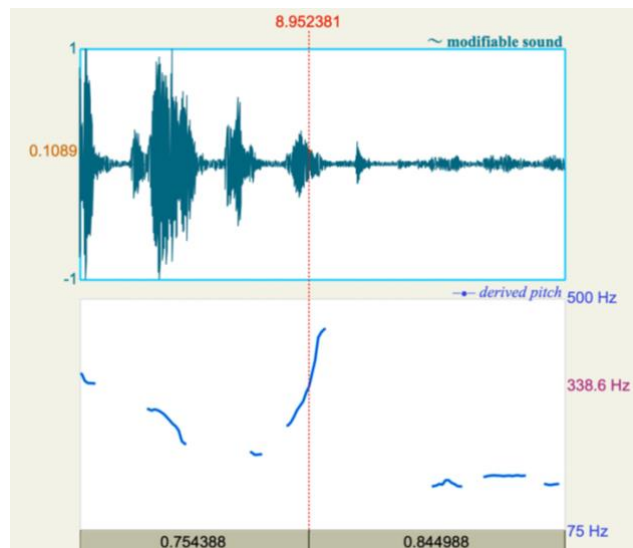

Figure 3.4: It seems the two of them do not exactly see eye-to-eye on occasion. A good plan, is it not?

In Figure 3.4, the intonation is *rising,* and in this case it matches the *confirmatory* function because the speaker is asking for approval.

Example 24: ANTHONY: A respectable family is headed by a gentleman, is it not? (Bridgerton, episode 7, season 2, 2022)
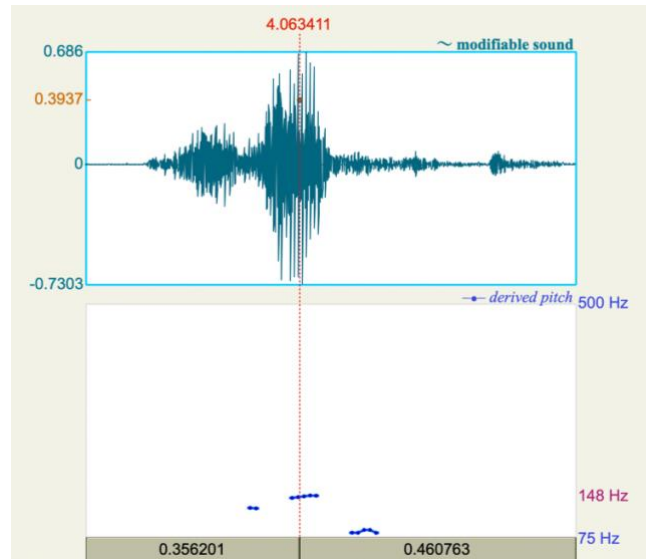
Figure 3.5: A respectable family is headed by a gentleman, is it not?

In Figure 3.5 the intonation is *rising* but it is difficult to say if it matches the *peremptory* function because the aim of the function is to make the addressee speechless and in previous studies there was no evidence that intonation can be used to make the addressee speechless,. The same situation is present in example 25 with the related graphic 3.6.

Example 25: EDWINA: But love moves swiftly, does it not? (Bridgerton, episode 5, season 2, 2022)
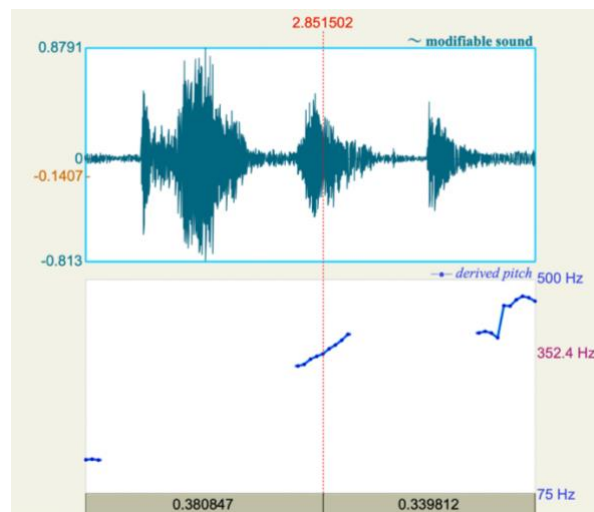
Figure 3.6: But love moves swiftly, does it not?

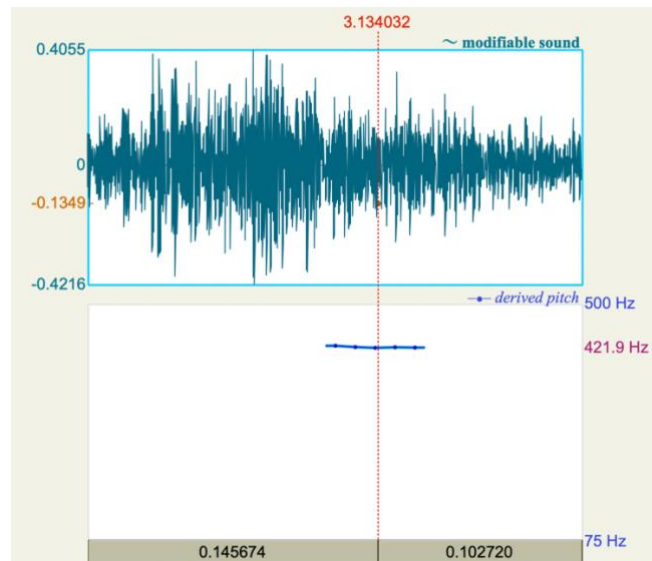Example 26: ANTHONY: Every man needs a muse, does he not? (Bridgerton, episode 1, season 2, 2022)

Figure 3.7: Every man needs a muse, does he not?

Example 27: BENEDICT: You do love gloating about your victories, do you not, Brother? (Bridgerton, episode 6, season 2, 2022)
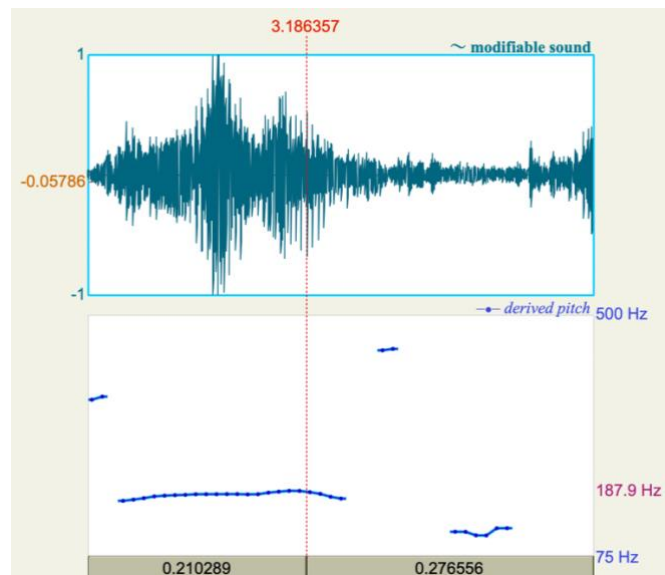

Figure 3.8: You do love gloating about your victories, do you not, Brother?

In Figure 3.7 and 3.8, intonation is *falling*. Here it is also difficult to understand whether the functions (*aggressive)* match or not the intonation because no previous study has identified intonation as a means to provoke the addressee.

3.5 Conclusions

This analysis shows that the number of tag questions found is 95. Moreover, the tag polarity is most of the time reversed but a small number of them show constant polarity. Contrary to expectations, this study found that the most used tag subject is *it* while the previous studies identified *you* as the most preferred in fiction dialogues. Another surprising result is that negation forms were all non-enclitic although Axelsson (2011) found that the most used is enclitic. This discrepancy could be attributed to the century in which the TV series is set. Another interesting result is that the functions of the Tottie and Hoffmann's model (2006) have been identified in a small selection of tag questions in season two of Bridgerton. At the very end, I investigated intonation in eight tag questions in particular whether it is falling or rising.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this dissertation was to find out the role of tag questions in scripted language, specifically the use, the functions and the intonation of tag questions in a TV series i.e. Bridgerton (season two). Most of the findings about the frequency of the components analysed of the tag questions met the expectations and correspond with the results of the previous studies. What is surprising is that the most frequent pronoun as a subject in fiction is *it* while in the studies of Nässlin (1984) and Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) the most frequent pronoun in fiction is *you.*

Another finding that stands out from the results reported in previous studies is about the frequency of enclitic and non-enclitic negations. Axelsson (2011) states that the most chosen negation is *enclitic* while *non-enclitic* form is almost present in fiction. In this study, the results are the opposite because all the tag questions with negation have non-enclitic forms.

Another goal of my study was to understand the functions of tag questions and how they are related to the message the speaker wants to convey. There are many functions possible depending on the attitude and the information the speaker needs to share. In this dissertation the functions were based on the model of Tottie & Hoffmann (2006) which incorporates the models developed by Holmes (1982, 1995), Algeo (1990).

Since the study was limited to the season two of Bridgerton, it was not possible to give a deeper insight into the phenomenon. The corpus was quite restricted so the results cannot be representative. If the corpus were broader and included the other two seasons, the results would be more meaningful. Furthermore, another limitation is the lack of other previous studies on Bridgerton, presumably since it is a very recent TV series.

Through this dissertation I gave a general overview of the topic, but further work needs to be done to establish the actual use and aim of tag questions in TV series. The current literature has few studies on the topic especially in the field of tag questions. Many of the scholars focus their attention on tag questions in conversation and very few research studies deals with tag questions in fiction dialogues. Further research should focus on

determining the role of tag questions in TV series dialogues, especially how they contribute to the development of the characters' interactions.

Moreover, further work is needed to fully understand the implications of intonation regarding the linguistic phenomenon of tag questions because nowadays the major studies on intonation focus on yes/no questions or on affirmative and negative sentences.

This work contributes to existing knowledge of tag questions and provides examples and data from the Bridgerton TV series but also connects areas that are currently studied on their own i.e. intonation in tag questions, tag questions in scripted language. A reasonable approach to tackle this issue could be to create new corpora of TV series' transcriptions with a wide range of possible linguistic phenomena.

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SUMMARY

Lo scopo di questa tesi è analizzare il fenomeno linguistico delle tag questions, non solo dal punto di vista strutturale ma anche dal punto di vista delle funzioni ad esse collegate. È un fenomeno particolarmente rilevante nella lingua parlata e poco utilizzato, se non quasi inesistente nella lingua scritta. Verrà poi inserito in una cornice linguistica più ristretta che è quella del linguaggio televisivo, in modo particolare nel linguaggio delle serie tv. Verrà presa in considerazione per l'analisi di tipo qualitativo e quantitativo la seconda stagione della serie tv Bridgerton. Di essa verranno prese in considerazioni le trascrizioni e manualmente verranno contate tutte le tag questions presenti all'interno dell'intera stagione. Le tag questions sono normalmente caratterizzate da un primo elemento chiamato anchor e un secondo elemento chiamato tag. Grazie a questi due elementi possiamo analizzare le tag questions come un unico fenomeno che dipende però dal variare di queste due componenti. Le funzioni che possono avere le tag questions sono varie soprattutto perchè veicolano il messaggio che il parlante vuole far arrivare. All'interno di questa tesi verranno presi in considerazioni tre modelli: quello di Holmes (1995), di Algeo (1990) e poi quello di Tottie e Hoffmann (2006) che rappresenta l'unione dei primi due. Le funzioni vengono sviluppate secondo il comportamento, il tono del parlante ma anche in base a ciò che egli vuole ricevere dal suo interlocutore. Per poter capire quanto questo fenomeno linguistico sia frequente e utilizzato nella lingua parlata sono stati presi in considerazione all'interno della ricerca i dati di studi precedenti corrispondenti agli elementi principali che vengono presi in considerazione nello sviluppo delle tag questions come il soggetto, i verbi ausiliari e la negazione nella tag. questi dati mostrano come il verbo ausiliare più utilizzato sia il verbo "be" e invece la negazione nella tag sia in percentuale maggiore rispetto a una tag positiva. Per capire ulteriormente l'impatto dell'utilizzo della tag questions nella lingua parlata, è stata presa in considerazione l'intonazione. Essa, infatti, può essere intonazione discendente (falling) o intonazione crescente (rising) e a seconda della tipologia può avere uno scopo diverso nella trasmissione di un messaggio.

Per poter comprendere meglio ai fini della ricerca quale possa essere la diversità dell'uso, della frequenza e delle funzioni delle tag questions nel linguaggio delle serie tv rispetto alla conversazione spontanea, sono stati presi in considerazione diversi studi che trattano

lo *scripted language*. Prima però di definire quali sono le caratteristiche di questa tipologia di linguaggio, viene data una visione generale di cosa si intende con linguaggio autentico. Con linguaggio autentico si intende infatti una conversazione vera e naturale che avviene tra parlanti nativi (Rogers & Medley 1988). Inoltre, questo linguaggio è anche caratterizzato da elementi non verbali che aiutano la fluidità della conversazione. Oltre a questo aspetto sicuramente si dà anche molta importanza a colui che ascolta e sicuramente all'interno della conversazione non mancano le forme colloquiali tipiche di un linguaggio genuino.

Lo *scripted language* nasce invece per soddisfare l'esigenza degli spettatori e normalmente devono essere particolarmente chiari affinché lo spettatore capisca cosa viene detto all'interno della conversazione. Questa tipologia di linguaggio viene pensata da un team di sceneggiatori e viene preparata in anticipo. Nonostante sia considerato un linguaggio artefatto, deve essere più vicino possibile alla conversazione che avviene naturalmente poiché deve far credere allo spettatore che sia una conversazione reale.

In questo caso la varietà linguistica è minore e le interruzioni o le false partenze tipiche della conversazione non sono presenti.

La tesi si conclude con l'unione della parte teorica analizzata nei primi due capitoli e una parte pratica di ricerca realizzata attraverso le trascrizioni della seconda stagione di Bridgerton. Come primo passo verranno contate manualmente il numero di tag questions presenti all'interno degli otto episodi presenti nella seconda stagione e poi in ogni tag question identificata, verranno valutati i diversi componenti strutturali e verranno create delle tabelle per mostrare la frequenza dei singoli elementi. Sono emersi dei risultati davvero sorprendenti in quanto si discostano dagli studi analizzati nei primi capitoli. Ad esempio, il *tag subject* più utilizzato è *it* mentre negli studi precedenti era *you,* perché normalmente l'interlocutore era una persona. Questi dati sono interessanti ma sarebbe più significativo analizzare tutte e tre le stagioni presenti in modo tale da avere un quadro più completo.

Un ulteriore aspetto analizzato sono le funzioni delle tag questions. È stato preso in considerazione il modello di Tottie & Hoffmann (2006) e di esse è stata cercata corrispondenza nella stagione. Non tutte erano presenti ma di alcune è stato possibile trovare addirittura due esempi significativi. In tutto le tag questions selezionate erano 8 e sempre di queste 8 ho cercato di capire quale fosse l'intonazione se discendente o

crescente. A seconda della tipologia è possibile capire quale sia lo scopo della tag question e per questo motivo ho cercato di capire se ci fosse una corrispondenza con la funzione identificata. È stato interessante perché alcune di esse effettivamente corrispondevano, altre invece differivano mentre delle ultime due non mi è stato possibile capire se ci fosse una somiglianza o meno.

In conclusione, questa tesi cerca di esplorare il fenomeno linguistico delle tag questions non in maniera singolare ma in relazione ad un linguaggio televisivo, nello specifico quello di Bridgerton. Lo scopo è quello di capire quali sono i suoi usi e come vengono utilizzate per trasmettere un messaggio. Ulteriori studi però sono necessari per comprendere al meglio il fenomeno sia a livello generale nel linguaggio delle serie tv sia più nello specifico nella serie TV Bridgerton.