LANGUAGE AS A TOOL OF INFLUENCE: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DAENERYS TARGARYEN'S SPEECHES IN DOTHRAKI AND HIGH VALYRIAN IN *GAME OF THRONES*[1]

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ABSTRACT. *Language as a Tool of Influence: Discourse Analysis of Daenerys Targaryen's Speeches in Dothraki and High Valyrian in* Game of Thrones. This article delves into the examination of the multilingual discourse and diplomatic strategies employed by Daenerys Targaryen, a central character in the "Game of Thrones" television series. The investigation centers on her utilization of the Dothraki and High Valyrian languages, both meticulously crafted by linguist David Peterson expressly for the show. Employing critical discourse analysis, this study seeks to unravel the linguistic influence wielded by Daenerys in her pursuit of power and influence within the fictional realm of Westeros. Through an analysis of her multilingual abilities, the article explores how Daenerys navigates and negotiates linguistic and cultural barriers to build alliances, forge connections, and assert her authority. Through an examination of the linguistic dimensions inherent in her diplomatic endeavors, the article illuminates the role of language as a potent tool for persuasion, negotiation,

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and cultural mediation within complex sociolinguistic contexts. The findings of this study significantly enhance our comprehension of multilingual diplomacy and its portrayal in popular culture, emphasizing the pivotal role of language in shaping political discourse and interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: Game of Thrones*, constructed languages, language and identity, cultural adaptation, intercultural communication.*

ABSTRACT. *Dialoguri transculturale. Evoluția personajului Daenerys Targaryen ca ambasador cultural în* **Game of Thrones***.* Acest articol explorează discursul multilingv şi strategiile diplomatice folosite de Daenerys Targaryen, un personaj central din serialul "Game of Thrones". Ne concentrăm asupra modului în care Daenerys se foloseşte de limbile Dothraki şi High Valyrian, create cu meticulozitate de lingvistul David Peterson special pentru acest serial TV. Prin analiza discursului, studiul nostru îşi propune să dezvăluie cum Daenerys mane-vrează influenţa lingvistică în căutarea puterii şi a influenţei în lumea fictivă a Westerosului. Explorăm cum, prin abilităţile sale multilingve, Daenerys depăşeşte şi negociază barierele lingvistice şi culturale pentru a construi alianţe, a crea conexiuni şi a-şi afirma autoritatea. Prin examinarea dimensiunilor lingvistice implicate în eforturile sale diplomatice, articolul aduce în prim-plan rolul limbii ca instrument puternic de persuasiune, negociere şi mediere culturală în contexte sociolingvistice complexe. Concluziile acestei cercetări contribuie semnificativ la înţelegerea diplomaţiei multilingve şi la modul în care este prezentată în cultura populară, subliniind importanţa centrală a limbii în modelarea discursului politic şi relaţiilor interpersonale.

Cuvinte-cheie: Game of Thrones*, limbi construite, limbă şi identitate, adaptare culturală, comunicare interculturală.*

Introduction

The HBO television series "Game of Thrones" has gained considerable popularity and is based on the renowned book series "A Song of Ice and Fire" by George R.R. Martin. It is set in a fictional medieval era on the continents of Westeros and Essos, delving into the power dynamics and alliances among noble families in Westeros, while also highlighting the exiled Targaryen family's mission to reclaim the throne. The main focus of this study is to analyze Daenerys Targaryen as a discourse community and explore the challenges she encounters in attaining and maintaining power. One noteworthy aspect of Daenerys is her need to converse in two distinct languages, Dothraki and High Valyrian. To support the analysis, the original and translated script from the

television show will frequently be utilized as evidence. This unique circumstance provides an opportunity to compare the two interpreters and gain a deeper understanding of her intentions and goals through her words. A comprehensive examination of the power struggle in "Game of Thrones" would require a detailed exploration, but this paper will primarily concentrate on the linguistic and discourse elements of Daenerys, specifically scrutinizing the war and power struggle in Essos. Therefore, we will employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as our chosen theoretical framework, which centers on the study of the relationships between language and power as well as the ultimate goal of the improvement of the human condition (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). According to van Dijk (2001), CDA looks at the way language structures impose or reinforce views, which in turn may lead to the unequal distribution of power and influence between different groups. In traditional views of language study, it is viewed from an autonomous perspective; language is considered to be a tool fitted to the communicative needs of its speaker (Baugh and Cable, 2001; Stubbs, 1983). The authors operate under the assumption that the main problems and central phenomena of these fields can be examined separately from their social context. This perspective aligns with formal approaches to semantics and discourse pragmatics. However, it faces criticism from Critical Discourse Analysis. According to van Dijk (2009), CDA strives to provide a comprehensive and empirically validated account of the relationships between discursive strategies, texts, their cognitive and social effects, and our own ethical and political positions. One of the distinguishing features of CDA is its emphasis on using linguistics to effect social change and promote social justice. Many CDA researchers align with this viewpoint, especially when studying topics like racism, xenophobia, and nationalism (Krzyzanowski, 2008). This goal is driven by the belief in the power of language and its influence on society and human behavior. What sets CDA apart from other approaches to language study is its primary focus and adherence to a specific theoretical framework. While traditional linguistics concentrates on language form, structure, and semantics, CDA examines language in its functional capacity. It looks at language's ability to achieve certain goals or objectives, always connecting the analysis of linguistic elements to the research question and the broader context of the text or discourse being investigated (Ruth Wodak in Wodak and Meyer, 2009, 2001; Stubbs, 1983). Nevertheless, prior to immersing ourselves in our main subject of inquiry, we aim to provide a brief discussion on the meaning of the term "discourse" or "discourses." According to Johnstone (2018:9), 'to discourse analysts, "discourse" usually means actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language, although some define the term more broadly as "meaningful symbolic behavior" in any mode (Blommaert, 2005: 2). When it comes to communication, however, Johnstone (2018:9-10) states that

it can, of course, involve other media besides language. Media such as photography, clothing, music, architecture, and dance can be meaningful, too, and discourse analysts often need to think about the connections between language and other such modes of semiosis, or meaning-making.

When analyzing the discourses of Daenerys Targaryen in Dothraki and High Valyrian within "Game of Thrones", our examination extends beyond mere word choices in her dialogues or speeches. As Johnstone (2018:9-10) suggests, we also consider 'other media besides language'. For instance, in Daenerys's case, we scrutinize her careful selection of attire, which varies depending on the geographical and cultural milieu she finds herself in, as well as the individuals she interacts with and the speeches she delivers. Additionally, her choice of hairstyle, characterized by different braiding styles, is adjusted to match the cultural context she is immersed in at any given moment. Therefore, according to Johnstone:

> calling what we do "*discourse* analysis" rather than "language analysis" underscores the fact that we are not centrally focused on language as an abstract system. We tend, instead, to be interested in what happens when people draw on the knowledge they have about language, knowledge based on their memories of things they have said, heard, seen, or written before, to do things in the world: exchange information, express feelings, make things happen, create beauty, entertain themselves and others, and so on. (Johnstone, 2018:10)

Johnstone states that discourses

> are conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking. These linked ways of talking and thinking constitute ideologies (sets of interrelated ideas) and serve to circulate power in society. In other words, "discourses" in this sense involve patterns of belief and habitual action as well as patterns of language. Discourses are ideas as well as ways of talking that influence and are influenced by the ideas. Discourses, in their linguistic aspect, are conventionalized sets of choices for discourse, or talk. (2018:10-11)

In our case study, we will illustrate Daenerys Targaryen's discourses in Dothraki and High Valyrian, which exemplify her beliefs and recurring actions (for example, her ability to amass the largest army in Essos, eliminate her adversaries, reclaim the Iron Throne, and assert sole rulership over the Seven Kingdoms). Additionally, we will examine linguistic patterns observed in her speech in Dothraki (such as her use of "iron chair" instead of "iron throne", "iron

suits" instead of "armour", "poison water" instead of "sea", "wooden horses" instead of "ships" and so forth).

The "Game of Thrones" series comes with a rich linguistic landscape that has gone largely unexplored. Many languages are spoken throughout the series and create an intricate web that mirrors the sociopolitical climate of the world created by George R.R. Martin. What is known of these languages thus far is fairly limited, and the focus of this paper will be a discourse analysis of Daenerys Targaryen's speeches in Dothraki and High Valyrian. The purpose of this analysis is to interpret the dynamic between the speaker and the addressees in these scenes and to ultimately comment on the use of language as a tool for establishing power relationships.

Therefore, the primary focus of this paper revolves around Daenerys Targaryen, a central character in the highly acclaimed television series "Game of Thrones", in which she is introduced as the last surviving member of House Targaryen. Born in exile, Daenerys initially resides in Essos with her abusive brother Viserys. Her early life is marked by hardship and subservience. Daenerys's narrative takes a significant turn when she is married off to Khal Drogo, the leader of the nomadic Dothraki horse lords. Despite initial challenges in adapting to the Dothraki culture, Daenerys gradually gains respect and authority among the members of the tribe. Her marriage to Khal Drogo plays a pivotal role in her character development. One of the notable aspects of Daenerys's storyline is her acquisition of three dragon eggs, thought to be petrified. However, they hatch into dragons, which she names Drogon, Rhaegal, and Viserion. The dragons become symbols of her power and a formidable force in the series. Daenerys's overarching goal is to reclaim the Iron Throne and restore the Targaryen dynasty's rule over the Seven Kingdoms. Throughout the series, she faces challenges ranging from political intrigue and betrayal to ethical dilemmas in her quest for power. Daenerys becomes known for her commitment to justice, freeing the oppressed, and her desire to break the cycle of tyranny in Westeros. As the series progresses, Daenerys evolves from a vulnerable and uncertain young woman into a strong and determined leader. The character of Daenerys Targaryen is one of the most intricate and iconic in "Game of Thrones," and her storyline contributes significantly to the overall narrative of the series.

Another fascinating aspect of Daenerys's character is her linguistic prowess. She initially emerges as the heir to the Targaryen legacy with a command of High Valyrian, the ancient language of her ancestors. As the series progresses, she also learns and speaks Dothraki, the language of the nomadic horse lords, whose leader, Khal Drogo, as mentioned earlier, she is forced to marry by her brother, Viserys.

The use of these fictional languages in the TV show adds depth to Daenerys's character, showcasing her adaptability and determination to navigate the diverse cultures in the world of "Game of Thrones." The mastery of languages becomes a symbolic representation of her growth as a cultural ambassador and a leader with a vision of a more just and unified realm. Daenerys's linguistic journey reflects the broader theme of cultural diversity and diplomacy in the series. The ability to communicate in different languages becomes a tool for forging alliances, understanding local customs, and ultimately exercising power in a world characterized by intricate political intrigues and complex relationships.

Research Objectives

The present study aims to analyze Daenerys Targaryen's adept use of High Valyrian and Dothraki throughout various seasons of "Game of Thrones", discerning patterns in her linguistic evolution. By tracing the progression of her linguistic expertise, our objective is to reveal associations between language usage and pivotal moments in Daenerys's character development.

Moreover, delving into Daenerys Targaryen's interactions with a myriad of cultures presented in the "Game of Thrones" narrative constitutes a central aspect of our study. This exploration aims to examine the various instances where Daenerys encounters and navigates through diverse cultural settings. When examining the discourse surrounding Daenerys's character, it is evident that her persona serves as an "identity kit", as she often transitions between languages, accompanied by changes in attire and demeanor. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in Season 1 Episode 10. During this episode, Daenerys assumes a distinct appearance unlike her usual attire. She adorns herself in Dothraki garments and is no longer accompanied by her two female slaves. The alteration of her costume directly corresponds to her change in language. When speaking her native tongue, High Valyrian, she assumes a slave/master dynamic with her khalasar, whereas when conversing in Dothraki, she fully embodies her role as a Khaleesi and proclaims her intent to vanquish the lords of the Seven Kingdoms.

Within this objective, our primary focus is to evaluate the intricate interplay between linguistic and cultural diversity, discerning how these elements intricately shape the portrayal of Daenerys as a cultural ambassador within the series. 'While there is a wealth of research on language and identity which focuses on the identity of "real", "alive" people, little research has been undertaken on the identities of characters in fictional genres (e.g. drama, television drama)' (Cabrejas-Peñuelas 2021). However, 'attempts have been made to categorize characters in character typologies: "flat" ("simple"), "round" (elaborated) (Forster 1987) in early classifications, while later categorizations

(see Culpeper 2001, 48-52) focus on traits in binary opposites, such as male/female, good/bad, and hero/villain (2021). By scrutinizing Daenerys's linguistic adaptability and cultural diplomacy, we seek to unravel the nuanced ways in which she fosters understanding, forges alliances, and navigates the complex sociocultural landscapes encountered throughout her journey.

Language and Power in "Game of Thrones"

In "Game of Thrones", language assumes a crucial role within its highly diverse setting. Here, the presence of not only the two specially crafted languages for the TV series, High Valyrian and Dothraki, but also their respective dialects hold significant importance, a facet we will elaborate on later in this paper. According to Fairclough (1989:5), discourse analysis involves examining not only the messages and meaning conveyed through language, but also the structure and identity that language displays. This understanding is crucial for comprehending the discursive power of a specific culture or language. Fairclough further emphasizes that discourse analysis investigates the context, aims, behavior, and relationships in events where language plays a significant role (1989:5).

In agreement with Fairclough, Martin and Nakayama (2018) argue that language is a form of social practice and institutional power. Therefore, to thoroughly analyze Daenerys's political role within the television series, it is crucial to understand her messages and linguistic forms in Dothraki and High Valyrian. These languages serve as the foundation for comprehending her cultural identity and its impact on her acquisition of power. Furthermore, it is important to note that communication acts as the primary locus of a sociocultural system, as suggested by Fairclough (1989). Culture and language are parallel identities, where culture serves as the foundational metaphor for communication, and communication serves as the foundational metaphor for culture. In Daenerys's case, her cultural identity is constructed through the languages of Dothraki and High Valyrian. By closely analyzing her speeches, one can gain insights into the construction of her cultural identity and the power of these languages on their respective cultures.

The examination of Daenerys's speech aligns with the principles of discourse analysis, as it involves deconstructing her language to uncover hidden messages and structures. By understanding how her language influences her political power, we can explore the parallel relationship between language and culture, as intertwined identities. Fairclough further emphasizes that discourse analysis investigates the context, aims, behavior, and relationships in events where language plays a significant role (1989:5).

In line with Fairclough's perspective, Martin and Nakayama (2018:83) argue that language constitutes a form of social practice and institutional power.

With this in mind, it becomes evident that analyzing Daenerys's political role within the television series necessitates a thorough understanding of her messages and linguistic forms in Dothraki and High Valyrian. These languages serve as the foundation for comprehending her cultural identity and its influence on her acquisition of power (Martin & Nakayama, 2018:83).

All of these aspects of language link together, making these factors types of social and cultural capital. On a more practical level, language and specifically oracy is power. Power implies the intentional use of influence. Language can often be a tool of influence. This is not necessarily a negative thing, rather it is an aspect of social interactivity. As it stands, language can be a tool of soft power, that is the use of attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion or force. And at the ultimate level, language can be a means of establishing the boundaries of what one can and cannot do.

The relationship between language and culture is both intricate and complex. Language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. Different ideas and values are embedded in languages. Language also acts as a vehicle for cultural expression. It is the primary tool used for transmitting and expressing culture.

Consider various scholars who have written about the relationship between language and culture. One distinguished individual is Edward Sapir, who firmly believed in the close connection between language and culture, asserting that language has a powerful influence on our perception of the world. He argued that language is not only shaped by culture but also serves as a vehicle for transmitting culture across generations (Sapir, 1921). According to the author, our comprehension of the world is greatly influenced by the words and concepts available in our language, and distinct languages reflect diverse ways of thinking and interpreting reality. He stressed the significance of studying language in order to gain insight into the unique worldview of a particular culture (Sapir, 1949). Sapir, as a linguist, presented the argument that language plays an essential role in molding our perception and comprehension of the world. He placed great emphasis on the interconnectedness of language and culture, asserting that language mirrors the shared ideas and values of a community.

Whorf (1940) builds upon the ideas put forth by Sapir and introduces the concept of linguistic relativity. He argues that the way a language is structured and the words it contains have a profound impact on how speakers of that language perceive and understand the world. According to Whorf's theory, each culture may have its unique way of conceptualizing reality, shaped by the characteristics of its language.

In the realm of identity and pride, sociolinguist Cameron (1996) delved deeper into the subject and conducted a more thorough examination of the role of language in indicating social identity. She proceeded to investigate how our

language choices often serve as an indication of our membership in particular social groups, as well as how it can potentially uphold existing social hierarchies. Through her research, Cameron was able to shed light on the significant and symbolic influence that language exerts in the establishment and representation of both personal and collective identities. These scholars and various others have contributed to our comprehension of the elaborate relationship between language and culture. Their work emphasizes that language is not merely a tool for communication, but a fundamental aspect of human experience, epitomizing and molding our cultural heritage and individual identities.

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in "Game of Thrones"

In the fictional world of "Game of Thrones", linguistic diversity adds a rich layer to the narrative, reflecting the multicultural nature of the series. Culture plays a significant role in shaping behavior and thinking in all contexts (Hofstede, 2001). The linguistic choices made reflect the social and cultural aspects of the world they are used in. High Valyrian and Dothraki are integral to this linguistic tapestry. High Valyrian is an ancient language associated with the Valyrian Freehold, a powerful civilization that once dominated much of Essos. It was the language of the nobility and scholars, and remnants of High Valyrian culture linger in various regions. Daenerys Targaryen, being a descendant of the Valyrian dynasty, is a native speaker of High Valyrian. As the last living Targaryen, her command of this prestigious language symbolizes her royal heritage and distinguishes her from other characters in the series.

On the other hand, Dothraki is the language of the nomadic horse lords, the Dothraki people, who roam the vast grasslands of Essos. Led by powerful leaders such as Khal Drogo, the Dothraki culture is fiercely independent and values strength and honor. As mentioned in the previous part of the paper, Daenerys learns Dothraki as a means of assimilating into this culture after being wed to Khal Drogo, the leader of the Dothraki people. Her ability to communicate in Dothraki highlights her adaptability and willingness to engage with a variety of social contexts.

The multicultural aspect of "Game of Thrones" is amplified by the presence of these languages and their respective dialects. The characters who speak High Valyrian or Dothraki come from different regions and backgrounds, contributing to the intricate web of relationships and power dynamics in the series. Language becomes a tool for diplomacy, alliance-building, and navigating the complexities of a world marked by diverse cultures and traditions.

Language as Symbol of Power and Identity: Daenerys Targaryen's Linguistic Strategies in "Game of Thrones"

In the vast and politically charged landscapes of Westeros and Essos in "Game of Thrones", the utilization of language extends beyond mere communication — it becomes a powerful symbol of both authority and cultural identity. This section delves into the strategic linguistic choices made by Daenerys Targaryen, focusing on her adept use of High Valyrian and Dothraki in various social and cultural contexts. Due to the intricate relationship between power and language, CDA has evolved to provide a toolbox of methods with which to examine how language can be indicative of power relations within society. These methods are related to the description of language form, the relationships between text and action, the systems of concepts, and the context of the situation. Since its early application in the study of propaganda, the detected depth of social significance in language use puts it in a unique position to address power and language (van Dijk, 2001). Daenerys possesses an understanding of the influence of language and effectively employs it to assert her authority. In the tenth episode of Season 5, it becomes evident that she utilizes language as a means to establish her dominance over both her subjects and adversaries. By articulating the name *Meereen* in a distinct manner, she distinguishes herself from the aristocratic classes in Meereen, thus indicating a disparity in social standing. Similarly, when addressing Hizdahr zo Loraq, she deliberately enunciates his name differently from his own pronunciation, using Valyrian to emphasize the distinction between her elevated position and his. This serves as a reminder, not only to herself but also to others, that she towers above him, employing language to wield her power. Furthermore, her selection and utilization of an interpreter further accentuate her authority and superiority.

To conclude, Daenerys's linguistic tactics are intricately linked to her complex beliefs concerning home, authority, and identity. In Season 1, she portrays herself as a vulnerable girl who has endured mistreatment from her abusive brother. It is only after rescuing the Unsullied and establishing a profound bond with her dragons that she begins to reclaim her Targaryen roots and assert herself as the rightful Dragon Queen. Daenerys Targaryen's character is a multifaceted persona with intricate ideologies. She has often been criticized for displaying a "white savior" complex, employing violent methods and expecting gratitude from those she has "liberated". Despite claiming the Iron Throne as her birthright, she also professes to fight for the oppressed. This apparent contradiction may stem from her internal power struggle, as she tries to reconcile her projected values with her personal desires. Ultimately, her success hinges on her ability to uphold her unconventional identity while simultaneously wielding the political power and strategic prowess needed to conquer the realm of Westeros.

High Valyrian

Daenerys Targaryen's proficiency in High Valyrian, the ancient and prestigious language of the Valyrian Freehold, is emblematic of her Targaryen lineage and royal heritage. As the Mother of Dragons and a claimant to the Iron Throne, Daenerys strategically employs High Valyrian in formal and diplomatic settings. Its usage reflects her desire to assert authority, presenting herself as a legitimate and regal figure.

To begin, High Valyrian takes center stage in formal ceremonies, proclamations, and interactions with Westerosi nobility. Its archaic beauty and intricate grammar serve as a linguistic spectacle, harking back to the grandeur of the Targaryen legacy. By choosing High Valyrian for ceremonial utterances, Daenerys not only conveys her noble status, but also initiates a symbolic restoration of the cultural and linguistic prominence associated with the dragonlords. A pivotal moment emphasizing the significance of employing High Valyrian in formal ceremonies is exemplified in Daenerys's victory speech. The speech in King's Landing takes place in the final episode of "Game of Thrones", Season 8, Episode 6, titled "The Iron Throne." After the destruction of King's Landing, Daenerys, flanked by her forces, addresses the gathered survivors and soldiers:

> Daenerys (addressing her army, the Unsullied): 'Dovaogedys! Dovaogedys! Jeme hen muñoti ñoghoti nadintaks se hae buzdaryti ubredaks. Sir daeremirossa iksat! Daro Vililio gierion hen qrinio hilmiot daeredat!' (Eng: 'Unsullied! All of you were torn from your mothers' arms and raised as slaves. Now you are liberators! You have freed the people of King's Landing from the grip of a tyrant!')
> The Unsullied: * Slam their spear butts onto the ground, three times in perfect synch, affirming their pride in their achievement and their queen *
> Daenerys (addressing her army, the Unsullied): 'Yn vilibazma tetos daor. Ilvra egralbri qubemiluty daor yn vapar tolvio vyho gieryndi daeredoty! Hen Vinterveli va Dornot, hen Laniso Viliniot va Qarthot, hen Jaedria va Zeo Embrot, abrar, valar, riñar toli grevo go bottis. Grevi ynoma pryjelat?') (Eng: 'But the war is not over. We will not lay down our spears until we have liberated all the people of the world! From Winterfell to Dorne, from Lannisport to Qarth, from the Summer Isles to the Jade Sea, women, men, and children have suffered too long beneath the wheel. Will you break the wheel with me?').[3]

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[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7mzJ3fKAw0&t=125s, accessed on 30.01.2024

In the aftermath of King's Landing, Daenerys's victory speech stands as a poignant moment, where the utilization of High Valyrian serves to underscore her commitment to a new era. As she addresses her people in the ancient tongue, the language of her ancestors, it symbolizes both a reclaiming of her Targaryen heritage and a declaration of transformative change. The deliberate choice to speak in Valyrian not only adds a touch of regality, but also communicates a profound sense of authority.

Another illustration of Daenerys employing High Valyrian occurs in diplomatic discourse. High Valyrian becomes a linchpin in Daenerys's diplomatic endeavors. In negotiations and alliances with Westerosi houses, its usage is deliberate and strategic. The language, with its historical weight and cultural significance, serves as a powerful tool in asserting her claim to the Iron Throne. Daenerys, as a linguistically astute diplomat, employs High Valyrian to engage in negotiations with a level of sophistication that mirrors the courtly discourse of Westerosi politics. Its use is not merely a linguistic choice but a conscious effort to restore the political and cultural authority associated with House Targaryen.

One of the most notable scenes in the series, in which Daenerys Targaryen acquires the Unsullied[4] and communicates with them in Valyrian, takes place in Astapor, during Season 3, Episode 4, titled "And Now His Watch Is Ended." In this pivotal moment, Daenerys arrives in Astapor seeking an army to support her quest for reclaiming the Iron Throne. The city is known for its highly disciplined slave army, the Unsullied. Daenerys negotiates with the slave-master Kraznys mo Nakloz to purchase the Unsullied in exchange for one of her dragons, Drogon. To demonstrate the control she would gain over the dragons, Daenerys allows Kraznys mo Nakloz, the Astapori slaver, to hold the dragon's chain:

> Daenerys: 'Is it done then? They (the Unsullied) belong to me.'
> Missandei (Daenerys's translator and advisor): 'Pindas lu sa sir tida?' (Eng: 'She asks if it is now done.')
> Kraznys: responds affirmatively in Astapori Valyrian: 'Sa tida. Pelos ji qlony. J'aspo eza zya azantyr.' (Eng: 'It is done. She holds the whip. The b*tch has her army').
> Missandei: 'It is done. You hold the whip.'[5]

However, as Kraznys attempts to assert control over Drogon, it becomes evident that the dragon is not as submissive as the slaver believes. The dragon resists, jerking away and refusing to stay docile in Kraznys's grasp.

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4   The Unsullied are a highly disciplined and skilled slave army in the world of "Game of Thrones."
5   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ph8CPHgzi5Y, accessed on 30.01.2024

The tension in the scene builds as it becomes clear that the dragons cannot be easily subdued. As the transaction unfolds, Kraznys underestimates Daenerys due to her speaking in the Common Tongue, assuming she doesn't understand Valyrian. However, Daenerys reveals her command of Valyrian when she speaks to Drogon in the language, catching everyone by surprise.

Frustrated and unable to control Drogon, Kraznys calls for Missandei, to convey a message to Daenerys. He instructs Missandei to tell Daenerys that the dragon is not listening to him, highlighting the limitations of his authority over the powerful creatures. This moment is crucial as it foreshadows Daenerys's eventual mastery over her dragons and emphasizes the dragons' intelligence and independence. It sets the stage for the subsequent turn of events where Daenerys reveals her understanding of Valyrian and her strategic plan to retain both the Unsullied and her dragons:

> Daenerys (addressing the Unsullied): 'Dovaogedys! Naejot memebatas! Kelitis!'
> Kraznys (speaking in Astapori Valyrian): 'Ivetra j'aspo zya dyni do majis.' (Eng: 'Tell the b*tch the beast won't come').
> Daenerys (addressing Kraznys in Valyrian): 'Zaldrizes buzdari iksos daor.' (Eng: 'A dragon is not a slave').
> Kraznys (speaking in Astapori Valyrian): 'Ydra ji Valyre?' (Eng: 'You speak Valyrian?')
> Daenerys (addressing Kraznys in Valyrian): 'Nyke Daenerys Jelmazmo hen Targario Lentrot, hen Valyrio Uepo anogar iksan. Valyrio muño engos ñuhys issa.' (Eng: 'I am Daenerys Stormborn of the House Targaryen of the blood of Old Valyria; Valyrian is my mother tongue').

She then turns to the Unsullied, issuing commands that nullify the slave-master's control over them. In this powerful moment, Daenerys not only acquires the Unsullied without sacrificing her dragon, but also emancipates the slave army by exploiting her linguistic advantage:

> Daenerys: (addressing the Unsullied in Valyrian): 'Dovaogedys! Aeksia ossenatas, menti ossenatas, qiloni pilos lue vale tolvie ossenatas, yn riñe dore odrikatas. Urnet luo buzdaro tolvio belma pryjatas!' (Eng: 'Unsullied! Slay the masters, slay the soldiers, slay every man who holds a whip, but harm no child! Strike the chains off every slave you see!').
> Kraznys (speaking in Astapori Valyrian): 'Nyk skan jiva aeske! Zer sena! Zer sena!' (Eng: 'I am your master! Kill her! Kill her!').
> Daenerys: (addressing her dragon, Drogon, in Valyrian): *Dracarys!* ("Dracarys" is a High Valyrian word that serves as a command for Daenerys Targaryen's dragons to breathe fire. The literal translation of "dracarys" from High Valyrian is "dragonfire" or "fire of the dragon").

The scene showcases Daenerys's strategic brilliance, linguistic prowess, and determination to break free from the shackles of oppression. It marks a turning point in her character arc as she begins her journey to liberate slaves and build her own formidable army. The use of Valyrian adds depth to the exchange, emphasizing the cultural and linguistic dynamics at play.

In summary, High Valyrian represents symbolic restoration. Beyond the immediate political context, Daenerys's use of High Valyrian symbolizes a broader endeavor — the restoration of the Targaryen dynasty's glory. As the last surviving member of her house, Daenerys leverages language as a tool for cultural reclamation.

Dothraki – The Interplay between Language and Cultural Assimilation

Conversely, Dothraki, the guttural and raw language of the nomadic Dothraki people, serves as a linguistic tool for Daenerys when engaging with the horse lords of Essos. Unlike the elegant and refined High Valyrian, Dothraki is stark and direct, reflecting the harsh realities of the nomadic lifestyle. Daenerys's command of Dothraki becomes instrumental in navigating the intricacies of cultural diplomacy.

However, Daenerys's mastery of Dothraki is not merely linguistic. It signifies her willingness to fully immerse herself in the Dothraki way of life. Speaking Dothraki is not just about communication; it is a symbolic act of cultural assimilation, crucial for building alliances and solidifying her role as Khaleesi.[6] Language is regarded as the primary facilitator of acculturation. The process of acculturation refers to the alterations that individuals undergo when they interact with a different culture, leading to a continuous sequence of adaptation and assimilation (Berry, 1980). Language serves as a means of communication and a symbol of identity. Proficiency in a language corresponds to a high degree of acculturation to the target culture. Research conducted by Fishman (1972) indicates that individuals who do not adapt to the linguistic changes in their language community experience social dislocation.

Subsequently, we wish to illustrate an excerpt from Season 1, Episode 8, titled "The Pointy End." In this scene, Mago, a warrior within Khal Drogo's khalasar, confronts Khal Drogo about his decision to spare the lives of defeated enemies, particularly women and children. Mago expresses discontent with this deviation from Dothraki traditions, advocating for the more traditional practice

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[6] In the context of "Game of Thrones", the title "Khaleesi" refers to the wife of a Dothraki leader, known as a Khal.

of enslaving defeated foes. Khal Drogo, however, listens to Mago's grievances but surprises everyone by defending Daenerys's plea to spare the women and children. This moment showcases Khal Drogo's growing respect and admiration for Daenerys, as he recognizes her influence on his decisions and begins to question certain aspects of Dothraki traditions. This scene is pivotal in demonstrating Daenerys's evolving role within the Dothraki culture and Khal Drogo's changing perspective as he starts to embrace a different approach under her influence:

> Drogo: 'Zhey jalán átthirari ánni, Mágo ásta mesháfka fich qorasókh máe: óhara háeshi rákhi fin qóraso me ásaja máe. Ásti anhaán hash jíni jíla.' (Eng: 'Moon of my life, Mago says that you took his spoils, a daughter of the Lamb Men who was his to mount. Tell me if this is so').
> Mago: 'Yer ifák. Yer ássoo ánna voséchhi!'[7] (Eng: 'You are a foreigner. You do not command me!').
> Daenerys: 'Ánha kháleesi. Ánha assók yéra sekósshi.' (Eng: 'I am khaleesi. I do command you!').
> Khal Drogo responds to this (the speech beginning 'See how fierce she grows?')
> Mago: 'Khal fin ássoe mezháh jáhakmeni vos khal.' (Eng: 'A Khal who takes orders from foreign whores is no Khal.'[8] (Lit. 'A khal whom foreign whores order is no khal.')

The scene where Daenerys braids Khal Drogo's hair is a poignant moment that highlights Daenerys's efforts to learn the Dothraki language and immerse herself in their culture. In this cultural exchange, Daenerys engages with Khal Drogo in Dothraki, demonstrating her commitment to adapting to his way of life. Despite the initial challenges, Daenerys's attempts to communicate in Dothraki reflect her desire to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between herself and the Dothraki horde. The following is an excerpt from a dialogue between Daenerys Targaryen (Khaleesi) and her husband, Khal Drogo, from Season 1, Episode 7[9]:

> Khal Drogo: 'Vezh fin Sája Rhaesheserés vos zígereo adoroón shíqethi.'
> (Eng: 'The Stallion who mounts the world has no need of iron chairs').

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[7] Notes: Mago here uses the informal second person with Dany, which is a grave mistake—especially before Khal Drogo.

[8] Notes: The word *mezháh* has a double meaning. When used within the Dothraki culture, it refers to a woman one has sex with but whom one doesn't marry. It's not an insult, if used appropriately, but it is when used inappropriately (e.g. in reference to someone else's wife). https://dedalvs.com/work/game-of-thrones/game_of_thrones_master_dialogue_s1s2.pdf, accessed on 30.01.2024

[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAsDy8V9l3s, accessed on 30.01.2024

Daenerys: 'K'ási ássikhqoyisiri, Vezh ádothrae nakhaán rháesheseri.' (Eng: 'According to the prophecy, the Stallion will ride to the ends of the earth').

Khal Drogo: 'Sorfosór nákha she Hávazzhifi Kázga. Vo hrazéf laz yóma evethíz.' (Eng: 'The land ends at the Black Salt Sea. No horse can cross the poison water').

Daenerys: Dalén rhaggát evéth ma ále vékhi she Váes Serís: Hrazéf Ído fíni óvethi yómme havázh…' (Eng: 'There are a thousand ships and more in the Free Cities: Wooden horses that fly across the sea…').

Daenerys: 'Sorfosór nákho vosécchi she havázh. Sáni sórfi vékha yómme havázh. Sórfo áthyolari ánni.' (Eng: 'The earth does not end at the sea. There are many dirts beyond the sea. The *dirt* of my birth').

Khal Drogo: 'Vos "sórfo": *Rháeshi.*' (Eng: 'Not "dirts": *Lands*').

Daenerys: 'Rháeshi, sek…' (Eng: 'Lands, yes…').

Khal Drogo: 'Kísha vástoki vos alíkh hrázefi ído m'ádori shíqethi.' (Eng: 'We will speak no more of wooden horses and iron chairs').

Daenerys: 'Me vos "adór", me…me…' (Eng: 'It's not a chair, it's a… *throne*').

Khal Drogo: *'Throne?'*

Daenerys: 'Adór finaán khal névasoe. Che kháleesi.' (Eng: 'A chair for a king to sit on. Or a queen').

Khal Drogo: 'Khal vos zígereo adoroón ánevasoe maán. Me zígeree sajosoón dísse.' (Eng: 'A khal does not need a chair to sit upon. He needs only a mount').[10]

The significance of this scene lies in Daenerys's symbolic gesture of adopting Dothraki customs, transcending mere language learning. Through the shared language, she seeks not only to communicate but also to connect on a deeper cultural level, emphasizing her commitment to her marriage and the integration of Dothraki traditions into her identity. This moment foreshadows Daenerys's evolving role as a cultural ambassador.

Moreover, Dothraki, known for its blunt and forceful nature, becomes a linguistic expression of strength and authority. Daenerys employs Dothraki when addressing the Dothraki horde (khalasar), conveying commands with a directness that resonates with their warrior culture. The language serves as a bridge between Daenerys and the Dothraki, establishing her as a formidable leader who understands, respects, and embraces their way of life.

For women rulers such as Daenerys, public ruling also means 'internalizing masculinized characteristics', including 'confidence, ferocity, aggressiveness and a capacity and a willingness to use force.' These 'characterize her development

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[10] https://dedalvs.com/work/game-of-thrones/game_of_thrones_master_dialogue_s1s2.pdf, accessed on 30.01.2024

as a ruler and a wielder of authority' (Clapton & Shepherd 2015:3). Moving forward, we aim to provide further illustration for the aforementioned ideas:

> Daenerys: 'Anha qafak asqoy yeroa, majin yeri m'athiri m'adrivoe ven qoy qoyi, m'adothrae anni m'avijezeri anna athzhowakaroon.' (Eng: 'I ask your oath, that you will live and die as blood of my blood, riding at my side to keep me safe from harm').
> Dothraki: 'Qoy qoyi! Qoy qoyi!' (Eng: 'Blood of my blood! Blood of my blood!')
> Daenerys: 'Anha aqafak san ale yeroa ei Khaloon ray qaf khalasaroon mae!' (Eng: 'I will ask more of you than any Khal has ever asked of his khalasar!")
> Daenerys: 'Hash yeri adothrae hrazef ido yomme Havazzhifi Kazga?' (Eng: 'Will you ride the wooden horses across the black salt sea?')
> Daenerys: 'Hash yeri vaddrivi dozge anni ma khogaroon shiqethi mori majin vohhari okrenegwin mori?' (Eng: 'Will you kill my enemies in their iron suits and tear down their stone houses?')
> Daenerys: 'Hash yeri vazhi anhaan Rhaeshis Andahli, jin azho me-Khal Drogo ast asqoy mehas hatif Maisi Krazaaji kash shieraki vitihir asavvasoon?' (Eng: 'Will you give me the Seven Kingdoms, the gift Khal Drogo promised me before the Mother of Mountains as the stars looked down in witness?')
> Daenerys: 'Hash yeri m'anhoon, ma jinne m'ayyeyaan?!' (Eng: 'Are you with me, now and always?!').[11]

Furthermore, Daenerys's deliberate use of Dothraki is not just a matter of linguistic choice; it is a strategic tool for cultural adaptation. Daenerys, by speaking the language of the nomads, breaks down barriers and fosters a sense of unity. It becomes an essential aspect of her journey towards becoming the Mother of Dragons and the Khaleesi who unites disparate tribes under a common cause, and precisely the identity she gains as Mother of Dragons 'provides her the power she needs to emerge as a leader' (Schroeder 2016, 21). The usage of language functions as a small-scale representation of a broader culture, and through acquiring mastery of the language, Daenerys attains a more profound comprehension of the identity and customs of the Dothraki people.

Moreover, as stated by Schroeder (2016, 91), 'the Dothraki respect the tangible physical force of the dragons' real power and the Westerosi respect their connection to the Targaryen line'. These two important aspects make Daenerys 'able to assume her public authority' (Cabrejas-Peñuelas, 2021).

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[11] https://dedalvs.tumblr.com/post/145160388754/dothraki-dialogue-episode-606-of-game-of-thrones, Accessed on 30.01.2024

According to Schroeder (2016, 92), 'so long as she remains connected to the dragons, and the symbolic maternity they represent, she is able to assume the role of authoritative figure and influence others.'

In conclusion, the exploration of Daenerys and the Dothraki unveils a dynamic interplay of cultural exchange, leadership dynamics, and the evolution of characters within "Game of Thrones." Daenerys's transformative journey from a vulnerable girl to a respected Khaleesi not only showcases her adaptability and resilience, but also highlights her ability to influence and lead a nomadic warrior culture with unique traditions.

The Impact of Acculturation on Daenerys Targaryen's Journey

Daenerys's motives for taking action are highly pragmatic and strategic. By engaging with the Dothraki, Daenerys is displaying her loyalty and commitment to them. She is aware that in order to conquer Westeros, she requires the support of the Westerosi, so it is crucial for her to maintain her alliance with them. By demonstrating a long-term dedication to the Dothraki, Daenerys hopes to create a scenario where she can return to Westeros leading a Dothraki horde. This strategic approach is also evident in her decision to invest time in learning the Dothraki language. When she emerges from the palace wearing Dothraki attire, she is outwardly displaying her progress in the acculturation process. Acculturation is a phenomenon where interaction between two cultures leads to changes in the cultural traditions of either the individual or the group (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits 149). Daenerys desires a swift integration process, as prolonged contact between cultures increases the likelihood of conflicts regarding racial dominance, ultimately leading to the elimination or impoverishment of the minority group (Gordon, 1964). Given the turbulent and unstable history of Khaleesi rule in the past, Daenerys recognizes the dangers posed by her current situation. To protect herself and her people from a violent and embarrassing downfall, Daenerys equips herself with the means to both adapt to and control the Dothraki culture (ibid).

Conclusions

This study has examined the connection between constructed languages, cultures, and power dynamics in Martin-esque secondary worlds. Through a critical discourse analysis, two societies in George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" book series and the accompanying HBO television series "Game of Thrones", namely the Dothraki and the Valyrians, were compared in terms of their language, culture, and behavioral norms. Based on this analysis, it was

concluded that language plays a crucial role in shaping social environments and power relations between different groups of people, challenging the notion that linguistic manipulation is exclusive to the real world, used by powerful groups to solidify their dominance. This assumption poses difficulties when applied to fantasy and science fiction secondary worlds, thus a framework was applied to objectively evaluate the level of linguistic relativity in any given constructed language and culture. By doing so, we can gain a better understanding of how and why certain manipulations of linguistic systems in secondary worlds are portrayed, and what this reveals about the author's perspective on existing social power dynamics, avoiding hypothetical comparisons with the real world. The Valyrians, known for their control over dragons, held significant power. If culture and language are the defining characteristics of a people, then language was the tool through which the Valyrians advanced their influence.

In essence, Daenerys's journey epitomizes the transformative potential inherent in cultural exchange. As she traverses the diverse landscapes of Westeros and Essos, her mastery of Dothraki and High Valyrian becomes more than a linguistic skill—it transforms into a powerful instrument of cultural diplomacy. Daenerys's ability to communicate seamlessly with different communities not only showcases her adaptability, but also positions her as a bridge between worlds, embodying the essence of a cultural ambassador. The significance of language in Daenerys's narrative arc goes beyond mere communication; it becomes a catalyst for shaping alliances, dismantling cultural barriers, and redefining power dynamics. In leading the Dothraki horde, Daenerys not only commands respect, but also introduces a new order that amalgamates diverse cultural elements.

Ultimately, the exploration of Daenerys Targaryen's role as a cultural ambassador within the "Game of Thrones" TV series not only unravels a rich tapestry of linguistic proficiency, cultural adaptation, and leadership, but also sheds light on the intricate dynamics of diplomacy and influence.

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