The Movement of *slow*: From English to Italian and Back Again. A Diachronic Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract

The present study explores the changes in the meaning of the word *slow*, both in Italian and English, from the beginning of the Slow Food Movement (SFM) up to 2019.

Since 1989 and the early days of Carlo Petrini's SFM, technology has increasingly led people towards multi-tasking in an attempt to save time, meanwhile, back to the past trends are increasingly evident as seen in several other Slow Movements, for example, in catering and hand-made/retro chains. The concept of slowness is becoming a relevant and ethical topic that is often related to what is organic, local and sustainable, leading to the introduction of an anglicism in Italian, but also to a new whole re-semantization of the word *slow* in English.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the semantic changes in the word *slow* diachronically both in Italian and in English. To this aim, two robust corpora were created, one from the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* and the other from the British *The Guardian*. The word *slow* was analysed within the different newspaper domains exploring frequencies, collocates, and identifying significant "repeated events" (Sinclair 2004: 28) together with their semantic preferences.

Results from the diachronic analysis show that through the SFM, the word *slow* has taken on specific new meanings in Italian, related to the dimensions of ethics, wellbeing, and environmental awareness. These were then partly re-introduced in English. More specifically, the case of reborrowing of *slow* within the context of movements (*slow fashion*, *slow tourism*, etc.) has quite likely been influenced by the Italian SFM. As a matter of fact, this process of reborrowing involves both acquisition and loss in meaning in both languages. This seems to be a relevant phenomenon in a global context of constant linguistic contact where English appears to play a relevant role as a global language.

1. Introduction

The word *slow* first appeared in Old English to refer to what was sluggish, slothful, late, and tardy. At first sight, it appears that this negative connotation of *slow* has largely remained to the present day, in that the notions of speed and alacrity are generally seen more positively than that of slowness. However, in this paper we argue that the meaning of *slow* may have partly changed thanks to a reborrowing which has brought new meanings to the word when introduced to specific contexts, first through the innovative collocation *slow food*. Therefore, our aim is to explore changes in the meanings of the word *slow* both in Italian and English, starting from the beginning of the Slow Food Movement up to 2019.

The word *slow* started to be linked to food with the foundation of the Slow Food Movement (SFM) in Italy in 1989. Before that, *slow* had been introduced into Italian in the early 1920s in relation to a certain type of dance ('ballo lento'). With the SFM, however, the loanword *slow* acquires new meanings that are no longer only related to an unhurried pace, but also include reference to healthy food.[1] We argue that, with the SFM slogan "*buono, pulito e giusto*", literally "good, clean and fair", the adjective *slow* is now associated with taste, healthiness/sustainability, and fairness. The choice of *pulito* (literally 'clean') in the slogan is a key one for the polysemy that characterizes the adjective in this context, where it refers to food as wholesome, natural, healthy, unprocessed, and good for the person's wellbeing and for the protection of the environment. The SFM slogan is thus the tip of a semantic iceberg that nowadays informs the concept of slowness, as we shall explore in this paper. By illustrating how the English loanword *slow* has been used in Italian with new meanings, we also set out to demonstrate how the newer Italian use of *slow* may have influenced and changed the use of *slow* in English too. This is certainly a peculiar case, as usually the original meaning of the loanword persists and remains unchanged in the source language. In this case, the new connotations of *slow* attributed by the borrowing language were also adopted by the source language: the new sense of the borrowed word was reborrowed in English as a semantic loan.

The modifier *slow* of the SFM creates a whole new "rhetoric" (Schneider 2008: 385) with novel meanings. SFM is more the rhetoric of community organization than a protest movement. As a movement, it focuses on social capital, which is based on healthy community values built upon the humanization of the market rather than its dismantling. As argued by Bauman (2007: 33), "contemporary society engages its members primarily as consumers, only secondarily and in part does it engage with producers" and the SFM positions itself in sharp contrast with societies where quantity is preferred over quality and where labour is seen as production. The aim of the movement is to provide human beings with what Bauman (2007: 29) calls "emotional anchors" rather than simply classifying them as consumers, producers, chain workers or robots.

The SFM has rapidly become popular outside Italy and in the UK. Despite the negative connotations of the adjective *slow* in English (indicating dullness and sluggishness), the use of the adjective has rapidly been adopted in the context of the SFM and elsewhere. The Slow Food Movement, and in particular Slow Food London[2] has contributed to raising awareness towards biodiversity and promoting education in taste, political and social matters, such as supporting local organic farmers and local economies (Landzettel 2019a; 2019b), and addressing climate change (Landzettel 2019c) while creating international networks. What is significant about the UK, and London in particular, is its "contradiction between high-paced city living and the desire to eat with an active conscience" (Heazlewood 2016). This political and social awareness leads citizens to search for ethical solutions within a fast and often changing technological context.

The impact of SFMs has been investigated from sociological (Martínkováa et al. 2022; Hendrikx, Lagendijk 2020; Payande et al. 2020), to higher education (Berg, Seeber 2016), and marketing perspectives (Sobreira et al. 2022), where researchers have mainly stressed the importance of these movements for a more ethical and sustainable approach to the environment and the economy. So far, no studies have focused on the new meanings related to *slow*, nor on the impact that SFMs might have had on language. Has the meaning of the word *slow* changed in both languages since the SFM first entered Italian? This study aims to explore how *slow* has been used in Italian and English newspaper discourse after the creation of the SFM.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the methods and materials. Section 3 explores results and discusses quantitative changes and trends of *slow* both in Italian and in English (3.1), with a focus on its use across newspaper domains (3.2). Qualitative analyses look at collocations of *slow* (3.3) in the selected domains of Food (3.3.1), Society (3.3.2), Entertainment (3.3.3), and Politics & Economics (3.3.4). The main points of this study will be summed up as a summary on *slow* as a case of reborrowing (3.4) and Conclusions (4).

2. Materials and Methods

This section provides details of how a diachronic corpus of news discourse was collected and presents the methodologies adopted in this study.

To carry out a diachronic analysis of the word *slow*, we collected two corpora, one in Italian and another in English, from LexisNexis,[3] a platform that provides access to the archives of different newspapers from most countries around the world. All articles containing the word *slow* were collected from *La Stampa*, for the Italian corpus, and from *The Guardian*, for the English corpus. *La Stampa* was chosen as it is the only Italian newspaper with data from 1969 onwards, while other newspapers, such as *La Repubblica*, only have more recent archives available. *The Guardian* was chosen as a comparable newspaper in terms of readership and orientation. Bearing in mind the year 1989 as the beginning of the SFM, for the Italian corpus articles were collected every 5th year from 1969 (20 years before the SFM) to 2019 (30 years after) with a total of 447,227 tokens (772 texts), to have a full view of the diachronic change of *slow* in Italian over the last 50 years. The English corpus was meant to trace the impact of the SFM and consists of articles selected every 5th year from 1989 to 2019 with a total of 14,474,850 tokens (13,633 texts).

Once the two corpora were collected, using the keywords provided by the articles themselves, we identified some recurring topics in the articles containing the word *slow*; these were: Crime, Education, Environment, Entertainment, Food, Literature, Medicine, Politics & Economics, Society, Sports, Technology, Tourism, and Weather. These thirteen domains were used to create different sub-corpora that would allow the study of variations across domains.

The study adopted a combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis together with the support of WordSmith 7 software (Scott 2016). Initially, we identified frequencies of *slow* over the years to explore diachronic changes in the frequency of the word form. Then, we explored changes in meaning by studying the collocations of the form. We looked at frequencies of the collocates of our node word; this allowed us to identify "repeated events" (Sinclair 2004: 28) and exclude single occurrences of collocates that would be unremarkable for our study (Sinclair 2004: 29). The qualitative analysis of the collocates of *slow* also paid attention to semantic preferences (Sinclair 2004: 32) that are associated with our node of interest. Collocates were analysed diachronically, taking into account changes occurring every fifteen years. However, when no occurrences were available for specific domains in Italian, we examined collocates every ten years. This choice allows for easier and more effective reading of the data and enabled us to track the significant changes in our word of interest.

It is important to note that, in *The Guardian*, we mostly looked at significant variations and connotations of *slow* in meanings that might have derived from the SFM and that might have been linked to the "good, clean and fair" principles. Therefore, we discarded all the other meanings of *slow*, mostly linked to its negative connotations (e.g., She was hyperactive, naughty, quite manipulative of men and *slow* at school).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Evolution of the Frequency of *slow* in Italy and in the UK from 1969 to 2019

Table 1 presents the data of the preliminary quantitative results of our corpora, displaying raw frequency and relative frequency per 10,000 words (pttw) of *slow*, number of texts, and tokens per year for each of the two samples.

The Italian corpus displays a marked increase in the use of the loanword *slow* since 1989, which coincides with the beginning of the SFM. It seems that the advent of the SFM caused an increase in the number of texts containing the word *slow* from under ten occurrences per year between 1969 and 1984, to 102

Samples	Italian Sample				English sample			
Year	Freq.	Rel. Freq.(pttw)	Number of Texts	Tokens	Freq.	Rel. Freq. (pttw)	Number of Texts	Tokens
1969	3	0.07	2	6802	-	-	-	-
1974	3	0.07	3	10491	-	-	-	-
1979	5	0.11	4	11453	-	-	-	-
1984	6	0.13	6	6282	-	-	-	-
1989	102	2.28	42	39893	1370	0.94	1200	1058358
1994	10	0.22	10	6670	1586	1.09	1436	1331861
1999	104	2.32	46	28647	1564	1.08	1403	1361748
2004	334	7.47	171	103015	2252	1.55	1819	1717893
2009	332	7.42	205	99277	3945	2.72	3494	3038745
2014	398	8.9	241	112968	3207	2.21	2943	3553826
2019 (January-April)	67	1.5	42	21729	1466	1.01	1338	2412419

Tab. 1 │ Comparison of frequencies, number of texts, and tokens in the two samples.

occurrences in 1989, after which there is a sudden decrease in its use in 1994, when it occurs in only ten texts, ten hits and an overall count of 6,670 tokens. Between 2004 and 2014 on the other hand, the term appeared in at least six-hundred texts with a thousand hits of *slow* in *La Stampa*, showing a more frequent use of this loanword in Italian.

As expected, in *The Guardian*, the number of texts containing *slow* is quite high, as it is a common adjective in English. However, when looking at the relative frequency of our node word in both of our corpora, we notice that in *La Stampa slow* is generally more frequent than in *The Guardian.* Figure 1 below provides the reader with a visual representation of the relative frequencies of *slow* in both of our corpora, confirming a higher use of the adjective in Italian and a lower but more constant use in English.

It should be noted however, that the mere increase in frequency of the word form in Italian is a
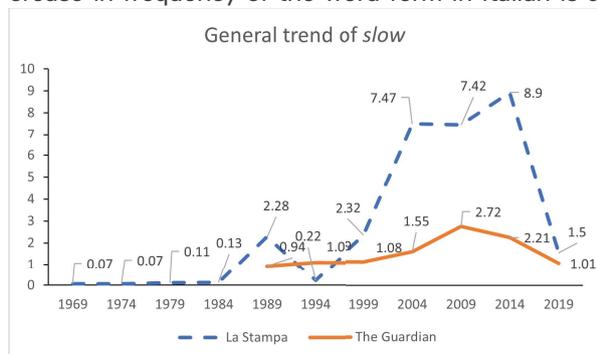

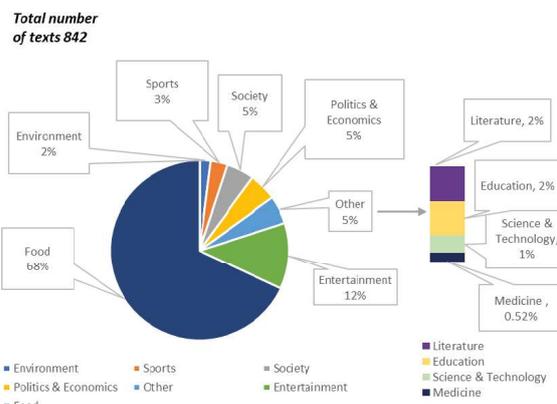**Fig. 1** │ General trend of *slow* in *La Stampa* and *The Guardian*.

Fig. 2 │ Distribution of the domanis in *La Stampa*.

measure of the interest of the topic in the press, rather than a measure of how the word has become to be active part of the Italian lexicon. In order to explore its meaning and use, we need to see what meanings are typically associated to it and how far the adjective is used productively in other contexts, apart from the SFM.

3.2.2 The Domains of *slow*

The distribution of the word *slow* across the different domains [Fig. 2] in the Italian corpus shows that most of the articles fall under the Food domain (68%), followed by Entertainment (12%), Politics and Economics (5%) and Society (5%). The remaining 10% of occurrences are distributed across Sports (3%), Environment (2%) and Other (5%). This last domain embodies and encompasses Education (2%), Literature (2%), Science and Technology (1%) and Medicine (0.52%).

In *The Guardian* [Fig. 3], almost three quarters of the articles fall under Politics and Economics (25%), Entertainment (24%) and Sports (20%), followed by Society (11%), Environment (4%), Science & Technology (4%) and Medicine (2%). The remaining 10% are distributed between Food, Education and Other, which is embodied and encompassed by Crime (2%), Literature (2%), Weather (1%), Brexit (1%) and Tourism (0.4%).

If we look at both pie charts, it appears that the word form is unsurprisingly used in a much wider
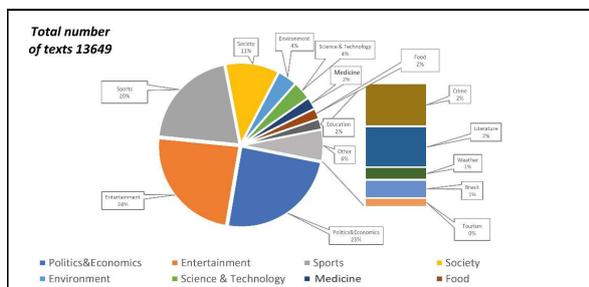
Fig. 3 | Distribution of the domanis in *The Guardian*.

range of domains in English with Sports, Society, Entertainment, and Politics & Economics representing the vast majority. In the Italian corpus, on the other hand, the domain of Food is overwhelmingly dominant, followed by Entertainment, Politics & Economics, and Society with a much lower distribution.

In order to map the different contexts in which the word is used, we will examine the use of *slow* within the domains of Food, Entertainment, Politics & Economics, and Society, which together make up 90% of all *La Stampa* articles. Each of these domains will also be explored in *The Guardian* corpus, where altogether they represent 86% of articles. Table 2 displays the diachronic frequency of *slow* within each of the selected domains in both corpora.

Results show that in *La Stampa* the use of *slow*, despite not being always constant over the years (see P&E and Society), is much more frequent than in *The Guardian*, with frequencies oscillating between 0.005 and 0.15 pttw. However, Table 2 confirms once again a strong link between *slow* and Food in the Italian context, where it appears for the first time 1989, in conjunction with the beginning of the SFM. Then, besides a decrease in 1994 (0.16 hits), the situation seems to remain stable between 2004 and 2019, as

hits range between 0.33 and 0.44 per 10,000 words. Most importantly, the year 1989 acts as a turning point in the extension of the loanword from the domain of entertainment (and dance) to other domains, confirming the possible influence of the SFM.

In *The Guardian*, on the contrary, *slow* is rarely mentioned in the Food domain, suggesting a limited attention to the notion of Slow Food. As a matter of fact, in this domain, the main use of *slow* is about recipes, referring to a particular way of cooking (e.g., *slow oven*, *slow lamb*, *slow steam*). Moreover, the diachronic data also shows that there is no significant variation in frequency over the years, except for some oscillation in the area of food, once again possibly related to varying interest in the topic of SF.

3.3 Collocations of the Word *slow* in *La Stampa* and in *The Guardian*

An analysis of collocates of the word form (and of the fixed collocations involving it) might be helpful in exploring how the new meanings of *slow* have extended to different domains in Italian and brought about changes in English too.

3.3.1 Food in Italy and in the UK

The domain of Food can be seen as the domain that originated the new meanings of sustainability and fairness, introducing a marked change in the Italian anglicism and the potential for change in English.

a) The Domain of *Food* in the *La Stampa* corpus
In the Italian Food domain, *slow* always refers to the SFM, which is why collocates of *slow* can be grouped into four semantic categories linked to this specific movement, namely its nature as a 'movement' (*Arcigola*, *consigli*, *manifesto*, *movimento*, *associazioni…*), its main focus on 'nutrition' and 'food' (*alimentazione*, *gastronomia*, *gusto*, *mangiare*, *tavola…*), the explicit link with the specific notion of 'time' (*calma*, *frenesia*, *lentamente…*), and the centrality of an ethical dimension involving both sustainability and fairness ('ethics': *ambiente*, *biodiversità*, *collaborazione…*).

A more detailed diachronic examination in the selected sampling years shows that in 1989 collocates of *slow* were mostly associated with words linked to

	La Stampa				*The Guardian*			
Domains / **Years**	**Food**	**Entert.**	**P&E**	**Society**	**Food**	**Entert.**	**P&E**	**Society**
1969	0	0.02	0.06	0	-	-	-	-
1974	0	0.02	0	0	-	-	-	-
1979	0	0.49	0	0	-	-	-	-
1984	0	0.09	0	0	-	-	-	-
1989	0.47	0.15	0.14	0.54	0.005	0.12	0.13	0.1
1994	0.16	0.17	0	0	0.01	0.10	0.12	0.09
1999	0.38	0.24	0.41	0	0.02	0.10	0.11	0.1
2004	0.39	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.03	0.15	0.13	0.1
2009	0.33	0.29	0.46	0.45	0.04	0.12	0.12	0.13
2014	0.44	0.22	0.14	0.22	0.11	0.1	0.08	0.08
2019	0.37	0.25	0	0.22	0.03	0.08	0.07	0.09

Tab. 2 | Diachronic relative frequency (pttw) in *La Stampa* and *The Guardian*.

the SFM such as *movimento* ('movement'), *manifesto* ('manifesto'), *internazionale* ('international'), and with the field of eating in general, with words such as *mangiare* ('to eat') and *tavola* ('table'). Some collocates refer to qualities linked to the SFM such as *lento* ('slow'), *calma* ('calm'), *lentamente* ('slowly'), *frenesia* ('frenzy'). The word *tavola* is particularly important as it is a frequent metonymical substitute for 'cibo' (the food that is placed on the table), and *a tavola* ('at table') means 'eating'. In fact, in Italian, *stare a tavola* does not only mean to literally 'sit at table' but the table is also seen as a social place where family, friends and colleagues take time to sit, eat, enjoy food, and discuss important and unimportant issues. In fact, according to Korsmeyer (1999: 186) in Italy "eating is an extended event", or as Bosio expounds (2013: 1), the temporal dimension of eating allows the appetite to be satisfied to develop a narrative text within the act of consumption.

By 2004, on the other hand, we meet new elements connected to the ethical dimension of *slow*, such as *biodiversità* ('biodiversity') – which appears six times – and *filosofia* ('philosophy'), that occurs four times. The element of biodiversity can easily be related to a growing awareness of issues such as climate change and the need for environmental preservation. Slow Food is associated with values linked to sustainability, and not just food. It is not by chance that the word *filosofia* starts to appear among the collocates. The SFM is no longer a political and social movement, but is turning into a philosophy, a different way of approaching both food and life. Collocates show no other significant diachronic change for the year 2019.

b) The Domain of *Food* in the *The Guardian* corpus
In the English corpus, when focusing on the association with the SFM, the collocation *Slow Food Movement* appears first in 1994, and it is at its highest frequency in 2004. Most articles regarding this topic, however, seem to have the informative purpose of explaining and presenting the movement to readers. Even if its meaning should be intuitive to native speakers, the expression appears to need further explanation. Example (1) shows how an explanation of the movement opens with a definition of its name in terms of what it is not: 'a kind of Anti-McDonalds'.

(1) As its name implies, Slow Food is a kind of Anti-McDonalds'.

The SFM is also defined as a 'crusade' (2), a battle against consumerism and fast-food chains.

(2) Petrini, who began his Slow Food crusade in the 1980s (…).

The metaphor suggests that SFM sets out to present itself as a movement with principles and ethics worth fighting for, but there are no further associations with the semantic area of environmental protection.

3.3.2 Society in Italy and in the UK

The distinction between the Food subcorpus and the Society one is somewhat arbitrary as we find references to food within articles more generally classified as Society. As stated in the Methodology section (See Section 2) we followed the classification provided by the newspaper itself. However, generally, this section contains all articles about social and cultural events, social problems (such as obesity, depression, drugs – not from a medical point of view, but from a social perspective), youth, religion, and charity. As we took into account one newspaper for each country, it is hard to determine whether the preference for certain topics in this subsection is due to cultural reasons or to editorial choices. Nevertheless, this subcorpus clearly shows how *slow* rapidly expanded to other fields and to a whole range of slow movements.

a) The Domain of *Society* in *La Stampa* corpus
The two semantic associations of *slow* that were found for the selected domain are those of 'movement' and 'ethics'. What falls under the semantic category of 'movement' is related to the expansion of the SFM to other fields. In other words, it includes new fixed collocations with reference to other slow movements (i.e., *Slow Book*, *Città Slow*, and *Slow Sex*), and it gathers elements related to social events, education, and agriculture initiatives. It also includes collocates related to the nature of the slow movements (i.e., *manifestazione*) and to symbolic locations of the SFM (i.e., *presidio*). 'Ethics' groups together those collocates that refer to features and characteristics related to any of the movements, such as *collabo-*

razione ('collaboration'), *ideologia* ('ideology'), and *qualità* ('quality').

Examining *slow* diachronically, in 1989 there is only one article linked to Slow Food. Collocates of *slow* are *food*, *mangiare* ('eat'), *movimento* ('movement'), *mondiale* ('global') and *ristorante* ('restaurant'). Although the article is classified within the Society domain, *slow* is still linked to the semantic field of 'food' and the SFM.

By 2004, elements are connected to new values and activities related to *slow*, such as *biodiversity*, *meditation* and *collaboration*. Among these, we have proper names either related to famous people who have been invited to vouch for different slow movements during various public events (e.g., *Carlo Petrini, Letizia Moratti, Stefano Bonilli*), or to publishing houses and cities (e.g. *Vancouver*). SFM is not only migrating to other movements (e.g., *Città Slow* and *Slow Book*), but it is also crossing borders and influencing other countries. This suggests the beginning of a sociocultural transformation with a shift in people's interests and needs.

In 2019, the link between new slow movements (e.g., *slow shopping, slow living, variante slow*) and the SFM is not explicit: the word has become accepted in Italian and its connection to the SFM is now taken for granted. For instance, with *variante slow* (literally the 'slow variant'), which refers to a specific walk in the Alps, *slow* functions as an ordinary adjective used to qualify a noun, without being associated to any movement. Possibly, this is because *slow* has already been assimilated and integrated into Italian, therefore it needs no translation or explanation.

b) The Domain of *Society* in *The Guardian* corpus
When looking at the Society domain in *The Guardian* corpus, it becomes apparent that *slow* has been used to describe, report, and qualify a range of slow movements beginning from 1994 with the SFM, and subsequently in 2004, 2009, and 2019: *slow fashion, slow art, slow money, go slow, slow cities, slow cinema,* and *slow presenter*.

In 2004 *cittaslow* ('slow city') explicitly refers to the SFM (3) underlining the wellbeing values (e.g., *health*) that the new movement has taken from Petrini's one:

(3) Like the *slow* food philosophy, Cittaslow promotes the

health benefits of eating local produce and encourages trade in locally-grown foods to create a healthy town economy.

In 2019, *slow fashion* shows no clear reference to the SFM, but the concepts share its principles. In fact, the slow fashion movement is, "a tendency to prize the making over the wearing", therefore values of ethics and sustainability emerge. *Slow art* instead is defined by contrast: "slow-art in a fast world" evoking the core values and the nature of the movement, which is that of juxtaposition and countering the trends that seem to follow globalization, consumerism, and fast consumption.

Once again, there is no explicit reference to the SFM, which might mean that the original values promoted by Petrini in 1989 have been already assimilated by society and stakeholders. Therefore, when *slow* is followed by any form of initiative or activity it might be carrying all the new meanings and associations that were given to it when the SFM was founded.

3.3.3 Entertainment in Italy and in the UK

The domain of entertainment marks the clearest changes in Italian, where *slow* rapidly extend its use from food to other fields such as tourism and art, which associate 'slowness' to sustainability and wellbeing.

a) The Domain of *Entertainment* in the *La Stampa* corpus
The collocates of *slow* in the domain of Entertainment can be grouped around three primary semantic preferences referring to the dimensions of 'dance' (*bolero*, *bossanova*, *danzando*, *spettacoli…*), 'sustainability' (*green*, *eco*, *territorio, verde*), and 'wellbeing' (*collaborazione*, *terapeutico…*). 'Dance' (4) groups together collocates related to music and dancing styles, while 'wellbeing' (5) groups word-forms linked to positive feelings that derive from any slow activity (e.g., *slow life, slow date*). Within the domain of 'sustainability' (6) collocates regard environmental awareness.

(4) Ricopre tutti i generi musicali dell'epoca, dal fox trot alo *slow*, dalla mazurca allo swing, dal valzer al tango, alla carioca.[4]

(5) La cura della barba altrui come atto filosofico, come spazio terapeutico *slow* in cui amarsi e rispettarsi.[5]
(6) La risposta «*slow* e green», come ha spiegato con voce la funzionaria dell'assessorato Stella Bertarione, a chi teme freddo, abissi e ghiacci.[6]

When looking at diachronic changes, between 1969 and 1989, in Italian, *slow* refers mainly to musical rhythms and to a type of ballroom dance, the so-called *ballo slow* ('slow dance'). There is no Italian translation next to the loanword, meaning that authors might take for granted that the audience is familiar with the specific genre.

In 1989 the main collocate of *slow* is *valzer* ('waltz') another term related to the semantic preference of dancing. By 1999, *slow* is related to the SFM and to other entertainment events linked to Petrini's movement. In 2009, collocates are once more related to the SFM (e.g., *food*, *gusto*, *qualità*, *Petrini*, *ristorante)*.

By 2019, collocates of *slow* become *cucina*, *Eataly*, *food*, *turismo* and *territorio*, showing that the word form is now mainly related to food and to tourism. Food is linked to cuisine (*cucina*), and to Eataly, the name of an Italian food chain that supports local products and commerce, whereas tourism is linked mainly to the promotion of a local area (*territorio*). This enumeration is completed by only two references to other movements that developed from the SFM, i.e., to Slow Tourism and Slow Date. Slow Tourism is also linked to elements of sustainability such as the environment (e.g., *slow* and *green*), while Slow Date refers to an initiative by Mirabilandia, an Italian amusement park that promoted a blind date with a potential partner on the park's Ferris wheel. What is interesting, though, is that in neither case was the modifier *slow* translated into Italian, suggesting that it might already be rooted in the language.

Overall, the loanword *slow* proves to have established itself in close association to food and tourism (rather than dance) and to have become highly capable of new associations. This evolution of consumption trends in the Italian entertainment industry can be seen as a shift from more 'social' activities like dancing ('ballo slow') to more 'individualistic' or 'elitist' pleasures such as meditation and sustainable forms of tourism. One paradox of this new emerging trend is that *slow* might lead to an exclusive movement, where wellbeing corresponds to a 'new luxury'

that only few people can afford.

b) The Domain of *Entertainment* in *The Guardian* corpus
The use of *slow* in this domain is mainly linked to fields of music (e.g., genres, musicians), dance (steps, rhythms), art (e.g., specific works), and travel (e.g., means of transport).

In 1989 and 1999, there is no reference to the SFM or other cultural movements. Only the 2009 corpus reveals some cases of the influence of the SFM on other cultural movements, namely *Slow Language movement*, the *Go Slow movement*, and *Eat Slow*. In association with *Slow Language movement*, we find words like *quiet, calm* and *comprehension*, suggesting that *slow* is correlated to something meditative. The analysis of the context regarding *Eat slow* reveals explicit references to the Italian SFM, as highlighted in clauses such as "arrives here from Italy" (7), or more generally with "coming to the UK" (8).

(7) But later this month the Go *Slow* movement arrives here from Italy to...
(8) Life at a snail's pace: The Go *Slow* movement is coming to the UK, but hitting...

In 2009, *slow travel* (9), is described through positive shared values of the SFM (e.g., *therapeutic*).

(9) It's surely time to promote the therapeutic value of *slow* travel.

For 2019, along with the usual collocates of *slow* in the field of music and of the arts, there are uses related to cultural movements like *Slow Walk, Slow Radio* and *Slow Cinema*, with no reference to the SFM. In this case, *slow* is associated with words like *mindful*, *anti-depressant* and *colouring-in,* which remind us of *therapeutic*, used in 2009 when referring to *slow travel*. Slow Radio and Slow Walk seem to be associated with issues related to wellbeing: in fact, Slow Radio's goal is to grant meditation and space for inner peace, while Slow Walk aims at pushing people to slow down and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Overall, it is important to emphasize that, with reference to cultural movements deriving from the SFM, *slow* carries new positive connotations and meanings associated with wellbeing. While not directly related

to the SFM, which seems to be an Italian prerogative, these might derive from the wellbeing meanings originally attributed to the word *slow* by the Italian movement.

3.3.4 Politics & Economics in Italy and in the UK

Altogether, in the domain of Politics & Economics (hereafter P&E) the adjective seems to have taken root in the economic field rather than in the political one. Both corpora witness the extension of the implications of sustainability and fairness to fields other than that of food.

a) The Domain of *Politics & Economics* in *La Stampa* corpus
In *La Stampa*, we identified one main semantic preference of the adjective *slow* for 'finance', which mostly groups together collocates related to the semantic field of money (i.e., *money, economy, investments*) and business (e.g., *company, growth*).

The diachronic perspective shows that there is only one occurrence of *slow* in 1969 – *slow down*, followed by its Italian translation *rallentamento* – showing that not all readers would have been familiar with the term used in the field of economics.

In 1989, on the other hand, *slow* is used as an adjective in *slow growth*. This refers to a particular economic phenomenon that occurred in the USA at the time, aimed at reducing the construction of new homes in residential areas to both cut crime in the suburbs and to increase resources for residents. Our concordance analysis reveals that the movement was linked to sustainability (*giardinetti ecologici*, literally 'ecological gardens'; and *nuova ecologia*, literally 'new ecology').

Articles in 1999 are mainly about the SFM and how it was supported economically both at a European and global level. In this context, *slow* is associated with other English loanwords such as *trading* and *marketing*. Another term associated with *slow* that year is *credibilità* ('credibility') related to SFM products and their quality.

In 2009 the presence of *Slow Money*,[7] a new movement linked to Slow Food, emerges. American Woody Tasch promotes a type of economy that places itself against the US economy, just as the SFM began in protest of the opening of the first McDonald's in Italy.

Collocates are strongly related to the semantic field of finance, with words such as *business* and *guadagno* ('income'). Moreover, collocations reveal a use of religious metaphors when describing the movement, such as 'prophet' (*profeta*), when referring to Tasch, 'the new credo' (*il nuovo credo*) and 'five commandments' (*i cinque comandamenti*) when referring to Slow Money (10).

(10)   Il credo in *Slow* Money ha cinque comandamenti: […].

Values of *slow* in this case, seem to be promoted and encouraged not only as a lifestyle to follow, but more like a religious belief.

Overall, in the field of finance, *slow* establishes itself with the SFM, but also acquiring new associations including ecological issues and local organic food enterprises.

b) The Domain of Politics & Economics in *The Guardian* corpus
The *Guardian* corpus shows a similar trend in the use of *slow* in the field of economy and specifically to banks, money (*capital, cost*), economic situations (*economic*, *financial*, *process*), and growth rates (*progress*, *rates*, *recessio*n).

Examining diachronic changes of *slow* within this domain, semantic preferences seem to remain relatively stable throughout the years. The main difference is the appearance of collocations with the word *Brexit* in 2019. *Slow Brexit* seems to refer to the process former Prime Minister Theresa May used to approach the Brexit deal expressing her desire to negotiate an ambitious free trade with the EU. It seems, in this case, that *slow* is equal to "one step at the time and carefully". There is no particular link with the SFM, nor to its values, rather it seems in relation to the notion of time.

There is no evidence of any new movement related or linked to the SFM, nor to any of the new potential values of *slow*, except for *slow growth,* which shows a gradual development of meanings that do not strictly refer to the notion of time. In 1989 *slow growth* is mainly followed by word forms referring to economic processes (e.g., *rates, inflation, or stagflations*), meaning that *slow* is used to refer to economic processes that require time to develop. Twenty years
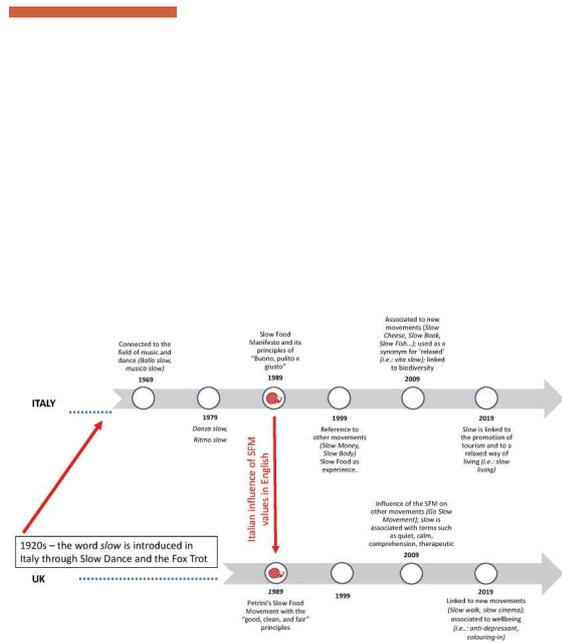
Fig. 4 │ Visual representation of the SFM values influencing English.

later, there seems to be a slight change as collocates are indeed related to sustainability issues such as lower energy consumption, and to other positive fairness values such as education, culture, and help (11).

(11)   Or we can turn the fiscal disaster into an opportunity to change habits and attitudes and create a new and green sustainable economy; […] invest in education and culture; lower energy consumption and *slow* growth […].

Overall, the analysis of collocates in both languages reveals convergences with the association of *slow* in the field of finance and with environmental issues, even if at different points in time.

3.4 Summing Up: *slow* as a Case of Reborrowing

Figure 4 provides the reader with a visual representation of how the values of *slow* introduced by the SFM have influenced the connotations of *slow* in English. While the two horizontal arrows represent the time span under analysis, the two arrows that cut across the time-lines point at the borrowing process.

The red arrows in the figure above show that *slow* first moved from the donor language (in this case, English) to the recipient language (Italian) before 1969 and was subsequently re-introduced in English with the new values acquired from the SFM. This suggests that the word *slow* might be considered as a case of reborrowing.

The first red arrow shows how *slow* was first introduced in the recipient language as a "core borrowing", which is a loanword "that duplicates or replaces existing native words" (Haspelmath 2009: 48): in Ital-

ian, the exact translation of *slow* is 'lento'. This borrowing might depend on a sort of "prestige" (ibidem) attached to a foreignism, and in particular in Italy, to anglicisms. Using an English loanword in Italian can be seen as a "social meaningful act", where the pragmatic context in which anglicisms occur can give prestige to the target language (Zenner et al. 2019). In fact, 'anglicization' of European lexis has become increasingly more frequent since the industrial, political, military, and economic position of Anglophone countries, giving a prominent role to English as a donor language (Luján García, Pulcini 2018; Pulcini, Furiassi, Rodríguez González 2012).

The advent of the SFM, however, introduced new meanings to the word through its opposition to *fast* in the collocation *fast food*. It was only at that point that the word acquired the new meanings of sustainability, wellbeing and fairness.

The second red arrow shows how *slow* was then reborrowed by what used to be the first donor language with values coming from the recipient language. This might be considered as a "cultural borrowing", meaning that the borrowed word form carries new concepts and values (Haspelmath 2009: 50): in this case, *slow* is no longer only associated with time and dullness, but rather with wellbeing and positive principles often related to environmental issues and fairness. This might be indicative of an ongoing sociocultural change, highlighting the need for a shift towards more personal perspectives in the context of a busy and fast-paced everyday life.

4 Conclusions

In this paper, we have analysed changes in the use of *slow* both in Italian and in English. The data analysis was carried out using both a quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative analysis allowed us to trace a general trend of the frequencies of *slow* both in Italian and in English, as well as to identify the most frequent domains in each of the two corpora. A qualitative collocation analysis of *slow* both in Italian and in English focused on how new values of the word *slow* have developed from the SFM in Italian, in an attempt to understand whether the SFM might have had any influence on the use of the term in English.

The diachronic and the collocational analysis of *slow* in the Italian sample has shown that its usage

carries new meanings to all the analysed domains of Food, Entertainment, Politics & Economics, and Society, as the use of *slow* is mostly associated to movements that derived from the SFM (*slow tourism, slow money, slow book*, etc.). The diachronic analysis of *slow* has revealed not only an increase in usage, but also a change in its meaning. As a matter of fact, from 1989 *slow* is not only associated with a dance or music style, but also to ethics, wellbeing, and sustainability (e.g., *slow e green*, *biodiversità,* or *terapeutico*). Moreover, while the word *slow* was initially followed by its Italian translation 'lento', as it needed to be explained, in more recent articles there was no longer a translation or reference to Petrini when citing the loanword, showing that Italian had acquired this word in everyday language. Therefore, in Italian *slow* seems to refer to time in a positive way, as a different lifestyle approach, taking time to understand things properly, to learn, to cook, to make things, or to travel, in ways that clearly contribute to wellbeing and environmental awareness.

The diachronic study and the collocation analysis of the English sample confirm that *slow* has taken up similar but variable meanings according to its contexts of use. For example, in the domain of Food and Entertainment news, *slow* can be used to refer to different social movements (i.e., *slow radio, slow walk*, or *slow travel*) in ways that are indirectly linked to the SFM, highlighting the contrast to a frenetic lifestyle, and incorporating the new values of *slow*. The domains of Society and Food, which seem to be specifically related, highlight a close link between *slow* and a 'movement' dimension: these are the domains that clearly show the establishment of the *slow food* collocation at different times in the two contexts and the rapid extension of the qualifier to other aspects of social life. Interestingly, in the domain of P&E our node word is used mostly in the subdomain of economics in both cases, with the same semantic preferences for issues of 'sustainability'. On the other hand, in the Entertainment domain *slow* is mostly related to wellbeing (i.e., *calm*, *quiet*, and *comprehensive*), an element which is also present in the same domain of the Italian corpus. However, while the ethical dimension remains mostly constant throughout the Italian corpus, in English this does not seem to be a new "acquired" value of *slow*.

Through the SFM, the word *slow* has taken on specific new meanings in Italian, related to the dimensions of ethics, wellbeing, and environmental awareness. These were then partly re-introduced in English. More specifically, we can say that the case of reborrowing of *slow* within the context of movements (*slow fashion*, *slow tourism*, etc.) has quite likely been influenced by the Italian SFM, especially with regards to the dimensions of wellbeing and sustainability. As a matter of fact, this process of reborrowing involves both acquisition and loss in meaning in both languages. In this case, the new values attributed to *slow* through the SFM have not only been adopted by analogous movements in the same lingua-cultural context, but they have also been analogously re-borrowed by the source language. This seems to be a relevant phenomenon in a global context of constant linguistic contact where English appears to play a relevant role as a global language.

We are aware that the study has a very narrow focus, as it centres on one word only in the life of two newspapers through the limited lens of collocation. More generally, however, we hope to have provided a small example of how language and cultural contact can influence the dynamics of word reference. The social nature of reference places words at the centre of a dynamics of negotiation of meanings in interaction that cuts across domains and cultural backgrounds. Language change is thus inevitably related to socio-cultural change. After the SFM, the meaning of *slow* relates to the values of sustainability, wellbeing, and fairness. In the dynamic process of meaning construction, different collocations and semantic preferences may characterize the various domains, but the meanings realized remain available for other contexts across languages and domains. The concept of 'slow' extends beyond the notion of moving at a low speed: it embraces the holistic wellbeing of individuals and communities, prioritizing quality, authenticity, and connection. It becomes a symbol of cultivating meaningful relationships with food and the environment, upholding values of sustainability, social responsibility, and cultural preservation.

Notes

¹ See 'slow food' entry in the Nuovo De Mauro dictionary: https://dizionario.internazionale.it/parola/slow-food

² The link to the official website is available at: https://www.slowfood.org.uk/groups/central-london/

³ The link of the official website is available at: https://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/gateway.page

⁴ Covering all musical genres of the time, from fox trot to slow, from mazurka to swing, from waltz to tango, to the carioca. [Our translation]

⁵ The care for other people's beard as a philosophical act, as a slow therapeutic space in which to love and respect each other. [Our translation]

⁶ The "slow and green" solution, as council member Stella Bertarione argued, for those who fear cold, abysses and ice. [Our translation]

⁷ Website of Slow Money available at: https://slowmoney.org/

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