A Detailed Linguistic Analysis of Doctrine and Covenants 132

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Doctrine and Covenants (D&C) 132 occupies a unique and controversial position within the Latter-day Saint scriptural canon. Although the text has long been associated with Joseph Smith and traditionally understood as a dictated revelation from July 1843, the historical record surrounding its production, preservation, and transmission is fragmented and contested. Eyewitness accounts differ in detail and are oftentimes contradictory; manuscript lines of descent are uncertain; and later recollections often reflect decades of interpretive development. This has generated an extensive—and frequently inconclusive—scholarly debate over the origins and authorship of the document.

What has been largely absent from this discussion is systematic linguistic analysis. Stylometry, the quantitative study of authorial style through function-word patterns and statistical modeling, offers an independent means of evaluating a text's stylistic alignment with an author's known writings. While not a replacement for traditional historical methods, stylometry can introduce a statistical layer of evidence into authorship questions that have otherwise relied heavily on retrospective testimony and interpretive inference.

This paper applies modern stylometric tools to assess whether D&C 132 conforms to Joseph Smith's established linguistic profile. Using function-word distributions, principal component analysis, and cross-validated classification models, this study compares the stylometric signature of D&C 132 to that of Joseph's authenticated revelations recorded within approximately the same period.

*Links in this paper are live at journalofmormonpolygamy.org.

The aim is not to reconstruct the historical circumstances of the revelation's production—a task requiring separate, dedicated treatment—but to determine whether the text's internal linguistic features align with Joseph's known dictation patterns.

By focusing narrowly on the stylometric evidence, this study provides an analytically grounded perspective on the authorship of D&C 132. The findings do not attempt to resolve the broader historical debate but instead contribute a quantitative foundation upon which future historiographical work can build.

Preliminary Considerations: Doctrinal and Tonal Discontinuities

Before turning to a more formal stylometric analysis, several preliminary observations can be made regarding doctrinal content and rhetorical tone. These observations are not offered as quantitative evidence of authorship but as contextual indicators of potential discontinuity within the text. Notable shifts in tone, modes of address, and doctrinal framing within Doctrine and Covenants 132 raise questions that warrant closer examination. Identifying such doctrinal and tonal irregularities establishes the need for a more rigorous, data-driven analysis and helps frame the stylometric results that follow. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to outline qualitative discontinuities that motivate the subsequent computational investigation, rather than to substitute for it.

A close reading of D&C 132 reveals pronounced shifts in both doctrinal content and rhetorical tone when compared to Joseph Smith's verified revelations. In Joseph's established prophetic voice, revelations tend to focus on broad spiritual principles, moral exhortations, and expansive theological visions, often expressed in a pastoral tone designed to teach, comfort, and inspire. They typically situate commands within the larger redemptive narrative of the Restoration, emphasizing repentance, unity, and the pursuit of holiness. D&C 132, however, adopts an unusually contractual register, detailing harsh commands and "conditions," particularly under which plural marriage may be practiced. This meticulous, rules-based language reads more like a conditional contract than the

flowing, revelatory prose characteristic of Joseph's other recorded revelations.

At the level of surface content, portions of D&C 132 appear to stand in tension with other scriptural texts associated with Joseph Smith. For example, the Book of Mormon plainly states that "David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord" (Jacob 2:24). By contrast, D&C 132 portrays the same figures as having received many wives with divine approval, asserting that they "did not sin" except in specific, narrowly defined circumstances (D&C 132:38-39). Similarly, Joseph Smith's inspired revision of the Bible modifies passages traditionally read as permitting plural marriage in ways that emphasize a monogamous framework, contradicting the general permissiveness of the practice in D&C 132.[1] Taken together, these contrasts warrant suspicion and highlight internal scriptural divergence that has long complicated attempts to treat D&C 132 as congruent with Joseph Smith's earlier scriptural productions.

A related divergence appears at the level of tone and rhetorical structure. D&C 132 exhibits an unusually dense repetition of formulaic divine titles. Phrases such as "the Lord your God" or "the Lord thy God" occur far more densely in D&C 132 than in any other section. In Joseph's authentic revelations, "the Lord your God" is generally reserved for moments of emphasis; in 132, the repetition is almost rhythmic, functioning like a signature after each clause (See D&C 132:28, 40, 47, 49, 53, 54, 56, 57). This constant reassertion of divine authority creates a formalized, authoritarian cadence dissimilar from most of Joseph's earlier work.

The harshness and the judicial tone of D&C 132 are also striking. While condemnations appear in other revelations, they are typically tempered with words of comfort, promises of mercy, and open invitations to repentance (e.g., D&C 29:40–42, D&C 42:74–92, D&C 63:14–20, D&C 84:56–57). In D&C 132, however, such balancing language is rare, or unequal. Instead, the text frequently pairs formal divine authority with absolute, irrevocable decrees such as "shall be destroyed" (vv. 54, 64), and "I will

[1] See 2 Samuel 12:13 JST and 1 Kings 3:14 JST; 1 Kings 11:4,6 JST and 1 Kings 14:8 JST in Thomas E. Sherry and W. Jeffrey Marsh, "Precious Truths Restored: Joseph Smith Translation Changes Not Included in Our Bible," *Religious Educator* 5, no. 2 (2004): 57–74, *LINK*.

destroy her" (v. 64), leaving little room for reassurance or pastoral encouragement—a contrast from Joseph's other revelations.

The tonal break becomes arguably most jarring in the "D&C 132 Polygamy" section, where the Lord threatens Emma Smith specifically with destruction should she reject the "law" being revealed (D&C 132:51-57). In the rest of the Doctrine and Covenants, "destroy" almost always appears in one of two contexts: (1) Satan as the destroyer, seeking spiritual ruin, or (2) God as the destroyer of wicked nations or hostile outsiders. When directed at individuals, it is generally aimed at outright antagonists, not covenant-keeping insiders. Emma herself is described in D&C 25 as "an elect lady" with a divine calling, and even in sharp rebukes (e.g., Joseph in D&C 3:9–10; Martin Harris in D&C 5:27–28), the Lord stops short of threatening annihilation without offering words of repentance and comfort. The D&C 132 threat represents an anomalous, highly personalized usage inconsistent with Joseph's established revelatory tone and theological approach.

Pronoun usage further underscores the stylistic departure. Many of Joseph's revelations address "my people," "my friends," or "brethren," softening the voice and reinforcing communal solidarity. In contrast, D&C 132 more often uses personal pronouns directly in connection with imperatives or judgments towards individuals, heightening the confrontational tone. Notably, "friend" or "beloved" language is virtually absent. This absence is particularly striking given that the "D&C 132 Polygamy" section registers some of the highest overall rates of pronoun usage among Joseph's doctrinal revelations—a density that could otherwise lend itself to warmth and love, but here instead creates a confrontational atmosphere. The text exhibits lower preposition usage than is typical in Joseph's revelations, suggesting a heavier reliance on direct address and simple syntactic linking rather than the more descriptive, relational phrasing found in his authenticated prophetic voice.

Narrative elements—common in Joseph's lengthier revelations, such as D&C 29, D&C 45, and D&C 84—are also missing. Those sections interweave commands with doctrinal exposition, parables, scriptural paraphrasing, or visionary sequences. D&C 132, by contrast, is almost entirely prescriptive, consisting of commands,

conditions, and penalties, with minimal theological narrative beyond what is necessary to justify doctrine.

These patterns—the elevated density of formulaic divine titles, the harsh judicial register, the contractual structuring, the absence of narrative, the confrontational pronoun usage, the anomalous threat toward Emma—form a profile that diverges from revelations commonly attributed to Joseph Smith. These differences may be more consistent with a later author operating in the polemical and administrative context of 1850s Utah, where the defense of plural marriage demanded both legalistic framing and uncompromising authority, though investigation of 1850s alternative authorship would necessitate a separate study.

Function Word Stylometric Analysis

Given the observed discontinuities, a stylometric study of D&C 132 was deemed fit for further analysis. Stylometry is the quantitative study of linguistic style, typically using statistical methods to measure unconscious patterns in an author's word choice and syntax. Because certain elements of writing—such as vocabulary preferences, sentence structure, and the use of common grammatical words—tend to remain consistent for an individual author, stylometry can be used to attribute anonymous or disputed works with a certain degree of confidence. One of the most reliable indicators of authorship is the distribution of function words (also known as stop words). Function words are short, high-frequency words such as *a, and, the, or, but* that carry little topical meaning but are used unconsciously and habitually. In the case of D&C 132, this also includes words typically considered more archaic due to the biblical-style language Joseph frequently used in his revelations, such as *ye, shall, unto,* etc. Since function words are less influenced by subject matter, they preserve the "wordprint" of an author more reliably than content words.

Function word frequency analysis has been shown effective in multiple landmark authorship studies, most famously in the resolution of the authorship of *The Federalist Papers* by statisticians Frederick Mosteller and David Wallace.[2] The method has also been

[2]Frederick Mosteller and David L. Wallace, "Inference in an Authorship Problem," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 58, no. 302 (1963): 275–309, *LINK*.

used in detecting multiple authorship within Mormon scripture, particularly the Book of Mormon.[3] However, only two known stylometric studies have specifically examined the authorship of D&C 132: a 1969 master's thesis by RLDS graduate student Enid DeBarthe,[4] and a more recently published study through *The Interpreter Foundation*.[5] The latter study will be covered in detail later.

DeBarthe's study analyzed features such as redundancies or tautologies, neologisms, valedictories, unique phrases, and sentence structure, comparing D&C 132 to the writings of Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and others. She concluded that Brigham Young wrote section 132 rather than Joseph or Hyrum Smith. While her work was pioneering for its time, several methodological limitations reduced its accuracy by modern standards:

- **Technological Constraints:** Without computer assistance, DeBarthe manually identified lexical features, increasing the likelihood of oversight and limiting precision.
- **Lack of Frequency Normalization:** She reported raw counts of linguistic features without adjusting for differences in text length—some of which varied by over 1,000 words—rather than segmenting texts into equal-length samples and calculating relative frequencies.
- **Small Corpus Size:** Her Joseph Smith dataset contained only four revelations (including D&C 132), limiting statistical reliability.
- **Failure to Control for Genre:** She did not distinguish between Joseph's revelatory style and his personal correspondence, despite their distinct word usage patterns.

[3]Matthew Roper, Paul J. Fields, and G. Bruce Schaalje, "Stylometric Analyses of the Book of Mormon: A Short History," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): Article 4, *LINK*.

[4]Enid Stubbart DeBarthe, *A Bibliography on Joseph Smith II, the Mormon Prophet-Leader* (qualifying paper, Northern Illinois University, 1969), *LINK*.

[5]Paul Fields, Steven T. Densley Jr., Matthew Roper, and Larry Bassist, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence for the Authorship of Doctrine and Covenants 132," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 67 (2025): 1–70, *LINK*.

- **Overemphasis on Unique Phrases:** She gave disproportionate weight to rare expressions in D&C 132 without considering that biblical-style phrasing common in Joseph's authenticated revelations, or simply low usage frequency, may be potential explanations. For instance, DeBarthe noted that "go in thereat" appears nowhere else in the D&C, yet the phrase simply uses verbiage from Matthew 7:13.

While DeBarthe's conclusions cannot be considered definitive, her work remains important for highlighting significant stylistic differences between D&C 132 and Joseph Smith's authenticated revelations. Her study laid the groundwork for further investigation, and the present research builds on her insight—applying modern computational stylometry, larger and genre-consistent corpora, and statistical visualization to reexamine the question of whether the polygamous portions of D&C 132 originated with Joseph Smith.

Methodology and Corpus Selection

Hypothesis

This study proceeds from the hypothesis that the linguistic profile of Doctrine and Covenants 132 reflects an authorial fingerprint distinct from that of Joseph Smith. Given the complex transmission history of the text, the absence of any extant dictated manuscript in the handwriting of Joseph Smith or his known scribes at the time the text was purportedly produced, and the denials by Joseph and Hyrum Smith that the original revelation authorized modern polygamy, it is reasonable to consider the possibility that the scripture as it exists today differs from the original dictated text.

Under this hypothesis, the portions of D&C 132 addressing plural marriage—and potentially the material related to eternal marriage—would be expected to form a distinct stylistic cluster, showing measurable separation from Joseph Smith's objectively verified revelations. Conversely, if the text aligns closely with Joseph's established stylistic signature across core function-word features and similarity metrics, that would weaken the hypothesis.

Corpus Selection and Study Design

This study employs a function-word frequency analysis to compare the linguistic profile of D&C 132 with a control corpus of Joseph Smith's authenticated revelations. All texts were processed using an automated Python-based workflow that normalized formatting, applied consistent tokenization, and extracted standardized function-word frequency vectors prior to analysis. The control corpus consists of multiple 665-word samples drawn from confirmed Joseph Smith revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, all belonging to the prophetic/revelatory genre. Every sample was taken from the earliest available manuscript to ensure textual reliability.

Revelations and chunks were selected to approximate as closely as possible the doctrinal density and prophetic tone of D&C 132, while excluding materials whose genre or content would introduce stylistic noise. Specifically, passages dominated by scriptural paraphrase or quotation (e.g., D&C 93, 133), personal correspondence (e.g., D&C 121, 128), and administrative or dialogic instruction (e.g., D&C 20, 68, 104, 107) were omitted. Revelations received during the Book of Mormon translation period (approximately D&C 3–19) were also excluded to avoid potential linguistic cross-contamination, as Joseph Smith's stylistic patterns during that period may have been directly shaped by the syntax of the Book of Mormon translation process—something that would warrant a follow-up study. Revelations suspected of co-authorship (e.g., D&C 76) were also excluded to preserve stylistic purity.

The primary corpus for Joseph Smith's middle-period revelatory style was drawn from D&C 29, 38, 42, 45, 50, 58, 63, 84, 88, 98, and 101 (dating 1830–1833). A secondary analysis incorporated Joseph Smith's Nauvoo-era revelations (D&C 124–126) to assess potential temporal drift, as authorial style can subtly evolve over time.

Preparation of the Target Text (D&C 132)

The text of D&C 132 was cleaned, stripped of punctuation, lowercased, and segmented into seven 665-word samples using a 50% rolling window ("rolling stylometry"), producing three segments corresponding to the polygamy-related portion and four to the non-

polygamy portion.[6] This procedure preserved contextual continuity, ensured comparability between samples, and generated a sufficient number of segments for statistical analysis.

The division into the "polygamy" and "no-polygamy" portions was informed by Joseph and Hyrum Smith's contemporaneous, public explanation that the July 12, 1843 revelation concerned eternal, monogamous marriage, with only a possible brief reference to ancient patriarchal marriage practices.[7] This clarification directly contradicts the *Nauvoo Expositor*'s claim that the revelation endorsed plural marriage.[8] Based on this contextual comparison, verses 1–3, 34–44, and 51–66 are designated as the polygamy-related portion, while verses 4–33, 45–50, and the final sentence of verse 66 are treated as the non-polygamy portion for the purposes of this analysis.

Preparation of the Joseph Smith Control Corpus

The primary corpus was also preprocessed by removing punctuation, converting all text to lowercase, and combining the revelations into a continuous sequence. The text was then segmented into uniform 665-word chunks with a 50% overlap to preserve contextual continuity, after which function-word frequencies were calculated for each segment. To isolate the most stable portion of Joseph Smith's stylistic signal, the upper and lower 15% of observations were trimmed, retaining the central 70% of the distribution. Trimming was based on distance from Joseph's centroid. This approach—directly analogous to trimmed-mean methods such as "core inflation" measures in economics—is a well-established technique for reducing noise and attenuating the influence of statistical outliers without throwing away meaningful data.[9] In

[6] For other studies utilizing rolling stylometry, see Maciej Eder, "Through the Magnifying Glass: Rolling Stylometry for Collaborative Authorship," in *Digital Humanities 2015: Book of Abstracts* (University of Western Sydney, 2015), *LINK*.

[7] Minutes, 10 June 1844, 25, The Joseph Smith Papers (hereafter JSP), *LINK*. Published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* on June 19, 1844. See Nauvoo City Council, Revised Minutes, Hancock County, Illinois, 17 June 1844, "For the Neighbor," *Nauvoo Neighbor* 2, no. 8 (Jun. 19, 1844): 2–3. *LINK*.

[8] *Nauvoo Expositor* 1, no. 1 (Jun. 7, 1844): 2, JSP, *LINK*.

[9] Jim Dolmas and Evan Koenig, *Which Core to Believe? Trimmed Mean versus Ex-Food-and-Energy Inflation*, May 28, 2019, *LINK*; Robert Dixon and G. C. Lim, "Underlying Inflation in Australia: Are the Existing Measures Satisfactory?," *Economic Record* 80, no. 251 (December 2004): 373–86; Tareef Kamil Mustafa, "Non-Word

a corpus as heterogeneous as the Doctrine and Covenants, with its shifting audiences, topics, and scribal influences, as well as its extensive biblical paraphrase, this trimming procedure enhances the reliability and interpretability of Joseph Smith's resulting stylistic profile. The final corpus consisted of 51 overlapping 665-word chunks.

The Nauvoo-era corpus (approximately 5,700 words) was also segmented into 665-word chunks with a 50% overlap. Combined with the polygamy and non-polygamy portions of D&C 132, this produced 23 total samples. Given the limited corpus size, the effective number of independent samples was small, and the results of this secondary analysis should be interpreted cautiously.

Function-Word Selection and Normalization

All text samples were normalized to occurrences per 665 words to ensure comparability. The function-word set consisted of the highest-frequency, distributionally stable tokens across Joseph Smith's revelations, including articles (e.g., *the*), pronouns (e.g., *I, you, they*), conjunctions (e.g., *and, but*), prepositions (e.g., *in, on, by*), auxiliaries (e.g., *shall, will*), and determiners (e.g., *this, that*). Female-gendered pronouns (*she, her*) were intentionally excluded due to their disproportionate frequency in D&C 132, resulting from the revelation's unusual and extended hostile address to Emma Smith.

The initial candidate set consisted of the 75 most frequent function words in the Doctrine and Covenants. Two filters were used to refine this list:

- Frequency filter: Tokens needed a mean relative frequency across the corpus of approximately 0.15% to avoid rare-word noise.
- Part-of-speech consistency filter: Tokens that alternated between content and function roles (e.g., *behold, come*) were removed.

After filtering, 50 high-frequency, consistently used function words remained. These formed the feature set for all stylometric

Attributes' Efficiency in Text Mining Authorship Prediction," *Journal of Intelligent Systems* 29, no. 1 (2020): 1415, *LINK*.

comparisons. The final list was:

the, and, of, by, to, in, I, shall, that, be, unto, you, my, is, for, a, are, not, have, they, which, all, it, this, he, as, his, their, will, them, with, your, who, ye, him, from, upon, may, me, or, was, if, at, on, before, those, but, an, am, were.

Statistical Analysis

Normalized function-word frequencies were analyzed using several complementary statistical techniques:

1. Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

PCA was used to visualize clustering among samples and to identify stylistic deviations. This approach is standard in stylometry for detecting outliers and exploring stylistic patterns.[10]

2. Cosine Similarity

Cosine similarity matrices were generated using standardized (z-scored) frequencies. This measured directional consistency in function-word usage between each D&C 132 segment and the Joseph Smith stylistic centroid. Results were visualized through heatmaps.

Together, these methods quantified how closely each D&C 132 segment aligned with Joseph Smith's authenticated stylistic profile.

Rationale

Function words reflect unconscious linguistic habits largely independent of topic or doctrine. By combining genre-controlled sampling, robust outlier trimming, rolling stylometry, and multi-metric validation, this study isolates deep structural patterns in Joseph Smith's revelatory prose. Deviation within the D&C 132

[10] Carmen Klaussner and Carl Vogel, "A Diachronic Corpus for Literary Style Analysis," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation* (LREC 2018) (Miyazaki, Japan: European Language Resources Association, 2018), 3496–97, *LINK*; Maciej Eder, Jan Rybicki, and Mike Kestemont, "Stylometry with R: A Package for Computational Text Analysis," *The R Journal* 8, no. 1 (2015): 107–21, *LINK*.

text itself may suggest compositional layering, editorial expansion, or non-Joseph authorship beyond normal stylistic variation.

Findings

The function word frequency analysis reveals clear and measurable stylistic differences between the "D&C 132 Polygamy" revelation and the authenticated Joseph Smith revelations in the control corpus. When standardized function word frequencies are plotted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the Joseph Smith samples cluster relatively tightly together, reflecting the internal consistency of his prophetic/revelatory style, even despite the inevitable variation in topics and audiences. In contrast, the "D&C 132 Polygamy" section chunks appear in their own cluster as clear outliers, positioned visually outside the Joseph Smith cluster in PCA space.

Additionally, the cosine-similarity matrices reveal a clear and stable three-way stylistic division within the corpus. The Joseph Smith baseline (JS), the "no-polygamy" segments of D&C 132 (132N), and the "polygamy" segments (132P) each form internally coherent stylistic clusters. For visual clarity, the individual 51 JS chunks are omitted from the figures; when included, they cluster around their centroid (approximately -0.28 to $+0.55$), reflecting the expected internal variation of Joseph Smith's revelations while maintaining a consistent stylistic direction. In both heat maps, however, the JS centroid shows uniformly negative similarity to every D&C 132 segment (approximately -0.38 to -0.71), indicating a pronounced stylistic divergence between D&C 132 and Joseph Smith's established profile. By contrast, both D&C 132 subsets exhibit moderate to strong internal cohesion: 132N ranges from 0.081 to 0.55 among its segments, while 132P ranges from 0.243 to 0.648. Their respective centroids align even more strongly with their component segments, with 132N clustering at roughly 0.54 to 0.82 and 132P at approximately 0.76 to 0.93, indicating two relatively distinct but internally stable non-JS stylistic voices. Although the 132N and 132P sections form separate stylistic signatures, they remain substantially closer to one another than to the Joseph Smith baseline. This pattern holds across both cosine-similarity comparisons—against Joseph Smith's middle-period corpus and

against sections 124–126—yielding a consistent result: JS, 132N, and 132P behave as three internally cohesive yet distinct stylistic profiles.

Function word analysis shows that the polygamous portions of D&C 132 depart from Joseph Smith's baseline style. The most striking deviation is in the use of the word the, which occurs at a rate of about 3.75% in the polygamy portion of D&C 132 words compared to an average of 7% for the rest of the corpus. Other underused features include common determiners (*of*) and conjunctions (*that*). Overused features include clause-linking conjunctions (*and*), gender-specific pronouns (*him, he*), archaic markers (*unto*), and conditional language (*if, were*). This combination produces a stylistic profile of D&C 132 that is more verbose, personalized, and conditional than Joseph's authenticated revelations, aligning with the authoritarian tone identified in the aforementioned qualitative analysis. The "D&C 132 Polygamy" section's pronoun usage ranks among the highest across all Joseph-era doctrinal revelations, yet this density does not produce the warmer, communal tone typical of Joseph's style.[11] Preposition usage is lower, on average, than the Joseph Smith mean, creating a more abrupt, directive sentence structure.[12]

Additionally, measures of lexical diversity (unique words ÷ total words) indicate that the combined D&C 132 chunks exhibit low vocabulary variation compared to the other chunks in the corpus, with an average lexical diversity of around 29.6%, compared to the corpus average of around 34.3%. Whereas most revelations generally maintain a broad distribution of unique word forms relative to length, D&C 132 relies heavily on repeated doctrinal phrases and recycled grammatical constructions. This restricted lexical palette suggests a more formulaic composition style and reduced linguistic variety, setting it apart as the least lexically diverse chunks of text analyzed.

[11] The "D&C 132 Polygamy" section contains an average pronoun rate of about 23% compared to about 19% for Joseph's corpus mean.

[12] The "D&C 132 Polygamy" section contains an average preposition rate of about 13% compared to about 14% for Joseph's corpus mean.

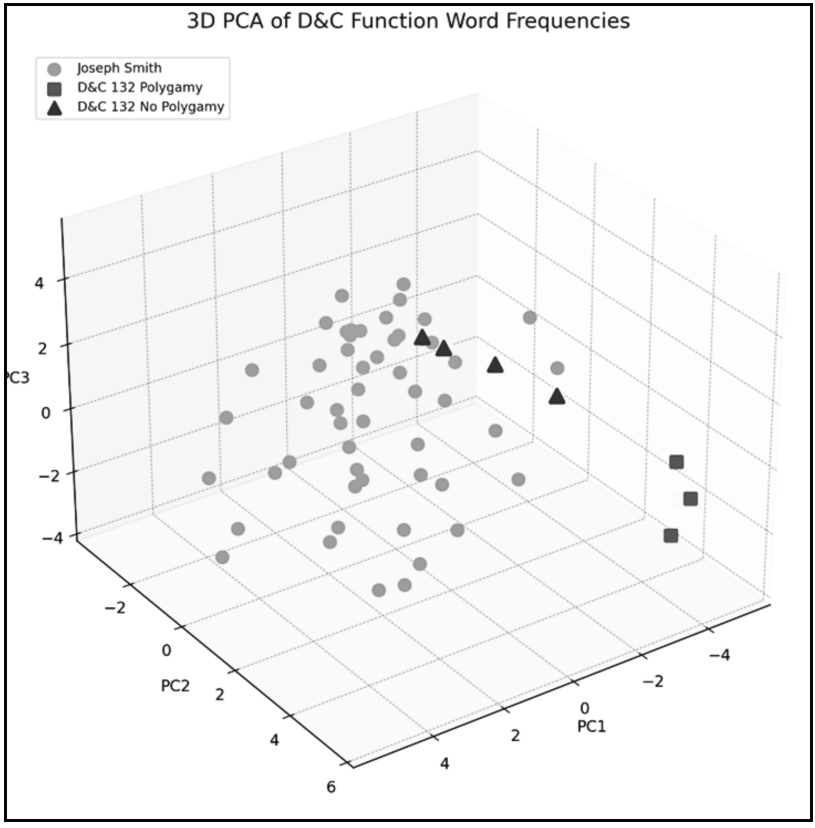

Figure 1: *A three-dimensional PCA visualization displaying stylistic variation among Joseph Smith's middle-period revelation segments using the first three principal components derived from 50 function-word frequencies per 665-word chunk. Circles represent the baseline Joseph Smith corpus (known-author control). The four triangles denote the D&C 132 (no-polygamy) segments, while the three squares represent the D&C 132 (polygamy) segments. The polygamy chunks cluster away from the main Joseph Smith centroid, showing greater stylistic distance along all three principal components. This separation aligns with the negative cosine similarity observed in the quantitative analysis, indicating a measurable divergence in linguistic profile within the broader Doctrine and Covenants corpus.*

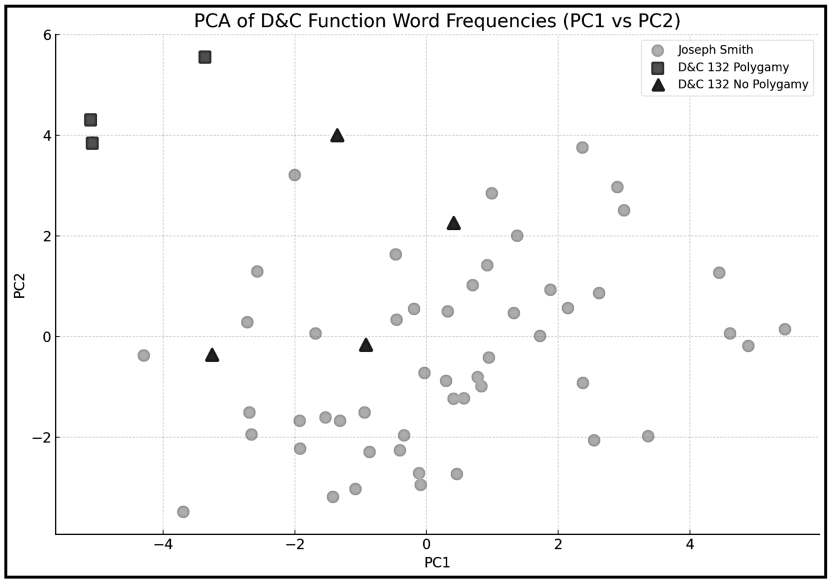

Figure 2: *A two-dimensional PCA visualization displaying stylistic variance within the first two principal components derived from 50 function-word frequencies per 665-word chunk. PC1 vs. PC2 explains the greatest amount of stylistic variance between the data points. The distribution of the "Joseph Smith" chunks suggests natural stylistic variation in a heterogeneous text like D&C. The polygamy chunks clearly form a separate cluster from the main Joseph Smith group, with two of the "no-polygamy" chunks appearing on the edge.*

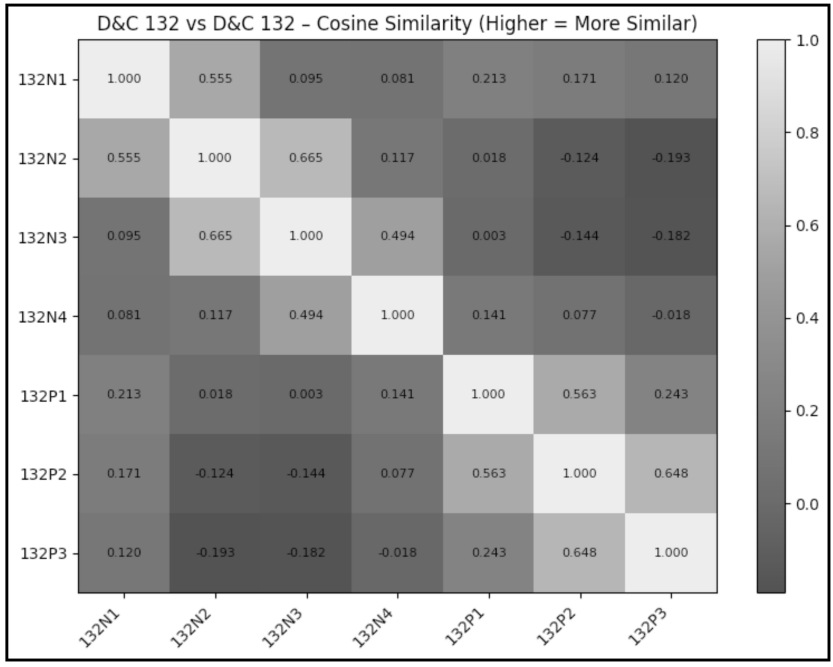

Figure 3: *A cosine heat map showing pairwise cosine similarity among seven individual 665-word chunks from D&C 132, computed on z-scored function-word frequencies. Rows and columns represent individual chunks, labeled 132N1–132N4 (non-polygamy sections) and 132P1–132P3 (polygamy sections). Cell values indicate cosine similarity coefficients, where higher values reflect greater stylistic similarity. The map shows moderate to strong within-group similarity among non-polygamy chunks and stronger, more uniform similarity among polygamy chunks, with moderate to moderately weak similarity between the two groups.*

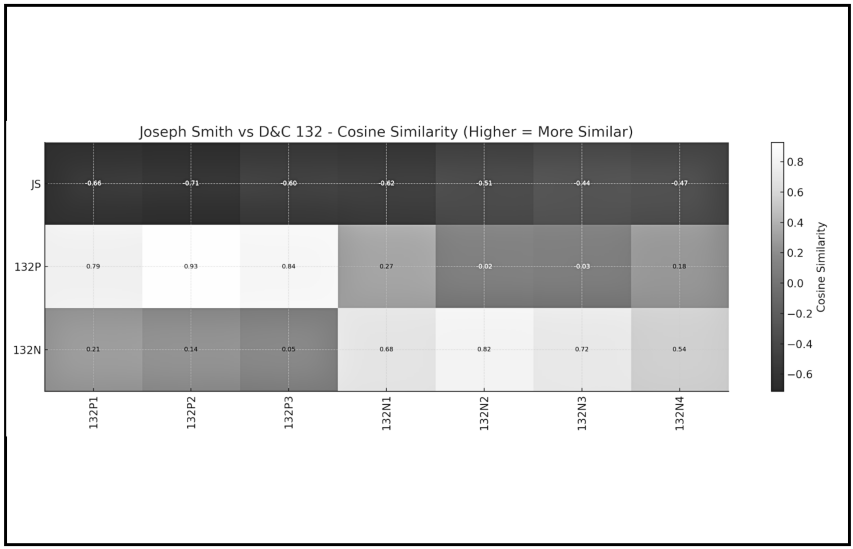

Figure 4: *A cosine similarity heat map comparing the centroid profiles of Joseph Smith's middle revelations, the proposed "no-polygamy" voice in D&C 132 (132N), and the "polygamy" voice (132P) against the seven polygamy and non-polygamy chunks of D&C 132. JS shows consistently negative similarity values across all segments, indicating a strong stylistic mismatch, though less so against the "no-polygamy" voice which is attested to in the PCA (Figure 2). In contrast, the 132P centroid aligns tightly with the three 132P segments (0.79–0.93) and less so with the 132N segments. The 132N centroid displays high similarity with its four corresponding segments (0.68–0.82) and mild similarity with the 132P segments. The pattern reveals two distinct stylometric signatures within D&C 132—132P and 132N—both of which differ substantially from JS.*

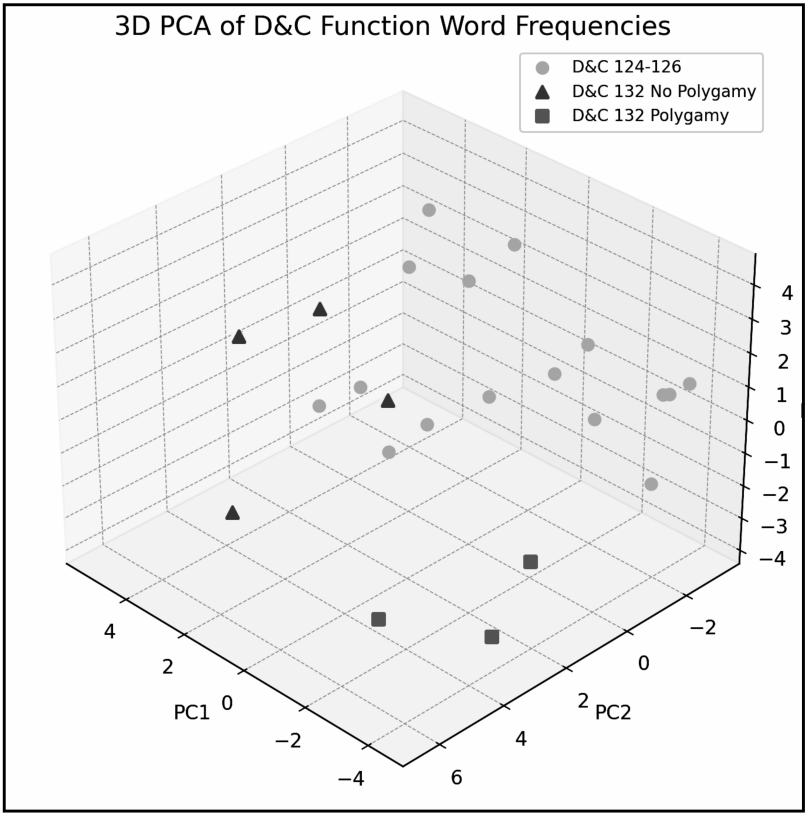

Figure 5: *A three-dimensional PCA visualization displaying stylistic variance among Joseph Smith's Nauvoo-era revelations (D&C 124–126) and the D&C 132 (polygamy and non-polygamy) segments. The same 50 function words used in the primary analysis were retained to ensure direct comparability. The Nauvoo corpus was divided into 16 overlapping 665-word chunks to control for potential temporal drift, as an author's style tends to evolve subtly over time. The D&C 132 chunks again appear stylistically displaced from the Nauvoo-era Joseph Smith centroid, reinforcing that their linguistic divergence cannot be attributed solely to chronological drift.*

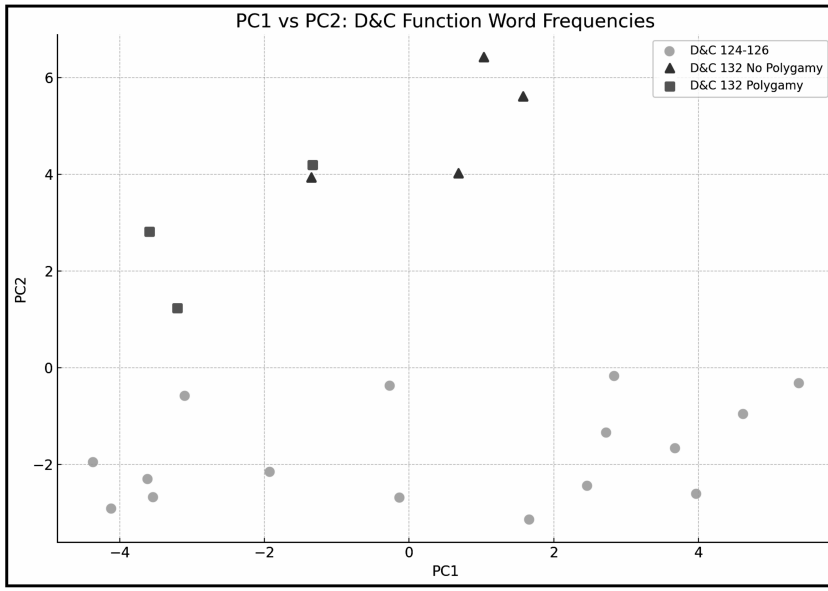

Figure 6: *A two-dimensional PCA visualization displaying stylistic variance within the first two principal components displaying stylistic variance between Joseph Smith's Nauvoo-era revelations (D&C 124–126) and D&C 132. The clear separation between the clusters demonstrates that the stylistic divergence identified in the primary analysis persists even when controlling for temporal drift, indicating that the linguistic differences are not simply artifacts of time or shifting historical context but instead reflect deeper compositional variation. Some caution is warranted, however: D&C 124–126, while revelatory in form, contain a mixture of doctrinal, instructional, and administrative material, with substantial scribal mediation that cannot be fully excluded. These factors likely contribute to the broader dispersion of their chunks along the PC1 axis.*

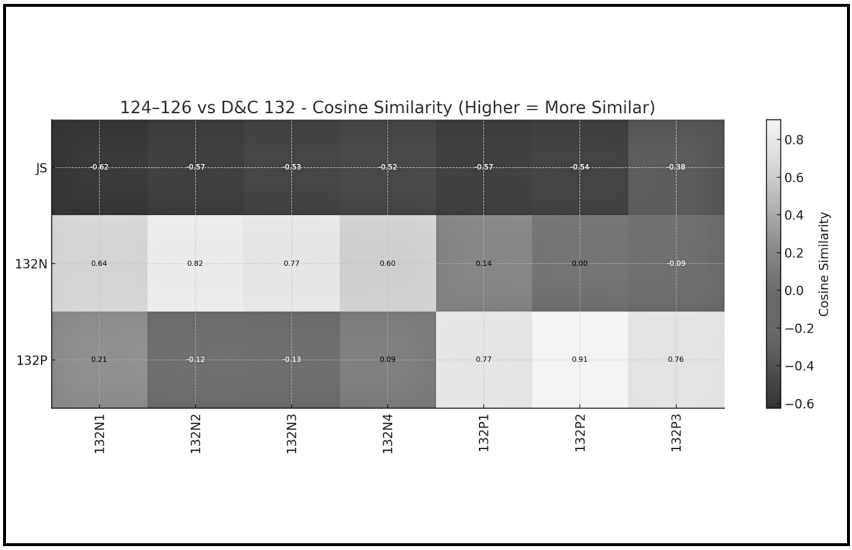

Figure 7: *A cosine similarity heat map comparing the centroid profiles of D&C 124–126 (JS), the proposed "no-polygamy" voice in D&C 132 (132N), and the "polygamy" voice (132P) against the seven polygamy and non-polygamy chunks of D&C 132. Higher values indicate greater stylistic similarity in 50-function-word spaces. JS shows consistently negative similarity with all 132 chunks, while 132N aligns strongly with 132N1–4 and 132P aligns strongly with 132P1–3, confirming three distinct stylometric signatures. This map supports the three distinct clusters in the principle component analyses in figures 5 and 6.*

Limitations

Several limitations of the present study should be acknowledged:

1. First, the Nauvoo-era corpus available for comparison is relatively small, consisting of approximately 5,700 words. Although the use of rolling 665-word windows increases the number of analyzable segments, the number of samples remains limited. In addition to having a particularly large scribal influence, portions of these Nauvoo-era revelations are also more instructional or administrative (e.g., D&C 124:62–83) in tone than strictly doctrinal, which introduces a degree of stylistic variability that cannot be entirely eliminated.

2. Second, this study is necessarily limited to the Doctrine and Covenants as the primary source of Joseph Smith's revelatory style. While this ensures genre consistency—a critical requirement in stylometric authorship analysis—it also constrains the size and diversity of the available corpus. Other texts by Joseph Smith exist, but they differ markedly in genre, register, or collaborative authorship, and therefore could not be included without introducing confounding stylistic noise.

3. Third, despite extensive filtering, normalization, and trimming procedures, some degree of heterogeneity within Joseph Smith's writings remains unavoidable. Variation in audience, purpose, historical context, and scribal mediation can influence surface linguistic features, even within a single author's revelatory corpus. Although the methods employed here substantially reduce such noise, they cannot eliminate it entirely.

4. Fourth, while stylometric methods—particularly those relying on noncontextual function-word distributions—are generally robust against deliberate attempts to imitate another author's style, no approach can entirely eliminate the possibility that a skilled imitator might introduce partial overlap with an established stylistic profile. If portions of D&C 132 were composed by someone consciously trying to approximate Joseph Smith's revelatory language, traces of that imitation

could persist in the data and subtly influence the resulting stylistic measurements. While the multi-method approach used in this study reduces the likelihood of such confounding effects, the possibility cannot be fully eliminated.

5. Fifth, this study necessarily relies on computerized preprocessing and statistical analysis. The volume of text involved—spanning tens of thousands of words, multiple rolling windows, and high-dimensional frequency matrices—necessitates automated cleaning, tokenization, normalization, and computation. While these tools make large-scale stylometric comparison possible, they also introduce a layer of abstraction between the researcher and the raw text. Though still more accurate than manual processing, algorithmic decisions regarding tokenization rules, word-boundary detection, and punctuation removal can subtly shape the resulting frequency distributions, and no preprocessing pipeline is entirely free from such artifacts. Moreover, the interpretive clarity of computational outputs such as PCA clusters, cosine similarity matrices, and z-score distributions depends on the assumptions embedded in these algorithms. Although steps were taken to mitigate these concerns—such as manual review of chunks, transparent preprocessing procedures, and the use of well-established statistical methods—the dependence on machine processing remains an inherent constraint. Consequently, the findings of this study should be understood as computationally informed approximations of underlying stylistic tendencies rather than definitive, error-free measurements of authorial voice.

6. Finally, no stylometric analysis, however rigorous, can provide absolute certainty as to authorial attribution. Stylometry does not function as a deterministic authorship test but as a probabilistic tool that identifies patterns, divergences, and stylistic consistencies across texts. Its conclusions must always be interpreted in light of historical context, documentary transmission, genre, and the inevitable imperfections of surviving sources. While the multi-method approach employed in this study yields strong and convergent evidence regarding the compositional structure of D&C 132, it cannot produce

a mathematically infallible attribution. Instead, stylometry offers a disciplined, data-driven framework for evaluating competing hypotheses, clarifying what the text most likely reflects—and what it almost certainly does not—within the limits of the available evidence.

These limitations do not invalidate the study's findings, but they do frame them appropriately. Future work incorporating newly discovered early manuscripts, larger corpora of comparable revelatory texts, or more advanced hierarchical stylometric models may help refine the conclusions further.

Counterarguments

Exclusion of Additional Principal Components

Critics may argue that excluding visualizations involving the third principal component (PC3) reduces the completeness or interpretive power of the analysis. However, this objection reflects a misunderstanding of how PCA functions in stylometric research. As statistician Hugh Craig explains, PCA redistributes linguistic variance across ranked orthogonal components, with the first few components capturing nearly all meaningful stylistic structure, while later ones primarily represent residual or noise-driven variance.[13] Empirical permutation testing consistently confirms that PC1 and PC2 contain the statistically significant authorial signal, whereas subsequent components seldom account for variance beyond chance levels. In fact, studies have found that the first two principal components can capture 99% of relevant variance across principal components.[14]

Stylometric convention, following Burrows and Craig, therefore treats PC1 and PC2 jointly as the most informative space for authorial discrimination—not because later components are ignored arbitrarily, but because they do not meaningfully contribute to classification. As Craig demonstrates through multiple attribution

[13]Hugh Craig, "Principal Components Analysis in Stylometry," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 39, no. 1 (April 2024): 97–108, *LINK*.

[14]Mehmet Can, "Authorship Attribution Using Principal Component Analysis and Competitive Neural Networks," *Mathematical and Computational Applications* 19, no. 1 (2014): 31, *LINK*.

trials, combining just the first two components has yielded accuracy rates above 90% in known-author tests, confirming that authorial separation is both robust and statistically valid when restricted to PC1 and PC2.[15]

Topic and Audience as Explanations for Linguistic Differences

Another counterargument is that the linguistic deviations in the polygamy portion of D&C 132 could be explained by its subject matter or intended audience. In this view, the conditional tone and unusual function word distribution might simply reflect the fact that the revelation addressed a sensitive marital dispute, necessitating more formal, prescriptive language than Joseph typically used.

However, this explanation does not hold when tested against comparable-length revelations of similar doctrinal complexity. Other section chunks which address detailed procedural matters, binding covenants, and conditions for blessings and penalties like D&C 132, including sections D&C 42 and D&C 58, also retain Joseph's baseline stylistic profile in both function word usage and overall tone. In fact, chunks from these revelations were found to have clustered much more closely to the overall mean of Joseph Smith's known corpus. Even when dealing with weighty disciplinary issues, Joseph's authenticated revelations tend to interweave instruction with narrative, pastoral encouragement, and collective admonitions, rather than relying almost exclusively on direct, second-person imperatives and conditional threats.[16] The sharp stylistic break in D&C 132's polygamy portion is therefore not adequately explained by topic or audience alone.

[15] Craig, "Principal Components Analysis in Stylometry," 100, 106.

[16] D&C 42 is a prime example of this: "*If he or she...*" or "*if they...*" are much more collective in admonition than the verbiage used in D&C 132 (ex. "*if he...*" or "*if she...*").

A Response to "Historical and Stylometric Evidence for the Authorship of Doctrine and Covenants 132," by Fields, Densley, Roper, and Bassist

A recent article by Fields, *et al.*, published in *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*, incorporates stylometric testing into an argument affirming Joseph Smith's authorship of D&C 132.[17] Because their statistical approach addresses the same question examined in the present study, a brief methodological response is necessary to clarify the points at which our analyses diverge.

This critique focuses solely on the stylometric dimension of their work. While Fields, *et al.* combine historical discussion with computational analysis, the present paper does not engage the historical component of their argument; those issues fall outside the scope of this study and would require a separate publication. Instead, the response below evaluates the technical assumptions, feature-selection strategies, and statistical choices underlying their stylometric conclusions. Several of these choices—particularly their treatment of genre, their resampling approach to short texts, and their covariance-inflation methodology—create strong structural biases toward a "Joseph Smith" outcome regardless of the underlying signal in the data.

The purpose of this response is not adversarial. Stylometry is a developing tool within Latter-day Saint studies, and methodological transparency is essential to its refinement. By examining how different modeling choices influence outcomes, this critique aims to situate the present study's findings within a broader computational context and to highlight why alternate methodological paths can yield markedly different results. The goal is not to settle historical debates, but to ensure that stylometric claims rest on valid and reproducible analytical foundations.

[17] Paul J. Fields, Steven T. Densley Jr., Matthew Roper, and Larry Bassist, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence for the Authorship of Doctrine and Covenants 132," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 67 (2025): 1–70, *LINK*.

Stylometric Argument

Following their historical discussion, Fields, *et al.* turn to stylometry as supposed empirical validation of that conclusion. Part Three of their study, titled "Authorial Stylometric Analysis of Section 132," attempts to quantify authorship by comparing word-use patterns within the revelation to writings of Joseph Smith, his Nauvoo clerks, and other potential contributors.[18] Their results are presented as statistically conclusive: both the polygamy and non-polygamy portions of D&C 132 are said to align with Joseph's early revelations and to differ sharply from the writings of Brigham Young or any other candidate.

At first glance, these findings appear authoritative, especially when embedded within visually sophisticated three-dimensional plots and confidence ellipsoids. Yet a closer examination shows that the study's design strongly predisposes the analysis toward the study's final outcome. Choices regarding corpus construction, sample resampling, feature inclusion, and visualization parameters collectively shape an environment in which a "Joseph Smith" result becomes the default rather than a discriminative conclusion. In effect, the stylometric analysis functions less as an independent test and more as a confirmation of the assumptions built into its structure.

The following response evaluates these methodological issues in detail, examining how specific analytical decisions—particularly in feature selection, genre handling, covariance scaling, and dimensional reduction—affect the apparent clustering of D&C 132. The goal is not to contest historical claims but to assess the stylometric component on its own terms and to clarify why its results should be interpreted with caution.

Visual Compression Through Confidence Ellipsoids

The most visually persuasive element of Fields, *et al.*'s stylometric presentation is their use of three-dimensional confidence ellipsoids.[19] These overlapping 99.9 percent ellipsoids are designed to project an image of statistical cohesion between the two halves of D&C 132 and Joseph Smith's early revelations. Yet the visual effect

[18] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 35-47.

[19] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 43-47. See their figures 5-11.

they produce is not a reflection of true authorial similarity—it is a byproduct of graphical compression. The broader the confidence interval chosen, the more likely that the ellipsoids of unrelated datasets will overlap, creating the illusion of sameness. By opting for an extraordinarily high 99.9 percent confidence level, Fields, *et al.* essentially guarantee overlap, because this threshold represents an almost all-inclusive boundary—encompassing all but 0.1 percent of potential variance. In other words, the ellipsoids would overlap even if the texts shared little stylistic affinity. As Eder cautions in his analysis of visual clustering in stylometry, many of the cluster-based displays may encourage overinterpretation of overlapping or adjacent sets as evidence of identical authorship, when they may simply reflect genre or source similarities.[20] Although their data isn't presented in a manner that can be replicated, it's highly likely that when the ellipsoids in Fields, *et al.*'s graphs are replaced by raw data points or by standard 60–95 percent confidence intervals, the apparent cohesion becomes far less pronounced, and the distinctness of the D&C 132 sub-clusters becomes more visible. Thus, what appears as confirmation of Joseph Smith's authorship is, upon inspection, a visual artifact of lenient statistical framing rather than proof of linguistic unity.

Misleading Visualization Through Genre Collapsing

Although Fields, *et al.* acknowledge that Joseph Smith's writings fall into distinct genres—prophetic revelations, epistles, instructions, and scribe-recorded materials—they undermine that very distinction in their analysis and conclusion.

Only three of the twelve corpora used by Fields, *et al.* consisted of revelatory-style texts, excluding D&C 132 itself.[21] These were Joseph Smith's early- and late-period revelations and Brigham Young's revelations. Brigham's corpus included his January 30, 1846 Revelation for Reuben Miller, Doctrine and Covenants 136, and his February 17, 1847 dream about Joseph Smith.[22] The inclusion of this dream narrative is unusual, as it is a descriptive visionary account rather than a Doctrine and Covenants–style

[20] Maciej Eder, "Visualization in Stylometry: Cluster Analysis Using Networks," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 32 (2017): 50–64.

[21] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 57-62.

[22] Cited in Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 61-62.

revelation such as D&C 136, and therefore introduces an inherent stylistic mismatch within Brigham's own corpus.

Additionally, Fields, *et al.* excluded uncanonized revelations from other nineteenth-century LDS leaders on the grounds that these authors had "no potential connection to Doctrine and Covenants 132."[23] Yet, using their own logic, revelatory material from Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff—all prominent polygamists and central figures in the development of early Utah theology—could have been included.[24] Their writings would have provided more appropriate and genre-consistent control corpora than the nine additional non-revelatory prose chunks Fields, *et al.* relied upon. The omission of these more relevant comparators further skews the analysis toward predetermined stylistic boundaries and weakens the validity of their conclusions.

After conducting genre-specific discriminant analyses, Fields, *et al.* overlay all of these distinct datasets within the same three-dimensional cube, placing D&C 132 among every category simultaneously.[25] This maneuver gives the impression that the revelation naturally clusters within Joseph Smith's stylistic range as a whole, when in fact the apparent proximity results from the stacking of multiple genre clouds into one display space. By visually merging revelation, correspondence, and dictated materials, Fields, *et al.* blur the contextual boundaries they claim to respect. The result is an inflated perception of stylistic coherence: D&C 132 appears to "fit" Joseph's voice only because the axes of their cube contain heterogeneous subgenres that collectively span an enormous stylistic territory. When these genres are analyzed separately—as they show in later figures—the distances between D&C 132 and Joseph's later Nauvoo revelations remain clearly visible. The choice to superimpose all categories in a single composite plot is therefore not an act of clarity but of rhetorical compression. It converts genre variance into visual overlap, creating an illusion of closeness that the data, when properly segregated, do not sustain.

For these reasons, the author of this paper found it more suitable to rely exclusively on Joseph Smith's own revelatory-style

[23] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 62.

[24] See "List of non-canonical revelations in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Wikipedia, s.v., *LINK*.

[25] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 40–44. See their figures 2–7.

writings as the control corpus. This corpus provides ample material for comparison and offers the most appropriate stylistic baseline against which to evaluate D&C 132. When properly filtered, it also avoids the distortions that arise from mixing genres or stylistic registers—an issue known to skew authorship analyses even when all texts originate from the same author.[26]

Temporal Inversion and Chronological Drift

Perhaps the most self-defeating outcome in Fields, *et al.*'s stylometric analysis is the revelation's unexpected proximity to Joseph Smith's early Kirtland revelations rather than his later Nauvoo compositions. According to their own figures (particularly figures 5–7), both halves of D&C 132 cluster most closely with sections 38 through 57—texts produced from 1831 to 1833—and only secondarily with the Nauvoo revelations from 1841 to 1844.[27] This temporal inversion is difficult to reconcile with the traditional claim that section 132 was dictated to William Clayton in one sitting in July 1843.[28] If their model were genuinely capturing authorial evolution, one would expect the revelation's style to align most closely with Joseph's other late works, such as sections 124 through 131, which share the same period and theological setting. Instead, their interpretive analysis effectively claims that section 132 is linguistically connected to the early 1830s—a period a decade removed from the text's supposed dictation.

Rather than squarely addressing this discrepancy, Fields, *et al.* treat it as corroboration, arguing that if the revelation originated in the early 1830s (as some Church sources assert), then its stylistic similarity to early revelations simply "confirms" its authenticity.[29] This reverses the direction of inference: because section 132 resembles Joseph's early writings, they conclude it must therefore have been first composed in that period. In any scenario in which the text did not circulate in stable written form from the early 1830s onward, this is linguistically implausible. It would require

[26] Artjoms Šeļa, "Corpus Building for Authorship Attribution," in *Survey of Methods in Computational Literary Studies* (2023), *LINK*; *LINK*.

[27] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 42–44.

[28] William Clayton, Letter to Madison Scott, November 11, 1871, MS 3423, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT, *LINK*.

[29] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 47.

Joseph either to retain in memory a lengthy revelation essentially verbatim for more than a decade, or, in 1843, to reconstruct the unconscious distribution of his 1830s function-word habits while extemporaneously dictating to William Clayton. Experimental work on memory and authorship imitation indicates that such fine-grained stylistic fidelity across long intervals, without a written exemplar or sustained rehearsal, is highly unlikely.[30] The discovery that an 1843 dictation clusters tightly with 1831–33 material should have prompted reconsideration of the text's composition history or of the stylometric model itself, not celebration of its supposed "consistency." By redefining a tension between date and style as confirmation, Fields, *et al.* blunt a potentially misleading result and reveal the circular logic structuring their stylometric framework.

Resampling and the Problem of Synthetic Samples

Fields, *et al.* seek to equalize the sizes of their authorial corpora by drawing "2,500-word samples" from each candidate author and from both halves of D&C 132. As they describe their procedure:

> Using resampling, we drew 6,000 samples, each of 2,500 words randomly drawn from each of the thirteen sets of texts from the candidate authors, as well as from the two parts of section 132.[31]

This step is a central part of their analysis. However, it is also the point at which their method becomes unsuitable for a short and potentially composite text like section 132 and other corpora they used in their study.[32] Neither the polygamy portion (≈1,300 words) nor the non-polygamy portion (≈1,800 words) contains 2,500 contiguous words. It is therefore mathematically impossible to obtain even a single 2,500-word chunk from either half without duplicating at least 700–1,200 tokens. The only way such samples can be produced is by resampling words with replacement from each half of section 132 until 2,500 tokens have been accumulated. Such

[30] Jacques Savoy, *Machine Learning Methods for Stylometry: Authorship Attribution and Author Profiling* (Springer International Publishing, 2020).

[31] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 38.

[32] For example, their combined Brigham Young "revelatory" corpus is only about 2,000 words.

bootstrapping can, in such settings, give an illusion of precision or stability that the underlying data cannot support.[33]

This procedure has two consequences. First, each "sample" is not a new textual observation but a synthetic pseudo-document built by duplicating the same small set of words and phrases. Second, the resulting pseudo-samples are inevitably non-independent: each one derives from the same underlying distribution and contains the same vocabulary in nearly the same proportions. Treating these artificially constructed samples as independent data points in Stepwise Discriminant Analysis gives the appearance of a rich and stable dataset, but no additional independent stylometric information has been created. The variance of the group is artificially compressed; its centroid is artificially stabilized, and the discriminant function can easily achieve near-perfect classification—not because the underlying texts are highly separable, but because the input data have been homogenized through resampling.

By contrast, the present study does not attempt to enlarge the text beyond its natural limits, instead prioritizing sample quality over sample quantity. In the current study, section 132 is divided into its two major thematic portions—the polygamy section and the non-polygamy section—and each portion is analyzed using real, contiguous 665-word windows with 50% overlap, a standard and methodologically sound approach in stylometry.[34] The polygamy section yields three windows; the non-polygamy section yields four. While these windows share some overlap, each one is composed of actual, unaltered text rather than synthetic content. Overlap creates mild correlation between adjacent windows, but it does not create artificial documents, nor does it distort the natural distribution of function words.

Because each window represents a genuine continuous sample of language, the method preserves local stylistic variance—exactly the kind of variance that would be flattened out or lost entirely under a full-text resampling method. If the polygamy and non-polygamy portions of the revelation differ stylistically, those differences will be visible across their respective windows; if they do not,

[33] Barmak Mostofian and Daniel M. Zuckerman, "Statistical Uncertainty Analysis for Small-Sample, High Log-Variance Data: Cautions for Bootstrapping and Bayesian Bootstrapping," *Journal of Chemical Theory and Computation* 15, no. 6 (2019): 3499–3509, *LINK*.

[34] Eder, "Through the Magnifying Glass."

the windows will cluster together naturally. In other words, the windowed PCA approach is not artificially generating additional "documents," but rather extracting all meaningful contiguous evidence that actually exists in the text. Furthermore, because PCA is an unsupervised method, it does not manufacture separation between pre-labeled groups. It simply reveals whether the windows from each portion fall into overlapping or distinct regions of stylistic space. This makes the analysis sensitive to internal heterogeneity in a way implausible for the SDA-based resampling used in Fields, *et al.*, which treats each half of section 132 as a single homogeneous pool of tokens.

These effects are further amplified by the choice of classification method. The use of Stepwise Discriminant Analysis (SDA) in Fields, *et al.*'s stylometric framework warrants careful methodological consideration. In the broader statistical literature, stepwise procedures have often been criticized for their tendency to capitalize on chance associations, yielding unstable feature sets and overly optimistic classification results—especially in settings with many predictors and few truly independent observations.[35] These concerns are well documented and have led methodologists to caution that stepwise approaches are best treated as exploratory tools rather than as a basis for confirmatory inference.[36] When SDA is applied to synthetically resampled, non-independent pseudo-documents—as in Fields, *et al.*—these known weaknesses are amplified: within-group variance is further compressed, separation becomes easier to achieve, and high classification accuracy can emerge even when the underlying authorial signal is not robust. For this reason, SDA-based attribution results obtained under such conditions should be interpreted with caution and understood as exploratory rather than decisive. The present study therefore avoids stepwise discriminant procedures as an evidentiary foundation, favoring instead contiguous windowing, transparent function-word distributions, and unsupervised analyses that do not depend on feature hunting or synthetic sample expansion.

[35]Bruce Thompson, "Stepwise Regression and Stepwise Discriminant Analysis Need Not Apply Here: A Guidelines Editorial," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 55, no. 4 (1995): 525–34, *LINK*.

[36]Thompson, "Stepwise Regression," 525-34.

Persistent Sub-Clusters and Masking Anomalies

Even after broadening their dataset, inflating their feature count, and overlaying heterogeneous genres within a single display, Fields, *et al.*'s own figures quietly reveal what their conclusions attempt to deny—D&C 132 continues to form distinct sub-clusters with their own centroids, separate from Joseph Smith's revelations. In their Figures 5 through 7, both the polygamy and non-polygamy segments of the revelation appear as discrete red and purple groupings that don't clearly merge with clusters representing Joseph's early or late revelations.[37] Rather than treating this separation as evidence of stylistic divergence, Fields, *et al.* visually obscure it by deploying enormous 99.9-percent confidence ellipsoids that conveniently swallow the outlying points. This maneuver transforms what should be recognized as statistically significant deviations into a superficial "overlap."

They also introduce a 2-D projection of "Function A" versus "Function C"—the discriminant-analysis equivalent of plotting PC1 against PC3 in a PCA—which naturally appears to show increased overlap within the D&C 132 samples.[38] Yet, as explained earlier in this study, that dimension captures only a minimal share of the total variance, since the overwhelming majority is already explained in the first two functions.[39] Emphasizing such a low-information projection only magnifies the illusion of similarity rather than providing meaningful evidence against divergence.

The problem is not merely aesthetic but methodological. When stylometric data points occupy distinct spaces within a multivariate field—even if partially enclosed within a broad confidence region—the separation signifies that the text's linguistic behavior is measurably different. Yoffe, *et al.* show how clusters can reflect formulaic reuse rather than genuine authorial similarity.[40] By visually smoothing their data, Fields, *et al.* transform what

[37] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 42-44.

[38] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 45.

[39] See above under "Exclusion of Additional Principal Components."

[40] Gideon Yoffe, Yair Segev, and Barak Sober, "An Unsupervised Information-Theoretic Approach to Identifying Formulaic Clusters in Textual Data," *Computational Humanities Research* 1 (2025): e9, *LINK*; David Kernot, Terry Bossomaier, and Roger Bradbury, "Stylometric Techniques for Multiple Author Clustering: Shakespeare's Authorship in The Passionate Pilgrim," *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications* 8 (2017), *LINK*.

could have been an instructive finding—that D&C 132 exhibits a distinct stylistic signature—into a non-result. Ironically, the very need for such smoothing betrays the fact that the text does not naturally blend with Joseph Smith's corpus. The revelation's two halves cluster relatively closely amongst themselves but remain separate from Joseph's other works, suggesting internal cohesion but external anomaly—a pattern that may be more consistent with later attempts at copying or composite redaction than with seamless authorship, though further analyses would be needed to test this possibility.

It appears that Fields, *et al.* attempt to cushion these contradictory findings by introducing a Mahalanobis distance comparison. They present their Figures 1 and 2 as evidence that D&C 132 "clusters closest" to Joseph Smith's revelatory sections based on Mahalanobis distance across 221 function words in a twelve-dimensional space.[41] This comparison is primarily relative and constrained by the candidate set; it shows which included corpus is least distant in this feature space, not whether the match is uniquely or strongly indicative of authorship. Since Joseph's and Brigham's revelations were the only texts of comparable prophetic genre, their stylistic similarity was inevitable. This explains why, despite coming from a completely separate author, Brigham's revelations measure the 4th closest in similarity to D&C 132 compared to the rest of the corpus and Joseph's non-revelatory texts are so far away. As discussed earlier, it is likely Brigham's corpus would cluster even closer to Joseph's if the authors had not included his February 17, 1847 dream narrative, which is more of a descriptive text rather than Brigham's Doctrine and Covenants–style revelation voice, such as that found in D&C 136.

[41] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 38, 64.

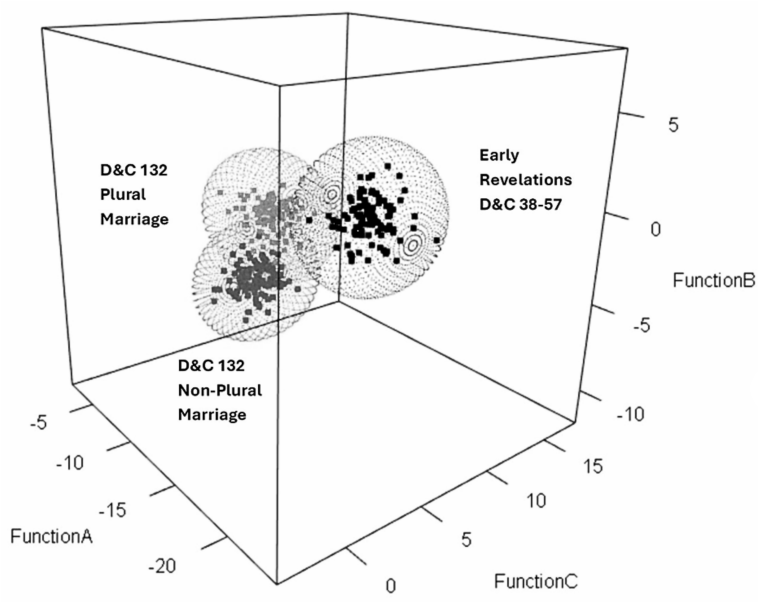

Figure 8: *Figure 8 in Fields, et al. displays three distinct centroids—corresponding to the "Plural Marriage," "Non-Plural Marriage," and "Early Revelations" corpora—when the data are centered. They claim these centroids aren't "meaningfully distinctive" with a huge 99.9% ellipsoid confidence interval, and yet are distinctive enough to form their own clusters. Image from Paul Fields, et al., "Historical and Stylometric Evidence for the Authorship of Doctrine and Covenants 132,"* Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship *67 (2025): 44.*

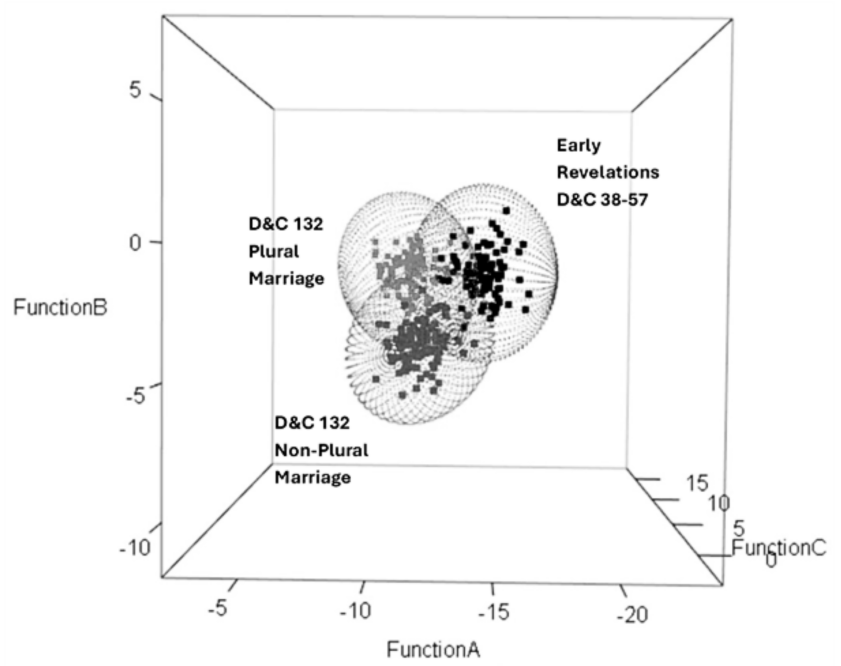

Figure 9: *Figure 9 in Fields, et al. plots the first two discriminant functions—the functions accounting for the greatest proportion of the model's relative variance—on a two-dimensional plane, where the separation between the centroids is again visibly pronounced. Image from Fields, et al., "Historical and Stylometric Evidence for the Authorship of Doctrine and Covenants 132,"* Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship *67 (2025): 45.*

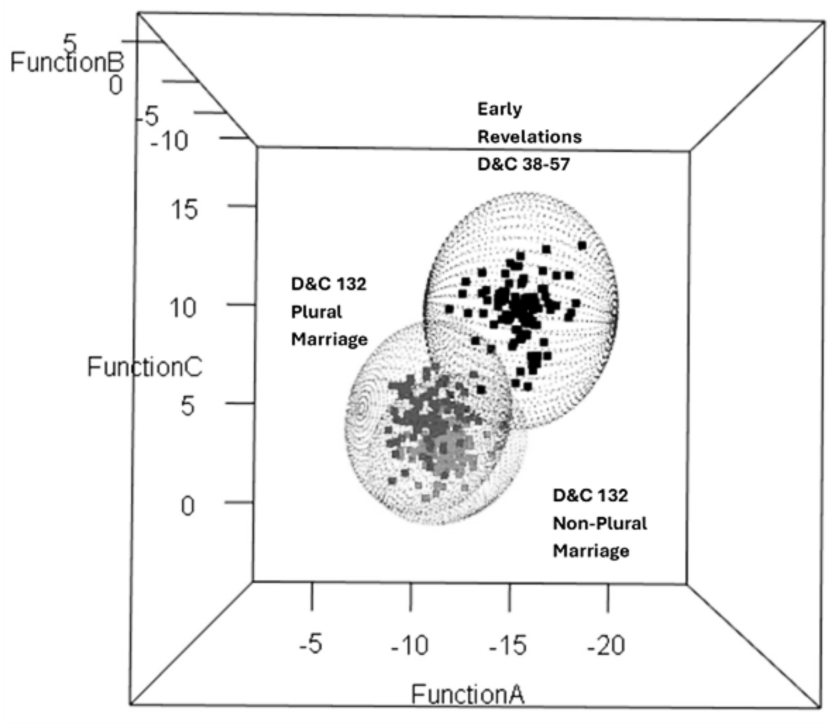

Figure 10: *Figure 10 in Fields, et al. plots the first and third discriminant functions. As noted earlier, the third function (Function C in this case) accounts for only a minimal portion of the total relevant variance, making Fields, et al.'s assertion of "considerable overlap" in this dimension misleading. Image from Fields, et al., "Historical and Stylometric Evidence for the Authorship of Doctrine and Covenants 132,"* Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship *67 (2025): 45*

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The finding of "least dissimilarity" merely confirms that D&C 132 reads closer to other nineteenth-century revelatory texts, not that Joseph wrote it. Moreover, the use of dozens of resampled pseudo-samples from small corpora artificially compresses variance, resulting in low distances and the visual impression of cohesion. Without effect sizes or significance testing, these relative distances are descriptive, not evidentiary—they demonstrate perceived similarity, not conclusive evidence of shared authorship.

Feature Inflation and Dilution of Authorial Signal

The final weakness in Fields, *et al.*'s stylometric methodology lies in their indiscriminate use of 221 function words—a feature set far exceeding standard practice and well beyond the range of statistically meaningful analysis for texts of this size.[42] In authorship studies, the reliability of function-word analysis depends not on how many words are counted but on how consistently those words appear across samples. Only the most frequent and distributionally stable tokens—usually between forty and seventy, depending on corpus size—provide a clear signal of authorial habit. Fields, *et al.* might argue that their use of 2,500-word samples ensures adequate stabilization of word frequencies; however, this assumption is misleading. As discussed earlier, repeatedly drawing 2,500-word samples from small corpora does not increase the amount of unique linguistic information available—it merely recycles the same limited vocabulary, producing an illusion of statistical robustness while leaving token frequencies just as sparse and unstable as before.

Within Joseph Smith's authenticated revelations, this study identified only about fifty commonly recurring function words suitable for analysis after examining their frequencies across the entire corpus. When rare or context-sensitive forms are included, the resulting frequency matrix becomes sparse and the discriminative power of the model rapidly collapses. As noted by researcher Sundararajan, when using lexical features (word-based models) in cross-domain stylometry, many features become "sparse especially for short texts because most word sequences do not occur."[43] By expanding their feature set to more than triple the typical size,

[42] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 38.

[43] Krishnan Sundararajan, *Analysis of Stylometry as a Cognitive Biometric Trait* (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2017), 16, *LINK*.

Fields, *et al.* introduce exactly this problem: statistical noise overwhelms meaningful stylistic patterns.

The issue is compounded by the small size of several of the corpora. With fewer than 4,000 words in section 132, many of the 221 "function" words used by Fields, *et al.* to discriminate the other authors occur too infrequently within section 132 itself to produce stable or representative frequencies. This violates one of stylometry's most fundamental assumptions—that word frequencies approximate normal distribution only when tokens appear often enough to be statistically meaningful and genuinely topic-neutral.[44] By forcing hundreds of low-frequency words into their analysis, Fields, *et al.* inadvertently dilute the influence of the most informative high-frequency variables—such as *the*, *and*, *of*, and *to*—while inflating the weight of sporadic particles that carry little or no authorial significance. It is also unclear in their paper whether their function-word list included archaic forms common in Joseph Smith's revelations (e.g., *unto, ye, shall*). The omission or inclusion of such terms, given their methods and corpora, would significantly distort the results, as these forms are ubiquitous in revelatory-style texts but largely absent from administrative writings, personal letters, and several of the other corpora used in their comparison.

Fields, *et al.* further compound these problems through their use of Stepwise Discriminant Analysis to "identify the linear combinations of function-word frequencies that best distinguish the sets."[45] SDA selects variables solely on the basis of how much they increase within-sample group separation, not on whether the variables represent stable authorial habits. When applied to high-dimensional, sparse data—such as 221 function words counted in 2,500-word windows in less than 4,000-word texts—SDA, as with all discriminate-analysis methods, can be prone to overfitting.[46] The stylometric survey by Stamatatos corroborates that authorship-attribution tasks are particularly sensitive to high feature/small sample ratios and sparse token distributions.[47] Furthermore, Fields,

[44] Savoy, *Machine Learning Methods for Stylometry*.

[45] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 38.

[46] Jyothi Subramanian and Richard Simon, "Overfitting in Prediction Models—Is It a Problem Only in High Dimensions?," *Contemporary Clinical Trials* 36, no. 2 (2013): 636–41, *LINK*.

[47] Efstathios Stamatatos, "A Survey of Modern Authorship Attribution Methods," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 60 (2009): 538–56, *LINK*.

et al. themselves imply in a separate publication that effective stylometric use of SDA requires a highly restricted feature set: in their analysis of *The Federalist Papers*—a vastly larger and more linguistically diverse corpus—they selected only 29 of the most discriminating words, in stark contrast to the 221 tokens employed in their D&C 132 study.[48]

Although Fields, *et al.* do not publish their complete function-word list, the methodological consequence is clear: they employ a bloated, high-dimensional feature space coupled with a classifier highly sensitive to variance, applied to corpora too small to stabilize the majority of their variables. The result is an analytical framework whose statistical sophistication masks an unstable foundation, rendering their classification results unreliable.

Lack of Transparency and Reproducibility

It should be noted that perhaps the most troubling aspect of Fields, *et al.*'s analysis is its lack of methodological transparency. Despite claiming rigorous statistical precision, the authors do not provide the full list of the 221 function words used in their discriminant model, nor do they explain why certain candidate revelations were excluded—even though numerous texts of comparable length, style, and historical relevance were readily available and could have strengthened their "Early Revelations" corpus. Likewise, they offer no description of how, or whether, the corpora were cleaned prior to tokenization: whether verse numbers, punctuation, or editorial annotations were removed, or whether capitalization was standardized. Because each of these preprocessing steps can dramatically affect function-word frequencies—especially in short archaic texts—the absence of this information prevents readers from determining what the model was actually measuring.

Compounding this opacity is the absence of any formal limitations section. The authors never address the constraints imposed by their corpora, their extensive resampling procedures, or the high-dimensional feature set they employ. In stylometry, acknowledging such limitations is essential for preventing overinterpretation and

[48] Paul Fields, Larry Bassist, and Matthew Roper, "Choosing Words for Stylometric Authorship Attribution: Evaluating Most Distinguishing Words (MDWs) vs. Most Frequent Words (MFWs)," *Digital Humanities 2016: Conference Abstracts* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University and Pedagogical University, 2016), 504–7.

for signaling where conclusions are tentative rather than definitive. Fields, *et al.*'s silence on these issues leaves readers without critical context and obscures the extent to which their results may be artifacts of methodological choices rather than genuine stylistic signal.

The sensitive nature of wordprint studies inherently requires the explanation of explicit preprocessing criteria, full word lists, sampling logic, and clearly stated methodological limitations to enable replication and critical evaluation. In a discipline where transparency is the only safeguard against confirmation bias, Fields, *et al.*'s refusal to document their pipeline renders their conclusions empirically unverifiable and, by extension, scientifically weak.

Summary of Stylometric Response

Taken together, these methodological issues reveal that Fields, *et al.*'s stylometric analysis is neither transparent nor statistically sound. Their inflated resampling procedure recycles limited corpora into hundreds of pseudo-samples, destroying statistical independence; their 99.9 percent confidence ellipsoids visually blur genuine separation; and their use of Mahalanobis distance within a closed, genre-uneven candidate set guarantees that Joseph Smith's revelations will appear "least dissimilar." The inclusion of 221 function words, many too infrequent to be meaningful, further weakens the discriminant model by flooding it with noise. Compounding these flaws is a lack of methodological transparency—no public function-word list, no corpus-cleaning protocol, and no rationale for excluding other contemporaneous revelations. The result is an analysis that presents the appearance of mathematical sophistication but fails tests of reproducibility, independence, and falsifiability. When these weaknesses are controlled for, the evidence does not point to stylistic unity between D&C 132 and Joseph Smith's authenticated revelations. Instead, it reveals a text whose linguistic behavior remains anomalous—internally cohesive but externally distinct.

Response to Appendix E

In Appendix E, Fields, *et al.* dedicate several pages to criticizing an early, unpublished stylometric experiment I conducted

over a year ago that was briefly summarized in an online forum.[49] This informal analysis—posted long before my present study—was explicitly exploratory and never presented as a finished, peer-reviewed work. Yet Fields *et al.* treat it as though it were a competing publication, devoting an entire appendix to refuting an early draft that I myself have long since superseded. Their portrayal of that post as "circulated among members of the Church" and "appearing sophisticated" is inaccurate and misleading; it was a short demonstration of method, not a formal claim of authorship attribution.

The criticisms they list—chiefly concerning my use of principal-components analysis (PCA), limited function-word set, and small corpus segmentation—ignore the context in which that preliminary analysis was performed. It was clearly labeled as exploratory, designed to visualize potential linguistic divergence within D&C 132 rather than to produce a definitive attribution model. In fact, the paper's "Methodology" and "Limitations" sections explicitly describe the restricted corpus and the necessity of a future, more comprehensive function-word analysis: "While the study presented here seems to offer a decisive conclusion . . . there were a few limitations that should be recognized for transparency reasons."[50] Nowhere did the draft present itself as statistically conclusive. In fact, stylometry can never be statistically conclusive. The draft's goal was to test feasibility using openly available tools—an introductory, visual exercise that later evolved into the more robust study presented in this paper. To treat that rough experiment as a published claim demanding formal refutation is methodologically misplaced and rhetorically defensive.

Moreover, Fields, *et al.*'s own "re-analysis" of my data introduces errors more serious than any they allege. They substitute their own resampling procedure and Bonferroni adjustments into a dataset they did not compile and then declare the results "deficient," without ever demonstrating that they reproduced my preprocessing steps, normalization criteria, or block definitions. In effect, they took my spreadsheet output and proceeded using their

[49] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 65-67.

[50] Ethan Lloyd, "A Stylometric Analysis of Doctrine and Covenants 132," (unpublished, 2024), 12, shared on social media, *LINK.*

own approach—without reconstructing the methodological context that gave those numbers meaning.

They further assert that principal components analysis (PCA) is "not appropriate given the data," a claim at odds with decades of stylometric practice.[51] Dozens of peer-reviewed authorship studies since the 1990s have relied on PCA precisely to visualize stylistic clustering of function word frequencies and identify potential outliers. As Craig's 2024 study shows, PCA and multidimensional scaling have remained standard exploratory tools for detecting stylistic divergence.[52] Fields, *et al.* also fault my preliminary study for not including a corpus of external authors, but this critique misconstrues its stated aim. The past, and current, goals are not to identify an alternative author for D&C 132—a task made difficult by the text's complex transmission history and unique genre—but to determine whether it behaves as a stylistic outlier when compared exclusively to Joseph Smith's authenticated revelations. For such an internal-comparison design, PCA is entirely appropriate.

Their insistence that a 99.9 percent confidence ellipse be used to judge "outlier" status further demonstrates methodological overreach. In small-sample linguistic data, a 95–99 percent threshold is conventional; pushing the level to 99.9 percent ensures that no data point will qualify as distinct. Their decision to apply such an extreme criterion and then pronounce the results "not outliers" simply illustrates how their analysis was designed to preclude difference.

Finally, the presence of this appendix in a paper claiming statistical neutrality raises questions of motive. Rather than engaging the broader evidence of linguistic anomaly within section 132, Fields, *et al.* devote several pages to discrediting a student's exploratory post, suggesting a defensive rather than scholarly impulse. My present analysis—conducted with a complete function-word corpus, rigorous normalization, and genre control—addresses precisely the limitations they cite and arrives at the opposite conclusion: that section 132's verses remain linguistically distinct from Joseph Smith's revelatory style.

[51] Fields, *et al.*, "Historical and Stylometric Evidence," 66.

[52] Craig, "Principal Components Analysis in Stylometry," 97-108.

Conclusions

The stylometric evidence presented in this study indicates that Doctrine and Covenants 132 diverges in measurable ways from Joseph Smith's established revelatory voice. Across multiple function-word feature sets, the text—particularly the sections addressing plural marriage—exhibits elevated rates of personal pronouns, conditional constructions, and other stylistic markers that differ from Joseph's authenticated revelations. These differences persist across PCA visualizations and cosine-similarity measures and are not easily explained by genre, topic, or audience effects alone.

While stylometric analysis cannot reconstruct the historical circumstances of the revelation's production or determine the precise origin of any specific passage, it can identify whether a text aligns with the unconscious linguistic patterns that characterize an author's typical dictation style. In this case, the results suggest that significant portions of D&C 132 do not conform to Joseph Smith's established stylistic profile, instead forming a distinct cluster that departs from his known revelations. This finding does not resolve broader historical debates, but it does provide a quantitative basis for questioning the assumption of single-author composition.

Further research will be required to clarify these issues. Expanded corpora, more comprehensive comparative datasets, and the application of additional stylometric techniques—such as larger-scale feature testing or supervised classification models once sufficient data become available—may offer deeper insight into the textual formation of D&C 132 and related nineteenth-century revelation texts. Stylometry cannot, by itself, settle questions of authorship, but it can help determine the range of plausible scenarios and signal where traditional narratives may require re-examination.

Within those methodological limits, the present analysis supports a cautious conclusion: D&C 132 contains stylistic patterns that are atypical of Joseph Smith's authenticated revelations and consistent with the presence of additional authorial influences or compositional layers. Future interdisciplinary work—including historical investigation, manuscript analysis, and broader computational study—may help to determine how these layers emerged

and how they relate to Joseph Smith's original teachings on eternal marriage.

Appendix A: Post-Study Observations Through Joseph and Emma Smith's Notes and Letters

Shown below is an extensive list of first-hand, contemporaneous documents or letters between Joseph and Emma containing wording relevant to their relationship during their lifetimes. Authorship style can often be discerned not only through quantitative measures but also through surface-level rhetorical patterns and modes of address. These statements may help readers intuitively form a sense of Joseph Smith's customary writing voice when addressing his wife, which can then be compared qualitatively with the tone, diction, and rhetorical posture found in the extant text of Doctrine and Covenants 132.

1830

- Joseph in July: "Behold, thy sins are for given thee & thou art an Elect Lady, whom I have called . . . & thou needest not fear for thy husband shall support thee." (D&C 25)[53]

1832

- Joseph on October 13: "I feel as if I wanted to say something to you to comfort you in your beculier [peculiar] triel and presant affliction[.] I hope God will give you strength that you may not faint[.] I pray God to soften the hearts of those arou[n]d you to be kind to you and take ^\the/ burdon of[f] your shoulders as much as posable and not afflict you . . . you have one true and living friend on Earth your Husband"[54]

1834

- Joseph on May 18: "I sit down in my tent to write a few lines to you to let you know that you are on my mind and that I am sensible of the dut[i]es of a Husband and Father . . . The few lines you wrote . . . gave me satisfaction and comfort and

[53]Revelation, July 1830–C [D&C 25], 34, JSP, *LINK*.
[54]Letter to Emma Smith, 13 October 1832, 1–3, JSP, *LINK*.

I hope you will continue to communicate to me by your own hand for this is a consolation to me to convirse \with/ you in this way in my lonely moments which is not easily discribed."[55]

- Joseph on June 4: "I want you to make use of the money I send you in wisdom, for such things as you need, and make yourselves as comfortable and contented as you can and continue to pray to the Lord to hasten the day when we shall be permitted to behold each other's face again and enjoy the blessing of the family circle in peace ... Be assured that I always remember you to my Heavenly Father."[56]

1837

- Emma on April 25: "I cannot tell you my feelings when I found I could not see you before you left, yet I expect you can realize them."[57]

1838

- Joseph on November 4: "I cannot express my feelings, my heart is full, Farewell Oh my kind and affectionate Emma I am yours forever your Husband and true friend."[58]
- Joseph on November 12: "I received your letter which I read over and over again, it was a sweet morsal to me, Oh God grant that I may have the privaliege of seeing once more my lovely Family, in the injoyment, of the sweets of liberty, and sotiaial life, to press them to my bosam and kiss their lovely cheeks would fill my heart with unspeakable grattitude."[59]
- Joseph on December 1: "My dear companion ..."[60]

[55]Letter to Emma Smith, May 18, 1834, 1, JSP, *LINK*.
[56]Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834, 59, JSP, *LINK*.
[57]Letter from Emma Smith, 25 April 1837, 35, JSP, *LINK*.
[58]Letter to Emma Smith, 4 November 1838, 3, JSP, *LINK*.
[59]Letter to Emma Smith, 12 November 1838, 1, JSP *LINK*.
[60]Letter to Emma Smith, 1 December 1838, 1, JSP, *LINK*.

1839

- Emma on March 7: "The situation in which you are, the walls, bars, and bolts, rolling rivers, running streams, rising hills, sinking vallies and spreading prairies that separate us, and the cruel injustice that first cast you into prison and still holds you there, with many other considerations, places my feelings far beyond description . . . but I still live and am yet willing to suffer more if it is the will of kind Heaven, that I should for your sake."[61]

- Joseph on March 21: "Dear Emma I very well know your toils and simpathise with you if God will spare my life once more to have the privelege of takeing care of you I will ease your care and indeavour to cumfort your heart."[62]

- Joseph on April 4: "if you want to know how much I want to see you, examine your feelings, how much you want to see me, and judge for ˆ\you[r]self/, I would gladly ˆ\walk/ from here to you barefoot, and bareheaded, and half naked, to see you and think it great pleasure, and never count it toil."[63]

- Joseph on November 9: "I shall be filled ˆ\with/constant anxiety about you and the children until I hear from you."[64]

- Emma on December 6: "There is great anxiety manifest in this place for your prosperity and the time lingers long that is set for your return."[65]

1840

- Joseph on January 20: "I feel very anxious to see you all once more in this world the time seems long that I am deprived of your sosiety . . . I pray God to spare you all untill I git home my dear Emma my heart is intwined arround you and those little ones."[66]

[61] Letter from Emma Smith, 7 March 1839, 37, JSP, *LINK*.
[62] Letter to Emma Smith, 21 March 1839, 1, JSP, *LINK*.
[63] Letter to Emma Smith, 4 April 1839, 2, JSP, *LINK*.
[64] Letter to Emma Smith, 9 November 1839, 1, JSP, *LINK*.
[65] Letter from Emma Smith, 6 December 1839, 2, JSP, *LINK*.
[66] Letter to Emma Smith, 20–25 January 1840, 1, JSP, *LINK*.

1842

- Joseph on August 16: "With what unspeakable delight, and what transports of joy swelled my bosom, when I took by the hand on that night, my beloved Emma ... Oh! what a comingling of thought filled my mind for the moment, Again she \is/ here, even in the seventh trouble, undaunted, firm and unwavering, unchangeable, affectionate Emma."[67]

- Emma on August 16: "Yours affectionately forever, Emma Smith"[68]

- Joseph on August 16: "Your affectionate husband untill death, through all eternity forevermore."[69]

- Emma on August 16: "My husband; who has not committed any crime whatever; neither has he transgressed any of the laws, or any part of the constitution of the United States; neither has he at any time infringed upon the rights of any man, or of any class of men or community of any description."[70]

- Emma on August 27: "Why then, be so strenuos to have my husband taken, when you know him to be innocent."[71]

1844

- Joseph on June 23: "If God ev[e]r opens a door that is possible for me I will see you again ... My heart ble[e]ds."[72]

- Joseph on June 27 "Dear Emma I am very much resigned to my lot knowing I am justified and have done the best that could be done give my love to the children."[73]

[67] Reflections and Blessings, 16 and 23 August 1842, 164, JSP, *LINK*. Less than a year after this quote, Joseph would have supposedly dictated D&C 132.
[68] Letter from Emma Smith, 16 August 1842, 175, JSP, *LINK*.
[69] Letter to Emma Smith, 16 August 1842, 175, JSP, *LINK.*
[70] Journal, December 1841–December 1842, 176, JSP, *LINK*.
[71] Journal, December 1841–December 1842, 188, JSP, *LINK*.
[72] Letter to Emma Smith, 23 June 1844, 1, JSP, *LINK*.
[73] Letter to Emma Smith, 27 June 1844, JSP, *LINK*.

1867

- Emma Smith in April: Emma denies the authenticity of D&C 132. "It is false in all its parts, *made out of whole cloth*, without any foundation in truth."[74]

1879

- Emma Smith on October 1: "He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have ... He did not have improper relations with any woman that ever came to my knowledge ... I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise."[75]
- Emma Smith on October 1: "I believe he was everything he professed to be."[76]
- Emma Smith on October 1: "There was no necessity for any quarreling. He knew that I wished for nothing but what was right; and, as he wished for nothing else, we did not disagree."[77]

[74] Jason W. Briggs, Interview with Emma Hale Smith Bidamon, April 1867, in Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, comps., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1844–1872* (Lamoni, IA: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1908), 3:352, *LINK*.

[75] "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saint's Herald* 26, no. 19 (Oct. 1, 1879): 289-90, *LINK*.

[76] "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," 289–90.

[77] "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," 289–90.