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KEYNOTE SPEECH 1

PROF FREDERIC CHAUME

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Reimagining Media Localization: Embracing Change, Empowering Diverse Talent

ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving ecosystem of global audiovisual media, localization is no longer a peripheral technical task but a central, identity-shaping practice. As artificial intelligence, automated workflows, and new platform-driven demands reshape the industry, media localization must be reimagined as a space where cultural diversity, human creativity, and technological innovation intersect. This lecture will explore how media localization, and particularly dubbing, is being transformed by emerging technologies and shifting professional roles. It will address how these changes create both challenges and opportunities for creativity and representation in digital environments. By drawing on current industry practices and research across dubbing, AI, and synthetic voices, the talk will reflect on how new workflows are redefining the skillsets required, the voices heard, and the agents empowered in the localization process. Ultimately, this lecture calls for a conscious and inclusive reimagining of media localization –one that embraces change without sacrificing cultural depth, and that empowers a broader, more diverse generation of language professionals to shape how identities and stories circulate on screen.

BIO

Frederic Chaume is a Full Professor of Audiovisual Translation at Universitat Jaume I (Spain), where he teaches audiovisual translation theory and translation and adaptation for dubbing; and Honorary Professor at University College London (UK), where he teaches translation and adaptation for voice-over and dubbing, Universidad Ricardo Palma (Perú) and Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (Perú). He is author (or coauthor) of eight books and has also coedited two books and four special journal issues (Textus, Perspectives, Prosopopeya, Translation Spaces). He is the director of the TRAMA book series (Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I), the first collection of monographs on audiovisual translation and media localization. Prof. Chaume has published over 100 articles, book chapters and encyclopedic entries on audiovisual translation and has given numerous keynote lectures on this topic in

international translation studies conferences and in several European, Asian, African and American universities. He also teaches regularly in some of them (University College London-UK, Universidad Europea de Valencia-Spain, Università di TorinoItaly, among others). He has supervised or co-supervised 22 PhD theses on the topic of audiovisual translation and some of them have received different Spanish and European awards. He is also in close contact with the industry, serves as a consultant for OTT platforms and AI dubbing companies. He coordinates the research group TRAMA (www.trama.uji.es) and is the recipient of the Critics's Award (2004), Berlanga Award (2010), the Xènia Martínez Award (2016) and the Jan Ivarsson's Award (2020) for his constant and enthusiastic support to media localization as well as his constant university training in this field. He has been appointed Honorary Member of the Colegio de Traductores del Perú in 2024. His most recent publications include *Doublage et sous-titrage. Guide d'une profession en plein essor* (2021), *Pasado y presente de la traducción para el doblaje* and *La Traducción para la Subtitulación: Mapa de Convenciones*, both published in 2019.

KEYNOTE SPEECH 2

PROF GIUSEPPE BALIRANO

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“Nothing Comes from Violence”: Teen Drama, Hate Speech and Digital Masculinities

ABSTRACT

In the digital age, teen drama series such as *Sex Education*, *Heartstopper*, and *Adolescence* extend beyond the screen to become central texts in wider discursive formations around youth, gender, and violence. This study explores how hate speech, whether direct or systemically embedded, is discursively rearticulated and emotionally reframed by adolescent viewers through social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. Grounded in Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS, Khosravinik, 2017, 2020), the analysis focuses on how young users engage with scenes of homophobia, gender-based exclusion, and emotional repression by producing platform-native responses: reaction videos, duets, meme edits, and captioned clips. These affective performances serve not only to interpret the original content but to renegotiate its ideological payload, often amplifying or resisting the violence depicted. Two conceptual tools are employed to examine these processes. The first is semiotic prosody (Balirano, 2017), which captures the emotional and ideological layering across modes, image, sound, gesture, and text, within digital remediations. The second is the community factor (Balirano, 2014), here reconceived to analyse the cultural and generational proximity between content creators and audiences, shaping how hate is either reproduced or dismantled in these digital contexts. Ultimately, echoing Sting’s words that “nothing comes from violence,” this talk argues that the digital afterlife of teen drama is where masculinities are not only represented but contested, and where the emotional legacies of televised hate become tools for building diversity, rather than breaking-community.

BIO

Giuseppe Balirano, PhD in English for Specific Purposes, is Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Naples L’Orientale, where he also serves as Rector’s Delegate for Lifelong Learning, eLearning, and Multimedia Enhancement. He is currently President of the Italian Association for the Study of English (AIA). His research interests include Social Media Critical Discourse Studies, online hate speech, humour, masculinity studies, the discursive construction of organised crime, queer cinema, and audiovisual translation. He is Principal

Investigator of the PRIN 2022 project *Echoes of Hate: Discourses of Violence, Practices of Resistance* and of the Monitoring Group on Hate Speech Online at UNIOR. He is also Director of *BeTwiXt*, a book series dedicated to linguistics and communication studies. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Textus: English Studies in Italy* and of *ALLieD: Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages in Educational Digital Settings*, and serves on the editorial boards of several international journals in discourse and media studies. His work draws on discourse-analytical approaches to investigate identity construction in multimodal contexts, particularly across digital platforms. He has published extensively on gender and sexuality discourses, as well as on the semiotics of visual and mediated texts. He actively collaborates on national and international projects promoting media education and critical digital literacy.

KEYNOTE SPEECH 3

PROF FRANCESCA SAGGINI

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It's so overt, it's covert. The double life of windows in popular culture

ABSTRACT

My talk will explore two aspects of popular culture from a transmedia and transhistoric perspective. Drawing on the complementary vantage points offered by two popular genres, horror and detection, I will examine the changing ontology and significance of windows, focusing on their evolving and dynamic connection with identity. In horror fiction, the window is the locus where the transparency of architecture as a signifier of CULTURE comes into contact and clashes—in a conceptual aporia—with the horror of the abhuman and (super)NATURE. The logical geometry of the window frame and the reassuringly mimetic transparency of the pane are challenged and often reversed by the morphic capacity and ontological uncertainty of the horrific body in transit and transformation, seen behind or outside a window. The thing on the glass threshold could be the restless spirit at the casement seeking admission into *Wuthering Heights*; the apparition of Jekyll/Hyde, exhaling ‘abject terror and despair’ before his window is ‘instantly thrust down’; the vampire creature of Croglin Grange, prying the lead from the window frame in his victim’s bedroom; or, finally, the ember eyes of the possessed Regan MacNeil, superimposed in the film montage on her eerily lit bedroom windows (*The Exorcist*).

In detective fiction, specifically in the Sherlock Holmes stories, I will show how the window can be considered a response to Dr Jekyll’s notorious “history of a window” and a parodic transmediation of the theme of double identity. Finally, Sherlock’s window at 221B Baker Street transmediates the detective’s method of investigation and his rechannelling of the psychogeography of the metropolis. In what ways do windows act as mirrors and prisms for identity in the uncanny spaces of horror and detection? Peering through my windows, we glimpse how identity is reflected, fractured, and transformed across the shifting landscapes of these popular genres.

BIO

Francesca Saggini is a Professor of English Literature at the Università della Tuscia (Italy). She is the author of five books and has edited thirteen collections and special journal issues. Many of her essays and chapters engage with popular fiction and genre literature. Francesca has

held numerous international fellowships (Canada, Germany, Italy, USA, UK) and regularly speaks at conferences, seminars, and public events. Among her recent publications in Gothic Studies are *Transmedia Creatures: Frankenstein's Afterlives* (co-edited with A.E. Soccio, Bucknell UP, 2018), 'The Gothic in Nineteenth-century Italy' (in *The Cambridge History of the Gothic*, 2020), and *Il fantasma in salotto. Dentro al Fantastico dell'Ottocento* (Unicopli, 2020). On houses in literature, her most recent publication is "Housing Romanticism," *European Romantic Review* (2023). She is an inveterate domophile and passionate about thrills and chills.

SPEAKERS

MARIA CRISTINA AIEZZA - Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale'

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Orientalism Lingering in the Air? A Critical Discourse Analysis of Italian and US Online Reviews of Middle Eastern Perfume Dupes

ABSTRACT

This study investigates user-generated discourse in online perfume reviews, focusing specifically on perceptions of Middle Eastern fragrances positioned as affordable alternatives to iconic Western scents. Historically, Western perfumery has drawn heavily on Eastern olfactory elements to construct narratives of exoticism, sensuality, and opulence. This practice reflects broader orientalist frameworks, in which the West reimagined the East to serve its own cultural, aesthetic, and commercial agendas. In recent years, however, the global success of Middle Eastern perfume brands, across both luxury and mass-market segments, suggests a reversal of this symbolic flow. What was once appropriated is now being re-authored, as these brands are increasingly shaping and redefining global fragrance aesthetics, asserting new forms of authorship and cultural influence. In today's globalised and digitally mediated fragrance culture, these so-called "dupes" challenge traditional olfactory hierarchies and invite critical reconsideration of notions such as authenticity, taste, and cultural authority. The research is based on a bilingual corpus of user reviews in Italian and English, collected from the popular fragrance platform *Fragrantica*, focusing on reviews of the same popular Middle Eastern fragrances across both languages. The study employs a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis approach, drawing on insights from digital discourse studies, semiotics, and postcolonial theory. It investigates how, through digital storytelling, users articulate their olfactory experiences, aesthetic judgments, emotional reactions, personal and cultural identities in relation to these scents. The analysis also explores how language is used to evaluate not only the scent itself but also branding, bottle design, or symbolic elements associated with the perfumes. A comparative analysis of Italian and US reviews can shed light on how different – though both Western – linguistic and cultural communities engage with the same Eastern products. This study seeks to uncover divergences in sensory evaluation, cultural framing, and discursive strategies used to convey taste, value, and legitimacy. The working hypothesis is that the "Oriental" versions may be framed as excessive, described, for instance, as overly intense, intoxicating, or packaged in containers perceived as ornate or even tacky. Ultimately, this study wishes to contribute to broader discussions on diversity, language, and identity in digital environments. It aims to demonstrate how user discourse around scent serves as a meaningful site where global consumption practices, aesthetic values, and cultural power dynamics are actively negotiated and continually redefined.

**Memes, Identity, and Online Humor:
A Pragmatic Comparison Between Jordanian and Egyptian Users**

ABSTRACT

This study offers a comparative analysis of how Jordanian and Egyptian users employ memes to perform pragmatic functions such as humor, irony, criticism, and social commentary. By focusing on the intersection of language, image, and culture, the study aims to uncover similarities and differences in how these two Arab communities construct meaning and negotiate identity through digital discourse. To this end, the study analyses two sets of memes (N=60 in each set). The data are analyzed qualitatively following Implicature theory proposed by Grice (1975). Then, an asynchronous questionnaire included the found functions was distributed to 100 Jordanians and 100 Egyptians (50 males- 50 females) in order to find the gender differences in perceiving the functions. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively in light of the study's research questions. The study revealed that all of memes used by the Jordanian and Egyptian participants serve the same main function which is humor in general, and in particular, the analyzed memes were employed to serve 26 sub-functions; namely, disappointment and frustration, sighing at misfortune, begging, exposing, bragging, wishing, underestimating, humoristic comparison, expressing shock, threatening, social criticism, gloating, satisfaction, complaining, condemnation, pessimism, exaggeration, adamant, relief, fright, mocking love, depression, and embarrassment, while the Egyptian participants serve the function of advertisements include more of *first impression*, *chunking*, *consistency*, and *attraction* categories than do the Jordanian ones. In terms of the perception of the functions among Jordanian males and females, the study revealed no significant differences among Jordanian males and female in using these memes. However, the study revealed that the Egyptian females agreed on the functions more than males. The findings seek to contribute to broader discussions in digital pragmatics, Arabic sociolinguistics, and cultural discourse analysis, highlighting how online humor reflects and reinforces local identities in Jordan and Egypt.

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***Deutschtürken* in the Digital Space: Diasporic Identity
and Multilingual Practices on Social Media**

ABSTRACT

Germany hosts the largest Turkish-speaking population outside Turkey, with over three million residents of Turkish descent, including second- and third-generation migrants often referred to as *Deutschtürken*. This sociolinguistic context has long attracted scholarly attention, yet the everyday multilingual practices of young Turkish-Germans on emerging digital platforms remain relatively underexplored. In particular, short-form video platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels offer a fertile ground for investigating how language use reflects and negotiates diasporic belonging. This paper explores how hybrid identities are constructed through the use of multiple languages in social media content created by young Turkish-German users. The study draws on a corpus of publicly available and widely circulated TikTok and Instagram Reels videos in which Turkish, German, and – in some cases – English co-occur. The analysis addresses the following research questions: How is multilingualism mobilized to index and negotiate diasporic identities? What roles do language choice and code alternation play in constructing stance and sociocultural alignment online? Adopting a qualitative sociolinguistic approach, the study combines elements of discourse analysis and digital ethnography to examine how users deploy linguistic resources to express familiarity, irony, authenticity, or group affiliation. By focusing on informal, everyday content outside institutional settings, this contribution sheds light on how diasporic youth navigate multilingual repertoires to articulate individual and collective identities in the digital public sphere.

**Code-Mixing, Code-Switching and Identity Negotiation:
Digital Communication among Nigerian Youth**

ABSTRACT

In today's globalised and interconnected world, social media and digital tools play a paramount role in enabling people to stay connected across vast distances. Platforms such as *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *TikTok* and *WhatsApp* facilitate instant communication by making it easier for individuals to maintain personal relationships with their family and community, regardless of geographical barriers. For younger generations, in particular, Gen Z and Millennials, research indicates that technologies and online spaces are central to daily interactions. Within these digital environments, specific groups, such as bilingual and plurilingual individuals, especially those with a migratory background, are able to leverage their linguistic repertoires to express and negotiate their hybrid identities. This pilot study explores these practices among two generations of Nigerian residents in Italy, focusing on how language use reflects identity and social belonging. Using a mixed-method approach, the study combines semi-structured interviews with 18 Millennials and 8 Gen Z participants and a thematic analysis of approximately one hundred instant messages and the conversations collected from their social media accounts, *WhatsApp*, *Instagram* and *Facebook*. Ethical issues were addressed by informing participants about the anonymity of their online communication data and obtaining informed consent. Given the limited size of the message dataset, the analysis emphasises in-depth, qualitative insights rather than broader generalisations. Preliminary findings bring into view noteworthy differences: GenZ particularly favour code-mixing Nigerian pidgin, English, various ethnic languages (e.g., Yoruba, Igbo and Edo) and even Italian, using their multilingual repertoire as a marker of identity and cultural expression. In contrast, Millennials primarily deploy pidgin English with fewer ethnic terms. Both groups, as demonstrated by the interviews conducted, exhibit a positive attitude towards code-switching and code-mixing, perceiving these practices not only as means of personal expression but also as a way to build connections, foster friendships and navigate complex social dynamics.

#ChurchTrauma: Translanguaging and Emotion in Online Narratives of Religious Abuse

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how individuals who have experienced religious trauma use digital platforms to narrate, process, and reframe experiences of spiritual harm and disaffiliation. Focusing on the discursive phenomenon of #ChurchTrauma, the study analyzes narratives of abuse and disillusionment shared by former members of institutional religions — particularly the Catholic Church and Evangelical communities — across platforms such as e.g., TikTok, Reddit, YouTube, and Twitter/X. Grounded in discourse analysis and translanguaging theory, the research explores how users mobilize diverse linguistic resources — including sacred registers, therapeutic vocabulary, digital vernaculars, and emotive metaphors — to construct affectively resonant, coherent narratives. These hybrid narratives perform crucial identity work, enabling individuals to articulate rupture, reclaim epistemic authority, and build belonging within emerging post-religious digital communities. At the heart of the analysis is translanguaging, understood as a dynamic meaning-making process that allows individuals to draw on multiple linguistic repertoires to express complex emotional and cognitive states. Narrators frequently shift between biblical references, psychological discourse, pop-cultural idioms, and activist rhetoric to frame their experiences. This hybridity is not merely stylistic; it plays a key role in reframing traumatic religious pasts and constructing new ethical and emotional selves. Emotion discourse is central. Metaphors of wounding, betrayal, entrapment, and liberation help narrators shape disorienting experiences of loss and awakening. Expressions of anger, grief, disgust, and emancipation serve as both catharsis and narrative strategy. These emotions are discursively constructed through evaluative language, stance-taking, and alignment with imagined audiences — often fellow survivors, secular allies, or institutional critics. More than a digital label, #ChurchTrauma operates as a communal and epistemic resource. It legitimizes personal accounts while resisting dominant religious narratives of silence and sanctity. It fosters shared language — a lexicon of pain and resistance that enables recognition, solidarity, and critique. These collective practices frame trauma as systemic and socially produced, challenging its privatization by institutions. In digital spaces, such narratives become acts of reclamation. They wrest narrative control from religious authorities and empower those historically marginalized — women, queer individuals, former believers, and spiritual dissidents. This process amounts to discursive deconversion: a linguistic unmaking of religious affiliation that is cognitive, emotional, and social. The research draws on a corpus of publicly available posts, video transcripts, and comment threads associated with terms like *religious trauma*, *spiritual abuse*, *deconstruction*, and *evangelical*. Studied through cognitive discourse analysis with a focus on mental representations and metaphor theory, these texts reveal how meaning is constructed,

negotiated, and emotionally anchored in online testimonies. Ultimately, this paper contributes to debates on language, identity, and inclusion in digital environments. It shows how online storytelling reshapes identity through emotional discourse, narrative hybridity, and digital belonging in post-religious spaces (Page, 2018; Andò, 2022).

“Deliberately vague”: Reading AI identity in *Klara and the Sun*

ABSTRACT

The present contribution offers a twofold pragmatic and stylistic analysis in order to understand how readers engage with the construction of a non-human narrative point of view (POV) in *Klara and the Sun*. The novel, narrated in the first person by the title character, Klara, an artificial intelligence (AI) avatar companion in a dystopian society, presents a unique case study for exploring language use in shaping perceptions of non-human entities. Firstly, drawing on Chapman’s (2023) notion of “uncooperative narration” and Grice’s Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1989), Kazuo Ishiguro’s 2021 novel *Klara and the Sun* will be analysed within a pragmastylistic framework. Klara’s non-human point of view and her peculiar experience of the world often give rise to Gricean maxim clashes, violations or infringements, leading to a distinctive “uncooperative” narrative style. Secondly, a corpus of online reader reviews from digital platforms such as Goodreads.com and Amazon.com will be examined. This empirical approach will determine how readers engage with and evaluate the narrative POV and the textual construction of AI identity through the analysis of their digital discourse. The stylistic analysis of the linguistic patterns and practices present in the reviews will provide valuable insights into contemporary “digital anxieties” and their negotiation and performance in online spaces.

**When You're Bilingual and Your Brain...":
Semiotic Representations of Bilingual Identity on TikTok**

ABSTRACT

In contemporary digital environments, TikTok serves as a key platform for the performance and negotiation of linguistic and cultural identities. Among the many identity positions enacted on the app, bilingual users frequently engage in self-representations that reflect the complexities, tensions, and creative potentials of switching between multiple languages. This paper explores how bilingualism and translanguaging are represented on TikTok, focusing on short videos where users humorously or reflexively depict experiences such as code-switching, lexical gaps, and linguistic interference. The analysis draws on a small corpus of videos retrieved through hashtags such as #bilingual and #bilingualproblems. These videos, typically lasting between 15 and 60 seconds, employ a rich multimodal repertoire including spoken language, on-screen captions, emojis, GIFs, sound effects, and gestures. Rather than treating bilingualism as a fixed linguistic competence, users often frame it as a dynamic and affective condition, one that involves cognitive confusion, cultural hybridity, and social positioning. From a semiotic perspective, these performances can be read as complex meaning-making practices where identity is not merely stated but enacted through multimodal assemblages. Captions like “when you’re bilingual and forget both words” or “my brain switching languages mid-sentence” are often accompanied by exaggerated facial expressions, abrupt video cuts, or sound overlays that dramatize the cognitive friction of language switching. These elements work together to produce a shared semiotic space where linguistic diversity is both normalized and problematized. The paper adopts a socio-semiotic and discourse-analysis approach, examining how these TikToks function not only as individual narratives but also as part of a broader digital vernacular where communities of practice form around shared linguistic and affective experiences. In doing so, it highlights how TikTok creators reflect on their lived realities inhabiting multilingual worlds. Furthermore, the paper discusses how humor, irony, and self-deprecation become rhetorical strategies that allow users to both disclose and defuse linguistic anxieties. These strategies do not only perform identity but also solicit empathy, recognition, and alignment from viewers, thus creating a participatory space in which bilingualism is collectively re-signified. Ultimately, this study argues that TikTok operates as a fertile ground for the semiotic negotiation of diversity and belonging. The bilingual TikToks analyzed here exemplify how linguistic practices in digital environments are embedded in broader processes of identity construction, community formation, and symbolic struggle, offering insights into how language and identity are mediated, performed, and reimaged in the everyday practices of bilingual users online.

Narrative Control and Polyphony in Computer Mediated Creative Writing

ABSTRACT

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is a form of AI that can autonomously generate new content, such as text, images, audio, and video (Lyu, 2023) across platforms such as ChatGPT, Grok, and other large language model interfaces. Recent research has explored the intersection of AI and creativity, challenging traditional perceptions of AI's limitations in generating new ideas and creating art (Crimaldi & Leonelli, 2023). This paper introduces *Computer Mediated Creative Writing* (CMCW), a framework that reconceptualises writing with AI as a form of collaborative creativity in which AI functions not as a text generator, but as a *co-agent*—a role-based reviewer providing critical, non-generative feedback that fundamentally alters both the authorial process and the construction of writerly identity. Drawing from sociocultural perspectives on creativity (Glăveanu, 2011), CMCW positions AI-assisted writing within a *representational space*—a dynamic third space where writers negotiate their authorial identities through iterative dialogue with algorithmic feedback. From this process, a dispersed form of polyphonic identity emerges: writers drawing upon the same AI systems form a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) united not by direct interaction but by shared access to an aggregated linguistic repertoire derived from the AI's training data. The resulting authorial voice is simultaneously singular and multiple—personal yet echoing the 'everyman' composite of millions of prior texts. *Polyphony*, as employed here, extends Bakhtin's (1984) notion of *dialogism* to human-computer interaction. In AI-mediated writing, polyphony manifests through the constant negotiation between a writer's individual voice and the AI's feedback, which itself embodies aggregated stylistic conventions, genre expectations, and linguistic patterns. This negotiation becomes a form of identity work: writers construct their authorial personas by strategically accepting, rejecting, or modifying AI suggestions. To examine these dynamics in practice, this study presents a collaborative writing experiment involving four rounds of iterative revision in which AI provided structured feedback on voice, image, and originality. The analysis reveals how writers perform identity through linguistic choices that position them relative to both traditional literary conventions—accessed via AI synthesis—and their own expressive intentions. The outcome is neither purely human nor purely artificial, but a co-constructed authorial identity that emerges from repeated dialogic engagement. While concerns remain regarding originality, authorship, and the flattening of style, empirical research (Pereira et al., 2023) suggests that many users perceive AI as a catalyst for ideation and refinement. CMCW demonstrates how process-oriented approaches to AI writing can support authors' intentional identity construction. By examining the moment-by-moment negotiations between writer and AI reviewer, CMCW shows how digital polyphony concretely shapes the performance and evolution of authorial identity in online creative writing platforms.

**Fit for the Feed: Gender, Power and Discipline in the Multimodal Discourse of Instagram
Fitness Influencers**

ABSTRACT

Social media plays a central role in shaping appearance ideals and beauty standards, often by disproportionately representing certain body types as more attractive and socially desirable (Grabe *et al.*, 2008). Instagram, in particular, an image-centric platform with features for liking and commenting, can foster a culture of appearance-focused evaluation and social comparison (Ahrens *et al.*, 2022). In this environment, the figure of the fitness influencer has emerged: self-made digital celebrities who provide fitness instruction and promote strength or flexibility training. These influencers typically promote an ethos of self-transformation, encouraging users to reshape and harmonise their bodies according to dominant beauty norms. However, this rhetoric is often linked to negative outcomes such as compulsive exercise, disordered eating and body dissatisfaction. This study investigates how six carefully selected fitness influencers orchestrate multimodal representations of training, identity and the body on Instagram. These representations are analysed in relation to broader discourses of gender performance, visibility and power. The dataset comprises Instagram posts from six accounts chosen to reflect diverse embodied identities and ideological positions. These include: a gay male coach and a Muslim female trainer, both offering inclusive and counter-normative portrayals of fitness; two instructors (one male and one female) who present a professional, motivational ethos grounded in education and discipline; and two influencers who exemplify more stereotypical extremes, that is, a hypermasculine male projecting hegemonic masculinity, and a hyperfeminised, sexualised female trainer. This contrastive design enables an in-depth examination of how visual and verbal elements construct, reinforce or challenge dominant narratives in digital fitness culture. Each post was analysed using Multimodal Discourse Analysis with particular focus on representational, interactive and compositional meanings. Key aspects included visual framing, caption tone and the image-text relationship. The theoretical framework integrates *postfeminist perspectives*, the concept of *hegemonic masculinity* and Foucauldian notions of *disciplinary power* and *reflexivity*. This interdisciplinary approach reveals how online fitness content can both reproduce and resist dominant ideologies. Findings indicate that among the female accounts, only one constructs femininity in line with sexualised bodily norms oriented toward the male gaze. The other two offer more inclusive portrayals that challenge Western, male-dominated paradigms. In terms of masculinity, while one male influencer clearly exemplifies hegemonic ideals, thus emphasising control, aggression and superiority, the other two destabilise this model through care-based coaching and professional discourse. Nevertheless, unlike the female accounts, even the more inclusive male representations maintain an element of disciplinary control and reflexivity, thereby continuing to anchor masculinity within normative beauty standards.

**Queering the gym bro:
A multimodal critical discourse analysis of Instagram reels and memes**

ABSTRACT

A gym bro is a (usually young) man who spends a considerable amount of time working out at the gym and regards fitness and muscle-building as a central part of his life and identity. A quite controversial expression of contemporary gym culture, the slang term has become one of the most popular labels defining male behaviour within the gym environment (Johansson 1996). Even though it is sometimes associated with dysfunctional perceptions of the body and with forms of toxic masculinity, the idiom is often employed to create in-group identity and sense of belonging (Gibbs, Salinas and Turnock 2022). As a shortened form of ‘brother’, as a matter of fact, *bro* is a confidential way of addressing a male friend, and in gym discourse *gym bro* is used both to identify and to bond with other males sharing similar cultural values. What makes the term interesting from a sociolinguistic and pragmatic point of view is its semantic instability. On the one hand, the connection established between gym bros can be so strong that it becomes – or can be mistaken for – a form of homoeroticism among straight-identified males. On the other, despite its strong link to male heteronormative behaviour, it has become part of the queer lexicon as well, especially of gay men who regularly attend the gym and are keen on having a well-defined body. Moreover, the noun phrase also displays a cross-linguistic and cross-gender behaviour inasmuch it is utilised in languages other than English as a culture-bound word and is sometimes referred to women who share the same passion for athleticism. The so-called gym bro culture has become a phenomenon on social media too, where communities of men regularly produce quite a huge amount of gym-related content, from workout tips to pre-workout meals and pictures of physical progress (McCauley Bowstead 2022). On Instagram alone, for instance, the hashtag *#gymbro* is found in about 2.4 million posts. This paper aims to analyse the reels and memes published on Instagram with the hashtag *#gymbro* with a specific focus on posts that queer its heteronormative meaning and representations (Baker and Balirano 2017). In order to do so, a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach (Balirano 2014; Jewitt 2009; Kress and van Leeuwen 2021; O’Halloran 2004; Machin 2013; Pauwels 2012; Roderick 2018; van Leeuwen 2014) will be adopted to assess how the integrated verbal, visual, and aural modes employed in the posts and their captions ambiguously appropriate and subvert the identities and cultural values commonly related to the term *gym bro*.

**Digital Diversity or Sexist Stereotypes?
A Corpus-Based Analysis of Gender in Mobile Games for Younger Audiences**

ABSTRACT

Video games represent a highly relevant and increasingly prominent area of interest within both academic research and popular discourse, offering a rich and evolving site for the exploration of cultural, social, and linguistic dynamics. Unsurprisingly, scholars of many disciplines have discussed videogames ethics and sociological role (Gabbiadini et al. 2016, Dietrich 2013, Burgess et al. 2011). Discursive perspectives have been applied to video games by many scholars (Heritage 2021, Ensslin 2017), and some have denounced the lack of adequate representations of female and non-binary characters in these digital spaces (Perreault et al. 2022). However, while research has explored gender representation in mainstream console and PC games, mobile games – particularly those designed for children and pre-teens – have received limited scholarly attention. Given the increasing popularity of mobile gaming among younger audiences, it is crucial to investigate how these games portray gender and whether they perpetuate exclusive or harmful stereotypes. This study examines gender representation in 8 mobile games created imagining children and pre-teens as likely players; the games were selected considering popularity, age ratings, and the volume of in-game textual content as deciding factors. This research pursues two primary goals: first, to establish whether the biases identified in previous research (Deskens 2013) are also present in phone-based entertainment and second, to explore the nature, extent, and linguistic characteristics of these stereotypes. Through a corpus-based approach, the present research analyzes a self-compiled dataset of in-game text in the form of character descriptions, assessing patterns of representation and linguistic choices. Despite the early stage of research, preliminary findings confirm some of the literature on gender representation in videogames, pointing to a significant imbalance in the representation of characters. This study contributes to the growing field of linguistic research on video games, addressing the previously academically neglected area of children-friendly mobile games, and highlighting the need for more inclusivity in mobile play environments.

“Drag Queen Cooking” – A Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis of digital food-centered media as a means of identity construction and platforms for diversity acceptance and inclusivity

ABSTRACT

Studies on the relationship between gender and food have widely ascertained that food-related discourse is strongly gendered (e.g., Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, as pivotal study on this topic). More specifically, gendered food discourse has always been influenced by the traditional narrations of the two dichotomous genders of males and females in most human societies around the world, whereby the place of the woman is represented as the domestic kitchen (*ibid.*), later further expanded into the traditional assumption whereby professional chefs are usually males while domestic cooking is traditionally reserved to females (Swinbank 2002). Much has been written on this traditional role assignments that have been investigated from several perspectives and research strands, from feminist studies explored using socio-anthropological lenses. They all found out that stereotypical representations tend to reinforce the existing hegemonic discourse which reflects a patriarchal view of society, basically reinforcing the ‘Domestic Goddess Ideal’. The same hegemonic view whereby men and women are crystallized in the traditional representation of dichotomous genders and traditional family composition. These representations and the corresponding food-related communication are transmitted by means of specific genres which today are, generally, food blogs as well as social media platforms such as Instagram that is surprisingly underrepresented in food-related communication studies. The present study seeks to take a different approach to gendered food-related communication by conducting a multimodal critical discourse analysis on a sample of food blogs and Instagram accounts that are run by queer food bloggers or queer foodies with particular attention paid to those run by drag queens. The aim is to analyze the strategies used in these cases to present the drag queens’ culinary personae and approach to food as a means towards their identity affirmation, acceptance as well as towards greater inclusivity and diversity in the panorama of culinary gendered communication. The study specifically focuses on drag queens because they embody a different style of ‘feminine’ model in the kitchen that was believed particularly interesting to compare and contrast considering the abundant literature available on the existing, ‘traditional’ models so far analyzed by/in the state-of-the-art. The study, in fact, examines how the model of ‘woman’ and ‘womanhood’ has been so far portrayed by hegemonic discourse through digital media such as food blogs and compares it with the model portrayed and (re-)presented (both visually and verbally) by drag queens via their food blogs, taking into careful consideration their own views on gender identification and construction.

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**Exile as a Discursive Break: Identity Work and “Dual-address”
Rhetoric of the Russian Opposition on Telegram**

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how political exile transforms the discourse of Russian opposition figures in digital environments, focusing on Telegram as the primary arena for dissent. Drawing on a longitudinal corpus of twenty high-impact Telegram channels between 2016 and 2025, I examine how displacement reconfigures rhetorical strategy, audience address, and the performance of political identity. Combining thematic, sentiment and framing analysis in NVivo with manual annotation, I conceptualise exile as a discursive rupture that compels opposition actors to renegotiate both message and voice. Telegram’s accessibility in Russia and its affordances for long-form, high-engagement content make it a strategic space for hybrid communication. Opposition figures in exile must simultaneously address their domestic followers, international institutions, and the host-country public. I refer to this as the emergence of a ‘dual-address’ rhetoric, a communicative repertoire that blends affective solidarity, moral critique, and policy pragmatism across geopolitical divides. Empirically, I identify three key discursive shifts post-exile: a) A surge in transnational framing after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, linking repression in Russia to global democratic norms. A gradual shift from moral indictment to instrumental policy talk, particularly evident in channels such as those of the Anti-Corruption Foundation and Maxim Katz. A thematic realignment under the influence of host-country media agendas, where topics like sanctions, war crimes, and human rights replace domestic institutional reform. These changes do not merely reflect topical adjustments. They indicate a strategic repositioning of dissent in response to altered opportunity structures and legitimacy pressures. My findings show that exile does not automatically radicalise discourse. Rather, rhetorical escalation occurs with delay and depends on perceived chances of return, domestic impact, and international visibility. Early exile stages often retain the cautious tone used in Russia, while rhetorical intensification typically follows sustained disconnection or strategic frustration. Theoretically, the study reframes exile not as a logistical constraint, but as a discursive juncture. It challenges the binary distinction between internal and external opposition by proposing a continuum model based on risk, audience composition, and platform logic. Drawing on framing theory, media-system dependency, and post-structuralist discourse analysis, I demonstrate how digital exiles perform credibility, leadership and patriotism in fragmented, algorithmically governed spaces. Methodologically, the project triangulates Telegram discourse with media citations, visual content, and external interviews. Citation audits reveal a shift from self-referencing to third-party validation through investigative journalism and legal NGOs,, emphasising institutional credibility over charismatic leadership. Figures such as Zelensky appear more often than Putin in posts about Russia,

functioning as rhetorical mirrors to articulate an alternative political norm without explicit comparison. This study contributes to the growing field of digital dissent and mediatised exile by offering the first comparative, longitudinal analysis of Russian opposition figures across exile status. It provides a new framework for understanding how authoritarian regimes, algorithmic platforms, and transnational displacement jointly shape political discourse in digital environments.

From Graphic Novel to Cinema: The Intersemiotic Retranslation of *The Joker's* Identity

ABSTRACT

The passage from comics to film can be regarded as an example of intersemiotic translation, as proposed by Roman Jakobson (da Silva 2017). This concept involves translating between different sign systems, such as from verbal to visual modes (Mikkonen 2006). Comics themselves are multimodal texts that combine visual and verbal elements, making their translation a complex process involving both interlingual and intersemiotic aspects (da Silva 2017; Zanettin 2022). When adapting comics to film, a two-phase process occurs, simultaneously translating both the text and its visual elements (Mikkonen 2006). However, in this delicate passage, the character's identity is at stake, especially when the passage involves the re-translation of the same character in different new film editions, so that this process can be considered closer to transcreation. Transcreation suggests a type of transfer which is more concerned with functional equivalence and adequacy rather than faithfulness (Torresi 2020: 15). Several comic book series, such as *Spider-Man* and *The Avengers*, have been adapted into films, with sequels produced following their financial success and popularity on social media. *Batman* has been one of the many comics to be intersemiotically translated both for television (1966-69) and for the cinema. Among the strongest points in the Batman universe is the gothic atmosphere and the strange enemies that Batman must fight against. His evil counterpart is the *Joker*, who in the origins was inspired by the character in *L'Homme qui Rit* (1869) by Victor Hugo. The *Joker* has been reinterpreted in several film adaptations from being Batman's nemesis to the sole and main protagonist, with a focus on his origins and evil nature. This study intends to discuss the narrative and stylistic transformation that characterised the *Joker* in the film productions. Focusing on the narrative and stylistic transformations that characterised these adaptations from Tim Burton's *Batman* (1989) and Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008) to *Joker* (2019) and *Joker – Folie à deux* (2024) by Todd Phillips, the analysis of the various film adaptations inspired by graphic novel from Alan Moore and Brian Bolland, *The Killing Joke* (1988) offers an interesting case for exploring these dynamics. None of the films examined faithfully reproduces the graphic novel, but each reworks the *Joker* character and his story, according to specific stylistic, narrative, and thematic choices. By analysing key scenes, this study will examine the directors' choices and their reinterpretation of the character to reveal how the *Joker's* identity is reshaped and reimagined for new and old audiences.

“Gen Z be like...”: Generation Z’s self-portrayal through humorous content on TikTok

ABSTRACT

The advent of social media has given life to a virtual environment where exchange is the order of the day. Within such social arenas, users can actively shape their identity in a space that encourages creative self-expression. In this regard, drawing on Goffman’s identity-as-performance principle, many studies have explored how social networking sites allow individuals to discursively present a version of themselves in a playful way. This is especially possible thanks to the intrinsically multimodal nature of digital platforms, where people can enjoy what Wallace (2016: 27) defines “media richness”, meaning that users can avail themselves of a vast array of tools, including texts, images, videos, and sounds, to enhance a multifaceted and vibrant self-representation. Considering this, special attention should be given to the social media usage of the younger generation born between 1997 and 2012, commonly referred to as ‘Generation Z’ or ‘digital natives’. This label hints at their high technological proficiency, which is evident in their harnessing social media as a way to maintain constant interaction with others, produce entertaining contents and express their own identity. These aspects come together in a case study conducted by Aaronson and Jaffal, who highlighted how, thanks to a distinctively humoristic and meme-based communicative style, young adults were able to reflect upon common experiences and generational-specific challenges while at the same time reinforce a sense of community and shared identity. Their work lies on a broader strand of research on online humour and identity. Examples might be found in Chiaro (2018), who highlighted how digital contexts are the scene of many humoristic practices, and Wyer and Collins, who underlined the essential relationship that exists between humour and identity formation, in that “jokes, witticisms, and other humorous verbal and nonverbal behaviors [...] can influence the impression one forms of that person”. Building on these foundations, this research aims to investigate how Gen Z content creators self-portray on TikTok by focusing on the specific traits that they claim characterise themselves as members of this generation. The reason why TikTok has been chosen as platform of interest is rooted in a major usage of this app by the Gen Z. The analysis will focus on the discursive self-construction of the Gen Z community by analysing a sample of TikTok videos identified by the presence of the hashtags #genzhumour and #genzhumor. The methodology draws on the sociocultural model of identity proposed by Bucholtz and Hall, whose principles allow us to analyse how identity is linguistically constructed. In the specific case of this analysis, the indexicality, relationality, and positionality principles come in particularly useful to highlight how identity emerges through specific discursive choices. The analysis reveals how Generation Z self-portrays as unserious, uncaring, constantly referencing internet memes, and

having a peculiar rejection to work. This latter aspect appears to be quite significant, as many of the videos ironically display Generation Z employees as laid back or somewhat lazy when it comes to performing in workplace environments. Moreover, Generation Z members are identified by a shared lexical code that is associated with generational identity. This often draws upon memes or viral expressions such as “bestie”, “rizz”, or the usage of micro-level linguistic structures like “it’s giving...”, which they also utter in professional settings, thus creating a dissonance that contributes to conveying an image of an inherently facetious generation.

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**Linguistic Diversity in the Digital Age:
Challenges and Strategies for the Preservation of Minority Languages**

ABSTRACT

The digital revolution has drastically transformed the global landscape, particularly in terms of communication, cultural dissemination, and knowledge production. The rapid spread of digital platforms, alongside the globalisation process, has led to the dominance of a few major languages—most notably English—in the digital sphere. Combined with socio-economic factors and perceived linguistic prestige, this phenomenon has had a profound impact on linguistic diversity. Indeed, it is one of the primary causes of language marginalisation and loss, posing a significant threat to the maintenance and preservation of minority languages (Bromham et al. 2022, Skirgård et al. 2023). This alarming linguistic scenario carries deep socio-cultural implications, as it intersects with issues of identity and belonging. Language loss represents a substantial reduction in the world's intangible cultural heritage, given that language is a fundamental medium for transmitting cultural knowledge, traditions, and identity from generation to generation (Sarma 2015). On the other hand, the Internet—now the primary medium for communication, education, and entertainment—has become a critical battleground for the preservation of linguistic diversity. According to Internet World Stats, only 10 languages dominate 77% of the world's digital content, with English alone accounting for more than half. This digital imbalance reflects broader global inequalities, as speakers of minority languages are often excluded from all digital spaces due to a lack of resources and infrastructure (UNESCO 2023). The work offers a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations underpinning sociolinguistic studies on the hegemony of English in the digital world. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach—ranging from individual aspects of heritage language knowledge to broader societal, educational, and policy concerns in both local and international contexts—it analyses the potential of digital language technologies to both prioritise and foster linguistic diversity. Specifically, the paper addresses the most significant factors that put linguistic diversity at risk, with particular attention to the digitalisation process and AI-based linguistic technologies. Finally, initiatives and case studies of language revitalisation efforts will be reviewed to provide insights into the future of linguistic diversity in the digital age.

Inclusive marketing through digital advertising campaigns: promoting inclusion or reinforcing bias?

ABSTRACT

Inclusive marketing (IM) refers to the effort a company undertakes towards the creation of a more representative culture, which embraces more identities, more communities, and more histories (Ferraro et al., 2023; Xavier, 2020). Specifically, it implies the understanding of the diversity within the willingness to promote strategies that target consumers of all backgrounds using the most appropriate channels. From an academic perspective, diversity in advertising has been examined through various aspects (e.g., gender roles, cultural identity, political ideology, religious and spiritual appeals) (Eisend 2019; Milfeld, Haley, and Flint 2021; Northey et al. 2020; Waller and Casidy 2021). A similar effort is echoed from the scientific research, where the number of publications about inclusion within the business and management ecosystem has grown exponentially in the past five years. Notwithstanding, an overall conceptualization of the phenomenon that could drive its academic investigation and practical implementation has not been provided yet. Furthermore, some risks usually associated with inclusive marketing have been highlighted, such as offending (Boyd et al., 2020), or feelings of exclusion among vulnerable or minority customer segments (Ulver and Laurell, 2020). Additionally, non-inclusionary practices such as marketplace omission (e.g. excluding the vulnerable and minority consumers) or marketplace commission (inclusion of vulnerable and minority segments in a discriminatory, derogatory, or unethical way) have been emphasized, while strengthening the need for inclusive marketing practices. Starting from these controversial issues, the study aims to explore the inclusive advertising campaigns promoted by the companies mentioned by the Forbes Communications Council as the ones committed at spreading diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives (<https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescommunicationscouncil/2022/07/15/11-brands-that-successfully-model-diverse-and-inclusive-advertising/>). Particularly, the strategies enacted by these companies through social media were examined according to a social semiotics approach (Jewitt, Bezemer and Halloran 2016; Balirano 2014; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) in order to explore their marketing efforts to promote inclusive practices while deeply understanding cultural contexts, thus detecting possible perpetuation of stereotypes and bias.

**Indigenous Scrolls: A Multimodal Corpus Analysis of @shinanova
and @notoriouscree's Storytelling on TikTok**

ABSTRACT

Contemporary digital landscapes are shaped by algorithms and continuous performance of the self (boyd, 2010); on social media, identity is negotiated through language, aesthetics, and platform-specific features. For many marginalized communities, platforms like TikTok and Instagram provide room for asserting visibility and challenge unfair dominant narratives. Following the global spread of Covid-19 in 2020, Indigenous creators have emerged as powerful digital storytellers, using these platforms to engage in acts of cultural resurgence and resistance. In Canada, Indigenous online activism represents both collective and individual opposition against colonial oppression and predates the advent of newer platforms like Instagram and TikTok. The grassroots movement *Idle No More* (INM), gaining viral momentum on Twitter in 2012, marked a first online example for digital re-appropriation by Indigenous peoples in Canada (Mongibello, 2024). Today, Indigenous content creators continue to use social media as outlets to showcase Indigenous strength and talents and to assert ownership over their self-representation (Mongibello, 2021). This presentation offers a comparative study of Indigenous digital storytelling practices through a corpus-assisted multimodal discourse analysis of two leading Indigenous influencer-activists from Canada: Shina Novalinga (@ShinaNova), an Inuk throat singer and cultural advocate, and James Jones (@NotoriousCree), a Nehiyaw hoop dancer and educator. They are the most followed Indigenous online personalities from Canada, each with over 4.4 million followers on TikTok alone. In 2025, their cultural influence was recognized globally in the *TIME100 Creators* list, placing them alongside Charlie D'Amelio, Amelia Dimoldenberg, Khaby Lame, and Kai Cenat - mainstream figures defining the current digital zeitgeist. Novalinga and Jones use their social media profiles to share aspects of Indigenous life, transmit Indigenous knowledge, advocate for decolonization and express Indigenous cultural identity through highly performative content – challenging colonial power structures while skilfully leveraging the algorithmic logic at the core of social media. This analysis focuses on two small datasets comprising TikTok post captions collected over approximately three months in 2025. Using keywords, frequency, collocation, and concordance tools (Baker, 2006), the study compares discursive strategies and patterns in their communication style and uncovers recurring thematic focuses in their content, with particular attention to the adoption of Indigenous languages and personal narratives to foreground Indigenous resistance. Although both Indigenous creators primarily communicate in English, Indigenous languages bear influence on their discursive approach. The incorporation of Indigenous terms and expressions creates moments of multilingualism that assert Indigenous identity and cultural belonging within predominantly Anglophone digital spaces.

Exploring Digital Environments in relation to Italian Migration to and Presence in Ireland

ABSTRACT

Over the years, technological development has led to significant changes in everyday activities. The impact of technological advancement has been experienced differently across generations (Biró, 2019) and has led to new ways of interpreting numerous concepts, including time, space (Giddens, 1990), distance, community and interaction (see e.g., Andersson, 2019). Nowadays, concepts such as *environment* and *space* are not just intended in a physical or material sense, but they are also associated with the digital and virtual world. The concept of digital environments has been interpreted in different ways and seems to be broad in scope (Platonova et al., 2022). Some scholars, for example, view digital environments as strictly connected to the physical and offline world due to their reciprocal influence and interconnectedness (Frömming et al., 2017). Moreover, digital environments, which can include, among others, online platforms such as forums, websites and social media have become a crucial part of everyday life (see e.g., Frömming et al., 2017). This makes it relevant for research to take both digital and non-digital, online and offline spaces into consideration. Digital environments seem to have become a valuable resource for migrant communities as well. In (socio)linguistics, some scholars have investigated them in relation to migrant groups, showing, for instance, that digital environments can be used to create a sense of belonging and identity through language (e.g., Balirano & Guzzo, 2011). Furthermore, digital spaces like websites can help preserve and convey culture, while fostering real-life connections among members of diasporic communities. Over the years, English sociolinguistic research has mainly focused on Italian migration to countries like, for example, the UK (e.g., Guzzo, 2014, 2017, 2023), leaving the Italian presence in Ireland relatively understudied. As part of my broader and ongoing PhD project, which aims to investigate the Italian community in Dublin (the Republic of Ireland) from an English sociolinguistic perspective, the present paper will aim to be an exploratory and preliminary investigation of digital environments that deal with or are relevant to the Italian community in Ireland, particularly in Dublin.

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‘About Refugees, By Refugees’: Digital storytelling and counter discourse

ABSTRACT

To date, the representation of migrants has predominantly been studied through the lens of mainstream media and political narratives, which often construct migrants as an Other, resulting in polarized portrayals oscillating between the entirely deserving and entirely undeserving (Chovanec & Molek-Kozakowska 2017; Musolff & Viola 2019). However, since Digital environments have enabled historically marginalized voices to create powerful alternative counter-discourses (e.g. Grasso 2023), a growing body of research has recently started to examine migrant self-representation (e.g. as shown in Taylor, Godman & Dunmore 2025; Del Fante 2025). This includes work on curated stories which are strategically presented in digital media (Lampropoulou, Giaxoglou & Johnson 2024). While these narratives challenge dominant stereotypes, they too risk oversimplification by privileging certain narratives over others and reducing the complexity of mobility experiences. This study builds upon these theoretical premises by examining migrant-elicited, migrant-authored narratives from the 1000 Dreams Project. This project was set up to ‘change prevailing refugee narratives through a storytelling project that tells the stories of 1000 refugees across Europe’ (1000 Dreams). These stories and accompanying portraits were made available on the project website and special media was used to introduce the stories and story-tellers one-by-one. Our corpus (783,439 tokens, 19,210 types) is composed of 184 interviews which were collected in English-speaking countries (Ireland and United Kingdom). These interviews, uniquely conducted by and with individuals with lived refugee experiences, offer an exceptional opportunity both to amplify authentic refugee voices and contribute to a growing body of work on self-representation which engages with wider contexts of discourse construction, and to empirically explore their alignment or divergence from dominant hegemonic discourses and curated narratives. Specifically, the study investigates two core research questions: First, to what extent do migrant-elicited narratives reflect dominant hegemonic Othering discourses, as evidenced in previous UK-based studies. Second, how do these migrant-authored accounts compare to recent curated representations of refugees in digital media. These comparisons are crucial to understanding the power of dominant political and mediated discourses and assessing the authenticity and representational nuances of carefully curated refugee narratives. To address the first research question, the study conducts a detailed discourse

analysis focusing on linguistic features indicative of dominant hegemonic representations, including metaphorical framings of migrants and hosts, binary oppositions, and framings of illegality or victimhood. The second research question draws on the work of Lampropoulou et al. (2024) to identify linguistic markers which were found to be characteristic of curated narratives, such as a positive narrative resolution, other-directed affect, and affective proximity to the host country. The study ultimately aims at empirically revealing the degree of influence dominant discourses exert on authentic refugee self-representations, identifying patterns that either perpetuate or disrupt established narratives. Additionally, by critically assessing curated representations against migrant-authored narratives, it highlights the complex interplay between authenticity, curation, and dominant discourse structures in digital refugee storytelling.

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**Shaping the boundaries of national identity:
the discursive construction of immigrants in U.S. political discourse**

ABSTRACT

Following 9/11, immigration in the United States has been increasingly securitized, shifting from being discussed primarily in economic or social terms to being framed as a direct national security concern. This securitization process has contributed to what scholars have called the “politics of insecurity” (Béland 2007) or the “politics of fear” (Wodak 2015). Within this framework, immigration has been constructed as a threat to national security, economic stability and cultural identity, fuelling restrictive policies, border militarization and deportations. This paper investigates the representations of immigrants and immigration in the discourse of four U.S. Presidents - George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. It employs a Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis (CBCDA) approach to analyse four corpora of speeches by the four Presidents and reveal linguistic patterns, discursive strategies and ideological implications. The analysis highlights that Trump pushed securitization to its extreme, centring his discourse around the “immigration threat” narrative, constructing an existential danger to national security and the personal safety and livelihoods of American citizens as the core features of the identity of immigrants. In contrast, Bush, Obama and Biden, while acknowledging security concerns, framed immigrants in a more positive light, highlighting their contributions to the nation, especially in economic terms. However, these positive representations are shaped by a utilitarian logic, where immigrants are legitimized only insofar as they are perceived as useful to serve the country’s needs, conditioning their inclusion on their utility to national interests. Despite these more favourable portrayals, this study argues that all four Presidents’ discourses continue to construct immigrants as the “Other”, reinforcing their marginalization in opposition to the identity of “traditional” US citizens. Even when framed positively, the inclusion of immigrants in the national narrative remains contingent on their instrumental value, highlighting the persistent absence of a cosmopolitan and universalist narrative that redefines national identity in non-traditional terms.

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From Inclusion to Belonging. A New, Multidimensional Scale to Evaluate Cultural Participation of People with Disabilities

ABSTRACT

In the past two decades, accessibility has become a buzzword, central to many (perhaps too many) areas of activity and research. In the wake of the success of such momentous documents as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, amply ratified throughout the world in 2009, a move towards cultural participation and inclusion of people with disabilities has been recorded worldwide. Although recent studies have moved beyond measuring the simple appreciation of accessibility services and texts, especially in relation to live events (Di Giovanni, 2022; Di Giovanni & Raffi, 2022; Di Giovanni & Raffi, 2025), to rather focus on the impact on people with disabilities in terms of wellbeing and happiness, it seems that a lot still needs to be done along these lines. In recent years, a few scholars in several areas have been exploring the notion of belonging in relation to disability (Raines et al, 2023), but to date no scale or questionnaire has been used to measure such a poignant concept, especially in relation to cultural participation. This study presents the design and planned validation of a multidimensional self-report scale aimed at assessing the subjective sense of belonging among people with visual and hearing disabilities who attend accessible cultural events. The development of the scale is grounded in the model proposed by Carter et al. (2016), which identifies ten core characteristics that contribute to the feeling of belonging: being present, noticed, welcomed, cared for, supported, accepted, known, befriended, needed, and loved. Positioned at the intersection of media accessibility, cultural participation, and social and affective psychology, this research explores how linguistic and sensory mediation shapes experiences of inclusion, identity, and recognition. The study builds on a range of practices aimed at enhancing the accessibility of live cultural events for audiences with visual and hearing disabilities. These approaches reimagine cultural participation as a multisensory and multimodal experience, offering services such as audio description, surtitles, tactile tours, and other immersive strategies. Such resources allow participants not only to access artistic content, but also to connect with others and engage more deeply with their own sense of cultural identity and belonging. Participants in the research involves adolescents and adults with visual and hearing disabilities who take part in these accessible events. After experiencing both the pre-show tour and the performance with accessibility

services, participants are invited to complete a digital questionnaire. Each of the ten dimensions of belonging is measured through three first-person items: two developed specifically for this study, based on Carter's framework, and one adapted from the Sense of Belonging Instrument – Psychological State (SOBI-P) by Hagerty and Patusky (1995). This structure is intended to strengthen internal consistency while also enabling convergent validation through the inclusion of items from a recognised, psychometrically sound instrument. The survey is administered online in an accessible format, fully compatible with screen readers and assistive technologies, and is designed to ensure ease of access for both blind and deaf users. Particular attention is given to inclusive language and clarity of expression, so as to make the questionnaire fully understandable and respectful of different communication needs. By combining a multidimensional approach to belonging with an accessible and inclusive design, this research aims to contribute both a novel measurement tool and new insights into how accessible practices can foster a deeper sense of social connection in live cultural settings.

Framing Leadership Online: British Prime Ministers' Identity Construction on X

ABSTRACT

The use of social media in the political arena is by now unavoidable and indispensable as they are an essential part of everyone's daily life (Zappavigna 2012). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X not only allow users to express their opinions and share personal content, but also play a crucial role in the construction and performance of their online identities. This aspect is particularly relevant for politicians, who use social media to construct and perform their public personas, strategically shaping their identity as leaders. By circumventing traditional media gatekeepers, they gain greater control over their self-presentation (Van Kessel and Castelein 2016), fostering a sense of closeness and personal connection with their electorate. In this context, X stands out as one of the most suitable social networks for investigating politicians' online identity construction, as it has consistently served a dual function: acting as an institutional communication channel while also enabling leaders to draw on the platform's informal and conversational style to shape a more accessible and personalised public image. Within the framework of a research project investigating the use of social media by (populist) political leaders (Di Silvestro and Venuti 2021; Cifalinò, Di Silvestro and Venuti 2023; Cifalinò, Di Silvestro, Pensabene and Venuti 2025) and the Conservative Party leadership elections that followed the Brexit referendum (Di Silvestro and Venuti 2024), this research focuses on the online identity construction of the last four Conservative British Prime Ministers – Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, and Rishi Sunak – during the period in which they announced their candidacy for the Conservative Party leadership. Our main aim is to investigate how these politicians constructed and performed their public identities through the social network X, with particular attention to gender implications. Given that two of the leaders – Theresa May and Liz Truss – are women, the analysis explores whether their online self-representation reinforces traditional gender stereotypes, potentially using them strategically, or whether it challenges and subverts such normative expectations. The inclusion of the two male politicians – Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak – serves to highlight further similarities and differences in identity construction through comparative analysis, particularly in relation to gendered self-presentation. The data were collected on X through the Advanced search tool during a one-week timespan starting from the day these politicians announced their candidacy as leader of the Conservative Party (and consequently also as Prime Minister since at the time the Conservative Party already had a majority in Parliament). Subsequently, these data were organised into four corpora and analysed qualitatively following the Critical Discourse Analysis approach (Machin and Mayr 2023). The analysis examines the textual and visual semiotic choices in the X posts, highlighting how politicians construct and perform their online identities and self-representation through digital political storytelling (Sergeant 2020).

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At the Language Frontier:

Anglicisms in Italian Gen Z's jargon and the Construction of Digital Identities

ABSTRACT

The emergence of new linguistic forms among Generation Z reflects a broader transformation in how identity is constructed, negotiated, and displayed through digital environments. Characterized by lexical innovation, resemantization, and creative repurposing, Gen Z jargon functions not merely as a communicative code, but as a symbolic resource through which young users articulate social positions, attribute cultural affiliations, and develop modes of self-presentation. In the Italian context, these practices are intensified by the convergence of global English, regional dialects, and the distinct discursive cultures of platforms like TikTok, Instagram, X, and YouTube (Nesi 2022). Drawing on the sociolinguistic framework of identity as emergent and relational (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), this study approaches language as a means of actively performing and shaping subjectivity. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of identity as a strategic performance in social interaction provides insight into how Gen Z speakers define their personas in online settings, where visibility and immediacy heighten the stakes of self-presentation. In parallel, Jenkins's (2008) theory of identity as both internal self-definition and external social recognition helps explain how linguistic choices serve to both assert individuality and secure group belonging in the fluid arenas of digital culture. The qualitative analysis is based on a corpus of approximately 100 Italian-language expressions collected from social media interactions and containing English-based lexical items, selected to represent contemporary youth jargon and its creative deviations from normative linguistic expectations. While determining with precision the extent to which Anglicisms migrate from digital contexts into spoken interaction remains challenging, data are interpreted as discursive practices through which users engage in boundary-marking, identity negotiation, and generational distinction. Gen Z's use of innovative, hybrid language highlights the complex interplay between personal agency, social structures, and technological mediation in the ongoing construction of selfhood. By investigating this linguistic frontier, the study emphasizes that the shifting processes of identity formation in the digital world necessarily entail a particular form of language change which appears to be different from the past.

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**Audiovisual Accessibility and Translation as a Tool for engaging young speakers
in learning Minority and Endangered Languages: The HOW TIMELY Project**

ABSTRACT

Audiovisual accessibility and translation (AVAT)—including modalities such as revoicing, subtitling, and audio description—are traditionally employed to make audiovisual content accessible to speakers of other languages and to individuals with hearing or visual impairments. However, beyond their accessibility function, these practices also offer significant pedagogical potential for language learning, particularly in the development of linguistic competence and skills (Bobadilla-Pérez & Carballo de Santiago, 2022). Building on this premise, the HOW TIMELY project (an Erasmus+ funded project running from December 2024 to December 2027, 2024-1-IT02KA220-SCH-000251047) aims to harness the power of AVAT for the revitalization and transmission of minority and endangered languages (MEL) especially among young speakers. Bringing together researchers, educators, and an NGO from three EU member states, the project focuses on the development of an innovative teaching methodology and an open-access digital platform. This platform will offer didactic materials and classroom-ready AVAT activities specifically tailored for MEL contexts. The initial implementation of the project targets three languages—Catalan, Irish, and Sardinian—with the objective of creating a replicable and adaptable framework for use with other MEL. The presentation will outline the theoretical foundations and cognitive benefits of AVAT in language acquisition, with a particular emphasis on its role in fostering engagement among younger generations of speakers. We will present key outputs of the project, including training materials for educators and the results of a survey conducted among MEL teachers regarding their needs, practices, and experiences with AVAT methodologies. Finally, we will explore how AVAT-based training can contribute to language diversity and language revitalization efforts through an online workshop co-developed with the EU Horizon project RISE UP.

**Preserving Linguistic Diversity:
Targeted Fine-Tuning of MarianMT for Idiomatic Expressions**

ABSTRACT

Idioms are a central component of linguistic and cultural identity, embodying shared historical, social, and emotional experiences specific to a language community (Baker, 1992). Their non-compositional meanings often defy literal interpretation, posing significant challenges for machine translation systems, particularly when bridging languages with distinct idiomatic repertoires. In the context of linguistic diversity, preserving the semantic and pragmatic integrity of idiomatic expressions is essential not only for translation accuracy but also for cultural representation and inclusion. This paper investigates whether fine-tuning a widely used open-source model—MarianMT (Helsinki-NLP/opus- mt-it-en; Tiedemann & Thottingal, 2020)—on a minimal, idiom-focused dataset can enhance its capacity for Italian-to-English idiomatic translation. We organized the study into two phases. First, we curated a dataset of ten Italian expressions, each idiomatic or ambiguous, paired with high-quality English equivalents selected to represent metaphor, ellipsis, ambiguity, and culturally embedded phrasing. We evaluated the baseline MarianMT model on this dataset, quantifying performance with BLEU and noting tendencies toward overly literal outputs. In the second phase, we fine-tuned MarianMT on the same dataset under low-resource conditions (10 epochs, batch size 2). To complement automatic metrics, we conducted a human evaluation assessing idiomatic adequacy, fluency, and contextual fit. Post fine-tuning, BLEU scores increased by 5 to 12 points across expressions, indicating improved n-gram overlap with reference translations. Qualitative analysis revealed enhanced figurative language handling, reduced literalism, and more accurate pragmatic choices. Human judges further confirmed that the fine-tuned model was more sensitive to cross-linguistic variation and better at conveying culturally appropriate equivalents. These gains demonstrate that even minimal exposure to idiom-rich data can recalibrate a general-purpose translation model’s behavior. This work contributes to computational linguistics by showing that targeted fine-tuning on compact, culturally informed datasets can meaningfully improve idiomatic translation, thereby supporting linguistic diversity in machine-mediated communication. Methodologically, our findings advocate for the strategic use of small, high-quality corpora to enrich models with underrepresented language phenomena. In an era of increasing reliance on automated translation tools, ensuring that idiomatic and culturally embedded language is not “lost in translation” is critical. We argue for an inclusive approach to language technology—one that regards idioms as essential expressions of linguistic diversity and digital equity.

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Trojan Learning and Digital Inclusion

ABSTRACT

This presentation examines Trojan Learning as a subversive and inclusive pedagogical approach in digital learning environments, informed by experiences and theoretical insights gained during emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study presents Trojan Learning—an approach that integrates critical reflection and identity exploration into ostensibly standardised or institutional digital practices—as an effective method for promoting diversity and inclusion in online education. Initially introduced in 2017, Trojan Learning emerged during the nationwide COVID-19 school closure as a reaction to inflexible, hierarchical pedagogical demands in online education. Instead of adhering to a transmissive educational model, educators utilised digital platforms and tools to present participatory and inclusive content that transcended formal limitations and amplified students' voices. In certain instances, digital tools facilitated the development of new subjectivities and forms of belonging, particularly for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or those marginalised by conventional classroom dynamics. Digital tools—such as collaborative documents, hyperdocs, interactive timelines, virtual exhibitions, and multimodal storytelling applications—are pivotal in fostering inclusive digital environments where students collaboratively construct knowledge and express diverse identities. By integrating critical inquiry and emotional literacy into curriculum-aligned tasks, educators achieved a Trojan horse effect: while superficially meeting institutional mandates, they effectively promoted reflection on power, social justice, gender, and cultural diversity. From a theoretical perspective, Trojan Learning challenges technocentric educational paradigms and underscores the ethical-political dimensions of teaching in digital contexts. Online learning environments are, in fact, not neutral; they are ideologically charged spaces necessitating the active construction of inclusion. In this context, educators act as intermediaries between institutional discourse and student agency, leveraging technological affordances to enhance participation, recognition, and identity development. To conclude This paper promotes the systematic integration of Trojan Learning strategies in digital education to improve inclusive practices, particularly in multilingual and multicultural environments. It engages in the ongoing discourse concerning the intersection of language, identity, and power in digital contexts, suggesting a framework where digital tools serve both functional and integration purposes.

**Generational Identities Across Media:
A Corpus-Based and Social Media Critical Discourse Study**

ABSTRACT

The concept of generational cohorts refers to the identification of a group of individuals who share common characteristics such as behavioural patterns, significant culture-historical experiences, or substantial birth rates within a particular timeframe (Strauss & Howe, 1991). While identifying a generational cohort may appear vague and abstract, it nonetheless serves as a valuable framework to explore how distinctive generations may differ in their attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours. Scholars from different fields of study agree that a new generational cohort arises whenever there is a considerable shift in behaviour or a significant change in birth rates (Tapscott, 1998; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Erickson, 2008; Rainer & Rainer, 2011). However, as Howe and Strauss (2000) point out, a generational persona, comprising perceived membership, shared beliefs, behaviours and historical context, is a more crucial determinant of a generation than birth numbers alone. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the linguistic construction of generational personae and how they are framed discursively in both traditional media and online platforms. To achieve this, a corpus of newspaper articles has been collected through NexisUni and analysed using corpus-based methodologies (Baker & McEnery 2015; Egbert & Baker 2020; Egbert et al. 2020; Baker 2023). The systematic analysis of the corpus will enable the identification of linguistic patterns and discursive loci related to each generational cohort. In particular, the distinctive linguistic features associated with each generation will be explored by employing various corpus linguistic techniques (e.g., frequency analysis, collocation analysis and concordance analysis, among others). Furthermore, the study also explores the representations of generational cohorts on social networking sites, particularly X (formerly Twitter), to uncover the discursive strategies and ideologies surrounding age, identity and societal values. A Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS) approach (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016; KhosraviNik, 2017, 2018) is employed to examine how social media's techno-discursive design influences affective communication, participation and identity performance. This framework allows for the analysis of how digital environments mediate and reshape generational identities, fostering both community affiliation and generational conflict in participatory web ecologies. Particular attention will be paid to how generational 'panics' (Lumby, 2001) and normative evaluations emerge across different platforms, revealing competing representations and contestations of generational belonging.

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**A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nota Mouzaki's column
"Not-AI's notes: subtly about subtitling"**

ABSTRACT

The field of audiovisual translation (AVT) has always been highly influenced by technological advancements. Indeed, Language Service Providers (LSPs) have constantly introduced multiple changes in AVT workflows as they sought to provide new solutions to respond to growing number of Video-on-Demand (SVoD) subscribers which led to an increasing demand for AV content (Estopace 2017; Marking 2022; Massidda 2023; Moorkens & Guerberof-Arenas 2024). In order to handle this issue, AVT workflows have shifted from desktop to web-based software and implemented machine translation systems, outsourcing the localisation process. However, some LSPs do not consider the negative consequences of AI technologies both professionally and ethically. This is the reason why freelance subtitler at Plint (<https://plint.com/>), Nota Mouzaki, in 2023 decided to start writing a column in the blog section of SUBTLE's website (<https://subtle-subtitlers.org.uk/blog/>) titled "Not-AI's notes: subtly about subtitling". Mouzaki's objective is to share her professional experience and express her opinion on working conditions in the age of AI. Furthermore, the blog is useful to help construct her identity as a subtitler and the digital environment is effective in trying to build a community of people who may be facing similar issues in the industry. This paper will analyse how Nota Mouzaki uses language as a way to persuade the readers to take her own perspective. The analysis will combine Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2010) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004), as the investigation will focus on Mouzaki's use of the second personal pronoun "you" in the column. By conducting a transitivity analysis, the study will shed light on the types of verbal processes employed by the author and help understand the discourses that characterise her argumentations. The analysis will eventually highlight the importance of taking professional subtitlers' perspective in the industry of AVT as they are the first people affected by the changes that LSPs introduce.

**Mediating Climate Crisis: Digital Narratives, Media Discourses
and the Linguistic Construction of Environmental Identity**

ABSTRACT

The climate crisis is not only an environmental and political issue but also a discursive and cultural one. Over the last few decades, the communication of climate change has evolved from a purely scientific and technical realm to a complex field of narratives deeply embedded in mass media, social platforms, and digital culture. This paper explores how the climate discourse is constructed, disseminated, and transformed in digital environments, focusing on the role of new media formats in shaping public perceptions and environmental identities. The first part of the study offers a historical overview of climate communication, tracing its evolution from early scientific warnings to its increasing presence in generalist media, documentaries, and now digital and participatory platforms. Special attention is paid to how digital formats such as infographics, podcasts, and short-form documentaries contribute to the democratization of climate discourse while also addressing issues of misinformation and greenwashing. The second part of the contribution focuses on a twofold analysis based on data from two leading observatories: the *Media and Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO)*, which monitors media coverage of climate change in 131 sources across 59 countries, and the *Observatorio de la Comunicación del Cambio Climático (Spain)*, which provides annual reports on climate communication across different formats and platforms. The most recent report (July 2025) examines the discourse around the climate crisis in Spanish media and the social network X (formerly Twitter), including the role of artificial intelligence in shaping and spreading climate narratives. Through the comparative analysis of both sources, this study aims to offer an updated and critical perspective on how climate narratives are shaped and how linguistic patterns, rhetorical strategies, and digital storytelling practices influence collective awareness, environmental engagement, and identity formation. Concepts such as “carbon footprint,” “climate emergency,” or “point of no return” illustrate the crystallization of a specific climate vocabulary that permeates social media, news platforms, and popular culture. Ultimately, this paper seeks to highlight the tensions and challenges in current climate communication: the overload of content, the algorithmic biases, the fragmentation of audiences, and the ethical responsibility of communicators. It also identifies emerging opportunities for creating more inclusive, transparent, and participatory narratives that foster a global ecological consciousness. By combining discourse analysis, media studies, and environmental humanities, this research contributes to the ongoing discussion on how digital environments mediate identity and diversity through the lens of the climate crisis—one of the most urgent and transversal challenges of our time.

The Communicative and Affective Role of Teachers in Digital Language Education

ABSTRACT

The growing interest in teaching within technology-mediated environments has given rise to numerous studies and research projects that are helping to explore the potential of these contexts and redefine their boundaries.

In the scientific literature, the communicative and affective aspects of teaching in digital contexts have often been overlooked in favor of a stronger focus on the tools and platforms involved. However, precisely due to the unique characteristics of online teaching, it is essential for teachers to be able to create an atmosphere in which interpersonal communication, collaboration, dialogue, and negotiation can promote learning and the construction of knowledge (Palloff & Pratt, 2007; Torsani, 2016). In distance language learning, the teacher also plays a central role as the sole bridge between the learners and the target language and culture—a position that further amplifies the importance of their communicative presence. These considerations call for a rethinking of the traditional perception of the teacher's role in digital environments, highlighting the relevance of the emotional and relational dimensions of online teaching. The study presented here starts from the concept of teacher identity in online language education (Pennington & Richards, 2016; Shafiee et al., 2022), and examines the importance of the above-mentioned competences, exploring how they are interpreted and put into practice. The research context is represented by the online Italian language courses offered by the Language Centre of the University of *****, which have been a stable part of the institution's curriculum since 2020. These courses combine synchronous sessions (via Zoom) and asynchronous components (via Moodle). Drawing on data collected through questionnaires, lesson observations, and interviews, the study seeks to answer the following research questions: To what extent are language teachers aware of this communicative-affective role? How much importance do they place on this dimension in their technology-mediated teaching? What strategies do they employ to foster communication, connection, and learning?

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UniTermGPT: Addressing Techno-Linguistic Biases in German University Terminology through Language Technology

ABSTRACT

As language technologies like ChatGPT increasingly shape how we communicate, translate and access knowledge, they also raise critical questions about techno-linguistic bias and the representation of linguistic diversity. While these technologies promise efficiency, accessibility and innovation, they also introduce new forms of linguistic bias and raise critical questions around the representation of linguistic diversity in digital spaces. *UniTermGPT* investigates how large language models (LLMs) process terminological variation within the German language (specifically university-related terminology from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and South Tyrol). These regional varieties exhibit significant lexical and institutional differences, which are often flattened or misrepresented by generalized AI systems trained on non-transparent data. Though considered a single language, German encompasses significant internal variation (that shape terminology). Higher education is a prime example: the term *Bachelorstudium* in Austria or *Bachelorstudiengang* in Germany and South Tyrol reflect regionally specific educational systems and linguistic traditions (in the form of system-bound terminology). However, language technologies like ChatGPT tend to flatten these distinctions, producing translations or texts that favour dominant norms and disregard linguistic nuance, even when specific prompts are used. *UniTermGPT* critically examines how ChatGPT processes (and reproduces this kind) of intra-linguistic diversity. By compiling a corpus of university-related texts from Austrian, German, Swiss and South Tyrolean higher education institutions, the project identifies key terminological differences and tests how ChatGPT handles them in multilingual translation. This includes contrastive analyses between AI-generated outputs and existing terminological databases, as well as annotations from domain experts such as university translators and terminologists. Through this approach, *UniTermGPT* uncovers a consistent pattern: ChatGPT often fails to recognize regionally system-bound terminology or generalizes it into standardized forms that may obscure or misrepresent local institutional practices. Such techno-linguistic biases reflect broader dynamics of linguistic homogenization, thereby shaping whose language, knowledge and identity are made visible or invisible in digital environments. The project situates these findings within larger debates about languaging diversity (across digital platforms). By failing to adequately represent linguistic diversity, AI-driven translation and content generation tools risk erasing culturally situated language practices, limiting access to domain-specific knowledge. *UniTermGPT* also engages with the ethics and politics of translation in the age of

AI. It challenges the assumption that “good enough” machine-generated translations are sufficient when they ignore the socio-cultural embeddedness of terminology. By incorporating expert annotation and evaluation into the process, the project models a participatory approach that values local linguistic knowledge and human expertise. Importantly, *UniTermGPT* is committed to Open Science principles. The corpus, methodology, annotated outputs and prompts are made openly available to support transparency, replication and community engagement. In doing so, the project not only advances research in language technology and terminology but also offers policy-relevant insights for developers and translators seeking to build and use more inclusive and culturally sensitive AI applications. Ultimately, *UniTermGPT* contributes to a growing body of work that calls for critical reflection on how language technologies participate in the negotiation of identity, diversity and power. It argues that for language technology to truly serve society, it must account for the full spectrum of linguistic variation.

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Because I Love You: Linguistic Justifications of Coercion in Digital Relationship Narratives.

ABSTRACT

Love, in its ideal form, is synonymous with care, intimacy, and mutual respect. However, recent linguistic research has underscored how expressions of affection can sometimes be co-opted to veil manipulation and psychological abuse. This study introduces the concept of *bad or toxic love*, defined as emotionally charged discourse that weaponises affectionate language to disguise harm, enforce control, or rationalise boundary violations within romantic or family relationships. The research, located within the field of hate speech studies, shifts attention away from more overt manifestations of hate to the more insidious domain of emotional manipulation. The inquiry builds on the notion that, alongside explicit verbal aggression, there exists a covert stratum of affective harm that often escapes recognition due to its linguistic camouflage as love. Our twofold aim is therefore to expose the linguistic strategies that transform expressions of affection into vehicles of domination, while revealing how speakers invoke relational roles, such as “father” or “partner”, to lend legitimacy to behaviours that violate the moral and social expectations associated with those categories. Methodologically, our study draws on Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) to examine how relational roles and their associated category-bound activities (CBAs) are invoked, subverted, or distorted in discourse. The dataset comprises a number of utterances extracted from posts and comment threads across five subReddits (r/relationship_advice, r/CovertIncest, r/TrueOffMyChest, r/AbusiveRelationships, and r/AITAH) spanning a two-year period. These utterances were selected based on their articulation of conflicting emotional claims, where love is both professed and undermined. The analysis incorporates both direct and indirect speech and is structured through an expanded MCA framework that includes speech type, macro-discursive functions (justification, conditionality, disclaimers, framing), and micro-linguistic elements (causality clauses, concessives, conditionals). Preliminary findings indicate that bad or toxic love operates through recurring discursive strategies that blur the boundary between affection and abuse. The study illustrates how these tactics are bolstered by the manipulative mechanisms of guilt-tripping, rationalisation of abuse, and gaslighting that serve to exploit the victim’s trust and fear of losing love. Ultimately, this research project advocates for greater critical attention to emotionally manipulative discourse in online spaces and paves the way for future research on the multimodal dimensions of toxic love.

Langaging Masculinity: Satirical Feminism and Identity Reversals on Instagram

ABSTRACT

In the digital age, social media platforms such as Instagram offer a visual fertile ground for challenging traditional gender roles and subverting stereotypical identities. One notable example is the satirical account @manwhohasitall, which critiques conventional gender roles by mimicking the tone, tropes, and aesthetics often associated with lifestyle, inspirational and parenting media. This study explores how the account uses humour, irony, and feminist commentary to highlight and destabilize the limitations of normative stereotypes. The account stands out due to its unique approach: they post from a “fictional matriarchy”, where women are the dominant sex in society. Through a discourse analysis of a selection of thematically chosen posts, the research investigates how humour functions as both critique and cultural reimagining. In 2021, Rothschild introduced the concept of the “reparative tweet” to describe how satirical content like @manwhohasitall performs feminist critique while also proposing alternative visions of gender identity. Rather than simply mocking hegemonic masculinity, the account encourages followers to reflect on the performative and constructed nature of gender norms and engage in exposing and rebuilding them in humorous interaction. Similarly, Caldeira emphasizes the democratizing potential of Instagram in spreading feminist messages to wider audiences, arguing that humour can be a particularly effective tool for public engagement and identity negotiation. Chiaro’s examination of viral humour in digital spaces adds to this understanding, highlighting how the fast circulation of jokes enables them to operate as both entertainment and ideological critique. Also, Attardo’s emphasis on incongruity, exaggeration, and parody as key mechanisms of humour further informs this analysis. In the case of @manwhohasitall, the humour is structured around gender reversals and semantic irony—for example, depicting men as frazzled caregivers or emotionally fragile professionals—thereby subverting familiar gendered scripts. By engaging in humorous virtual conversations with followers who reply through similarly sarcastic affordances, the account’s use of semantic inversions exposes the contradictions within dominant discourses of masculinity (and femininity), inviting a reparative rethinking of male (and female) identity. Ultimately, @manwhohasitall’s ironic juxtapositions function as a form of cultural defamiliarization, making the invisible norms surrounding masculinity (and femininity) visible and absurd. This study addresses two central research questions: (a) How does @manwhohasitall use humour and satire to critique traditional masculinity? and (b) What thematic areas - such as domestic labour, emotional expression, professional expectations, and fatherhood - emerge across the account’s content? The preliminary findings reveal that the account consistently challenges the stoic, hyper-competent model of the “ideal man” by

portraying male figures engaging in roles and practices culturally coded as feminine. These depictions—while exaggerated and humorous—prompt reflection on the limitations of gender binaries. Following on Rothschild’s work, which focused on the then-available Twitter account, by analysing the Instagram account, created afterwards, this paper contributes to gender and media studies by showing how digital humour can facilitate feminist critique and identity reconstruction. Satirical content on platforms like Instagram can subvert mainstream gender narratives, offering new ways of imagining masculinity and femininity. Through humour and viral visual culture, accounts like @manwhohasitall not only entertain but also challenge the boundaries of traditional gender discourse.

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Masked Affections: Contradictory Emotion and Vernacular Digital Performance in Nigerian Facebook Discourse

ABSTRACT

This research examines how Nigerian Facebook users utilise memes to convey ambivalent or contradictory emotions, particularly in the contexts of love, relationships, and social belonging. While textual comments often reflect conventional expressions of joy, such as "I'm happy for them" or "Congratulations," they are frequently juxtaposed with visual memes that display facial expressions of jealousy, resentment, or disapproval. This semiotic contradiction between text and image invites further investigation into how affect is digitally constructed, negotiated, and spatially mediated in Nigerian online discourse. Drawing on digital sociolinguistics and affect theory, this research argues that such meme practices constitute a form of vernacular affective performance, where emotions are not only communicated but also performed for audiences within culturally and digitally situated contexts. The affective contradiction between verbal and visual elements serves as a socially intelligible mode of expressing complex emotional states that might otherwise be censured in direct speech, such as envy, disappointment, or passive aggression. This aligns with Ngai's (2005: 6) theorisation of "ugly feelings," which are affectively real but socially disavowed, and with Ahmed's (2004:1) notion of emotion as a cultural practice that "sticks" to bodies, words, and gestures in historically and contextually specific ways. Methodologically, the study is based on a purposive sample of publicly available Nigerian Facebook timelines, public pages, and comment threads related to romantic relationships, engagements, or marriage announcements, collected between 2023 and 2025. Through a multimodal discourse analysis, we examine how meaning is co-constructed through linguistic form (including Nigerian Pidgin, stylised English, and code-switching), visual imagery (such as meme templates and facial expressions), and platform affordances (likes, shares, emoji reactions). These posts are read as *micro-performances of affect*, shaped by both Nigerian sociolinguistic norms, where indirectness and expressive restraint are often valued in public discourse, and the affordances of Facebook as a hybrid space of private feeling and public performance. Spatiality, central to this panel, is approached here as both digital and cultural. Facebook functions as a translocal affective space where Nigerian users draw on culturally specific emotional repertoires within algorithmically shaped, global digital networks. Memes serve as affective 'placeholders', visually encoding emotions in ways that resonate with local communicative norms. These expressions reflect not mere irony but shared strategies of indirectness, communal critique, and coded commentary characteristic of West African digital discourse. This study contributes to debates on linguistic diversity, digital discourse, and affect politics by showing how Global South users creatively express socially sensitive emotions. It explores how cultural norms around respectability shape these expressions, and how digital platforms blur boundaries between sincerity and sarcasm, public and private, and text and subtext.

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How much does machine translation tell you about how you respond in simple conversations?: A case study of pronominal and verbal marking of the speaker/addressee

ABSTRACT

Digital environments are now not only “crucial environments where linguistic diversity and cultural identities are negotiated, reshaped, and performed” but also where such linguo-cultural diversity and identities are studied and learned. In such ever-progressing and rapidly-advancing environments, as we recognize or acknowledge, the internet services and ICT tools have now shaped brand-new platforms for linguistic research and language learning, which had for centuries been predominantly printed and published materials in the form of books, cassette tapes, or some types of discs with human-mediated instruction and training. In accordance with the aims of the conference, our study addresses the role of audiovisual translation (AVT) in mediating linguistic study and language learning. We pick up Google Translate (GT henceforth) as an example and do some research on how it translates the following sample conversations with some “prepatterned, prefabricated” expressions (Hopper 1998: 167) into a dozen languages. We ask some native speakers of each language to make the results of translation (more) natural if they are not. We compare the original translations and their human corrections to demonstrate how much such machine translation can reflect the linguistic and pragmatic facts of the relevant conversations, and how the translation results can be utilized for linguistic analysis and language learning with respect to pronominal and verbal marking of the speaker/addressee in the dozen languages. For example, GT translates English in (1) into Japanese in (5), which is intelligible to native Japanese speakers but is awkward and far from being what they usually say. They are far more likely to say, A: Koko de benkyō shite irundesu ka?; B: Hai, sōdesu; B’: Īe, chigaimasu, as is the case in (6), the Japanese translation of (2). Likewise, GT translates English in (3) and (4) into Japanese in (7) and (8), which are in contrast, natural as they stand, but B’s utterance obviously deviates from what the corresponding English utterance means in conveying that ‘Oh, you study [you’re a student] here, too.’ Native speakers would more likely say, B: Ā, soonandesu ka [lit.] Oh, is (that) so.’ We show that changing and devising translation inputs could somewhat better the translation result and thereby include more pragmatic conditions on them, but human interventions are still indispensable for realizing a certain level of linguistic research and study and language learning based on them.

**Deaf Identities in the Media:
a Multimodal Corpus-based Analysis of the Netflix series DeafU**

ABSTRACT

Inclusivity and diversity have become central themes in social activism and awareness campaigns worldwide, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of valuing and respecting differences among people. This shift recognises that diverse perspectives and backgrounds enrich society and that everyone deserves equal opportunities and a sense of belonging. While minority groups like the LGBTQ and Black communities have been prominent in social movements, other minority groups, such as the Deaf community, have long remained in the shadows. Media representation holds significant power in shaping how society perceives any community, including the deaf and hard-of-hearing community (National Association of the Deaf, 2025) and has a significant impact on the construction of public belief and attitudes and their relationship to social change (Happer & Philo 2013). The lack of media representation of D/deafness, though, has perpetuated misconceptions and stereotypes frequently associated with deafness by the mainstream hearing society. Lately, the Deaf community is steadily gaining visibility and influence in media and entertainment (National Research Group 2022), especially in film and on television, with stories featuring deaf actors and characters, like in the 2022 Oscar-winning “CODA”. The Deaf community is actively working towards greater understanding, acceptance, and equality through accurate portrayals of their culture and experiences in media, making sure they are involved in all phases of media productions, which is ultimately the only way to disrupt stereotypical and inauthentic depictions (Foss 2013; Haller 2024: 28). This paper examines media representations of D/deafness through a corpus-driven Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) of *DeafU*, an American Netflix series portraying a group of Deaf and hard-of-hearing students sharing their stories and exploring life at Gallaudet University, a key bilingual, multicultural and diverse higher-education institution for deaf and hard-of-hearing education established in Washington D.C. in 1864. Applying the theoretical perspectives and methodological tools of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (van Leeuwen 1996; Kress & van Leeuwen 2001, 2006; Martin 2000; Martin & White 2005) to the context of Deaf Studies, some instantiations of self-representation of D/deaf individuals are captured with the aim of foregrounding how they craft new discourses of deafness countering common conceptions and assert, at the same time, their agency in shaping a more inclusive cultural and linguistic landscape. By means of an integrated multimodal (Baldry & Thibault 2006; Eriksson 2017) and corpus-based approach to the analysis of the Netflix series *DeafU*, this paper aims to enhance societal understanding of D/deafness-related issues, focusing on identity formation and social interaction. Moving beyond a deficit-based view of deafness, it also seeks to foster greater inclusivity by promoting a deeper understanding of diversity within the broader society, with an emphasis on the unique strengths and perspectives that Deaf individuals bring.

Inclusion through diversity: potential of multilingualism in school learning

ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning refer not only to the role that students and teachers play at school, but to the whole and multi-colored context in which education takes place. Nowadays schools are rich in innovative teaching tools and methodologies, that engage students and help them learn disciplines, with a specific focus on inclusion and nondiscrimination. Considering that in Italy Secondary Schools many students do not speak Italian as L1, it is useful to analyze how a creative use of language could be necessary to acquire an active, personal, ductile linguistic knowledge, that is open to a multilingualism that allows everyone to participate with potentially-equal means, also in learning disciplines such as Math, Physics, History, Science, Literature, Motor Science, IT and so on. When we talk about globalization and Eurolinguistics, we also refer to the way language represents a powerful means of communication in the mixed net of interactions among experience, language and education, and how multilingualism can contribute to identity formation, social belonging, and/or exclusion. And when we talk about translanguaging, we especially refer to different strategies adopted in complex situation of pluralistic classrooms, where teachers live with several types of students: theoretically, the choice could be between pay attention to issues related to bilingualism and second language acquisition – so that everyone, including emerging bilinguals, can express their potential, adopting an approach that integrates second language acquisition with the strengths of multilingual interaction – or implement teaching methods and relationships that exclude or reject students' languages of origin, thinking that this creates confusion or may slow down learning. The focus needs to be on the potential of language for inclusion: if we can convey a message to students and get them to collaborate in different languages or with a common language, we will not have students with two separate languages, but rather a linguistic repertoire from which they select certain elements depending on the communicative situations in which they find themselves, and which constitutes a capital to be invested in teaching, a framework capable of supporting the learning of a second language. Using language as a vehicle in school learning can unveil crucial results to build up a common knowledge, where students and teachers can work together to lay down the necessary foundation for interdisciplinary learning. It is not simply a matter of coming up with a concept in a classroom and translating it with AI or other e-tools, but it deals with valuing language, words and technology, and use them as means to improve everyone's skills, knowledge and abilities. Nowadays, e-tools and digital environments have become crucial, and they can be employed to enhance teaching methods, provide personalized learning experiences, improve student engagement and collaboration, explore identity and

diversity through multicultural, multilingual, and multidisciplinary perspectives. How can digital means help teachers and students in education? Is it a simple matter of translation or a learning choice for a more general inclusion of those who don't speak Italian as they mother tongue?

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Signed, Sealed, (Mis)Delivered? Human vs Machine Translation for the DHH

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how human-translated and machine-translated texts are cognitively and perceptually processed when rendered into sign language, with a focus on media accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) audiences. As AI-based translation technologies, particularly in audiovisual translation (AVT), continue to evolve, their role in promoting inclusion for DHH users becomes increasingly important. Yet, despite advances in automated sign language generation and speech-to-sign systems, the comprehension, usability, and perceived quality of machine-generated translation remain underexplored, especially across the diverse DHH population. Our research addresses this gap by examining how different user groups process and evaluate AI-generated versus human-generated translations. We employ an eye-tracking experiment involving hearing participants and DHH individuals, both pre-lingually and post-lingually deaf. The distinction reflects important linguistic and cognitive differences: pre-lingually deaf individuals are more likely to use sign language as their primary mode of communication, whereas post-lingually deaf individuals often have stronger spoken language foundations and may rely on hearing aids or cochlear implants, with varied use of sign language. In our study, participants are presented with audiovisual stimuli containing translated content in written and signed forms, followed by comprehension questions and post-task questionnaires. Eye movement data provide insight into cognitive processing patterns, while post-task questionnaires capture user perceptions of translation clarity, ease of understanding, and overall satisfaction. These multimodal measures allow us to assess not only comprehension but also the degree of trust and engagement with machine-translated content. Preliminary findings reveal significant variation in how translated content is received and understood across user profiles, underscoring the need for inclusive design strategies in AVT. By analysing both cognitive load

and user preference, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how AI-driven translation technologies can serve diverse online audiences. We argue for the integration of user-centred design, accessibility standards, and DHH community input in the development of future AVT systems, particularly for digital and online media environments where accessibility and inclusion are to be viewed as foundational principles.

The Legal Community on Facebook as a Metaphorical Space

ABSTRACT

Legal communities on Facebook represent an emerging phenomenon that reflects the professional identity of lawyers within the social media landscape. From a poststructuralist and social constructivist perspective, these communities are dynamic constructs where professional identity is shaped and negotiated through discourse. Metaphors play a central role in this process, blending conceptual spaces to generate new meanings and cognitive frameworks (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998). In this study, conceptual metaphor is understood as a fundamental cognitive mechanism for constructing primary models of reality. A conceptual metaphor involves interpreting one conceptual domain through the lens of another, as outlined in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Eco, 1984; Gibbs, 1995; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Mishankina, 2010, 2013). Legal discourse relies on metaphor not only to explain and interpret norms, but also to structure legal reasoning, rhetorical persuasion, and the construction of professional identity (Brožek, 2013; Charteris-Black, 2011; Feteris, 2017; Marmor, 2014; Mattila, 2006; Semino & Demjén, 2017; Winter, 2001). This research explores the role of metaphor in legal discourse on social media, particularly in how legal professionals conceptualize their “community” on Facebook. The analysis focuses on in-group perspectives and the metaphorical structuring of the concept of “group.” The study is based on a 4,699-word corpus drawn from the declared goals of 85 Facebook groups for Italian lawyers. Groups were selected based on whether the notion of “group” was explicitly or implicitly central to their purpose. The methodology combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, including corpus-based collocation analysis and clustering of metaphorical expressions. Using a simplified version of the MIPVU procedure (Steen et al., 2010), metaphorical uses of the keyword *group* were identified, classified, and grouped into recurring source domains (e.g., *group* = place, organism, network). With *group* as the central node, the analysis examined its collocations, identified metaphorical source domains, grouped frequent expressions into clusters, and visualized relationships between conceptual patterns. Coding revealed dominant metaphorical patterns that shape the collective identity within these communities. Twelve main metaphorical domains were identified. The most frequent was GROUP = PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (141 occurrences, 31.97%), followed by GROUP = PLACE (22.45%) and GROUP = PERSON (12.02%). These patterns suggest that the group is mainly seen as a dynamic space for action, a place of aggregation, or an entity with agency and intent. Another recurring metaphor presents the group as a physical space or container, with expressions like “*place for exchange*” or “*discussion forum*” likening it to a shared space. The contrast between “*open*” and “*closed*” groups reflects its inclusive or exclusive nature. Groups are also

portrayed as living organisms capable of growth through member participation (“*Help the group grow*”), as well as through metaphors of construction, where professional success is framed as a building supported by foundations of skills and relationships. Conflict and defense metaphors (e.g., “*struggle*,” “*stronghold*,” “*outpost*”) depict the legal profession as something to be protected. This suggests, lawyers on Facebook conceive their community as a defined, bounded space, clearly separated from the outside world of “non-professionals,” extending this boundary-making to digital environments as well.

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**Subtitling Singapore Colloquial English:
Negotiating Identity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Digital Age**

ABSTRACT

In today's globalized digital media landscape, subtitling has become a site of cultural negotiation. This paper explores the subtitling of Singapore Colloquial English (Singlish) on platforms such as Netflix and YouTube, examining how such practices shape discourses of identity, diversity, and inclusion. Singlish reflects Singapore's multicultural reality, blending English, Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, Tamil, and other languages. However, subtitling this hybrid vernacular—particularly for international audiences—poses a dilemma: should subtitles preserve the local flavor of Singlish or standardize it for wider accessibility? This tension reflects deeper ideological questions about what forms of speech are deemed legitimate or intelligible in global media. Drawing on audiovisual translation theory, sociolinguistics, and postcolonial perspectives, this paper analyzes how subtitlers navigate the representation of Singlish. Through case studies of online films, series, and user-generated content, it explores translation strategies such as code-switching, omission, and relexification, assessing their impact on cultural visibility and voice. The study also considers the role of machine-generated subtitles and the risks they pose in marginalizing non-standard language varieties. Findings reveal that subtitling Singlish is often shaped by pressures to sanitize or “correct” language, potentially erasing local identities. However, independent creators are pushing back, using subtitling as a tool of resistance and affirmation. These alternative practices highlight the potential for more inclusive subtitling approaches that embrace, rather than flatten, linguistic diversity. This paper argues that subtitling Singlish provides a critical lens for understanding how digital media mediate identity and belonging. It calls for subtitling frameworks that prioritize cultural authenticity, enabling multilingual communities to be represented on their own terms in an increasingly homogenized media environment.

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**Moving along the axes of space and scale:
Multilingual experiences of Hong Kongers on Chinese social media**

ABSTRACT

This study is part of a larger ethnographic project examining cross-border Hong Kongers' multilingual practices and identity (re)construction from scalar and language-ideological perspectives. The online-offline nexus and dynamics have captured the attention of ethnographic fieldworkers in recent years, and a close examination of the specifics and complexities of people's online spaces and lives is key to establishing a more complete account of their voices, identities, and paths of relocation. Data for this study were collected through ethnographic observations of the digital lives of ten Hong Kongers relocating to the Greater Bay Area in China. These included semi-structured interviews and screenshot recordings of their social media activities on widely used mainland Chinese platforms such as WeChat and Xiaohongshu. A two-phase analysis has been conducted: an initial thematic analysis of the transcripts and screenshots to generate a macroscopic thematic overview, followed by a critical narrative analysis to gain microscopic understanding of participants' use of linguistic and semiotic resources and their situated (re)construction and negotiation of identity. The preliminary findings reveal that while the enregistered use of traditional Chinese characters can serve to index participants' identity as Hong Kongers, this distinction appears diluted by technological affordances—such as system-generated simplified Chinese subtitles in WeChat video production—that standardise language use across different users. Simultaneously, the multimodal and affordance-rich nature of digital platforms makes language boundaries more porous and fluid than those observed offline. These dynamics give rise to a complex sociolinguistic terrain in which linguistic identity is less bounded by dominant language ideologies and more shaped by agentive acts of self-narration and (re)construction. Moreover, participants often suppress their use of mixed-code English in routine online interactions; yet, this latent register and other cultural and scalar resources are tactically mobilised in particular scenarios to assert professional expertise and translocal capital derived from their Hong Kong-based training and experience. Such strategic deployments enhance their visibility and credibility on digital platforms, thereby facilitating access to potential customers and aspirations toward an upscale socio-economic position. As part of a larger ethnographic project, this study contributes to the conference a critical, empirically grounded understanding of multilingual practices and identity (re)construction that not only encompasses digital spaces but also highlights their inseparability from real-world sociolinguistic contexts. It brings to light the dialectical interplay between standardised and fluid language practices, and the agentive strategies individuals employ to navigate and capitalise on cross-border digital environments.

**“Let Me Solo Her”: Identity, Insider Language,
and Multimodal Belonging in Elden Ring’s Fandom**

ABSTRACT

This presentation examines the multimodal strategies of membership in the global digital fandom of the action role-playing game Elden Ring by focusing on the viral phenomenon Let Me Solo Her. Emerging as a fan-hero figure within the online community, Let Me Solo Her is the nickname of a skilled player who has gained widespread recognition for consistently helping other gamers. After being summoned in the cooperative online mode of the game, Let Me Solo Her assist players in defeating one of the most difficult bosses of the video game, Malenia, wearing nothing but a jar on the head. This paper intends to investigate Let Me Solo Her as a transmedial phenomenon (Elleström 2019; Meyerhofer-Parra et al. 2024; Schiller 2018), which began as a singular gameplay performance and then evolved into a collaborative cultural narrative spanning YouTube video, memes, fanart, and comment threads across multiple platforms. The objects of analysis are a representative YouTube video of Let Me Solo Her defeating Malenia; a selected corpus of user-generated memes derived from this narrative; a number of multilingual comments and responses from the platform’s community; and dedicated easter eggs in other video games. The investigation will pinpoint how transcultural identities and insider discourse are constructed, stylised, and shared in digital environments. By integrating multimodal discourse analysis (Kress 2010; Zappavigna and Ross 2025) and translanguaging theory (Canagarajah 2013; García and Kleifgen 2020; García and Wei 2014), this study will explore the ways in which linguistic elements—such as invented or game-specific terminology (“maidenless,” “tarnished,” “solo run”)—combine with visual and performative strategies to produce texts that are characterized by layered meanings and expressions of belonging. In addition, the examination of user-generated, ancillary texts will serve to outline the construction and negotiation of identity in digital online spaces (Androutsopoulos 2015; Feher 2021; Page 2012) through authority, humour, and solidarity, as well as by means of English uses as Lingua Franca. In fact, memes, comments and video content are not meant to entertain only—they also function as discursive tools whereby participants co-construct communal mythologies, define standards of play, and engage in acts of linguistic and cultural remixing through creative adaptations of English in online environments. This research shall prove that Let Me Solo Her, despite being a singular character narrative, encompasses a broader set of practices by which global gaming communities articulate values, roles, and affiliations. The aim is to contribute to the connotation of game-related content as tools for the observation of key concepts of digital practices such as multimodal creativity, transmedial spreading of collective storytelling, and transcultural engagement.

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Accessibility Beyond Borders: Rethinking Tourism through (Live) Virtual Guided Tours

ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 lockdown, museums and archaeological sites around the world closed, drastically limiting access to cultural assets (UNESCO 2020). In response, numerous cultural institutions and tourism companies increased their online presence to stay in touch with audiences, resulting in a rapid expansion of virtual cultural experiences. Among these, the (online) virtual tour became the most popular, offering (real-time) interactive guided experiences that greatly improve accessibility. They allow audiences that may face physical, geographical, or financial limitations to participate, as well as address issues about overtourism and crowded areas in popular destinations. This article investigates live virtual tours as a type of tourism discourse that democratises access to cultural heritage while broadening the pool of possible tourists. Using a qualitative discourse-analytic approach, the study looks into how virtual tours promote the notion of accessibility as a key component of sustainable and inclusive tourism. Finally, the implications for guide training, virtual experience design, and the theory of tourist communication in digital environments are discussed, with a focus on the role of live virtual tours in fostering equal possibilities for cultural engagement.

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**Reclaiming the Narrative: Digital Storytelling and Classical Reception in Taylor Swift's
“Look What You Made Me Do” Music Video**

ABSTRACT

Beyond their entertainment function, music videos in contemporary pop culture have evolved into powerful tools for digital storytelling, allowing artists to construct and convey intricate narratives about themselves as both public figures and private individuals. Taylor Swift’s 2017 “Look What You Made Me Do” (LWYMMMD) music video exemplifies this, serving as a compelling case study of how an artist can leverage digital storytelling to reclaim and redefine her self-identity in the aftermath of intense media scrutiny and public backlashes. Specifically, our proposal argues that the LWYMMMD music video strategically employs ancient Roman and Greek figures and tropes—namely Caesar and Medusa—as foundational elements for Swift’s radical reclamation of her public narrative and artistic agency. Through an integrated methodology combining classical reception studies and multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA), we analyse how LWYMMMD transcends mere decorative allusion to engage in complex processes of reception, transformation, and negotiation of classical archetypes in the age of digital pop culture. Our analysis contends that Taylor Swift actively re-contextualises and re-appropriates Caesar and Medusa within a digital setting, crafting an engaging narrative of betrayal and empowerment. Focusing on a pivotal scene—Swift on a throne inscribed with ‘Et tu, Brute?’ and surrounded by snakes—we illustrate how the invocation of Caesar and Medusa respectively parallels Swift’s recurrent experiences of betrayal, disempowerment, demonisation, and, ultimately, resilience. From an MCDA perspective, the references to classical figures and myths are further evident in the interplay of visual and textual elements within this digital text. The camera’s bottom-to-top movement, Caesar’s iconic quote carved on the throne, the potent symbolism of the snakes, collectively highlight Swift’s masterful use of digital storytelling to appropriate classical heritage and powerfully negotiate her agency and self-identity as a woman and an artist. Ultimately, in the music video Swift’s intentional references to both Caesar’s betrayal and Medusa’s rage overtly aim at challenging patriarchal narratives, asserting female agency, and criticising pervasive double standards within the entertainment industry. Beyond its immediate narrative function, the video aptly enacts a gendered reappropriation of classical heritage in a digital environment, thus emphasising the universal significance of its legacy. LWYMMMD

ultimately serves as a powerful visual manifesto, wherein Swift leverages ancient paradigms to assert ownership over her identity, artistic output, and public narrative, thereby reclaiming her version of the entire story in the face of reductive portrayals imposed by mainstream media and the male-dominated music industry. This analysis further contributes to a nuanced understanding of how classical antiquity continues to be a fertile ground for contemporary artists navigating complex issues of identity, power, and representation in the digital age.

Language teachers in YouTube: (standard) accent and the celebrity-professional continuum

ABSTRACT

Many language teachers currently use online platforms like YouTube as a source of income, on many occasions as their sole source of income. The functions of YouTube have changed over the years since it started twenty years ago, but for a few years now, many professionals have found a way to create a base of subscribers who watch their videos, posted regularly, and a portion of these subscribers buy their products (books, private lessons, and so on). In this study I compare four videos by four different language teachers who use Youtube in this fashion, and I analyse them using an approach to the analysis of multimodality that employs the (dis)embodied-filmic modes distinction (Mestre-Segarra, 2024; Valeiras-Jurado & Bernad-Mechó, 2022). Embodied modes include language and paralanguage, gestures and facial expressions; disembodied modes refer to the setting and external appearance of the teachers; and filmic modes include the camera position, kind of shot, transitions, visual prompt and audio and visual effects. Two are English teachers concerned with pronunciation aspects (Rachel and Marina) and two are Spanish teachers focused on grammar issues (Maria and Claudia). Two other elements complement the analysis. On the one hand, an analysis of the channel as a whole, looking at the total number of videos, the regularity of the uploads, and the number of subscribers. On the other hand, the comments to the four videos, with a discourse analysis of the content of the comments. Two main findings will be discussed. The first concerns the role of accent in the videos, and the second the position within an imaginary celebrity-professional continuum of the teachers. Whereas Rachel has a standard American accent and would be placed towards the professional side of the continuum, Marina deploys a quite marked Southern California accent and displays characteristics of the celebrity side. The Spanish teachers both use a standard peninsular Spanish accent, and would be both placed in the professional side of the continuum, with Claudia slightly more towards the celebrity side than Maria.

**Transatlantic Gynecological Authority:
A Comparative Analysis of Reels in Spain and the U.S.**

ABSTRACT

Medical communication on social media has experienced a remarkable surge in recent years, allowing healthcare professionals to connect with global audiences through emerging digital discourse genres. One notable example is the informative reel format on Instagram, which blends audiovisual, textual, and performative elements to disseminate knowledge in accessible ways. This format has gained relevance among specialists in gynecology and obstetrics, who increasingly use it to raise awareness, share preventive advice, and challenge taboos surrounding sexual and reproductive health. Building on this context, the present study undertakes a comparative analysis of the discursive and multimodal strategies employed by female gynecologists based in Spain and the United States. The research is grounded in the framework of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) as developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), alongside the methodological approaches proposed by Rodríguez Camargo and Velásquez Orjuela (2011), and the recent contributions of Sapiña (2024) on the reception of audiovisual discourse in digital environments. The results show that in both national contexts, medical authority is constructed through the interplay of verbal, visual, and typographic resources. However, culturally shaped patterns emerge. Spanish gynecologists tend to use more familiar, empathetic forms of address, often employing second-person pronouns and inclusive first-person plural structures to foster a sense of closeness and co-responsibility. Their reels are typically filmed in warm, everyday settings and rely on colloquial language, reinforcing a horizontal and emotionally engaged doctor–patient relationship. In contrast, U.S.-based professionals emphasize credibility through references to scientific literature, statistical data, and visible academic credentials. Their discourse prioritizes terminological accuracy and is frequently supported by visual aids such as infographic and interactive diagrams, projecting a more hierarchical and expert-oriented identity. This study highlights how cultural variables shape digital pedagogies and personal branding in online medical outreach. It underscores the need to understand social media not only as a communication channel, but as a space where health professionals negotiate trust, authority, and affective connection.

Exploring creative audiovisual translation in the age of AI

ABSTRACT

The past decade has seen the Web 2.0 expand dramatically. Content creators nowadays dominate the virtual scene and dictate trends in a plethora of social dimensions within a mediascape no longer dominated by traditional TV and replaced by top streamers and social platforms. The massive quantity of audiovisual content produced in multiple other languages requires interlingual mediation into English, the lingua franca of communication, or from English into numerous other languages, especially from Asia. Thus, the need to create cost-effective translations has propelled audiovisual translation (AVT) technological developments in an unprecedented manner. Against this background, this paper dives into a peculiar aspect of AVT, that of creative subtitling in the age of artificial intelligence (AI), which has been challenging traditional workflows, and calling for innovative localization strategies. Creative subtitling, in the form of authorial intertitles, in- and out-show comments (e.g. telop and danmu) and web-subs, provides a novel way of conceiving AVT in the digital age, not as a largely automated activity with a pinch of human touch, but as an artistic process in the hands of directors, creators and professional translators.

**From cultural attraction to holistic educa(c)tion:
Conveying values of biosociospiritual regeneration through Indigenous communities'
representation in English multimodal tourism communication**

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how Indigenous values and excluded communities' voices can promote regenerative tourism through English multimodal communication, fostering a shift toward a worldview rooted in ecology, genuine reciprocity and spirituality. Current tourism practices face a crisis marked by overconsumption, land degradation, and cultural insensitivity, prompting the need for alternative paradigms. Regenerative tourism emphasizes local community well-being and ecosystem regeneration, positioning tourists as co-actors committed to mutual benefit rather than passive consumers of idealized representations. Reimagining tourism requires revisiting policies and investments, with ancestral knowledge serving as a resource to challenge growth-oriented models that commodify ecocultural heritage. Indigenous values—focusing on community and sanctity of, connection to Nature—align with Living Systems Theory. From this perspective, tourism becomes a gateway for meaningful encounters, encouraging reciprocal relationships across physical, emotional-spiritual, sociocultural, environmental, and economic dimensions, promoting collective wellbeing and eco-social justice, while nurturing long-term cultural responsibility. This study investigates how regenerative tourism boards use language and imagery to represent native communities as integral participants in ecological processes. Using Corpus and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), along with sociosemiotic analysis, it examines how Indigenous, animist perspectives are constructed at the clause (Transitivity) and visual representation level; conveyed through encoded emotions, evaluations (Appraisal), gazes, shots and angles; and propose values of respect, reciprocity, collective responsibility and empowerment, moving away from Anthropocentric separation and commodification narratives. A corpus of 2,000 web pages from Playa Viva (owned by Regenerative Travel, winner of Global Vision and Future of Travel Awards) and Visit New Zealand was collected via Apify Scraper. Visual corpora were annotated through SRI Tagging, while language corpora were analyzed using Sketch Engine. A sub-corpus categorization of 100 images focused on communities' representation followed a data-driven adaptation process. Statistical analysis was performed by quantifying elements such as participants' presence, distributions, (re)actions, gazes and camera shots. Linguistically, verb, adjective wordlists and multi-unit keywords were generated, semantically annotated and prosodically explored through Word Sketch (LogDice) and KWIC functions. Findings reveal that, compared to conventional tourism storytelling, which reinforce ideologies of dominance, sensory gratification, and escapism - often portraying pristine landscapes as static objects (Phenomena) of human fantasy and passive contemplation

(Sensors in reaction/mental processes) from long, high-angle shots - Indigenous-centered narratives emphasize active collaboration, inter-connection and ecological stewardship. Imagery depicting community involvement encodes ideals of collective agency and genuine, equal engagement with tourists and viewers, through direct gazes combined with eye-level angles and close-up shots. Linguistically, regenerative narratives employ Transitivity patterns that depict conservation efforts (material processes) and reciprocal interactions with ecosystems, avoiding frequent use of emotionally charged Reactions and purely aesthetic, extremely positive Evaluations that reinforce the idealization of nature as a spectacular product to be consumed and enjoyed without considering the ecological impact (lack of Judgement). Complexity (Appreciation resource) is used instead to evoke emotional resonance, empathy, care and ethical reflection on inclusive, long-term wellbeing also through relational processes describing biodiversity details, fostering a sense of protection of ecological complexities that does not capitalize on superficial aestheticism and pleasure. Applying SFL resources enables the encoding of agency, attitudes, and social relationships through grammatical roles that position Indigenous communities, natural elements and especially tourists as Actors and learners, empowering the latter as responsible agents committed to eco-cultural preservation - going beyond static, detached observation. Similarly, encoding evaluations through Complexity resources describing Nature's physical peculiarities and animist personifications prompts appreciation of biodiversity's intrinsic value and consciousness.

Female Identity in an Age of Surveillance: A Literary Analysis of Digital Selves in Contemporary Fiction

ABSTRACT

In an increasingly online world, the idea of identity is changing remarkably. Our sense of ‘self’ is no longer a fixed private self, but rather a phenomenon that is becoming deeply fragmented, performative, and mediated by digital platforms. This shift raises crucial questions about visibility, personal control, and constant surveillance in online spaces. Women who navigate this digital terrain face immense pressure from hypervisibility, a pervasive gendered surveillance that scrutinises their presence, and the demanding performance culture of social media. This study offers an insight into how these multifaceted challenges are dramatically portrayed in two contemporary novels that reflect distinct moments in the digital age: Dave Eggers’s *The Circle* (2013) and Lauren Oyler’s *Fake Accounts* (2021). Through a comparative and diachronic literary analysis, this research examines how the female protagonist of each narrative experiences and negotiates her online identity within the rapidly evolving digital scenarios. The theoretical framework is built upon Michel Foucault’s concept of panopticism to demonstrate how the feeling of being watched shapes behaviour; Jean Baudrillard’s theory of simulacra to understand how digital representations can become more “real” than reality itself, and Shoshana Zuboff’s concept of surveillance capitalism to outline the profit-driven engines behind the collection and monetization of personal data. The methodology combines close textual reading with discourse and stylistic analysis, focusing on specific linguistic features such as narrative voice, irony, metafiction, and the lexicon of digital interaction. These elements reveal how both texts construct the intricate tensions between authentic self-expression, digital fragmentation, and omnipresent surveillance. This inquiry specifically examines how these novels represent female online identity under varying forms of digital scrutiny and explores the distinct narrative strategies employed to illustrate the changing nature of digital selfhood. Furthermore, it investigates how the thematic evolution from *The Circle* to *Fake Accounts* reflects broader cultural shifts in understanding online identity and its gendered dimensions. Findings indicate that *The Circle*’s portrayal of female identity, subjected to enforced transparency and corporate regulation, reflects early digital optimism that gradually turns dystopian. In contrast, *Fake Accounts*’ depiction of a female self, fragmented, consciously performative, and at times resistant through irony and detachment, characterizes a more saturated and cynical digital present.

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Building Social Belonging in the Online Classroom: Ongoing Lessons from the Pandemic

ABSTRACT

The sudden shift to online learning in March 2020, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, forced educators to reimagine the classroom as a digital space. At a large American community college, several ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) faculty realized a critical need: fostering social belonging among multilingual, multicultural students as they navigated the dual challenges of remote education and pandemic-induced isolation. This presentation shares the insights and experiences of these faculty as we researched, implemented, and refined strategies to build inclusive online communities that support student success and personal growth. Specifically, we strove to create a “public homespace,” a learning environment that focuses on being “more inclusive, nurturing, and responsive to the developmental needs of all people – but most especially to those who have been excluded and silenced” (Belenky, Bond & Winestock, 1997, cited in Hamilton & Reis, 2005, p. 50). Two activities in particular emerged as being particularly impactful for giving such students “voice” and “visibility” (Roper, 2020), and these activities will be featured in this conference presentation. First, Alternative Discussion Boards, including reflective posts and multimedia responses, shake up the traditional discussion board and encourage students to share personal narratives and cultural insights, fostering deeper connections and mutual inspiration (McKenna et al., 2022). Second, Jigsaw Readings promote collaborative learning and peer teaching, allowing students to become content experts and cultural ambassadors within their virtual classrooms (Williams, 2004). Ultimately, fostering social belonging in digital classrooms is not a peripheral concern, but a foundational element of equitable, effective education. While this presentation is based on experiences of ESOL instructors, these pedagogical practices that contribute to social belonging can be applied to any discipline and modality. Participants who teach online classes will leave this session with practical ideas and materials for creating digital community, as well as a renewed understanding of how digital pedagogy can honor linguistic and cultural diversity while building resilient, inclusive learning communities.

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Digital Storytelling as an AlterNative Pathway to Indigenous Visibility and Identity-building

ABSTRACT

This paper starts from the assumption that Indigenous (Hi)storytelling provides both a contextual framework and an analytical opportunity for reframing theories and practices of contemporary Indigeneity and alterNative identity formation. From dismantling ostracising systems of representation within Western discourse to problematising neo-imperialist visual regimes through an Indigenous epistemological lens, this work endeavours to challenge and deconstruct regime-made socio-cultural tropes for the purposes of a re-politicisation of Indigenous ethos within the theory-practice framework of decoloniality. By delving into the work of award-winning author and enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes of Oklahoma, Tommy Orange, this paper seeks to investigate decolonial storytelling acting as a conduit for local-cultural knowledge production and global recognition. Within Orange's multivocal debut novel, *There There*, the author exposes the Western epistemological distortion of Indigenous historical trauma. White supremacy not only imposed shame on Indigenous cultural and ethnographic heritage, but it also shaped subjectivity through distorted – because situated – systems of representations. Scopic regimes have therefore codified Indigeneity through the fetishized image of the 'Indian', flattened into a figure embellished with traditional feathered regalia. In this context, digital storytelling and narrative reclamation function as decolonial praxis, challenging these imposed identities and reasserting Indigenous presence on Native and contemporary terms. Throughout his multigenerational novel, Orange masterfully orchestrates the diverse yet interconnected voices of twelve urban Indigenous people from Oakland, using storytelling as a liberating means for both collective and self-assertion. The novel in fact foregrounds the twelve characters' desire to retell their (Hi)stories in a safe, intimate, self-determined space, one where their narrative is not threatened by the weight neo-colonial practices. Nevertheless, many of the characters wrestle with their in-between identities. For instance, Edwin Black, who has majored in Native American literature, finds himself disconnected from the lived realities of contemporary Indigeneity. Despite being extensive, his academic knowledge lacks resonance with his lived experience, revealing a disjunction between theory and practice. This

gap underpins the urgency of decolonial storytelling as a method of reclaiming one's voice, grounding identity, and reconnecting with collective memory. Edwin's identity crisis stems from an internalised fear of not being "Indigenous enough" due to his mixed lineage. In response, he turns to digital platforms – e.g. Facebook and Second Life – to connect and reconcile with his Indigenous roots. On Second Life, an online game where users create avatars and shape their own virtual experiences, Edwin finds a unique space for self-representation and validation. In fact, this platform grants him the agency to assert his Indigeneity on his own terms, a significant act of empowerment for post-reservation Native Americans. By contrast to the 'lactification process' theorised by Frantz Fanon (2008, p. 27) in *Black Skin, White Masks* – where the colonised subject aspires to whiteness as a means of epistemic acceptance and inclusion – this act of digital self-fashioning becomes a powerful means of resignifying Urban Indigeneity and of epistemic resurgence. As Bolter and Grusin argue, (Indigenous) selfhood can therefore be *remediated* by digital media, working as conduits for decolonising stigmatised knowledge systems. Undoubtedly, 'There is no there there' (Orange 2018, p. 39) anymore after colonial dispossession, and the further imposition of a Western societal system. However, this forgotten 'there there' endures within Indigenous peoples and enables the protagonists of the novel to locate themselves and their communities within a present-tense, lived narrative. In this sense, the ancestral "there there" of Native American identity has finally become *therein*, a presence within. Indigenous knowledge-making, then, lie not in dwelling on the past but in *presentifying* tradition and resemanticising identity through mixed-media storytelling as a means of performative citizenship and resistance to cognitive imperialism.

**Redefining the Vegan Muscular Masculine Boy in Social Media Discourse:
The Case of 'Calivegans'**

ABSTRACT

Veganism has long been framed as incompatible with hegemonic masculinity, often associated with weakness, fragility, and a lack of physical power (The Vegan Society 2021). In fitness and bodybuilding cultures, strength and muscle-building are traditionally linked to animal protein consumption and dominant masculine ideals (Nath 2011). However, emerging counter discourses seek to redefine veganism as a source of power and resilience. Among others, Stefano Rinaldi, a prominent Instagram calisthenics and vegan influencer (a self-defined *calivegan*), constructs a counter-narrative of vegan masculinity, explicitly rejecting the stereotype of the “weak vegan” (Tschiggerl 2021) while concurrently promoting a vision of plant-based strength as superior. This redefinition is grounded in a new, relational model of masculinity, which allows for greater flexibility in identity construction and adaptation to changing sociocultural contexts (Robertson, 2007; Kaplan et al., 2017). In line with Balirano’s (2014) view of masculinity as an ideological and performative construct, and with Orsatti and Riemer’s (2015) multimodal model of identity-making, the proposed study relies on Multimodal Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Studies (Machin and Mayr 2023), to analyze a selection of Stefano Rinaldi’s Instagram reels and examine how verbal and visual resources co-construct a specific idea of vegan masculinity. The analysis explores how language, embodiment, and visual resources interact in the shaping of a muscular, plant-based male identity. Special attention is given to bodily metaphors, motivational speech acts, and affective discourse, which serve to frame veganism as a disciplined, powerful, and highly masculine practice (Gough 2018). This perspective enables a better understanding of how influencers frame veganism not just as an ethical or health-conscious choice, but as a compelling and desirable model of gendered identity. The findings contribute to research on discourse and embodiment, demonstrating how language produces performative effects on the perception of masculinity and strength (Ruby and Heine 2012). Also, this study aligns with broader discussions on how language affects bodies, revealing the intersection between discourse, physicality, and social identity in online vegan fitness culture, where identity and diversity are actively negotiated and reshaped through digital self-presentation.

Languaging Diversity, Claiming Power: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Online Narratives of Professional Migrant Women in Australia

ABSTRACT

The digital environment is redefining how migrant communities represent themselves and engage with society, offering new opportunities for visibility, solidarity and self-empowerment. In particular, the growing importance of online platforms is helping to overcome traditional forms of media exclusion, encouraging the creation of collective narratives and the development of mutual support practices among migrants. In the literature on migrant women's blogs, the focus is mainly on exclusion, integration, domestic violence and health; fewer studies investigate platforms that, rather than merely documenting critical issues, are designed as spaces for active empowerment and bottom-up political action, capable of influencing the dynamics of social and professional recognition. This study analyses Professional Migrant Women (PMW), an online community that hosts narratives from professional migrant women in Australia between 2023 and 2025. The aim is to explore how, through storytelling strategies and discursive choices, a female “space of power” is constructed online, to uncover injustices but also to consolidate collective identities and inclusive practices. A corpus of posts published between 2023 and 2025 was collected and analysed using a mixed approach. A Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995) was employed to describe the rhetorical strategies and discursive structures used to negotiate power, belonging, and diversity. Additionally, a Narrative Analysis (Gimenez, 2010) highlighted identity trajectories and recurring narrative motifs, while intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) guided the interpretation of dynamics involving gender, ethnicity, and professional background. The Digital Storytelling paradigm (Couldry, 2008) highlighted the role of web platforms in strengthening the sense of community. The study integrates qualitative and quantitative methods by combining Critical Discourse Analysis with the help of corpus investigation tools (Baker, 2006; Anthony, 2019). Corpus linguistic tools sustain the study to identify discursive trends and the impact of specific linguistic choices on textual empowerment, and support quantitative findings with qualitative evidence. Preliminary results indicate that professional women migrants who are authors of narratives tend to use strategies such as empathetic appeals, shared professional best practices, metaphors about reclaiming digital space, and primarily aim to promote exemplary stories. These mechanisms foster the creation of a “space for action” where personal experiences can become collective experience, overcoming stereotypes and institutional barriers, increasing migrants' online agency and generating offline initiatives.

Emotions Take the Mic: The Sound of Authentic Drama in Spanish Dubbing

ABSTRACT

Traditionally associated to linguistic traits of orality, naturalness has been one of the core objects of study in research about dubbing quality (see Pérez González 2007; Antonini and Chiaro 2009; Romero-Fresco 2007; 2012; Pavesi 2018; Spiteri Miggiani 2019; 2023; Sánchez-Mompeán 2019; 2020). This presentation aims to investigate the relationship between audience perception, emotional authenticity, and vocal naturalness in Spanish-language dubbing. Two studies have been carried out in order to examine how identity construction and emotional resonance are affected by two different dubbing styles ("natural" vs. "play-acted"). Both works are grounded in broader concerns about *dubbese* (prefabricated dubbing language), vocal performance, and how target audiences evaluate the credibility of dubbed voices in emotionally loaded scenes. For this purpose, both studies adopt an empirical reception-based approach to dubbing perception. In the first study (Naranjo, 2021a), participants were exposed to eight short clips extracted from two emotionally loaded scenes—one portraying anger and the other sadness. The two scenes were dubbed using different vocal approaches, featuring variations in intonation shaped with natural-sounding discourse markers. First, the scenes were subjected to acoustic analysis where vocal traits such as breathy voice, vocal fry, and pitch variability were identified. Then, participants were instructed to rate naturalness and to indicate their preferences. Although quantitative voice analysis tools (Praat) did not reveal statistically significant differences, qualitative feedback from Spanish-speaking viewers showed clear preferences. Natural dubbed versions were generally preferred in anger scenes due to their perceived spontaneity and credibility; on the other hand, sad scenes showed nuanced results with some participants favoring play-acted versions when emotional intensity (e.g., crying) was prominent. This finding suggests that perceived authenticity may be genre- or emotion-dependent. In the second study (Naranjo, 2021b), the complete anger and sadness scenes were presented to participants. Results reveal that differences in terms of naturalness were more discernible for anger than for sadness where natural dubbing again elicited stronger preference. However, in the sadness scenes, the play-acted style was more favorably received. The presence of heightened affective cues—vocal elongation, gliding vowels, and emotional interjections—could have increased dramatic engagement, leading to a stronger preference of the play-acted version. Visual and vocal expressions of emotion (e.g. sobbing) and background music are also discussed as potential influential factors. These two studies combine phonetic analysis with audience reception in the context of AVT, with the aim of contributing to debates on vocal identity, performance credibility, and the future of the aesthetics of dubbing with human and automatically generated voices.

Any Week is Sexist Week: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Posts and User Comments to Online News about Women in the UK

ABSTRACT

Women are traditionally and systematically underrepresented by media, with only 25% of women as subjects and sources in the news at the global level (GMMP 2020). When they are present, their verbal and visual representation is tied to recurrent semiotic discrimination and linguistic misogyny perpetrated through both words and images (Aiston 2023; Balirano 2023). As news consumption is increasingly moving to social media platforms, and particularly Facebook (Ofcom 2024), the representation and perception of women in these spaces offers valuable material for multimodal critical analyses of discourse. Based on these premises, the proposed study investigates the representation of women on social networking platforms by UK news outlets in a collection of Facebook posts about both public and common women. Drawing on multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA), the study aims to highlight the consistent presence of discriminatory verbal and visual representations, as well as sexist discourse whenever a woman is depicted in the news. The dataset considers all Facebook posts about women published within a week (23-30 June 2025) by four major UK newspapers, namely *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Mail*, and *The Telegraph*. The approximately 200 selected posts include news reporting about and showing images of individual women or groups of women, including both public figures and common people. Images and comments collected manually are analysed by combining the multimodal discursive strategies provided by the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl 2017) and multimodal critical discourse analysis (Machin and Mayr 2012). In addition, the application of psychological models for misogyny identification (Fersini *et al.* 2018; Samory *et al.* 2021) completes and strengthens the proposed analysis. Preliminary results show that visual and verbal sexism is recurrent in social media posts about women, with issues related to their representation arising not only from the specific image choices made by news outlets, but also from how they are perceived in terms of content and phrasing in user comments, as well as from covert to overt discrimination signalled by both visual and linguistic cues. Overall, this study contributes to understanding the effects of gendered hate speech towards women as privileged targets of discrimination in online contexts.

**Discursive Representations of Single-mother Families:
An Analysis of Reddit Threads and Comments**

ABSTRACT

Family patterns have diversified considerably in the last sixty years going beyond the married nuclear family (a married – heterosexual – couple with children) and single-parent families are now a widely recognised phenomenon and family assemblage (UN, 2017; Balirano, Mackenzie, Zottola, 2024). Yet, according to some narratives, the ‘traditional’, nuclear family remains a source of morality for nations, a beacon for social order and identity (Sullins, 2021). Indeed, this concept of family has proved to be a fertile instrument of political and public communication because of its resonance across the social spectrum and its ability to engage with social and cultural values (Galvin, 2006). However, amid the many public appeals to embrace the defense of traditional family values – such as love, respect, honesty, responsibility – a more subtle view has increasingly emerged, capturing the paradox of such narratives. Traditional family values are used as a weapon to deny the rights of differing, non-traditional families (Zartler, 2014). This study specifically aims to investigate how different concepts of family are discursively construed in social media discourse, focusing on the online interactions that could be retrieved from the platform Reddit concerning single-mother families. Reddit is a platform consisting of topic-based communities, often referred to as ‘subreddits’, which function as discussion forums where users can share content and comment on a wide range of issues. Its hybrid nature, combining features of traditional forums and social networking sites, has contributed to its growing popularity. A corpus of threads featuring the keywords ‘single mom(s)/mum(s)/mother(s)’ was collected, including all the replies and comments to the initial messages, as posted over the last 5 years on the platform. Through a critical approach to discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2006; Jones, Chik, Hafner, 2015; Bouvier and Machin, 2018), the construal of single-mother families emerging from Reddit threads and comments will be examined. The investigation will concentrate on conversations on topics relating to single moms, seeking for advice/opinion and so forth, as well as instances of hate speech perpetuating forms of discrimination and marginalization towards such families. By enacting social stigma and stereotyping, hateful narratives exacerbate emotional and social tensions, portraying single mothers as unworthy exceptions to the ‘natural’ and ‘traditional’ family.

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**The “Brat vs Demure” Aesthetic: Multimodal Identity Construction in Social Media
Discourse**

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how social media act as spaces for self-expression and identity formation, allowing for the creation of gendered personas that shape, reinforce or resist cultural norms. The focus is on two of them, the so-called “brat” and “demure”, which have emerged as highly stylised figures of femininity across digital platforms. These figures function as opposite metaphorically structured identities, which are enacted in digital spaces through a number of multimodal features, such as typography, colour palette, visual framing, intonation, music (Adolphs and Knight, 2020; Georgakopoulou and Spilioti, 2016). Drawing on theoretical frameworks of multimodal analysis (Jewitt, 2009; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021) and multimodal metaphors (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi, 2009), the analysis focuses on how metaphors operate across visual and verbal modes on Instagram in order to construct different representations of the self, which form a community of users that identify with one or the other. In this context, the first term comes from the namesake of Charli XCX’s sixth studio album, released in June 2024, where it is characterised as rebellious, defiant, ironic, unapologetically bold and unconventional. The second derives from a TikTok uploaded in August 2024 by the content creator Jools Lebron, in which she coined what became a catchphrase: “very demure, very mindful”; although it stems from a parody of what is known as the “clean girl” aesthetic, the adjective has come to be used literally and associated with depictions of modesty, restraint, softness and kindness. This study shows how these metaphorically constructed performances negotiate agency in social media discourse, acting as socially embedded practices for performing identity in digital environments.

‘Warmer Space’: Women in STEM’s Identity on Reddit

ABSTRACT

According to the 2024 UIS Report, the number of women among STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) graduates has remained stagnant for over a decade. This ongoing disparity must be traced back to systemic gender discrimination, which continues to shape educational and professional access (UNESCO, 2024). Within this enduring “chilly climate” though, new media platforms have allowed women in STEM to carve out ‘warmer’ digital spaces: indeed, these platforms provide opportunities to develop their STEM identity, build solidarity with other women, and share personal experiences more freely. Reddit, for instance, has been for quite some time an anonymous (and therefore safer) setting for users to discuss gendered issues, such as domestic violence and the #MeToo movement. To date, only one study has specifically examined women in STEM on Reddit, employing a quantitative, media mining methodology. Our aim with the current work was to approach this topic differently, from both a discursive and a feminist perspective. We focused indeed on how women in the subreddit *r/xxstem* discursively constructed their identities and framed their lived experiences as women in STEM, applying both Corpus Linguistics and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). Using Reddit’s “hot” post filter (which highlights recent content with high engagement), we downloaded 950 posts from *r/xxstem*, that were then formatted in XML in order to be analysed by Sketch Engine – Corpus Linguistics software- while retaining important metadata (of both posts and comments) such as id, publication date, author, score, and URL. By combining Corpus Linguistics and FCDA, we had the opportunity to ground qualitative insights in large, empirical data and reach the conclusion that, starting from the corpus’ quantitative analysis, in building their STEM identity on Reddit, women talked about their experiences, reaffirmed their own identity (as a/being a), perceived reaching out to ‘the other’ as fundamental (look for other women), and compared their experiences with that of the male counterpart (men getting credit for women’s work); reading then such data under the lenses of FCDA, it became clear to us that all these different declinations of identity formation entailed deconstructing gender norms and stereotypes, calling out sexist constructs and therefore, in one word, resisting, by creating challenging discourses. The role of Reddit was crucial: we argue indeed that *r/xxstem* became a ‘warmer’ space, where by practising critical awareness, women were free and able to pursue a transformative agenda, acquiring agency, a voice and the means to build positive identity, directly sustained, as per Reddit’s architecture, by the community of fellow women. In conclusion, it was our aim to contribute to broaden the conversation on the link between social media and

identity formation, highlighting how crucial these digital spaces are, specifically with respect to women in STEM, to break the barriers of systemic oppression and discrimination, and create therefore counternarratives against patriarchal culture and institutions, working towards gender equality, and therefore the empowerment of women and girls across all sectors (UN, 2015).

**Online communities and their hashtags – an analysis of social media data
from the 2024 European Election campaign in Italy**

ABSTRACT

As social media continue to increase their sphere of influence, overtaking traditional news outlets as a source of political information for individuals in the under 30's bracket (Eurobarometer Youth Survey 2024), it is of increasing importance to democracy that such sources of information be free of third-party interference. To this end, in February 2024, the European Commission set out its 'Defence of Democracy' initiative, with the aim of promoting transparency of interest in political lobbying and to combat covert interference in democratic processes. The *RightsNet* project and its continuation as *The New Challenges to Democracy in the Digital Ecosystem* aim to examine social media activity in the context of the 2024 European Elections, plotting interactions (likes, comments, shares) and analysing contents, to uncover the dynamics involved in political activity on social media and their potential repercussions on the democratic process.

This talk uses corpus linguistics techniques to examine Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) posts collected in 2024 via hashtag scraping for the five most prominent hashtags used in the campaign in Italy: #usailtuovoto ('use your vote'), #elezionieuropee ('European elections'), #elezionieuropee2024 ('2024 European elections'), #europee2024 ('2024 Europeans'), and #elezioni2024 ('2024 elections'). The data comprises 411 public Facebook posts (12,009 running words) and 10,000 public X tweets (283,881 running words), predominantly written in Italian (Sernani 2025). While covert interference in the elections may well have occurred most significantly via private groups, this public data reveals interesting tendencies, demonstrating that political communities can be delimited on the basis of their linguistic choices. Mentions of politicians and parties by name is prevalent, but not in itself revealing; what is revealing, instead, is that the hashtag preferences seem to align with political orientations. For example, the almost-synonymous #elezionieuropee and #elezionieuropee2024 – differentiated only by the inclusion (or not) of the year 2024 – are found to collocate (associate lexically) with different political parties and their representative politicians. This association is not a positive or proactive one: rather than indicate support, such co-occurrence can be seen to coincide with fierce criticism of the (anonymous) authors' dispreferred political factions and personae. Far from being neutral, therefore, hashtag choices reveal themselves to be political indicators, signalling sympathies and antipathies which unfold on closer reading of the data wherever they collocate with proper names. This observation has important repercussions for data collection as well as for its analysis. First

of all, any presumption that hashtags are semantically neutral appears to be misplaced, which means that care must be taken when using hashtag scraping, especially for politically-oriented data, so as to ensure coverage and to limit bias. And as far as analysis is concerned, it highlights the need to go beyond automated functions such as collocations and n-gram extraction, and to delve into the specifics of individual posts, where loaded language abounds and political sentiment cemented. Hashtags seem to act as social aggregators, uniting similarly-minded individuals into online communities – or echo-chambers, perhaps – where criticism can be vented, accepted, and shared.

When Hate Speech Heals: The Subversive Power of Queer Slang in AVT

ABSTRACT

Hate speech, particularly in its online manifestations, has garnered significant attention in the field of English linguistics (see, amongst others, Balirano & Hughes 2020). While commonly condemned, hate speech can, in certain contexts, serve as a linguistic cohesive device, contributing to the formation and maintenance of specific speech communities (see, amongst others, St Clare 1995). This study explores both explicit (e.g., profanity and slurs) and implicit (e.g., sarcasm and wordplay) instances of hate speech as employed by Modern English Queer Slang speakers in audiovisual products. Although extensively investigated (see, amongst others, Ranzato 2012: 369-384), this research employs an alternative approach by conducting a contrastive analysis with Polari language (Baker 2002a; 2002b), thereby highlighting how the subversive use and reclamation of hate speech has long played a pivotal role in the creation and preservation of LGBTQIA+ communities. In doing so, this study also aims to highlight how linguistic sensitivity regarding the use of certain (hateful) terms cannot be attributed solely to political correctness or the more recent woke culture, but has long constituted a source of sociocultural tension among opposing communities. Drawing on audiovisual and queer translation theories (Díaz Cintas 2007, 2010; Harvey 1998) and adopting Vinay and Darbelnet's translation model (1958/1995), this study conducts a critical analysis of the English and Italian subtitles of *RuPaul's Drag Race UK* (Bruce McCoy, Sally Sanders, RuPaul Charles, Fenton Bailey, Randy Barbato, Tom Campbell; 2019-present) Season 3. The choice to focus on this specific corpus stems both from the extensive body of research it has generated (see, amongst others, Goldmark 2015), and from the broader research project within which it was adopted. From this, a qualitative analysis was conducted on the introduced themes. This research thus aims to demonstrate the importance of preserving such forms of hate speech in subtitling and translation practices, in order to faithfully reflect speakers' communicative intentions and support identification and identity-building practices. Aware of the regulatory constraints and the linguistic implications of displaying such expressions on streaming platforms, the queer approach adopted in this study argues that genuine reappropriation requires the use of such terms even outside the community — not in pursuit of external approval, but as a means to subvert stereotypical dialogic roles. Furthermore, the study raises critical concerns regarding the use of automated subtitling and translation tools when the abovementioned speaking communities are featured, emphasising the indispensable role of human translators for linguistic accuracy and sociopolitical sensitivity.

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**‘Everyone knows you’re just another pathetic incel, Jamie’:
Teenage digital discourse and AVT in Adolescence**

ABSTRACT

This study scrutinises how the Netflix series *Adolescence* (2025) constructs teenage social identities through digitally mediated discourse, and how audiovisual translation (AVT) transfers these identities for global audiences (Díaz-Cintas & Massidda 2019). The series portrays teenagers as deeply embedded in online environments, where generational slang, emojis and coded expressions function as markers of belonging and differentiation from adults and institutional figures (Zanotti 2024). These online interactions are central to *Adolescence* as a screen-based digital narrative, whose social discourse is characterised by irony, aggression and hate speech (Androutsopoulos 2015; Tagg & Seargeant 2017), reinforcing group hierarchies and processes of marginalisation (Balirano & Hughes 2020; Balirano et al. 2023). In line with research methodologies in audiovisual translation, the study examines how AVT negotiates the complexity of teenage digital discourse and the sensitive nature of hate speech. The focus is on the Italian rendering of incel-related terminology and its wider semantic domain, with particular attention to the translation of lexical items and linguistic constructions referring to misogyny, gendered hostility and digitally mediated masculine frustration. The analysis investigates how these elements are reproduced, reshaped and reframed in the Italian version, situating the translation process within the broader dynamics of contemporary adolescent digital communication. Ultimately, the investigation seeks to position Audiovisual Translation in Italy within the evolving landscape of youth discourse representation and the linguistic rendering of contemporary adolescence (Ranzato & Zanotti 2018; Ranzato 2019; Bruti 2021). By examining how incel-related language and digitally mediated forms of hostility are transferred across languages, the study contributes to broader reflections on the role of AVT in shaping the visibility and social framing of teenage identities in translated media, as well as to map how Italian AVT positions itself within current debates on youth language and the translation of emerging digital subcultures.

**Bodies that don't matter? Consent over Black bodies and maternal health.
A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Adriana Smith case in US digital landscape.**

ABSTRACT

In February 2025, Adriana Smith – a Black woman from Georgia, USA – was declared brain dead following a medical emergency while she was nine weeks pregnant. However, due to Georgia's law, which bans abortion in the presence of detectable fetal heartbeat, the hospital did not disconnect the machines that sustained her heartbeat to continue pregnancy. Despite Smith's irreversible condition, her family was denied the right to choose whether to withdraw life support (The Washington Post, 2025). On 13th June 2025, an emergency caesarean section was performed on Smith's body and a premature baby boy was born. Four days later Smith's life support was removed. This case has reignited national and international debate around consent, reproductive justice, and state control over bodies, reflecting Butler's (1993) critique of discursive materialisation of bodies under normative constraint. It has also fuelled ongoing debates on the intersecting dimensions of race, gender, and legal-medical power in the construction of subjecthood. As Black feminism has long argued, Black women's reproductive autonomy has historically been undermined by institutional and structural forces that make their bodies instruments of the state rather than sites of selfhood (Wilson 2025; Roberts 1997). Since bodily consent and reproductive control may be discursively enacted through transitivity patterns and social actors allocation (Lazar 2005), this study examines how Adriana Smith's body and agency are constructed in different kinds of US-based digital media using a Critical Discourse Studies (CDS, Wodak and Meyer 2016) approach grounded in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) and its social semiotic dimension (van Leeuwen 2008). Drawing on a corpus of social media posts published after Smith was declared brain dead, this study investigates transitivity patterns to assess how agency is distributed among key social actors, such as, Adriana Smith, her family, the hospital, the fetus, and the law. The analysis focuses on two main dimensions. The first one involves transitivity structures (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014), which are examined to determine how processes, participants and circumstances are configured to represent this event. The second one draws on van Leeuwen's (2008) framework to analyse how social actors are included or excluded, activated or passivated, and how their roles are nominalised or backgrounded. By focusing on transitivity patterns and social actors representation, this study lays bare how the denial of bodily consent is a legal and ethical issue that is shaped in discourse and linguistic choices, where the grammar of agency and social role allocation reflects broader systems of power, racialisation, and reproductive governance. Specifically, such linguistic choices may legitimise or erase power asymmetries in social media discourse. Therefore, this study contributes to broader

conversations in CDS, reproductive justice, and intersectionality. It also highlights the need for linguistic inquiry to engage not only with the performative mechanisms of discourse but also with the ethical and political consequences, particularly in cases where race, gender, and state power converge to deny personhood.

**Rewriting Myth, Resisting Violence: Digital Vernaculars
and Feminist Counter-Discourse in *Priya's Shakti***

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how the multilingual digital graphic novel *Priya's Shakti* challenges rape culture in India by reappropriating Hindu mythology and integrating participatory digital storytelling to foster resistance against gender-based violence (GBV). The novel, created in response to the 2012 Delhi gang rape of Jyoti Singh, reframes traditional religious symbols through the figure of Priya—a rape survivor turned superhero who is empowered by the goddess Parvati to become an agent of change. Combining visual storytelling, mythological symbolism, and augmented reality, *Priya's Shakti* deploys translanguaging strategies by merging Hindi and English versions, culturally embedded mythic references, and globally accessible visual metaphors, enabling a wide and diverse audience to engage with the narrative. This work argues that *Priya's Shakti* is not merely a static story but an evolving digital artifact where readers participate through online campaigns (#standwithpriya), localised translations, and interactive AR tools that overlay survivor testimonies onto real-world spaces. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodal narrative analysis, the study investigates how the graphic novel counteracts the denial, attack, and reversal of victim and offender (D.A.R.V.O.) strategies perpetuated in both legal and cultural responses to Jyoti Singh's case. Furthermore, the work considers the novel's function as a digital vernacular—a hybrid of grassroots activism and literary production that transcends genre boundaries and fosters an inclusive, intersectional platform for feminist resistance. It demonstrates how *Priya's Shakti* offers a counter-discourse to both patriarchal rhetoric and institutional silencing, using accessible media formats to reach rural and urban audiences alike. Ultimately, this case exemplifies how digital storytelling, when embedded in culturally resonant mythological frameworks, can reframe collective memory and identity, transforming survivors from silenced figures into empowered protagonists. In doing so, it highlights the importance of digital media and translanguaging practices in constructing inclusive narratives that bridge traditional literatures, social justice advocacy, and interactive technologies.

**Karen as Meme, Karen as Monster: Linguistic Simplification and the Policing of
Femininity Online**

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the figure of “Karen” as a viral meme template and discursive ‘monster’ in contemporary digital environments. Circulating across platforms such as Reddit, TikTok, and Twitter/X, the Karen meme serves as a metonym for a specific form of racialized, entitled, and hyper-visible white femininity – depicted as aggressive, self-righteous, and overbearing. Far from being a trivial stereotype, the Karen meme encapsulates complex processes of discursive exclusion, linguistic simplification, and gendered control. Adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis framework, the paper examines a corpus of captioned memes and short-form videos to identify recurring lexical and pragmatic patterns: modal constructions, assertive and evaluative verbs, formulaic complaints, and syntactic compression. These linguistic features construct a recognizable voice that is easily replicable, indexical, and virally efficient – echoing broader trends of linguistic simplification on social media (Serra et al., 2024) and the entropy-reduction processes typical of meme evolution (Serra et al., 2021). The meme’s virality relies on its ability to codify this discursive voice into a fixed and ridiculed persona. The Karen is rarely allowed to “speak” authentically; instead, her speech is parodied, repeated, and flattened into a symbolic template. This paper interprets such discursive practices as a form of symbolic punishment aligned with a gendered necropolitics (Mbembe, 2019) – understood here as the management of visibility, legitimacy, and discursive death within digital publics. Through ridicule and repetition, the Karen meme polices the boundaries of acceptable femininity while masquerading as critique of privilege. Ultimately, the paper argues that the Karen meme functions as a viral tool of *norm enforcement*: it disciplines behaviour, simplifies language, and naturalises cultural bias disguised as satire. By integrating discourse analysis with insights from recent studies on linguistic simplification and memetic patterning, this contribution highlights how viral discourse can reproduce *power asymmetries* through the very mechanisms that claim to subvert them.

English Contamination: Runglish into Ofisnyj Novojaz

ABSTRACT

The globalisation of the English language, especially through digital technologies, has led to significant linguistic transformations within non-Anglophone societies. In the Russian context, this has resulted in the emergence of Runglish, a pidgin born out of continuous contact between Russian and English (Mariupolsky, 2005). This phenomenon sheds light on the development of new cultural identities shaped by digital interaction and globalisation (Pershina, 2016). Runglish firstly developed within Russian speaking diasporic communities, such as those in Brighton Beach and in New York (Perotto, Ambrosi, 2009); afterwards, it spread through digital platforms, particularly the Russian internet space known as RUnet (Paracchini, 2017) evolving also into Ofisnyj Novojaz (Office Newspeak), a business jargon. Moreover, Runglish blends lexical, phonetic and syntactic features of both source languages, responding to pragmatic communicative needs while simultaneously contributing to the construction of digital cultural identities. Through an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates sociolinguistics, media studies and migration theory (Kerswill, 2005), this paper argues that Runglish constitutes a stable communicative system embedded in the evolving linguistic repertoire of a digitally connected, transnational community. This phenomenon, indeed, requires contextualisation within broader socio-economic transformations and digital globalisation understanding. To this end, the linguistic data examined in this study include hybrid lexical items and morphosyntactic structures. Special attention is devoted to the lexical borrowings and semantic calques from English into Russian. These items have been taken from RUnet platforms, linguistic databases, selected through criteria of recency, linguistic innovation and representativeness of contact-induced change. By tracing their historical and functional development, the study demonstrates that English, despite claims of its decline (Ostler, 2011), maintains a dominant role as a global lingua franca (Crystal, 2003). This dominance reshapes vocabulary, morphosyntax, communicative practices, identity expression and prevailing language ideologies within Russian-speaking communities, revealing the complex interplay between language, power and mobility in the 21st century.

“My nonna made that too!”: Cultural stereotypes and the negotiation of Italian American identity on Instagram

ABSTRACT

Ethnic identity is generally perceived to be a complex process shaped by multiple aspects, such as a sense of belonging to an ethnic group, language, values, and knowledge of the group's history. In addition to these factors, stereotypes are another one that plays a part in the creation of “self-images”, regardless of whether individuals align with or distance themselves from them. Drawing on these premises, this study applies Bucholtz & Hall's (2005) sociocultural linguistic model to examine how Italian American Instagram users negotiate cultural stereotypes of Italianness and construct identity in relation to them. Starting from the 1st of January 2024, I collected and analysed a dataset comprising 1000 comments posted by Italian American Instagram users under posts shared by one of the most prominent accounts in the Italian American Instagram community (@growingupitalian). The decision to focus on Instagram is grounded in the growing relevance of social media platforms as key spaces where Italian Americans engage with their cultural heritage and foster a sense of community. The findings reveal that the majority of Italian American users align themselves with most stereotypes, especially those related to family, traditions and cuisine, which are the three most frequently occurring themes in the dataset. This choice can be interpreted as a deliberate strategy of identity construction: by embracing widely recognisable cultural stereotypes, particularly those related to these three domains, Italian American users position themselves in closer alignment with a widely recognised and stereotyped image of Italianness. Rather than distancing themselves from their ancestral roots, they in fact appear to reclaim and reaffirm them. At the same time, this alignment with common cultural markers of Italian heritage may also reflect a conscious refusal of full assimilation into the dominant American cultural model. Instead, these users seem to negotiate their identity within a space of cultural in-betweenness, where their Italian ancestry coexists with their American belonging. Linguistically, this is signalled by practices such as the frequent use of loanwords from Italian or regional dialects or even attempts at including entire sentences in one of their heritage languages. This also suggests that, for contemporary generations of Italian Americans, the notion of Italianness is, in most cases, no longer associated with shame, but reflects a positive re-evaluation of identity, suggesting that the stigma experienced by earlier migrants has been overturned.

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A Voice for the Voiceless: Digital Storytelling and Identity (Re)construction in Prison

ABSTRACT

Storytelling is considered as a resource used by people for meaning making and identity negotiation. “Narratives are not simply recounts of what happened, but important resources for people to collaboratively reflect and make sense of events and situations, establish common ground, and display and negotiate their identities”. Furthermore, the Internet has opened up new possibilities to produce and share stories. The anonymity of digital platforms can encourage the telling of stories that have been kept hidden for a long time because of stigma or social pressure. It can literally give people a voice, combat feelings of isolation, and help people make sense of difficult experiences. The present study aims to reflect on the stigma surrounding incarcerated citizens, focusing on the prejudices, stereotypes, and clichés about them and the issues that arise, especially in the post-prison phase, and digital storytelling as a communicative tool to reduce this social phenomenon. Storytelling, which encompasses various aspects such as sharing experiences, passing on values and principles, communicating emotions to others, fostering discussion, and strengthening community ties, can become an effective instrument to counteract the stigma that prisoners often suffer. Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, a sample of stories extracted from the American website “Prison writers - where prisoners have a voice” will be investigated. The website aims to give voice to the voiceless through American prisoners’ personal stories in order to change the public’s misconceptions on convicted people. Incarcerated people are often victims of intense societal stigma and self-narrative may involve a process of purposive and agentic reconstruction of identity where a ‘new’ person emerges. By telling their own stories, prisoners have the opportunity to reconstruct who they are and who they wish to be and sharing their stories online can be a way to start a process of destigmatization to cancel the label ‘ex prisoner’ after release from prison. The telling of one’s past experiences can open up new ways of thinking the present, exploring the self and prepare the teller to develop a future sense of agency. “Storytelling is a process of reauthoring the self that promotes a language of personal agency and empowerment”. Since self-narratives are powerful tools to change tellers’ identities, the analysis will focus on the phenomenon of self-storytelling within a context of incarceration by detecting the most recurrent discursive patterns which can help prisoners start “a positive identity transformation” (Kiernan 2021: 6) and social destigmatization.

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**The Discursive Construction of Brand Identity across Digital Environments:
A Focus on Luxury Tourism**

ABSTRACT

Luxury tourism is a highly symbolic and experience-driven domain in which brands must craft compelling narratives to connect with affluent consumers. In this segment, value creation depends not only on the functional quality of products and services but also on the ability of brands to evoke exclusivity, emotional resonance, and aspirational lifestyles. Consumers engage in conspicuous consumption to enhance their social standing, aligning themselves with brands that symbolize prestige and exclusivity (Lai et al., 2022). Beyond social identity, emotional connections to luxury brands further reinforce consumer engagement (Peng & Chen, 2019). Given the importance of emotional resonance in consumer-brand relationships, luxury brands must develop communication strategies that reflect evolving consumer expectations rather than relying on standardized messaging. However, many luxury brands still continue to adopt standardized communication strategies that fail to address the complexity of evolving consumer mindsets. As digitalization transforms the landscape of strategic communication, digital platforms have become essential tools for luxury brands to construct, circulate, and manage their narratives. They allow brands to create aspirational images, reinforce exclusivity, and foster community engagement. Online brand communication plays a crucial role in shaping how brands are constructed, perceived, and consumed. The development of a distinctive and robust brand identity is crucial in this context (Conte et al., 2024). Organizations define the components of their brand identity internally and subsequently communicate it externally to convey a desired brand image, reputation, and a cohesive understanding of the brand among stakeholders. Branding is grounded in discourse, as both can be thought of as systematic ways of shaping and viewing the world through the deployment of specific semiotic choices. Despite this intersection, digital branding remains an underexplored area within discourse studies, particularly in relation to how brand identity is constructed across online platforms. Accordingly, this study focuses on the case of *Mangia's*—a high-end hospitality brand operating in the Italian islands of Sicily and Sardinia—and explores how luxury brand identity is constructed

through digital tourism discourse (Maci, 2020). Employing cross-platform digital discourse analysis from a multimodal perspective (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020), the study investigates Mangia's brand communication across its official website, Facebook, and Instagram.

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How the use and transfer of taboo language helps to create the identity of characters in the series *Slow horses*. A closer look at the Slovak, Italian, French, and Spanish subtitles

ABSTRACT

Strong taboo language used in Slovak dubbing or subtitles to series available on online streaming platforms does not have to conform to Slovak legislation which applies to audiovisual products broadcast on Slovak television where the use of taboo language in the primetime is penalised. Recently, Slovak dubbing and subtitles containing abundant taboo language have become available on various streaming platforms, e. g. for the series *Euphoria* (2019), *Yellowjackets* (2021), *White Lotus* (2021), *The Last of Us* (2023) and others, and prompted Slovak translation scholars to further examine the strategies of taboo language transfer in audiovisual translation (Bendík, 2023, 2024; Ukušová & Koscelníková, 2025). Drawing on the definitions of taboo language by Jay, 1992; Allan & Burrige, 2006 and Alsharhan, 2020, and the strategies for its transfer (Ávila-Cabrera, 2023), we focus on analysing the transfer of taboo language into different language versions of subtitles (Slovak, Italian, French, and Spanish) in the first season of the series *Slow Horses* (2022, See-Saw Films) which is available on the streaming platform Apple TV+. As pointed out by Díaz-Cintas & Remael (2021, p.191), translation of taboo words and invectives in audiovisual translation is essential in cases where they either contribute to the characterisation or fulfil a thematic function in a given audiovisual work, bearing in mind that one has to also examine their relevance for the storyline, their emotional impact, and their acceptance by the target audience. *Slow Horses* is a British spy thriller series containing strong taboo language, used especially by the main protagonist Jackson Lamb, MI5 agent, but also by other characters, and can be considered an integral part of their identity. The main goal is to examine the approaches to taboo language transfer across different languages in the given series and assess whether the identity of the individual characters is preserved or altered due to significant toning down (or toning up) of the taboo language. In order to do that, we take into account the specifics of subtitles, i.e. spatial and temporal constraints (Szarkowska & Jankowska, 2025), as well as the fact the different cultures may have different levels of tolerance for taboo words (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021).

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Navigating Online Narratives: A Discourse Analysis of Support Service Representation

ABSTRACT

In the virtual world (VW), language behaviours seem to be pragmatically less rigid and more hybrid genre-wise. Indeed, the VW seems to encourage smoother interaction and reduce anxiety levels accordingly. With specific reference to gender-related issues, the VW provides an extraordinary opportunity to investigate how gender non-conforming people manage to talk about themselves out of some linguistic (be them lexical and/or syntactical) constraints, thus confirming the positive role online interaction may play in letting people come out of the dark. The new 'gender performances' are evident in self-identification on social media and in the VW. These "performances" may be carried out either by individuals or by larger institutions. They exploit and adapt language to meet communicative needs in our rapidly changing world, fluid world. This entails an ongoing dialectical interaction between control processes governed by the existing identity structure and some regulatory efforts to modify it. In identity construction, people present themselves through roles, selecting and displaying a selection of their possible identity traits. Given the nature of self-presentations as *loci* and processes of identity construction and individual redefinition, they can provide significant examples of how language can be used to address issues that hinder non-conforming people from being smoothly visible. On-line self-descriptions worth studying for the evidence they can provide regarding the online identity construction of gender non-conforming individuals. At the same time, identities are represented and co-constructed in communicative events aiming at offering support services. This paper aims to analyze the linguistic strategies employed in online events dedicated to presenting and advertising support services. Specifically, our research delves into how language is discursively utilized to construct presentation and self-presentation narratives. We will examine this phenomenon through in the "Transgender Equality Network Ireland" (TENI <https://teni.ie/>). Our investigation will focus on two key areas: 1. Representations by the Network: we will analyze how TENI constructs narratives about its support services and organization. This includes the language used to describe the services and their benefits, as well as the network's overall mission. We will pay close attention to how these presentations aim to foster trust, encourage engagement, and demonstrate the accessibility and relevance of the support offered. 2. Self-representation by social actors and individuals: crucially, we will also explore how individuals who utilize or benefit from TENI's services engage in self-

presentation. This involves analyzing personal narratives, testimonials, and individual accounts of experience relating to the support received. Our aim is to understand how these personal stories contribute to the overall discourse surrounding support services, highlighting both their impact and the agency of the individuals involved. By scrutinizing organizational and individual narratives of presentation and self-presentation, this study will shed light on the complex interplay of language, identity, and support in the virtual world.