



Research as Resistance in a World at Odds

**VI Seminar in English Studies
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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

PLENARY SPEAKERS

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Bridging the Affective Gap: Creative Metaphors and the Reader’s Role in Trauma Narrative.....	3
“Not in any kind of normal way, or not without a lot of pain”: Heteronormative Sexuality and Chronic Genital Pain in Sally Rooney’s <i>Intermezzo</i>.....	4
Who Gets to Sing the Epic? Vulnerability, Trauma and Eco-feminism in <i>A Thousand Ships</i> (2018) by Natalie Haynes.....	5
Nonbeing quality of DeLillo’s <i>Cosmopolis</i> protagonist.....	6
Working until Death: The Workplace as a Site of Horror.....	7
Rethinking Utopia in Times of Crisis: Posthuman Ethics and Alternative Futures in Contemporary Fiction.....	8
“Big Brother meets Big Business”: The biopolitics of surveillance capitalism in Rob Hart’s <i>The Warehouse</i> (2019).....	9
From instruction to self-branding on social media health communication: A qualitative exploration of expert identity on Instagram through visual post design.....	10
Digital recontextualization practices of scientific knowledge: An exploration of REPS (Research Explained in Practical Summaries).....	11
Recontextualization of Scientific Knowledge in Adolescent-Oriented Digital Texts: Analysis of Discursive and Multimodal Strategies and Implications for the EFL Classroom.....	12
Database linguistics: Creating a context-based corpus analysis tool.....	13
Sowing Seeds of Resistance: Black Women Activists and the Civil Rights Movement....	15
Where the Stage Refuses Silence: Blackness and Ethics in Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’ Theatre.....	16
Memories Embraced and Erased: Overcoming the Limits of Aboriginal Life in Tony Birch’s <i>The White Girl</i>.....	17
Gothic Themes and The Black Body in Rivers Solomon’s <i>Model Home</i>.....	18
“The world is cursed. But still, you find reasons to keep living”: Life-affirming Eco-cosmopolitan Resistance in Studio Ghibli’s <i>The Princess Mononoke</i> (Hayao Miyazaki, 1997)	19
“No use living without delight”: Virtual unreality and vulnerable materiality in Ursula K. Le Guin’s <i>Paradises Lost</i> (2002).....	20
Are Plants Not Living Beings? The Power of the Island Setting for Human De-centering in Mark Jenkin’s <i>Enys Men</i> (2022).....	21
Posthuman shapeshifting: blurring the boundaries between human and nonhuman in Nnedi Okorafor’s <i>Lagoon</i>.....	22
Tackling the Passive-causative Structure within EFL Materials: A Critical Systematic Review.....	23
Bringing Real-World Topics into Language Classrooms through Content-Based Language Teaching: Lower Secondary EFL Teacher’s Perspectives.....	24
Teaching English Word Order in Czech Classrooms: A Pilot Study.....	25
A Critical Ethnographic Exploration of Freelance Professionals in English Language Teaching.....	26
Dreaming Big in London: Urban Spaces and Migrant Experience in <i>My London Lullaby</i> (Santa Cruz, 2021).....	27
Food Studies and Transmodernity in Asian-Australian Women’s Memoirs.....	28

Florence Against the Machine: Ali Smith’s <i>Spring</i> (2019) and the Hostile Environment of the United Kingdom.....	29
<i>The Way: Transnational Space, Cosmopolitanism and Transformation.....</i>	30
Shapeshifting Selves: Identity, Relationality, and the Nonhuman in Contemporary Literature in English.....	31
“You” in Times of Turmoil: Second-Person Narration in N. K. Jemisin’s Dystopian Fiction.....	32
Nonhuman Biography and the Limits of Representation in Karen Joy Fowler’s <i>We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves</i> (2013).....	33
Enhancing Pragmatic Competence: Effects of Concept-Based Pragmatic Instruction on Secondary School EFL Learners' Production of Requests and Responses.....	34
The Impact of Pragmatics Instruction on EFL Learners’ Writing Skills, Confidence, and Attitudes.....	35
The effects of foreign language enjoyment on L2 semantic fluency: The role of FL proficiency.....	36
From Communicative Competence to Multimodal Communicative Agency: Rethinking EFL Education as Resistance.....	37
“Can you womansplain it a bit better?”: Irony and Vulnerability in <i>The Worst Person in the World</i> (2021).....	38
<i>No Hard Feelings</i>, a transactional romance.....	39
Embodied Geographies: Penélope Cruz and the Construction of “Italy” Onscreen.....	40
Anglicisms in Online Gaming: Uses and Perceptions Among <i>League of Legends</i> Players and Platforms.....	41
Humour preferences from a cognitive linguistic perspective: a pilot study.....	42
Psychological self-disclosure as a tool of media identity construction: a case-study of five YouTube vlogs discussing Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).....	43

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Bridging the Affective Gap: Creative Metaphors and the Reader's Role in Trauma Narrative

This study proposes to explore how creative metaphors are employed in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* to represent trauma-related emotions, and how their effectiveness relies on the reader's interpretive engagement. First published in 1976, *The Woman Warrior* is a hybrid memoir blending autobiography, folklore, and feminist reflection to portray the coming-of-age of a Chinese American girl negotiating silence, shame, and cultural dislocation. Drawing on trauma studies (Caruth, 1996), the research begins from the premise that trauma resists direct representation and often disrupts narrative coherence. As such, Kingston's memoir turns to inventive metaphors that resist conventional emotional mappings.

Building on emotion conceptual metaphor (Kövecses, 2000) and Semino's (2008) work on metaphor in discourse, this study is also further grounded on creative metaphors (Steen, 2008), which serve as cognitive and communicative strategies in representing complex affective states. However, while creative metaphors offer a compelling strategy for articulating trauma-related emotion, their communicative success is not guaranteed. Their interpretation relies heavily on the reader's ability to recognize, process, and emotionally engage with metaphorical cues that may be unfamiliar or culturally coded. To examine this dynamic, this study draws on the theory of storyworld possible selves (Martínez, 2018), which provides a narrative-cognitive framework for analyzing how readers construct affective identifications with characters through imagined projections. This perspective helps to account for the ways in which metaphorical representations of trauma may succeed or fail in bridging the emotional gap between narrator and reader.

Through close reading of selected passages, this paper investigates the affective and epistemic tensions that emerge when metaphorical complexity confronts emotional accessibility. It argues that the communicative potential of trauma-related emotion hinges not only on the author's narrative and metaphorical choices, but also on the reader's ability to co-construct meaning within metaphor-rich stories.

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Keywords: creative metaphor; trauma-related emotion; emotion conceptual metaphor; reader engagement; *The Woman Warrior*

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“Not in any kind of normal way, or not without a lot of pain”: Heteronormative Sexuality and Chronic Genital Pain in Sally Rooney’s *Intermezzo*

Since her rise to prominence, Sally Rooney’s treatment of women’s sexuality and the dynamics of heterosexual relationships has been one of the main points of contention in the critical reception of her fiction. Indeed, her female characters have repeatedly been shown to reflect patterns of (self)objectification and gendered relational dynamics that align more closely with depoliticised postfeminism (Carregal-Romero) than with empowering representations of female subjectivity. Since the publication of her latest novel, *Intermezzo* (2024), these patterns seem to have reached new heights, with one of the main protagonists’ love-interests mapping almost uncannily onto the Madonna–whore binary: whereas Naomi works as an OnlyFans creator, Sylvia has embraced celibacy and comes to embody, quite literally, a secular Madonna of sorts who “magnificently listens and inclines her head” (126, my emphasis). This opposition becomes even more troubling when considering that Sylvia’s celibacy is informed exclusively by her incapacity to have penile-vaginal intercourse after an accident six years earlier—for her, this means that she will never be able to have proper sex again, since she would be “offering something very inferior” (131). Although this decision sets the entire plot in motion by triggering a traumatic breakup with Peter, it remains largely surrounded by silence and frustration on both their parts. In this sense, Rooney’s novel risks reproducing a reductive and strikingly male-centred understanding of sex, while offering little space to explain or interrogate the origins of Sylvia’s withdrawal. Yet, when read alongside medical studies on women and chronic genital pain, Sylvia’s response appears not as an anomaly but as a disturbingly familiar pattern. As Labuski has shown, women with “non-functioning genitalia” are still widely shaped by a “heteronormative imaginary through which [women’s] genital bodies exist primarily as parts in a penetrative script” (165). From this perspective, *Intermezzo* can be read as offering a strikingly realistic, if deeply unsettling, depiction of how sexual disability is lived under contemporary heteronormative conditions.

In this paper, I aim to examine how Rooney’s construction of Sylvia as a woman with chronic genital pain exposes a prevailing sexual politics that continues to haunt women’s bodies today, turning her into a necessary—albeit painfully under-acknowledged—cultural locus for re-thinking female sexual pain and desire.

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Keywords: Heteronormative sexuality; Chronic genital pain; Female sexuality; Sexual politics; Sally Rooney

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Who Gets to Sing the Epic? Vulnerability, Trauma and Eco-feminism in *A Thousand Ships* (2018) by Natalie Haynes

In the last decades, there has been a proliferation of novels focusing on the revitalisation and reimagining of classical mythology in contemporary fiction by Anglophone women writers. Authors such as, Pat Barker, Natalie Haynes or Madeline Miller approach classical texts not only as sources of creative inspiration but as tools for critique and social intervention (Nisa & Moreno, 2025). Although there is a significant overlap on thematic and methodological levels with the feminist retellings from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, transmodern rewritings address a broad spectrum of post-9/11, post-Brexit, post-pandemic and post-#MeToo concerns. Contemporary female authors inscribed within this rewriting turn place a stronger emphasis on intersectionality, incorporating gender, violence, war, sexual abuse, trauma and other identity-related issues into their rewritings (ibid.).

This paper analyses the novel *A Thousand Ships* (2019) by Natalie Haynes. This polyphonic rewriting encompasses the stories of twenty-five different female narrators during the aftermath of the war of Troy. More especially, this analysis will focus on the (her)stories of Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, Gaia, the earth goddess, and Andromache, the wife of the Trojan prince Hector. Through transcorporeality (Alaimo, 2010) and ecofeminism (Gaard, 2017), I will analyse how war is not merely a heroic competition over territory or honour but a destructive force that reshapes societies, families and landscapes by drawing parallels to current conflicts such as those in Gaza or Ukraine. By means of vulnerability and ethics of care theories (Onega & Ganteau, 2017; Athanasiou & Butler, 2013; Gilson, 2014), I will demonstrate how women are still the most vulnerable subjects when it comes to armed conflicts. Finally, through Calliope's character, I will demonstrate that feminist-inspired contemporary rewritings are an adequate site to speak out individual and collective experiences of female marginalisation and abuse.

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Keywords: Rewriting; Transmodernity; Women; Vulnerability; Ecofeminism

Adriana Hamivka
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Nonbeing quality of DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* protagonist

This paper examines Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) through a posthumanist lens, focusing on how technological mediation reconfigures human subjectivity into a state of 'nonbeing'. By synthesising a Lacanian framework with contemporary posthumanist theory, this study argues that the protagonist, Eric Packer, inhabits a liminal space where the boundaries between the biological self and the digital environment dissolve. The central hypothesis posits that Packer's journey represents a liminal subjectivity; he exists as 'thought divorced from body' (Valentino, 2007: 146), attempting to find an elusive authenticity within the 'streams of numbers' and financial patterns of a globalised, electronic economy.

At the core of the narrative is Packer's day-long car journey through Manhattan. The limousine is presented not merely as a mode of transport, but as a technological microenvironment that provides a 'certain kind of abstraction'. This vehicle serves as a protective shell that differentiates Packer from the physical world's 'poverty and turmoil', while simultaneously tethering him to it through a complex televisual apparatus. Inside this cabin, the limousine's primary function is to induce a solipsistic detachment, convincing Packer that he has already vanished into the data he monitors.

As Packer seeks to transcend his material existence through visionary powers—seeing events on his screens before they occur in reality—he becomes trapped in the 'in-betweenness' of the real and virtual worlds. The paper demonstrates this transition by applying Jacques Lacan's concept (1992: 270) of being 'between two deaths': the symbolic death of his social and physical identity and the impending real death of the biological organism. In the final confrontation with Benno Levin, Packer is left in an ontological limbo. Ultimately, the analysis concludes that Packer's trajectory represents the failure of the hyper-capitalist subject to fully transition into the digital; he remains caught in a state of nonbeing—more than a human, yet less than a hyper-/cyber-human.

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Keywords: 21st-century American literature; *Cosmopolis*; cybercapitalism; post-Humanism.

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Working until Death: The Workplace as a Site of Horror

The workplace is not a new setting of horror. Films as varied as *Frankenstein* (1931), *Psycho* (1960), and *Alien* (1979) take place in the characters' workplaces, which are isolated, marginal and whose spatial conditions either put characters in danger or foster the conditions for them to become mentally unstable. From 2008 onwards, there has been a boom of work-related horror films, which can be linked to the recession and the growing precarity of work (Pfannebecker and Smith 2020). As a consequence, some scholarly output has addressed the portrayal of work in horror (Miller 2013; Briefel and Middleton 2023). Still, the place in which work is performed has been overlooked.

This paper explores the portrayal of the workplace in post-2008 horror. Yi Fu Tuan argues that the spatial organization of places gives clear social messages (1974) and much of the horror constructed by these films lies in the way the workplace is spatially organized. Films like *The Tunnel* (2011), *Most Beautiful Island* (2018), or *Open 24 hours* (2018) take place in marginal or clandestine workplaces, but, in contrast to earlier films, they reflect on the social and economic implications of working in the margins. Corporate workplaces also abound in post-2008 horror—which were not typical in the genre before—, as happens in *Office* (2015), *Office Uprising* (2018) and *Black Friday* (2021). In these films, corporate policies and hierarchies among workers are imprinted in space. The internet also becomes a workplace in films like *Cam* (2018), *Followed* (2018), and *Deadstream* (2022), in which the layout and social dynamics of the platforms encourage content creators to do anything for money and attention. This paper argues that, in order to understand why work is portrayed as horrific, it is necessary to understand first the context of the place in which work happens.

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Keywords: Horror cinema; workplace; recession; spatial theory.

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Rethinking Utopia in Times of Crisis: Posthuman Ethics and Alternative Futures in Contemporary Fiction

In a time characterized by environmental degradation, the ageing of democracy and rapid technological advance, projections of the future are deeply influenced by narratives of regulation, optimization and technocentrism. These stories are permeated by forms of political and economic organization that commodify nature, life and even progress itself. In this context, speculative fiction has become a relevant field for questioning the basis that sustains the predominant visions of the future. This paper arises from my ongoing doctoral research on Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, analyzing how modern speculative fiction opens a new paradigm that rethinks utopia in a frame of systemic crisis. Utopia is no longer an aspiration based on progress or technological advance. Instead, this paper delves into alternative utopian imaginaries that highlight the vulnerability of ecology. Based on posthumanist frameworks, this work argues that *MaddAddam* represents a form of utopian thinking displayed through what I define as an "evolution through involution". This new concept digresses from the desire of accumulation and progress to shine a spotlight on practices of limitation and ethical restraint. Within this framework, the trilogy challenges dominant posthuman narratives and redefines posthumanism as an ethical change that displaces human beings from the center of value. By framing this new interpretation in broader debates about uncertainty and rapid change, this paper argues that literary research opens a landscape to approach challenges of the present in a more critical way. Thus, speculative fiction offers a site where utopian thinking is examined in relation to historical responsibility and the continuity of inequality. From this lens, utopia is understood not as the vision of alternative and ideal futures but as a constant process of ethical and political reconsideration.

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Keywords: Speculative Fiction; Utopian thinking; Posthuman ethics; Evolution through Involution; Environmental degradation.

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“Big Brother meets Big Business”:
The biopolitics of surveillance capitalism in Rob Hart’s *The Warehouse* (2019)

In the novel *The Warehouse* (2019), Rob Hart imagines a dystopian near-future United States dominated by Cloud, an Amazon-like megacorporation whose surveillance infrastructure governs all aspects of labor. This paper examines how Hart’s novel represents the biopolitical effects of surveillance capitalism, focusing on the processes of alienation, datafication, and self-disciplining through which workers are transformed into compliant subjects.

Drawing on surveillance studies, biopolitics, and critical accounts of neoliberal governance (Bauman & Lyon 2013; Crawford et al. 2015; Nayar 2015; Zuboff 2019), I argue that *The Warehouse* exposes a shift in contemporary labor regimes from external coercion to internalized control. Cloud’s wearable technologies, biometric monitoring systems, and algorithmic performance metrics do not merely regulate workers’ bodies but encourage their active participation in self-surveillance, fostering a form of subjectivity aligned with corporate imperatives of efficiency and optimization. Under the guise of empowerment and self-improvement, surveillance becomes a mechanism through which workers willingly discipline themselves, accepting data extraction and continuous monitoring as conditions of belonging and economic survival.

Crucially, Hart underscores that this regime operates through seduction rather than overt repression. Cloud’s transhumanist rhetoric promises agency, security, and personal fulfillment through technological mediation, while in practice it produces forms of alienation that fragment workers’ identities and reduce them to quantifiable “dividuals.” Surveillance technologies thus function as biopolitical instruments that normalize exploitation by translating structural violence into neutral metrics and individualized responsibility.

By foregrounding these mechanisms of biopower, this paper draws attention to the role of literature in resisting dominant technocratic imaginaries and reclaims scholarship as a space for interrogating, contesting, and reimagining posthuman futures of collective agency.

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Keywords: Surveillance capitalism; posthumanism; neoliberalism; biopolitics

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From instruction to self-branding on social media health communication: A qualitative exploration of expert identity on Instagram through visual post design

Recognised as identity shaping tools (Van Dijck 2013), social media support self-presentation in health communication, enabling self-performance credibility and self-branding among wellness professionals (Wellman 2023). While existing research has examined discursive self-presentation of wellness experts (Atef et al., 2023), the role of social media post design in health professionals' construction of their expert identity remains underexplored. To fill this gap, this proposal addresses the potential relation between expert identity and visual composition on Instagram, particularly focusing on instructional content from physiotherapy by way of case study. For this purpose, 50 Instagram posts from one physiotherapist are qualitatively analysed drawing on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2021) framework for functional design and Van Leeuwen's (2021) model of identity design. The study specifically investigates the orchestration of visual resources (namely, overlaid imagery, iconographic elements, typography, and colour) and their organizational layout attending to principles of (post) design.

Preliminary findings indicate a strategic reliance on visual elements to serve both instructional and self-promotional functions, while simultaneously shaping the expert's self-presentation as a legitimised knowledge provider and a branded professional. Functionally, posts appear rhetorically segmented through deliberate colour and typographical choices that signal distinctions between instructional and promotional content. Iconographic elements further contribute to this functional differentiation, as graphical icons (namely arrows) are exclusively used to support instruction, whereas photographic elements (self-portraits) operate as self-promotional cues. Beyond this functional role, an aesthetics of professionalism appears to be achieved solely within self-promotional content, particularly through the use of cold-temperature colour schemes evoking institutionalisation, which are absent from instructional content. Overall, a dual functional and identity-oriented analysis of post design points to the emergence of hybridised professional identities in social media health communication, in which experts adopt a curated visual style that supports the effective dissemination of specialised knowledge while constructing a science-like aesthetics that reinforces the expert's projection as a branded individual.

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Keywords: expert identity; Instagram; visual design; social media

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Digital recontextualization practices of scientific knowledge: An exploration of REPS (Research Explained in Practical Summaries)

Recent work on genre evolution and recontextualization has shown how digital environments reshape the circulation of expert knowledge. In a context of instant access to endless amounts of information, audiences are increasingly exposed to competing and often contradictory claims. As a result, expert voices are required to stand out as reliable points of reference. However, credibility alone is not sufficient; enhancing audience engagement and fostering comprehensibility are also key requirements for effective digital science communication (Lorés 2023).

Against this backdrop, this paper examines a hybrid digital genre of science communication that recontextualizes peer-reviewed research for (non-)academic audiences: Research Explained in Practical Summaries (REPS). REPS break down published studies into easy-to-understand, science-backed reports and insights that present current trends in diet, nutrition and training. While texts are authored by different contributors acting as knowledge mediators, REPS operate under the umbrella of a recognised expert figure, who functions as a knowledge broker and provides a stable point of reference, reinforcing the credibility of both the selection of studies and the interpretations offered.

The study examines the rhetorical organization of REPS through a qualitative move analysis (Swales 2004) and an analysis of key metadiscourse features (Hyland 2005; Mur-Dueñas 2011). The corpus consists of ten REPS (27,000 words) published in 2025 in two issues from the *Biolayne* monthly research review publication (<https://biolayne.com/reps/>). Preliminary findings suggest that these digital recontextualized texts display a highly conventionalized rhetorical structure characterized by a stable sequence of moves that differs from that of conventional research articles. Core research-article moves associated with creating a research space, presenting the research, and interpreting outcomes are retained, albeit in a reshaped form, while additional moves are introduced to frame contested issues and turn evidence into practical guidance. Code glosses, as an interactive resource, are particularly salient in some moves, enhancing comprehensibility, while engagement markers, as interactional resources, prevail in the final additional move (Translating findings into practice). Overall, the findings show that REPS do not merely select and simplify research articles, but reconfigure their rhetorical structure to balance credibility, comprehensibility, and audience engagement.

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Keywords: digital recontextualization; science communication; genre analysis; metadiscourse; knowledge mediation

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Recontextualization of Scientific Knowledge in Adolescent-Oriented Digital Texts: Analysis of Discursive and Multimodal Strategies and Implications for the EFL Classroom

Adolescents' access to online information enables them to consume information about Natural Science and health-related topics. This situation matches scientists' subsidiary goal of popularizing research (Lorés, 2023) and teenage readers' need to find reliable sources of information. However, a recontextualization process is needed to make expert knowledge comprehensible to diversified audiences, and that becomes essential to successful science dissemination (Lorés & Mur-Dueñas, 2025). How recontextualization is realized for adolescent audiences deserves closer attention.

This study examines how adolescent-oriented websites make expert scientific knowledge intelligible by means of the main discursive and multimodal strategies employed. It analyzes the frequency and function of explanatory strategies, drawing on the framework of cognitive discourse functions (Dalton-Puffer, 2013) deployed in digital texts to provide reasons and causes for scientific phenomena. Engagement strategies and how these position readers (Hyland, 2005) are also objects of study. Finally, the contribution of multimodality in the recontextualization process is explored, focusing on the integration of semiotic modes (Bezemer & Kress, 2008) and how visual elements can extend or elaborate knowledge. A corpus of 30 texts from three adolescent-targeted websites was compiled to perform the study under the name SciDisTA (Scientific Dissemination for Teenage Audiences). It contains Natural Science and Health-related texts which include links to the original academic sources, proper acknowledgement of authorship and aim to make expert knowledge accessible.

Results indicate that explanatory strategies play a key role in the recontextualization process, while directives and questions appear to be relevant to generate engagement. Semiotic resources such as visuals and layout support expert knowledge accessibility for teenage audiences. Conclusions identify a recurrent recontextualization pattern and discuss the potential use of these texts in the EFL classroom and the need to boost multimodal literacy in both students and EFL teachers.

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Keywords: Recontextualization; Cognitive discourse functions; multimodality; engagement strategies; EFL classroom.

Dominik Gęgotek and Agnieszka Ziora

(University of Silesia)
Database linguistics: Creating a context-based corpus analysis tool

Open-source and free software collaboration is becoming increasingly important as it enables wider public participation in knowledge creation, aligning closely with the goals of citizen science (Stodden, 2010). Its transparent and collaborative practices foster trust, helping communities understand and engage with complex technical and scientific processes.

This presentation focuses on the development of a specialised corpus analysis tool designed to examine hedge phrases, sentiment, and values in language within discussions between open-source volunteers and project coordinators on GitHub. As collaborative software development increasingly relies on distributed, asynchronous communication, understanding the linguistic features that shape these interactions is crucial. However, current corpus tools are not well-suited for analysing participant interactions and their contexts in large corpora (Gillings et al., 2023, pp. 45-47). This project addresses the gap by integrating linguistic annotation and semi-automated corpus creation with database practices from other fields of science (Raasveldt & Mühleisen, 2019).

The finished tool will combine multiple algorithms focused on extraction of values (Boyd, 2021), hedge phrases (Islam et al., 2020), and sentiment classification, allowing for the analysis of those features and their correlation with continuous collaboration with volunteers. Alongside the tool, a sizeable corpus of discussions in GitHub issues and pull requests is being developed. It also includes Codes of Conduct and README files of all open-source projects published under Apache and GPL licenses, currently totalling about 5 billion words. By providing an online integrated platform for multi-layered discourse analysis under an open license, this corpus tool hopes to offer researchers, maintainers, and community managers deeper insight into the linguistic practices that sustain open-source collaboration.

The presentation will focus on the basic features of the program, the corpus and the processes behind their development. It will also include a presentation of an example study that could be conducted with the use of the tool.

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Keywords: citizen science; computational analysis; corpus design; open-source software; online communication

Jeniffer Tubbs
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Sowing Seeds of Resistance: Black Women Activists and the Civil Rights Movement

This paper reconceptualizes Black women's domestic labor and food provision during the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movements as radical, material forms of resistance that challenge settler-colonial, heteropatriarchal, and racialized systems of power. Often dismissed as "women's work," the labor of figures such as Fannie Lou Hamer and Georgia Gilmore functioned as both sustenance and strategy: cooking, distributing, and organizing around food became sites of political agency, enabling grassroots mobilization, cooperative farming, and financial support for activism. These practices reveal the transmodern dimensions of resistance, where quotidian acts intersect with structural power, and the posthuman stakes of nourishment, land, and care extend beyond the individual to the community and environment.

Drawing on scholarship from Premilla Nadasen, Monica White, LaDonna Redmond, and Bobby J. Smith II, as well as memoirs such as Anne Moody's *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, this study emphasizes the interdiscursive nature of activism: domestic labor, agricultural organizing, and political protest overlap, producing a networked praxis that sustains movement infrastructures under crisis conditions. Initiatives like Gilmore's Club from Nowhere and Hamer's Freedom Farm Cooperative demonstrate how Black women transformed food and land into tools of liberation, prefiguring contemporary urban food justice practices, such as Germaine Jenkins's Fresh Future Farms.

By situating these histories within transnational frameworks—drawing parallels to land and agricultural struggles in apartheid South Africa—and employing a decolonial, Marxist-feminist lens, the paper argues that Black women's labor operates as a vital model for contemporary resistance. Understanding food, land, and domestic work as strategic sites of intervention underscores how research itself can act as resistance in a world at odds.

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Keywords: Black women's activism; food justice; domestic labor as resistance; decolonial frameworks; transmodern/posthuman praxis

**Denisa Alexandra Mircea
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Where the Stage Refuses Silence: Blackness and Ethics in Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' Theatre

In an era marked by social acceleration and fragmentation, contemporary theatre has increasingly interrogated the forces that alienate the individual and undermine the relationships with others and the world. Responding to these pressures, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *An Octoroon* (2017) and *Appropriate* (2019) expose the persistent racial, familial and historical fractures that shape the contemporary world, transforming theatrical space into a site of ethical inquiry and potential resonance.

Focusing on both plays, this paper examines how they critique the systems that generate disconnection and interrogate representational authority by staging Blackness as mediated, unstable and historically burdened. Simultaneously, both works create a resonant space in which the renewed connection between the stage and the audience fosters critical reflection and the potential for social change. In addition to the thematic concerns, the employed metatheatrical strategies, direct address, and other innovations that depart from the conventional theatrical forms allow the playwright to deepen the meaning of the works by repositioning the audience as active participants rather than passive observers with the purpose of confronting their own racial assumptions. In doing so, the plays move beyond merely conveying moralized narratives, cultivating, instead, an environment in which reflection on personal and collective responsibility become both unavoidable and essential to promoting social transformation.

Therefore, grounded in the framework of Black performance theory and in Christina Sharpe's *Wake Studies* (2016), this paper investigates how Jacobs-Jenkins represents Blackness within the contemporary context, employing formal experimentation to reveal and challenge systemic racial and cultural biases. Additionally, it further explores how the aforementioned strategies cultivate a transformative encounter in which the audience is compelled to reckon with inherited injustices, acknowledge that racial and social fractures are lived realities, and confront the ethical weight of their own gaze.

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Keywords: contemporary theatre; Blackness; spectatorship; social change; formal experimentation

**Amanda Cámara Gamazo
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**Memories Embraced and Erased: Overcoming the Limits of Aboriginal Life in Tony Birch's
*The White Girl***

In a world increasingly defined by borders and constraints, the concept of the narratives of the limit acquires particular critical significance. Thus, literature has long functioned as a space in which these limits are articulated through characters whose experiences resonate with both the past and present state of societies (Leane, 2017, p.6). The novel selected for this paper, *The White Girl* by the Aboriginal author Tony Birch, portrays the struggles of Aboriginal women attempting to survive under the Aboriginal Protection Act, within limits imposed by patriarchal and postcolonial norms. These physical and psychological constraints are repeatedly confronted through the emergence of memories that sustain resistance.

It is worth noting how memory studies often privilege remembrance to such an extent that, as Martínez-Alfaro and Pellicer-Ortín (2017) observe, “the value attached to memory has had the consequence of nearly diminishing forgetting” (p.3). Within postcolonial and Indigenous contexts, however, memory and forgetting cannot be understood as oppositional processes but rather as deeply entangled responses to historical and ongoing violence. Through an analysis centered on the Aboriginal female protagonist and her daughter, this paper explores how, in a context where the bond with Aboriginal legacy is fundamental and resistance is enacted through the transmission of memory, *The White Girl* presents two distinct strategies for coping with pain: the insistence on remembering and the impulse to forget.

What this paper ultimately seeks to highlight is the novel’s most tragic consequence: the forced disengagement of one Aboriginal character from the tradition of preserving and transmitting memory to future generations. In this sense, Birch aligns with what Serran (2015) identifies, in her examination of Aboriginal life-writing, as a force that “unsettles the settler nation and settler remembrance (or amnesia) of colonization” (p.6). By portraying memory as both a site of resistance and of loss, the novel exposes the enduring limits imposed on Aboriginal lives and emphasizes the radical potential of remembrance to challenge colonial erasure.

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Keywords: Memory; Limit; Aboriginal; Colonization

Aurora Rodríguez Bermejo Fraile
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Gothic Themes and The Black Body in Rivers Solomon's *Model Home*

Model Home (2025), by Rivers Solomon, follows Ezri, a gender non-conforming black androgynous protagonist who is forced to come back to the haunted house of their childhood after a traumatic death in the family. The story plays with elements of traditional Gothic narratives to interpret and explore the prevailing horrors of the black experience in today's white America. Ezri, in their resistance to be defined or contained in traditional binaries of selfhood, serves as a conduit from which we can access traumatic and repressed modes of living. Ezri's macabre childhood years transform into a lack of identity and human interconnectedness that haunts the protagonist well into their adult years. The story explores through this haunted house and neighborhood the utter discomfort and rejection forced on any "alien/outsider" individual. These gothic elements are intrinsically enmeshed with Ezri's fluctuating identity as a black queer person.

This paper aims to examine the gothic elements present in *Model Home*, especially those related to blackness and trauma. There is a particular vulnerability present in the protagonist black body that alludes to the historical way in which black and queer bodies have been excluded from the full definition of "human." The analysis will focus on traditional gothic themes related to the body, queerness, the supernatural, and tragedy (Sedgwick), particularly considering elements of the grotesque and the Other. The analysis will also incorporate contemporary perspectives of anti-humanism and racial studies, again, related to the issue of identity making and the experience of social Othering (Bennet; Iman Jackson).

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Keywords: Contemporary Literature; Race Theory; Gender Studies

**Clara Revilla Lahoz
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“The world is cursed. But still, you find reasons to keep living”: Life-affirming Eco-cosmopolitan Resistance in Studio Ghibli’s *The Princess Mononoke* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1997)

In a global world distinguished by rapid technologies and neoliberal mercantilist principles (Fernández, 2025), young citizens are highly exposed to accelerated inputs that do not give them a rest to explore life around them (L’Ecuyer, 2015). In this context, Studio Ghibli utopian films can be interpreted as a sign of social resistance (Foucault, 2009) and ecocritical dialogics (Martín, 2023), portraying that, even in this global scenery of pollution and hurry, “it is possible for wonderful encounters and beautiful things to exist” (Miyazaki, 2008, p. 16). As Ghibli films evoke, humans should pause frenetic rhythms to preserve life and nature through a horizontal, intergender and border-crossing task that reunites fantastical creatures, natural environments and ordinary children.

A paradigmatic example of the life-affirming and eco-cosmopolitan resistance art can articulate (Harvard, 2006) is the animated movie *The Princess Mononoke* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1997). Set in the ironworkers Muromachi period (1336-1573), it addresses the urgent need to (re)connect with the endangered real world to make it sustainable for future generations. Formal devices like the hand-drawn portrayal of landscapes in naturalistic mise-en-scènes and the use of slow-paced camera movements, as well as few editing cuts and traditional anti-war Japanese music tunes, privilege the feeling of oneness with nature (Cheng & Monroe, 2012), nurturing, drawing on Wegner (2014) in Martín (2023), hope-building aspirations as the basis of a “new historical time of utopian possibility” (p. 40), distinctively located in a living nature where magic imbues everything with possibility.

As a result, the film connects to William’s (2015) ecopedagogy, L’Ecuyer’s (2015) principles for learning through a sense of wonder and Fernández’s (2025) poetic learning theory, enabling young viewers’ ecological (Merrit et al., 2017) and personal (BFI, 2014) emancipatory transformations (hooks, 1994; Bergala, 2016).

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Keywords: Film Studies; Studio Ghibli; Eco-cosmopolitanism; Ecopedagogy; Film Literacy

Laura García Soria
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“No use living without delight”: Virtual unreality and vulnerable materiality in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Paradises Lost* (2002)

Science fiction frequently uses space travel and spaceship societies as thought experiments to question human identity and adaptation. In the quest to move beyond anthropocentric understandings of encounters with the other, Miccoli argues that paralysis arises when consciousness is conceived as independent from embodiment, despite the fact that “human experience is made unique by our own physical sensory interface with the world” (56).

This paper examines Ursula K. Le Guin’s novella *Paradises Lost* (2002) to explore the tension between virtuality and materiality through the speculative scenario of intergenerational space travel. As descendants of the original travelers lose their connection to Earth, they also lose the vulnerability associated with material and environmental exposure, reshaping their sense of identity. Drawing on Ganteau’s notion of vulnerability as constitutive of an interdependent, non-autonomous subject, this paper argues that Le Guin’s enclosed spaceship society suppresses the conditions necessary for posthuman becoming. Living within a fully artificial environment devoid of risk, the characters’ only connection to the outside world is through a virtual reality program, and their acceptance and embracing of this virtuality isolates them in their anthropocentrism, creating a rigid sense of identity, unable and unwilling to open up, as “openness itself is read as a site of potential danger” (Ahmed 69).

Through an ecocritical and posthuman reading, this paper investigates how *Paradises Lost* critiques the prioritization of virtual stability over material relationality. Ultimately, the paper proposes a new materialist understanding of the human as constructed through assemblages and co-constitutions, following Daigle’s notion of transjectivity, being as relational and entangled rather than autonomous.

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Keywords: Vulnerability; Ecocriticism; New Materialism; Posthumanism; Science Fiction.

Carlota Fernández Espiago
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**Are Plants Not Living Beings? The Power of the Island Setting for Human De-centering in
Mark Jenkin's *Enys Men* (2022)**

Mark Jenkin's *Enys Men* made a subtle but impactful arrival in 2022, reflecting the film's own quiet, unsettling nature (Marshall, 2023). Set in 1973 on an uninhabited island off the Cornish coast, a wildlife Volunteer (Mary Woodvine) observes and tracks the changes of a rare plant growing on the island. This paper argues that the island helps shift the focus from the privileged position of the human, as defended by anthropocentric theories, in favor of nature and other living beings inhabiting the island. Islands, as well as places in folk horror, have the capacity of physically and mentally transforming anyone who stays there for a certain period of time (Gómez & Hernández Adrián, 2022; Kermode 39:27-39:50). The Stone Island (English for *Enys Men*) is no different. Additionally, the shift from an anthropocentric perspective to a more equal relation between human and nature is reflected in the changes that both the plant and the Volunteer go through simultaneously.

Taking the backdrop of Brexit (2016) and the Covid-19 pandemic (2020), this film mirrors the isolation of the country through the remote island, and the solitude of the pandemic through the figure of the Volunteer. At the height of globalization and the loss of what makes us unique, Jenkin's film works in favor of creating a proper piece of Cornish folklore, adding a culturally-specific layer to folk horror, but without rejecting any of the existing traditions. Drawing on anthropocentric theory (Franz et al., 2025; Weitzenfeld & Joy, 2014), British folk horror scholarship (Newland, 2016; Tyree, 2023) and studies about islands in the cinema (Gómez & Hernández Adrián, 2022; Ronström, 2021), this paper foregrounds the role of the island in *Enys Men* as a place that de-centers human experience while generating its own folk tradition.

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Keywords: *Enys Men*; island; folk horror; anthropocentrism; isolation

**Alessandra Martín González
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Posthuman shapeshifting: blurring the boundaries between human and nonhuman in Nnedi Okorafor's *Lagoon*

The potential to expand the boundaries of the human ontology has been omnipresent in feminist science fiction, as explored by theorists like Haraway, Braidotti and Ferrando. I contend that *Lagoon* uses the arrival of the aliens as a pretext to rethink what it means to be human in the polluted, corrupt and chaotic city of Lagos, Nigeria. The identity of these aliens is liminal and porous, given that it establishes a symbiotic interaction with the environment “We change. With our bodies, and we change everything around us.” (Okorafor, 46). The aliens are cyborgs in that they embody dynamic agents that cannot be defined or understood in essentialist terms, only in co-construction with other matter and beings: they can shape-shift, they alter nature to enable wildlife to thrive and they can even alter human beings according to their innermost desires. In this manner, nonhuman others such as the alien ambassador Ayodele adopt the roles of diplomatic mediators and they bring about substantial changes in the social structure, compelling Lagos to become a posthuman ecosystem. The coexistence with nonhuman beings will thus dethrone mankind and force it to negotiate its own subjectivity for the sake of a symbiotic and post-anthropocentric new order. This change in *Lagoon* is depicted in a holistic way: shapeshifting happens in the body, but it is extended to the mind. This body-mind continuum will be altered by the integration of the other within the self, making mankind vulnerable, but also empowered with a new posthuman awareness.

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Keywords: Posthumanism; identity; science fiction; body; Nnedi Okorafor

Alicia Gual Miró
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Tackling the Passive-causative Structure within EFL Materials: A Critical Systematic Review

The English passive-causative structure (e.g., *I had/got my nails painted*) is mainly used to describe a paid service performed by someone else, typically a professional, at the request of the subject. Because of its partial resemblance to the passive voice, this structure is included within the same unit in most post-mandatory Spanish EFL textbooks (e.g., Kelly & Bradfield, 2013; Broadbent & Wetz, 2021). For instance, in both cases the performer of the action is expressed, if at all, as an optional prepositional phrase in final position (e.g., *I had my hair cut by Mary vs. My hair was cut by Mary*). Moreover, the lexical verb in both constructions appears in the past participle form.

However, despite the surface similarities, the two constructions differ in crucial aspects. For example, the passive voice uses the auxiliary verb *to be*, whereas the passive-causative structure employs the light verbs *have/get* (cf. Gilquin, 2003, for semantic particularities). Furthermore, the passive voice selects an affected theme subject (i.e., the direct object in the active voice), but the subject of the passive-causative structure is the causer of the event rather than its actual performer. These differences, together with broader syntactic and semantic mismatches between English and Spanish, can create persistent difficulties for EFL intermediate students.

This presentation offers a critical and systematic review of how the passive-causative structure is treated in a selection of EFL textbooks and reference grammars. It also identifies relevant areas of difficulty for EFL learners, including the passive voice, word order, the so-called experiential *have* (Inoue, 1995), and the notion of agentivity. On the basis of this critical review from an EFL perspective, the presentation argues for the need to refine current methodologies and pedagogical approaches in order to improve both comprehension and production of this structure in realistic communicative contexts.

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Keywords: Passive-causative structure; passive voice; agentivity; EFL textbooks; critical review

Tereza Brzá

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Bringing Real-World Topics into Language Classrooms through Content-Based Language Teaching: Lower Secondary EFL Teacher's Perspectives

This paper reports initial findings from the main phase of a qualitative dissertation study investigating the implementation of Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) in lower secondary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in the Czech Republic. The study examines how EFL teachers incorporate cross-curricular topics – such as media literacy and environmental education – into language instruction, and how they perceive and manage the pedagogical, linguistic, and cognitive demands associated with content-based teaching.

The study adopts an implementation research design involving three lower secondary EFL teachers who implemented CBLT in their classrooms. Data were collected through classroom observations, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews over an extended teaching period. The data were analysed thematically to capture teachers' perspectives on instructional decision-making, classroom interaction, and professional learning processes.

Initial findings indicate that the use of authentic, content-rich materials increased student engagement and supported higher-order thinking and meaningful classroom interaction. At the same time, teachers reported challenges related to balancing linguistic support with cognitive complexity, managing classroom discourse, and adapting materials to learners' language proficiency levels.

By foregrounding teachers' lived experiences, this study offers insights into the practical realities of implementing CBLT in lower secondary EFL contexts. The findings highlight the importance of reflective practice and targeted teacher support in facilitating sustainable pedagogical change and contribute to current discussions on content-based approaches and teacher development in foreign language education.

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Keywords: CBLT; EFL; Implementation; Integration; Pedagogy.

Marek Mynařík
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Teaching English Word Order in Czech Classrooms: A Pilot Study

The teaching of English word order in the Czech context presents a specific linguistic challenge due to fundamental structural differences between the two languages. Building on the traditions of the Prague School (Mathesius, 2016; Dušková, 1994; Vachek, 1994), this paper views word order as a polyfunctional tool influencing meaning from both grammatical and informational perspectives. Czech word order is relatively free and utilized for Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), where communicative dynamism typically moves from the theme (known information) to the rheme (the core message) (Vachek, 1994), whereas English word order is fixed and primarily serves a grammatical function. A brief review study of nine foreign publications (e.g., Souisa & Yanuarius, 2020; Uysal & Bardakci, 2014) confirms that while grammar instruction is widely researched, word order remains a significant research gap, as it is rarely addressed as a standalone phenomenon.

The core of this paper is a qualitative pilot study involving one teacher and B1-level learners. The research employed methodological triangulation, combining direct observation with audio recording, textbook analysis, and semi-structured interviews using stimulated recall. A novel element introduced during the pilot was the recording of the teacher's immediate reflection via a voice message right after the lesson. The instruction focused on specific word order challenges: indirect speech and indirect questions. Findings indicate that the teacher managed these topics through inductive methods and project-based work, such as creating mind maps and podcasts, or "read & tell" activities. The teacher acted as a facilitator, promoting learner autonomy while using textbooks only as a secondary framework. Furthermore, comparison with the mother tongue was used selectively and pragmatically. Methodologically, the pilot confirmed that audio recording is sufficient and non-invasive. It also highlighted the crucial need for the main research phase to strictly distinguish between the explicit use of the mother tongue and cross-linguistic comparison.

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Keywords: English word order; Czech teachers; teaching approaches; pilot study; grammar

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A Critical Ethnographic Exploration of Freelance Professionals in English Language Teaching

The growing disruption in the field of English language teaching (ELT) through gig economy models has contributed to an increase in freelance English teachers who market directly to learners. These teachers operate beyond the traditional institutional frameworks, shaping the ELT industry in unique ways. However, their professional practices and their perspectives on conventional teaching principles remain unexplored. This study investigates how such teachers define their roles, construct their identities, and negotiate language ideologies through their actions, and considers the implications of these practices for contemporary ELT.

To examine these questions, the study adopts an ethnographic research design. The investigation will begin with a survey of freelancing ELT professionals who perform a variety of roles such as teacher training, materials writing, and consulting, as well as teaching English. The objective of the survey is to describe the current state of the freelance landscape in ELT.

Following the survey, the ethnographic exploration will focus on a small number of participants. Qualitative data will be collected using semi-structured interviews over a period, and will then be analyzed using multiple discourse analytical tools within the frameworks of critical language pedagogy and English as a Lingua Franca theory.

This investigation aims to contribute an understanding of this group of professionals, providing a nuanced interpretation of how solo freelance teachers engage with the ELT landscape and consequently impact it. Additionally, the use of a critical lens is expected to highlight the tension in teachers' pedagogical choices between catering to perceived communicative needs and actual effective communication. In an increasingly precarious industry, it is imperative that we gain an insight into those individuals who work outside conventional institutional structures.

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Keywords: English language teaching; freelancing; critical language pedagogy; language teacher identity

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Dreaming Big in London: Urban Spaces and Migrant Experience in *My London Lullaby* (Santa Cruz, 2021)

The 2016 Brexit referendum, supported by nearly 52% of the population who voted in favour of leaving the European Union, reshaped the future of the United Kingdom. This resolution implied cutting ties with Europe and reconsidering and redefining the identity of the nation (Masrani, 2018). Within England, London stood as the bastion of the “Remain” side, a reflection of both the city’s global economic interest and the multicultural, youthful composition of its population.

This paper analyses the portrayal of the city of London and its filmic space in the independent feature *My London Lullaby* (2021), directed by London-based Spanish filmmaker Hugo Santa Cruz. Shot in just fifteen days during Covid-19 restrictions and with a lack of permits, *My London Lullaby* tells the story of Helena Kutsche (Shirley Both), a German aspiring actress attempting to make a living in the capital. Her experience as a European migrant is framed by the politics of mobility and exclusion within the post-Brexit context.

This paper argues that mobility is embodied through Helena’s multicultural and alternative social circle and activities, and is visually rendered by her constant movement through the city via public transport. Additionally, it proposes that *My London Lullaby* articulates a diverse portrait of “local London” (Brunsdon, 2007), with potential to be both a springboard for personal success and a brake on Helena’s ambitions. As the narrative unfolds, the city’s perceived physicality becomes a hindrance to the realisation of this ‘London Dream’. The cinematic treatment of London is seldom touristic or commercial. Instead, the locations reflect a naturalised view of London that aligns with the lived reality of the characters and the filmmaker himself, while retaining a clear sense of spatial referentiality.

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Keywords: London; *My London Lullaby*; space; post-Brexit; migrant

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Food Studies and Transmodernity in Asian-Australian Women's Memoirs

Food lies at the core of existence, as all living beings share the universal need for nutrition to survive. More than just sustenance, food can also be understood as a cultural and symbolic medium that shapes cultures, identities, rituals, and social structures, across time and place. These different roles of food hold great relevance in the context of Transmodernity (Ateljevic 39, Dussel 236, Rodríguez Magda 3), highlighting not only the fact that it is a biological necessity that connects us all, but also an essential asset for identity (re)construction. This can be directly observed in migrant and diasporic life narratives, as they use food as an essential element to deal with cultural negotiation (Leong- Salobir 2-4).

Therefore, this paper analyses the representation of food in life writing narratives and sheds light into how these contribute to both the reaffirmation and ultimate reconciliation of cultures and hybrid identities. For this purpose, I examine, through the theoretical lenses of Food Studies and Transmodernity, the role of food as a narrative backbone and how it addresses intersecting crises in memoirs by Australian women authors belonging to the Asian diaspora. The texts under analysis are *Unpolished Gem* (2006) by Alice Pung, *Eat First, Talk Later: A Memoir of Food, Family and Home* (2015) by Beth Yahp, and *Meshi: A Personal History of Japanese Food* (2022) by Katherine Tamiko Arguile. In all three, food and culinary practices play an essential role in the narrative, sometimes even acting as a link between cultures through which the authors come to a point of understanding in their own hybrid identities. Likewise, they all explore diverse crises regarding the sense of belonging to a household, and the constant search and reconstruction of identity that this entails.

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Keywords: Transmodernity; Food Studies; food memoirs; Asian diaspora in Australia; crisis.

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Florence Against the Machine: Ali Smith's *Spring* (2019) and the Hostile Environment of the United Kingdom

Over the past decade, the political situation of the United Kingdom has been very tumultuous and unsteady. However, in this atmosphere of accelerated changes, one thing has remained constant in the country: its hostile environment, upheld through a series of policies that criminalise, detain and expel migrants. The epitome of these malpractices is enacted in Immigration Removal Centres (IRC), facilities that are managed by private companies and supervised by the Home Office where subjects are criminalised and held indefinitely. In *Spring*, the two narratives merge into a journey across the United Kingdom led by Florence, the daughter of a detained migrant she hopes to reunite with at the end of her adventure. She is accompanied by Brittany, a worker at a detention centre for migrants in the United Kingdom, “a DCO at one of the IRCs employed by the private security firm SA4A” (133). The novel reflects how, as Bosworth puts it, “transforming human beings into bodies that can be expelled is not just a legal but also a symbolic and affective endeavour” (11). The aim of this paper is to examine the representation of the hostile environment and the attitudes towards migrants in *Spring*, oscillating between the pessimism and polarisation of the current British condition, and a border-shattering optimism. As Rancière explains, literature and art are political tools that “reconfigure the map of the sensible” (39) through the introduction of “lines of fracture and disincorporation” (39), therefore contributing to the creation of “political subjects that challenge the given distribution of the sensible” (40). Similarly, David Herd highlights the potential of literature to foster dialogue, observing that it can become a “non-expulsive space”, particularly through “themes of moving, making, and speaking” (265). Thus, through the liminality of Florence, a displaced child, *Spring* both reflects and resists, rejecting the hostile environment of the country and building a non-expulsive space.

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Keywords: hostile environment; human rights; migration; politics

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The Way: Transnational Space, Cosmopolitanism and Transformation

This paper explores to what extent crisis-driven cinematic transnational journeys foster cosmopolitanism as well as personal and social transformation, using the film *The Way* (Estévez, 2010) as a case study. The narrative follows Tom Avery, a grieving American father (Martin Sheen) who embarks on the journey after his son's death in the Camino. Tom's initially reserved and stern character, reluctant to travel, changes through the physical, social and emotional challenges of the journey. As will be argued, *The Camino* functions as a transnational space where cross-cultural encounters take place. Despite the pilgrims' different backgrounds, origins and crises, they are connected by the shared movement and their vulnerability. Everyday practices of cosmopolitanism are grounded in interpersonal connections, not ideals.

By applying different theoretical approaches, namely Bauman's (2000) concept of "liquid modernity" in which change is the only permanence, Beck's (2006) sociological analysis of cosmopolitanism derived from cultural encounters, and Delanty's (2010) view of society as an ongoing process of self-constitution through the continual opening of new perspectives in the encounter with the Other, this study shows how the film models transformation and fosters a form of cosmopolitanism shaped by personal interactions, mobility and self-reflection. Building on Eleftheriotis' analysis of cinematic mobility (2010), the film reveals how movement carries cultural and relational significance beyond mere physical motion, being an example of cinematic journeys as sites of cultural negotiation and transformation. *The Way* serves as a powerful vehicle for personal and social transformation, and the cultivation of cosmopolitan engagement.

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Key words: Transnational space; cosmopolitanism; cinematic journeys; transformation; pilgrimage

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**Shapeshifting Selves: Identity, Relationality, and the Nonhuman in Contemporary Literature
in English**

Shapeshifters, or creatures that are able to assume different forms and alter their appearance, are part of almost every folkloric tradition around the world. From Greek, Roman or Norse mythology to Native American, Celtic or Asian folklore, beings such as gods, werewolves, vampires, tricksters, kitsune or selkies have always captured the imagination of human beings and are still very much alive in our days, becoming a recurrent trope for contemporary literature. The aim of this paper is to explore the potential that they have in order to analyse contemporary social issues, especially those related with identity, personification and relationality. This will be done through an analysis of the anthropological implications of different iterations of shapeshifting folklore across a variety of cultures, time periods and civilisations, studied as well through the lense of contemporary literary theories such as transmodernity, kinship or interconnectivity theories. The results will be applied to contemporary works of literature in English across three genres: folklore and mythology rewritings, children and young adult literature and science-fiction. The first one will explore the ways in which present-day literature deconstructs and revisits our folkloric heritage through works such as *Folk* (Zoë Gilbert, 2018) or *The Devourers* (Indra Das, 2015). Young adult literature offers the possibility of interpreting shapeshifting as a metaphor for one's place in society, body transformation and gender nonconformity in novels such as *Pet* (Akwaëke Emezi, 2019) or *His Dark Materials* (Phillip Pullman, 1995-2000), while science-fiction explores posthumanism, mutation, fluid identity and interspecies relationships through, for example, books such as *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Ursula K. Le Guin, 1969) or *Annihilation* (Jeff VanderMeer, 2014). Shapeshifting folklore is still a useful resource in order to analyse and understand identity, as well as to build healthier and more positive relationships with ourselves and those around us.

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Keywords: Shapeshifting; Folklore; Identity studies; Contemporary literature; Relationality.

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“You” in Times of Turmoil: Second-Person Narration in N. K. Jemisin’s Dystopian Fiction

Second-person narration remains a relatively uncommon narrative strategy in the novel, having traditionally been associated with epistolary writing, used in interior monologues or in pseudo-oral narratives (Fludernik 221). Scholarly approaches to this mode have often emphasized its capacity to establish emotional proximity with the reader (Mildorf 148; Fludernik 11; Castelli 54). However, when employed in genres which are more typically associated with first-person narration such as dystopian and speculative fiction (Varsam 205), the implications of second-person address shift significantly and call for critical attention.

My analysis focuses on *The Broken Earth* by N. K. Jemisin, where second-person narration occupies a key role. I argue that, in this context, the second person functions as a means of honoring oral storytelling traditions present in Afrofuturist and speculative narratives while fostering an affective bond that implicates the reader in experiences of dystopian violence, endurance, and care. Moreover, this narrative strategy contributes to a process of narrative deceleration, as theorized by Jean-Michel Ganteau (19) and Hartmut Rosa, encouraging vulnerability and shared responsibility.

This paper, developed as part of the theoretical chapter of my doctoral project, also examines the relevance of second-person narration in dystopian fiction and its departure from dominant narrative conventions. Through a critical literature review, it engages with existing interpretations of second-person narration as a device of reader implication and affective intensity, while situating this narrative mode within intercultural dialogue and ethical relationality. Drawing on Enrique Dussel’s conception of intercultural dialogue (Dussel 43), the paper approaches second-person narration through the lens of Transmodernism. The paper suggests that second-person narration in contemporary dystopian fiction can operate as a transmodern narrative practice that foregrounds relationality and intercultural modes of storytelling over individualized testimonial voice.

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Keywords: Narratology; Second-person; Dystopia; Relationality; Transmodernism.

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Nonhuman Biography and the Limits of Representation in Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (2013)

Nonhuman biographies emphasise the need to portray nonhuman experiences as significant at the same time that they expose the inability to fully access nonhuman beings' subjective experiences. Questions of narrative authority, mediation and representation become central in such texts. As Timothy Baker argues, "[p]aying attention to animals requires realising that human language is not sufficient to encompass the world" (204), a limitation that challenges humanist and anthropocentric models of life writing and calls for more ethically self-aware narrative strategies.

This paper examines Karen Jay Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (2013) as a form of nonhuman biography mediated through a human narrator. Here, I explore how Fern, a chimpanzee raised as part of a human family and later displaced into scientific experimentation, is rendered biographically meaningful despite the absence of her nonhuman narrating voice. I contend that Fowler's use of internal focalisation through Rosemary, Fern's human sister, constitutes a strategy of ethical restraint. Moreover, the novel's fragmented chronology and delayed disclosure of key information emphasise the impossibility of having full access to nonhuman experience, while foregrounding the narrator's trauma and unreliability.

Through a narratological approach to the novel, and drawing on key notions of trauma theory and critical animal studies, this paper examines the ways in which the novel aims to resist anthropomorphism and ventriloquism while producing a critical depiction of, and engagement with, nonhuman suffering. Paying attention to formal disruption allow us to challenge dominant humanist assumptions about biographies, and texts can be read as a tool for recognising nonhuman suffering without fully appropriating it.

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Keywords: Karen Joy Fowler; nonhuman biography; anthropomorphism; narratology; trauma theory

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**Enhancing Pragmatic Competence: Effects of Concept-Based Pragmatic Instruction on
Secondary School EFL Learners' Production of Requests and Responses**

Pragmatic competence is vital for learners' communicative ability, yet it receives little attention in Spanish school EFL curricula, where instruction tends to focus mainly on grammar (Tatsuki, 2019; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2022). Research on instructed pragmatics has mostly examined explicit and implicit approaches to teaching, while studies on Concept-Based Pragmatic Instruction (CBPI)—a socioculturally grounded method combining conceptual mediation, scaffolded practice and learner verbalisation—remain limited, especially in school settings (Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006; van Compernelle, 2014, 2018). The aim of the present study is to investigate whether CBPI can help adolescents make more contextually appropriate and agentive choices when producing requests and responses in English, as measured through interactive written discourse completion tasks (IWDCTs) (Tatsuki, 2019). A three-lesson CBPI intervention was implemented in a compulsory third-year secondary state school Oral English elective class in Spain. This group was selected because the subject explicitly prioritises interactional use of English, which made it a pedagogically relevant setting and enabled a valid intervention within regular classroom routines. The class included 15 learners aged 14-15 with approximately A2-B1 proficiency. The instructional sequence combined concept orientation, guided noticing through audiovisual materials, scaffolded role-play and learner verbalisation following a Vygotskian pedagogy (Vygotsky, 1978). Data were collected before and after instruction through an IDCT, in which learners produced written dialogues and completed a perception questionnaire. Results show gains in the strategic range of requests, greater sensitivity to power and social distance when responding and more explicit metapragmatic reasoning when justifying choices. Learners also began to draw on the instructional concepts in their explanations, increasing awareness and agency. Overall, findings indicate that CBPI can bridge theoretical explanation and situated pragmatic performance in secondary EFL classrooms. Thus, the study suggests that extended instruction may be needed to successfully apply what they have learned in more independent, less-supported interactions.

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Keywords: Instructional Pragmatics; Pragmatic Competence; Sociocultural Theory; English as a Foreign Language; Secondary Education

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The Impact of Pragmatics Instruction on EFL Learners' Writing Skills, Confidence, and Attitudes

Given the importance of pragmatic competence, including politeness, in writing (Romanowski & Bandura, 2019), the role of pragmatics in writing development represents a key area for research in linguistics and foreign language didactics. This study delves into the effects of explicit pragmatics instruction on EFL university students' writing skills, with a focus on the production of pragmatically appropriate texts that adequately take the purpose, context, and addressee into account, aspects considered important in written communication (Brown & Hood, 1989).

A quasi-experimental study was conducted at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University, with 77 students of the Primary school teaching programme as the respondents and a pre-test, a post-test, and a questionnaire as the main data collection tools. The analysis of the students' tests, which involved writing a formal e-mail, indicates that explicit instruction on concepts from pragmatics, such as speech acts, politeness, or formality and informality, supported by applied practice of these concepts through in-class tasks and homework supplemented with proper feedback, has a positive impact on writing skills development. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed significant improvement in the experimental group's overall score as well as in the categories of *speech acts and communicative purpose* and *formal and informal style*, while no statistically significant improvement was found in the control group. The answers from the questionnaire given to the experimental group suggest that pragmatics instruction is generally well-accepted and perceived by the students as valuable for their writing skills and confidence. In alignment with previously conducted studies (Chen, 2016; Deveci & Hmida, 2017; Codina-Espurz & Salazar-Campillo, 2019), the findings demonstrate the benefits of pragmatics instruction and encourage its use in teaching practice.

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Keywords: pragmatics instruction; applied linguistics; quasi-experiment; teaching writing; EFL students

The effects of foreign language enjoyment on L2 semantic fluency: The role of FL proficiency

Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) has been defined as a “broad positive emotion experienced by FL learners when their psychological needs are met in the FL classroom” (Botes et al., 2022: 206). With the increase of Second Language Acquisition and Positive Psychology research, interest in this affective variable has grown substantially. Numerous studies have demonstrated that FLE positively affects FL performance (e.g., Dewaele & Li, 2022). However, research examining the relationship between FLE and vocabulary knowledge remains scarce and inconclusive, despite the central role of vocabulary in overall FL proficiency. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, no prior studies have investigated the effect of FLE on L2 semantic fluency, broadly defined as the ability to produce words related to a semantic category within a limited time frame (Jiménez Catalán, 2025). Additionally, the effect of FL proficiency level on FLE has received little empirical attention, despite being suggested in the seminal work of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) as a potential source of variation in enjoyment.

To help fill this gap, the present preliminary study examines the effect of FLE on L2 semantic fluency while taking participants’ level of FL into account. A total of 60 university FL learners participated in the study. FLE was measured using the original scale developed by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). FL proficiency was assessed through the Oxford Placement Test (UCLES, 2001). L2 semantic fluency was evaluated using a time-controlled L2 semantic fluency task involving four semantic categories. Independent-samples t-tests and correlation analyses were conducted. Results showed that FLE had a positive effect on L2 semantic fluency only among participants with intermediate proficiency in the FL. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that positive emotions such as enjoyment exert a broadening effect when learners engage in tasks that balance challenge and perceived ability. Under such conditions, enjoyment may widen attentional focus and support flexible lexical retrieval strategies, resulting in higher semantic fluency output.

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Keywords: Foreign language enjoyment; L2 semantic fluency; level of FL mastery; Positive Psychology; Second Language Acquisition

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**From Communicative Competence to Multimodal Communicative Agency: Rethinking EFL
Education as Resistance**

Contemporary educational contexts are marked by increasing social, ecological, and communicative complexity. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, this situation raises a fundamental question: “How can communicative competence be accounted for when meaning-making is no longer primarily realized through linguistic resources alone?” Although established models of communicative competence continue to play a central role in EFL pedagogy, they offer limited conceptual resources for addressing communication that unfolds across multiple modes.

This paper proposes a theoretical reconceptualization of communicative competence through the notion of multimodal communicative agency in EFL education. The proposal is developed at the initial stage of an ongoing doctoral project at the University of Salamanca, within the LINDES (Linguistic Descriptions of English) research group. Rather than reporting classroom data, the paper responds to a theoretical and pedagogical need to refine existing accounts of communicative competence in light of contemporary communicative practices. Drawing on communicative competence models, multimodal literacy studies, and genre theory, communication is approached as the situated mobilization of linguistic, visual, spatial, and other semiotic resources. From this perspective, multimodality is not conceived as an added layer of meaning but as an integral dimension of communicative action. In order to explore this question, comics and other graphic narratives are therefore discussed as multimodal genres that make processes of meaning-making particularly visible through the orchestration of verbal, visual, spatial, and semiotic modes within multimodal texts, layout, and sequencing. Their pedagogical relevance lies in the way they foreground learners’ capacity to interpret, negotiate, and produce meaning across modes, rather than grammatical accuracy alone.

By outlining a theoretically grounded conceptual model, my research aims to contribute to applied linguistics and EFL pedagogy while providing a framework intended to inform future classroom-based research. In doing so, it seeks to align accounts of communicative competence with contemporary forms of communication and with critically oriented approaches to language education in the EFL classroom.

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Keywords: communicative competence; multimodal literacy; EFL pedagogy; graphic narratives; critical literacy.

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“Can you womansplain it a bit better?”: Irony and Vulnerability in *The Worst Person in the World* (2021)

The 2017 #MeToo movement signaled a cultural turning point that reoriented global and transnational cinematic portrayals of female subjectivity, foregrounding questions of agency, intimacy, and vulnerability. Some of these narratives employed a “static temporality” (Cattien, 2019) tied to the recurrent representation of female trauma (Projansky, 2001), while others sought to move beyond this restrictive framework by embracing the core cultural politics of fourth-wave feminism—particularly its intersectional and post-structuralist orientations. Drawing on Rosalind Gill’s (2017) account of post-feminist sensibility and recent studies of gender representation (Bartlett et al., 2019; Piyumali & Sandaruwan, 2025), this paper examines an emergent narrative sensibility characterised by vulnerability, relational interdependence, and affective dissonance. It also assesses how this sensibility is formally and thematically articulated in the Norwegian film *The Worst Person in the World* (Joachim Trier, 2021), a case study that effectively contributes to reshaping global cinematic representations of contemporary womanhood.

The scattered structure of the film, divided into twelve episodes, mirrors the unstable subjectivity of its protagonist, Julie (Renate Reinsve), a deeply flawed—yet highly creative—woman in her early thirties who struggles with professional and romantic commitments. She oscillates between emotional and physical connections with two different men, while striking sequences of magical realism reveal her desire for freedom from outdated gender expectations. Through these formal and narrative strategies, this paper frames Julie as a liminal female subject—positioned between past patriarchal structures and emerging feminist sensibilities—and as an active agent negotiating (and playfully ironising) contemporary societal demands concerning motherhood, female pleasure, and the tension between independence and emotional vulnerability. Ultimately, the paper argues that the film depicts the new feminist sensibility as a mediating tool for understanding the reconstruction of fragmented female identities, the emergence of new forms of intimacy, and the evolution of relational ethics.

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Keywords: womanhood; coming-of-age; relationships; vulnerability

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No Hard Feelings, a transactional romance

This paper analyses *No Hard Feelings* (Gene Stupnitsky, 2023) as an example of how contemporary romantic comedies engage with questions of space, class and economic inequality. It explores how the real location in which the film is set and shot, Montauk, New York, operates as a meaningful cinematic construct that shapes narrative development, character relationships and the conditions under which intimacy can emerge.

By analyzing the representation of Montauk as a desirable yet exclusionary space marked by rising property values, seasonal wealth, and the displacement of long-term local residents, this paper looks into how the film critiques the commodification of coastal cities, which have been identified as experiencing the highest rates of gentrification in the US (Richardson 2019). In this context, particular attention is given to the protagonist's (Maddie played by Jennifer Lawrence) precarious relationship to space, including housing insecurity and restricted mobility and how these spatial pressures motivate her getting into a transactional romantic arrangement. This has been recognized as a prototype of female protagonist that is often found in comedy films (Wanzo 2016).

Within this spatial perspective, this paper also looks at the contrast between local and affluent spaces, such as Percy's (Andrew Barth Feldman) parents' insulated domestic environment, to reveal how wealth restructures intimacy and alters expected romantic comedy power dynamics. Likewise, this subversion is achieved not only through class but through an age imbalance, with Percy being the younger and inexperienced one in the relationship. As Alberti points out, this subversion touches upon "contradictory genres of masculine identity that define the contemporary romcom" (4). Conversely, this analysis highlights how the relationship between Percy and Maddie also participates in key romantic comedy conventions, such as the "magic space of transformation" and the humour of the characters' exchanges and interactions (Deleyto 2009, 2011). As Deleyto argues, romantic comedies typically centre on "the exploration of love and human sexuality and its complex and fluid relationship with the social context" (2009). *No Hard Feelings* (2023) explicitly draws on this framework, since Percy and Maddie's relationship acts as a central narrative motor that foregrounds questions of intimacy, personal transformation, sexual discovery and social conciliation.

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Keywords: Romantic comedy; space; gentrification; intimacy.

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Embodied Geographies: Penélope Cruz and the Construction of “Italy” Onscreen

Penélope Cruz’s transnational success derives partly from her versatility, as she frequently portrays different “foreign” or “exotic” identities which differ from her Spanish origins. Hollywood frequently commodifies this flexibility, marketing a generalised “Latinness” or “otherness” rather than precise national identities. Historically, “Italianness” in Hollywood has been constructed through stereotypes—passionate, romantic, and sometimes volatile characters, often drawing from musical and theatrical traditions (Muscio, 2006)—whereas European art cinema allows for more nuanced and culturally specific portrayals (D. Jones, 2024).

This paper analyses Penélope Cruz as a case study to explore how a transnational star’s performance and persona affect spectators’ perception of cinematic space. Therefore, I compare her performances in two Italian roles: Laura Ferrari in *Ferrari* (Michael Mann, 2023) and Clara in *L’immensità* (Emanuele Crialese, 2022), as they show how Cruz’s star body mediates contrasting constructions of “Italy” across Hollywood and European cinema. Mann’s location shooting in Modena aimed to recreate the life in this city in 1957, its “sociology, psychology and emotionality,” while Crialese’s 1970s’ Rome operates as autobiographical memory space, reconstructing the city of the director’s childhood and teenage years. As both movies are filmed on location, I draw on Mark Shiel (2001) and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith’s (2001) theories to explore the setting of Italy as an active narrative agent rather than a passive backdrop, integrating Richard Dyer’s (1979) star theory to argue that transnational stars such as Penélope Cruz complicate the city-as-protagonist paradigm, altering how audiences experience real spaces.

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Keywords: Penélope Cruz; star persona; cinematic space; Italianness; performance

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Anglicisms in Online Gaming: Uses and Perceptions Among League of Legends Players and Platforms

Online gaming has experienced rapid global growth, with English serving as a Lingua Franca (ELF) across diverse linguistic communities (Sanou, 2018). This study adopts a critical ethnographic sociolinguistic approach to examine two main aspects of Spanish-language online gaming. First, it investigates the presence and role of anglicisms—including borrowings and calques (following Backus & Dorleijn, 2009)—within the Spanish LoL community. Second, it explores Spanish-speaking gamers' motivations for using these forms and their perceptions of them.

To address the first aim, the research analyses lexical phenomena linked to language contact in *League of Legends* (LoL), focusing on its Spanish-speaking players. For the second, it examines 30 community members' awareness and reported attitudes toward anglicisms.

The study combines qualitative and quantitative datasets. Dataset 1 involved the sociolinguistic categorisation of anglicisms (Ross, 2007) across three LoL-related platforms—Riot Games, the Spanish Videogame Association (AEVI), and Liga de Videojuegos Profesional (LVP)—collected over one month. Dataset 2 included 134 forum posts, four official forum entries, and 70 spoken turns from a Spanish broadcast of a World Championship match. Dataset 3 consisted of a 26-question survey completed by 30 gamers, addressing gaming habits, language use, and perceptions of anglicisms.

Results show a striking contrast: institutional platforms exhibit limited use of anglicisms (4% of utterances, e.g., *Rioters*), while players employ them extensively (73%, primarily borrowings, e.g., *Ranked*). This suggests that gaming companies are more conservative regarding English adoption than previously documented (Aranda Juárez et al., 2017; Folqués, 2022). Players, alternatively, actively embrace anglicisms and view English positively in both community interactions and personal gaming practices.

By combining linguistic analysis and qualitative data, this study explores how language and identity intersect in online gaming, offering a sociolinguistic perspective on the processes of Englishisation in digital gaming communities.

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Keywords: Anglicisms; Online gaming; League of Legends; Sociolinguistics; Language attitudes

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Humour preferences from a cognitive linguistic perspective: a pilot study

This study aims to quantitatively measure humour preferences along the lines of humour theories and cognitive linguistics (Brône, 2017; Bognár, 2025). Categories relying on the three widely accepted humour theories, which are Incongruity Resolution Theory, Superiority Theory and Relief Theory (Nilsen & Nilsen, 2019) were grafted into the cognitive linguistic framework relying on cognitive contextual levels. Cognitive contextual levels categorize the influences and determining factors of our environments on our cognition (Ellis, 2019). Despite the data not being generalizable due to the relatively small size of the participants, it proves to be a possible first step towards a larger endeavour.

A pilot-questionnaire divided into two parts was used to conduct the study online. The first section gathered demographic data, the second measured preferences using a Likert-scale. The original objective of the study was to measure inclination towards different types of humour on different cognitive levels based on gender and age. However, exploratory factor analysis determined that the current questionnaire reliably measured only along the lines of macro ($\alpha = .90$, $N = 6$), mezo ($\alpha = .85$, $N = 8$), and micro ($\alpha = .78$, $N = 3$) levels of cognition.

Albeit age and gender did not prove to be statistically significant factors, certain aspects worthy of consideration surfaced. Firstly, jokes residing on the micro ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.16$) and mezo levels ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.18$) were preferred over the ones placed on the macro level ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.58$). Secondly, only cognitive contextual levels emerged as significant factors during the analyses. If further, large-scale studies repeatedly confirm the assumption that cognitive contextual levels (Ellis, 2019) are more influential than humour theories (Nilsen & Nilsen, 2019) within the quantitative measurement of humour preferences, shifts within the field might be expected to occur.

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Keywords: Humor; Cognition; Incongruity; Contextualization; Psychometrics.

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Psychological self-disclosure as a tool of media identity construction: a case-study of five YouTube vlogs discussing Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)

Narcissism as a socio-semiotic construct has been widely used to appraise, criticize, and often stigmatize individual patterns and cultural phenomena. This has created a discursive space which may be negatively or dismissively pre-disposed to the available psychological construct of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), or individuals publicly identifying with it. In order to question and counter this discursive disadvantage, it seems relevant to showcase how online media discourses of self-exposing ‘narcissists’ operationalize this very category and attempt to resolve related ideological dilemmas. Unlike other discourse studies of contested identities, I suggest dealing specifically with the NPD construct and focusing more on discourse practices users themselves apply to navigate both psychological concepts and associated discursive stigma in their online identity projects. To do that, I conducted a case-study of one YouTube vlog created by an individual diagnosed with NPD, using the concepts and methods of Critical Discursive Psychology and elements of Narrative Analysis. More specifically, I examined how forms of investment in psychological categories, variations of ‘us’ vs. them’ interpretive repertoires, and ‘footing’ choices in a vlog-as-a-narrative contextualize the vlogger’s positions and interactions with/in the discourse community. As a result, I re-conceptualized narcissism as a high-stakes psycho-discursive identity construct and identified several vlog’s methods for challenging the NPD stigma construct, namely meta-narrativization and meta-‘othering’ of narcissistic identity, reframing of ‘demonizing’ interpretive repertoires and subject positions, formulation of authenticity, accountability, subversion as discursive identity values, and collaboration via new online media ‘affordances’ with the ideologically opposed discourse community. This meta-context paves the way for reducing the socio-semiotic distance between the highly polycode and, often negatively implicating, discourses on narcissism produced by perceived ‘Others’ (non-narcissists), and an individual identity narrative as a perceived ‘Other’ (a narcissist).

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Keywords: Narcissism; Discourse; Identity; Stigma.