International Conference

Contemporary Horizons in English Studies (CHES)

September 18–19, 2026

Department of English Studies
University of Zadar, Croatia

Book of Abstracts

Sveučilište u Zadru
Universitas Studiorum

ODJEL ZA ANGLISTIKU
Department of English Studies

Contemporary Horizons in English Studies (CHES) – Book of abstracts

Conference Organizer: Department of English Studies, University of Zadar

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University of Zadar
Obala kralja Petra Krešimira IV/2
23000 Zadar
Croatia

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Editors: Ivo Fabijanić (University of Zadar), Frane Malenica (University of Zadar)

Proofreader: Leonarda Lovrović

Publisher: University of Zadar

Visual identity of the front page: dpi grafika :: digitalna tiskara, Zadar

Contact: ches@unizd.hr

Conference website: https://conference.unizd.hr/ches/

Host institution website: https://www.unizd.hr/

ISBN: 978-953-331-631-4

Zadar, 2026

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KEYNOTE LECTURES

Christina Gkonou

University of Essex, UK

When Emotions Become Shared: Emotional Labour, Identity, and Collective Wellbeing in Language Teaching

Language teaching is often examined through the familiar lenses of methodology, pedagogy, and assessment. Yet, this technical focus can obscure a central part of the profession: the emotional and identity-based experiences of those who teach. Language educators work in roles inherently and fundamentally connected to communication and human interaction, which means that emotions are not simply incidental but are embedded in day-to-day classroom practice and relational work.

In this keynote presentation, I draw attention to the complex emotional world of language teachers and the often invisible emotional labour they perform. Emotional labour involves commodifying and displaying emotions to meet professional expectations, whether projecting enthusiasm, maintaining composure, or managing frustration and fatigue. These expectations are not only internal pressures; they are socially and institutionally shaped. Teachers are frequently required to "perform" care, positivity, or authority even when it conflicts with their personal wellbeing. Recognising this tension is crucial for understanding the hidden and frequently undervalued emotional demands placed on educators.

To explore these dynamics, I draw on identity theory and emotional labour scholarship to examine how language teachers construct, negotiate, and sometimes protect their professional identities in emotionally charged contexts. Identity is not fixed; it evolves through interactions with students, colleagues, leadership, and wider institutional discourses. Teachers constantly balance what is expected of them with who they feel they are and want to become. Crucially, I argue that wellbeing should not be framed as an individual responsibility alone. Emotional experiences are collective, shaped by relationships, workplace cultures, and broader socio-political conditions in education. Therefore, we should move towards more supportive and collaborative systems that recognise teacher emotions as legitimate, shared, and worthy of care – and wellbeing as a collective health priority in language education. Ultimately, acknowledging and valuing emotional labour, identity, and wellbeing is key to developing more humane, sustainable, and authentic language teaching practices that allow teachers not just to cope, but to thrive together.

Bio note

Christina Gkonou is associate professor at the University of Essex, UK, where she leads the MA TESOL programme and teaches across a range of modules in language teacher education and the psychology of language learning and teaching. Her research focuses on the affective

dimensions of language education, particularly language learner anxiety and language teacher emotions.

Christina has published widely in her field, including her most recent book, Cultivating Teacher Wellbeing (2022, Cambridge University Press), and most recent article on language teachers' sense of belonging (International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 2025). Christina has examined over 30 doctoral theses internationally and has served as External Examiner for MA TESOL and MA Applied Linguistics programmes at the Universities of Birmingham, Kent, and Leeds. She currently oversees the entire provision for the Faculty of Language Studies across all seven branches of the Arab Open University in her role as Chief External Examiner. Additionally, she is co-editor of the Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching book series published by Multilingual Matters.

Stipe Grgas

University of Zagreb, Croatia

Disciplinary Musings and Reckonings

The enabling condition for speculating on the future of any scholarly discipline assumes an assuredness in regard to its place in the world, its content, its method and relevance. These assumptions need not be articulated in order for the discipline to function both as archive, as a contemporary practice, and as a mapping of its future trajectory.

Initially, it must be said that the study of literature has morphed beyond its strict problematic and ventured into fields which have opened up in its networking with other disciplines. Those encounters have been more than productive. On this occasion, this enabling productivity will not be my primary interest. Rather, I will call attention to a different, more challenging, interdisciplinary encounter which, instead of contributing to disciplinary knowledge, works against its functioning.

I will address a number of topics originating in philosophy and (negative) theology and resulting in an impasse that disciplinary knowledge and theory have to reckon with if their work of critique is not to fall short of its mark. My intention, in short, is to show that critical (literary) theory is not itself immune to a critique which questions its very reason for being.

The first topic that will be discussed is the hubris of knowledge. Deriving from this, the next topic will be the bad infinity of scholarly production. Apophatic thinking, as understood by negative theology, will be shown to represent a logical step to take after these preliminary moves. Turning to literary matters, I will contend that a reappraisal of Samuel Beckett's work provides a rich resource illustrative of many of the above-stated issues. My presentation will conclude with the application of this problematic to our contemporary world and with the questioning of the position of our discipline in the present conjuncture.

Bio note

Stipe Grgas is professor emeritus who retired as full professor of American Studies at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb in 2021. Before joining the Zagreb department in 2005, he taught for more than twenty years at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar and was a guest lecturer at English departments of other Croatian universities (Rijeka, Split). He has published four books—two on Irish matters and two on American literature and culture—edited two more, and written over a hundred scholarly articles. Besides literary issues, he has worked in the interdisciplinary field of human spatiality and cultural studies. His most recent work explored the overlap of economics and literature. These themes have been the focus of his lecturing on various postgraduate courses. He has been a guest lecturer abroad and has been awarded two Fulbright scholarships (Yale, Cornell). In 2017 Grgas was honoured by his colleagues with the festschrift The Errant Labor of the Humanities.

NPOO (NEXTGENERATION EU) PROJECT PANEL: NEW HORIZONS IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES IN CROATIA

Sven Cvek

University of Zagreb, Croatia

Theory of Value and the Production of Culture: Some Remarks on Materialism and Formalism

In this talk I will briefly introduce the research project "Theory of Value and the Production of Culture," currently being conducted at the Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and funded by the European Union ("NextGenerationEU"). From within such institutional setting, the project aims at mapping the basic concepts of the "theory of value" and exploring their uses in the analysis of cultural and social forms. This methodological framework is based on the work of Karl Marx, or one of its influential readings, which posits the form of value as the fundamental mechanism of socialisation in and reproduction of capitalist societies. Rather than dwelling on the problems of projectification of scholarly work, I will use this occasion to situate the theoretical interests of this project in the context of some recent developments in Anglophone literary and cultural theory that, relying more or less explicitly on the conceptual apparatus of value-form theory, put into practice materialist-formalist analytical methods for literary and cultural studies.

Keywords: value, capitalism, Marxism, culture, projectification

Tanja Gradečak

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

Figurative Language in Framing Public (FigFrame)

The aim of the project is to explore how linguistically expressed concepts reveal the unconscious aspect of language, activating frames or conceptual networks of metaphor. One such example are Lakoff's *deep* and *surface frames* that are deeply rooted in our construction of morality (2002, 2008), most prominent in the family model NURTURANT PARENT vs. STRICT FATHER, imposed by various media channels as reflections of cultural and social environment. The process of persuasion in the online environment is particularly interesting in the context of our interest in attitudes towards politics, media literacy, and its role in the lives of young people. The proposed project is conceived as a series of interconnected individual quantitative and qualitative research studies based on corpus analysis, experimental and correlational approaches. All of these research studies arise from the project's principal objective, which is to establish the existence of already present frames in public discourse by eliciting and analysing figurative expressions based on polysemy, i.e., metaphor and metonymy. Another task is to detect both universal and language-specific phenomena that determine the potential for the creation of new frames in public discourse in both English and Croatian language. In order to integrate intuitive insights and exact linguistic data, the project combines a theoretically grounded introspective deductive approach (from theory to data) with a psycholinguistic and corpus-based inductive approach (from data to theory). Such an approach allows us to focus attention on two basic research problems: the complexity of systemic relationships and the embeddedness, or variability, of figurative expressions (e.g., Benczes 2019; Berberović and Delibegović Džanić 2015; Gradečak 2025; Gradečak-Erdeljić and Milić 2011; Matovac and Tanacković Faletar 2013; Bolognesi and Werkmann Horvat 2022). The final goal of the project is thus to propose an effective model for analysing the impact of framing with figurative language in the field of public and political discourse in English and Croatian that could be applied for the purpose of developing media literacy.

Keywords: framing, figurative language, polysemy, metaphor, metonymy, public discourse, media literacy

Marko Lukić

University of Zadar, Croatia

ASTRAH—Atlas of Fear: Narratives and Urban Spaces of Dread

ASTRAH is a four-year interdisciplinary research project funded by the European Union through the *NextGenerationEU* programme. It explores how fear, trauma, and collective memory become embedded in urban environments through cultural narratives, architecture, and representations in media and popular culture. The project's central aim is to develop a systematic analytical framework for understanding cities as spatial archives of fear—spaces shaped by historical violence, social tensions, and cultural imaginaries. Drawing on fields such as cultural geography, urban studies, memory studies, and heritage research, ASTRAH investigates how specific urban locations come to be perceived as sites of unease. It examines how these perceptions influence everyday movement, behaviour, and senses of belonging, while also analysing the relationship between physical urban spaces and their imagined or mediated representations in literature, film, and popular culture. Methodologically, the project adopts an interdisciplinary approach that combines cultural and textual analysis with historical, archival, and spatial research. It includes comparative case studies of globally recognised cities associated with urban fear, such as Tokyo, London, Edinburgh, and New York, in order to establish broader conceptual and analytical frameworks. At the same time, ASTRAH focuses its primary empirical and digital work on the city of Zadar. Despite its complex history marked by political change and rupture, Zadar has remained largely absent from dominant narratives of urban fear. The project addresses this gap through the creation of an interactive, GIS-based digital atlas that maps locations associated with fear, trauma, and collective memory by linking them to archival materials, historical sources, and cultural representations. Importantly, ASTRAH treats mapping as a critical analytical practice rather than a purely technical tool. It also emphasises ethical heritage practices and public engagement, particularly in the responsible digital representation of sensitive historical material. Overall, the project contributes to innovative approaches in researching and interpreting urban space, memory, and cultural narratives.

Keywords: urban, space, horror, fear, history

Jelena Šesnić

University of Zagreb, Croatia

The NextGeneration EU research project: A Glossary of Transatlantic Literature in the Long Nineteenth Century

The intention is to showcase state of the art research conducted within the purview of the NextGeneration EU financing scheme. The project by the title "A Glossary of Transatlantic Literature in the Long Nineteenth Century" is carried out at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb. This four-year project intends to investigate complex interrelations of the sophisticated Victorian perspective on transatlanticism and its seminal American mutations in the long nineteenth century, whose endpoint is the First World War—a global event. We particularly propose to canvass transatlantic modernity in the long nineteenth century in the form of a glossary of transatlantic literature, with particular focal points. In year one, the keywords comprise gender, genre, class, and race. In the second year, the focus is on territoriality and space, particularly on the notion of sea, continent, frontier, and borderlands. The third year centres on the key concepts of revolution, reform, and war, while in the fourth year the attention shifts to the notions of visuality, focalisation, and panopticism. In terms of methodology, we maintain that a truly functional analysis of transatlanticism demands also a confluence of literary history, philosophy, cultural theory and, especially, of the knowledge specific to English and American Studies. The projects members include the faculty of the Chairs of English Literature and American Studies of the Department of English (Grgas, Knežević, Jukić Gregurić, Domines, Klepač, Relić) ranging from professors to assistants. The principal investigator is Jelena Šesnić in the American Studies programme. External experts to help realise the project goals in the course of four years include Professors Cian Duffy (Lund University) and Anja Müller Funk (University of Mainz), and Assoc. Prof. Kimberly Engber (Wichita State University).

Keywords: NextGeneration EU, research project, English Studies, American Studies, Croatian academic sphere

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Tihana Anić

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Breaking the Cycle: Domestic Violence and Recovery in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us*

This paper examines the representation of domestic violence in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us *(2016) through the theoretical framework developed by Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). Drawing on Herman's model of trauma recovery—establishing safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection—the analysis explores how the novel portrays the psychological dynamics of abusive relationships and the survivor's path towards healing. The study focuses on the protagonist, Lily Bloom, whose experiences with intimate partner violence reflect complex cycles of attachment, denial, and self-preservation. By situating Lily's narrative within Herman's trauma theory, the paper highlights how Hoover's novel captures the normalisation of abuse, the internal conflict between love and fear, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Particular attention is given to the ways in which memory, narrative voice, and emotional ambivalence function as mechanisms through which trauma is both obscured and gradually processed. The analysis further considers how the novel challenges simplistic victim-perpetrator binaries, instead presenting domestic violence as embedded in broader psychological and social contexts. Ultimately, the paper argues that *It Ends with Us* offers a nuanced literary depiction of trauma recovery that aligns with Herman's emphasis on agency, boundary-setting, and the reconstruction of self. Through this interdisciplinary approach, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about the cultural representation of domestic violence and the role of contemporary fiction in fostering awareness and empathy.

Keywords: *It Ends with Us*, Colleen Hoover, Judith Herman, domestic violence, trauma and recovery

Ines Begić

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The Role of a Loving Pedagogy in the Language Classroom: Insights from the Literature

In a continuously changing teaching and learning landscape, teacher and learner wellbeing, which was long overlooked, is given increasing attention. A key element of wellbeing in the foreign language classroom is the teacher-student relationship. Plenty of studies have investigated the ways teachers may motivate their learners; however, there is yet much to be explored in terms of how a loving pedagogy may influence learners' attitudes, emotions, beliefs, L2 learning, and overall self-perception, especially when it comes to their L2 self. This paper reviews the literature on the role that a loving pedagogy plays in foreign language education, stressing its importance for both learners and teachers. Research on loving pedagogy points out the significance of teachers establishing rapport with their students. Learners who feel valued, respected, appreciated, and seen by their teachers and who feel free to express themselves in the language classroom are likely to establish a good quality relationship with them, which may eventually lead to higher motivation, more commitment in their work, higher self-esteem, and better academic success overall. This, in turn, might enable the development of secure attachments that may positively impact learners' lives because feeling loved and having a sense of belonging could positively influence their behaviour in an educational setting alongside improving their own L2 self-image. Due to the nature of language learning, it is likely that loving pedagogy might be even more significant in these classrooms as teachers need to build bonds with their students using an L2, which can sometimes be challenging. It is therefore crucial to open the discussion on the possible ways loving pedagogy might influence the teacher-student relationship and their overall wellbeing, as this might offer valuable insight into the students' inner worlds and their L2 acquisition, as well as the teachers' overall engagement in their professional lives.

Keywords: loving pedagogy, language classroom, teacher-student relationship

Marijana Birtić Vučić

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Beyond the Practical: Theoretical Horizons in ESP and EAP Courses at the Centre for Foreign Languages, University of Zadar

This presentation challenges the persistent misconception that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching is merely practical and materials-driven. Drawing on Basturkmen (2020), we first argue that ESP pedagogy and materials design inevitably embody underlying theories of language teaching, even when these remain implicit. We then demonstrate this theoretical grounding in our ESP and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses through instructional materials and practices. Revisiting our ESP and EAP teaching trajectory, we make these foundations explicit via three interrelated lenses: task-based pedagogy as a core-learning framework, learner-centeredness as a defining ESP principle, and needs-based syllabus design as foundational to course development. In doing so, we reframe ESP as inherently theoretical and context-responsive, rather than merely pragmatic. The presentation thus highlights how the "practical" surface of ESP teaching is always underpinned by explicit or implicit theoretical choices, and how these choices are negotiated within the specific institutional and curricular environment of the Centre for Foreign Languages.

Keywords: ESP and EAP (English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes), task-based pedagogy, learner-centeredness, needs-based syllabus design

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Narrative, Trauma, and Book Banning: A Trauma-Informed Perspective of Literary Censorship

Using a framework of narrative trauma theory, this narrative inquiry examines the ways in which book banning and efforts of censorship are interconnected with conceptions, depictions, and experiences of trauma. Such connections include, for example, how conceptions of trauma literature, depictions of traumatic events in books, and the teaching of such challenged literature intersect with conditions for banned and challenged books. The paper further analyses how conceptions and depictions of trauma are constituted within various cultural milieu which have bearing on sociocultural conditions that give rise to banned and challenged books. Prior English and literary trauma scholars (e.g., see works of Dutro; Dutro and Bien, 2014; Dunn, 2022; Leonardi and Staley 2022; Caruth 1996) have explored pedagogical and critical connections between trauma and literature. Likewise, researchers across education, library science, and cultural studies (e.g., Hooper et al. 2025) have documented the rise of contemporary book banning and censorship campaigns. Yet, there remains limited scholarship examining the intersection of trauma and book banning; that is, how representations of trauma in literature become entangled with sociocultural fears, moral panics, and political movements resulting in censorship. This study addresses that gap by analysing banned and challenged books alongside archival materials that document historical and contemporary conditions of censorship. By doing so, the study offers a trauma-informed framework for understanding why certain narratives are deemed threatening and how banning such narratives may operate as a form of cultural silencing or erasure. This paper contributes to multiple fields and international contexts, including English, education, literacy studies, library and information science, and trauma studies. It has timely and global implications for educators, librarians, and scholars navigating current debates around intellectual freedom, censorship, and trauma-informed education.

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Keywords: literary trauma studies, book banning, censorship, intellectual freedom, trauma-informed education

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From Sensory Mapping to Synesthetic Force: Explaining the Functional Specialisation of the Senses in Political Discourse

This paper develops a theoretical and explanatory account of synesthetic language in political discourse by introducing the concept of synesthetic force within cognitive linguistics (Bretones Callejas 2025; Lakoff 2008). Building on previous work that has demonstrated the uneven distribution of sensory domains in the construction of political authority, the study moves beyond descriptive patterns to explain why certain senses are systematically privileged while others remain marginal. The analysis is based on a focused dataset consisting of a contemporary US presidential address on geopolitical intervention (approx. 10,000 words). A two-stage methodology was employed: (1) systematic lexical retrieval of candidate expressions associated with sensory domains (touch, vision, sound, taste, smell), followed by (2) manual contextual validation to identify non-literal sensory activation with clear discursive relevance. The resulting dataset comprises 87 validated instances of synesthetic expressions, which were annotated according to sensory domain, discursive function (authority, coercion, confrontation, delegitimation), and evaluative polarity. The study introduces a new analytical layer by modelling the relationship between sensory domains, discursive functions, and interactional distance. Synesthetic expressions are conceptualised as instances of functional specialisation: touch encodes force and asymmetry, vision constructs epistemic control, and sound enacts command and confrontation, while taste and smell remain constrained due to their association with proximity and internalisation. The main contribution lies in proposing a constraint-based model of synesthetic activation, in which sensory distribution is shaped by the interaction between embodiment and discourse-specific factors such as geopolitical distance and adversarial positioning. The paper argues that synesthetic language constitutes a structured, constraint-sensitive system of meaning construction, contributing to research on embodiment, discourse, and political communication.

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Keywords: synesthesia, political discourse, embodiment, cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis

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The Illusion of Agency in Digital Narratives: 10 Lost Boys and the Limits of Choice

This paper examines how interactivity and the possibility of choice function in Mark Sample's digital work *10 Lost Boys* (2020). Even though the reader's/player's selections do not change the final outcome, I argue that the illusion of the reader's agency further reinforces the work's central message. Through a structure in which readers/players are constantly presented with multiple-choice questions, the story creates a sense of control while ultimately and inevitably directing one of the boys towards becoming a white supremacist. The paper therefore explores how this aspect of interactivity shapes the ways in which we create, experience, and interpret digital stories. The paper argues that the work uses repeated choice to produce discomfort, compel replay, and reveal how extremist identities are formed through discourse, cultural signs, and ideological capture. Drawing on Espen Aarseth's concept of ergodic literature, Ian Bogost's notion of procedural rhetoric, and broader debates on agency and choice in digital narratives and video games, the paper shows how *10 Lost Boys* mobilises interaction not to empower the reader/player in any simple sense, but to involve them more deeply in a logic of inevitability. Ultimately, the paper argues that *10 Lost Boys* demonstrates how digital literature can use interactivity to expose the cultural mechanisms through which innocence, belonging, and identity are ideologically reshaped.

Keywords: digital literature, interactivity, choice, procedural rhetoric, Mark Sample

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The Use of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching and Learning in Slovenia: Practices, Attitudes, and Ethical Dilemmas of Teachers and Students

The paper examines the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into English language study and teaching in Slovenia. Using a mixed-methods approach, it investigates current AI-supported practices, user attitudes, and emerging ethical considerations. Existing studies indicate that teachers and students most frequently employ AI for material preparation, writing support, translation, and exercise generation. Within these practices, teachers generally express cautious optimism, whereas students show higher levels of enthusiasm. Research on AI literacy suggests that students demonstrate stronger technical proficiency, while teachers exhibit more advanced critical evaluation skills. Key ethical concerns include plagiarism, the authenticity of student work, and algorithmic bias. Participants consistently emphasise the need for clear institutional guidelines and systematic professional development. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of AI's role in the Slovenian educational context and offers evidence-based directions for enhancing pedagogical practice and teacher education in ELT.

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Keywords: artificial intelligence, ELT, AI literacy, ethics, Slovenia

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A Line in the Sand: Exploring National and Disciplinary Boundaries in Video Games

Political developments in the twenty-first century have centred much discourse on border enforcement and the texts which engage it. Representations of the US-Mexico border in video games and other digital texts provide a compelling opportunity to identify how media can justify, undermine, or complicate the nature of borders in the cultural imagination. Gary Kafer insists on seeing "gamification as a rhetorical process that communicates how play dynamics sustain the procedural logics of border security and citizenship" (Kafer 2022, pg. 181), suggesting that games participate in the ongoing project of justifying the existence and necessities of the borders they simulate. Similarly, J. Llamas-Rodriguez argues that games reify "infrastructures of the border," infrastructures which entail "sociotechnical systems that maintain the geopolitical boundary [and] the conceptual frameworks that shape popular ideas about what borders are and what they are for" (Llamas-Rodriguez 2021, para. 2). In this paper, I draw on these conversations to argue that literary classrooms can make more porous and permissive their own boundary-lines by using the simulational quality of games to deepen conversations of pressing topics. This paper examines borders in video games to show how participatory and procedural environments expose aspects which elude representation in typographical and visual media. In addition to their simulational (as opposed to representational) qualities, video games are also inherently ludic and use play in ways threatening to the very notion of boundaries. Games thus become inherently transnational, breaking down borders by virtue of their medium: decontextualized and reevaluated in a transnational narrative space […] video games create transnational communities with specific social morphologies, where both authors and readers can each become the immigrant who plays without (outside of) national borders (Melnic and Melnic 2017, pg. 75) This paper seeks to provide a brief history of border representations in digital and interactive texts in the hope that a more intentional engagement with video games in the classrooms helps explain the nature of borders their representation, disputation, and subversion.

Keywords: borders, games, procedurality, simulation, disciplinarity

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Donald Trump's English-Language-Related Attitudes and Ideological Positions as Reflected in Presidential Documents

Although Donald Trump's language ideological stance is mostly describable by a promotion-oriented attitude as far as the English language is concerned, which simultaneously entails an implicit minority-language-as-problem position, the actual language management proposals and ideological remarks of the Trump Administration cover a broader spectrum of substantive initiatives and symbolic statements. This paper attempts to map both the "ideological" and the "management" components of language policies explicitly expressed in Trump's presidential documents and speeches during his first term (2017-2021) and during his second tenure (2025-) until July 2026, specifically focusing on the perceived role of the English language in the nation-building process. The corpus of relevant presidential documents was built with the help of the American Presidency Project database (https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/), and the classification of the records was completed with the help of a "Language Policy Spectrum Framework" which highlights the differences between general, specific, substantive, and symbolic policies (Czegledi 31). Initial findings indicate that besides trying to officialise English through an executive order, Trump also proposed to use the majority language as a gatekeeping mechanism to exclude limited English proficient workers from certain jobs. Additionally, the spreading of the English language abroad appears to be a language policy priority for the Trump Administration, which, on the other hand, may prove to be less effective than expected due to the declining soft power appeal of the United States.

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Keywords: language policy, language ideology, English language, Trump presidency

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Integrating Language and Content in Teacher Education: A CLIL-Based Proposal for Science Learning in English

Bilingual education has seen steady growth over the last two decades in Spain, following recommendations from European bodies on language and education. This is mainly achieved due to the implementation of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) subjects in English. CLIL is one of the most established approaches in bilingual schools across Europe for integrating language and subject content. It has become particularly popular in countries where English is not widely used for academic purposes.

This paper presents a specific didactic proposal for the course English III, offered to students enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education with a major in English at the University of Valladolid. The course is designed to enable students to acquire subject content knowledge in science while simultaneously developing their English proficiency. This dual focus fosters linguistic awareness through corpus-based approaches and enhances a range of literacy skills, encompassing not only reading and writing but also the application and transfer of knowledge across contexts. Particular attention is given to denominative variation in English in the context of science teaching, which equips future primary teachers with confidence to teach subjects such as Natural and Social Sciences in English.

The methodology will be illustrated through the analysis of texts drawn from NASA Space Place and National Geographic Kids. Building on this textual input, students engage in a variety of output tasks including the production of knowledge pill recordings and other creative writing tasks that demonstrate the practical value of integrating language analysis and content learning.

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Keywords: language teaching, English for specific purposes, corpus studies, denominative variation, scientific literacy

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Multiplicity of Perspectives on Interactive Teaching in the EFL Classroom: Exploring Teacher–Student Alignment through Video-Stimulated Recall

Interactive approaches to teaching English, grounded in constructivist theories of learning, have long been recognised as essential for fostering student engagement, autonomy, and deeper language development (Burns and Myhill; Morgan; Walsh). Such approaches emphasise learner participation, negotiation of meaning, and co-construction of knowledge, typically mediated through teacher–student and student–student interaction (Holmes; Loyens and Gijbels). While interactive teaching is widely endorsed in theory, its implementation and perceived effectiveness can vary significantly across contexts and individuals. Drawing on the concept of classroom interactional competence (CIC) as defined by Walsh, this research investigates both general and situated beliefs of two Serbian EFL teachers and their students regarding interactive teaching, with a particular focus on how they perceive and evaluate specific moments of classroom interaction. The study employs video-stimulated recall (VSR) interviews as a means of accessing participants' reflections on selected episodes of classroom talk. These episodes, identified as more or less interactive, are analysed in light of the teacher's use of elicitation techniques and the students' reactions to them. The aim is to explore the degree of alignment between teacher and student perceptions of what constitutes effective interactive teaching and to examine how these perceptions may be shaped by individual learner characteristics such as ability, motivation, gender, and personality traits, as described by both the teacher and the students. By combining observational data with introspective accounts, this study seeks to capture the multiplicity of perspectives that exist within a single EFL classroom and to highlight how interpretations of interactivity are not only socially negotiated but also personally filtered. Findings are expected to inform student teacher reflection and training by revealing how beliefs about interactivity may diverge or converge across roles and how these beliefs manifest in the dynamic, moment-to-moment reality of classroom interaction.

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Keywords: classroom interaction, EFL classroom, interactive teaching, video-stimulated recall

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Comparing Teachers' and Students' Language Difficulties and Needs in English-Medium Instruction

English-medium instruction (EMI) refers to the use of English to teach non-philological academic subjects in contexts where English is not the dominant first language. As teachers and students in EMI settings are predominantly speakers of English as a foreign language, scholarly discussions have focused on their linguistic preparedness, inconsistent language proficiency requirements, and limited institutional language support (Becker and Zakharova 3; Dang et al. 847; Drljača Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović 100–102). The present study was conducted at the University of Rijeka, Croatia, and involved 111 EMI teachers and 331 EMI students. Each group completed a separate online questionnaire examining language-related challenges and needs for language support. The data were analysed using Stata, with particular emphasis on comparing teachers' and students' responses. The findings indicate that students experience the greatest difficulties with specialist terminology, academic English, and grammatical accuracy, whereas teachers most frequently face challenges related to grammatical accuracy, speaking fluency, and pronunciation. Both teachers and students accurately recognise the main language difficulties experienced by the other group, showing a strong alignment between self-assessments and cross-group perceptions. While teachers and students report varying levels of need for language support, nearly all teachers and most students express a desire for such assistance and believe it should be provided by higher education institutions. In light of EMI teachers' and students' reported challenges and expectations, the study advocates the provision of tailored support and the implementation of clearly defined language proficiency requirements. Such measures would help prevent language-related difficulties, better equip teachers, support students, and ultimately enhance the overall quality of EMI.

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Keywords: English-medium instruction, teachers, students, language difficulties, language needs

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Revisiting the Docufiction Dilemma in the Age of AI

The integration of AI-generated imagery in film is opening up the door to unforeseeable possibilities but at the same time forcing a radical re-evaluation of our belief in the image. The "indexicality" of film based on the notion that film is a factual trace of reality is seriously brought to question. The controversy gets even more relevant for documentary filmmaking since it is closely related to journalistic principles of truth and realism. By looking back at some classic examples of docufiction, such as Cathy Come Home (BBC, 1966, directed by Ken Loach), the paper revisits the conventions of this predigital hybrid form that has already blurred the line between fact and fiction. AI technology is then evaluated as a cinematic tool and a discussion is raised whether AI "threatens the future of documentary" (Ross) or the ethics of truth remain in the hands of the authors themselves. In classic docufiction, filmmakers use re-enactments to bridge the gap between hard facts and emotional truth. Docufiction includes genres such as docudrama, mockumentary, and animated documentary. Docudrama dramatises serious events, while mockumentary fakes a documentary style for satire or humour. Both simulate objectivist real-time representation of truth by exploiting codes, conventions, and strategies of realist documentary film style. One can argue that by preserving indexicality their image still testifies reality, whereas AI image does not. The case of animated documentary provides a counter-argument as it breaks away completely from the indexical link by openly constructing animated scenes to represent real events. In order to justify the use of animation for "telling the real," Formenti (177) refers to Halas who says that animation has the abilities that live-action does not: "visualise the invisible", "solidify the intangible", "characterise and symbolise," and "re-create the extinct, inaccessible to normal filming." The same abilities are applicable to AI technology. By examining the AI dilemma from the perspective of the docufiction dilemma, the paper aims to reinstall the responsibility for truthfulness to the human intelligence.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, docufiction, ethics, authenticity, hybridity

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The Neutralisation of Agency in George Orwell's *1984* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*

This paper puts into perspective two distinct models of social control in Nineteen Eighty-Four and Fahrenheit 451. While Orwell constructs a system driven by anxiety, Bradbury depicts a culture of voluntary compliance achieved through submission and conformity. Both works demonstrate that effective control, whether through fear or pleasure, leads to compliant members of society. Orwell's dystopia is read through Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish, as a regime of disciplinary power in which panopticism produces subjects who self-regulate out of fear from being punished and the internalisation of surveillance. In contrast, Bradbury's different approach, where sensory overload and entertainment displace critical thought, is examined within Neil Postman's Amusing Ourselves to Death, which correlates public discourse and entertainment as a control mechanism. Contrasting these two frameworks shows that both of these models of social control have a tremendous impact on a person's agency within such societies because they neutralise it. Orwell's disciplinary system operates through anxiety and the anticipation of punishment, while Bradbury's entertainment-based system operates through distraction, pleasure, and passive consumption to maintain a submissive society. This distinction emphasises two opposing ideas: one inspired by saturation and pleasure, the other grounded in fear and constraints. Despite these differences, both systems achieve the erosion of individual's autonomy and the collapse of critical thought.

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Keywords: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Fahrenheit 451*, agency, control, submission

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Relevance of *the Age Factor* for Acquisition of English in Croatia

Second language research is increasingly conducted from a transdisciplinary perspective (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). It stresses the multilayered complexity of second language learning and the need for a context-sensitive approach to different unresolved questions, e.g., the role of the age factor in second language acquisition. Interestingly, the globally popular belief in *the earlier - the better* persists despite the lack of valid and reliable scientific evidence. In Croatia, previous research on the age factor pointed to advantageous early start (e.g., Mihaljević Djigunović and Vilke, 2000). However, learning conditions for English acquisition in Croatia have changed since in many important ways. Hence, this paper aims to address the interplay between an early start and learning conditions in the context of Croatian English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) learning. A study was conducted with a stratified sample of EFL learners after six years of formal study. Pre-primary and primary starters' achievement (N=196) was compared on listening, reading, and writing tasks (*Cambridge Young Learners Test*, A2 level) and receptive and productive English vocabulary tasks (*Young Learner Vocabulary Assessment Test*; Sylvén and Sundqvist, 2016). In view of the findings, local relevance of global trends and popular beliefs about *the earlier - the better* are discussed. A need for a careful interpretation of the interplay between the age factor and the learning conditions and its significance for foreign language policy and practice in education is stressed. Additionally, the insights obtained offer themselves to expanding horizons about feasibility of early multilingual development and the learning of foreign languages other than English in Croatian primary schools.

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Keywords: English as a foreign language, young learners, the age factor, learning conditions, context-sensitive approach

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Conceptual Patterns of Phrasal-Verb Particles in Fictional Medical Dialogue: Evidence from the MedCor Parallel Corpus

Phrasal verbs constitute a central yet challenging component of English lexical and grammatical structure, particularly due to the polysemy and semantic flexibility of their particles. From a cognitive linguistics perspective, however, these particles are not arbitrary but encode recurrent spatial schemas and metaphorical extensions grounded in embodied experience. This study explores how such conceptual patterns emerge in authentic spoken discourse by examining phrasal verbs in MedCor, a manually aligned English-Spanish parallel corpus of subtitles from medical television series. The analysis focuses on phrasal verbs containing the particles out, up, and through, which occur frequently in conversational medical contexts. Drawing on corpus concordances, the study investigates the semantic contribution of the particle, the interaction between verb base and particle, and the conceptual schemas underlying both literal and figurative uses. Particular attention is given to how these meanings are rendered in Spanish translations, allowing us to observe whether the spatial and metaphorical motivations encoded in the particle are preserved, attenuated, or neutralised across languages. Preliminary results reveal systematic conceptual regularities. The particle out consistently evokes a container-boundary schema associated with emergence or extraction, up reflects a verticality schema linked to increase and activation, and through encodes traversal across a bounded region, frequently extended metaphorically to experiences, processes, and difficulties. While Spanish translations often preserve the core meaning of the event, they frequently suppress the spatial imagery encoded in the particle, which may obscure the conceptual motivation underlying English phrasal verbs. These findings highlight the value of aligned audiovisual corpora for examining the conceptual organisation of phrasal verbs in naturalistic dialogue and provide empirical support for cognitively oriented descriptions of particle semantics.

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Keywords: phrasal verbs, cognitive linguistics, particle semantics, parallel corpus, audiovisual dialogue

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Code Choice, Identity, and Multimodality in the Written Discourse of Hungarian Diasporic Facebook Communities

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between code choice and identity through the analysis of written mixed-language discourse, for example codeswitches on Facebook pages authored by Hungarian diasporic communities in English language dominant countries: United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand. The mixed code discourse is a linguistic style that contributors to Facebook pages use intentionally to distinguish their identity and to highlight their relationship with their heritage language and culture within the mainstream language and culture. A multimodal approach is used during the investigation, which presumes that in addition to language there may be other approaches available for making meaning. Multimodal approach is especially useful when meanings in general are to be understood in a community. Writing itself is considered to be multimodal, this means it utilises a visual medium that can include particular design features (e.g., use of colour, font and type face, choice of a particular script). The method used by linguistic landscape researchers is applied to the study of language alternation in the aforementioned written discourses to analyse the degrees of integration or separation of languages that a multilingual mixed-language text can include. In this paper I argue that the members of the Hungarian diasporic communities living in the aforementioned countries have developed a fluid identity as opposed to a stable identity.

Keywords: diaspora, written discourse, code choice, multimodality, identity

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Complex Interactions in the Multilingual Mind: Metalinguistic Awareness and Language Learning Motivation in Trilingual Learners Decoding an Unfamiliar Language System

This study investigates the relationship between multilingual awareness and language motivation, through the application of Dörnyei's seven motivational constructs identified in a longitudinal study (Dörnyei et al. 2006) conducted from 1993 to 2004. These motivational components fall within the framework of the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) that was later developed to offer a more self-based understanding of language motivation. Building on prior research highlighting that metalinguistic and crosslinguistic awareness, as meta-emergent properties in multilingual individuals, expedite multiple language learning and use, this research aims to unravel Hungarian secondary school students' use of their multilingual background to decode texts in an unfamiliar language. This study explores whether a heightened level of meta- and cross-linguistic awareness correlates with stronger motivation and decoding skills, and how this relationship manifests within Dörnyei's motivational constructs. The study involves 134 Hungarian high school students, speakers of L2 English and L3 French, who are enrolled in a French bilingual programme. Participants were administered the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q), a language motivation questionnaire, an English proficiency test, a French proficiency test, a reading comprehension test in Italian, which is an unfamiliar language to them, and a retrospective questionnaire. The results show a significant relationship between metalinguistic abilities and the ability to decode an unknown language. Students with heightened metalinguistic abilities show greater success in deciphering the Italian texts, as they reflected on similarities between their previously learnt languages and the Italian language at lexical, structural, and phonological levels. Furthermore, the study found seven motivational constructs similar to those identified by Dörnyei et al. (2006), with some discrepancies observed in factor loadings. Students were surprisingly shown to be, to a certain extent, more motivated in learning English even though enrolled in a French bilingual program.

Keywords: metalinguistic awareness, crosslinguistic awareness, motivation, multiple language learning, decoding

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The Modality of FoMO—How Headlines Dictate Your Behaviour

Lifestyle news portals have adopted numerous clickbait strategies (Stolac and Valstelić 2014; Pranjić and Gradečak 2026) among which deontic modality (Brdar et al. 2001) plays a major role. Deontic modality, with its intrinsic character of exerting human control over events, is particularly interesting in view of the marketing strategies for presenting goods or types of behaviour to be sold. Headlines such as "You simply must have this bag" or "No one should miss this opportunity to visit X" bombard us from web pages of lifestyle portals dedicated to both male and female readership, i.e., potential consumers. Deontic, or interpersonal modality, is a type of modality where the author exerts influence over readers by controlling and directing their own actions. It turns out to be a clever marketing strategy of so called "hidden persuaders" where an assumed authority giving advice about buying or experiencing something switches the role of the controller through the so called FoMO effect ('Fear of Missing Out')*. * Our research focuses on the use of deontic modal verbs in headlines in English and Croatian lifestyle news portals or lifestyle sections for women where we established a high percentage of this editorial strategy to draw attention to the content of the article itself. We extracted 200 headlines (100 in each language) where we compared the use of deontic (semi) modal verbs (must, should, ought to, have to) to other verbal strategies (e.g., questions: Have you seen this…? or all-inclusive present: This is the most popular x this season) in headlines by creating and analysing this dataset in SketchEngine. Hatzidaki (2011) noticed that the relentlessly regulative tone of deontic modality is invariably mitigated by the implication that the rules posed are for the benefit of the reader. Our results indicate that deontic modals play an important role in the FoMO effect, but that the habitual effect of the Present Simple and deictic elements are relevant clickbait tools as well.

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Keywords: deontic modality, FoMO, clickbait, marketing strategy

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Trans Ecologies and the Horror of Permeability in Saskia Nislow's *Root Rot* and Trang Thanh Tran's *They Bloom at Night*

Trans horror fiction is a new genre characterised by a desire to critique and reconfigure the framing of transness as monstrosity. Alison Rumfitt's recent horror fiction imagines transphobic ideology as haunting and infestation, while Eve Harms focuses on surgical horror, the abuses of the medical establishment, and loss of bodily autonomy. In this paper, I propose to examine another emerging iteration of infestation and body horror—ecological permeability—in two trans horror novels, Saskia Nislow's *Root Rot* and Trang Thanh Tran's *They Bloom at Night. *In *Root Rot*, inspired by *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Last of Us*, a parasitic fungus infiltrates bodies and environments and produces unstable doubles. In *They Bloom at Night*, toxic algae infests and reshapes bodies, making them entangled with their surroundings. The two novels imagine infestation through nature as Ecohorror that frames the boundaries of the human body as permeable. The fact that the changes affect all and not just trans bodies reflects a broader trend in trans horror, as does the tone of ambivalence in being affected by a transformation that is simultaneously threatening and empowering. This represents a move away from a clear categorisation of monster and victim and reverberates with trans animacy and affect theories (Barad; Chen; Simpkins; Crawford) which envision trans embodiment as intra-actions rather than as pathologised interiority.

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Keywords: transgender, horror, ecologies, American contemporary fiction

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Lexical Frequency and Pre-Switch Latency in Hungarian-English Code-Switching

Code-switching, which is the alternating use of two languages within a single stretch of speech (Grosjean; Myers-Scotton), offers a valuable window into how bilingual speakers coordinate lexical access and speech planning in real time. Psycholinguistic research (Dijkstra and Van Heuven 175–197; Kroll et al. 119-135) suggests that bilingual lexical access is largely non-selective, meaning that words from both languages can be co-activated during production. In such conditions, switching may be sensitive to lexical accessibility, and retrieval difficulty can manifest as pauses and other disfluencies. This study examines spontaneous Hungarian–English code-switching in a naturalistic setting, focusing on whether lexical frequency influences the latency preceding an intra-sentential switch. The dataset consists of publicly available Hungarian podcast episodes (approximately 30 hours), from which code-switch tokens were analysed. Pre-switch latency was operationalised as the silent or filled intervals directly before the switch point. Lexical frequency for switched items was determined via the Hungarian National Corpus and used to distinguish low- and high-frequency switch targets. Overall, the results indicate that switches into lower-frequency English items tend to be preceded by longer pauses and are more likely to co-occur with disfluency, while switches into high-frequency items are typically produced with little or no measurable delay. These findings support the view that processing effort at code-switch points is conditional and shaped by lexical accessibility.

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Keywords: code-switching, lexical frequency, pre-switch latency, disfluency, lexical retrieval

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Zones of Evasion—Serial Killers, Urban Spaces, and the Horror of Failed Control

American serial killer narratives repeatedly situate violence within the city, linking murder not only to individual deviance but also to the spatial and institutional conditions that enable it and allow it to remain undetected. Drawing on Michel Foucault's work on governmentality and dispositifs of power, this paper approaches serial killer narratives as horror texts that reveal the city's own (in)visible mechanisms of discipline and control, as well as the failures of the structures they expose. In this context, the serial killer is understood both as a materially produced figure enabled by contemporary urban conditions and as a metaphorical embodiment of those same structures. As Philip L. Simpson observes, the serial killer "conceives of and carries out actions in a manner not dissimilar to the violent methodology of the larger social structure" (136). Through readings of *American Psycho* (1991/2000), *Se7en* (1995), and *You* (2014/2018–2025), the paper examines how these narratives register a horror that exceeds the individual act of murder and instead emerges from systemic violence embedded in urban space. In each case, the killer's ability to move through the city highlights not only gaps in institutional control but also the uneven distribution of attention that allows violence to persist. Read together, these narratives register shifting configurations of power, moving from more localised disciplinary forms of control towards increasingly diffuse and less visible regimes of power. The horror of serial violence in these texts thus lies not only in murder itself but also in the urban conditions that permit violence to circulate and remain unseen.

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Keywords: serial killer narratives, urban space, regimes of control, violence, horror

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Misinterpreting Home(land): Gender, Identity, and Migration in Contemporary Albanian-American Women's Writing

Since the 1880s, Albanian communities in the United States have been actively engaged in cultural production, with the American context providing an important platform for literary and artistic contributions. Albanian communities established various press, such as *Dielli *(The Sun, 1906–present), *Kombi *(The Nation, 1906–1909), etc., as a means of cultural exchange between Albania and the United States, all of which included columns dedicated to literary production by migrant authors such as Faik Konica (1985-1942), Fan S. Noli *(1882-1965), Arshi Pipa (1920-1997), (Kadija 10-11). Such migrant voices have been central in negotiating questions of displacement, identity, and belonging within Albanian-American communities. However, Albanian-American cultural production has historically been predominantly male-oriented, privileging masculine perspectives on migration, exile, and national identity. The presence of women authors was almost absent. The first recorded publication by an Albanian-American woman writer, Nexhmie Zaimi's (1917–2003) autobiographical novel *Daughter of the Eagle: The Story of an Albanian Girl*, would only be published in 1936, thirty years after the establishment of the aforementioned press. To this day, women's experiences of migration and belonging within the Albanian-American body of literature remain underrepresented. Women authors such as Safete S. Juka (1923–2005), Iliriana Sulkuqi (1951–), etc., and recently, Ledia Xhoga have begun to challenge this imbalance. This paper addresses this gender gap by analysing *Misinterpretation* (2024) by Xhoga, examining how gendered identities are constructed in contemporary Albanian-American women's writing and how belonging is negotiated through female migrant experience. Drawing on feminist theories of intersectionality and diaspora studies, the paper situates gender as a central analytic category through which migration and cultural identity are negotiated. The paper demonstrates how Xhoga's novel challenges dominant narratives within Albanian-American literature and offers a more nuanced understanding of belonging as a gendered process.

Keywords: Albanian-American literature, migration, diaspora, gendered identities

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Shades of Meaning: Translating Race into Croatian

This paper examines how key concepts from postcolonial, feminist, and critical race theory are translated in Croatian editions of theoretical works. The translation of these concepts poses a significant challenge due to their cultural specificity, historical connotations, and ideological weight. The challenge, if left unaddressed, implies an inability to discuss these ideas in Croatian. The study focuses on terms such as *blackness*, *black feminism*, *people of colour*, and their translations in the works of authors including Edward Said, bell hooks, Sara Ahmed, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. This study demonstrates that many current Croatian renderings either literalise terms in ways that obscure their historical and political specificity or adopt approximations that fail to capture the contexts of race, power, and resistance. By situating these terms within their original intellectual and socio-political frameworks, the paper proposes translation principles and tentative Croatian equivalents that emphasise contextualisation, terminological consistency, and critical awareness of linguistic and cultural constraints, arguing for solutions that foreground racialisation, positionality, and structural inequality rather than erasing them. Such an approach may prove essential for preserving the analytical and emancipatory potential of postcolonial and critical race theory within the Croatian academic and cultural context.

Keywords: translation, racial terminology, critical race theory

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"Australia for the Australians": The *Bulletin*, Genre, and the Aesthetics of Exclusion in the 1880s–1890s

In July 1887 the Bulletin proclaimed that "Australian and Republican are synonymous. No nigger, no Chinaman, no lascar, no kanaka, no purveyor of cheap coloured labour, is an Australian." The proclamation was not incidental to the magazine's literary programme. It was its necessary condition. This paper argues that the *Bulletin* of the 1880s and 1890s was the primary institutional vehicle through which the Australian intelligentsia transformed history into nature—producing the mythology of the bush, mateship, and egalitarian democracy not as a reflection of Australian life but as a selective and exclusionary construction that came to be mistaken for national identity. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's account of print capitalism and Ernest Gellner's analysis of nationalist standardisation, the paper shows how the magazine's continental reach and systematic editorial filtering produced a national community through inclusion and exclusion rather than reflecting one that already existed. What Russell Ward would later describe as the Australian legend was created, not uncovered. The short story was the form through which this myth, in Roland Barthes's sense, was made: through what Christopher Lee identifies as the effacement of the artist—the short story's performance of artlessness, its presentation of itself as pure documentary record rather than aesthetic artefact—the Australian mythology appeared as something prior to representation, something discovered rather than made. History was turned into nature; the nation lost the memory that things were once made. In the settler colonial context, stripped of the alibi of an established metropolitan tradition, the ideological work of genre is visible with an explicitness that the British and American cases do not permit: what genre does everywhere, it must say here.

Keywords: print capitalism, settler colonialism, nationalist mythology, short story, imagined community

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Fidelity Lost: Literary Translation in the Age of AI

Even if we set aside the more obvious issues of copyright and authorship, and acknowledge the clear advantages AI tools offer in terms of accessibility, availability, and speed (are these the new "accuracy" and "fidelity"?), the translation of literary works in the age of AI remains fraught with limitations. What now appears to be "lost in translation," unlike in previous eras, is not primarily information or even meaning, but rather the texture, rhythm, effect—in a word, the poetry—of the translated text, and consequently of the original itself. AI-generated translations may be fluent, and may seem faithful, but the simply sound flat. While this may partly be the result of our still-developing understanding of how to use AI tools effectively—an issue translators will certainly continue to explore—the more far-reaching concern lies in their impact on the readers. Are readers gradually losing their ability to recognise nuance, ambiguity, and the aesthetic complexity of literary texts? More broadly, is communication itself becoming impoverished, reduced to the efficient exchange—or is it trade?—of basic information at the expense of expressiveness, illocution, effect? Is plot becoming more important than style itself? This paper addresses these questions not in order to argue against the use of AI in literary translation, but to examine and highlight its (current) limitations and to raise the awareness of its possible cultural and aesthetic, as well as communicative, consequences. It ultimately asks what is at stake for literary translation—and for literature in broader terms, as well as for their consumers, for readers—when fluency and transparency (under the guise of accuracy and fidelity) begin to replace poetic nuance, literary effect, and the distinct voices of both author and translator.

Keywords: literary translation, AI-assisted and AI-generated translation, reader reception, translation pedagogy

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Comparative Minimalism in the Literature Classroom: Teaching Hemingway's Prose and Austen's Free Indirect Discourse

The paper argues that the juxtaposition of Hemingway's minimalist prose with Austen's use of free indirect speech does not merely express two examples that feature both forms of literary minimalism, but it also indicates how they offer contemporary pedagogical possibilities to inspire a richer involvement of the reader. The goal of showing how minimalist strategies in literature encourage interpretation is a means for uncovering fresh stylistic, narratological, and comparative literary perspectives. Teaching writing techniques of both Ernest Hemingway and Jane Austen demonstrates how narrative restraint invites a deeper understanding of minimalist fiction, authorial voice and the reader's participation. Hemingway's "iceberg theory" is used to make readers detect emotion and meanings between the lines, while Austen's free indirect discourse fuses narrative voice with character consciousness, requiring doubled attention to irony and viewpoint. But both writers share certain crucial features: what goes unsaid often matters as much, if not more than what is expressed, and the underlying goal is to "show rather than tell." Building upon more than 20 years of teaching experience, this paper proposes a set of practical activities for university students to consider in the context of minimalist fiction. These comprise close readings of both authors' passages to demonstrate techniques, creative writing tasks, and discussions about how narrative economy invites active reader involvement. Studying Hemingway and Austen as minimalist masters helps students acquire analytical skills transferable across periods and genres. Not only does this deepen appreciation for these particular authors, but it also builds active, critical reading skills valuable beyond the classroom.

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Keywords: minimalism, Hemingway, Austen, literature classroom

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Compassion with Restraint: Teacher Emotion and Identity in Vietnamese EFL Teaching

This paper explores how Vietnamese EFL teachers negotiate professional identity through emotion, care, and culturally situated forms of compassion. Drawing on narrative inquiry, the study examines how teachers make sense of love, responsibility, disappointment, pride, and emotional restraint in their everyday pedagogical lives. The analysis is informed by compassion-based language education, which views language teaching not only as the delivery of linguistic knowledge but also as a relational practice grounded in psychological safety, trust, care, and human flourishing. The paper argues that compassion is not culturally neutral. In the Vietnamese context, teachers' compassion is shaped by Vietnamese community-oriented culture and East Asian moral-cultural logics, especially lǐ / 礼 / lễ, where propriety, hierarchy, harmony, and face-saving norms regulate emotional display. As a result, compassion may not always appear as overt warmth or verbal affirmation. Instead, it may be enacted through patience, tactful correction, disciplined guidance, quiet support, and emotional restraint that protects students' dignity while maintaining classroom order. These culturally valued forms of care, however, can also produce emotional labour when teachers must reconcile humane, learner-centred commitments with exam pressures, institutional expectations, and professional vulnerability. By foregrounding culturally situated compassion, this paper contributes to research on language teacher emotions, identity, and well-being. It extends compassion-based language education by showing how love and care are felt, performed, and constrained within local moral orders.

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Keywords: teacher emotion, teacher identity, compassion-based language education, Vietnamese EFL teachers

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The Role of Contextual Factors in Learner Engagement with Written Corrective Feedback in L2 Writing

Recent studies on written corrective feedback (WCF) in second language (L2) learning have taken a more holistic approach, not focusing solely on learners' linguistic accuracy. According to Ellis's (2010) framework for the investigation of WCF, both individual and contextual factors determine the ways in which learners respond to WCF. In addition, learner engagement, including their cognitive, behavioural, and affective engagement, plays a role in their processing of WCF. Namely, it has been argued that learners who engage more deeply are likely to achieve better academic success (Han and Hyland 2015). However, prior studies have not adopted a longitudinal design to explore the role of contextual factors in learner engagement. The aim of the present study was to investigate the role of contextual factors in learner engagement with different types of WCF in English L2 writing over five semesters. The research was carried out at the University of Zadar, Croatia on a sample of undergraduate students (N = 39) who were majoring in English. The experimental group (N = 18) was provided with metalinguistic WCF with codes, and the control group (N = 21) received indirect WCF (Ellis 2009). To elicit information about the role of contextual factors in learner engagement, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a smaller sample of students (Han 2019). The data was subject to content analysis, and the results suggest that contextual factors play an important role in learner engagement with WCF.

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Keywords: written corrective feedback (WCF), L2 writing, contextual factors, learner engagement

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Architecture of Absence—Cinesthetic Horror and Negative Space in Osgood Perkins' Films

The presentation examines the cinema of Osgood Perkins through the intersecting frameworks of negative spatiality and cinesthesia, arguing that his films produce horror not through narrative escalation or visible threat, but through the embodied experience of spatial absence. Rather than relying on action or explicit monstrosity, Perkins constructs atmospheres defined by emptiness, stillness, and minimal sensory cues, where horror emerges as a felt condition of space itself. The presentation will introduce the concept of cinesthetic negative space to a convergence of visual composition, sound design, and temporal pacing that generates an immersive, multisensory engagement with absence. Furthermore, the presentation will suggest that Perkins' use of static shots, prolonged duration, and sparse soundscapes intensifies perceptual awareness, allowing viewers to experience space as tension, pressure, and anticipation. Through close readings of I Am the Pretty Thing That Lives in the House and Gretel & Hansel, the analysis demonstrates how architectural environments—corridors, interiors, and landscapes—function as cinesthetic fields. These spaces operate not merely as settings but as active agents in the production of horror, generating a paradoxical sense of presence and withdrawal, perceptibility and instability. Situating Perkins' work within broader discussions of atmospheric horror and spatial dread, particularly in relation to Mark Fisher and Eugene Thacker, the paper argues that his cinema exemplifies a contemporary shift toward affective and spatial modes of horror. In this context, cinematic space becomes an experiential medium through which the void is not simply represented but sensed, transforming horror into an embodied encounter with absence.

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Keywords: Osgood Perkins, negative space, cinesthesia

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"Marriage or Misery": Mary Bennet's Accomplishments in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *The Other Bennet Sister* (2020)

Women's education in the Regency era aimed at producing accomplished girls. The term "accomplishment" encompasses skills such as drawing, dancing, singing, and playing an instrument—all of these being valuable additions to a woman's worth on the marriage market. In the Regency era, an advantageous marriage was seen as the greatest accomplishment in a woman's life. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), accomplishments and marriage are frequently discussed. The Bennets do not have the means to employ a governess, so the sisters are self-taught. It is Mary, the third daughter, who is the most studious, compensating for her plain looks. Austen's text comments negatively on Mary's studies and music practice, especially her public performances, presenting them as an embarrassment to Elizabeth and an impediment to her relationship with Mr Darcy. However, Janice Hadlow's novel *The Other Bennet Sister* (2020) dives deeper into Mary's character to investigate the reasons behind her ill-fated musical performances and her general focus on studies. It interprets Mary's obstinance as a realistic, necessary drive to find a husband or face a lifetime of misery in spinsterhood. This paper will compare the representation of Mary Bennet's accomplishments in Jane Austen's original novel and in Hadlow's *The Other Bennet Sister*. Building upon the themes established in *Pride and Prejudice*, the contemporary novel gives voice to the usually neglected character to foreground the issues that women faced in an era where they were valued only for their marital potential.

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Keywords: Jane Austen, Janice Hadlow, female accomplishment, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Other Bennet Sister*

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Students' Attitudes Towards the Role of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Learning

The use of technology in second language (L2) learning, including Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), has a long-established tradition. However, recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) have raised new questions regarding its acceptance and pedagogical value among language learners. Previous research generally reports positive learner attitudes towards AI across educational contexts, yet studies focusing specifically on L2 learners, particularly in the Croatian context, remain limited. The present study investigates university students' attitudes toward the use of AI in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The sample included 93 English language majors at the University of Zadar. Data were collected using an adapted version of Shoufan's (2023) questionnaire, based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis 1989). The results indicate overall mixed attitudes toward AI tools, with relatively low levels of behavioural intention, perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness. No significant gender differences were found, while third-year students demonstrated more positive attitudes than first-year students. Participants also expressed concerns regarding the accuracy of AI-generated information and the reliability of cited sources. Despite these concerns, qualitative analysis revealed that most students intended to continue using AI tools in the future. These findings provide insights into learners' attitudes toward AI in L2 learning and highlight the need for critical and pedagogically informed integration of AI tools in language education.

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Keywords: artificial intelligence (AI), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), learner attitudes, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), higher education

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Reimagining Urban Belonging: Chicanx Identity, Language, and Racialised Citizenship in Netflix's *Gentefied*

This paper positions *Gentefied* (2020–21) as a key text for exploring new methodological and thematic horizons in contemporary English Studies. Through a microhistorical focus on the Boyle Heights neighbourhood in Los Angeles, the series becomes a lens for examining shifting paradigms of identity, language, and belonging in twenty-first-century US literature and media. By reading the show as a form of digital-era cultural production, the paper highlights how English Studies increasingly engages multilingualism, transnational subjectivities, and platform-based storytelling. Situated within debates on urban transformation and racialised citizenship, *Gentefied* foregrounds the paradoxical positioning of Chicanx communities as both agents and subjects of neoliberal gentrification. The paper argues that the series expands English Studies beyond monolingual and nation-centred frameworks by centring hybrid linguistic practices—particularly Spanglish—as literary and political strategies of resistance. These multilingual dynamics challenge traditional disciplinary boundaries and invite new approaches to textual analysis that account for code-switching, cultural hybridity, and diasporic aesthetics. The presentation further examines how artistic production, panethnic traditions, and entrepreneurial aspiration operate as contested sites of identity negotiation. In doing so, it demonstrates how intra-community tensions—self-gentrification, class mobility, and cultural commodification—complicate celebratory narratives of representation. Particular attention is given to the character of Casimiro Morales, whose storyline illuminates the workings of detention, deportation, and "crimmigration," exposing how undocumented immigrants are constructed as perpetually deportable subjects within the US nation-state. By linking localised neighbourhood struggles to broader structures of global capitalism and racialised governance, this paper argues that *Gentefied* signals a new horizon for English Studies: one that integrates media studies, ethnic studies, urban studies, and critical migration scholarship. Ultimately, the series challenges dominant narratives of the American Dream and reclaims Boyle Heights as a contested archive of Chicanx belonging, cultural resilience, and narrative innovation.

Keywords: *Gentefied*, Chicanx identity, self-gentrification, undocumented status, detention

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A Room of Her Own: Female Desire in Miranda July's *All Fours*

Miranda July's 2024 novel *All Fours* represents a 45-year-old woman artist struggling with midlife and perimenopause, which cause her creative, emotional, and sexual apathy. By focusing on the motif of the room, the talk will explore the novel's relationship to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) to suggest that *All Fours* continues and expands on Woolf's concerns. Famously, Woolf exposes women's inability to express their feelings, desires, and thoughts freely in a world determined by patriarchy, arguing for the need of a space where a woman can think and create in an authentic way. Developing these ideas in a twenty-first-century context, July's novel features an unnamed autodiegetic narrator who discusses her perimenopausal challenges with bold explicitness and frankness, which contributes to a layered, humorous, devastating, and graphic narrative about a woman's life and desires. She embarks on a symbolic journey of self-exploration, which morphs from the initial, and essentially masculine, idea of a cross-country road trip to a three-week stay in a motel room that she renovates to create her own feminine and personal space. In the room, she slowly comes to terms with her desires, fulfilling some and re-directing others, and experiences a sense of liberation from heteronormativity and gendering, all of which propels her toward self-actualisation both as a person and writer.

Keywords: *All Fours*, desire, gender, Miranda July, Virginia Woolf

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Spatial and Economic Liminality in Stephen King's It and 'Salem's Lot.

This paper explores the relationship between liminality and economic decline in two of Stephen King's novels, Salem's Lot and It. The examination of these works reveals how King combines the existential fear surrounding the American psyche of economic instability within liminal spaces. With a critical focus on the American middle class, I explore the manner in which King's narratives effectively unsettle both his protagonists and readers, infusing an element of authenticity into the supernatural elements of his stories. King's subversive critique of middle-class ideals challenges the traditional notion of the American Dream. This paper sheds light on King's manipulation of economic liminality to add depth and complexity to his narratives while contributing to the broader discourse on literature and American culture.

Keywords: liminality, class, American dream, horror

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Addressing Dyslexia and Dysgraphia in Croatian EFL Classrooms: A Case Study of Multisensory Structured Language Intervention

Dyslexia and dysgraphia are among the most prevalent neurodevelopmental learning disorders and present considerable challenges for Croatian students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). These challenges are particularly evident in mastering English orthography, whose deep and irregular grapheme–phoneme correspondences contrast sharply with the transparent phonological system of Croatian. Consequently, phonological processing deficits may significantly hinder learners' decoding and encoding abilities in English, limiting overall language development and academic achievement. Effective instruction therefore requires targeted pedagogical adaptation that moves beyond conventional teaching methods and responds to learners' specific cognitive profiles. This case study investigates the effectiveness of a Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) approach, originally developed by Sparks and Miller (2000), through its implementation with two Croatian high school EFL learners diagnosed with co-occurring dyslexia and dysgraphia. Drawing on established causal models (Morton and Frith 1995) and deficit theories (phonological, double-deficit, magnocellular, and cerebellar), the intervention also aligns with Croatia's legal framework for inclusive education and Hannaford's cerebral dominance framework (1997). Both participants, identified as right-hemisphere dominant learners with strong auditory-visual preferences, completed an eight-week program emphasising systematic grapheme–phoneme integration, cumulative review, structured progression from simple to complex linguistic units, and deliberate overlearning. Pre- and post-intervention assessments demonstrated substantial gains in vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension, as well as measurable improvements in grammar accuracy and reading fluency. Participants also reported increased self-confidence, reduced language-related anxiety, and greater classroom engagement. Although limited in scope, the findings offer preliminary evidence supporting the systematic integration of MSL approach in Croatian EFL context and highlight the importance of linguistically informed adaptations for neurodiverse learners.

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Keywords: dyslexia, dysgraphia, Multisensory Structured Language (MSL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), inclusive education

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Finding the Dark in Grimdark—Rereading Michael Moorcock's *Elric of Melniboné*

The recent proliferation of fantasy fiction has led to an increasing body of scholarly work that seeks to systematise the genre into descriptive categories (Pringle 19). Due to the rapid expansion of fantasy fiction, these categories have been broadened to accommodate both overlooked and emerging fantasy writers. This paper focuses on one such category: grimdark (or "gritty") fantasy, whose emergence is often associated with Glen Cook's *The Black Company Series *(1984-1985) and Joe Abercrombie's *The First Law Trilogy *(2006-2008). In recent years, grimdark fantasy has attracted academic attention due to its departure from what critics call the "post-Tolkienian fantasy" (Persson 71). The main criticism directed at such fantasy characterises it as "escapist" and argues that its only function is to enable the reader to escape reality (Carroll 59) through the usage of neomedieval tropes which are almost always romanticised (Carroll 61). These tropes are linked to the influence of J. R. R. Tolkien, whose works have been criticised by authors such as George R. R. Martin (Carroll; Persson). Long before Martin, one of the key figures of the "sword-and-sorcery" genre, Michael Moorcock, wrote an essay entitled "Epic Pooh" in which he criticised the works of both Tolkien and his successors as having "little wit and much whimsy" (181). Moorcock's *Elric *saga is a direct departure from and rejection of dominant high fantasy, including many elements now recognised as grimdark—the rejection of the hero trope, the emphasis on cruelty, "violence, nihilism" (Persson 70), but also "disillusionment" and "powerlessness" (Persson 71). However, this connection remains underexplored. This paper, therefore, argues that Moorcock's *Elric *functions as a crucial reimagining of high fantasy—a reimagining which set the foundation for contemporary developments now recognised as grimdark fantasy.

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Keywords: fantasy, grimdark, Tolkien, Moorcock

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From Decoration to Communication: A Longitudinal Analysis of English in the Linguistic Landscape of Zadar (2011–2026)

As a global lingua franca, English saturates public spaces worldwide, serving functions ranging from the purely pragmatic to the highly symbolic (Backhaus; Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau; Cenoz and Gorter; Coluzzi; Huebner). Within the Croatian context, previous Linguistic Landscape (LL) research has frequently framed English through a lens of cultural tension: as a vehicle for "Americanization" (Gradečak-Erdeljić and Zlomislić), an "invasive" force that threatens to displace local lexical equivalents (Stolac; Stolac and Hlavač), or conversely, as a utilitarian tool designed to facilitate communication in hubs of international tourism (Oštarić). However, few studies have moved beyond these binary ideological critiques to examine the diachronic development and communicative complexity of English *in situ*. This paper addresses that gap by presenting a longitudinal qualitative analysis of the use of English in the LL of Zadar, utilising a robust dataset of photographic evidence and ethnographic observations collected on several occasions between 2011 and 2026. By tracking the evolution of English usage over this fifteen-year period, the study categorises its shifting sociolinguistic roles—moving from a "neutral" auxiliary tool for seasonal tourism to a permanent, more nuanced marker of neoliberal globalisation and lifestyle branding. Specifically, the analysis scrutinises the pragmatic efficacy of English signage, investigating the "communicative gap" between intended messaging and actual reception. It questions whether these multilingual texts are functionally accessible to their diverse target audiences or if they primarily serve as a form of "linguistic decoration" intended to project an aura of modernity and prestige. The findings offer critical insights into how Zadar's urban space reflects broader Croatian trends in the ongoing negotiation between the preservation of local identity and the pressures of global integration.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, sociolinguistics, Zadar, Global English, longitudinal analysis

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Using Students' Perspectives in Developing Business English Course Materials

The importance of developing customised English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course materials has been researched far and wide by teachers and researchers in recent decades (Hutchinson and Waters 21; Lekaj Lubina et al. 1195; Pašalić and Plančić 210; Srinivas 62). Significant findings point to the contribution of student perspective in ESP course material development (Atigh and Khabbazi 56). The aim of this study is to use student perspective to improve and develop Business English teaching materials. The study will use the mixed method design where participants, i.e., the students taking the Business English course, will be given a questionnaire to fill in about the suitability of the current ESP course book that has been developed around the specific content area topics taught in the Management study course curricula at the University of Zadar. Also, the students will be asked to suggest possible modifications to the course materials that might be useful in customising language activities to better reflect the specific communication needs in the Management study course. The results of the study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of how to improve the course materials that will suit specific and current ESP communication requirements. An important assumption here is that ESP teachers do not always have the complete firsthand insight into the current content area subjects being taught at universities (Wu and Badger 1-2; Nur Fitria 53-54). In conclusion, student perspective is a useful "tool" in course material development (Dima and Raluca Stefan 80) because it helps ESP teachers address important aspects in the design of ESP course materials and notice possible inconsistencies that might be otherwise overlooked. Incorporating student perspectives might help bridge the gap between ESP content and course-related communication needs that can be particular and prone to dynamic and content-dependent changes within the business profession.

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Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, Business English, course material development, student perspective

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Designing a Questionnaire on EFL Teachers' Motivational Strategies in the Croatian Educational Context

Motivational strategies are activities and interventions that foreign language (FL) teachers employ in classes to either enhance or maintain the level of their students' motivation. These strategies correlate with students' achievement in a FL as proven in a range of studies (Gardner; Cheng and Dörnyei; Bernaus et al.; Moskovsky et al.; Waninge et al.). The design of the questionnaire used to collect and measure motivational strategies among teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) within the Croatian secondary school context will be presented in the paper. It was used as the instrument to measure teachers' frequency of motivational strategies use and students' perceptions of use of these strategies in the EFL classes in a doctor's thesis research. It was grounded in the theoretical framework proposed by Dörnyei and the instrument developed by Cheng and Dörnyei, which included a self-report questionnaire comprising 48 items categorised into ten macro-strategies. The questionnaire was not used in glottodidactic research in Croatia prior to the mentioned research. A pilot study was conducted among 110 secondary school EFL teachers in order to translate, culturally adapt, and validate Cheng and Dörnyei's instrument for the Croatian educational system. Following the pilot, a refined 46-item version of the questionnaire was designed and administered in the main research to both teachers and their students. These items were categorised into nine macro-strategies. The process of designing the questionnaire and its final version can be useful and valuable to young or experienced researchers in the field of glottodidactics in Croatia as well as to practicing teachers interested in a comparative analysis of teachers' self-assessed frequency of motivational strategy use and students' perceptions of those same practices.

Keywords: EFL teachers' motivational strategies, questionnaire design, teacher perceptions, student perceptions, Croatian educational context

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Contrasting Desire: Shakespeare's Subversion of the Petrarchan Idealism in *10 Things I Hate About You*

The popular 1999 romantic comedy *10 Things I Hate About You *(dir. Gil Junger) is widely known as the adaptation of William Shakespeare's play The Taming of the Shrew. The shrew in the film is Kat Stratford, a strong-willed young woman who must be seduced in order for Bianca, her younger sister who is considered an ideal woman, to be allowed to date. Helping his friend conquer Kat's younger sister, the main hero, Patrick Verona, devises a ploy to seduce Kat but they eventually fall in love and become a couple themselves. The present paper aims to analyse the film in a new light, that is, to show that the popular romantic comedy is influenced not only by Shakespeare's play(s) but also his sonnets. More specifically, the characters and the relationship dynamics within the film's two romantic storylines, between Kat and Patrick and Bianca and Cameron, respectively, will be used to juxtapose Francesco Petrarch's and William Shakespeare's selected sonnets. While Petrarch's sonnets envision his beloved woman as a flawless angel inside and out, attributing to her all the superlative qualities and otherwise unattainable beauty standards, Shakespeare uses Anti-Petrarchism to offer a much more realistic portrayal of the woman but without denying her attractiveness, beauty, and the speaker's love for her. This paper will show these differences in the two poets' attitudes to the object of their desire, and how the film's two romantic couples and their heroines embody these two contrasting views.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Petrarch, sonnets, desire, *10 Things I Hate About You*

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Gender Inclusivity in Translation from English: Attitudes Towards Experimental Translation Strategies

Efforts to make English a gender-fair language have been undertaken for half a century, challenging in particular the "male-as-norm" principle in professional titles and generic references to humans. As a language with notional gender, English achieves gender inclusivity relatively easily, especially when compared to languages with grammatical gender encoded not only in nouns and pronouns, but also in adjectives and verbs. For languages with grammatical gender, inclusive proposals have also been made, but with varying success, making gender-fair translation an ongoing challenge. The problem is most acute when the English source text does not reveal a person's gender because it is unknown, concealed, irrelevant or, in particular, when referring to agender or non-binary people. Since gender-fair language is associated with "non-discrimination, recognition and equality" (European Parliament 4), this issue deserves the attention of democratic societies. Translation has always been a vehicle for innovation, impacting not only the language systems but also the literary, cultural, political, scientific, and social systems of the receiving communities. Experimental translation, especially of literary works, can thus encourage the exploration of topics that are underaddressed due to societal and/or ideological pressures. This study uses an excerpt from Martha Wells' 2017 SF novella All Systems Red, featuring a genderless android narrator, to explore gender-related translation strategies for Croatian, a language with grammatical gender and a male linguistic bias. Four strategies are used: the "male-as-norm", as in a recently published translation, the feminine gender, and two neosystems. Research participants, some of whom identify as non-binary, are asked to assess the readability, humour, and engagement of each version, and the likeability and wittiness of the narrator, stating which version they prefer and would continue reading. The results are expected to advance language inclusivity efforts, especially when it comes to highly gendered languages.

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Keywords: translation, gender inclusivity, gender fairness, language policy, neosystem

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The Ignorant Schoolmaster of Hal Hartley's *Surviving Desire*

In Hal Hartley's 1991 mid-length film *Surviving Desire*, a university literature professor Jude embraces his intellectual and emotional ignorance, exploring the limits of knowledge and illustrating that knowing is neither sufficient nor the ultimate goal of education. The film appeared the same year as the English translation of Jacques Rancière's seminal book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (*Le Maître ignorant: Cinq leçons sur l'émancipation intellectuelle*, first published in French in 1987), which examines the transformative potential of teachers consciously performing ignorance within institutional contexts. This presentation explores and analyses the dialogue between Hartley's film and Rancière's book, as both share the idea of the transformative effect of performing ignorance as an emancipatory tool in the context of institutional education and personal growth. According to Rancière, teachers do not primarily teach through explanation—indeed, he suggests they teach least effectively in this way—but rather through the deliberate assumption of performative roles that shape emotional exchanges with their students. By stepping out of the privileged position of "those who know and explain," teachers can initiate new strategies for both intellectual and emotional emancipation. This approach involves displaying mutual vulnerability, challenging traditional hierarchies, and fostering an environment of shared discovery. The key question, then, is to what extent ignorance, as a form of intellectual vulnerability, can be intentionally performed and under what conditions this performance is most effective. A similar dynamic is embodied in the figure of the fool, famously analysed by Bakhtin, who subverts, mocks, and critiques established social orders. By disregarding the norms and conventions that uphold the status quo, the fool—or, in this case, Hartley's "comic teacher"—illuminates alternative ways of understanding the world and its hidden social and emotional logics, ultimately suggesting paths towards emancipatory transformation.

Keywords: ignorance, performance, knowledge, emancipation, comic teacher

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Haunted Minds: Trauma and the Noir Psyche in *In a Lonely Place*

The post-war period in American cinema is marked by increasingly pessimistic portrayals of domestic life, which gradually undermined the previously sacrosanct notion of the home. This development gave rise to a cycle of transgeneric films commonly categorised as film noir, a body of work that explores the darker undercurrents of American post-war society. The era was characterised by significant social upheaval, largely driven by the expanded role of women during World War II. As women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, traditional gender dynamics were disrupted, challenging established societal norms. Film noir can be understood, in part, as a response to these transformations, introducing new character archetypes such as the femme fatale and the psychologically disturbed male protagonist. The latter figure often reflects the lingering effects of trauma, manifested in psychological deterioration and unstable behaviour. This paper examines In a Lonely Place, a seminal work by Nicholas Ray, widely regarded as one of Hollywood's most distinctive auteurs. The film serves as a representative example of the final phase of film noir, during which more balanced character portrayals gave way to increasingly unstable and pathological figures. As Paul Schrader observes, the third phase of film noir (1949–1953) is defined by "psychotic action and suicidal impulse," encompassing films such as Gun Crazy, The Big Heat, Detective Story, White Heat, and In a Lonely Place. The protagonist of Ray's film, Dixon Steele, exemplifies the (anti)hero of this late noir phase, whose character undergoes a profound process of psychological disintegration. This study analyses the film through multiple interdisciplinary frameworks, including stylistic, existential, and feminist approaches—each central to film noir scholarship. Particular emphasis is placed on the concept of trauma, drawing on the theoretical contributions of Cathy Caruth and Kirby Farrell.

Keywords: film noir, trauma, Nicholas Ray, disintegration, psychology

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From Page to Screen: The Role of Fate in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Its Film Adaptation

Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, subtitled *A Pure Woman*, was first published in 1891 to a very mixed reception. Victorian society, easily offended and certainly not used to sympathising with "fallen women," real-life or fictional like the eponymous heroine of Hardy's narrative, was wary of allowing (mostly female) readers to consume this tragic and haunting story. Criticised for the portrayal of an innocent country girl's moral decline and its "improper explicitness," the novel oscillates between positioning young Tess as an object of male sexual desire, on the one hand, and deeply empathising with her plight as a perpetual victim of hypocritical societal standards and fate, on the other. The central concern of both the source novel and its 1979 film adaptation, directed by Roman Polanski, is the role of fate and its inescapable influence on the main protagonist's life. Drawing on the methodological framework of adaptation theory, this presentation examines the principal features of both works, offering a comparative analysis of their stylistic and narrative elements. It also situates the film within the broader context of Polanski's oeuvre, with particular reference to earlier adaptations such as *Rosemary's Baby* and *Macbeth*. The study focuses on the distinctive characteristics of each work, with special emphasis on the treatment of fate and the psychological construction of the central character. Furthermore, it evaluates the extent to which the film adaptation preserves the dominant atmosphere of Hardy's novel, a criterion often regarded as central to assessing the effectiveness of literary adaptations.

Keywords: Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, fate, film adaptation, Roman Polanski

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Cruel Optimism and Social Limits of Desire in *Winesburg, Ohio*

This paper will offer a new reading and interpretation of several short stories in Sherwood Anderson's short story collection *Winesburg, Ohio: A Group of Tales of Ohio Small Town Life* (1919). Drawing on Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011), which brings together affect theory with broader social and political concerns, the paper argues that in the stories "Hands," "Mother," and "Adventure," the protagonists' attachments to various forms of desired stability, (expression, freedom, and love), function as instances of cruel optimism. These attachments, paradoxically, sustain their sense of purpose while simultaneously obstructing the characters' ability to recognise the structural conditions that render their aspirations unattainable.

In contrast to psychoanalytic models of desire associated with Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, which locate desire within psychological processes or symbolic structures of lack, this reading foregrounds the social and historical production of desire. Rather than treating the characters' struggles as primarily internal, it situates them within the material and cultural constraints of early twentieth-century American life. In this way, the paper moves past an individual psychological framework and positions Berlant's ideas well before late capitalism, suggesting that the instability of promises such as social belonging, romantic fulfilment, and personal freedom was already embedded in earlier socio-historical formations of small-town mentalities and expectations.

Keywords: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, desire

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Case Study of War Metaphors in Political Discourse during the 2019 European Parliament Election

This case study investigates the use of the conceptual metaphor politics is war occurring in the British media coverage of the 2019 European Parliament Election. The analysis is based on a corpus of 80 newspaper articles downloaded from freely accessible online news portals in the UK. The texts were manually analysed to identify instances of war metaphors and classify their sub-metaphors (e.g., political activity is a target, political campaign is a battlefield, politicians are warriors). Drawing on the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics, the study combines Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory to examine how political processes are interpreted using conflict-based frameworks. Grounded in the work of scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson, Musolff, Charteris-Black, the analysis aims to explore both cognitive and discursive functions of war metaphors in shaping political communication. The source domain of war has already demonstrated a high degree of productivity, as it enables complex electoral processes to be understood through familiar and readily interpretable concepts such as battle, strategy, victory, and defeat. Such framing not only increases comprehensibility for voters, who can easily relate to the imagery, but also emphasises its persuasive impact by stressing rivalry, dominance, and the display of power over opponents. The 2019 European Parliament election took place during a period characterised by an ongoing Brexit debate, which caused political deadlock and divisions within society. As a result, this election campaign was often regarded as an indirect vote on EU membership, which contributed to a highly conflict-oriented media discourse.

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Keywords: conceptual metaphor, political discourse, war metaphor, election campaign

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"The Sense of an Ending": Contemporary American Fictions and Apocalyptic Horizons

In a capitalist and atomised culture, characterised by the prefix "post-" (post-postmodernism, post-irony, post-identity, post-millennialism, post-feminism, post-apocalypse), it seems difficult to find stable foundations on which to settle. Literature is haunted by and imbued with the "sense of an ending" to borrow Frank Kermode's expression: "although for us the End has perhaps lost its naïve imminence, its shadow still lies on the crises of our fictions; we may speak of it as immanent" (Kermode 2000, 6). The meanders of the apocalypse—doom, the end, spectrality, darkness, underworld, catastrophe, crisis, unveiling, transcendence/transdescendence—shed light on moments of revelation, feelings of finitude, and ambivalent awareness of catastrophe that haunt contemporary fictions. The apocalypse invokes the notion of the horizon not only as a teleological end, but also as a field of potentialities that characterise the indefinite world that is about to come to an end. The representation of intimate apocalypse(s) leads to the consideration of the ways in which fictions can approach the figure that Giorgio Agamben refers to as "the contemporary," this individual able to detect the beam of darkness coming from their own time. Contemporary American fictions contribute to the analysis of a society in crisis through the writing of vulnerable, ordinary subjects threatened by dissolution and looming collapse, and the representation of a troubled mindspace. Some unexpected events can also shift the writer's perspective, history then influencing stories. Literature can then conjure the powers of creation both as a means of escape and as a way to explore a more global perspective in confusing, threatening times, envisioning "precarious present, fragile futures" (Botha 2014).

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Keywords: apocalypse(s), contemporary fictions, United States, crisis, narration

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American Horror Fiction in the Nineteenth Century and Beyond: Genre (Dis)Continuities and Questions of Race, Gender, and Class in the Works of E.A. Poe and H.P. Lovecraft

In the mid-19th and early 20th centuries, Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft laid the foundation of modern horror narratives. Today, their works are the backbone of the horror genre production worldwide. Edgar Allan Poe, much like other American writers of a similar period, transferred the European Gothic heritage to the context of a developing American culture, but transformed it into a distinctive poetics that transcended its spatio-temporal conditions. About a century later, H. P. Lovecraft followed the established Poean rules of the Gothic/horror genre, moulding them to the historical and cultural context of the United States in the early 20th century. The innovations that both authors introduced into the horror genre (Poe's short-story form that better suited the unity and impact of the effect a horror tale should achieve, and Lovecraft's logic of "cosmic horror") calcified and outlived both authors' literary productions. The peculiarities of their poetics, however, were determined by their socioeconomic positions, i.e., formed under the strong impact of the economic, cultural, and social contexts of the time. Through a close reading of Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness*, this paper will thus try to achieve several goals: a) place both authors and their works within the continuity of the horror genre development, while paying respect to its specific rules, Gothic heritage and a late-19th/early 20th-century shift into science fiction; b) analyse their respective poetics and formal aspects of works more thoroughly as symptoms of specific historical and cultural moments, market logic, and the authors' class position; and c) support the claim about the contextual impact on Poe's and Lovecraft's work at the level of content, discussing the way in which both authors addressed racial and gender matters.

Keywords: E.A. Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, horror genre, race, gender

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Grammatical Category Differences in English-Hungarian Code Switching

In this paper, we present the results of a study of intraword code-switching of English words occurring in a Hungarian context, based on the corpus of Hungarian YouTube podcasts. We suggest that different English word categories, especially nouns, adjectives, and verbs, display different suffixation patterns: nouns may enter the Hungarian context unsuffixed, e.g., *pick-up truck**, *or carry only inflectional –; adjectives may or may not be suffixed with derivational suffixes, e.g., full-os*; *while verbs always have to be followed by a verbalising derivational suffix, e.g., *trash talk-ol* or *live-oz*. We are going to argue, following Kiefer (2000), that code-switched English verb roots that do not occur as nouns in Hungarian can only be incorporated as verbs in derived forms, nouns represent the other extreme, as they never receive a nominalising suffix in a code-switching environment. Adjectives, on the other hand, will sometimes follow this pattern, but on other occasions they will not receive an adjectival Hungarian suffix at all. We point out that these phenomena very closely match the behaviour of the same categories in the case of English loanwords in Hungarian, following Kiefer (2000). This will lead us to conclude that loanwords and code-switched words do not behave as isolated paradigms following completely different patterns as claimed by Poplack (2004; 2012), but they constitute a continuum in which the same principles are valid.

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Keywords: English, Hungarian, code-switching, morpho-phonological integration, grammatical categories

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Seduction of Many Tongues in New Orleans: Implications of Reading Multilingual Literary Heritage of Port City

The cultural history of the port city of New Orleans has been the focus of increased interdisciplinary research in recent decades, following the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, at times accompanied by problematic public discourse calling into question the city's survival. Additionally, the city's celebration of its Tricentennial in 2018 provided an added opportunity for scholars to systematically reevaluate the local canon and its significance within the broader national context. Transnational literary scholarship, in particular, has been exploring new frontiers in understanding the city's longstanding and historically multilingual textual heritage due to its status of a port city, as well as a former colony that had changed hands several times among competing imperial powers before being integrated into the US. By applying cross-cultural aesthetic perspectives to a wider range of the local canon or expanding their scope beyond Anglo-American authors to include texts written in languages such as French, Spanish, or German, these new transnational approaches offer new insights into the ambiguous cultural heritage of this complex port city that often include and go beyond its perceived authenticity and exceptionalism. This presentation will examine the implications, challenges, but also stipulations posed by such approaches to different modes of reading and literary historiography, as well as their contribution to transnational American Studies.

Keywords: New Orleans, port city, literary heritage, print culture, transnational American Studies

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The Issue of Authorship in the *Game of Thrones* Universe

In contemporary transmedia narratives, which are products of the snowball effect, the question of the author is a problematic one. In the case of *Game of Thrones*, for example, audiences tend to argue that one of the reasons why the last few seasons of the adaptation did not live up to their expectations is because it diverged from the source material, since Martin's epic fantasy saga is still not finished by the author. Thus, they focus on the author of the literary texts, while when they are talking about the adaptation, they mostly focus on the showrunners, David Benioff and D.B. Weiss. This question is even further complicated when we take the other entries of the franchise into consideration, be it Martin's other books on the Westeros, like *Fire & Blood*, *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms*, *The World of Ice and Fire*, or the HBO adaptations like *House of the Dragon *and *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms.* However, in the case of meganarrations, several authors are present in the creation process, including not only the originating author and the showrunners, but the scriptwriters, directors, and all the creative personnel who participate in the creation of different media entries. In this presentation, I will argue that since these media entries are controlled by a particular brand, the concept of authorship by branding should be introduced, since contemporary franchises are not controlled by a single author but rather a company that decides which media entries are official and which are not.

Keywords: Game of Thrones, transmedia storytelling, meganarration, authorship, HBO

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Beyond the Anthropocene: Scripting Ecocentric Social Futures in River of Ghosts and Gardens in the Dunes

Moving beyond the Anthropocene, this paper examines the representation of rivers and forests in Robert Franklin Gish's River of Ghosts (2013) and Leslie Marmon Silko's Gardens in the Dunes (1999) as relational spaces that unsettle anthropocentric understandings of nature. Drawing on Eduardo Kohn's (2013) concept of the forest as a semiotic community and Robin Wall Kimmerer's (2013, 2024) ethics of reciprocity, it identifies the literary modalities employed to challenge Western nature-culture binaries.

Both novels portray ecosystems as active agents endowed with sovereignty and historical memory, capable of shaping human destiny. In River of Ghosts, the river emerges as an archive of ancestral presence and the unseen force fulfilling an Indigenous prophecy. Gardens in the Dunes showcases an intimate botanical relationality, where desert vegetation and protective forests offer sites of resistance to colonial violence. In this sense, both narratives actively confront ecological dystopias by dismantling the objectified, Anthropocene landscape that reduces more-than-human entities to passive commodities.

Furthermore, the authors encourage readers to experience natural environments as living subjects through sensory poetics. Utilizing synesthesia as an aesthetic strategy, the narratives blur the boundaries between human perception and more-than-human experience, cultivating a sensorially grounded ecological attunement where environments appear affectively alive.

Ultimately, by articulating Indigenous relational ontologies that resonate with recent developments in the environmental humanities and multispecies studies, Gish and Silko invite readers to inhabit alternative ways of knowing, thereby scripting ecocentric social futures where shared worlds are continually renewed through reciprocal acts of care and survival.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Indigenous Ontologies, More-than-Human, Ethic of Reciprocity, Ecopoetics

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"The horizon of language": Trauma and Formal Experimentation in Jenny Diski's *In Gratitude*

Jenny Diski *In Gratitude* (2016) is the memoir that the writer completed right before she died of an aggressive cancer and pulmonary fibrosis, published shortly after her death, with two postscripts written by her husband, "the Poet" (12), and her daughter.

Though Diski herself refers to it ironically as yet another "cancer diary" (19), a genre that, by then, was a cliché, this paper argues that *In Gratitude* eschews easy definition, being far more complex, difficult to categorise and highly experimental. It is a hybrid text that fluctuates between different genres—cancer diary, memoir of youth, and trauma narrative—and linguistic registers, moving from medical and scientific discourse to discussions of literature and profound philosophical meditations on life, death, and time.

The memoir revolves around two main narrative axes: first, the account of her illness, the "apocalypse" that began when her "Onc Doc" (15) announced that she had an inoperable cancer, prompting her to write her memoir. Second, the harrowing memories of her traumatic childhood with her abusive parents who more or less abandoned her, and of her youth, when she suffered from depression and was in and out of psychiatric hospitals—alongside the story of her intricate relationship with the novelist Doris Lessing, her quasi-adoptive mother, and their difficult yet formative relationship.

This paper examines how Diski's formal experimentation resists the consolations and narrative coherence typically expected of illness memoir; it argues that the writer embraces fragmentation to capture the immediacy of lived crisis and express the unrepresentable. The memoir mimics the structure of trauma in its suspension between attempts to convey the unsettling event and the figurative evocation of the symptomatic response through formal and stylistic innovation.

Memory and trauma studies provide the theoretical framework to analyse the memoir's themes, while Irene Kacandes's and Julia Novak's theorisation of experimental life-writing will be used to examine how Diski's hybrid form challenges conventional autobiographical modes.

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Keywords: trauma narrative, experimental life-writing, illness memoir, memory studies

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Silence, Responsibility, and Harm: An Interdisciplinary Reading of Alice Munro's Mother-Child Stories

Positioned at the intersection of literary studies, cultural criticism, and social psychology, this paper proposes an interdisciplinary reading of Alice Munro's short fiction that speaks to the expanding horizons of contemporary English Studies. Alice Munro has long occupied a central place in Anglophone literary culture, yet recent biographical revelations invite renewed critical engagement with the ethical dimensions of her work. Focusing on "Deep-Holes" (2009), the paper examines how the story stages the gradual erosion of the mother–child bond through patterns of silence, emotional withdrawal, rationalisation, and displaced responsibility. Drawing on Albert Bandura's theory of moral disengagement, the analysis shows how literary narrative can illuminate psychological mechanisms that enable harm while obscuring accountability. Rather than treating the story solely as a representation of family estrangement, the paper reads it as a complex exploration of the ways responsibility is narratively negotiated, denied, or redistributed within intimate relationships. This approach highlights the productive dialogue between literary analysis and concepts from social psychology, demonstrating how interdisciplinary methods can deepen our understanding of characterisation, narrative ethics, and affective distance. By situating "Deep-Holes" within Munro's broader treatment of familial fracture, repression, and unspoken violence, the paper argues that contemporary literary studies benefit from frameworks that cross disciplinary boundaries and respond to newly emerging ethical questions. In this way, the paper contributes to ongoing conversations about how English Studies can renew itself through integrative, critically responsive approaches to literature, culture, and human behaviour.

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Keywords: Canadian literature, interdisciplinarity, social psychology, moral disengagement, narrative ethics

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Catastrophe, Nature, and Regeneration in Samuel Beckett's Major Plays

While Samuel Beckett has often been read through the lens of absurdist and existentialist aesthetics, recent scholarship situates his work within the historical contexts of the Cold War, nuclear anxiety, and environmental crisis, which open up new ecocritical and environmentalist readings. As early as 1961, Theodor W. Adorno, in "Trying to Understand Endgame", attempted to historicise Beckett's major play by linking its desolate, infertile landscape to the aftermath of the Second World War; however, it is only in the last two decades that ecological readings of Beckett's theatre have become more established. Focusing on Endgame, Happy Days, and Waiting for Godot, this presentation argues that the plays stage environments shaped by an unnamed catastrophe, marked by ecological collapse and virtually no chance of regeneration. An implied, unspecified catastrophe precedes the dramatic worlds of these plays, reflected in the transformation of temporal and spatial laws and ecological depletion. In the sterile landscape of Endgame, no plant ever sprouts, the sea is tideless, and animal life is reduced to insects and parasites. Happy Days presents a similarly inhospitable, desert-like setting, in which Winnie remains stuck in a mound and Willie has mutated into a crawling, animal-like lifeform. In Waiting for Godot, an equally sparse setting suggests minimal regeneration in the sprouting of leaves on the single existing tree. Taken together, these plays confirm that Beckett's theatre can be read as staging not abstract absurdity but the material consequences of catastrophe on nature and all forms of life. Read in the context of the contemporary climate crisis and growing environmental concerns, Beckett's plays also acquire renewed urgency, as their stark landscapes and transformed forms of life echo present anxieties.

Keywords: Samuel Beckett, ecological collapse, postwar theatre, catastrophe

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LOVE IS . . .? Conceptual Metaphors at the Intersection of Cognitive Linguistic and Philosophical Thought

Philosophers' interest in language is essentially grounded in the assumption that, by investigating the meaning of a linguistic structure, one might uncover the essence of the concept behind it. Therefore, the point where cognitive linguistics and philosophy meet is reflected in the goal to shed light on how meaning is communicated by means of language, and to explain the interaction between language, thought, and reality. From the cognitive semantic perspective, everyday metaphors are seen as some of the most productive structures whose use allows insight into how the human mind makes sense of reality (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Metaphorical mappings include relations between source domains (typically more concrete) and target domains (usually more abstract). In this paper the focus is placed on LOVE as the target domain. The primary aim is to analyse the extent to which the most influential philosophers' discussions on the concept of love are reflected in conceptual metaphors with LOVE as the target domain, as identified by cognitive semanticists in contemporary language use. Through the use of the discursive method (Stanojević 2013: 132-139), the analysis includes a close reading of texts related to "philosophy of love" (Singer 2009), starting from Plato's *Symposium* to the most prominent contemporary philosophers' texts. Besides the authors' linguistic choices in discussing the concept of love, what is also analysed are classifications of types of love (e.g., erotic, courtly, romantic), as they may be related to the cognitive semantic notion of prototype and, thus, facilitate our understanding of the cognitive organization of ways in which love has been conceptualized metaphorically. Finally, the collected data are evaluated in the context of the most prominent conceptual metaphors related to love in contemporary language use, as identified by cognitive semanticists, such as Kövecses (2000).

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Keywords: cognitive linguistics, philosophy, conceptual metaphors, love

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The Uncanny After: Spatial and Temporal Dislocation in a Post-9/11 Novel

This paper examines Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* by drawing on Sigmund Freud's interpretation of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) as the return of the repressed—something once familiar resurfaces in altered and unsettling form (Freud 132). While the uncanny has often been approached as a psychological category, this paper puts forward that, in this seminal fictional account of one of the most pivotal moments in American society (and literature), the uncanny is fundamentally reflected through the spatial and temporal dislocation. By focusing on the characters' trauma and attempting to continue living after the September 11 attacks, the analysis shows that the destruction of the urban fabric of New York produces a distorted familiarity, in which the known environment becomes estranged, disoriented, and turned inside out. The once enclosed returns to the open, and the boundary between inside and outside collapses, generating the sense of uncanny that is both physical and perceptual. At the same time, the past persistently haunts the present through lingering imagery, memory, and reenactment. The survivors and witnesses of the attacks re-experience the event, never moving forward. Coupled with DeLillo framing the story within the aftermath of the attacks, there is a suggestion of the breakdown of spatio-temporal continuity which positions the uncanny as the structural principle of the post-9/11 trauma.

Keywords: the uncanny, post 9/11 fiction, Falling Man, spatiality, temporality

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Speaking in Code: Digital Slang and the Generational Divide

This study, descriptive in nature, investigates the spread of digital slang on social media and how it impacts the way different generations use language. While this social and linguistic phenomenon has been widely observed, its role in widening the communication gap between generations is still not fully understood. The study uses a survey-based research design to analyse patterns of understanding and usage of digital slang among participants (N = 101) of different generations. The findings reveal a clear divide: younger participants show higher levels of comprehension and use; older participants, however, report limited familiarity and often perceive it as alienating or unnecessary. The use of specific social media platforms seemingly accentuates the divide, as younger participants report using primarily TikTok, which is the main platform for the propagation of slang, and older participants often report using Facebook, which younger generations rarely mention. These differences contribute to overall miscommunication between generations, with digital slang functioning as a tool for connection within certain groups and as a source of exclusion for others. Together, these findings shed light on how digital slang influences language use on and beyond social media. It is, therefore, not just an online language variety but a linguistic practice that shapes generational identities. For that very reason, it is increasingly used in marketing to create a sense of relatability and connect with younger audiences.

Keywords: digital slang, generational divide, social media, intergenerational communication, digital linguistics

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"To the elements, be free": Trauma and Incarceration in Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* (*The Tempest* Retold, 2016)

To commemorate the quadricentennial of the Bard's death, the Hogarth Press devised the Hogarth Shakespeare Project, commissioning acclaimed and auspicious contemporary authors to write retellings of Shakespeare's renowned plays in prose. One of the project's collaborators, Margaret Atwood, appropriated a late romance, The Tempest, as a novel, Hag-Seed (2016). Reflecting on the process, Atwood put forward an interpretation of the play as a work about prisons (Atwood) and, in her adaptation, listed nine "unique incarceration events" found in the source text (125). Unsurprisingly, then, the motifs of confinement, isolation, and trauma are predominant in her rewriting that relocates the original to a contemporary correctional institution. This paper explores the representation of imprisonment and trauma in Hag-Seed, with the emphasis on the portrayal of therapeutic possibilities of literature and theatre. Engaging in a metaliterary dialogue with Shakespeare, Atwood's characters experience repetition with difference that allows them to channel their grief. Reading and enacting the Bard's classics, they can articulate what is difficult to voice and are able to perceive traumatic events in relation to another's story. In addition, the inmates-turned-actors acquire new identities on the stage, thus symbolically escaping the roles of convicts that define and constrain them. Finally, Atwood allows for subversion in the penitentiary dynamics, as prisoners turn Bentham's notion of the panopticon on its head and coerce corrupted figures of authority into following their orders. Ultimately, I argue that Atwood built on her reading of The Tempest as a text that focuses on instances of captivity by reimagining it in a correctional facility, simultaneously challenging the restrictive perception of jailhouse as exclusively a place of penalty, and evoking the healing potential of the arts to cope with misery and remorse.

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Keywords: trauma, prison, Atwood, Shakespeare, *Hag-Seed, The Tempest*

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The Geometry of Ethics: Fractal Narrative and Moral Choice in *The Witcher 3: Blood and Wine*

The Witcher 3's expansion story, Blood and Wine, remains notable for an unpleasant, binary ethical dilemma. As the liminal figure of the witcher, an augmented human who patrols the border between human and nonhuman by killing "monsters," both siding with humanity and siding against it result in an unsatisfactory ending. The aim of this paper is to apply "fractal logics" (Livingstone 69) to this dilemma and see how they can shape ethical and epistemological questions. Fractality is a type of self-referential structure in which the whole is the same as or similar to each of its individual parts and which can replicate infinitely. It is usually thought of as the "geometry of nature" and "chaos" (Mandelbrot). While a term pertaining mostly to mathematics and biology, fractality has also been investigated in literary theory by, for example, Ira Livingstone and N. Katherine Hayles. In "Chaos as Orderly Disorder: Shifting Ground in Contemporary Literature and Science," Hayles writes about chaotic "complex systems," which remain "extremely sensitive to initial conditions." Applied to *Blood and Wine*, Hayles's notion of complex systems complicates the simple anthropocentric binary of human/nonhuman in the witcher's world, which came into being through the very geometrically described "Conjunction of the Spheres" (The Witcher 3), a mixing of human and nonhuman dimensions. While tracking "fearful symmetries" (Livingstone) and "sticky autoreferentialities" (Hayles) through Blood and Wine and its human/nonhuman schism, this paper aims to show how fractal geometry can be ethically viable in navigating a video game narrative as a "complex system" (Hayles).

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Keywords: fractal narrative, ethics, epistemology, video games, game studies

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"The Air Shudders with Hours": Urban Pastoral in Tobias Hill's Poetry

This paper analyses the urban-pastoral dichotomy in the poetry of contemporary writer Tobias Hill, particularly his collections *Midnight in the City of Clocks* (1996) and *Nocturne in Chrome & Sunset Yellow* (2006). In his poems, the pastoral blends into the city, which results in a hybrid that is often described as "urban pastoral." Drawing on Raymond Williams's analysis of the rural and urban landscape in *The Country and the City* (1973) and Richard Sennett's account of a decline in public interaction in *The Fall of Public Man* (1977), the paper examines the ways in which the urban design affects and shapes human behaviour. Moreover, it analyses the effects of metropolitan environment on nature, which previously represented an escape from the city or, in the words of Williams, "an idyllic retreat" (281), but which now coexists with the urban milieu. The modern city, a densely populated area, induces a sensory overload that is often not fully processed by its inhabitants. It is a "city of clocks" (Hill, *Midnight in the City* 4), a space of constant motion, as the people internalise the urgency to move, which is clearly captured in the line "[y]ou're late, you're late, you're late the blackbird says" (Hill, *Nocturne in Chrome* 10). It becomes an objective place deprived of self-expression, and in it, as Sennett argues, "the public man might feel more comfortable as a witness to someone else's expression than as an active conveyor of expression himself" (195). Ultimately, the paper argues that urban-pastoral space implies a transformation of the landscape, but also of human experience, where city increasingly dominates nature and citizens remain disconnected from their surroundings.

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Keywords: Tobias Hill, urban space, rural space, Raymond Williams, Richard Sennett

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Pynchon in the Balkans

From the very beginning of his writing career, Thomas Pynchon has shown a persistent, if elusive, interest in the Balkans. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, the region appears in the form of Novi Pazar as a mysterious blot—almost like an alien presence—splashed onto the periphery of Europe, suggesting a latent threat capable of spreading across the continent and beyond. In *Against the Day*, this presence becomes even more closely linked to planetary disturbance, evoking the Balkans as a site of geo-trauma within an emerging Anthropocene imaginary. Finally, in his later work, references to the Ustaše—trained abroad and invoking the fascist salute "Za dom spremni"—further complicate the region's association with histories of violence and ideological extremism. Given the enduring mystery surrounding Pynchon's own identity and biography, one might even speculate whether he has ever directly encountered the region he so evocatively invokes. Traditionally, the Balkans has been constructed as Europe's internal "other," a space theorised by Maria Todorova as "Balkanism," analogous to Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. Yet in Pynchon's work, the Balkans cannot be reduced to a fixed geographical entity. Rather, it emerges as a shifting, elusive formation—capable of appearing anywhere in the world. This paper proposes to analyse the Balkans in Pynchon as a form of geo-trauma: a fragmented zone within the global landscape of the Anthropocene. It asks whether the Balkans functions both as a site from which global fascist tendencies may emerge and, paradoxically, as a space that also holds the potential for alternative political imaginaries and forms of emancipation (Uskoks).

Keywords: Thomas Pynchon, the Balkans, geo-trauma

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Consumerism, Class, and Atomic Anxiety in John Cheever's "The Brigadier and the Golf Widow"

The Cold War era, where emotions of atomic anxiety and dread collided with the economic and scientific development, was immensely impactful on American culture and literature. Accordingly, those sentiments are found in the short stories of one of the best chroniclers of American suburbia—John Cheever. His soft way of narrating brings out a myriad of important and harsh topics regarding the American upper-middle class suburban family in the atomic age, delving deeper into the problems of consumerism, family relations and stability, and emotional distress that developed as a result of political and social conditions of that time. Pierre Bourdieu in his *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste *(1979) discussed how amplification of consumption is directly linked to the appearance of the aforementioned new social stratum and the creation of cultural capital, which led to notable class distinction. Cheever's short story "The Brigadier and the Golf Widow" presents a fertile ground for analyses of the presented issues through one very popular product of the atomic era, known as a family fallout shelter. Fallout shelters present one of the most interesting products of the consumerist Cold War era; however, the accessibility of this product was limited to a certain social stratum. Since the price of those fallout shelters was notably exorbitant, only upper-middle class American families could afford them, thus shaping fallout shelters into, what Bourdieu defines as, objectified capital. American upper middle-class developed as a result of post-World War II politics and economic stabilisation, followed by scientific discoveries and oral media development. However, that particular social stratum consisted of similar individuals who shared the same race, wealth, social rules, and world views. Through this symbol of an extravagantly decorated family fallout shelter, with carefully chosen phrases and descriptions, Cheever ironically paints a picture of absurdity, loneliness, and atomic anxiety that hides behind consumerist behaviours and class distinction. Thus, the aim of this paper is to offer an analysis of Cheever's short story "The Brigadier and the Golf Widow" in the framework of Bourdieu's consumption and capital theory. The paper explores the idea that the fallout shelters which appeared as a product of atomic anxiety became a consumerist item and an extension of the upper-middle class habitus.

Keywords: atomic anxiety, consumerism, fallout shelter, Cheever, Cold War era

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From 'May You…' to 'FYI': The Afterlife of Curses in Digital Discourse

This presentation examines the status of curses as a short oral genre in contemporary digital discourse. We argue that online curses have undergone a pragmatic shift from optative performatives towards non-performative markers of stance markers, and formulaic expressions of negative character. In canonical accounts of speech acts, curses belong to a class of utterances whose force depends on felicitous contextual conditions, including authority, uptake, and a relatively stable speech situation (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). In digital environments, however, these conditions are weakened by decontextualisation, heterogenous audience, and the rapid circulation of discourse across different platforms. Using examples from social media, comment threads, and meme discourse, several recurrent types may be identified: (a) residual optatives, which preserve the form without the performative force (*May your Wi-Fi fail when you need it most*); (b) predictions, which**
**shift from ill-wishing to forecasting (*This will not end well for you*); (c) playful and often ironic forms, which frame curses as intertextual play rather than verbal action (*Sending bad energy your way*) (cf. Predojević 2012). We show that these forms are best analysed as discourse-pragmatic resources for indexing stance, aggression, irony, or moral judgement. In this respect, digital curses illustrate a broader shift from action to stance: rather than bringing about harm, they construct speaker attitude and social alignment in highly mediated interaction (Du Bois 2007; Jaffe 2009). The contemporary curse thus persists as a conventionalised discourse form whose primary functions are evaluative, interactional, and metapragmatic.

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Keywords: curses, digital discourse, stance, speech acts, pragmatics

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Carmen M. Bretones Callejas is a professor and researcher at the University of Almería (Spain) and director of the research group Language and Thought (HUM602). Her research lies at the interface of semantics and pragmatics, with a particular focus on interactional meaning, social evaluation, and constructional approaches to language. She has published on the role of culture and cognition in linguistic meaning and is especially interested in how grammar encodes speaker stance and intersubjective relations. She is the author of *The Iconic Power of the Short Story: Exploring Culture, Cognition and Affective Involvement in Seamus Heaney* (Peter Lang, 2025).

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Branka Drljača Margić is a professor in the English Department at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, and has served as a visiting professor at the University of Turin. She earned her PhD from the University of Zagreb, Croatia and was a visiting research fellow at Queen Mary University of London during her doctoral studies. Her

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Ivana Duvnjak is a second-year graduate student (teaching programme) of English Language and Literature and Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek, J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek. She was a member of the English Studies student association "Glotta" from 2021 to 2025. In 2023, she took on the role of deputy-editor-in-chief of the journal *Kick*. She worked on the project *Violence in Contemporary Adaptations and Popular Culture* at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. She has written and presented numerous papers at academic and professional conferences, as well as student conferences.

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Jelena Pataki Šumiga, PhD, is a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek, Croatia (2020-ongoing). She teaches courses in old English literature and contemporary British dystopia. Her fields of research are dystopia, Disney, romance, and YA literature. She is a member of the Utopian Studies Society Europe, the YA Studies Association, and the co-editor of the scholarly blog *Fractals: The Shapes of Popular Culture* (https://fractalsffos.wordpress.com/category/article/). She has published a dozen academic papers, co-edited the *Breaking Stereotypes in American Popular Culture* conference proceedings (FF Press, 2023), and she headed the *Violence in Popular Culture and Contemporary Adaptations* research project (2024-2025). Next to her academic work, she is a successful conference interpreter as well as literary translator, with more than 70 popular fiction and non-fiction titles translated from English to Croatian.

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Ivana Pothorski is a doctoral student at the University of Zadar, specialising in the cognitive linguistic analysis of political discourse. Her current research investigates the role of conceptual metaphor in shaping public perception, with a comparative focus on English, German, and Croatian media during the 2019 European Parliament election. Her academic background includes a prestigious DAAD scholarship for research at the University of Mannheim. She has contributed to the International Contrastive Linguistics Conference on two occasions: in 2023 at the Institute for the German Language (IDS) in Mannheim and in 2025 at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. Professionally, she balances her research with her role as a teacher of English and German, maintaining broader research interests in contrastive linguistics and cross-linguistic metaphor studies.

Alwena Queillé

Alwena Queillé is a PhD researcher in contemporary American literature at Sorbonne Nouvelle University (ED 625 MAGIIE, EA 4398 PRISMES). Her Master's dissertation addressed the representation of solitude and isolation in Ottessa Moshfegh's novels and short stories. Her current doctoral dissertation examines the writing of vulnerable, apocalyptic intimacies in the contemporary American fictions of Ottessa Moshfegh, Rachel Kushner, and Emma Cline, particularly in light of affect, vulnerability, and geopoetic theories.

Lucija Relić

Lucija Relić is a new assistant and future postgraduate student in the Department of English, American Studies Programme at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia. In 2025, I graduated from the same faculty, with my graduation paper topics being *"**Bringing Modernist Innovations to Gothic Modalities**"**: Modernist Gothic in the Works of William Faulkner and Carson McCullers *in the American Studies major,* *and *Metaforika u suvremenom hrvatskom pjesništvu od 2010. do danas *(Metaphor in Contemporary Croatian Poetry from 2010 to Present)* *in the Comparative Literature major. Both can be accessed via ODRAZ Repository (ODRAZ). My current academic preoccupations are American Modernist prose and poetry, with an emphasis on the centre-periphery problematic within the Modernist literary movement(s), as well as contemporary Croatian poetry. An interest in contemporary Croatian poetry stems from my own literary endeavours and engagement with literary criticism on Croatian poetry for the website Stilistika.

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Attila Salamon is an assistant lecturer at the English and American Studies Institute, University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary. He has an MA in Applied Linguistics and is a doctoral candidate at the Multilingualism Doctoral School at the University of Pannonia. He teaches courses in the fields of linguistics, translation, and language improvement in both BA and MA programmes. His research interests include code-switching, contact linguistics, sociolinguistics, and online platforms in linguistic research.

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For her interdisciplinary research on port cities from a humanities perspective, Petra Sapun Kurtin was awarded a year-long Research Fellowship at the Wirth Institute (University of Alberta, Canada) and the Fulbright Scholarship at New York University (New York, US) and Tulane University (New Orleans, US). Her interdisciplinary thesis at the University of Zagreb, Croatia on representations of New Orleans as a port city introduced a Mediterranean

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Małgorzata Socha holds an MA in English Philology, with specializations in American Studies and British Literature, alongside postgraduate diplomas in Human Resources and Translation. She completed her studies at the John Paul II University of Lublin, the Jagiellonian University, Boston College, and Harvard University.
She has long served as an academic lecturer in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and a translator at the Jagiellonian University Faculty of Medicine. Her research has been presented at international conferences across Europe and Asia, including recent engagements in Switzerland, Germany and England.
While her earlier scholarship focused on the 20th- and 21st-century British and American literature, her current research examines Indigenous literatures of North America, analysing concepts of cultural identity through the lens of medical humanities and environmental studies. Most recently, she has been exploring literary and philosophical works intersecting

memory, place, and trauma within postcolonial and ecocritical frameworks. She is a member of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society and the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture, and Environment (EASLCE) and a frequent presenter at the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research.

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Andrea F. Szabó, PhD, is an associate professor in the English and American Studies Institute at the University of Pannonia, Hungary. She teaches courses in North-American literatures, popular culture, and media representations of gender. Her research focuses on the Gothic and literature with Alice Munro's fiction in the centre.

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Szilárd Szentgyörgyi is an associate professor of linguistics at the English and American Studies Institute at the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary. He has an MSc in mathematics, an M.A. in English, and a PhD in theoretical linguistics from the University of Szeged. Besides working at the University of Pannonia, he has also taught courses to English and theoretical linguistics majors at ELTE University in Budapest, the University of Szeged, Selye János University in Komárno, Slovakia, the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and Nazareth University in Rochester, NY. His research interests include optimality theory in phonology, vowel harmony, laryngeal phenomena, and accents of English and socio-cultural stereotypes connected to these. He is a two-time Fulbright scholar at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA and Nazareth University, Rochester, NY.

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Monika Šincek Bregović graduated in English Language and Literature and Comparative Literature from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. She obtained a PhD in Drama and Theatre Studies from the University of Zagreb, Croatia in 2017. She has worked as an assistant editor at *Quorum* literary magazine since 2011, and as the editor-in-chief for Pulse - the Journal of Science and Culture (https://www.pulse-journal.org/) since 2018. She is currently employed as an assistant professor at the University of Zadar, Department of English, where she is teaching courses in Theory of Literature, Contemporary British Drama, Modern British Drama, Shakespeare, and Modern British Novel. She has presented her work at many national and international conferences. She is also a member of PSI International and HDAS.

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Sanja Škifić is a full professor in the Department of English Studies at the University of Zadar. Her research interests include sociolinguistic issues related to language policies, language ideologies, and the relationship between language and identity, as well as cognitive linguistic issues related primarily to conceptual metaphors. She has published two books and more than twenty-five scientific papers that deal with her research interests. She is a member of the International Association of Multilingualism (IAM) and the Croatian Applied Linguistics Society (CALS).

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Gaj Tomaš is a PhD candidate in literature at the University of Osijek. He holds a master's degree in English language and literature and German language and literature. Since 2018, he's been serving as lecturer in English and German at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb, Croatia, where he teaches English for Political Scientists and Journalists. His research areas include space and identity and post 9/11 American literature. Memberships: Croatian Association for American Studies; The Association of LSP Teachers at Higher Education Institutions.

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Vesna Ukić Košta is an assistant professor in the English department at the University of Zadar. She earned her MA from the University of Zagreb and her PhD from the University of Zadar. She is the co-editor of *Timeless Shakespeare* (University of Zadar, 2019), *Migrations: Literary and Linguistic Aspects* (Peter Lang, 2019), and *Rewriting Urban Space in Anglophone Literature and Culture* (University of Zadar, 2023). She has published numerous articles on Irish women's writing and contemporary British literature. Her research interests centre on twentieth-century and contemporary British fiction,

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Tena Velki is a full professor in the field of developmental psychology at Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Education. Her areas of interest encompass developmental psychology, children with disabilities, educational inclusion, and cybersecurity. She has participated in more than 100 international and national scientific and professional conferences and has published numerous scientific papers and books. In addition, she has led and collaborated on several national and international projects. As a keynote speaker, she has shared her expertise at various conferences in Croatia and abroad. She served as Vice Dean for Research for two years and received several awards for her successful work and exceptional contribution to the field of Croatian applied psychology (e.g., "Marulić: Fiat Psychologia" award in 2018 and the award by Croatian psychological Association in 2017). In addition, Tena Velki is an expert in data analysis for social sciences.

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Kristina Veraja recently graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split with a degree in English and Italian. Her academic work focuses on digital linguistics, particularly the spread of digital slang among younger generations and its influence on online culture and communication practices. In her professional role as a Marketing and Sales Associate at the Student Centre in Split, she applies her understanding of how young people use language to better understand audience engagement, with an interest in how brands use digital slang, trends, and online culture to build a more authentic and relatable presence.

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Victoria Vestić is an assistant and doctoral candidate at the University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of English Language and Literature, where she teaches seminars on Romanticism, the Victorian Age, and Modernism. Her research explores the intersection of literature and mathematics, applying an interdisciplinary approach to questions of narrative, epistemology, ethics, and biopolitics in literary texts.

Antonia Vodan

Antonia Vodan recently graduated with a master's degree in English Language and Literature and Italian Language and Literature from the University of Zadar. Her MA thesis focuses on feminist readings of appropriations of William Shakespeare's plays. Currently, she is an

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Nikolina Vranić graduated in English Language and Literature and Italian Language and Literature from the University of Zadar in 2023. In 2024, she became an assistant at the Department of English Studies at the University of Zadar. Her current academic interests include British Victorian, Romantic, and Modernist poetry and literature, poetry, urban space, and popular culture. Additionally, she has been a member of The Croatian Association for the Study of English (CASE) since 2025. She is currently enrolled in the postgraduate doctoral study programme Humanities at the University of Zadar.

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Mario Vrbančić is a full professor of English at the University of Zadar. He received his PhD in Comparative Literature and Film Studies from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and has worked in New Zealand, Australia, Ukraine, and Croatia. His research focuses on literature, film, and psychoanalysis. He is the author of *The Lacanian Thing: Psychoanalysis, Postmodern Culture and Cinema* (Cambria Press, 2011), *Hitchcockian Gaze* (Jesenski and Turk, 2017), and *What After Dystopia?* (Jesenski and Turk, 2024). His novel *Of the End of the World, Corals Sing* is forthcoming (Jesenski and Turk, 2026). Alongside his academic work, he writes and develops plays and performance texts and has worked on drama projects in both theatrical and film contexts.

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Noel Vukoja is an English as a Foreign Language teacher at Fran Krsto Frankopan Elementary School in Osijek, Croatia. He completed his master's degree in English Language and Literature and Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek in 2024 and began his doctoral studies in Educational Sciences at the Faculty of Education in 2025. His research primarily focuses on foreign and second language acquisition among students with specific learning disorders, as well as learning styles and strategies used by advanced EFL learners. He is interested in exploring teaching approaches that promote inclusive and effective learning experiences for diverse student profiles within English language education.

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