

AIA

Associazione Italiana di Anglistica

Newsletter 119 Summer 2025



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AIA Summer Editorial 2025

This brief summer editorial reflects the quieter rhythm of the season, offering just a few lines before we come together again as a community in the autumn. Yet even in this interlude, important moments of intellectual and institutional life lie ahead.

The upcoming AIA Conference in Turin (11-13 September 2025) will mark a key moment in our scholarly community. With its theme, “Human, Humane, Humanities. Voices from the Anglosphere”, the conference promises a stimulating programme of keynotes and panels highlighting critical dialogue and renewed exchange. On this occasion, the new AIA Board will also be elected, making the conference a vital moment of institutional life and democratic participation.

This summer issue of the newsletter offers a vibrant portrait of our Association’s ongoing life, a space where intellectual energy, institutional engagement, and scholarly creativity converge. Thanks to our active involvement in the ESSE network, our work reaches colleagues across Europe, fostering broader conversations and strengthening international collaboration. The issue gathers a selection of initiatives and events that further testify to the dynamism, diversity, and commitment of our members. From conferences and seminars to outreach projects and collaborative ventures, these contributions reflect the richness of our shared academic pursuits. Readers will also find recent publications, updates on ongoing endeavours, and much more, a snapshot of AIA’s energetic presence within and across the academic landscape. We warmly thank all those who have contributed news and timely information to this issue, and we encourage all members to continue sharing their activities, projects, and achievements with the Association.

I am delighted to announce a major development for *Textus*, the flagship journal of our Association. Thanks to sustained encouragement from members of the AIA Board and a productive dialogue with our publisher Carocci, I am proud to introduce a new hybrid open access model starting with the current issue (volume XXXVIII 2025, No. 1), “The Breeding Grounds of Conflict. Discourses of War, Discrimination, Protest, and Disinformation” edited by Bronwen Hughes, Margaret Rasulo, and Ruth Wodak. This long-awaited change reflects our shared commitment to aligning *Textus* with the latest standards of international academic publishing. Under this model, the introduction and up to two articles per issue will be published in open access format and made freely available online, significantly expanding the reach and impact of the research we disseminate. The guest editors of each themed issue will propose the selected articles, subject to approval by the journal’s Editor, thereby ensuring continuity with the journal’s high academic standards and editorial vision.

This step marks an important milestone, not only in terms of accessibility and visibility, but also in reaffirming AIA’s role in shaping inclusive and forward-looking scholarly practices. Our goal is to transition *Textus* to a fully ‘Gold Open Access’ journal within the next two years, making all its contents freely accessible worldwide and paving the way towards inclusion in prestigious international databases such as SCOPUS.

In the wake of recent parliamentary debates, this Editorial also opens up a space for reflection on the proposed *Disegno di Legge 1518*, which is set to significantly reshape national policies for academic recruitment, evaluation, and career progression. Following

our 26 June assembly and joint discussions between Area 10 and Area 11, a shared position paper is currently being finalised and will be made publicly available in September.

As members of the Association committed to academic integrity and institutional responsibility, we echo the concerns raised by the current ASN Committees for Areas 10 and 11. Indeed, in their recent open letter to the Minister of Universities, the Committees expressed deep dismay over the proposed abolition of the national habilitation title and raised serious doubts about the move toward locally-managed recruitment processes based solely on self-declared quantitative indicators. The signatories also condemned ministerial statements that discredit their ongoing work by implying a lack of merit and quality in the habilitation process, describing such accusations as not only unfounded but also institutionally untenable.

AIA stands firmly in support of transparent, merit-based procedures that uphold and safeguard academic standards nationwide. We cannot overlook the risks posed by weakened institutional autonomy, increased centralisation of evaluation criteria, and the marginalisation of teaching excellence. These issues, already brought to the Senate's attention during the CUN's recent hearing, will remain at the heart of our advocacy and scholarly engagement in the coming months. AIA also reiterates the urgent need for a structured and inclusive dialogue between the Ministry and scientific societies, whose collective expertise is essential to shaping a sustainable and forward-looking reform.

Over the past months, AIA has continued to promote inclusive, interdisciplinary research through its various initiatives and working groups. From AIA for Schools to AIA Doctoral, our members have shown unwavering dedication to advancing knowledge and sharing expertise across different educational and institutional settings. As previously mentioned, the coming months will also bring important developments in national policies on recruitment and academic careers, which AIA will address through dedicated communications and initiatives.

I warmly invite you to join us in Turin this September, an occasion not only to present and discuss your research but also to reconnect with colleagues and friends. For now, may the summer bring a well-deserved break, a gentler pace, and perhaps even the space for new ideas to take shape, for, as Shakespeare poignantly reminds us, “summer’s lease hath all too short a date”.

Warmest wishes for a restful and inspiring summer,

Giuseppe Balirano
AIA President

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All issues of *Textus* published by Carocci can be accessed by AIA members through a cloud repository on Google Drive. Members will receive the link by email upon renewal of their subscription. For further information on the *Textus* archive, please write to: riviste@carocci.it

***Textus* issue 1/2025**

The Breeding Grounds of Conflict. Discourses of War, Discrimination, Protest, and Disinformation

edited by Bronwen Hughes, Margaret Rasulo, and Ruth Wodak

***Textus* issue 2/2025 – Literature
forthcoming**

**The Voices of Water:
Intermedial and Multimodal Blue Eco-Stories**

Guest co-editors:

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Maddalena Pennacchia (Roma Tre University)

**Niklas Salmose (Linnaeus University, Vaxjö, Sweden -
Center of Intermedial and Multimodal Studies, Sweden)**

Copy Editor: Gaia Amrita Whitright (Roma Tre University)

***Textus* issue 3/2025 – Cross-disciplinary issue
forthcoming**

Text Analysis and Digital Humanities in English Studies

Guest co-editors:

Maristella Gatto (University of Bari)

Michaela Mahlberg (University of Birmingham)

Lorenzo Mastropiero (University of Insubria)

Francesca Saggini (University of Tuscia)

Copy Editor: Eileen Mulligan (University of Bari)

Textus 1/2026 - LANGUAGE

**How to Do Things with(out) Words:
Intersections between Pragmatics and Multimodality**

Guest co-editors:

Aoife Beville (University of Naples L'Orientale)

Fabio Ciambella (Sapienza University of Rome)

Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster University, UK)

Copyeditor:

Darragh Mulcahy (Sapienza University of Rome)

Pragmatics is the study of language in context; it involves analysing the meaning-making processes employed by language users. However, as studies in multimodality have widely established, other (para-linguistic and extra-linguistic) semiotic resources are also used to convey and construe meaning. Understanding the pragmatic import of multimodal communication is becoming increasingly important in a world where digital communication dominates interpersonal and professional interactions. Indeed, as Lluís Payrató observes, the ‘speech acts’ central to traditional Austinian and Searlean pragmatics do not occur in isolation from other communicative modes –such as gesture, facial expressions, prosody, and even visual or textual elements in digital media. Instead, they should be viewed as integral components of broader “communicative events” (2017, 4), where meaning emerges dynamically from the interplay of multiple semiotic resources. This perspective highlights the necessity of examining how language functions in conjunction with other modes, particularly in digital contexts where text, image, and audiovisual elements frequently combine to shape understanding. Multimodal pragmatics, therefore –the study of how meaning is constructed and interpreted through the interplay of multiple modes (e.g., linguistic, visual, gestural, auditory, and spatial) –would seem to be a fruitful yet hitherto understudied approach to understanding the complexities of interpersonal and multimodal communication (see Mubenga 2009; Dicerto 2018; Haryanti et al. 2023).

This issue of *Textus* (1/2026 – Language) aims to investigate the dynamic intersection between multimodality and pragmatics, shedding light on how theoretical approaches, analytical methods, and practical applications from each field can mutually inform and enrich one another. By bringing together scholars and practitioners from diverse disciplines, this issue seeks to foster an interdisciplinary dialogue on language in use across various forms of multimodal pragmatics.

Deadline for abstracts submission: CLOSED

Deadline for submission of first draft of article: 31 August 2025

Request for revisions following peer review: 15 October 2025

Deadline for final version of article: 15 December 2025

Call for abstracts
Textus 2/2026 - LITERATURE

**Writing the End, Imagining the Future:
Ecoapocalypses and Ecotopias in Anglophone Literature**

Guest co-editors:

Gioia Angeletti (Università di Parma)

Roberta Grandi (Università della Valle d'Aosta)

Nicoletta Vallorani (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Lykke Harmony Alara Guanio-Uluru (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences)

Copyeditor:

Elizabeth Ritsema (Royal Holloway –University of London)

In *The Last Man* (1826), Shelley thus envisioned the annihilation of the human race: an endemic disease being turned into a pandemic plague by a combination of war-related increase in human contacts and an unprecedented rise in air temperature. Nearly a century and a half later, Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975) imagined a sustainable society featuring mandatory waste recycling and electric engines, widespread bike-sharing, and advanced technological devices called "picturephones." Science fiction has long exhibited an uncanny ability to anticipate the worst –and, more rarely, the best –of possible futures. Yet today, as climate change, global warming, the sixth mass extinction, phosphogeddon, and other eco-catastrophes have ceased to be speculative concerns and instead define the lived reality of many communities, the once-cathartic potential of apocalyptic narratives may be diminishing. As noticed by Amitav Ghosh, "There is, [...], an important difference between the weather events that we are now experiencing and those that occur in surrealist and magical realist novels: improbable though they might be, these events are neither surreal nor magical. To the contrary, these highly improbable occurrences are overwhelmingly, urgently, astoundingly real." (2017, 27)

Over the last decades, eco-apocalyptic and dystopian works have functioned as a means of reflecting on contemporary environmental crises, serving as cautionary tales designed to warn and engage readers with urgent global concerns (Basu, Broad, and Hintz 2013; Bradford et al. 2008; Curry 2013). However, recent interdisciplinary research spanning psychology, anthropology, affect studies, environmental activism, participatory culture, and speculative fiction (Callahan et al. 2019; de Moor et al. 2020; Leyda 2023; Lockyer and Veteto 2015; McKinley 2008; Nairn 2019; Oziewicz, Attebery, and Dědinová 2022; Weik von Mossner 2017) suggests that an overreliance on apocalyptic frameworks may be counterproductive. Scholars argue that narratives centred on climate catastrophe risk engendering paralysis rather than action, as they can reinforce the perception of an inevitable and insurmountable collapse, discouraging proactive engagement with environmental challenges (Arnold 2018; Hull 2019). In response, alternative genres such as ecotopias and solarpunk offer visions of the future that inspire optimism rather than despair. These narratives imagine worlds that are not only sustainable but deeply appealing, fostering a desire for systemic transformation and encouraging active participation in building a more just and environmentally integrated society (Ulibarri 2022; Weik von Mossner 2017).

This issue of *Textus* invites contributions that examine eco-apocalyptic visions, climate fiction, and environmental dystopias, as well as alternative imaginaries such as ecotopias, solarpunk, fantasy, afrofuturist and feminist utopias. We welcome ecocritical analyses of both classic and contemporary works of adult and children's literature, along with other critical approaches informed by ecofeminism, intersectionality, blue and green humanities, energy humanities, posthumanism, new materialism, and affect studies.

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Textus 2/2026 - LITERATURE

Submission of abstracts and timeline

Please send abstracts to: gioia.angeletti@unipr.it, r.grandi@univda.it, nicoletta.vallorani@unimi.it

Deadline for abstracts submission (400 words plus references): 15 September 2025. Please put as subject line “Textus Literature Issue 2/2026 –abstract submission”

Notification to authors: 30 September 2025

Deadline for submission of first draft of article (maximum 7500 words including references): 31 December 2025

Request for revisions following peer review: 15 February 2026

Deadline for final version of article: 15 April 2026

Call for abstracts
Textus 3/2026 - CROSS-DISCIPLINARY ISSUE

**Voices Across Borders:
Reframing the Barriers of Vulnerability in Language, Culture,
and Literature**

Guest co-editors:

Gaetano Falco (Università degli Studi di Bari “Aldo Moro”)

Elena Spandri (Università degli Studi di Siena)

Jun Pan (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Copyeditor:

Eileen Mulligan (University of Bari)

In an increasingly hostile transnational political climate and environment, where current sweeping policy-making bodies demonize notions and practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion, fostering division within and between societies, nation-states, and cultures, the need to encourage inclusive dialogue in academic research has never been more pressing. By reframing the barriers of vulnerability in all its forms—whether linguistic, cultural, social, and digital, or in their literary representation—this issue of *Textus* intends to construct a comprehensive and vibrant space for scholarly investigation and social change, encouraging interdisciplinary conversation. Vulnerability is a concept that usually implies the related ideas of fragility, inequity, and risk, but is also associated with resilience, empowerment and resistance (Butler 2014). It “is a concept with fleeting contours as much as it is an idea with assured academic success” (Ferrarese 2016:149). As such, it is characterized by indeterminacy and variability, which accounts for the current, “increasingly multidisciplinary interest in the topic.” (Nungesser and Schirgi 2024: 252). Over the last decades, the notion has gained the attention of various research areas, both embracing and articulating its conceptual boundaries, as the idea itself has been subject to reconceptualization in the field of international human rights law (Morawa 2003). The call for Voices Across Borders offers itself to multiple inflections, showcasing the need for change and empowerment as a key quality that underlies recent developments in the fields of –amongst others –(critical) discourse analysis, literary studies, cultural studies, (critical) disability studies, gender studies, environmental studies, migration, border discourse and cultural mediation, and museum studies. Among the possible angles, one may consider for instance exploring the pliability of the novel form to contemporary ‘humanitarian imaginary’ in the current context marked by a pervasive condition of conflict, the massive experience of vulnerability and mediatic exposure to violence (Ganguly 2016). Another option may be to consider the dual role of language as both a barrier and a bridge across various fields, including translation and communication (Davies 2012); or, as a resource for inclusion and a cause of exclusion of vulnerable groups, ranging from migrants to refugees and asylum seekers (Schrover and Schinkel, 2013), to women and LGBTQI+ people (Jones 2023). The papers selected will ideally address the core topic from either theoretical or applied and text-focussed perspectives, in literature, linguistics, and cultural studies, including discussion of best practices in teaching and other professional experiences.

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Submission of abstracts and timeline

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Deadline for abstracts submission (400 words plus references): 15 December 2025. Please put as subject line "Textus Cross-disciplinary Issue 6/2025 – abstract submission"

Notification to authors: 15 January 2026

Deadline for submission of first draft of article (maximum 7500 words including references): 31 May 2026

Request for revisions following peer review: 15 July 2026

Deadline for final version of article: 1 September 2026

32nd AIA Conference

11–13 September 2025 – University of Turin

Human, Humane, Humanities. Voices from the Anglosphere

The new millennium is witnessing new geopolitical crises, ideological conflicts, the effects of climate change, which make us reflect on what ‘being human’ involves.

Real-life experiences of people struggling for survival, suffering from ethnic, religious, political, gender and linguistic discrimination or isolation tell us that ‘humane’ values are often violated or ignored.

The emphasis on ‘human, humane and humanities’ in the title of the 32nd AIA Conference is meant to offer scholars in linguistic, literary, cultural and transmedial studies the opportunity to explore the various facets of ‘human nature’, as they emerge from the voices of communities in the English-speaking world. The polysemic nature of these words lends itself to reflect on the state of being human, but also on being humane, that is, feeling empathy, compassion, and understanding for fellow living entities.

The digital turn represents a huge step forward for present and future generations of scholars. However, artificial Intelligence seems to be subverting the primacy of human intellect, threatening to dehumanize many aspects of human creative and communicative practices.

Recently literature has incorporated notions of neo-materialism and posthumanism to better take into account the more-than-human agency and the interconnectedness of all living beings. In postcolonial literature new forms of enslavement determine a constant concern both in the traditional and in the new media. Environmental humanities in the Anglosphere is increasingly engaged in interconnected issues of social and climate justice, asymmetrical power relations and decolonial thinking.

AIA32 will host the following plenary speakers:

Rossella Ciocca, University of Naples L’Orientale

Radhika Jha, cosmopolitan author

Carol O’Sullivan, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

Caroline Tagg, The Open University, United Kingdom

Link to AIA32 website: <https://corep.it/aia-conference-2025>

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Calls for papers: conferences, workshops

Conferences, workshops

Title: “Workshop: Literature and Sport – Genre and Gender”

Dates: December 10, 2025

Place: University of Aosta Valley/online

Organisers: Roberta Grandi, Armela Panajoti, Angelika Reichmann

Submission deadline for abstracts: September 20, 2025. Contact: Angelika, Armela and Roberta at reichmanna@gmail.com; armelap@assenglish.org and r.grandi@univda.it

Fuelled by such critically acclaimed films as *Chariots of Fire* (1981), *Million Dollar Baby* (2004) or *Invictus* (2009), recently re-envigorated discussions of representation have a growing interest in sports in visual media. This interest has produced such insightful analyses of sports’ role in performing gender as for instance Viridiana Lieberman’s *Sports Heroines on Film* (2015) or various chapters in *Sports, Film and National Culture* (2021). Nonetheless, no systematic study of this aspect is discernible in literary studies, though relevant texts, like Bernard Malamud’s *The Natural* (1952) or Naomi Benaron’s *Running the Rift* (2010), abound. In this workshop, we discuss sport(s) in Anglophone fiction, with the aim to analyze the various forms of representations—cultural, social, political—featuring sports in literatures in English since the late 19th century. We scrutinise, specifically, the interrelationships of gender, genre and sports, bearing in mind that genres are “cultural categories” associated “with the cultural practices of the society [i.e. social groups] in which they are produced,” and thus “[w]hen writers make use of a genre which has traditionally been an avenue of expression for another [...] group, they attempt to make that form of expression relatable to other [...] groups of people.”

With a view to publishing the proceedings of the workshop and the ESSE seminar held in Lausanne (2024) on a similar topic as a thematic volume with Palgrave Macmillan, the organisers invite proposals for 20-minute online presentations focussed on issues of gender in sports fiction, including but not limited to: performativity of gender and sports; binary constructions in sports fiction: masculine vs. feminine, heterosexual vs. homosexual; sports and society: social interaction, power relations, and identity construction—local, national, regional, international—through sports; the rhetoric of sports: heroes, celebrities and sports discourse in the public sphere; gender (under)representation in sports literature.

Title: “Cognition and the Media”

Dates: October 30-31, 2025

Place: University G. D’Annunzio Chieti-Pescara

Convenors: Eleonora Sasso, Marcello Giovanelli

Submission deadline for abstracts: September 22, 2025. Send to: cognition.media2025@unich.it

We are pleased to announce the International Conference on Cognition and the Media, a multidisciplinary event bringing together scholars from media studies, cognitive science, translation studies, linguistics, psychology, and related fields.

Drawing inspiration from the work of scholars such as Gilles Fauconnier, George Lakoff, Ronald W. Langacker and Mark Turner (cognitive linguistics), as well as more recent contributions by Giuseppe Balirano (digital and social media, multimodality, and multimodal stylistics), Jorge Díaz-Cintas (screen and digital media, cybersubtitling and cyberdubbing), Yves Gambier (translation, cognition, and media accessibility) and Marcello Giovanelli (stylistics, cognitive studies, and the public humanities), the conference seeks to explore the dynamic relationship between cognitive processes and media forms - including film, television, digital platforms, games, and social media - with a particular emphasis on translation and audiovisual practices. We aim to foster dialogue on how media influence, shape, and are shaped by cognitive mechanisms as perception, attention, memory, emotion, and narrative

comprehension, especially in contexts involving multilingualism, accessibility, and intersemiotic mediation.

At the heart of this conference is a key question: How do media shape and reflect the ways we think, feel, and communicate -especially across languages and cultures? In an era of saturated information, real-time interaction, and constant cross-linguistic exchange, cognition is at the centre of how media function and how meaning moves across borders. As cognitive science deepens our understanding of how we perceive, process, interpret and memorise information, it raises critical questions for media scholars, translators, and communication experts.

We invite papers that explore the dynamic intersection of cognition and media from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Confirmed keynote speakers: Giuseppe Balirano, Charlotte Bosseaux, Jorge Díaz-Cintas, Yves Gambier, Marcello Giovannelli, Luc van Doorslaer.

Title: “Inheriting Eco. Umberto Eco, the University of Bologna and all the knowledge in the world”

Dates: May 27–29, 2026

Place: University of Bologna

Organisers: Centro internazionale di Studi umanistici “Umberto Eco”

Submission deadline for proposals: October 30, 2025. <https://centri.unibo.it/cue/it/convegno-eco-2026>

The year 2026 will mark the 10th anniversary of Umberto Eco's death on 19 February 2016.

Ten years during which Eco himself had asked not to organise any conferences about him, so as to better determine and appreciate what to forget, what to keep, and what to build on.

Indeed, a decade is an adequate time span to allow culture to fulfil two of its essential functions, adopted by Eco as central themes of his essays: that of filtering knowledge, offering subsequent generations only that which deserves to be remembered, and of opening, or renewing, a text through new interpretations. Two actions that, alone, serve to appreciate what can and must remain.

This conference on the 10th anniversary of Eco's death, which the Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna is promoting through its Centro internazionale di Studi umanistici “Umberto Eco”, aims to make Umberto Eco's intellectual legacy visible, inviting participants to shape the conference with the ambition of developing a scientific event that is genuinely close to Umberto Eco's way of thinking.

By bringing together scholars in the many fields of knowledge in which Eco worked, the conference aims to bring out Eco's legacy of thought; the aspects that emerge following the progress and distance brought about by ten years; the elements of thought that are still worthy of attention; and the directions in which these elements can be developed and relaunched today. This conference, therefore, has no set themes or sub-themes for reflection; instead, it makes room for the most important themes to emerge from the papers, debate and work of the scholars summoned to Bologna.

In short, the Centro internazionale di Studi umanistici “Umberto Eco” is organising an open work-conference enabling the emergence of new paths of reflection by re-examining and re-filtering Umberto Eco's immense body of works. In short, the Centro internazionale di Studi umanistici “Umberto Eco” is organising an open work-conference enabling the emergence of new paths of reflection by re-examining and re-filtering Umberto Eco's immense body of works. The proposals should be structured around six main areas: Narrative; Interpreting and Translation; Semiotics; Philosophy and History of ideas; Middle Ages; Media. With these areas in mind, those who identify with one or more of Eco's ideas will be able to interact and reflect dialogically with the conference's community of scholars.

In doing so, not only will the conference redesign a legacy destined to become ever richer and more open; it will also make it possible to commemorate Eco's vast intellectual legacy of thought in a non-ceremonial manner, revealing its strength, renewing its interpretation, and creating an occasion that is not merely commemorative or retrospective, but rich in thought, innovation and future.

Title: “Clerici Day III - Tennis in Literature and Film”**Dates: April 16-17, 2026****Place: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Brescia****Organisers: Giuseppe Cosio, Valentina Varinelli****Submission deadline for abstracts: October 31, 2025. Send to: valentina.varinelli@unicatt.it and franco.lonati@unicatt.it**

While Sinner-mania is steadily growing in Italy, a measure of the global hype surrounding tennis is the proliferation in the past few years of literary and cinematic representations of this game. From Andre Agassi's bestselling autobiography *Open* to the recent success of Luca Guadagnino's *Challengers*, tennis occupies a central place in contemporary pop culture. Yet these are only the latest expressions of an artistic tradition as old as the sport itself, encompassing film and theatre, 'high' literature (think of Giorgio Bassani's *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* or David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*) and commercial fiction (such as Sophie Kinsella's debut novel, *The Tennis Party*, and Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Carrie Soto Is Back*), life writing and journalism – not to mention tennis fanatics like Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, and Martin Amis.

This conference aims to investigate the forms and modes of representation of tennis – both in its modern version and in its early manifestations – in world literature, cinema, and TV series. It will also be the opportunity to promote the impressive tennis library and archive built by Italian TV commentator, journalist, and writer Gianni Clerici (1930-2022), now held at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Brescia (<https://brescia-raccoltestoriche-gianniclerici.unicatt.it/>).

We welcome 20-minute papers in English or Italian from academics as well as journalists and tennis experts. The proceedings will be published in a volume of the double-blind peer-reviewed *Quaderni delle Raccolte Storiche* series of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

Title: “Between Theory and Practice: The Essay Beyond Borders”**Dates: April 9-10, 2026****Place: University of Pisa****Organisers: Mario Aquilina, Paolo Bugliani, Roberta Ferrari****Deadline for abstracts: October 20, 2025. Send to: ebb.pisa2026@gmail.com****For further information: <https://essaysbeyondborders.eu/events/call-for-papers-for-ebb-conference-in-pisa-9-10-april-2026/>**

We are pleased to announce the call for papers for the international Conference Between Theory and Practice: The Essay Beyond Borders, to be held on 9-10 April 2026 at the University of Pisa.

The conference aims to explore the essay's potential to foster civic engagement and to create spaces for reflective, critical and individual thought in both public and private spheres.

As a fluid, exploratory, and experimental genre, the essay bridges personal reflection and public discourse, offering a space for deep thought and nuanced argumentation in rapidly evolving and complex times—characterised, among other things, by climate change, political unrest, the effects of post-truth discourse, and the increasing presence of Artificial Intelligence in areas once considered the exclusive realm of human thought and expression.

The essay is a self-reflexive form that favours dialogic thought. It allows for the development of an individual voice that remains open to exchange, seeking affinities and navigating tensions rather than reinforcing fixed positions. Open to experimentation and change, essayistic writing resists rigid ideological stances, thriving instead on curiosity, adaptability, and an evolving engagement with experience, context, and ideas. The essay situates individual experience within broader social, political, and philosophical frameworks, bridging the subjective and the collective while acknowledging the tension between the personal and the public.

These qualities define the essayistic not only as a literary practice but also as a way of thinking and teaching—one that encourages rigorous reflection, meaningful dialogue, and engaged citizenship.

Conferences, workshops

Within this conceptual framework, the conference asks whether the essay can serve as an antidote to—or find its place within—accelerated digital culture, fostering deep, reflective, and engaged reading and writing. In particular, it seeks to explore the essay’s potential and limits within the context of the ‘planetary turn.’ As global crises demand new ways of thinking, the essay offers a means to interrogate interconnectedness, fostering critical and speculative approaches that move beyond anthropocentric and national frameworks—frameworks increasingly inadequate in addressing planetary concerns.

Title: “African Cosmologies across the Atlantic: Literary, Linguistic, Artistic and Cultural Representations” - AISCLI Seminar Day

Date: November 10-11, 2025

Place: University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara and University Campus of Pescara

Organisers: Aminat Emma Badmus, Alessandra Di Pietro, Lisbety Mirabal Díaz

Deadline for abstracts: July 23, 2025. Send to: africancosmologies@gmail.com

Recent years have seen an upsurge of narratives from the Global South that engage in the representation of various African cosmologies. In contrast with Western traditions, these narratives are contributing to an epistemological shift from “the study of African religion as object [to] the study of African religion as subject” (Olupona 2013: xix).

This epistemological relocation seems almost a necessity in the current state of today’s globalised world, in which neo-colonialist and capitalist forces fuel genocides, environmental destructions and economic recessions, while also posing a threat to civil and human rights all over the globe. It is no wonder, then, that some contemporary writers and artists are turning their attention to the realm of spirituality in order to find a valid alternative to society’s lack of human ethos.

In this sense, the vast worlds of African religious practices and cosmologies are redefining literary, linguistic, artistic and cultural representations across the Atlantic, from Africa to the Caribbean. Whether to represent the fluidity of queer bodies, to offer alternatives to Anthropocentrism or to convey the traumatic legacies of the Middle Passage, contemporary authors such as Akwaeke Emezi, Eloghosa Osunde, Nnedi Okorafor, Jacqueline Crooks and Edwige Danticat, among others, are using representations of African cosmologies to challenge westernised dichotomies and epistemologies, opening up our world to new possibilities of being.

This one-day international conference aims to investigate the literary, linguistic, artistic and cultural representations of African cosmologies, posing particular attention to the points of contact between the African continent and the Caribbean regions. This seminar will be of interest to scholars of African, Caribbean and Afro-American Literatures, Linguistics, Anthropology, Religious and Diaspora Studies.

Title: “Echoes of Hate, Screens of Resistance: Discourse, Media, and Pedagogy in the Digital Age”

Date: October 23–25, 2025

Place: University of Naples “L’Orientale”

Convenor: Giuseppe Balirano

Deadline for abstracts: July 30, 2025. Send to: prin2022echoes@unior.it

The international conference Echoes of Hate, Screens of Resistance marks the culmination of the PRIN 2022 project ECHOES – English Studies to Contrast Hate Online and Enhance Solidarity, a multidisciplinary initiative funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research. The project focuses on the critical analysis of harmful online practices (HOPs) in English multimodal discourse, with an emphasis on promoting solidarity, inclusion, and responsible digital citizenship.

In today’s increasingly polarised digital world, hate is no longer confined to fringe communities; in fact, it circulates widely through social media, public discourse, and popular audiovisual culture. Cinema and

Conferences, workshops

television, together with social networking systems, participate in both the reproduction and the contestation of exclusionary narratives. Meanwhile, educational institutions face mounting pressure to equip learners and educators with tools to identify, counter, and neutralise these forms of hate.

This conference provides an open platform for scholars, educators, cultural practitioners, media analysts, and digital activists to reflect on the critical role of language, screen discourse, and pedagogical practices in addressing hate and fostering inclusive futures.

Over the past two years, the ECHOES project has investigated online hate from a multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) perspective, analysing verbal, visual, and aural digital texts in English. Using this methodology, the interuniversity research team has identified four prominent forms of HOPs, namely trolling, cyberbullying, bashing, and defamation, and analysed their impact on four particularly vulnerable social groups: women, migrants and diasporic communities, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities. In addition, the analysis was guided by six main hate categories: Age (including discrimination against the elderly), Body, Disability, Ethnicity (including various forms of racism not necessarily linked to migration), Gender, and Religion.

The conference will explore how digital and screen-based textualities construct and circulate hate, and how they offer discursive and pedagogical opportunities for resistance. By convening experts from fields such as applied linguistics, discourse analysis, media and film studies, education, and social semiotics, Echoes of Hate, Screens of Resistance seeks to cultivate and promote interdisciplinary dialogue and reinforce the role of education and research in countering digital toxicity. We especially encourage contributions that engage critically with the idea of digital solidarity, interrogate the ethical responsibilities of content creators and educators, and propose tangible models for promoting inclusion and mutual respect in online and audiovisual communication.

Title: “Passaggi di Senso: Traduzioni e Linguaggi oltre i Confini”

Date: February 23-24, 2026

Place: University of Salerno

Organisers: Valeria Anna Vaccaro, Mariagrazia De Meo, Valentina Schettino, Valentina De Cristofaro, Michele Bevilacqua, Pasquale Esposito, Giuseppe Bisogni

Deadline for abstracts: September 15, 2025. Send to: convtradspec2026@unisa.it

The conference aims to promote interdisciplinary and multilingual reflections on the role of languages in processes of mobility, contact and mediation in contemporary global contexts. Contributions may explore a wide range of topics related to language variation, translation practices, intercultural communication and sociolinguistic dynamics in multilingual and multicultural settings.

Title: “(Im)politeness on Stage”

Dates: December 15-16, 2025

Place: University of Naples L’Orientale

Organisers: Valentina Vetri, Bianca Del Villano, Chiara Ghezzi, Roberto Esposito, Mariaconcetta Mirto, Emma Pasquali, Aoife Beville

Deadline for abstracts: August 31, 2025. Send to: valentina.vetri@unisi.it or chiara.ghezzi@unior.it

(Im)politeness plays a crucial role in the analysis of dramatic dialogue, revealing complex aspects of characterization, plot development, and the underlying structure of social harmony or discord. The ways in which characters deploy impoliteness strategies on stage provide insights into power dynamics, relationships, and the negotiation of social boundaries. Beyond its narrative function, impoliteness also serves as an important theatrical tool: it can enhance entertainment, generate humour, and, in the case of

mock impoliteness, even express intimacy, affect, or strategic cunning. While dramatic texts have often been overlooked in stylistic and pragmatic studies due to the long-standing debate between text based and performance-based approaches, the increasing availability of filmed stage performances — through platforms such as National Theatre Live, National Theatre at Home, Digital Theatre — has facilitated new analytical possibilities. The integration of multimodal analysis now allows scholars to examine not only the language of dramatic texts but also their performative realization, including prosody, gesture, and spatial dynamics. As Boulton argues, a play is an organic, complex organism: it does not simply signify, but it “walks and talks before our eyes” (1960: 3). This highlights the need to examine dramatic dialogue from multiple perspectives, considering how meaning emerges not only from the text itself but also from its delivery, interactional dynamics, and performative realization. By integrating linguistic, pragmatic, and multimodal approaches, scholars can explore the full range of strategies through which (im)politeness operates in drama—whether in written scripts, staged performances, or filmed versions.

Title: 4th International ELT Conference “New Trends in English Language Teaching, Learning and Education”

Dates: October 9-10, 2025

Place: Parthenope University of Naples

Organisers: Raffaella Antinucci, Giuseppe Balirano, Eleonora Federici, Tania Zulli, Lucia Abbamonte, Bronwen Hughes

Deadline for abstracts: July 31, 2025. Send to: 4eltconference@uniparthenope.it

The 4th International ELT Conference “New Trends in English Language Teaching, Learning, and Education” will be held at Parthenope University of Naples on 9-10 October 2025.

The event follows the international debate launched by the three editions of the Conference hosted by the University of Naples L’Orientale (2022), the G. D’Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara (2023), and the University of Ferrara (2024). The 4th International ELT Conference aims to foster ongoing debates on the challenges of language teaching, language learning, and special needs education with a particular focus on English-Medium Instruction (EMI).

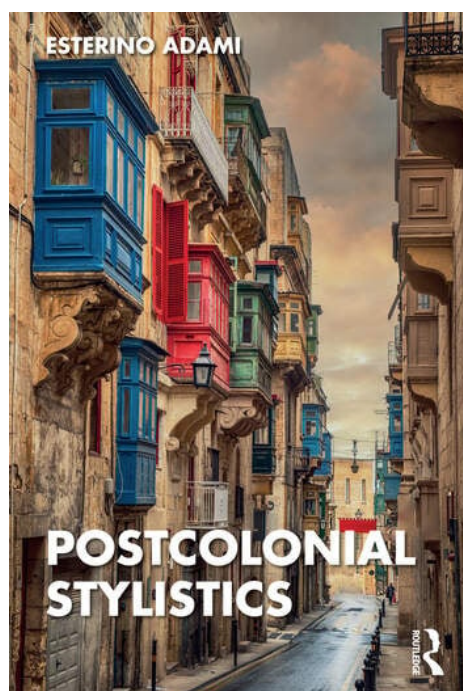
We are pleased to invite submissions on the conference theme: English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and the Development of Specialized Teaching and Learning Skills. The conference seeks to address challenges and opportunities in equipping both teachers and students with effective strategies to navigate the complexities of EMI environments, particularly in courses that involve specialised terminologies, discourses, and content.

New publications

Esterino Adami

Postcolonial Stylistics

Routledge, 2025, pp. 242. ISBN: 9781032740898



This accessible introduction to postcolonial stylistics looks at the shared aims of stylistics and postcolonial studies and illustrates how to apply the analytical and theoretical tools of stylistics to a selection of literary and non-literary texts from a range of English-speaking postcolonial contexts. Structured around the five keywords of Language, Identity, Belonging, History, and Ecology, the book: sheds light on the way in which writers from a range of former colonial territories have creatively drawn from such thematic areas to construct complex and committed discourses / shows how a rigorous linguistic analysis can help reach a better understanding of the rhetorical mechanisms and cultural dynamics operating in these works / underlines how meaning is generated from the interaction between author, reader, and context; how narratives shape and propagate a specific worldview; and how metaphor can convey social and political values / expands on each keyword by considering texts of different typology such as fiction, poetry, drama, and non-fiction, accompanied by activities and references / includes historical and literary postcolonial timelines and an index of names and topics. Comprehensive in its coverage and assuming no prior knowledge of the topics considered, the book adopts an interactive and activity-based approach to develop readers' understanding of linguistic structures and forms through postcolonial texts. Offering a new interdisciplinary perspective, this is essential reading for students new to stylistics and postcolonial literature.

Marina Bondi and Franca Poppi (eds)

Creating Trust through Transparency?

special issue of *Iperstoria*, 25, 2025. ISSN 2281-4582

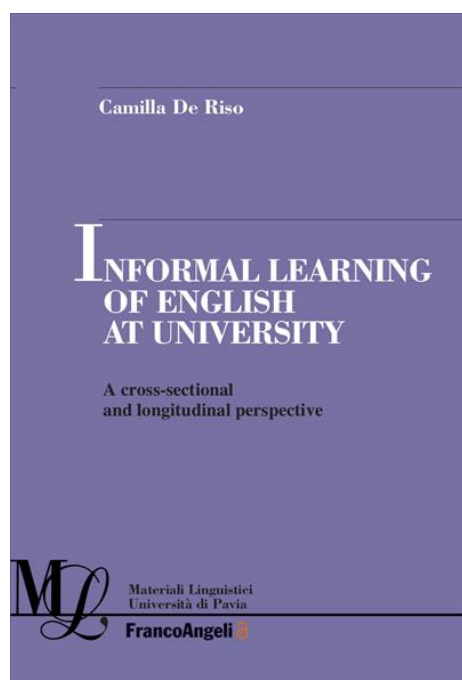


This special issue delves into the pivotal roles of transparency and trust in corporate communication, shedding light on how these aspects contribute to corporate credibility. Transparency enables organizations to demonstrate accountability, creating a positive impact on organizational reputation and fostering stronger relationships with stakeholders. Additionally, trust helps in enhancing stakeholder engagement, ensuring they feel valued and informed. Together, transparency and trust form the bedrock of robust business communication strategies, enabling organizations to navigate the complexities of modern corporate environments effectively. By prioritizing clear and honest exchanges, companies can build a solid foundation for long-term success and sustainability. This issue explores various strategies and approaches for enhancing transparency and trust, highlighting their significance in shaping corporate communication practices that resonate with stakeholder expectations and promote organizational integrity.

Camilla De Riso

Informal learning of English at University. A cross-sectional and longitudinal perspective

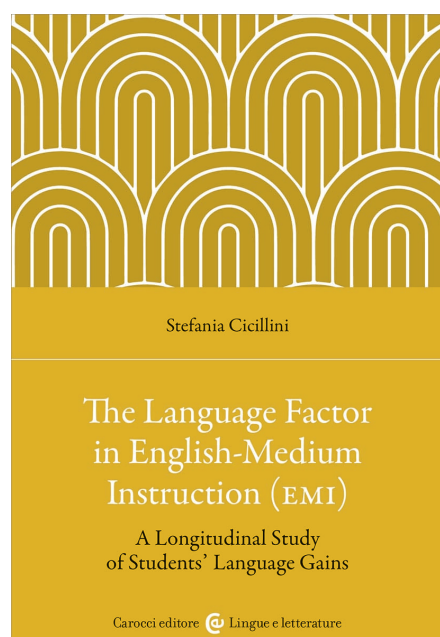
Franco Angeli, 2025, pp. 205. ISBN: 9788835179252



With English increasingly moving beyond the classroom and into informal settings, research on informal second language learning (ISLL) has emerged as a fruitful field of study, exploring both digital and real-world environments for language learning and use across Europe. The unprecedented availability of informal English input has paved the way for new media affordances through which the language can be accessed, used and appropriated by L2 learner-users. This book investigates how Italian university students access English spontaneously. A questionnaire survey gathered insights into participants' patterns of exposure to different types of informal English input, from audiovisuals to face-to-face interactions, as well as into learner-users' reasons for accessing L2 input informally. Moreover, a longitudinal study monitored the evolution of participants' L2 spoken production, observing complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF) trajectories to explore possible relationships between L2 development and frequency, intensity and type of exposure to informal English input. Findings highlight ongoing shifts in patterns of access among younger generations and provide insights into the role of L2 input in shaping new acquisitional profiles. Participants show distinct behaviours, attitudes and motivations towards the English language; individual factors that, alongside some specific elements such as immersion and register, appear to have influenced L2 development in different ways.

Stefania Cicillini

The Language Factor in English-Medium Instruction (EMI). A longitudinal study of students' language gains Carocci, 2025, pp. 208. ISBN 9788829024292

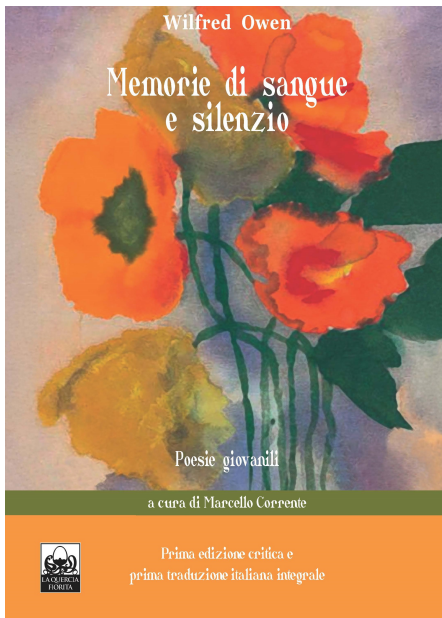


This volume deals with a crucial, but underestimated, dimension of English-medium instruction (EMI) in higher education, namely the students' language experience and the improvement in English proficiency, the latter being one of the key motivating factors to opt for EMI. The mixed-method case study presented in this volume is a longitudinal investigation of the participants' language progress, spanning over two academic years. Although English language outcomes are neither mentioned in the definitions of EMI nor in the courses' syllabi, indeed, the EMI experience provides a large amount of language input for students, which is both assimilated consciously and partly as a result of incidental language learning. On reviewing previous literature on EMI, this book addresses some key questions such as the impact of EMI on the students' English skills, the increase of proficiency while focused on subject-oriented activities and in particular whether English improvement is voluntary or incidental. The data retrieved from questionnaires and language tests administered to one-hundred medical students enrolled in an Italian university provide valuable insights into the language factor in EMI, which may be usefully exploited and extended to other higher educational contexts.

Marcello Corrente (ed.)

Memorie di sangue e silenzio. Poesie giovanili di Wilfred Owen, Vol. 1 & Vol.2; prima edizione critica italiana integrale a cura di Marcello Corrente ; prima traduzione italiana integrale (con testo a fronte) a cura di Marcello Corrente e Laura Ubaldi

La quercia fiorita, 2024, pp. 378 e pp. 384. ISBN: 978-88-940614-8-2, 978-88-940614-3-7



This two-volume publication offers, for the first time in the Italian scholarly context, a complete translation of Wilfred Owen's poetic corpus, encompassing his early compositions, war poetry, and the unfinished fragments preserved in his manuscripts, left incomplete due to his untimely death.

In addition to the translations, the volume includes an extensive critical essay, a meticulously detailed biographical profile of the author, and a chronological compendium of the most significant historical and cultural events of his era. Furthermore, it presents a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography, incorporating the principal critical editions of Owen's poetry, alongside all major scholarly contributions—monographs, peer-reviewed articles, critical essays, reviews, doctoral dissertations, and conference proceedings—published in Italy and internationally from the early 20th century to 2024.

The editor provides a rigorous analysis of the metrical structures and rhyme schemes employed by Owen in each poem, supported by an extensive critical apparatus. The footnotes serve a dual purpose: some elucidate key linguistic and philological aspects, while others offer deeper insights into the cultural, literary, and anthropological dimensions of the text. These annotations facilitate a multifaceted interpretative framework, encompassing historical, political, social, medical, and military perspectives.

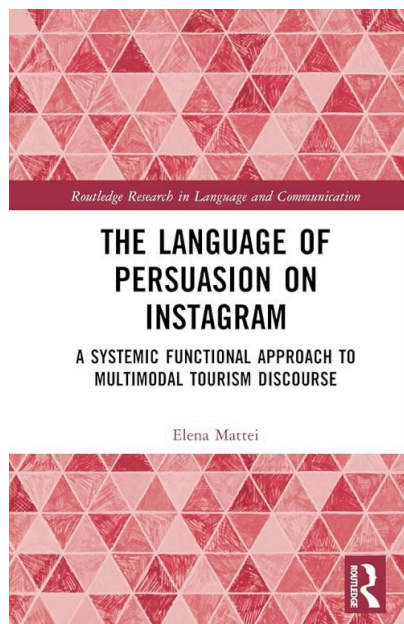


New publications

Elena Mattei

The Language of Persuasion on Instagram. A Systemic Functional Approach to Multimodal Tourism Discourse

Routledge, 2025, pp. 288. ISBN: 9781032937489



This book offers a systematic, interdisciplinary investigation into the language of persuasion in contemporary tourism discourse, with a focus on English-language travel boards' use of Instagram and official websites.

Drawing on Corpus Linguistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics, it examines how linguistic and visual resources are strategically deployed to construct idealized representations of destinations and evoke positive emotional responses. Through a multimodal analysis, the volume explores recurring linguistic patterns, the role of platform-specific dissemination, and how discourse constructs power dynamics between destinations and prospective tourists. By combining empirical methods with critical discourse and sociological perspectives, the book sheds light on how emotionally charged, consumer-oriented narratives may reinforce broader socioeconomic inequalities and contribute to unsustainable travel practices. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing debates on digital persuasion and literacy, media framing, and the ideological function of tourism communication, recommending approaches to integrate data-driven, highly persuasive strategies and eco-sensitive narratives.

This book will be of interest to scholars and students in discourse analysis, digital communication, tourism studies, marketing, and linguistics, as well as professionals interested in the mechanisms behind strategic, promotional narratives and their potential impact on social and environmental sustainability.

Marina Bondi, Silvia Cacchiani (eds)

Language Variation: Perspectives on Lexis and Phraseology

Issue of *Status Quaestionis*, 27, 2024

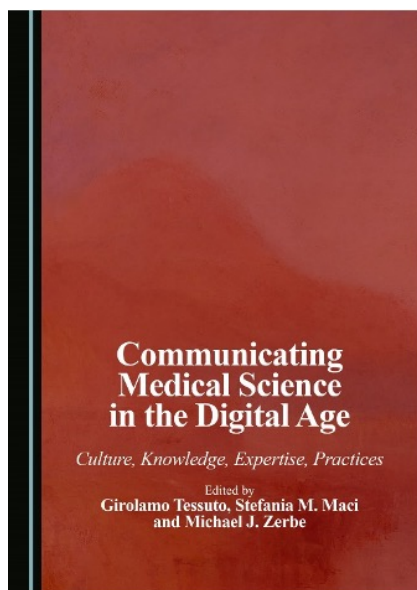


While spanning several genres and domains, and discussing lexical and phraseological variation from multiple angles and perspectives, the dominant methodological standpoints in the Special Issue are corpus and discourse analysis. Small and large corpora are used along with lexicographic data to examine key lexical and phraseological questions in language variation, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In particular, special attention is devoted to language choice, linguistic constraints and linguistic innovation as observed in English, Italian, and across English and Italian.

Girolamo Tessuto, Stefania M. Maci and Michael J. Zerbe (eds)

Communicating Medical Science in the Digital Age. Culture, Knowledge, Expertise, Practices

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2025, pp. 398. ISBN: 1-0364-4566-6



The rapid development of the Internet and social media platforms has transformed the landscape of medical science communication where a variety of societal stakeholders, including the research academy, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and patients, increasingly turn to the readily usable functionalities of online information and knowledge platforms. This transformation has had a significant impact on digital communication within the medical academy and the healthcare sector as a whole. Opportunities are spawning an increasingly diverse digital ecosystem of less formal practices of medical scholarly communication on web and social media platforms (research blogs, tweets, newspaper articles, press interviews, ResearchGate, WikiPathways, info-graphics and video-abstracts), making the scientific process more democratic and responsive to societal needs and fostering ‘open’, rapid scientific communication between researchers, citizens, and other societal actors. This book brings together academics and practitioners from the area of linguistics and other fields to critically discuss and rethink emerging trends and variations in medical science communication models where culture, knowledge, expertise, and identity are played out, contributing to the discursive study of texts and genres that matter to internal and external processes and practices of medical science communication.

Bronwen Hughes and Margaret Rasulo (eds)

Language Variation: Perspectives on Lexis and Phraseology

Special issue of *ALLIED - Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages in Educational Digital Settings*, 1(1), 2025



The first issue of *ALLIED*, the new open-access journal from UniorPress (Editor in Chief: Giuseppe Balirano), is now available.

The *ALLIED* journal was established to address contemporary challenges in language education and applied research, with a particular focus on digital learning environments. In this way, *ALLIED* is a platform at the intersection of applied linguistics, digital pedagogy and educational innovation.

All articles are peer-reviewed and freely available on the official website of the journal: <https://www.uniorpress.it/allied>. The journal welcomes English-language contributions from international scholars and early-career researchers and is open to submissions for future issues.

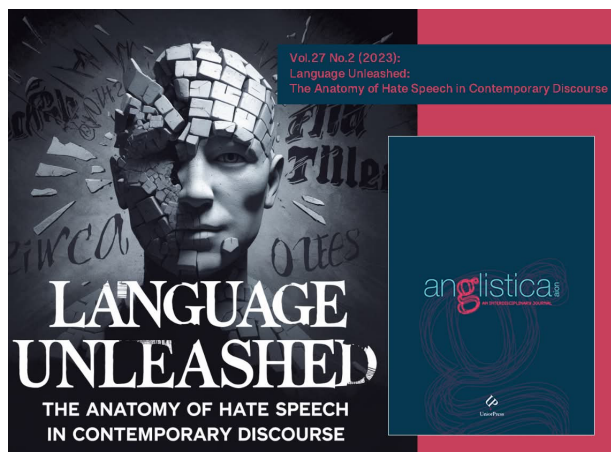
This inaugural thematic issue, edited by B. Hughes and M. Rasulo features: emerging approaches in English language teaching; technology and inclusivity in language education; innovation, multimedia, AI and digital environments; theoretical and practical insights into tools, methodologies and teacher training.

New publications

Giuseppe Balirano, Giuseppina Scotto Di Carlo and Robert Lawson (eds)

Language Unleashed: The Anatomy of Hate, Speech in Contemporary Discourse

Special issue of *AION - Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages in Educational Digital Settings*, 27(2), 2025 [2023]



This special issue deals with the linguistic, social, and ideological mechanisms behind hate speech in today's global and digital contexts. It brings together critical reflections on language, violence, and identity across a range of media and perspectives.

Featuring contributions from: Elena Guerra, Stella Martin and Marta Milani; Francesco Meledandri; Fabio Cangero and Antonio Fruttaldo ; Maria Cristina Nisco and Annalisa Raffone ; Francesco Nacchia; Francesca D'Angelo; Roberto Esposito; Giusy Scotto Di Carlo; Beatrice Spallaccia; Maria Cristina Aiezza; Margaret Rasulo (Raz Mags) and Maria De Santo.

Breaking Barriers: Empowering Interactions in Language, Literature, and Culture

AIA Seminar

Aldo Moro University of Bari

14-15 May, 2025

REPORT

Title: “Breaking Barriers: Empowering Interactions in Language, Literature, and Culture”

Date: 14-15 May 2025

Place: Aldo Moro University of Bari

Scientific Committee: Giuseppe Balirano, Paola Catenaccio, Manuela D'Amore, Franca Dellarosa, Massimiliano Demata, Gaetano Falco, Maristella Gatto, C. Bruna Mancini, Francesco Meledandri, Marilena Parlati, Irene Ranzato

Organising Committee: Elisa Fortunato, Rosita Maglie, Pierpaolo Martino, Denise Milizia, Angelo Monaco, Mariacristina Petillo, Silvia Silvestri, Francesco Sinigaglia, Laura Chiara Spinelli, Alessandra Squeo

The 2025 AIA Seminar, which was held at the Aldo Moro University of Bari on 14 and 15 May, represented an event where early researchers and senior scholars presented thought-provoking and interesting contributions to reflect upon the effects of the evolution of the strategies of production and transformation of discourse types on language, literature, and culture. More than 30 presentations addressed the seminar’s call to “break barriers” through interdisciplinary approaches covering different fields, from digital media to postcolonial literature, to gender studies, environmental communication, and museum practice.

The programme of the seminar was structured around four plenary lectures. The opening keynote was delivered by Michaela Mahlberg (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg), who explored how digital tools in the field of corpus stylistics can reveal latent patterns of representation and ideology in literary texts. Through examples of canonical authors, Michaela Mahlberg illustrated how collocation networks and corpus-based methods can provide deeper insights into how literature participates in the social construction of meaning. Her work invited participants to rethink the act of reading itself as a space for breaking interpretative hierarchies and enabling more inclusive and participatory literary criticism.

The second plenary was given by Alex Robinson (University of Liverpool, Centre for the Study of International Slavery), who addressed the enduring impact of slavery and colonialism in the curation and interpretation of cultural heritage. Robinson’s intervention critically examined the role of museums and archives in sustaining or dismantling dominant narratives of national identity, calling for decolonial approaches that prioritise reparative storytelling, participatory memory work, and the empowerment of historically silenced voices.

The third keynote speaker, Elena Spandri (University of Siena), explored the role of English literature as a site of rupture, resistance and reimagination. Engaging with postcolonial and gender theory, her presentation traced how literary narratives challenge hegemonic discourses and create spaces for symbolic agency. In particular, she highlighted the capacity of literary texts to unsettle

fixed categories of gender, nation, and cultural belonging, foregrounding literature's ability to give form to experiences of dislocation, subversion and transformation.

The final plenary, which also served as the closing event of the seminar, was delivered by Maria Grazia Guido (University of Salento). Drawing on her extensive research in intercultural pragmatics, trauma narratives and ELF-mediated institutional discourse, Professor Guido presented a compelling analysis of the role of English as a contact language in highly asymmetrical settings - especially, within contexts of migration and healthcare. Maria Grazia Guido's presentation revealed that hybrid linguistic practices can contribute to the elimination of barriers, becoming instead resources for empowerment and survival. Through real-world examples of transcultural communication, the closing event reaffirmed the seminar's central theme, proving that language, when ethically and empathetically deployed, can be a means of negotiating meaning, building trust, and enacting resilience.

Alongside the plenary sessions, research papers connected diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks such as - among others: Critical Discourse Analysis; Corpus Linguistics; Multimodal Semiotics; Literary Theory; Ecolinguistics; and ELF Studies. Vincenzo Amendolara (University of Bologna) investigated eco-narrative clusters on TikTok and Instagram, using ecolinguistics and multimodal discourse analysis to uncover how digital users articulate climate anxiety, hope, and activism. Paola Brusasco (University of Chieti-Pescara) presented a critical and corpus-assisted comparison between *The Feminine Mystique* and its Italian translation, showing how cultural and stylistic shifts shaped its reception in 1960s Italy. Salvatore Ciancitto and Lucia La Causa (University of Catania) examined representations of queer identities in children's book covers across Italy and the UK, applying visual grammar theory to interrogate the pedagogical implications of illustration. Pietro Luigi Iaia (University of Salento) discussed an ongoing application of his "ELFentextualisation" model, exploring how institutional texts can be reconfigured through multimodal and translanguaging strategies to become more accessible to international audiences.

Contributors also explored how digital and multimodal environments reshape public discourse and identity negotiation. Presentations on AI-generated tourism discourse, for example, questioned how algorithmically produced texts reproduce or challenge established tropes of exoticism, hospitality, and national branding, inviting reflection on the epistemological implications of machine-authored representation. Other contributions focused on populist rhetoric in social media ecologies, examining how multimodal strategies - such as memefication, visual framing, and affective appeals - function as persuasive tools in polarised political contexts, often reinforcing barriers to critical dialogue while simultaneously creating novel discursive spaces.

Themes of identity performance and cultural subversion were also prominent. Research on drag culture and queer semiotics illustrated how performative aesthetics and linguistic creativity operate within both digital and embodied spaces to challenge heteronormative conventions. In addition, the contributions that analysed metaphor in international news discourse showed how conceptual framing in global journalism constructs narratives of crisis, solidarity, or threat, with particular attention to the lexical choices and imagery used in reporting humanitarian or environmental emergencies. Other papers investigated online relational work in health-related communities, highlighting the affective and linguistic labour involved in peer support networks on platforms such as Reddit. These studies revealed how users collaboratively construct empathy, negotiate expertise, and manage face in contexts marked by vulnerability and emotional intensity.

Thanks to its programme and the data that were presented, the 2025 AIA Seminar confirm the relevance of language, literature, and culture studies to identify and break those barriers that undermine our evolution as global citizens of physical and digital spaces.

Conferences: information and reports

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

Title: “Philosophy and Theatre”

Dates: November 20-21, 2025

Place: Verona

Organisers: Silvia Bigliuzzi, Alessandro Stavru, Emanuele Stelzer, Gherardo Ugolini

The conference will investigate how dramatic texts and forms relate to specific philosophical topics ranging from Classical Antiquity to contemporaneity (such as mimesis, katharsis, pathos, parrhesia/eironeia, dialogue/monologue, reality/fiction, pleasure/pain, joy/misery, life/death, truth/lying, space/time, body/embodiment etc.). We will also look at issues involving the theatricality of philosophy, such as performance theories, where theatrical performance is understood as a specific form of philosophizing.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

Title: “‘coldtonguecoldhamcoldbeefpickledgherkins...’: Eating Indoors and Outdoors in Children’s Literature”

Dates: November 27-28, 2025

Place: University of Venice Ca’ Foscari

Organisers: Laura Tosi, Alessandro Cabiati

Food and eating occupy a central place in many children’s stories. The extent of scholarly interest in the topic is evident in numerous critical works, ranging from the monograph *Voracious Children* (2026) to collections such as *Critical Approaches to Food in Children’s Literature* (2009), *Feast or Famine? Food and Children’s Literature* (2015), *Table Lands: Food in Children’s Literature* (2020), and *Eating Cultures in Children’s Literature* (2024). Discussions of food in children’s narratives also feature prominently in food studies collections like *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Food* (2018) and *Food and Literature* (2018), as well as in a wealth of journal essays and edited volumes too numerous to list. Across all these works, scholars explore the wide range of meanings and interpretations that food holds within children’s literature. But while fictional food itself has been discussed from a variety of different perspectives, the significance of the places in which food is prepared and consumed has not been given the same critical attention. It is safe to say that in children’s literature there are as many inns, cafés, restaurants, dining rooms, canteens, picnics, chocolate factories and tea parties – indoor and outdoor venues alike – as there are types of real and fantasy foods. Some of these places, such as the ‘Osteria del Gambero Rosso’ where Pinocchio dines with the Fox and the Cat, have entered the popular imagination and have become cultural references in gastronomy.

Some other venues disrupt the boundaries between inside/outside and between kinds of eating practices: although supplied with a large armchair and a long table fully set for tea, Alice’s ‘Mad Tea-Party’ takes place, like a picnic, under a tree. On other occasions, it is the boundaries between space and food which are torn down. A place like the witches’ house in ‘Hansel and Gretel’ can thus be made of bread, cake, and sugar, but far from being comforting the house and the food take on threatening – and predatory – connotations, subverting the food hierarchy. The aim of this conference is thus to bring together investigations about the way child characters engaged in eating scenes alter the meaning of places, just as places, in turn, shape the characters. We are interested in exploring interactions between children, places, and food, and the way this triangulation evokes memories, shape children as consumers, build communities, and suggest connections to social, gender, and national identities.

Conferences: information and reports

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

Title: “12th World Shakespeare Congress: Planetary Shakespeares”

Date: July 20–26, 2026

Place: University of Verona

Local organisers: Skenè Research Centre: Silvia Bigliazzi, Emanuel Stelzer, Petra Bjelica, Simona Brunetti, Sidia Fiorato, Vlado Jelcic, Susan Payne, Cristiano Ragni, Beatrice Righetti, Anmol Deep Singh, Roberta Zaroni

The Pre-registration and the Registration pages have been set up on the Congress website: <https://www.conftool.com/wsc2026/index.php?page=index>

ISA members may sign up here (from 25 May 2025 to 15 September 2025): <https://www.wsc2026.org/seminars-workshops-pre-registration/>

The 2026 World Shakespeare Congress will mark the International Shakespeare Association’s 50th anniversary. Let us celebrate together in fair Verona, Italy, where, from July 20th to 26th 2026, Shakespeareans will gather in this beautiful and historic city on the Adige River, a vital crossroads of ancient and early modern Europe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the setting for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The WSC will address questions related to the role of Shakespeare in connection with contemporary concerns about the destiny of our planet and human beings at a time when humanism has been deeply challenged. The Congress will foster discussion of the many ways in which Shakespeare may be conceived as ‘planetary’, reaching out to resonances with new cultural galaxies of enquiry, debate, and knowledge.

Planetary Shakespeares offers a way to tackle a whole range of issues beyond the present concern with Global Shakespeare and suggesting multifarious ways in which Shakespeare’s infinite variety and complexities can offer an entrance point to the humanities, enabling them to confront planetary crises and reconsider relations among nature, art and technology, as well as the need to reconfigure our sense of reality both socially and epistemologically. Now that we have moved into the digital, the virtual, the cyborg, and the posthuman ages, and the notion itself of reality has been challenged from different angles, including our experience of augmented reality, we have become aware of new turning points in history, and how they affect our perception of the contradictions embedded in our sense of the real. Theatre best captures such transformations and possible contradictions. “Planetary Shakespeares” offers convenient gateways into the most varied experiences of ‘the real’ via a plurality of interconnected issues.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

Title: Graduate Conference “*Wunderkammer*: Linguistic, Literary and Cultural Forms of Wonder”

Dates: December 15-16, 2025

Place: Roma Tre University

Organisers: the 38th and 39th cycles of the PhD programme in Foreign Languages, Literatures

The *Wunderkammer*, translated from German as “chamber of wonders”, originated in the Renaissance as an unorganised archive of rare objects and curiosities and, as the title of the conference suggests, it represents an invitation to conceive linguistic and literary culture as a non-linear confluence of experiences that intersect with human life, crossing it and deepening its meaning. Within this ideal chamber of wonders, the forms of awe and astonishment are articulated along the folds of language. The conference’s aim is to rediscover wonder by moving away from a vision that clearly separates the real from the imaginary, enhancing instead the creative act in its fruitful exchanges with the world from

which it comes and to which it returns. The conference aims to investigate the concept of wonder from a linguistic and translation-oriented approach, as well as from a literary and cultural perspective.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

Title: “Minding the Present: Bodies, Places, Matter in and between Australia and Europe”

Dates: September 17–19, 2025

Place: University of Padova

Organisers: Maria Renata Dolce, Eleonora Federici, Francesca Mussi, Marilena Parlati

For further information: <http://appuntamenti.disll.unipd.it/easa-2025-padova/>, and go to <https://www.australianstudies.eu/> for membership. You can also contact the Conference convener, Marilena Parlati at marilena.parlati@unipd.it

We are pleased to announce the conference *Minding the Present: Bodies, Places, Matter in and between Australia and Europe*, to be held on 17-19 September 2025, at the University of Padova (Italy). In this conference we aim to explore the demands of the present, the actions and interactions we are all bound to set into motion in order to engage in political and art-activistic practices to start caring for and curing our vulnerable planet and our insecure standing on and with it. Central to our exploration is the ontology of the present—the *hic et nunc* (here and now)—together with the concepts of present orientation and the re-figurations of time/s. We will focus on how, through discourse, art, literature and geopolitical praxis, we can understand, experience, and potentially reshape both our perception of time, particularly in relation to the present moment. We are especially interested in investigating the present as a dynamic space situated between archives of the past (Hall, 2001) and what P. Saint-Amour has defined as traumatic anticipations of the future (Saint-Amour, 2015), taking into account nonlinear, non-Western and Indigenous cosmologies and heterotopias. In this way, we assert that, as Hodgson suggests, “the present moment is not... a static fixed coalescence but a super complexity, the dynamism of which determines its ability for anticipation” (2013, p. 31). We seek to examine the shaping experiences, identities, and perceptions of the present as a catalyst to urgent action both in Australia—with a special alertness to the very rooted cultures of Indigenous Australia—and in the complex relations between Europe and Australia. The conference particularly welcomes contributions from literature, linguistics, the performing arts, anthropology, cultural geography, memory studies, political and legal studies. We also encourage interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches.

The papers which will be delivered range from nineteenth-century colonial and settler issues to the extreme contemporary, attempting to disentangle the fraught relations within the continent and among Europe and other spaces. Our three keynote speakers are Gail Jones, Joseph Pugliese and Maggie Nolan. EASA members can also attend the whole conference online.

The Conference is also sponsored by AIA.

REPORT

Title: “States of [Perma]Crisis: Literary, Linguistic and Cultural Explorations”

Date: June 9-10, 2025

Place: Sapienza University of Rome

Organisers: Leonardo Bagnulo, Asia Battiloro, Alberto Dall’Olio, Carlotta Ferrando

The 2025 Sapienza Graduate Forum, organised by the 38th cycle of the PhD programme in English Literatures, Language and Translation, brought together researchers for a two-day in-person event dedicated to the theme “States of [Perma]Crisis”. The forum aimed to investigate how literature, language, and culture engage with the condition of chronic crisis.

The opening keynote by Professor Florian Mussnug (University College London), titled “Cutting Time: Crisis, Power, Event” explored how dominant framings of “permacrisis” risk dulling political awareness by turning crisis into a continuous background condition.

The first panel, “Unpacking Ecological Crisis”, featured Giulia Magro (Sapienza University of Rome), who analysed the use of desert and medieval motifs in *Dune* and *Mad Max* to visualise ongoing ecological degradation and social collapse. Charlie Toogood (Newcastle University) revisited William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*, and its utopian vision as a tool for confronting the entanglements of the Anthropocene. Asia Battiloro (Sapienza University of Rome) focused on Naomi Alderman’s *The Future*, interpreting it as a speculative climate novel.

“Exploring Female Bodies and Minds” addressed gender, ecology, and structural oppression. Sophia Scarpeccio (University of Macerata) examined the interplay between environmental and reproductive justice in Emma Donoghue’s *Halfway to Free*. Aida Marrella (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle) read Natasha Brown’s *Assembly* through the lens of intersectionality. Carlotta Ferrando (Sapienza University of Rome) discussed Raven Leilani’s *Luster*, framing Black motherhood as a site of both trauma and defiance.

In “Confronting Past and Present Traumas”, Loris Zevrain (University of Milan) interpreted Yukio Mishima’s *The Golden Pavilion* as a meditation on the liminal identity of post-war Japan. Martina Lombardo (Sapienza University of Rome) explored Tommy Orange’s *Wandering Stars*, where Native American characters reclaim identity through language. Eleonora Maio (University of Palermo) analysed Sally Bayley’s *No Boys Play Here*, and Shakespearean intertextuality as a vehicle for narrating personal crisis. Silvia Guselli (Sapienza University of Rome) examined the trauma-inflected letters of Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur.

“Patriots, Pirates, and Propaganda” turned to the entanglements of identity, empire, and crisis. Lucy Lawrence (Newcastle University) discussed “The Green Sheaf”, and its attempts to reimagine an Irish identity entangled in imperial complicity. Paolo D’Indinosante (Sapienza University of Rome) explored forgotten British poems written in response to national traumas. Giovanni Ruscica (University of Milan) analysed Chinese cinematic responses to moments of crisis.

The second keynote by Dr. Christophe Declercq (Utrecht University), “Empowerment Through Truth in Times of Crises: Advocating for Representation in Combatting the Corrosion of Memory”, examined how contemporary crises are perceived and framed, highlighting the role of dominant political and economic institutions in shaping these narratives.

“Narrative Fractures: Crisis and Media in the 21st Century”, showcased diverse engagements with digital culture. Iwona Marinov (University of Silesia in Katowice) examined how video games *This War of Mine* and *Frostpunk* simulate permacrisis through ethical gameplay. Vincenzo Amendolara (University of Bologna) presented a contrastive analysis of climate narratives across social media. Martina Di Tizio (Sapienza University of Rome) analysed the rise of “metanarrative autofiction” on social media, showing how users construct online identities. Valerio Monticelli (Sapienza University of Rome) turned to *Baby Reindeer*, exploring how masculinity and vulnerability are refracted through pragmatic ambiguity.

In “Eco-Crisis and the Politics of Language”, Sara Pollice (Independent Scholar) analysed TED Talks to

examine climate metaphors. Lorenzo Zannini (University of Naples “L’Orientale”) explored expert discourse in “The Conversation” Australia, arguing that knowledge about climate adaptation is shaped by cultural and neoliberal contexts.

“Cities Under Pressure” focused on urban spaces as sites of collapse and memory. Pasquale Concilio (University of Naples “L’Orientale”) compared how Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* and Claire Vaye Watkins’s *Gold Fame Citrus* dramatize the failure of environmental justice. Marco Sbreglia (Sapienza University of Rome) discussed Hong Kong writer Xu Xi’s portrayal of urban nostalgia. Sylwia Zazulak (University of Silesia in Katowice) explored *Cities: Skylines* as a simulation of urban crisis.

In closing, the Graduate Forum reaffirmed the critical role of the humanities in making sense of crisis. Through a wide range of literary, linguistic, and cultural perspectives, participants revealed how the concept of permacrisis can be productively unpacked and contested.

REPORT

Title: “Gender and/in Migration”

Date: July 3-4, 2025

Place: Parthenope University of Naples

Organisers: Raffaella Antinucci, Claudia Capancioni, Mariaconcetta Costantini

The international conference *Gender and/in Migration*, held on July 3–4, 2025, at Parthenope University of Naples, explored the intersections of gender and migration in contemporary society, literature, and media. The event was the result of a collaborative effort between the research centres L&GEND (University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara) and CRILLS (Parthenope University of Naples), and aimed to investigate how these themes intersect across various textual genres, including literature, media, and film. The conference opened with welcome addresses by the convenors and directors of the two research centres, Mariaconcetta Costantini and Raffaella Antinucci. Both highlighted the conference’s objectives and stressed the importance of adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the study of gender and migration, one that incorporates not only Linguistics, Literature, Media, and Cultural Studies, but also the Social Sciences, such as Sociology, Anthropology, and Psychology. The first day commenced with a panel focusing on the discursive representation of male and female immigrants in the media. Massimiliano Demata (University of Turin) analyzed how female immigration is constructed on social media, with a specific focus on Donald Trump’s posts. Similarly, Maria Cristina Nisco (Parthenope University of Naples) and Annalisa Raffone (Pegaso Digital University) examined how the British press portrays immigration through a gendered lens, drawing attention to the differing representations of male and female migrants in mainstream UK media. The second panel shifted the focus to Italian diasporas in English-speaking countries, approached primarily from a sociolinguistic perspective. Four major Italian migrant communities were discussed in relation to the communication styles of male and female immigrants: Siria Guzzo (University of Salerno) covered England and the United States, Giuseppe Vitale (Parthenope University of Naples) discussed Scotland, and Valentina Di Cristofaro (University of Salerno) addressed Ireland. The day concluded with two panels exploring literary representations of immigrant women. Teresa D’Aniello (LUMSA University of Rome) and Rebecca Borsari (Sorbonne Université Paris IV) focused on contemporary Italian literature, while Francesca Crisante (University of Messina) examined representations in American literature. The second day continued the exploration of immigrant women’s narratives in literature. Panels five and six delved into works by female diasporic writers from the UK, the US, and the Caribbean. Elisabetta Marino (University of Rome Tor Vergata) discussed the works of Monica Ali and Nashid Kamal, both revolving around the Bangladeshi migrants’ community. Alessandra Di Pietro (University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara) analyzed the experience of an immigrant woman in the Haitian community in Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes,*

Memory. Finally, Mariaconcetta Costantini examined the influence of gender on the migratory experience in *Behold the Dreamers* by Cameroonian-American author Imbolo Mbue. The Gender and/ in Migration conference offered valuable insights into the complex relationship between gender and migration in today's world. It underscored how literature and language function as vital interpretive tools for understanding the gendered portrayal of migrants in media and literary texts. Moreover, the discussions highlighted how gender can often represent a major barrier to the aspirations and life projects of individuals seeking better opportunities abroad.

REPORT

Title: “Informal English Learning at University - A Kaleidoscope of Voices and Pathways ”

Date: May 9, 2025

Place: University of Pavia

Organisers: Maria Pavesi, Luca Briatico, Camilla De Riso, Maicol Formentelli, Elisa Ghia, Elena Giribaldi, Silvia Monti

Website: <https://prin.unipv.it/index.php/en>

The conference “Informal English Learning at University - A Kaleidoscope of Voices and Pathways” presented and discussed the key results of the PRIN project “The informalisation of English language learning through the media: Language input, learning outcomes and sociolinguistic attitudes from an Italian perspective” (Principal Investigator, Maria Pavesi), the first large-scale study conducted in Italy to explore how the ever-increasing opportunities of exposure to English through new media affordances affect university students’ acquisition of English as a second language.

The conference, which brought together scholars from each of the four Italian Universities involved in the project, each representing a different region of the country, from north to south, opened with a welcome session featuring remarks by Federico Forneris (Vice-rector for Research, University of Pavia), Luca Vanzago (Head of the Department of Humanities, University of Pavia), Giuseppe Balirano (President of AIA) and Maria Pavesi (Principal Investigator).

The keynote address “Informal L2 learning and acquisition via the media: state of the art and future perspectives”, offered the reflections of Sandro Caruana (University of Malta) on incidental online learning in contexts that hybridize linguistic and digital literacies and on the salience of bridging formal and informal learning of English.

Following the keynote address, the first panel, “A national survey on University students’ informal experience with English”, provided the methodological framing of the project, its rationale and the results of the survey. In the first talk of the panel, “In contact with English: Investigating Present-day informal language learning”, Maria Pavesi explored how the polycentric nature of the mediatic diffusion of English correlates with educational and technological habits and affordances in different parts of the country. The second talk by Francesca Bianchi (University of Salento), Elisa Ghia and Cristina Mariotti (University of Pavia), “A global view on informal contact with English in Italian universities”, presented the findings of the survey and showed that the frequent, dynamic and multifaceted informal contact with English, which mostly encompasses audiovisuals, relates to appreciation of the language and enhances vocabulary knowledge and L2 proficiency. Also, the individual educational background, personal attitudes towards English, and learning-specific variables influence the positive outcomes of informal contact with English. After the lunch break, a discussion about the survey results was led by Paolo Della Putta (University of Turin) who reflected in his talk “Imparare l’inglese frequentandolo. Dati e implicazioni del progetto ‘The informalisation of English language through the media’” on the factors that affect informal learning of English.

English use, attitudes and learning over time were the themes explored by Paola Leone (University of Salento) and Emanuela Paone (University of Bologna) in their talk “Motivazione degli studenti

universitari all'esposizione informale all'inglese L2: una prospettiva longitudinale". They compared data from two rounds of interviews with the same group of respondents who, a year later, reflected on the changes in their attitude towards English in informal contexts and their awareness of their own incidental learning.

Irene Ranzato (Sapienza University of Rome) and Massimo Sturiale (University of Milan) finally focused on "Attitudes towards British screen accent in informal second language learning" discussing the results of a questionnaire and follow-up interviews that explored the interviewees' attitudes to varieties of English and their ability to detect features such as register, dialect and accent.

The conference ended with a round table "Voices from within: Reflecting on one year of informal language learning through the media", moderated by Camilla De Riso (University of Pavia), which gave voice to some of the questionnaire and interview respondents. The prompts of the discussant Bronwen Hughes (University of Naples Parthenope) gave the students the opportunity to share their experiences and reflect metacognitively on their language acquisition processes.

By encouraging the exchange of data and perspectives among scholars from Italy and beyond, the conference underscored the value of recognizing and leveraging the informal, often engaging ways in which Italian students interact with English. It also emphasised the importance of bridging this incidental, media-influenced language learning with formal English instruction.

REPORT

Title: "Collective Biographies Across Disciplines and Ages"

Date: July 1, 2025

Place: University of Cagliari

Organisers: Luciano Cau, Maria Grazia Dongu, Veronka Szöke

The one-day conference held at the University of Cagliari saw a range of perspectives converge on the concept of collective biographies. This concept, which formed the focal point of the event, has received limited exploration thus far within the academic domain. The conference also functioned as a medium for the discourse of experimental methodologies employed in the study of memorialisation, a field that has gained increased prominence across various academic disciplines and historical eras. Maria Grazia Dongu presented a proposal to extend the definition to encompass fictional collective biographies, as presented in a variety of literary genres. Her paper concentrated on the interplay between self-presentation and short biographies of Richard III in Shakespeare's eponymous history play. It was demonstrated that *Richard III* functions as a collective biography, depicting the intricate network of relationships within a dysfunctional family unit. Moreover, the work of Shakespeare is a story collectively constructed, which reflects on the primary purposes of its construction. In this study, Luciano Cau examines the multiple biographies of detectives and criminals as depicted in Irish detective stories. The author employs an analysis of spatial elements, the movements of the characters, and the associated emotional states to demonstrate the methodology by which these stories can be reconstructed. In her presentation, Judith Roads offered a linguistic analysis of Quakers' testimonies with a view to highlighting the main qualities that are exalted in them. Karen Lipsedge analysed Martin's portrayal of Dido Belle and Lady Elizabeth Murray as a collective biography, perpetually adapted and altered by spectators' perceptions across time. Finally, Fabio Vasarri set Ginzburg's *La famiglia Manzoni* in the context of collective fictional biographies. In accordance with the theoretical musings of Bourdieu on the phenomenon of groups cooperating to create a great author, the author examines the lives of French and Italian long-life friends, who contributed to his fame and evolution as a writer.

The book recently edited by Dongu, *Raccontare un gruppo, in gruppo* (FrancoAngeli, 2024) constitutes a pioneering endeavour to initiate a comprehensive discourse on the subject. Individuals expressing interest in participating in a new project are invited to contact dongu@unica.it.

REPORT

Title: “Pseudo-Silence in Early Modern Theatre”

Date: June 16-17, 2025

Place: University of Naples L’Orientale

Organisers: Aoife Beville, Silvia Bigliazzi, Bianca Del Villano, Beatrice Righetti

In the evocative surroundings of the Aule delle Antichità (Palazzo Corigliano), in the heart of Naples, the international conference “Pseudo-Silence in Early Modern Theatre” took place on June 16th and 17th. The conference was a joint initiative organised by members of the Skenè Research Centre and the Argo Research Centre, with the support of the Italian Association of Early Modern and Shakespeare Studies (IASEMS), the Pseudos Research Group, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Verona, and the Department of Literary Linguistic and Comparative studies of the University of Naples L’Orientale. Reflecting the organisers’ combined interests, the conference sought to reveal the linguistic, literary, performative, socio-cultural, historical, and aesthetic aspects of various forms of performing silence on the 16th and 17th century English stage. The conference brought together scholars from several Italian universities as well as international scholars from the University of Oxford, the University of California Santa Barbara, Salzburg University and the Hangzhou Normal University, reflecting the wide appeal of the conference’s topic and its interdisciplinary approach.

Proceedings began with a welcome address from Aoife Beville and Beatrice Righetti, representing the Argo Research Centre and the Skenè Research centre respectively, followed by the keynote address from comparative literature scholar Jon R. Snyder (University of California Santa Barbara) whose reflections on the anthropology of silence during the Baroque period contextualised pseudo-silence as a wider European phenomenon. Snyder’s commentary on a series of emblems representing silence and secrecy revealed the baroque aesthetics of pseudo-silence in Early Modern Europe, setting the scene for the conference’s primary focus on theatre.

The first panel, “The Language of Silence and Silencing”, brought together pragmatolinguistic and stylistic approaches to dramatic dialogue. Fabio Ciambella’s (Sapienza University of Roma) paper highlighted the verbal violence which distinguishes the treatment of Cassandra in both Shakespeare and Heywood, revealing pragmatic practices of disempowerment. Alba Graziano (University of Tuscia) presented fascinating insights into both performative and editorial aspects of dialogical asides (and ‘aside to’), placing these utterances in a liminal stage space between silence and speech, and revealing their functions in terms of generic conventions of Restoration comedy. Chiara Ghezzi (University of Naples L’Orientale) presented a pragmatic analysis of several ‘silenced’ female characters in the Shakespearean canon, unveiling shared patterns among their linguistic behaviour.

The second day of proceedings began with a panel entitled “(En)gendered Silences”. Gilberta Golinelli (University of Bologna) discussed the subtleties and significance of apparent silence in Margaret Cavendish’s *The Convent of Pleasure* as a space of female resistance and resilience, revealing intricate notions of gender and sexuality through a critically informed appraisal of the text. Chiara Di Dio (University of Florence) presented an innovative taxonomy of female silence and the silencing of female characters in Shakespeare’s history plays. While Ruhui Wang (Hangzhou Normal University) discussed significant silences from several of Shakespeare’s female characters, offering a literary parallel to Ghezzi’s linguistic analysis.

The second Keynote address was given by Maria Elisa Montironi, scholar of early modern literature and member of the IASEMS board. Her talk on the silences of the biblical character Mariam, as portrayed in two texts - the first by Elizabeth Cary and the second by Markham and Sampson, revealed the dramatic functions of verbalised silence, performed silence and eventually the ultimate silencing of execution, contextualising the character within gender conventions and societal constraints of Early Modern

England. Reprising the comparative seeds sown by Snyder, Montironi's contribution also highlighted Boccaccio as a probable source for Cary's representation of silent Mariam.

The third and final panel, "Staging the Unspoken," focused on the performative aspects of silence in 16th- and 17th-century theatre. Krisha Hirana (University of Oxford) explored the ethical implications of contemporary rejection of the "discomfortable" text *The Masque of Blackness*, within the context of current racial tensions. Caterina Pan (University of Salzburg) discussed the generic shift from tragedy to comedy in *Von Tito Andronico*. Richard Bradshaw (University of Oxford) presented his research into the ethical implications of implicit and explicit stage directions regarding silence and silencing in early modern drama.

Overall, through an interdisciplinary approach that combined literary, linguistic, historical-cultural, and performance studies, the conference succeeded in challenging traditional notions of silence as a mere absence of speech, instead revealing its active and strategic role in constructing dramatic meaning. 'Pseudo-silence', therefore, emerged as a category which allows multiple, overlapping and intersecting interpretations of performed or verbalised silence, silencing, near-silence, asides, stage-directions, and more, revealing the role of reticence both as an instrument of suppression and, conversely, as a means of resistance.

REPORT

Title: "3rd Cirlam International Conference "Artificial Intelligence in medical communication: current challenges, future directions"

Date: May 22–24, 2025

Place: University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli

Convenor: Jerome Tessuto – Cirlam Director <https://www.cirlamvanvitelli.it/>

This Conference brought together highly regarded and authoritative speakers from around the world whose research in a range of disciplinary fields casts light on current topics relating to artificial intelligence in medical communication. The word count for this report does not allow for a thorough review of the proceedings, but this brief survey of a selection of plenary papers is intended to give an idea of the breadth and depth of the discussion.

In his plenary address, Vijay Bhatia (University of Hong Kong), addressed the topic of digitally-inspired doctor-patient interactions in a critical genre analytical perspective. Whereas in the traditional paradigm there is a dispreference for patient access to medical knowledge, patients are now challenging the status dynamics between doctor and patient, giving rise to the digitally engaged patient. The shift from the traditional doctor-patient dyad to an emerging doctor-patient-charlatan triad is not without risk: there is an increasing misappropriation of specialised medical terminology by self-proclaimed online experts with no medical qualifications who attract a significant following. The role of medical AI assistants was examined by Stefania Maci (University of Bergamo), who reported that 10% of answers were completely or partially wrong, casting serious doubt on whether AI is in fact as intelligent as its proponents claim. Much of the advice provided was grammatically correct but functionally inadequate. GPs are increasingly using AI for diagnostic purposes, but the advice needs to be taken *cum grano salis*. Michele Ceccarelli (University of Miami) spoke about epigenetics and cancer genomes, in particular, glioma, the most aggressive form of brain tumour, reporting on the possible applications of AI in early cancer detection. Marina Bondi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia), focusing on medical publishing and editorial practices, noted that medical science is paying increasing attention to AI in product development, clinical research, and patient care, with particular attention to clinical applications, imaging interpretation, infectious disease surveillance and the use of chatbots in medical communication and education. Applications in medical practice have had a major impact on publishing, where AI has become

an essential but contentious tool for authors and editors. Saul Carliner (Université de Montreal) pointed out that submitting a paper that contains hallucinations undermines the credibility of the author. AI is not good at original thinking: it can mimic human behaviour but lacks a human connection and the text it produces is bland and unoriginal. Gavin Brookes (University of Lancaster) reported on AI and its affordances for health communication, arguing that AI representations of dementia patients are profoundly dehumanising. Scaremongering gives rise to stigma, with the result that dementia patients are less likely to seek help. The AI-generated discourse of ‘the living dead’ means that the rights of the patient are likely to be ignored. AI tends to amplify existing stereotypes with the result that bias gets recycled through generative AI. Luke Collins (Lancaster University) examined how visual representations in public health communication contribute to the social construction of health concerns. In applied linguistics these representations are characterised as ‘discourses’ with the use of corpus linguistics for computer-assisted analyses of health texts. However, these analytical tools require the data to be encoded in text and there is no standard procedure for capturing image content for corpus-assisted discourse analysis. Google Cloud Vision can play a useful role in the investigation of text and images. Nicholas Tatonetti (Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles) discussed the application of AI in enhancing drug safety, with a focus on underserved populations, arguing that traditional pharmacovigilance methods fall short in identifying adverse drug reactions (ADRs) in these groups, as a result of limited representation in clinical trials and healthcare data. By leveraging AI and machine learning Honorary Lectures 4 techniques, researchers can analyse large-scale electronic health records (EHRs) and genomics databases to cast light on hidden patterns and predict potential ADRs more effectively. Giuliana Garzone (IULM University, Milan), provided an appraisal of AI in healthcare communication, noting that AI is seen with a mixture of fear and wonder, generating widespread anxiety. AI is characterised by ethical dilemmas and the dehumanisation of healthcare decision-making, and we do not know how it is controlled. Inaccuracies and hallucinations abound. AI is now ubiquitous, so it attracts much attention, though we still do not fully understand it. Finally, Natalia Malara (University of Catanzaro - Magna Graecia), a medical oncologist working on healthcare management for personalised medicine, reported on a target therapy directed against specific markers. In a perspective of personalised medicine, one treatment fits one, and AI applications can be used not just to predict clinical events but also treatment responses, with a personalised risk assessment.

William Bromwich

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia



WELCOME

2026 ESSE CONFERENCE

The 2026 European Society for the Study of English Conference will take place at the [University of Santiago de Compostela](https://www.usc.es/), Spain, 31 August – 4 September.

Whether on foot, by bike or plane, do join us for ESSE 2026 in Santiago de Compostela, a **World Heritage City** and home to one of the **oldest universities in Spain**. We are looking forward to welcoming you to Santiago de Compostela!

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In memory

Adriana Corrado

It is with deep emotion that I wish to honour the memory of Professor Adriana Corrado, a leading figure in the landscape of Italian Anglistics and, for me, a true “academic mother”.

Adriana Corrado was a woman of strong and rigorous character, but those who had the privilege of knowing her well understood that behind her seemingly severe exterior lay a generous heart and profound humanity.

It was she who believed in me from the very beginning, encouraged me to embark on the academic path, and did everything possible to help make my professional dream a reality. Her generosity also extended to my family: she tried in many ways to help my sister return to Italy so we could be reunited.

A passionate scholar, Adriana Corrado dedicated her career to exploring utopias and gothic narratives, with a particular interest in vampire stories. Her intellectual curiosity and adventurous spirit led her to travel and engage with many various cultures, enriching her teaching and research.

The strength of her convictions, combined with a big heart, made her an irreplaceable guide for many of us. Her legacy lives on in the minds and hearts of those she trained and inspired.

To the community of the Associazione Italiana di Anglistica, to which Adriana Corrado contributed as a passionate scholar, I offer this heartfelt remembrance, in the hope that her example will continue to light our way.

With affection and gratitude,

Emilia Di Martino

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