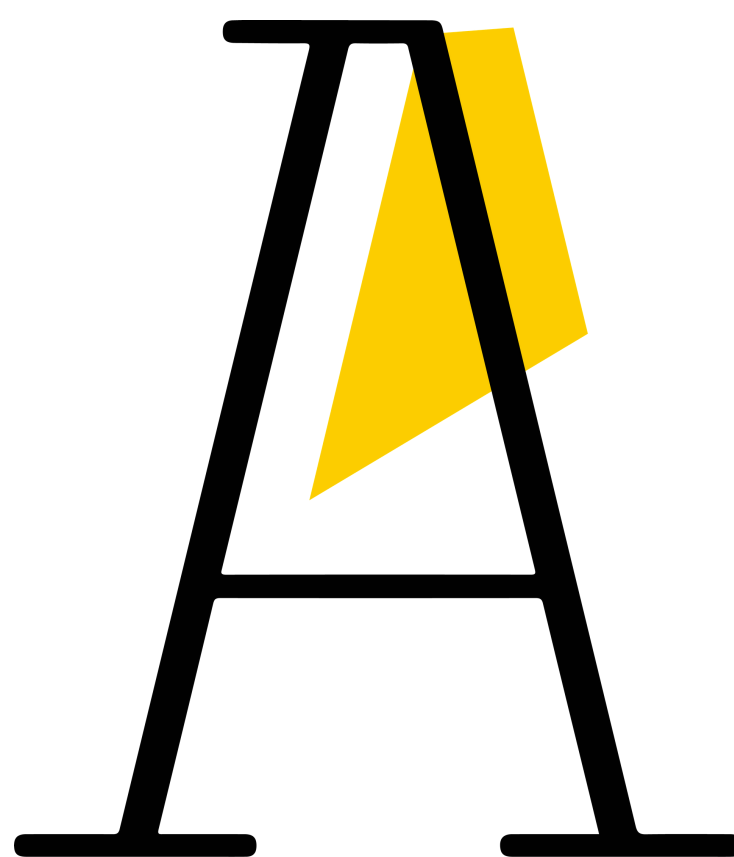# NEW VOICES IN ENGLISH STUDIES
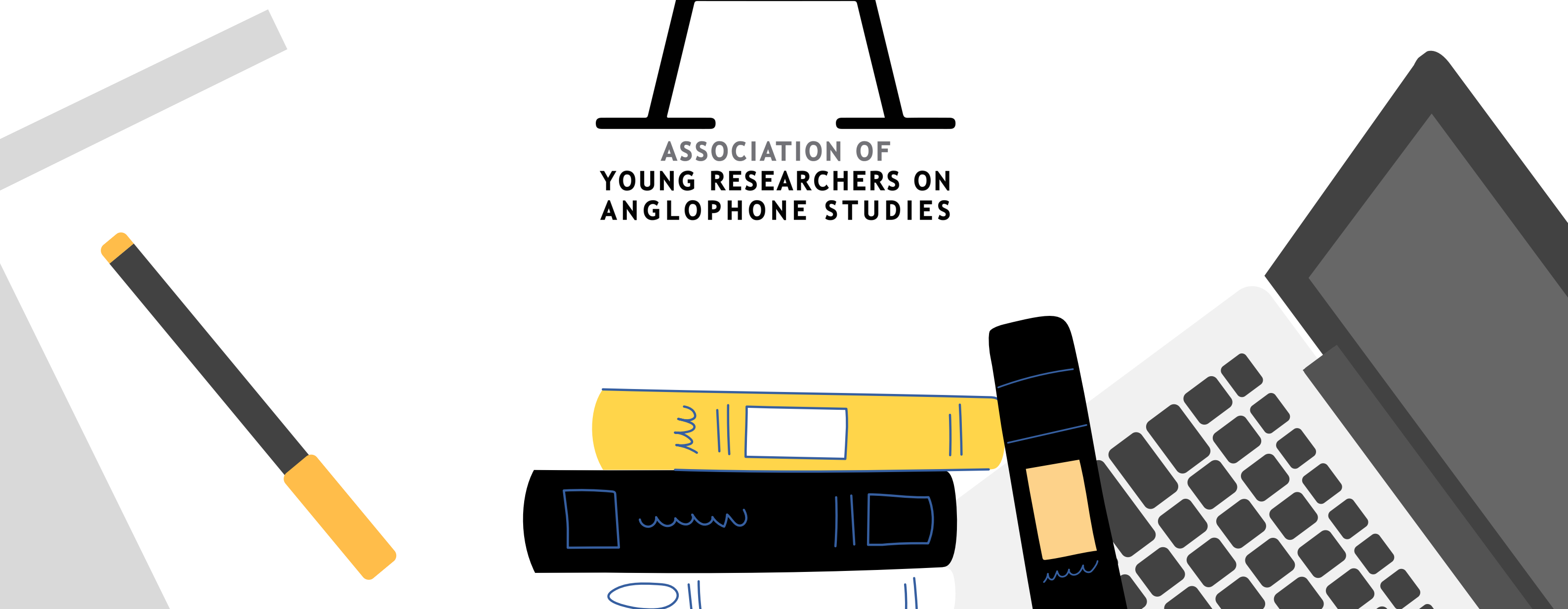
## ASYRAS VII CONFERENCE
### 17-18 JUNE 2021

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

ASSOCIATION OF
**YOUNG RESEARCHERS ON
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**Rosario Arias Doblas**
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"Neo-Victorian Senses in the Age of a Pandemic"

Rosario Arias is Professor of English Literature at the Department of English, French and German Studies at the University of Málaga (Spain). She has been member of the Executive of the Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies (AEDEAN). Professor Arias is an active member of Academia Europaea since 2016, and she is currently the President of Victorian and Neo-Victorian Society in Spain (VINS). She has published a number of articles and book chapters on neo-Victorian fiction, trauma, haunting and spectrality, the trace, revisions of the past in contemporary fiction, ageing and illness narratives. She has co-edited (with Patricia Pulham, University of Surrey) Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past Past (Palgrave, 2010). In addition, she has also published the volume Science, Spiritualism and Technologya facsimile edition of Spiritualist texts, which belongs to the collection Spiritualism, 1840-1930 (Routledge, 2014). Professor Arias has written on the work of contemporary writers (Sarah Waters, Hilary Mantel, Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, Kazuo Ishiguro, Kate Atkinson, among others). She is Principal Investigator of one funded research project and head of the research group "Contemporary Literatures in the European Context" (LITCAE) (ref.HUM-858). She is the Director of the Doctoral Programme in "Linguistics, Literature and Translation" since 2016 (ongoing), and Head of Department of English, French and German since 2013 (ongoing).

**Javier Calle Martín**

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"Suffixes in Competition: Diachronic and Diatopic Features on the Development of -ise and -ize in English"

Javier Calle-Martín is Professor at the Department of English, French and German Studies at the University of Málaga, where he teaches and researches about historical linguistics and corpus linguistics. Javier Calle is the principal investigator of top-notch research projects like the *Málaga Corpus of Early English Scientific Prose*, which compiles data from Modern (1500-1700) and late English (1700-1900). He has been editor of *The Middle English Version of De viribus herbarum* (2012), *A Late Middle English Remedybook in MS Wellcome 542* (2013) and *A Middle English Commentary on Giles of Corbeil's Carmen de urinis* (2020) and has published in journals like *Review of English Studies*, *Studia Neophilologica*, *Folia Lingüística Historica*, *Neuphiloloigische Mitteilungen* or *The Australian Journal of Linguistics*, among others. Over the last years, he has mainly focused on studying divergent structures within different linguistic varieties of English, having opened the way for his publications to appear in renowned journals such as *English World-wide* or *English Today*.

Sara Prieto is Assistant Professor at the English Department of the University of Alicante, where she teaches American literature from the colonial period to the late 19th century, as well as two electives on Innovation in Literatures in English (BA in English Studies) and a survey on British and Women Writers (MA in Literary Studies).

Her main line of research focuses on the literatures of the First World War, with special attention to war reportage and eyewitness accounts from that period. She is the author of Reporting the First World War in the Liminal Zone: British and American Eyewitness Acocunts from the Western Front (Palgrave Macmillan 2018) and she has co-edited Literary Journalism and World War I: Marginal Voices (with Andrew Griffiths and Soenke Zehle, Presses Universitaires de Nancy 2016); she has published in edited volumes like Letras desde la Trinchera: Testimonios Literarios de la Primera Guerra Mundial (Universitat de València, 2015) or the Edinburgh Companion to First World War Periodicals (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming) and in journals such as Edith Wharton Review, First World War Studies, Anuario IEHS or Anglica: An International Journal of English Studies. Prieto is also interested in travel writing as a transitional and hybrid genre, leading the research Project ATLAS (American Travel Literature About Spain 1900-1950). In addition, as a member of the research Project "Poetics of Activism" she engages in the inteserctions between academia, activism and society, with special attention to the manifestation of this activism in North American Women Writers from the 21st century.

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"Reading Whitman today"

# ABSTRACTS

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## Progressive black masculinities in Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*

Ta-Nehisi Coates's memoir and letter to his son *Between the World and Me* (2015)—published shortly after the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement—provides a rich and diverse representation of African American male life in contemporary United States society. This paper explores how Coates represents and explains black masculinities as well as how he defines his own identity as being excluded from United States society, yet central to the nation.

Coates's vision of masculinity is analyzed by focusing on his representations of boyhood and fatherhood in *Between the World and Me*. More specifically, Coates's depiction of his adolescence and of black youth in the streets of Baltimore, and his descriptions of fatherhood, particularly of his own role as a father and the depiction of his parents, are key in assessing Coates's rendering of a non-hegemonic masculinity. By analyzing Coates's projection of his own role as both a man and a father, and his complex and multifaceted representations of black manhood, I argue that Coates promotes a caring masculinity which opposes hegemonic notions of masculinity. In order to acknowledge the hybridity of male identities and analyze Coates's representations of black masculinities, this paper draws from Athena D. Mutua's conceptualization of progressive black masculinities" as performances of the masculine self" which both reject notions of domination and validate and empower black humanity", and Raewyn Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity. This paper also explores the connection between the construction of stereotypes about black manhood and the struggle for recognition of black bodies.

Thus, the goal of this paper is to examine the ways in which Coates presents resistance to normative notions of masculinity and asserts models for progressive masculinities through his portrayals of boyhood and fatherhood in the contemporary context of the Black Lives Matter movement.

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## "A distant bird winging its flight away": Bird symbolism in Kate Chopin's fiction

The relationship between birds and women was first established by Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). From that moment onwards, it has been used as a symbol of entrapment and liberation in women's writings. By using theories of literary symbolism, namely Ellen Moers' *Literary Women* and Juan Eduardo Cirlot's *Diccionario de Símbolos*, this essay explores the bird imagery present in Kate Chopin's works, mainly in *The Awakening* (1899), but also in her short stories "The Story of an Hour" (1894) and "Lilacs" (1896). In the novel, birds are used as a metaphorical extension of Edna Pontellier, the protagonist. The narrative distinguishes between domestic birds and wild birds, resembling Edna's duality and the experimentation with her own identity. This essay analyzes the different bird species that appear throughout the novel and its significance for the understanding of the controversial finale. The domestic birds, like the caged parrot and the mockingbird, represent Edna's social entrapment. In contrast, the wild birds (the owl, the grossbeak and the bird with a broken wing) parallel her new transgressive self. Another important element is the presence of the wings, which determine the quality of Edna's freedom. In the short stories, the protagonists, Mrs. Mallard and Adrienne Farival, also live a dual life. Whenever they experience a sense of liberation, the reader encounters flying birds, whereas when they feel trapped, another caged parrot appears. In short, the presence of birds in Chopin's works offers important insights about the meaning of the narration, especially in *The Awakening*. The bird imagery, despite being subtle and brief in the short stories, is splendidly expanded in the novel, hinting towards a naturalistic reading of the ending.

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## Community, Identity and (Not)Belonging in Judith Ortiz Cofer's *The Latin Deli*

Latinx communities currently face a significant displacement feeling. It is well established that Latinx communities, also known as the outsiders or the ones who do not 'belong', coexist with dominant communities, also known as insiders or the ones who 'belong'. This paper aims to determine how Latinx communities face constant displacement feelings as well as how they manage to share the space with other dominant communities.

To test the hypothesis that Latinx communities face a significant displacement feeling while coexisting with dominant communities and their techniques to progress in this atmosphere, the short story collection *The Latin Deli: Telling the Lives of Barrio Women* (1995) by Judith Ortiz Cofer will be analyzed. The results showed similar tendencies as hypothesized: Latinx communities face feelings of displacement caused by racism, religion, and the use of the Spanish language, which ultimately condemns them to the same job sectors. While it is true that sharing a common language, Spanish, brings Latinx communities together and allows them to express their hyphenated identities, it is also true that it broadens the gap between the dominant and non-dominant communities. By coexisting with the former, Latinxs in the stories undergo a process of identity development that culminates in the integration stage, when dominant identities are embraced by individuals with a non-dominant identity and when the latter group finds a balance between the two or more identities (Martin and Nakayama 166).

As it will be seen in my reading of Ortiz Cofer's collection, cohabitation is possible due to an assimilation process undergone by the non-dominant communities yet some particularities belonging to the Latinx community are not shared nor understood by the dominant communities. Although there may still be residual anger from the discrimination and prejudice that Latinx communities have faced, they may direct this energy into positive outlets such as working to end discrimination for their own and other groups (Martin and Nakayama 166).

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## Unashamed: Writing the Female Body in Emile Pine's *Notes to Self*

Reflecting on alcoholism, infertility, misogyny and rape, among many other themes, *Notes to Self* (2018) is Emilie Pine's first collection of personal essays, for which she has received several high-profile awards. Dhuibhne (2020) refers to the novel as "intense, brilliant and feminist" and accurately identifies that "it is the fragility of the writer's own body and life that forms the central theme of the bulk of the collection" (266). This is why, taking the chapter 'Notes on Bleeding & Other Crimes' as my case study, the main focus of this essay is the female body. I argue that the underlying force that drove Emilie Pine into writing this essay is the shame surrounding the female body. It is through this shame that the author channels her thoughts and feelings into writing, acquiring a particular confessional and feminist style of writing that echoes the famous "écriture féminine". For my analysis, I am going to conduct a close reading of the essay, focusing on specific relevant passages. Firstly, I am going to examine the journey Pine undergoes in the conceptualisation of her own body: from being ashamed to unashamed. To do so, I will use Elaine Scarry's (1985) formulation of the stages of the "projection of the body" and I will be mainly focusing on two bodily elements: menstruation and scars. Secondly, I will explore how this type of writing leads to the reclaiming of the female body, along the lines of what Hélène Cixous (1976) advocates in her influential essay 'The Laugh of the Medusa'. In essence, I will illustrate how there is a clear intertwining of body and text in Pine's essay, and I will examine how the personal is transformed into the political.

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## Taboo Expressions and Intense Emotions: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Approach

This research aims at eliciting and analyzing the most prototypical linguistic expressions used by speakers imagining themselves in extreme situations in two geographically distant

Spanish speaking countries, in order to determine whether speakers utter curse words and taboo expressions despite not being in adverse situations. Furthermore, such linguistic expressions and the emotions experienced in their utterance have been connected in an onomasiological way in order to finally extend Prototype Theory, originated by Eleanor Rosch in 1978, to the use of taboo expressions.

To fulfill these purposes, 185 speakers from Spain and Venezuela have been studied by means of an online questionnaire in which they were asked about their personal background information, which served to associate taboo expressions and curse words with their birthplace. Furthermore, as a result of hypothetically placing participants in several pleasant and adverse situations, it has been possible to study the priming effect that context would cause in them and to identify the most prototypical taboo expressions and curse words that these speakers of Spanish would utter when facing positive and negative situations, as well as the emotions confronted in the process.

To sum up, it has been acknowledged that not only geographical areas have a causal effect on the use of prototypical taboo expressions and curse words, but so do the satisfaction felt and the adversity faced in each situation, since prototype taboo expressions and prototype curse words vary depending on whether speakers experience positive or negative emotions. Importantly, not only negative circumstances and corresponding emotions have a causal effect on the use of swear words, but so do pleasant situations and positive feelings. Finally, it is possible to explain curse words in terms of Prototype Theory by means of analysing their family resemblance structure.

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## Comment clauses in World Englishes: A pilot study of *I believe*, *I guess* and *I suppose* in Hong Kong English

Previous research on comment clauses, *i.e.* parenthetical clauses whose main function is to "express the speakers' comments on the content of the matrix clause" (Quirk et *al.* 1985: 1112) to which they are linearly integrated, has focused principally on native varieties of English (*cf.* Thompson and Mulac 1991, Thompson 2002, Brinton 2008, Kaltenböck 2008, van Bogaert 2010). By contrast, World Englishes remain largely unexplored, with just a few studies devoted to these non-native varieties (*cf.* Kolbe Hanna 2014 on *I think*, Mazzon 2019 on *I am afraid*). Moreover, while certain comment clauses have been extensively examined, most notably *I think* due to its high frequency of occurrence, other comment clauses have received far less attention.

The present paper contains a pilot study which explores comment clauses in the context of World Englishes, particularly the variety of English spoken in Hong Kong. For my purposes I focus on a set of three comment clauses, namely *I believe*, *I guess* and *I suppose*, which are examined using the Hong Kong component of ICE (*International Corpus of English*), a corpus that contains 1 million words from spoken and written registers.

The aim of the present study is twofold. First, to account for the internal structure of the selected comment clauses in terms of Tense, Aspect and Modality (TAM) properties, following

van Bogaert's (2010) methodology. Second, to determine their degree of grammaticalisation on the basis of TAM variation, as compared to the complementation structures from which they are supposed to derive historically.

The outline of the presentation is as follows: I first summarise previous research on English comment clauses. Then, I introduce the historical and linguistic context of Hong Kong English. In the remainder of the paper I explain the methodology used in the study and discuss the findings for *I believe*, *I guess*, and *I suppose.*

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## Prince Hal and Hamilton: becoming a leader in Shakespeare's Henriad and Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical

The purpose of this work is to explore the similarities between the musical *Hamilton* and the Henriad. It shows how Lin-Manuel Miranda and Shakespeare use similar strategies to depict the evolution of characters that become leaders. Both authors create a game of opposites between the protagonists, Hamilton and Prince Hal, and their adversaries, Aaron Burr and Hotspur. Prince Hal, in the Henriad, and Hamilton, in the musical, are considered unlikely to be leaders at the start

of their stories. They need to showcase a combination of political and planning abilities to attain power. Hal learns from his rival Hotspur to be braver in battle, while Hamilton learns from Burr to be more cautious. However, only Hal is successful in keeping himself in power by balancing both types of skills. Although the plays focus on how the protagonists attain power, another parallelism shared by Hamilton and the Henriad is how they incorporate the voices of other characters that show the negative consequences of the actions of the leaders. In *Hamilton*, the son of the protagonist ends up fatally wounded as a consequence of his bad advice, causing great pain to his wife Eliza. In the Henriad, the king banishes his former friend Falstaff. As a consequence, other characters blame him for Falstaff's declining health and eventual death. A secondary objective of this work is to explore Shakespearean elements in contemporary pop culture. In that regard, this study contests the traditional negative view of pop culture that considers popular manifestations of Shakespeare as lesser versions of the originals. *Hamilton* is an example of how rich, complex and interesting the links between contemporary pop culture and Shakespeare can be.

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## Individual Variation and the Forensic Potential of Schwa Epenthesis in Belgian Dutch and Scottish English

Schwa epenthesis is a process which consists of the insertion of a schwa in certain liquid + consonant clusters. This phenomenon can be observed in different languages and is particularly characteristic of certain varieties of Dutch—both as it is spoken in the Netherlands and Belgium—as well as some varieties of English from Ireland and Scotland. Studies have revealed that epenthesis is conditioned by social, regional, and linguistic factors. Considering, moreover, that prior investigations have shown that features which show sociolinguistic variation may also reveal individual speaker variability, this study aimed to examine schwa insertion from a forensic phonetic perspective in terms of its potential for speaker comparison purposes. Spontaneous speech samples for two homogeneous groups of speakers were taken from a Belgian Dutch and a Scottish English corpus. The analysis consisted of an initial count of the epenthesised and schwa-less tokens observed for each speaker in an array of r+C and l+C clusters, as well as subsequent chi-squared tests in the form of pair-wise comparisons between the individuals performed on a subset of two Belgian Dutch consonant clusters and one Scottish English cluster. These revealed that schwa epenthesis showed higher inter-speaker variability in Belgian Dutch than in Scottish English. Thus, the results suggested that while Belgian Dutch epenthesis may potentially be suitable for use in forensic phonetic environments, this process in Scottish English is not. Further research will need to be conducted, however, in order to establish the extent of the forensic value of schwa epenthesis by means of an examination of its intra-speaker variability as well. Additionally, considering that this study observed an absence of epenthesis in all but one of the Scottish English clusters, a further investigation into schwa insertion in modern-day speech for this language may provide valuable insights.

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## Music and politics: The influence of music and musicians on the shaping of political beliefs

We are constantly surrounded by music. It is present in ceremonies, celebrations, parties... we hear it in our homes, cars, and on the street through our headphones. It is so routinely embedded in our lives that we often regard it as mere entertainment. However, music has the potential of conveying strong messages, such as political ones, that can influence individuals and large groups of people. The relationship between music and politics has been present through history, becoming sometimes a political artifact, as in those cases where an existing piece of music has been appropriated to endorse a political agenda, or when musicians consciously compose music conveying political messages which reflect a specific ideology. In this paper I will be focusing on the latter situation: musical artists who have used their popularity and media platforms with the conscious purpose of reaching out to an audience in order to address certain political issues. My goal is basically to analyze i) the extent to which musicians get involved in political affairs ii) the reason why they do so, if they do, and iii) whether their own political views may have an impact on the opinions of their followers. Do young individuals learn more about political matters because of what their favorite singers say rather than because of the actual decisions of politicians? Can their listeners learn politics by listening to their songs? What consequences can musicians face when breaking their political silences (being politically outspoken often backfiring on the musicians' careers)? To answer these questions, I will analyze some real-life examples of political involvement by American and British famous pop/rock musicians, and will discuss the data provided by an online survey I carried out among young music fans with the aim of measuring the impact of their favorite artists on their political beliefs.

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## William Faulkner and the Aesthetics of Trauma: A study of the 1929-1936 novels

With a penchant for insanity and decay, and subjecting his characters to "flood and fire", North-American canonical writer William Faulkner's (1897-1962) oeuvre is simultaneously spurred and plagued by a wide range of individual and collective, traumatizing and traumatogenic sites. These range from punctual events such as armed combat, sexual abuse, and suicide; or the aftereffects of a crippling culture of exceptionalism and defeat. With this in mind, this project interrogates the different inflections of the phenomenon of trauma in the main works of Faulkner in light of the contemporary theorization of trauma. Since its inception in the mid-90s, the theory of trauma (Caruth, 1995) has attracted a horde of detractors and advocates alike, managing to secure a position as one of the critical keystones of the 21st century (Kurtz, 2018). With a deep psychological substratum and accruing a set of aesthetic and social concerns, trauma theory looks into the transposition of hurt into the fabric of literary language and its demands on representation. Hence, the twofold concerns of this study are, once identified the sources of traumatization, to

look into the strategies through which trauma is aestheticized in the author's work - with a predominant focus on the latter aspect. Specifically, we argue, Faulkner's wide-ranging of stylistic choices - belated disclosure, a dialectics of verbal overflow and narrative ellipsis, and an overdetermined imagery - are in consonance with illuminating the trauma-laden subjectivity of a given character. The corpus of this project is the Southern author's literary production comprising his main titles published from 1929 to 1936. As a tentative conclusion, this work will highlight the critical relevance of intersecting Faulkner and trauma discourse as a means of opening new avenues in Faulknerian scholarship.

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## Nonhuman Animals in Margaret Atwood's Fictional Worlds

The presence of nonhuman animals in literature across cultures and generations is undeniable, however, as DeMello argues, they seem to merely exist as cultural symbols, linguistic metaphors or "mirrors for human thought" (14). An author who has seen the potential that nonhuman animals have and frequently employs them in her works is Margaret Atwood. Therefore, in my thesis I will focus on the graphic and fictional novels published by Atwood and analyse the presence of nonhuman animals in them. The aim is to understand how nonhuman animals are portrayed in her works and the significance of them while attempting to answer whether nonhumans appear as a collectivity to be exploited by humans or as complex characters who are sentient and individuals. From a preliminary analysis, it is possible to say that her characters often share a deep connection with nature and her graphic and fictional novels are filled with references to nonhuman others. Additionally, their presence is varied and could be classified under different categories. Atwood seems to frequently use nonhumans as a resource to describe or allegorize humans and their actions or appearance, particularly when describing women. Furthermore, in her first novel, *The Edible Woman* (2012), there is a clear connection between

the act of eating meat and the oppression of women that echoes Carol Adam's correlation between androcentric consumption of women and animals (2010). Similarly, she links nonhuman animals with the problem of the Canadian identity while attempting to "return" to nature through the process of *becoming-animal* as it is shown in *Surfacing* (2012). Subsequent publications such as *MaddAddam* (2013) attempts to illustrate the suffering that nonhuman animals face because of the Anthropocene by having them as characters and narrators. This study will help analyse in further depth the correlation between Atwood and the field of Animal Studies.

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## Corpora and mental health: Using Twitter to identify linguistic patterns

The Covid-19 pandemic has sparked many conversations about mental health and well being: as cities around the world have been forced to go on lockdown, people have begun to express more openly their feelings regarding anxiety or depression and, overall, their state of mind. As a consequence, online forums such as Twitter have been invaded by a large number of messages that focus on mental health, with users who honestly share their personal experiences with therapy or their coping strategies for uncomfortable emotions (Coppersmith et al., 2015; Gkotsis et al., 2016). However, disinformation and stereotyped images of mental illnesses have also proliferated in social media platforms, thus leading to the use of different discursive patterns with distinct emotional implications (Hunt & Brookes, 2020).

The present work, therefore, aims to provide an analysis on the language employed to talk about mental health through the hashtags #WorldMentalHealthDay and #MentalHealthMatters. The tweets were extracted using Twitter's API platform, which allows the download of raw data. The methodology followed is based on three aspects: (a) a quantitative analysis using *SketchEngine* (Kilgariff et al., 2014) to extract the main keywords and topics from the corpus; (b) a sentiment analysis of the compiled tweets using the application *Lingmotif* (Moreno-Ortiz, 2017) to explore the overall semantic orientation of the messages; and (c) a qualitative analysis to examine how the different types of reactions to the hashtags are manifested from a linguistic

perspective. The main objective is to observe patterns of discourse associated with the language of mental health, and the possible connotations that these might have regarding sentiment.

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## "Magic you wanted was a miracle, magic you didn't want was a haunting": African American Motherhood in Brit Bennett's *The Mothers*

Contemporary African American women's literature extensively discusses motherhood. Most narratives about African American women's experience include sexual violence and forced motherhood. Some key examples are Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple,* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. In these novels, African American girls and women are victims of their sex, gender, and race.

Brit Bennett's debut novel, *The Mothers*, published in 2016, begins with a seventeen-year-old protagonist whose mother has committed suicide. Ascribing to the coming-of-age genre and echoing Toni Morrison's *Sula*, Bennett focuses on how women can support one another, the roles of women in African American communities, and the hypocrisy of the Church. Set in the present day in a small African American town, Nadia Turner enters the realm of womanhood when her life changes completely. Her mother is dead, she is pregnant, and her relationship with Luke ends when she has an abortion. Abortion, a taboo subject that Bennett presents mesmerizingly, not making her fiction a political leaflet. The challenge of the novel is not to support pro-abortion or pro-life attitudes, but to give voice to the untold story of many women. Bennett explores the impact an abortion can have on a woman's life and those around her. In my proposed presentation, I will analyze Bennett's rewriting of motherhood in African American literature while highlighting parallelisms with Morrison's *Sula*. I will address motherhood and sexuality, the

importance of the mother-daughter relationship, and the diverse forms of mothering in the novel. This presentation leads to the conclusion that Bennett updates the theme of motherhood to offer modern African American women a new narrative they can relate to.

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## Negotiation of meaning in university telecollaborative exchanges: an internship between Japanese and Spanish students

This paper is focused on Negotiation of Meaning (NoM) episodes found in ten audiovisual telecollaborative interactions. The study is being conducted within the context of the VELCOME project, which carried out a telecollaborative partnership between Japanese and Spanish university students. The main aim is to determine the relevance of NoM episodes in these audiovisual telecollaborative experiences, together with defining the nature of said episodes. To do so, the corpus will be analyzed through a mixed methodology, since the quantitative results provide the basis for the subsequent qualitative analysis of the data. The NoM episodes will be analyzed based on Smith's (2003, 2005) expansion of the model of Negotiation of Meaning formulated by Varonis and Gass (1985). In addition, the triggers are going to be classified into attended and unattended, and, subsequently, into resolved and unresolved. A deeper insight into the nature of these interactions will be provided through the observation of the strategies employed by students, which will be based on Clavel-Arroitia's (2019) categorization of resolution strategies. The hypothesis is that NoM episodes will represent a relevant portion of the interactions in the corpus, emphasizing the significance of these breakdowns in communicative processes. Furthermore, a salient presence of strategies such as confirmations, comprehension checks, gestures, and changes of mode is expected, which could provide further information about the nature of face-to-face telecollaborative exchanges, which seem to resemble real life interaction. Finally, an evaluation of the different taxonomies used in this thesis will be carried out so as to determine whether these analysis methodologies are actually suitable for video Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC).

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## Debating Caste, Class and Gender in Diaspora Writing: A Close Reading of Bharati Mukherjee´s Novels

Bharati Mukherjee is a diaspora writer who experiments with new hybridized forms of diaspora writing. This is one of the factors which has contributed to her replacing her predecessors. In fact, she has become one of the best seller woman diaspora writers. Mukherjee´s novels portray diaspora women either in the role of daughters, wives, divorcees or widows to represent patriarchy within national and international boundaries. Her works are mostly researched in the field of diaspora writing, nostalgia, alienation and immigration. Moreover, her works have been read from several feminist perspectives. However, very rarely Mukherjee's novels have become the focus of an analysis which combines caste and class together with gender.

From the point of view of the study of caste, Mukherjee's texts question the caste system and caste-based patriarchy in diaspora literary writings. In particular, a close reading of her fictional works, *The Tiger´s Daughter, Wife, Jasmine* and *Desirable Daughters*, from a marginal and subaltern perspective, gives a new turn to her writings. This paper will deal with the questions of who is crossing the border?, what does the process of crossing the border entail?, does caste travel with the gendered body? These questions will be discussed by taking into account the complexity and intersectionality of caste, class, and gender. Specifically, this paper will employ feminist theories, which go beyond gender constructs to also question class and caste-based differences.

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## Vulnerability in Resistance: Didactic Intersectional Narratives in Bernadine Evaristo's *Girl, Women, Other* (2019)

Evaristo's Booker Prize winning novel from 2019, *Girl, Women, Other* presents a diverse collection of narratives of women of the African diaspora living in London. 12 characters of first, second, and third generation immigrants to Great Britain are depicted in their complex female natures to negotiate the question of intersecting identities. From a lesbian play writer to a rather conservative house wife, the novel not only features diverse livelihoods but also explores a variety of themes including feminism, patriarchy, politics, coming off age, relationships, sexuality, and religion. Additionally, the narratives span over several decades and include women from different age groups. As the narratives describe the diverse livelihoods of the characters, notions of vulnerability and resistance are accompanying all of the characters independent of their stages in life. Thus, Evaristo constructs a complex overall narrative that challenges homogeneous gender assumptions and aims at dismantling social binaries. Inspired by the literary excellence of the author to create a didactic and avant-garde novel that challenges social construction in its cores, it is the aim of this paper to investigate the notions of vulnerability and resistance embodied and narrated by the characters in the novel. Drawing heavily on Judith Butler's (2016) understanding of the concepts of vulnerability and resistance, this paper proposes to explore the novel through an intersectional feminist lens as originated by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). Finally, it is the goal to demonstrate through the analyses of the concepts of vulnerability and resistance and their interconnectivity the didactic value of Evaristo's novel to understand intersectional female identities and to challenge heteronormative female narratives.

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## An Intersubjective Approach to Ambivalent Female Relationships in Rebecca Reid's *Perfect Liars* (2019)

Since its birth, crime fiction has been one of the most widely read literary genres. Despite the traditional prevalence of male characters over female ones, along the years we have witnessed an increase of female presence, whose predominance is undeniable in the 21st century.

Furthermore, in the last forty years there has been a change of focus from the crime itself to the psychological configuration of the characters. Currently, the combination of these two factors has resulted in a strong presence of complex and troubled female characters within the genre, who are immersed in equally intricate relationships with other characters of the same kind. In this paper, I propose psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin's theory of intersubjectivity as an enlightening critical framework for the analysis of relationships of this nature. Benjamin reorients the conception of mental life as happening between subjects rather than from a subject towards an object (Benjamin 30) and bases her theory of intersubjectivity on the processes of *recognition* and *destruction*. Taking this approach, I will analyze the bond between the three lead characters in Rebecca Reid's *Perfect Liars* (2019). The three women, Georgia, Nancy and Lila, are old schoolmates who committed murder when they were teenagers and are still tied together by their past. Sixteen years later, they are still friends (or frenemies) and their strained relationship embodies the darker side of female relations. The analysis of their bond, marked by jealousy, in-fighting and one-upmanship, will lead us to conclude that the aforementioned theories provide us with an enriching ground for the study of intricate female relationships in contemporary crime fiction.

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## Disability in Jasper Fforde's *Shades of Grey*: Narrative Prosthesis, Science Fiction and Critical Dystopia

Jasper Fforde's works have been mainly analysed under the lens of science fiction. This is the case of *Shades of Grey* (2009), a novel set in a post-apocalyptic future alternative world. The aspect that turns this society into a dystopian one is the fact that, even though everyone is affected by the same visual impairment, not all of them are equally disabled. Thus, it can be argued that Fforde uses disability as "narrative prosthesis" (one of the main theoretical concepts in disability studies) in a traditional sense, that is, as the basis for the construction of his novel. However, he takes it a step further by using disability as a tool for destabilising traditional standards of normalcy as well. In the present paper, I am going to analyse how visual disability in *Shades of Grey* is used as narrative prosthesis that fosters the questioning of the notion of disability as a social construct through the genres of science fiction and dystopia.

In order to do so, I am going to use three critical frames: disability studies, science fiction and (critical) dystopia. Within the general scope of disability studies, I have used David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder's notion of narrative prosthesis, Lennard Davis's distinction between impairment and disability and Margrit Shildrick's approach to critical disability studies. In relation to science fiction, Gerald Alva Miller's and Brian McHale's theories have been used

to explore how, in postmodernist narratives, the role of science fiction is to interrogate normalised experiences by means of defamiliarisation. In addition, I have used Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan's study about critical dystopias to identify *Shades of Grey* as one.

In this respect, I will carry out a close-reading analysis of the different constituents of the novel that are affected by disability, such as plot and characters construction. After the analysis of *Shades of Grey*, I expect to conclude Fforde's *Shades of Grey* is a critical dystopia that challenges traditional values around the notions of normalcy and disability by means of confronting readers with defamiliarising and incongruous elements that expose social discourses as arbitrary constructs.

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## Queer (dis)orientation in Oscar Wilde's "The Portrait of Mr W.H" (1889)

Since Foucault dated the "birth" of modern homosexuality in 1870 (43), many queer scholars have considered the different genealogical agents that enabled this emergence, as well as the precision of the date offered. Many of these studies have focused on the medical, social, and legal aspects of the Victorian era that contributed to the alleged consolidation of homosexuality. Other scholars such as Linda Dowling or Dustin Friedman, however, have addressed the impact that the study of ancient Greece, and of the Renaissance had on the formation of a Victorian queerness that predated Foucault's idea of modern homosexuality.

Following Sara Ahmed's conceptualisation of queer phenomenology, this paper addresses how a relatively lesser-known short story by Oscar Wilde, "The Portrait of Mr W.H." (1889) can be read as an orientation device towards the different artistic discourses of the past that inform queer culture and historiography.

In the story, a cast of unreliable characters become obsessed with a forgery that attempts to pass as the original portrait of Shakespeare's muse: Mr W.H. By positing this portrait as a point of historic and artistic conflict, the narrative turns its back to heteronormative realities and (dis)orientates both the characters and the readers, creating a queer effect. Wilde's story exemplifies how specific objects can serve as points of reference from which to rethink human subjectivity, or even as a tool through which to access one's own sexual or affective identity. The power of the portrait, however, lays ultimately on its ability to conjure the past as a cultural space that allows for the expression of these identities.

In this way, Wilde's short story orientate readers, I argue, towards the different ways in which aesthetic assumptions about Ancient Greece and the Renaissance enabled queer men to explore their desires before the discourses identified by Foucault as the progenitors of modern sexuality became predominant, or even how these assumptions allowed men who refuse to accept these discourses to approach their identities from a different angle.

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## Seamus Heaney's and Bella Akhmadulina's Perspectives on (Un)Wellness

The current situation around the globe has reminded everyone that one thing that always matters is health. However, the perspectives on sickness vary beyond seeing it as an antagonist to one's wellbeing, thus enriching the lack of health with meaning and providing us with hope. Two of the poets who refuse to diminish sickness to non-health are Seamus Heaney and Bella Akhmadulina. The suggested parallel between the two lies in, first, their being contemporaries although on different sides of the Iron Curtain. Secondly, both have been praised as some of the most expressive voices of their generation (uncoincidentally, both were seen as such by Joseph Brodsky, who had the chance to familiarise himself as with the Soviet literary tradition so with

the Western). Thirdly, their re-living of romanticism in the post-war epoch allowed Heaney and Akhmadulina to voice that hope for a true renewal that the 60s and 70s were promising. Despite the promise being unfulfilled, the hope remains, and welcoming the two poets to remind us of it seems as pending as natural. Heaney's and Akhmadulina's views of sickness are not identical, likely due to Heaney's closer experience of it as he witnessed his father dying of cancer. Nevertheless, both deny letting sickness, whether physical or spiritual, take over one's being and instead insist on sickness's power to transform and purify. Moreover, the poets see sickness with some irony, thus overcoming fear of it and curing it, since, to paraphrase Akhmadulina, "we shall dance, like / a ballerina to sickness´s music".

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## A Forensic Linguistic Study of the Plays of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe

The present research intends to attribute to the Elizabethan play *Arden of Faversham*, which was approximately written in the year 1,593 and it is still considered anonymous (Elliot and Greatley-Hirsch, 2017), its likeliest authorship through a forensic linguistic study that will consider William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe as its potential candidates. Therefore, the presentation will provide a brief introduction to the development of authorship attribution studies within the field of forensic linguistics, which will be followed by a more exhaustive explanation of the distinct linguistic methods with which the authorship of a literary text can be analysed, such as n-gram studies (Grieve et al., 2018) or a Zeta test (Craig and Kinney, 2009). Lastly, the program ALTXA, which is a computational tool that has been designed for the conduction of the present study and will be released as a free software by the end of the year 2021, will be presented. This software includes many of the functionalities that are essential in the field of forensic linguistics and presents an intuitive interface that can be accessible to new researchers. In sum, even though the initial goal of the study is to analyse the authorship of the play *Arden of Faversham*, the ultimate objective of the project is the elaboration of a computational tool that facilitates the inclusion of authorship attribution studies in educational settings.

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## A story-based approach to the teaching of English (L2) word writing: a case study from primary education

This case study aims at exploring the effects of the story-based approach in helping children to write English words in the ESL/EFL primary classroom. This research employs a quasi-experiment with 44 children who are in grade 2 in a semi-private school in Tarragona, Spain; whose English level is pre-A1 (CEFR). The students are evenly divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. Only the experimental group learns with the story-based approach. In terms of the control group, the control group follows their usual activities at their ESL class to learn vocabulary, including games and exercises. After the experiment, a pre-test, a post-test and a five-week-later exercise are used to measure students' ability of writing at word-level. The data collected are analysed with descriptive statistics, the Mann Whitney U test, the Wilcoxon signed rank test, and the General linear model in order to identify the difference between the two groups, the effect of time and the influence of the interaction between time and treatments. The results show that there is evidence of considerable improvement in word writing in both experimental and control groups. This may account for frequency and reiteration of the written input, which came to play an imperative role in students' performance in their word writing. With a limited number of exposures to the target language that the experiment provided (six times in this study), stories only could not be differentiated from other teaching methods designed to supply students with written input (such as games and alternate activities) in improving students' ability of writing the target lexical items.

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## Word Division in the Handwritten and the Printed Versions of *The Secrets of Alexis* and *A Niewe Herball or Historie of Plants*

The term *word division* is used to indicate the threefold representation of a number of compound words in historical writings, which may occur either joined, split with a hyphen or separated as two words, the latter generally predominating over the rest (Tannenbaum 1930: 146). Word division dates back to the sixth century, when Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes contributed notably to the use and development of the *distinctiones* system. These scribes required more visual marks in order to understand Latinate texts, most of them written in *scriptura continua*, and, for the purpose, they turned to separate words by providing spaces or periods between them (Clemens and Graham 2007: 83-84; Calle Martín 2011: 18). The phenomenon has been omitted in most traditional sources and the only references in the specific literature are constrained to remarking the absence of a standard practice until the first half of the sixteenth century (Denholm-Young 1954: 70; Petti 1977: 31). More recently, however, the phenomenon has been addressed in a study discussing the emergence of spacing in Middle English and its development throughout Early Modern English both in handwritten and printed compositions (Calle-Martin and Lorente-Sánchez, Forthcoming).

The present paper aims to analyse the distribution of some compound words in the handwritten and the printed versions of the same texts so as to cast some light on the contrast and similarities between the two formats, if any. The printed data, on the one hand, come from *The Secrets of Alexis* and *A Niewe Herball or Historie of Plants*, two Early Modern English scientific compositions written by Girolamo Ruscelli and Rembert Dodoens, respectively. The handwritten material, on the other hand, comes from Glasgow University Library, MS Ferguson 7 (ff. 1r-20v; 23r-48v; 59r), an early seventeenth century volume which contains a number of handwritten passages of the abovesaid texts. From a methodological viewpoint, the rational used for this investigation derives from Calle-Martín and Lorente-Sánchez's classification of the phenomenon in early English scientific writing (Forthcoming), wherein they describe word division according to the evidence provided by nominal/adjectival compounds (e.g. *headache*, *toothache*, *lukewarm*, etc.), reflexives (e.g. *myself*, *yourself*, *themselves*, etc.), compound adverbs and prepositions (e.g. *afterward*, *therewith*, *without*, etc.) and words which, although independent

lexemes in present-day English, are irregularly found together in the history of English (e.g. *shall be*, *as much*, *will be*, etc.).

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### Narratives of Illness: Dementia, Care Relations and Institutional Spaces in Alice Munro's "The Bear Came Over the Mountain"

Sufferers of dementia are usually pictured as aged, loose people whose understanding of the world has been reduced to a childish behavior. Deprived from memory and self-awareness, the afflicted are usually taken as lost causes for civilian life as well as a burden to their families. However, these diseases based on unpredictable and ominous deterioration affect both the sufferer and those who witness the suffering. Under this light, literature has provided a context to perform these narratives of illness and care relations. Alice Munro is a Canadian writer who has largely written and reflected upon this matter driven by her own experience with mental and physical deterioration. In like manner, characters of her stories engage in these narratives whether they are the afflicted or witnesses in order to unfold the complex relations of care and ethical commitment. In her book H*ateship, Friendship, Courtship, Marriage* (2005), we find a great number of examples of these narratives. However, this essay will focus on "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" in particular and its take on dementia, institutional spaces and care relations. This story revolves around aging and dementia as in correspondence to the role of institutional care and residential facilities as well as how such a deterioration works upon the lives of both patient and witness. Drawing on a correspondence between memory and identity, caretakers/caregivers and

institutional authority, visitors and patients, this essay aims to analyse how characters reveal instances of vulnerability and resilience through the interaction and collaboration between themselves and their roles as well as the mediation of institutional space in such care relations.

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## The literary representation of female genital mutilation through the autobiography

The main objective of this paper is to present the work carried out in my PhD project on the literary representation of female genital mutilation (FGM) through autobiography and testimonial literature.

I will first briefly revise African fiction written in English by women between the 20th and 21st centuries. It is important to point out that it was not until the 1970s that the scholarly interest in the works of African women writers arose. Academics soon focused on the role of Ugandan writers Goretti Kyomuhendo, Elvania Namukwaya Zirimu, Mary Karooro Okurut and Violet Barungi; Kenyans Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, Margaret Ogola and Rebeka Njau; and Nigerians Flora Nwapa and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Some of those writers have echoed the practice of FGM in their works, such as Rebeka Njau and Flora Nwapa, who is one of the first African writers whose work has been widely studied since recognition from the 1970s. Her most outstanding work is *Efuru*, where she addresses issues of great concern to African women such as FGM.

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## Trans-forming bodies: Jeanette Winterson's view of transgender in *Frankissstein*

Jeanette Winterson, mostly known for writing about love, gender, and sexuality, has also tackled other topics in more recent years, like mythology, and technology. In her latest novel, *Frankissstein* (2019), Winterson discusses technological advances and the ethical boundaries in those, but she also uses technology to give gender a new dimension. Thus, she presents a transgender character, Ry, who is non-binary; he was born a woman, has a male appearance, got a mastectomy, and kept the female genitals, but most importantly, is comfortable with the doubleness in his body. Furthermore, in the novel Winterson links the transsexual body with transhumanism, for in both cases there is a modification of the body that aims for the person to achieve an external identity that matches their internal one. Despite presenting only one of the multiple realities of the transgender being —given that every experience is unique and, thus, it would be impossible to do so— and referring only to the physical aspects of the transgender reality, Jeanette Winterson presents a character that represents a part of the LGBTQ community that had only been briefly mentioned in The Powerbook (2000). *Frankissstein* presents Jack Halberstam's idea of the trans* body as fragmented, unfinished, and always under construction, but also Latham's idea that medicine views sex as "singular and binary" and does not accept that sex expressions and representations are varied and multiple. Through Winterson's narrative in Frankissstein, I will aim at analysing her view of the transgender reality through the lens of transgender studies academics in order to put Winterson's thought in context.

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## 'Playing Rugby on an Irish Field': Imaginaries and Practices of EFL Immersion in and around a Rugby Summer Camp in Ireland

Immersion education is currently trending in the private Spanish, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) market, with families across social classes investing in a plethora of highly customizable EFL packed holidays such as the "Rugby+English" summer camp in this study. In Spain, immersion is a clear reaction to traditional EFL instruction methodologies popularly deemed 'boring', 'grammar-based' and 'ineffective', which, coupled with a general lack of confidence in the public education system to ensure a high level of English proficiency, has left 'immersion' infused with a multitude of expectations and aspirations. In Spain, young, affluent adults have engaged in immersion holidays throughout the past 30 years; nevertheless, the demand, variety of products, and targeted audience in terms of social class and early age is unprecedented. Consequently, the trajectories of these new educational holiday experiencers are undocumented, and their voices remain unheard within the literature –particularly from a qualitative, sociolinguistic perspective. This study intends to bridge these gaps through a multi-sited, ethnographic exploration of young, mobilised, Catalan-Spanish teens consuming the "Rugby+English" immersion experience against the backdrop of their parents as investors, and the target immersive context which creates and provides the product. More specifically, through the use of observational data, semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders, and advertising material, I will unpack a) what it means for young language learners to 'do' immersion abroad; b) what English acquisition looks like at a rugby summer camp; and, to this extent, c) how the target context and its stakeholders are commodified for EFL purposes. By putting expectations and practices in dialogue, I aim to analyse the arising tensions that speak to spatially disjointed imaginaries of language education within the 'black box' of immersion experiences abroad.

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## The Effect of Plurilingualism on Perceptual Learning Styles in EFL Learning

Perceptual learning styles imply the use of one's preferred senses to acquire, process, and store information (Reid, 1995). These styles (visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic) are found in multilingual education and they uncover individual differences. Few studies have investigated plurilingual learners' perceptual learning styles. For example, Psaltou Joycey and Kantaridou (2009) did not report significant differences between plurilingualism and learning styles. In contrast, Emamipour and Esfandabad's (2010) research indicated significant differences, and that verbal and visual modalities were the most and least preferred learning styles of plurilingual learners respectively.

The objectives of the present study were (1) to identify plurilingual EFL learners' perceptual learning styles, (2) to determine whether their mother tongue influenced perceptual learning styles, and (3) to ascertain whether there was a relationship between plurilingualism and perceptual learning styles. The sample consisted of 13 bilingual EFL learners in the 12th grade of Spanish secondary education. The data collection instrument to measure their perceptual learning styles was the *Learning Style Survey* (Cohen, Oxford, and Chi, 2009).

Results showed that 30.77 per cent of plurilinguals favored the visual learning style, followed by auditory (7.69 per cent), and tactile/kinesthetic (7.69 per cent) styles. 53.85 per cent were multimodals: 7.69 per cent of multimodal learners preferred the visual and auditory learning styles, 23.08 per cent the visual and tactile/kinesthetic, and 23.08 per cent the auditory and tactile/kinesthetic learning styles. Moreover, the Bulgarian student used more learning styles, followed by the Macedonian, Arabic, and Romanian students. However, the ANOVA test did not find a statistically significant relationship between mother tongue and perceptual learning styles. Likewise, the Chi-squared test did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between plurilingualism and perceptual learning styles. This study has implications for foreign language education because it suggests that plurilingual EFL learners have different learning preferences, which are not influenced by plurilingualism.

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## Hollywood in Germany: the reception of the mainstream in a divided country – West vs. East

The rise of Cultural Studies and the importance given to popular culture have been a key point in understanding current society from daily conversations to lifestyles imposed by various trends. As many authors claim, cultures are evolving and changing constantly due to the many factors that take part in this process and among these we find cinema, which will be the focus of the current presentation.

Hollywood and cinema play a relevant role in the transmission of stereotypes and patterns of behaviour while also contributing to constant changes of cultures, creating both differences and similarities between them. Therefore, if we establish a dichotomy Hollywood/society it seems clear that this position of superiority of Hollywood leads us to consider the relationship between cinema and culture as a post-colonialist one in which Hollywood acts as an exporter of values and ideologies from the USA trying to blend in the territories of reception.

On this basis, this presentation aims at analysing the acceptance or rejection of Hollywood in the German territory. The goal is to seek differences according to whether the audience grew up in West Germany and those who were raised in the East and see how long that influence lasted. Other questions raised from our initial hypothesis is if this is still a crucial factor nowadays in terms of building a common identity that segregates regions, as well as trying to look for stereotypes and role models when growing up. For that, a practical study will be conducted in the form of a survey including general questions and others based on a selected corpus composed by two mainstream films from Hollywood from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s.

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## Generic Hybridity and the Imagination of Environmental Risks in the Contemporary British Novel: Liz Jensen's Climate Fiction *The Rapture* (2007)

From Rachel Carson's influential *Silent Spring* (1962) to the recent rise of climate fictions, speculative literature has long been a privileged medium to express concerns about impending environmental risks. The growing influence of climate change on contemporary literary production has prompted ecocriticism to rethink its epistemological assumptions, like the Cartesian concept of "nature" as the passive and stable background of human history. Modernity's most multifaceted and hybrid risk, climate change constitutes for both novelists and risk theorists an unprecedented representational challenge. Although many critics rightly argued that its scope and complexity could not be contained within the narrow focus of the traditional novel form (Ghosh 2016, Trexler 2015), some innovative climate fictions have attempted to approach the multifaceted realities they evoke with generic hybridity. This case study analyses how, by borrowing from various literary genres and tropes, *The Rapture* successfully captures climate change's complex interplay of natural, political, economic, social and cultural factors, in a way that is both informative, didactic and emotionally engaging. Set in a near future London, *The Rapture* dramatises real-life risk assessments stating that methane drilling could trigger underwater earthquakes and the release of methane in the atmosphere, causing accelerated global warming. Despite the warnings of experts, the worst-case scenario unfolds, ending with the flooding of London in a tsunami. By illustrating the causes and consequences of inappropriate risk perception and risk management at multiple levels of society, *The Rapture* offers both a well-researched cautionary tale on collective inertia and the possibility to imagine, and therefore better apprehend, otherwise abstract risk scenarios. Reflecting a paradigm shift in our understanding of human and nonhuman agencies with crucial implications for literature and ecocriticism, *The*

*Rapture* showcases that generic hybridity might be an effective way of addressing the entanglement of natural and technological risks and their many interrelated factors.

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## I Am Half-Sick of Shadows, said the Lady of Shalott and The Lady of Shalott

"The Lady of Shalott" is a lyrical ballad that was written by the English Victorian poet Alfred Tennyson. This poem has generated a vast variety of interpretations. This poem has also been a source of inspiration for many artistic manifestations including art, literature and music. This paper aims to analyse the process of reversed ekphrasis in two paintings produced by the painter, John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott* and *I Am Half-Sick of Shadows, said the Lady of Shalott*. Bearing in mind the dialogue between image and word, it may be also taken into account that Nick Loven's fictionalized film version of the poem involves a process of circular intertextuality. As a result, the text narrated becomes a visual image. The poem is transformed into an image and it is turned into another image again through the film adaptation.

Epkhrasis is defined as "the practice of using words to comment on a piece of visual art". This term is derived from the Greek language and it means "description". Hence, the principle of reversed ekphrasis is described as "a practical realization of the ut pictura poesis theory consists in backward procedure of producing a double piece of art". The conversion stage of the process of reversed ekphrasis through which Tennyson's source text is turned into Waterhouse's target text relies on a moment which is displayed in the poem "The Lady of Shalott", through the mediation of the lady's words. Waterhouse's intertextual dialogue with Tennyson's poem involves a process of reversed ekphrasis. This interaction between image and word is later turned into another visual expression. The word transformed into an image is turned back into image again using a film version.

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## Misrepresentations of Pregnancy and Motherhood in Modern Video Games

Video games are a recent medium compared to film or literature, but boast an immense cultural output. Their production values have escalated following their popularity. During this prolific history, most developers have ignored or misrepresented female characters and issues. However, the patriarchal perspectives that have given birth to these tropes are not new, as they are pervasive in older texts (Francus, 2013).

Still, video games possess a unique device: player agency. It is defined as the ability of players to have effects and cause change in a virtual game world (Eng, 2020). It holds the potential to create a powerful impression of the cultural perspectives it bears, in addition to engaging audiences in a more direct experience with them. When pregnancy, childbirth and parentcraft are at the core of a video game's narrative or gameplay, they are still distorted by patriarchal misrepresentation.

In my PhD thesis, I aim to sort these phenomena into clearly distinct typologies that I will use to categorize existing representations of pregnancy in a selection of contemporary video games. This is how my research will reveal the influence of the aforementioned typologies and their symbolism in both male and female players' perception of female sex-specific realities. Their current portrayals beg the question: how could video games become more fair towards representation if they adapted female experiences of pregnancy and childbirth? This paper will also explain how my thesis analyzes the negative perceptions developed by male video game players from the reiteration and reinforcement of myths about -and inaccurate representations of- pregnancy and motherhood (Holloway, Rubin, & Kurniawan, 2012). Thus, I expect to fill a gap in the research of these cultural matters and to invite academic discussion into the matter of female-specific issues being shunned by cultural representations in interactive fiction and media.

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## Lexical Blends in the Language of Photography

Blending may be defined as "the intentional coinage of a new word by fusing parts of at least two source words" (Gries, 2004: 416). There is unanimity among numerous authors that this very old process found in many languages of the world (Brdar-Szabó & Brdar, 2008: 171) has become very popular and productive nowadays (e.g. Bauer, 1983; Cannon, 1986; Rúa, 2002). Many studies, therefore, have focused on blends in the general language and also, although to a lesser extent, in specialized languages, as for example in economics (e.g. Silaški & Đurović, 2013) or in fashion (e.g. Bednárová-Gibová, 2014). However, to the best of my knowledge, no attention has been paid so far to this process in the language of photography. This study intends to fill this gap and explore blends used by professional photographers. In particular, it aims at identifying and analyzing lexical blends in the photography discourse focusing on their structure and characteristics. In order to fulfill this objective, a corpus-based approach has been used, being the sources of this study blogs on photography written by professional photographers in English. The results show that the language of photography does make use of blending; some of the examples found were: *digicam < digital + camera, gobo < goes + before + optics, squinch < squint + pinch, Leica < Leitz + camera,* just to mention a few. With this study, I intend to shed light on this particular word formation process in the field of photography, as one of many fields of ESP, which seems to be extremely interesting and rich due to its interdisciplinarity and diverse nature.

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## An Ecocritical Reading of George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*

*A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R.R. Martin, which inspired the world-famous TV series Game of Thrones, can be considered a world phenomenon. Nonetheless, it has still only timidly been met with academic interest. Although some collections of essays have been released, one particularly interesting issue has not been addressed: the way the saga presents the role of humanity on the planet as part of a bigger and more powerful system – the ecosystem. Hence, this research aims at conducting a textual analysis of the saga from an ecocritical perspective, focusing on the way it portrays humanity within nature and their relationship with the more-than-human world. Moreover, this paper argues that Martin's saga can be seen as a narrative of climate change and environmental crisis, or Cli-fi, as defined by Goodbody and Johns-Putra (2019), not only because the inhabitants of the Seven Kingdoms are facing an inevitable environmental disaster, but also because of the way the Westerosi deal with it, chiefly overlooking its importance or even denying its existence. With a view to proving it, different ecocritical theories, such as ecophobia developed by Simon Estok (2018), Glotfelty and Harold's (1996) and Plumwood's (2002) environmental ethics, among others, will be applied to Martin's saga. This paper will eventually reveal that Martin recreates the different stages of the human-nonhuman relationship, the gradual shift towards a more anthropocentric positioning and its consequent mastery of and detachment from nature. Instead, a more ecocentric worldview and the creation of a holistic biocommunity are presented as a possible solution to the coming environmental disaster. Therefore, this paper argues that *A Song of Ice and Fire* can be used with didactic purposes in order to teach environmental ethical issues as well as to put the spotlight on our role, as individuals as well as society, in the causes and solutions of our own environmental crisis.

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## Queer Trauma in Ali Smith's *How to be Both* (2014)

Trauma and Sexual Identity concerns have always been present, and sometimes interconnected in literature. However, there was a tendency to explore both traumatic and queer characters from a medicalized perspective. These negative tropes have led scholars to reimagine, and develop brand new currents of thought. Ann Cvetkovich, for instance, developed, from a demedicalized perspective, an uncanny relation between trauma and queer studies. This constituted Queer Trauma, or the perception of the traumatic experience creating new value to queer's representation and cultural practices.

How to be Both (2014) by Ali Smith is a paradigmatic example of a text where trauma and queerness meet since it presents a traumatic retelling of the lives of two sexually fluid characters, Francesco and George. With this context in mind, the purpose of this paper is to explore how Queer Trauma is represented in this novel. More specifically, it will analyze its conceptualization, and how the fragmented identity by queer trauma is reconstructed in the discourse through narrative strategies. This scrutiny would be developed by drawing on pluralistic theories of trauma such as that of Cvetkovich (2003), perceiving trauma as a socio-cultural discourse, and Forter (2011) who emphasized its narratable aspects.

Analyzing How to be Both (2014) against the theoretical background exposed reveals that this novel runs counter to the pathological perspective of trauma and sexuality. Besides, it captures the understudied view that Queer Trauma is a fluid process that might alter identity but its narration in moments of recollection constitutes unique understandings about the self and the external world.

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## Updating the Female Artist Novel: Siri Hustvedt's *The Summer Without Men* and *The Blazing World*

The evolution of the female artist novel has proved to be inevitably linked to the status of women in society. Due to an increased feminist consciousness by the end of the twentieth century, a considerable number of literary critics revised the artist novel, aiming to trace the origins of the female artist novel as well as the main features that could define it. A pivotal work that sought to analyse the characteristics of the artist heroine from the nineteenth to the twentieth century was Linda Huf's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman* (1983). Today, women authors continue to write about the ambitions of the artist heroine. Such is the case of the author and winner of the Princess of Asturias Award for Literature 2019, Siri Hustvedt, who exposes the circumstances of the artist heroine in current society by means of her fictional literary work. As her protagonists chronologically escape from the analysis conducted by Huf, this paper aims to show the convergences and divergences that Hustvedt's contemporary artist heroines of *The Summer Without Men* (2011) and *The Blazing World* (2014) have with regard to the twentieth-century one. The methodological framework entails Linda Huf's study of the female artist novel and Evy Varsamopoulou's subsequent revision of it in her publication *The Poetics of the Künstlerinroman and the Aesthetics of the Sublime* (2002), focusing on the protagonist's interpersonal and social relationships. It could be concluded that Hustvedt's portrayal of the artist heroine still shares the consequences of living in a patriarchal system, but it opens the way for complex representations of female characters, establishing strong emotional bonds between women.

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## Simplifying Spelling? A Study on Speakers' Spelling Preferences and Spelling Reform

The standardisation of English spelling in the mid-seventeenth century resulted in the configuration of a deep orthographic system, characterised by systematic violations to the one-to-one principle (Cook, 2004). From that point on, the relationship between sounds and letters in the English language would become rather complex. The adoption of borrowed orthography in

the lexicon and the completion of the standardising process before the end of Great Vowel Shift further contributed to the issue (Nevalainen, 2006; Cook, 2004). The lack of transparency in English spelling permeated into the Complaint Tradition, a movement which encompasses a stream of criticism on the English language in general, and on its orthography in particular (Milroy & Milroy, 1999). As a consequence, a myriad of proposals at spelling reform have surfaced since the sixteenth century, and still continue to this day (Crowley, 2012), founded on the concern that "it is so hard to spell English" (Yule & Yasuko, 2016: 414). Despite the intentions and the number of attempts, these have been largely unsuccessful, as the state of Present-day English spelling corroborates. Nevertheless, some simplification has indeed taken hold of the language, as exemplified by the variability in doublets like colour/color, centre/center, anaesthesia/anesthesia, kilogramme/kilogram or traveller/traveler (Gramley et al., 2021). The coexistence of both forms, however, raises some questions: Do speakers prefer the simplified forms? Is English somehow undergoing spelling reform? The present paper seeks to answer these questions by means of a corpus-based analysis focused on the distribution of spelling variants in twenty varieties of English worldwide. The data will be retrieved from the Global Web-based English corpus (Davies, 2013) in light of its quantitative features. Then, the theoretical framework presented above will guide the qualitative analysis of the findings.

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## Narrative Architecture: walking through the fourth wall of narratives in the Digital Era

The aim of this paper is to offer a potential taxonomy of the alternative narrative formats that have appeared alongside the development of the digital era, such as Transmedia Narratives, to expose how these are transforming the relationship between narratives and their audience. A case study of one of these alternative narratives, from the perspective of both creator and consumer, will be carried out to illustrate this shift.

Consequently, this paper will first propose the reconsideration of the nature of 'narratives', by contrasting the traditional notion of these as fixed textual objects, to one of narratives as abstract flexible entities, collectively constructed through experience. This new perception will be explored and explained through an overview of the evolution of the different historical consciousness on the art of narration. Secondly, the main distinguishing features of each of the alternative narratives identified will be emphasized, in order to show how they adjust to the particularities of the current participatory cultures, focusing on the USA as main consumer and developer of this type of narratives. Concepts such as convergence, prosumers or immersion will be introduced to support this argument. Finally, through the in depth analysis of one of this alternative narratives, this paper will try to provide a contextualized evidence of the prominence that these new ways of audience engagement have in the communication/entertainment sphere. This case study will do so by looking at the different stages of the narrative development process, the strategies considered for production, the particularities of its narrative style, and the content-audience dynamics.

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## Synonyms and *the company they keep*: On the influence of abstract and specific co-occurrence patterns on lexical choice

Since the advent of corpus linguistics, a myriad of investigations have examined the distributional patterns of near-synonymous expressions and have paid special attention to their collocational preferences (e.g., Gries 2001, 2003; Arppe & Järvikivi 2007). This has been done either by focusing on their idiosyncratic collocational trends or by recurring to more schematic semantic features that are shared by a whole range of individual collocates, thus grouping them into binary classes such as ABSTRACT/CONCRETE or more specific semantic categories. Nevertheless, most research of this type adopts a synchronic perspective, while the diachronic dimension has been systematically ignored.

By employing techniques specifically geared towards collocational analysis, this paper delves into the diachronic development of three synonymous adjectives from the olfactory domain, namely *fragrant*, *perfumed*, and *scented*. Examples of the adjectives are extracted from *COHA* (Davies 2010-) and their nominal collocational preferences are examined throughout 1810-2009. Different levels of co-occurrence are examined: (1) individual noun collocates modified by the adjectives (*soap* in *scented soap*), (2) semantic classes of the collocates (CLEANING PRODUCTS in *scented soap*), and (3) aroma denoted by the adjectives (artificial in *scented soap* contrary to natural in *fragrant flower*). Therefore, the main objective is to uncover possible changes in the meaning of the adjectives as reflected in their collocational behavior at different levels of granularity.

Regardless of their prototypical uses, with *perfumed* and *scented* being more common to denote artificial aromas and *fragrant* natural ones, results demonstrate that, diachronically, all adjectives follow a similar pattern, as they become increasingly more associated with nouns placed at the artificial end of the semantic continuum. Interestingly, this semantic development is, in all cases, particularly pronounced at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, which suggest that this change is not coincidental, but possibly the result of some underlying motivation.

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## Being and Living with 'the other': a British-Nigerian Experience through Cinema

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B Du Bois addresses the issue of non-belongingness derived from being at a crossroads between two worlds or cultures. Several authors such as Stuart Hall (1978), Kobena Mercer (1994) or Paul Gilroy (1987) have also pinpointed this idea of the barrier between belonging and non-belonging. These ideas are the starting point of this proposal given that it aims at exploring how 'the other' – migrants– are perceived by the country's long-established dwellers and how they look at themselves through their own eyes and the eyes of their country-fellows.

This objective will be carried out within the context of 80s Britain and through a family living between two cultures (British and Nigerian). For this purpose, the documentary *Home Away from Home b*y Maureen Blackwood will be used as a tool of analysis. This documentary explores the experience of loneliness involved in migrating. In it, the protagonist recreates her Nigerian hut in her British garden given that she misses her homeland. She decides to build it after realising that she cannot fit in and can only aim at being 'anglicised' (Bhabha, 1994) but never fully accepted. The construction of the hut sparks hostility on the part of her neighbours and it helps investigate the journey of disintegration arising from living 'trapped' between two worlds.

Furthermore, three different but related sections will be used to achieve the objectives. The first one will explore how immigrants deal with the situation created with coming to a new country, their 'promised land'. The second section tackles how England comes to terms with the presence of newcomers through the concept of 'the other'. The final element in the paper will address questions related to mixed-identity and the idea of being 'trapped' between two cultures.

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## Adjectives, Women and Donald Trump: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Adjectives Tweeted by @realDonaldTrump from June 2015 to January 2019

Ever since Donald Trump officially embarked on a political career in 2015, his personal Twitter account became a springboard into the White House. In fact, the Republican became famous for his aggressiveness, provocative attitude and controversial statements about women, most notably (but not exclusively) against Democratic frontrunner Hillary Rodham Clinton. Taking Fairclough's theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (1989, 1995) as a starting point, this study critically scrutinises the adjectives @realDonaldTrump brought into play to describe several women from June 2015 to January 2019. In order to do so, the present paper will (1) analyse original tweets in which only female agents are mentioned; (2) classify the degree of toxicity embedded in them; and (3) search for clear patterns and strategies that could shed light on Donald Trump's political appeal. The findings from this research show there might indeed be a clear pattern in relationship to the adjectives used by @realDonaldTrump to depict women.

The study reflects how the degree of toxicity embedded in Trump's tweets (e. g. the use of derogatory adjectives) decreases as his presidential bid experiences a steady rise. The conclusions reached provide insight into the ways in which the Trump phenomenon might work and be understood, which might either link the Republican's appeal with his masculinity, or else present several women as a direct attack against the cultural boundaries Trump stands for. The ideological uses of the adjectives tweeted by @realDonaldTrump, thus, could further highlight the connection between linguistic features and the real-life implications these may have.

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## Metamorphosis and Borders in Sarah Hall's "Mrs Fox", "Bees" and "The Nightlong River"

Sarah Hall writes about the metamorphosis of humans into animals and land in order to blur the boundary between human and non-human matter. This blurring allows her to point to the consequences of human actions on ecosystems and to question our place in the environment. Hall writes the process of transformation as a main theme, a structural and an aesthetic principle, in order to displace the human subject in relation to traditional categories. Such a displacement allows her to call into question the borders between living and non-living matter, rural and urban landscapes, and the real and the imagined.

"Mrs Fox", Hall's best-known text on human-animal transformation, published in the collection *Madame Zero*, recounts the transformation of a woman into a fox. By illustrating Alaimo's concept of "trans-corporeality" (Alaimo 2) in a literal way, "Mrs Fox" challenges the traditional border that separates human and non-human matter and imagines an ontological fluidity between both. Similarly, the short story "Bees", published in the collection *The Beautiful Indifference*, offers a powerful account of animal extinction, in which a woman observes the great number of dead bees that fell in her friend's garden. As she wonders about the cause of this decimation, the urban scenery turns into a rural landscape, which initiates her slow textual transformation into a bee and a fox, illustrating Baidotti's concept of "isomorphism" (Braidotti 527). The interconnectedness of human and non-human matter is also represented in "The Nightlong River", published in *The Beautiful Indifference* as well*,* in which a young girl hunts a mink to use its fur as a cape. The hunting scene becomes a transformation scene, in which the young girl morphs into an animal and the land becomes animated, exemplifying Bennett's "distributive agency" (Bennett ix). These short stories allow for a decentring of the human subject, challenging their position at the top of the ontological hierarchy, and thus invite the readers to question their responsibilities.

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## Postmodern Theatricality: The Interplay of Fiction and Theatre

With the emergence of new interdisciplinary research paradigms, the interface of arts and media has become a major area of interest in literary and linguistic studies (Ryan 2014; Vorobyova 2017). Central to this research framework is the concept of theatricality grounded in the multifaceted interaction of literary text with conventions of theatrical art. The prominence of theatrical influence becomes especially evident in the context of postmodernism, with its inherent tendency to mingle various genres, styles, and art forms.

A powerful theoretical and methodological platform for eliciting literary manifestations of theatricality is provided by the theory of *intermediality* (Rippl 2015). Based on this approach, my take on the phenomenon of theatricality stems from the analysis of *intermedial references* (Wolf 2011) that *mention* ('explicit intermedial reference') or *imitate* ('implicit intermedial reference') the presence of theatrical medium in the postmodernist literary discourse. Given that, this research on theatricality **aims** to 1) elucidate the approaches to defining the notion of *theatricality* across humanities, with a special focus on its postmodernist representations; 2) highlight various types of media interaction in literature from the perspective of intermediality studies; 3) elicit multilevel verbal and textual means of theatricality, lexical-semantic, imagistic, narrative, and compositional among them.

Special attention is given to discussing postmodernist manifestations of theatricality in M. Atwood's *Hag-Seed*, I. Murdoch's *The Black Prince*, J. Fowles's *The Magus*, and J. Winterson's *The Passion*. In this respect, an inquiry about the interplay of postmodernist fiction with theatre provides a deeper insight into the realm of media boundaries and interart relations in literature and beyond.

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## The autonomy of the woman writer: *The Diary of Anaïs Nin* and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* on the struggle for female agency

The post-war era in the United States burdened female authors with great limitations linked to the values of femininity (passivity and domesticity). Nevertheless, the decades of the 40s and 50s became a period in which the bases for the emergence of the feminist movement were being laid but the world of literature was still a male-dominated field. Female authors of this period often dealt with a lack of autonomy and agency in their personal and professional lives which became the base of their literary creation and inspired their writing as a form of rebellion.

Consequently, the analysis of works of an autobiographical nature written by female writers, such as *The Diary of Anaïs Nin* and Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar,* become sources of great interest.

The purpose of this paper will be to determine how the topic of autonomy (or lack thereof) is explored in Plath's and Nin's writing, which were the problems both authors experienced regarding agency and how both authors relied on literary creation as a means of conquering the autonomy they were denied. To achieve this, the previously mentioned works will be analysed along with the works of theoreticians who have worked on issues of autonomy in female literary creation such as Elaine Showalter, Susan Gubar, Sandra Gilbert, and Sharon Spencer. As far as results are concerned, the paper will show how the seemingly contrasting works of Nin and Plath can be linked to one another through a conscious attempt at regaining autonomy and how this connection can be traced back to a shared experience of female authorship during the postwar era.

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## "Irishness" and the Equine Animal in Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady: A Novel*

National identities and their (re)negotiation entail an ongoing debate in contemporary societies. Among them, the Irish identity and the issue of Irishness may be some of the most problematic matters in contemporary Ireland. Donna L. Potts explains that the use of the nonhuman animal for the construction and negotiation of Irishness can be traced back to the birth of the Irish State. Nonhuman animals would be used to show  Ireland's "mastery over animals" (Potts 144). Horses have often operated as the vehicles to (re)negotiate "Irishness" (Smyth 163), as spotted in Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady* (1987).

Having been described as an ecofeminist (Roberts 139), Anne McCaffrey is an Irish-American writer best known for her prize-winning fantasy Pern series, experimented with other genres in the 1970s, albeit always paying special attention to the animal trope in her fiction as exemplified by the novel analysed in this paper, *The Lady.* Here, a third-person narrator describes the life of an Anglo-Irish girl, Catriona Carradyne, and how she undergoes the loss of her first pony, Blister, in an accident, as well as how she overcomes the loss. The aim of this paper is on the one hand to find evidence of how the horses and ponies are used to ease the anxieties raised by hybrid identities revolving around Irishness; and, on the other hand, whether the accident leads to an ethical encounter with the nonhuman Other that enables the protagonist to resist the anthropocentric instrumentalisation of the nonhuman Other and to what extent.

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## Modernism and Pandemics: the Experience of Food and Nature in Hope Mirrlees' *Lud in the Mist*

Since the onset of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has integrally modified the neoliberal fabric at an international scale. As an invisible invader, the new coronavirus disease has forcefully turned into an increasingly relevant crisis in a myriad of domains, modifying and consuming not exclusively micro-organisms and human bodies, but entire social and political systems. The rhetoric of the media was constantly dominated by war metaphors and similes as the difficulties of the health sector and the global population became more challenging. After all, the "language focusing on siege, dangerous invaders, and defensive battles tends to be particularly prevalent when the damage to agriculture and food production is massive" (Parasecoli 194).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the traces of pandemic crisis and the rhetoric of pandemics in Modernism and its relation with the ecology of interwar pandemics. With regard to the ravaging intrusion of pandemics, literature is not an exception, insofar as readers' response to their surrounding realities is a complex socio-cultural by-product. Similarly, Modernism's vicinity with the 1918 Spanish influenza, the *Spanish flu* forges the discourse of modern experience, food consumption and production at war time and pandemics. Emphasising this frame of analysis, Hope Mirrlees' novel *Lud-in-the-Mist* (1926) will allow for the study of ecology and contagion in modernity and the transformation of rural and urban areas following the advent of capitalism.

Through an environmental perspective, Mirrlees' fantasy novel will bring into focus the analogous relation between modern experience, nature and food, and, particularly, between the legal prohibition and stigma of eating the novel's exotic fairy fruit, illness and food poisoning. Banned fairy fruit will serve as one of the recurring motifs of paramount importance that conceptualise the role of small-scale production, farming, smuggling and law in a new era in which mythology and tradition had to be necessarily reconstructed.

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## Metatextuality, Intertextuality and Intermediality in the Villanelle

I propose to talk about the villanelle, a fixed-form poem originating in medieval Italian dance songs, consisting of 19 lines on two rhymes with an alternating refrain that appears at the end of five tercets and a final quatrain.

To look at metatextuality in this fixed form, I shall examine key self-referencing villanelles at different points in history to see the evolution of the metre, length and refrain/repetend, and consider how metatextuality has both limited and opened up the villanelle. From this, I shall move on to talk about the relationships that can be seen in specific villanelles between certain poems: Edmund Gosse with John Keats; Oscar Wilde with Austin Dobson and Theocritus; William Empson with Dylan Thomas and T.S. Eliot; and Elizabeth Bishop with Robert Bridges.

I shall explain how villanelles reflect theories about intertextuality. I will then look at intermediality, and the villanelles that have been set to music by musicians like Stravinsky and John Cale, and will refer to theories of adaptation. I will show an example of ekphrasis in a villanelle, referencing the art of Giorgio de Chirico, as well as turning to the relationship that villanelles have with cinematic media. Finally, I will look at post-modern villanelles, and will consider how the form has become a perfect vehicle for the poetic encapsulation of a range of modern concerns, from gender to ecology to black lives. In short, I will consider how this little-known form has become one of the most popular types of fixed form poetry after the sonnet and the haiku.

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## "This is How You [Fall] in Love": the Political, Social, and Individual Complexities of (the Lack of) Love in the City in Dionne Brand's *Love Enough* (2014)

Dionne Brand's poetics and prose reflect the multicultural and multiethnic complexities of today's Canadian society and its diasporic nature. Brand stylishly blends her characters' personal and individual complex (hi)stories with a larger and urgent call for political consciousness. Interestingly, the novel shows a paradoxical dynamic that opposes both the dialectic of

romanticism dreaming and political consciousness awakening and it does so by providing different scenarios and intertwined episodes where love functions as an affective and political tool in the lives of the marginalized and alienated characters portrayed. *Love Enough* presents a series of meditations on contemporary life in the city and the flourishing possibilities that this context permits for love to contain the political, social and individual, ultimately providing a new character that needs to be taken into account: the city itself and its changeable weather. Through a series of poly-vocal episodes and interconnected lives and spaces, the city of Toronto emerges as a melting pot where various kinds of love (say erotic, filial, political) shape the lives of a group of people, allowing both personal change and social justice. And, even though love sometimes appears to be a hindrance and the novel leaves a bittersweet feeling on the reader and perhaps more questions than answers, Brand optimistically finds order in the disorder of life while questioning if love, eventually, is enough to endure our existence.

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## The Impact of Written Direct Corrective Feedback on L2 English learners

There has been a long debate about the effect of written corrective feedback (WCF, hereinafter) on improving second language (L2, hereinafter) learners' linguistic accuracy. Some scholars question the effectiveness of direct WCF on improving L2 learners' linguistic accuracy.

This research argues for the validity of such a feedback regarding the improvement of L2 learners' writing performance. The current paper conducts an experiment aiming to investigate any short and long-term effects on improving L2 English learners' linguistic accuracy in writing. The study includes 26 third-year Primary Education students at a Spanish public school within an English- Spanish bilingual project. Data were collected from essays, tests (pre-test and post-test) and treatments (giving feedback). The current paper aims to discuss the effectiveness of direct WCF in the process of learning L2 English at Primary Education levels. More precisely, the study will focus its attention on a group of students in their 3rd year of Primary Education, whose ages range from 8 to 9.

Results revealed the validity of Direct CF over Indirect CF at primary levels. Over a study period of two months, the present research found out statistically significant results for future studies and pedagogical implications.

Our study has shown that learners improve their earlier writing after they receive a feedback over two months, which goes hand in hand with Russel and Spada (2006) who agree with the fact that error correction is effective for improving L2 learners' written accuracy.

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## Viewing Authentic Videos for Learning English: University Students' Informal Practices and Perception of its Usefulness

Developments in on-line technologies have facilitated numerous sources of authentic videos, which can be used for language teaching-learning purposes by EFL learners at different levels of education. Nowadays there is a growing body of research that provides evidence that TL (Target Language) learners can improve their language proficiency while viewing authentic videos with or without subtitles/captions (e.g. Talaván 2007; Yuksel and Tanriverdi 2009; Rodgers 2013; Frumuselu et al. 2015; Pujadas and Muñoz 2019; Wisniewska and Mora 2020). Very few studies, however, have addressed the matter of TL learners' perception of the usefulness of this informal activity, particularly regarding Spanish learners of English as a FL (e.g. Ismaili 2013; Trinder 2017; Wang and Cheng 2020). That is why this survey provides insight into how Spanish university learners of English use authentic videos in their free time and their perception of the effectiveness of this activity for TL learning. For this purpose, seventy-four first year university students of the English Studies Degree, who were of mixed proficiency levels, answered a questionnaire. The results revealed generally positive attitudes as the majority of respondents watch authentic TV series and films in English in their free time with more or less time of exposure. Moreover, they tend to watch authentic videos with captions or subtitles either in English or in their mother tongue. Most importantly, the great majority of the respondents believe that watching authentic videos can help them improve different skills and aspects of English. Therefore, this study provides evidence that integrating authentic videos in the TL teaching-learning process and fomenting their use outside the classroom can be beneficial for Spanish EFL learners in their pursuit of improving their TL knowledge.

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## Speaking skills in EFL through the Communicative Approach

This paper examines the impact of the use of the Communicative Approach on speaking skills. The increased demand for English-proficient adult employees has, to some extent, led to a recent transition in English language teaching from structuralist to more functional pedagogical approaches and, as a result, to the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The underlying theory that underpins this pedagogical approach is that communication and language are interwoven. Therefore, many authors conclude that the study of the latter must be understood by putting into practice communicative functions in real contexts (Halliday, 1970) and its use for meaningful tasks (Johnson, 1982) with authentic materials. By doing so, the student's "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1972) will be fostered.

Following the procedure of action research (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018), the objective of the present research is to determine, on the one hand, how increased participation through different interaction strategies (role plays, collaborative information-gathering and opinion-sharing activities and asynchronous online speaking practice) and, on the other hand, assessment focused on fluency and group feedback, have an effect on the students' self-confidence, their willingness to communicate and their overall communicative competence.

The findings of this exploratory study in two classes of fifteen advanced students (level C1.1.) at the *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas* indicated that speaking-in-class-anxiety and the lack of opportunities to speak outside the classroom context were major factors that hindered their communicative proficiency. In addition, the analysis showed that the communicative competence is one of the students' main concerns and that it is considered to be one of their priorities when learning English as a foreign language.

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## (Im)politeness and Identity Construction: An Initial Approach to Speech Acts in CORIECOR

The construction of a community's identity is closely linked to the peculiarities of the linguistic variety spoken by its members. The usage of a series of politeness or impoliteness patterns among a group of speakers contributes to shaping their general tendencies with regards to social distance management. This paper aims to contribute to the outlining of the linguistic construction of the Irish identity by focusing on the evolution of its (im)politeness patterns through time. In order to do this, it resorts to the data available in a subcorpus of CORIECOR (Corpus of Irish English Correspondence), analyzing empirical data with which to reach conclusions with regards to real speech patterns among this group of speakers.

This study combines qualitative research and corpus linguistics tools in order to allow for an ulterior quantitative analysis of the data. Speech acts are individually extracted from the letters in the corpus and later classified and tagged through Microsoft Excel tools and AntConc. This allows for a systematic retrieval of the features observed and their identification within a theoretical framework based on a togetherness-apartness axis stemming from the works of scholars such as Terkourafi, Arundale, and Archer.

Through the study of specific speech acts triggering face negotiations, conclusions can be drawn so as to which discursive tendencies have existed and exist in this variety of the English language. The identification of (im)politeness tendencies within the speech patterns of this community of speakers sheds light on their conceptualization of distance management. This thence allows to develop a further understanding of the ways in which these dynamics shape the notion of individual identity of the members of this group of speakers. This paper presents the initial results of the early stages of this research project.

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## The Enregisterment of Devonshire Speech in 19th-Century British Literature

Dialects have always been part of English literature to portray the voices of the peasantry, where they hail from and what social implications their origins denote according to their local speech (see Blake 1981). In recent years, representation of dialects in literature has garnered much linguistic attention due to Asif Agha's groundbreaking model of enregisterment, which he defines in terms of "processes whereby distinct forms of speech come to be socially recognized (or enregistered) as indexical of speaker attributes by a population of language users." (2003). Parting from Agha's framework, many scholars have successfully drawn parallels between specific dialect forms and social values. In this context, the North of England has been received much attention for its characteristic dialectal features, as shown in Beal (2009) and Cooper (2013), amongst others. In contrast, however, West Country dialects have remained uncharted within Agha's framework. Most of its counties (Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Devon and, further East, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire) share a history of migratory waves and commerce which impinged greatly upon their language. In fact, West Country dialects have evolved into some of the most distinctive varieties of the British Isles for their use of voiced fricatives, gendered pronouns and peculiar pronoun system (see Ihalainen 1994; Wagner 2004c; Wagner 2012b).

This paper takes a preliminary approach to the enregisterment of West Country dialects, with special emphasis on Devonshire speech. Drawing on the *Salamanca Corpus*, I examine the representation of the dialect in R. Giles's "The Gude Old Times at Welcombe" (1885) and Mary Hartier's "An Evening with Hodge" (1896), which I will compare and scrutinise using quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. My aim is twofold. On the one hand, to ascertain the repertoire of Devonshire features distributed in both works. On the other, to highlight the enregistered status of the dialect within the West Country. This analysis may hopefully contribute to ongoing work on dialect enregisterment in historical contexts, while it lays the groundwork for future research on nineteenth-century Devonshire speech.

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## Zelda Fitzgerald's Dancing Aspirations through "The Girl with Talent" (1930)

Although Zelda Fitzgerald had danced during her childhood in Montgomery (Alabama), she did not resume her ballet lessons until 1925. Under the direction of renowned ballet teachers such as Catherine Littlefield in the United States and Madame Lubov Egorova in France, Zelda Fitzgerald became infatuated with dancing, practicing for about eight hours a day. Her efforts were indeed rewarded in 1929 when she was offered a solo debut for the opera *Aïda* in Naples. This was a great opportunity for Zelda's career; yet she rejected the offer. To this day, the only written evidence of why Zelda might have turned it down is found in her sister Rosalind Smith's personal correspondence. According to Zelda's sister, Scott did not allow his wife to accept the offer. This frustrating turning point in Zelda's artistic career remained as a psychological wound for the years to come to the extent that Zelda fictionalized it in several writings as it is the case with her short story "The Girl with Talent" (1930). This story, published within Zelda's girl-series collection for *College Humor*, is a clear depiction of Zelda Fitzgerald's own dilemmas while trying to have it all: her marriage to Scott Fitzgerald and a career of her own. Drawing on the work of feminist scholars, this conference paper seeks to provide a close reading of "The Girl with Talent" (1930) in order to analyze to what extent Zelda Fitzgerald's personal and artistic aspirations influenced her writings, and how this relates to her constant struggles to find her own artistic voice.

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## Duolingo as a tool to second language acquisition

This paper examines Duolingo as a tool to second language acquisition. Duolingo is one of the most famous apps used in Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The topic of second language acquisition with the use of ICT resources has been broadly studied by linguists internationally. However, with its new platform "Duolingo for Teachers", not only researchers, but also teachers have become interested in seeing the possibilities of this application.

In Duolingo, language acquisition mainly occurs due to gamification (Mahmudah, 2015) consisting of getting points by playing in a learning platform similar to a game (González, 2018). According to some researchers, Duolingo appears to be very motivating and entertaining due to its layout and design. In addition, what distinguishes this application from others is competition, which encourages studying. The main incentive is that the more you play, the more awards you receive (James and Meyer, 2018). Nevertheless, there are several negative aspects which still need to be studied in depth. The main constraints of Duolingo are pragmatic functions and poor feedback (Bodgan, 2016).

Throughout this paper, the main characteristics of Duolingo as regards its learning process are identified. This research proposal is aimed at analysing the effects of Duolingo on second language acquisition by considering two groups of around 20 students each: one group uses Duolingo, and the other does not. After having passed one full grammar skill test, both groups took an exam in order to find out whether Duolingo had fostered their learning. By doing this, this study seeks to prove that even though this free app claims to improve language skills, it does not apply to all functions of the language. In addition, it will be argued that the teacher role is still needed to provide interaction and feedback.

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## Challenging the Matriarchal Myth: Matrilineality and Matrifocality through Anglo-Nigerian Literature

Some authors define African matriarchy according to rules of succession and inheritance, whereas others define the concept based on the female mother-focused matricentric unit. When it comes to African matriarchy it is essential to examine two of the most relevant lines of research found within this field: one carried out by Senegalese Cheikh Anta Diop and the other led by Nigerian Ifi Amadiume. The former claims that matriarchy is the social system that existed generally throughout black Africa in ancient times as well as at the present day with inheritance and succession traced through the female line. The latter defines the concept of African matriarchy based on the figure and the structure of the *mkpuke*, which is an autonomous "female mother-focused matricentric unit" of Nnobi, — an Igbo village town — and "the smallest kinship unit and the smallest production unit" (27).

Whereas some try to define African matriarchy, others such as Adrianne Rich even call into question if there was ever true universal matriarchy, as she claims that "some feminist anthropologists may deny that any actual 'matriarchal' period ever existed" (111).

The present article aims to review different Anglo-Nigerian narratives written by Nigerian English-speaking female writers — such as Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Lola Shoneyin among others — that demonstrate that matriarchy needs to be understood as a combination of matrilineality — kinship systems in which descent and familial membership is traced through the female line (Gottlieb & Robinson 2) – and matrifocality, which deals with a family structure where mothers head families, oversee the distribution of goods, land, and food for the clan, and where fathers are absent and play a less important role (Barfiel 312).

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## Let´s Talk About Diversity: Implementing Narration as a Didactic Tool for Diversity Teaching in the EFL/ESL Classroom

Narration as a means of communication has numerous effects additionally to the mere act of telling a story. Besides this entertaining value, a group can strongly benefit from the exchange of personal experiences and viewpoints in the form of narration and storytelling. Based on Lambert's (2002/2013) approach to storytelling as a promoter of emphatical connection, and thus understanding, this presentation explores the didactic value of this tool, precisely Digital Storytelling, in the EFL/ESL classroom. Including Wu and Chen's (2020) eight outcomes of Digital Storytelling, the broad array of advantages for the classroom and the individual is outlined from a general approach. Going on, the increasing significance of diversity teaching, as well as the discussion of intersectionality in the classroom will be addressed. In a time where the Black Lives Matter movement, and the hashtag #StopAsianHate in the context of racist crimes against Asian Americans and citizens with a history of migration from Asian countries are drawing attention to issues of intersectionality and diversity, the engagement with these topics is of grave importance. Having conducted a qualitative interview study for a PhD research project with the research question which conflicts arise in the Austrian classroom based on intersectionality and cultural diversity, the presentation addresses the main findings of this research. Then, the strength of the implementation of narratives and Storytelling in the classroom with the aim of addressing and engaging with these conflicts is outlined and discussed. In that, the potential of this teaching tool enabling a critical and reflective discourse within the classroom is elaborated, and the possibility of fostering understanding, and with that acceptance, for future societies.

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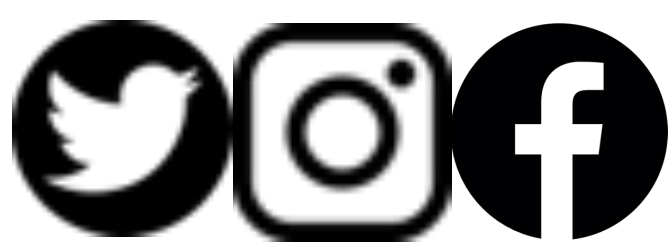## Motivation, ICT tools and Kahoot in ESL in Secondary Education

In the 21st century, a motivating and engaging learning process is of paramount importance for students, whose current educational demands are shaped by a world dominated by globalisation and technology. In this way, teachers must be prepared to make their lessons enjoyable and entertaining. Born digital natives and having experienced different ways of learning due to the increasing development of technology, students are highly motivated by the use of ICT tools in class. Similarly, the use of gamification in the classroom enhances the students' engagement in the subject and offers a different vision to learning and teaching a second language. Teaching English as a second language through the use of ICT tools and gamification is thus a clear asset to any foreign language teacher who must presently search for new pedagogical ways to improve their teaching due to the new demands that have recently appeared in the educational context. This study was conducted at IES Dunas de las Chapas High School (Marbella) during the academic year 2020/2021. The participants in this study were first- and second-year students (ESO) who were exposed to a series of Kahoot! quizzes during the second term. These quizzes dealt with vocabulary and grammatical points that were part of the syllabus. Motivation and engagement on the part of the students was evaluated through the use of a questionnaire designed ad hoc for this purpose. The results being extremely positive, they revealed great acceptance on the part of the students, who deemed the activity as motivational, fun and profitable for their learning process.

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