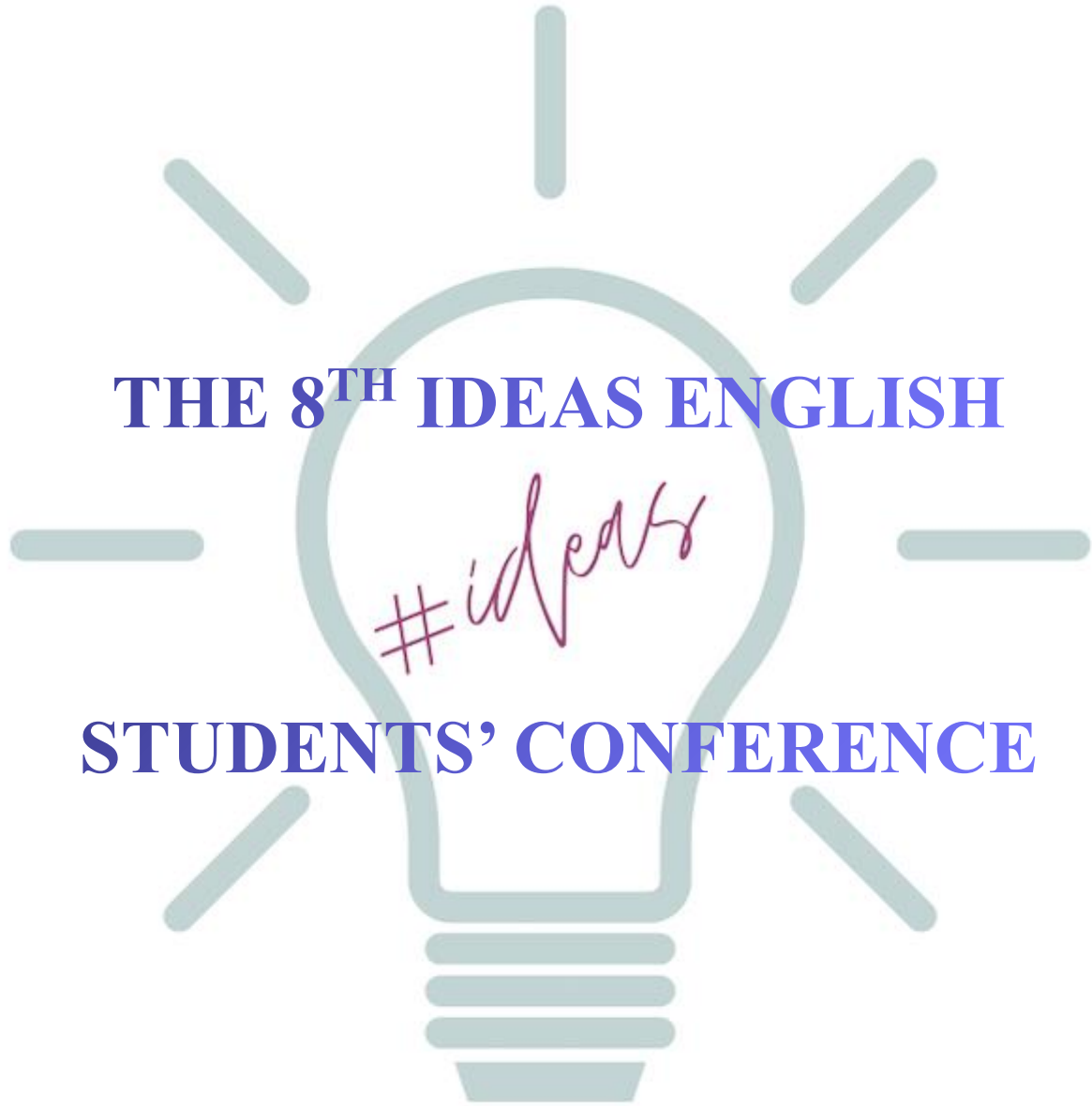


BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



THE 8TH IDEAS ENGLISH

STUDENTS' CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 2023



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Department of English
and American Studies

Author: Jana Hallová

Category: Linguistics

Affiliation: Masaryk University

Next Step in Communication? Memes and Evolution of Language

The project focuses on the use of memes on social media, their prevalence in conversation and their usage based on the age of the contributors. The main research question it asks is whether the use of memes in computer-mediated discourse is a momentary trend or whether it exhibits signs of language evolution.

A quantitative linguistic study is employed to answer this question within the scope of the project. The subject of the study, the social media platform analyzed, is Facebook, mainly for the fact that its users often include indicators of their age on their profiles. The project then looks at three most popular pages on Facebook and their three most recent posts. With the use of an online software (Exportcomments.com), the top 5000 comments (if available) along with the responses to them were selected and searched for memetic elements. Out of 16 760 comments, the results include analysis of 2837 memetic posts in total, which are then subjected to categorization according to the age group that their posters belong to, based on their provided public profile data. The specific personal data remains anonymous within the study, but the work does demonstrate the distribution of the use of memetic elements by different age groups in the selected posts.

Based on the quantitative results, the project considers whether the use of memetic elements rises exponentially the lower the approximate age of the user. The most recent demographic studies of Facebook are employed and compared to the quantitative results to surmise whether the result is representative of a language evolution.



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Department of English
and American Studies

Author: Milana Hrachova

Category: Linguistics

Affiliation: Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice

Gender Differences in Production and Perception of Emotions in Speech

The presentation explores potential gender-based differences in perception and production of emotions in speech and it aims to find out whether women are more emotional in these two processes than men. Research questions were drawn from three studies that discussed reasons for gender-based differences (Tannen (2014), Chaplin (2014), Polce-Lynch et al. (2001)) that emphasized that women tend to be more emotional in speech production and perception. For the purpose of approving or disproving this belief, two separate experiments were conducted.

An important part of the presentation will be dedicated to the description of experiments, their results and following conclusions based on the findings. The first experiment focuses on how participants perceive and evaluate acted emotions (happy and sad) taken from film scenes, while the second experiment aims to demonstrate differences in how participants produce emotions when given the task of reading short sentences in a neutral, happy, or sad manner. Prosodic features, including fundamental frequency (F0), intensity, and speaking rate, were selected to analyse emotions in participants' speech. The overall findings suggested that production and perception of emotions do not significantly differ between genders. Moreover, male subjects had higher level of accuracy in the perception of sad feelings. The changing nature of gender roles in society might be the explanation for such a result. This implies that the claim that women are more proficient at evaluating the emotions expressed in speech appears to be false.



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The final part of presentation will outline ongoing research that is inspired by my previous work. It is concentrated on gender-based differences in understanding of onomatopoeias in the selected sample of Indo-European languages (English, Slovak and Ukrainian).



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Department of English
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Author: Martin Mikuláš

Category: Linguistics

Affiliation: University of Ostrava

The Language of Manipulation: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Mainstream News Media and Fake News Websites

In the contemporary digital media landscape marked by the prevalence of disinformation and fake news, the aim of this study is to perform a comparative analysis of mainstream news media and fake news websites, and to identify the multimodal resources characteristic of them. In particular, the study focuses on newsbits and newsbites, which comprise clusters of headlines, leads, hyperlinks, and images (Knox, 2007), because they arguably represent the most salient features of any news websites. A representative corpus of newsbits and newsbites was compiled from mainstream news media and fake news websites that meet the criteria of such websites defined in the study. In total, 20 newsbites and newsbits were collected from 2 mainstream news media and 2 fake news websites. The study primarily draws on Bednarek and Caple's (2012) approach to news discourse, which affords ways to perform a complex multimodal analysis of text and image, as well as explores the concepts of news values, evaluation, and composition. As the primary objective of newsbits and newsbites is to entice readers to read the full article, the hypothesis is that the creation of compelling newsbits and newsbites is a shared objective of both mainstream news media and fake news websites. The persuasive impact of the linguistic and visual modes is, however, assumed to be more pronounced in the case of fake news websites. This arguably reflects their goal of manipulating and persuading their readers.



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Department of English
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Author: Kateřina Ratajová

Category: Linguistics

Affiliation: University of Ostrava

The Language of Persuasion: (Self-)Presentation Strategies Adopted by British YouTubers in Clothing Hauls

The aim of the present paper is to analyse micro-celebrity practices and self-branding strategies utilised within YouTube clothing hauls for the purposes of persuasion. The lack of studies concerned with such videos and the fact that they are one of the most popular types of vlogs (Shah et al., 2017) make them an intriguing subject for analysis. Attention is primarily paid to the way the YouTuber's public persona is constructed and then further promoted to achieve higher engagement online. The dataset comprises three videos by a British YouTuber called Roxxsaurus, video descriptions and a sample of comments posted in the comment sections. The data were subjected to a digitally mediated discourse analysis in line with Gee (2014) and Unger (2020). The findings suggest that the identity of a successful YouTuber is constructed not only through the exhibition of desirable personality traits, such as accountability, positivity, or, most importantly, authenticity, but also through regular communication with the audience. The analysis also shows that this image is further promoted with the help of self-branding strategies in order to gain more attention from the audience in the form of comments, views and subscriptions. Such strategies include not only verbal and visual calls for action in the videos, but also links posted in the video descriptions.



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Author: Mária Lujza Csorba

Affiliation: Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice

Category: Literature

Modernization of the Irish Literary Tradition through the Representations of Masculinity and Fatherhood in Mike McCormack's *Solar Bones*

This literary research provides an analysis of the novel *Solar Bones* (2016) written by a contemporary Irish stream-of-consciousness writer Mike McCormack. The aim of this research is to argue that Mike McCormack modernizes the Irish literary tradition mainly through representations of two concepts – masculinity and fatherhood. My presentation provides the theoretical background for the outlining of the traditional ways of masculinity and fatherhood representations in Irish literature as well as the methodology. It further contains the hypothesis which states that Mike McCormack modernizes the representations of the aforementioned concepts through the characterization of his male protagonist as a caring masculinity representative, the addition of an atypical father-daughter relationship and its differing dynamic to the typical father-son portrayal in traditional Irish literature, and through the creation of strong and independent female characters. In my analysis which is introduced through research questions, I focus on the chosen themes – modernized representation of masculinity, fatherhood, and female characters. The contribution of this research to the ongoing literary analyses lies within the protagonist's caring masculinity reflected in his work-related sense of responsibility and use of emotive language, which seem to be overlooked in other authors' works focused on related topics. Although I introduce certain aspects through which McCormack honours the previous Irish literary tradition, the analysis argues in favour of his



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undeniable deviation from the Irish norm and subsequent modernization of the aforementioned concepts in the Irish context.



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Author: Katarína Danková

Affiliation: Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice

Category: Literature

**The Representation of Sapphics in Selected Literary Works by Patricia Highsmith,
Nigel Nicolson and Taylor Jenkins Reid**

Lesbianism, historically marginalised and often rendered invisible, persecuted, or sexualised by society, remains an underexplored topic in Slovak academic literature. This presentation addresses this oversight by analysing the depiction of sapphic relationships in literature. We focus on three distinct novels—Nigel Nicolson's *Portrait of a Marriage*, Patricia Highsmith's *The Price of Salt*, and Taylor Jenkins Reid's *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*. Our main goal is to provide a comparative examination of these works, emphasising how the authors portray sapphic characters, the impact of societal norms on them, and the nuanced exploration of their sexualities. Despite significant temporal differences, these literary works reveal striking thematic consistencies. Our analysis reveals both disparities and convergences, particularly in the dynamics of the characters' relationships with individuals of different genders and their evolving self-perception of their sexuality. Notably, the female characters in *The Price of Salt* and *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* experience strained relationships with men, unlike Vita Sackville-West in *Portrait of a Marriage*, who maintained a fulfilling marriage. Additionally, the characters in *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* are aware of their sexuality from the outset, while the protagonist in *The Price of Salt* discovers her sexuality during the narrative. Furthermore, the presentation highlights commonalities in the resolutions of these novels and the prevailing societal influences on their relationships. All three novels conclude positively, with *The Price of Salt* being the most influential in this regard, despite



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societal prejudices against homosexual relationships. In conclusion, this presentation sheds light on the historical context of lesbianism and the portrayal of sapphic characters in three novels. Despite the decades that separate them, these works reveal shared themes and societal influences, underscoring the ongoing need for academic exploration of lesbian literature and its profound impact on our understanding of human relationships and societal norms.



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Department of English
and American Studies

Author: Nora Júlia Levická

Affiliation: Masaryk University

Category: Literature

Our Songs, Our Stories: Un-Creating Narratives in Three Feminist Rewritings of Homeric Myth

In the proposed paper, the focus of the analysis will be laid upon the importance of songs in the creation of mythical narratives, and on reinforcing stereotypes and power-paradigms in patriarchal societies, as well as on the ways in which three female authors of feminist myth revisionism, Margaret Atwood, Madeline Miller, and Pat Barker, all employ them in order to emphasize the narrative imbalance between the male and female voices in the original myths.

In the three novels object of analysis, *The Penelopiad*, *The Silence of the Girls*, and *Circe*, parallels between versions of the songs portraying the female characters depicted in the novels will be drawn. A special emphasis will be put on the lesser degree of agency provided to the female characters in the original myths, mainly on their the reactions of the characters to those songs, or absence of thereof, in the rewritten versions.

All three novels mentioned above provide a plethora of instances in which both main and side characters reflect on their inability to express themselves due to their social status as both women and slaves (The Maids, Briseis), to being portrayed in a distorted or manipulated light, portrayed either as a perfect, yet unattainable role model for other women (Penelope), or as wicked temptresses and cautionary tales (Circe, The Maids).

The theory of feminist myth revisionism, as well as theory of mythmaking, will be employed. This theoretical framework will be used in analysis of extracts from all the three



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novels, with a special emphasis on both the presence and absence of songs, and on their authors. In the end, the reader will be acquainted with the current rising interest in feminist myth revisionism, both in academia and in popular reading.



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Author: Eliseo Guardado Salguero

Affiliation: University of Prešov

Category: Literature

The Intertextual Inclusion of Metal Music into the Narrative of *Death Metal Epic III: Sinister Synthesizer*

This article explores the intertextuality of metal music into the narrative of the novel *Death Metal Epic III: Sinister Synthesizer* by Dean Swinford. It seeks how metal music genres such as blackened death metal shape the narrative in such musical novels, once these genres are intertextually included, giving it an authentic and distinctive narrative among other musical novels. Some terms such as musical experiences, metal themes and intertextuality are briefly defined based on the musical analysis employed on the field of musico-literary studies. Then, narratology is defined and eventually used as a method for exploring and analyzing the narrative in this novel which encircles David Fosberg (both the narrator and protagonist in this novel) and his challenging metal experiences after he is ejected from the Belgian black metal band Desekration. Such musical experiences as well as some recurrent metal themes such as “total death” provide enough material for analyzing the musico-literary narrative shaped by metal music in this novel. Finally, the results certify that *Death Metal Epic III: Sinister Synthesizer* is a metal novel whose narrative is influenced by more than a metal music genre in terms of both characters, experiences, and themes.



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Department of English
and American Studies

Author: Silvia Štulrajterová

Affiliation: Masaryk University

Category: Cultural Studies

**Aboriginal Land Rights, Environmentalism, and Literature: Envisioning Reconciliation
in Australia and Canada**

Since the time of colonisation, the capitalist exploitation of Australian and Canadian land contrasted with the Indigenous spiritual custodianship of said land. Extraction imperialism is contested by Indigenous communities and environmental activists who criticise the unsustainable development. While the agendas of environmental and Indigenous activists do not always overlap, some Indigenous scholars and authors stress the importance of a joint action against development companies. This paper will compare two such instances as presented in the *The Yield* (2021) by an Australian Wiradjuri writer Tara June Winch, and *The Back of the Turtle* (2014) by a Canadian author of Cherokee origin Thomas King.

Both novels highlight the fact that respectful cohabitation and sharing of the land are crucial for the future of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous inhabitants. *The Yield* outlines the threat of displacement that an Aboriginal family faces in the wake of a mine construction. The protection of their ancestral land is eventually supported by the environmental activists who had boycotted the mine. Not straightforward and unconditional support nonetheless creates an alliance that stops the mine. *The Back of the Turtle's* protagonist, Gabriel, represents the fusion of the western science and the Indigenous knowledge; a prominent scientist of Indigenous descent helps develop a deadly bacterium which causes an environmental catastrophe and wipes out the Indigenous community his mother had belonged to. Despite the dystopian overtones, Gabriel's survival is achieved with the help of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities that remained in the affected area, suggesting that the key to survival is



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cooperation and alliance. In broader terms, the protagonists' reconciliation with their past paths the way for an alter/Native vision of the future. Winch and King are conscious of the contemporary socio-cultural problems and they both envision an allyship between the Aboriginal and environmental activists and a reconciliatory future.



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