

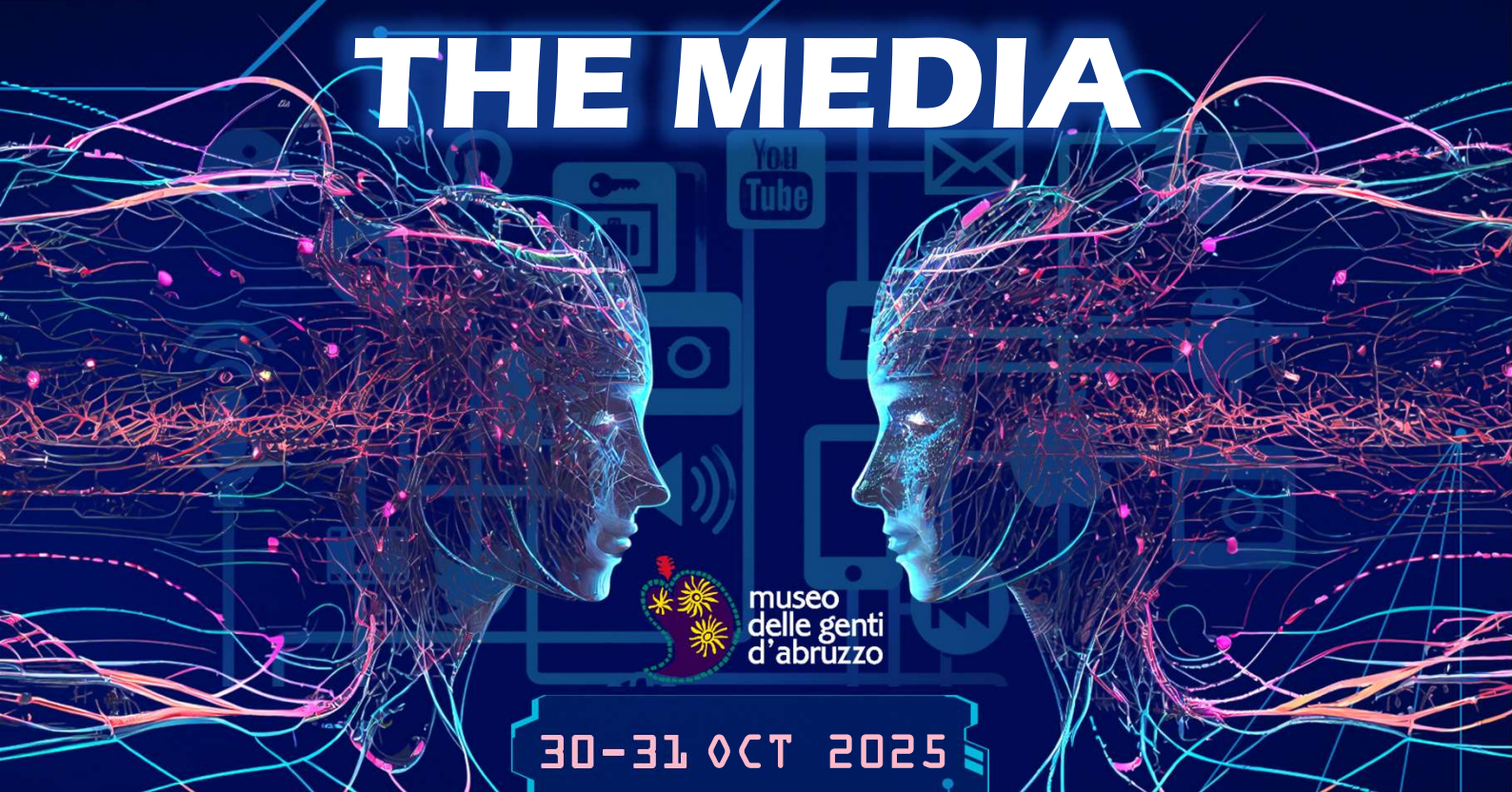


DIPARTIMENTO DI LINGUE,
LETTERATURE E CULTURE MODERNE

PESCARA



COGNITION & THE MEDIA



30-31 OCT 2025



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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Giuseppe **Balirano** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”, Italy), *Cognitive Stylistics of Excess: Queer Disidentification in Audiovisual Media*

Charlotte **Bosseaux** (Edinburgh University, Scotland), *Translating Emotions: Towards More Caring and Ethical Practices in Audiovisual Translation*

Jorge **Díaz-Cintas** (UCL - UK), *Subtitles Without Borders: Voices of Activism on Screen*

Yves **Gambier** (University of Turku, Finland), *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation: Complexities of the Parameters. Focus on Subtitling*

Marcello **Giovanelli** (Aston University, Birmingham, UK), *What Can Stylistics Teach Us About Cognition*

Luc **Van Doorslaer** (University of Tartu - Estonia), *News Translation Flows: Where Media and Translation Meet*

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Esterino **Adami** (University of Turin), *“Uploaded to the cloud, sounds like heaven”:
Intertextuality, Split Self and Embodiment (in the Mind)*

As part of the British science fiction anthology TV series *Black Mirror*, “San Junipero” is an episode that encapsulates challenging and complex motifs thanks to the two female protagonists Yorkie and Kelly, whose enactors constantly oscillate between different epochs of the past (the 1980s, the 1990s and the 2000s) and the future (an unspecified, technologically-advanced era). Such a bizarre disruption of temporal deixis is only one of the numerous manifestations of estrangement, and as the story unfolds it is revealed that the coastline resort city of San Junipero is a simulacrum, or rather a simulated reality, where the elderly can live, even after death. This story brings to the fore and problematises crucial questions about memory, existence and identity, which after the third industrial revolution have been magnified through the increasingly massive and influential effect of science.

In this contribution, I aim to tease out and investigate some linguistic and cultural aspects of the episode, focusing on both the *novum* nature of the text (the alternative and nostalgic digital worlds inhabited by the two characters, whose love cuts across times, ethics and bodies) and the stylistic rendition of affection, empathy and cognition in their (post)human dimension. Framed within an interdisciplinary approach that adopts and adapts notions and tools from cognitive poetics, metaphor studies and narratology, the talk will specifically investigate three intertwined levels. These are: 1) the notion of intertextuality, by which the episode discloses a plethora of references to 1980s pop culture and traditional science fiction themes such as time-travels, 2) the idea of ‘split self’, as Yorkie and Kelly simultaneously live (physically/virtually) in their young age and in their end-of-life condition, and 3) the very sense of embodiment, whereby the dynamics of the interaction between minds and bodies juxtapose the feisty ‘funfair’ and computer-generated ‘paradise’ of San Junipero and the corporeal and mental frailty of human beings in a hospice, before being “uploaded to the cloud”.

Miguel Ángel **Bernal Merino** (Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), *What Game Localisation Reveals about Translation and Cognition*

The localisation of video games required a variety of changes from the Language Industry due to the novel interactive experience games offered different from books, comics and films. Multimedia interactive entertainment software necessitated an innovation in the way translations were made and proofread so that these digital game-machines could be enjoyed by players in locales around the world. As a result, software localisation and testing were adapted for entertainment purposes, expanding on translation practices developed for written, illustrated, and audiovisual media. Video games bridged the gap between passive media and physical toys by reimagining computers for participatory storytelling and world-building. Consequently, specialised translation companies needed to develop an array of new roles and digital tools to project such ludic products globally. Video game localisation highlighted how a text-centric approach to translation broke user engagement because linguistic items are only a fraction of the multimodal interaction that players based their in-game choices on. Proofreading games, therefore, called for the creation of a new localisation role: linguistic quality assurance (LQA) play-tester. In other words, the lack of cohesion

between translated and untranslated game assets (text, voiceover, images...) disrupts the pragmatics of machine-human communication because words act as a key node in the mesh of cognition, and poor localisation magnifies asset misalignments in interactive media.

Daniel **Cabeza-Campillo** (University of Warwick, UK), *Translation of Brexit-related Metaphors in the Media: Findings from a Bilingual Corpus*

This paper examines the translation of Brexit-related conceptual metaphors in media discourse, drawing on a bilingual corpus of 240 news article pairs (i.e., 480 news articles in total) published in six media outlets in English and Spanish between 2016 and 2022: *BBC News* and *BBC News Mundo*; *The Guardian* and *elDiario.es*; and *El País* and *El País English Edition*. Conceptual metaphors are part of our everyday language because thought itself is fundamentally metaphorical in nature, and we use them effortlessly and unconsciously to understand and describe the world around us (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003). In discourse, metaphorical linguistic expressions can hold significant persuasive power, generating empathy and framing socially shared perspectives (Charteris-Black 2018; 2019). Within the realm of media discourse on Brexit, various metaphorical expressions pertaining to divorce, war and poison have been used to depict both the Leave and Remain campaigns. These expressions have contributed to the construction of narratives of humiliation and cultural trauma among pro-Brexit groups (Toomey and Shepherd 2023), and of existential anxiety and ontological (in)security among pro-Remain groups (Browning 2018). For example, a news article from *The Guardian* quoted Boris Johnson describing the EU referendum as if “the jailer has accidentally left the door of the jail open and people can see the sunlit land beyond” (Syal 2016). The same article also reflected the pro-Remain perspective: “British exit would be ‘poison’” (ibid.). Through data triangulation, this paper identifies the most frequent translation procedures used for each type of Brexit-related conceptual metaphor, and offers a critical analysis of their cognitive and persuasive functions. By combining approaches from disciplines such as News Translation Studies, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Critical Metaphor Analysis, this paper seeks to elucidate the pivotal role of translation as a conduit for thought representation in the context of the media discourse on Brexit.

Mirko **Casagrande** (University of Calabria), *Adapting an Alien Language to the Screen: From Ted Chiang’s Story of Your Life to Denis Villeneuve’s Arrival*

In Ted Chiang’s “Story of Your Life” (2002), linguist Louise Banks is tasked with communicating with the seven-tentacle alien creatures that have just landed on Earth and with interpreting their mysterious language, whose spoken and written versions are called “Heptapod A” and “Heptapod B” respectively. Being a non-linear semasiographic language, Heptapod requires a cognitive shift to be processed and reproduced by humans and presents free word order and no preferred clause order, which makes it a sort of circular language with sentences being realised – and written – simultaneously.

Consequently, Louise starts experiencing changes in her perception of time, with the future surfacing in the present and what she remembers as the past turning into something that has yet to happen. The life story she tells is that of her daughter, whom she knows will tragically die even before conceiving her. Drawing inspiration from Sapir-Whorf’s hypothesis about how language shapes the thoughts of those who speak it, Chiang’s short

story introduces a teleological worldview in which events – and thus life itself – are seen in their entirety, and human causal and sequential experience is radically questioned.

In 2016, French Canadian director Denis Villeneuve successfully adapted the text for the screen, turning Chiang's story into a critically acclaimed Hollywood blockbuster. The combination of images, sound and verbal language allows *Arrival* to represent some of the features of the alien language in a more direct way, from the visual depiction of its written form to the overlapping and mixing of temporal dimensions in Louise's perceptions.

Drawing on a theoretical framework that combines cognitive stylistics (Giovannelli and Harrison 2024; Semino and Culpeper 2022; Stockwell 2019), adaptation studies (Hutcheon 2013; Leitch 2017), and multimodality (Balirano 2014; Kress and van Leeuwen 2021; O'Halloran 2004; O'Halloran, Tan and Wignell 2016), this paper aims to analyse not only how *Heptapod* is adapted in the film but also how its cognitive elements are translated at the level of language processing, emotion, and worldview.

Flavia **Cavaliere** (University of Naples Federico II), *“A square is not a circle”. From Shapes to Frames: Multimodal Perspectives on Ethnic Representations in the Media*

The media's supposed communicative purpose of transmitting objective data and facts is, rather, «a value-laden, ideologically determined discourse with a clear potential to influence the audience's assumptions and beliefs about the way the world is and the way it ought to be» (White 2006: 37) – a pivotal notion in mass communication research, so extensively demonstrated that it hardly needs further justification. Mediascapes (Appadurai 1990, 1996) provide in fact vast reservoirs of images, narratives, and ethnoscapings that indisputably contribute to cultivating people's (mis)conceptions of social reality (Gerbner et al. 1993, Gerbner 2002). In particular, (fictional) media functions as a “public textbook on ethnicity and foreignness” (Cortés 1984: 64), leading audiences to believe that such representations are accurate and authentic (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004; Mastro 2009; Lee et al. 2009, Ramasubramanian et al. 2023). Yet audiences often fail to recognize the biased nature of these portrayals, especially when repeatedly exposed to stereotypical or overused depictions. The cumulative effect of long-term exposure can subtly shape perceptions of reality (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Bryant and Zillman 2002) to such an extent that «it would not be impossible to prove with sufficient repetition and a psychological understanding of the people concerned that a square is in fact a circle [...]. Words can be moulded until they clothe ideas and disguise them» (Goebbels' not direct quote in Trevor-Roper 1979: 19). Moreover, given the ever-increasing dominance of the 'pictorial turn' (Mitchell 1994), visual misinformation may be even more effective and influential than textual discourse in eliciting emotional responses and (mis)constructing concepts (Liu & Kuru 2025). Accordingly, this study analyses various narratives and visual representations of ethnic groups and minorities from a multimodal discourse analysis perspective (Kress 2001, 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, 2006; van Leeuwen 2008; Kress 2010; O'Halloran 2011; O'Halloran and Smith 2011). Particular attention is given to the multimodal 'framing devices' (Goffman 1974; Entman 1993, 2004; Scheufele and Shanahan 2002; Gross and D'Ambrosio 2004) that play a crucial role in constructing portrayals of minority groups. The presentation aims to

evaluate the extent to which media representations can serve either as instruments of radicalization or as vehicles of integration, by discouraging or fostering intersections, encounters, and participatory affiliations.

Irena **Ciobanu** (West University of Timisoara), and Daniel **Dejica-Carțiș**, (Politehnica University Timisoara), *Lexical Framing in University Marketing: A Discourse and Psycholinguistic Analysis*

This study examines the linguistic strategies employed in higher education marketing materials through a combined psycholinguistic and discourse-analytic lens. While institutional branding has been widely studied, less attention has been given to the specific lexical and rhetorical choices used to engage prospective students. Building on Kronrod's (2022) work on persuasive language in advertising, the analysis focuses on how inclusive pronouns, lexical framing, and tone contribute to constructing institutional identity and fostering a sense of connection.

The study analyses promotional texts from internationally oriented universities such as Aalto University (Finland) and Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna (Italy), with attention to lexical selection, rhetorical structure, and communicative intent. These institutions serve as case studies for identifying recurring linguistic patterns and evaluating their alignment with psycholinguistic principles, including lexical processing, framing effects, and persuasive communication.

The findings aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of how language functions within the genre of university marketing and how specific linguistic choices may influence prospective students' perceptions, attitudes, and decision-making processes.

Florentin **Crăineanu** (West University of Timisoara, Romania), Daniel **Dejica-Carțiș**, Politehnica University Timisoara, Romania), *The Role of English for Specific Purposes in Romanian Medical Education: A Case Study of Curriculum Design and Pedagogical Practice*

This study investigates the pivotal role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in medical education across Romanian universities. It contends that ESP has evolved from a supplementary skill into a core component of medical training, shaped by the globalization of healthcare, the increasing mobility of Romanian medical graduates, and the growing enrolment of international students in English-medium programs. The analysis focuses on pedagogical frameworks adopted by several Romanian institutions, emphasizing curricula that integrate medical terminology, professional communication, and academic literacy. Particular attention is given to the transition from general English instruction to a needs-based, task-oriented approach tailored to clinical settings. The study also addresses key implementation challenges, such as varying student proficiency levels and the necessity for interdisciplinary collaboration between language educators and medical faculty. It concludes by outlining strategic directions for enhancing ESP curricula to ensure that Romanian medical graduates are not only clinically proficient but also linguistically equipped for global professional engagement.

Giuseppe **De Bonis** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), *Dealing with Multilingual Cinema: Cognitive and Translational Dimensions of Diegetic Interpreting on the Silver Screen*

Multilingual cinema creates unique conditions of reception: viewers are asked to process not only multiple narrative threads but also multiple linguistic codes. This experience engages attention, memory, and emotion in ways that differ from monolingual films. Films that incorporate diegetic interpreting—where translation occurs within the film's story—or deliberately omit it foreground the cognitive challenges and opportunities of linguistic mediation on screen.

This paper explores the representation of diegetic interpreting in multilingual films (O'Sullivan 2007, 2011; De Bonis 2015, 2024), comparing it with other diegetic strategies such as contextual translation (Baldo 2009; De Bonis 2015, 2024), and with extra-diegetic devices like part-subtitling (O'Sullivan 2007, 2011), with the aim of assessing how these modes influence viewers' perception and understanding. Scenes in which a character takes on the role of interpreter for others often dramatize trust, misunderstanding, or power asymmetry, placing viewers in a position similar to that of the characters. Conversely, the absence or breakdown of mediation can be equally revealing, confronting the audience with partial comprehension and affective disorientation.

Drawing on a small yet significant sample of US and European drama films from the 1960s to the 2010s, this paper analyses how diegetic interpreting, contextual translation, part-subtitling, and their strategic absence function as devices that mediate cultural encounters, accentuate communication barriers, and shape viewers' cognitive and emotional engagement. Ultimately, these strategies prove to be not merely narrative mechanisms but crucial sites where multilingual cinema engages cognition, translation, and the audience's comprehension.

Robin **Donadio** (University of Naples "L'Orientale"), *Countering Climate Anxiety in Short-Form Digital Storytelling: Coping and Community-Action on TikTok*

This paper examines how short-form videos on TikTok, explicitly crafted to *soothe* climate anxiety, mobilize affect, community, and online activism. Rather than problem-centred crisis narratives, the corpus targets "calming" and "coping" content such as calming prompts over nature footage, gentle "you're not alone" talk-to-camera pieces, micro-action checklists, and community invitations (e.g., local clean-ups, seed swaps). The study asks:

- How do creators design multimodal bundles that down-regulate distress (lexicon, soundtrack, visuals, pacing)?
- How do these bundles scaffold belonging and translate affect regulation into online/offline activism?

A corpus of 40–60 public TikTok clips (e.g., #climateanxiety, #ecogrief, #climatehope, #ecotok, #activist) forms the dataset. Each post is analysed as a multimodal "bundle" (video + on-screen text + soundtrack/voiceover + caption/hashtags + top comments). Using the Appraisal framework, I track Affect (soothing, reassurance, resolve), Judgment (care, responsibility), and Graduation (intensity dialing).

Using Membership Categorization Analysis, I record the typical descriptions and actions linked to the main participants (self as coping subject, peer community, experts, institutions, and 'nature' as ally), so I can track how Affect (anxiety, calm, resolve), Judgment (care, responsibility), and Appreciation (usefulness of practices, qualities of places) are distributed across roles.

I analyse key visuals (framing, shot size, pace, sequencing) as cues of Graduation and Affect, then track the shift from regulation (calming moves) to invitation (collective ‘we,’ clear actions: Engagement aligned). Finally, I read top comments/replies for uptake (alignment or pushback) and how they realize Appraisal values.

Findings identify a repertoire of “calm-to-act” devices (second-person address, gentle ambient soundscapes, stepwise task visuals, communal deictics) that convert anxiety into belonging and small, trackable actions.

The paper contributes an operational codification scheme for supportive climate storytelling and practical design tools for educators, advocates, and creators.

Abderrahim **Eljazouli** (Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech), and Nouredine **Azmi** (Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech), *Laughing Across Borders: Cultural Sensitivity and Audience Reception in English-Arabic Humour Subtitling*

Translating humour is widely regarded as one of the most challenging tasks in translation, especially when coupled with Audiovisual Translation (AVT) frameworks like subtitling. This research explores the complexities involved in translating humour, with a focus on linguistic and cultural challenges, particularly in the English-Arabic language pair. Drawing from significant contributions by scholars such as Chiaro (2000, 2006, 2010), Bucaria (2007), and Martínez Sierra (2020), this study addresses the critical issues surrounding extralinguistic, culturally specific references, and language-based humour in audiovisual media. The research highlights the importance of creative solutions to these challenges, especially in sensitive areas such as sex, religion, and politics. This experimental study goes beyond the analysis of subtitling strategies by investigating the real-world reception of translated humorous subtitles. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the study examines how Arabic-speaking audiences comprehend and react to humour in sitcoms, focusing on culturally sensitive themes. Through this approach, the research aims to identify patterns in humour perception and cultural adaptation, providing insights into the effectiveness of humorous subtitles in generating laughter while maintaining cultural sensitivity. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how humour translation functions within AVT, emphasizing the practical implications of subtitling humour in cross-cultural contexts. This study seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical analysis and practical application, offering valuable perspectives on the adaptation of humour in subtitled audiovisual media and its reception by diverse audiences.

Roberto **Esposito** (University of Naples L’Orientale), *Jabs of Hate: Multimodal Cognitive Frames Around Olympic Gold-medallist Imane Khelif*

During the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, Algerian boxer Imane Khelif became embroiled in a media controversy over her gender eligibility. In her match against Italy’s Angela Carini, her opponent withdrew after less than one minute, claiming she was struck hard by Khelif. Rumours and misinformation soon spread online, suggesting Khelif was male or transgender. Sport committees’ declarations were made (IOC 2024) along with indiscriminated statements from public figures – such as J. K. Rowling, Elon Musk, and Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni – on biology and gender matters. The International Olympic Committee condemned the wave of hatred, and Algerian institutions filed

complaints for defamation and harassment (VOA 2024). Khelif herself denounced the attacks as harmful to human dignity and called for an end to online bullying.

This paper provides insights into the media commentary around Khelif, which significantly shaped public perception and response. By adopting a multimodal stylistic approach (Nørgaard 2010; 2019), the study combines methods of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001; 2021) and Cognitive Stylistics (Semino & Culpeper 2002; Hart 2024) to explore verbal and visual materials retrieved from major newspapers and main sports pages on Instagram, together with users' comments. Multimodal data – images and captions – are analysed according to categories such as narrative and conceptual processes, and framing, to understand how Khelif was presented and discussed online; on the other hand, transitivity processes and conceptual metaphors are examined in readers' comments to understand how audiences perceive and respond to mediated, often biased depictions.

Findings highlight how online hate rapidly spreads when metaphorical language merges with both real and mental images, dramatically constructing narratives of exclusion. As a cross-modal phenomenon (Balirano and Hughes 2020), hate speech occurrences in international sport contexts are crucial to analysts: while they are provided with a proper arena to investigate hateful language with regards to gender, fairness, and national identity, they are also offered avenues to challenge discriminatory cognitive scripts that target athletes competing in front of the world.

Ekaterine **Gachechiladze** (Akaki Tsereteli State University), and Meki **Lobzhanidze** (Akaki Tsereteli State University), *Linguistic-psychological Features in Media Translation*

Translating culture, humour, and emotion in media is a complex task. Media such as films, TV shows, advertisements, and social media combine words, images, and sounds. Translators must consider not only language but also cultural background, social norms, and emotional tone. This paper explores how meaning is transferred across languages and media, highlighting both linguistic and psychological dimensions.

From a linguistic perspective, culture and humour are embedded in metaphors, idioms, gestures, and narrative structures. Translators face the challenge of making these elements understandable to audiences from different cultures. Humor, for example, often depends on wordplay or cultural references that do not have a direct equivalent in another language. Emotions are also encoded in language, voice, and visual cues. Translators must preserve the intended feeling while adapting it to the target culture.

From a psychological perspective, translation is more than copying words; it involves understanding how audiences perceive, process, and respond to information. Psychology shows that meaning is shaped by attention, memory, and emotional response. Translators make choices that affect how audiences interpret characters, narratives, and feelings. Understanding cognitive and emotional processes helps translators balance fidelity to the original with accessibility and engagement for viewers.

This paper also considers how different media forms affect translation. Subtitles, dubbing, and social media posts each require different strategies. Cognitive factors, such as attention span and memory capacity, influence how audiences receive translated humour and emotion. Psychological insights help explain why certain choices succeed or fail in conveying meaning and emotion across cultures.

In conclusion, translating culture, humour, and emotion is both a linguistic and psychological task. It shapes how audiences think, feel, and connect with stories from other

cultures. Understanding this process requires attention to language, cognition, and the emotional impact of media.

Andrea **Gaggioli** (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart), *Beyond Presence: Introducing Antipresence in Media Experience*

Research on immersive media and cognition has traditionally focused on *presence*, the subjective sense of “being there” in mediated environments. Presence has been considered a desirable state, enabling immersion, engagement, and the suspension of disbelief across media forms—from narrative transportation to virtual reality. However, much less attention has been devoted to its counterpart, which I term *antipresence*. Antipresence describes the experience of distance and estrangement from what is perceived, in which individuals critically monitor the authenticity of their experience. Rather than being a mere dysfunction associated with dissociation or alienation, antipresence can play a constructive role in human cognition. It enables reflexivity, critical doubt, and the imagination of alternative realities.

This contribution proposes that media experiences are best understood as oscillations between presence and antipresence, regulated by processes of experiential monitoring. While presence allows users to immerse themselves in media environments, antipresence creates moments of distance that can foster critical awareness, creativity, and even transformative insight. Recognizing antipresence as a legitimate and functional dimension of mediated experience opens new avenues for media design. Instead of aiming exclusively at maximizing presence, designers might deliberately integrate antipresence—through techniques of disruption, self-reflexivity, or estrangement—to encourage reflection, ethical awareness, or creative exploration.

By reframing presence and antipresence as complementary modes of media experience, this contribution highlights their joint role in shaping cognition, meaning-making, and agency. This dual perspective suggests a broader ecology of consciousness in which media are not only vehicles of immersion but also catalysts for critical distance and imaginative reconfiguration of reality.

Polina **Gavin** and Marcello **Giovanelli** (Aston University, UK), *Pandemic Intervention in Art: An Ekphrastic Account of Self in Lockdown*

This paper presents a response-driven study of ekphrasis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we approach ekphrasis as a contemporary cross-media creative practice that intersects visual art and poetry. Often used as a translation of meaning from one media to another, ekphrasis combines their both means in intricate and novel ways that produce novel reflections and enhanced effects on audience. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, ekphrastic writing becomes part of the covid poetry genre, a reflective output and a creative channel for coping with the traumatic experiences of the global health crisis. As part of the overarching project *Writing and Reading the Pandemic* led by Giovanelli at Aston University (Birmingham, UK), we explore two intertwined response practices: writing of ekphrastic poetry as an act of contemporising abstract visual art and the engagement of readers with lived experiences of the pandemic with an ekphrastic composition. Through a cognitive stylistic lens, we elicit strategies of meaning transfer and narrative construction between collaborative media. Applying the concept of ekphrastic intervention, we analyse

reader-response data to uncover cognitive mechanisms behind the audience interaction with ekphrasis that narrates the impact of lockdown isolation on the experiencing self. With the findings from both strands, we show the potential of ekphrasis to elicit resonant introspective effects and reflections on one's pandemic self.

Jelena **Kirejeva** (Kaunas University of Technology), *Russian Culture as the Target of Hatred: The Case of Russia-Ukraine War*

The present research falls within the realms of cognitive linguistics, affective pragmatics and computer-mediated communication. The investigation focuses on the conceptualisation of emotional responses (the emotions of HATRED and CONTEMPT targeted at Russia and Russian culture) evoked by Russia's large-scale military actions in Ukraine. It aims at establishing the ways the emotions are instantiated in multimodal (both verbal and verbo-pictorial) computer-mediated data sample (approx. 800 posts, interviews withdrawn from Facebook) through the identification of certain monomodal and multimodal conceptual structures and linguistic means.

The method of content analysis alongside with the method of cognitive analysis and computer-mediated discourse analysis were applied in the research. The collected samples were analysed in the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor theory, Extended Conceptual Metaphor theory, the Metaphor scenario theory, as well as certain insights provided by the psychological and bioengineering studies into emotions, since in the study emotions are approached as integrated neuro-physiological-behavioral-evaluative-experiential-social phenomenon (Forceville, 2020, Kövecses, 2020, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Musolff 2006).

On the basis of the analysis carried out the following conclusions can be drawn: HATRED and CONTEMPT as the target domains are most frequently conceptualised through the BODY domain, e.g., RUSSIA IS AN ILLNESS (e.g., a quarantine has to be imposed on Russian culture), RUSSIA IS AN ILL PERSON (e.g., the country is ill with bipolar disorder), RUSSIA IS DEATH (e.g., the distorted image of Matryoshka, the symbol of fertility and motherhood intended to represent the symbol of mortality instead); the FOLKLORE, LITERATURE domains, e.g., RUSSIA IS A THREAT that has to be eliminated. The verbal and verbo-pictorial data obtained is congruent with the definitions of HATE and CONTEMPT described as a desire to eliminate the object of the emotions by humiliating, dehumanizing and even killing.

Andrea **Lombardinilo** (Rome Tre University), *Laws of the Media: Marshall McLuhan's Myth of Metaphors*

This proposal focuses on Marshall McLuhan's interpretation of metaphors as a communicative process analyzed through the normative patterns of the "tetrad" that he elaborated in reference to the historical evolution of media. In his posthumously published *Laws of Media* (1988), McLuhan intended to use a tetrad - a four-part construct - to examine the effects on society of any technology/medium. His purpose was to find a means of explaining the social processes underlying the adoption of a technology/medium, by dividing its effects into four categories and displaying them simultaneously. 1) What does

the medium enhance? 2) What does the medium make obsolete? 3) What does the medium retrieve that had been obsolesced earlier? 4) What does the medium reverse or flip into when pushed to extremes? This scheme was already explained in 1977 in an article appeared in “et cetera / ETC: A Review of General Semantics” (vol. 34, no. 2, June 1977, pp. 173-179), *Laws of the media*, in which all four laws of the media were established in relation to each other as the two figures and two grounds of metaphor, and their ratios “extend to the four irreducible relations in [all] technology”. McLuhan’s rhetorical approach to media processes implies the investigation of the relationships between expression and representation, as he remarked in *Culture without literacy* (“Explorations”, no. 1, 1953, pp. 117–127): “When we look at any situation through another situation we are using metaphor. This is an intensely intellectual process. And all language arises by this means”. The metaphor is conceived as a cognitive medium useful to probe human expressive complexity, in line with the communicative relevance that daily rhetorical solutions have upon the representative patterns of daily life. Human experience is permeated by symbolic and semantic fluctuations that actors are compelled to decrypt from a communicative perspective as well: this process has an intellectual origin stemming from the potential of bending language according to ever-changing semiotic instances. Hence follows the opportunity to investigate the tenet of metaphor as a media cognitive tool in line with McLuhan’s invention of tetrad, with the purpose of understanding of media and their rhetorical complexity.

Giulia **Magazzù** (University of Rome Tor Vergata), *Stylistic Strategies in Audiodescription: An Analysis of Netflix Productions*

This paper explores focuses on the stylistic strategies employed in the audiodescription of two Netflix productions, i.e. *The Discovery* and *The Umbrella Academy*. While subtitling and other accessibility tools have received substantial scholarly attention, audiodescription remains comparatively underexplored—particularly in relation to narrative techniques like foreshadowing. The analysis identifies two key forms of foreshadowing in audiodescription: character foreshadowing, which allows audiences to infer roles and motivations, and event foreshadowing, which signals future plot developments. These examples reveal how audiodescription must creatively adapt visual cues into verbal narration, often relying on timing, tone, and genre-specific conventions to preserve narrative coherence and emotional impact. The majority of earlier research on foreshadowing focuses on surprising or mysterious endings (Emmot and Alexander 2014, among others), especially ones that contain secret information. The analysed case examples give a solid overview of the many limitations and challenges faced by audiodescribers and demonstrate a range of strategies, some of which are employed more successfully than others. Even though the existing audiodescription rules are sufficient, further work is required to integrate the advancement of scholarly research with the realworld use of these characteristics by audiodescription providers.

Carla **Manno** (University of Naples “Parthenope”), *Unsteady Frames: Cinema, Memory, and the Reframing of Masculinity in Charlotte Wells’ Aftersun* (2022)

This paper investigates the cinematic reframing of masculinity through a multimodal and cognitive perspective, focusing on Charlotte Wells’ *Aftersun* (2022). Moving beyond the reductive binary of “toxic” versus “healthy” masculinity (Waling, 2019), I argue that the film articulates a representation of soft masculinity, foregrounding vulnerability, care, and intimacy within the father–daughter relationship. *Aftersun*’s narrative captures a liminal moment in the daughter’s passage from childhood to adolescence, tracing how relational dynamics shift across time, memory, and affective experience.

Drawing on Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen), Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson), and Affect Theory applied to cinema (Massumi; Gregg and Seigworth), I examine how multimodal ensembles—visual framing, music, gestures, colour, and narrative ellipses—mobilise spectators’ perceptual and affective engagement. Two cinematic metaphors are especially salient. First, the camcorder as a metaphor of mediated memory and perception: Callum (the father) becomes accessible to Sophie only through fragments and recordings, while the device simultaneously operates as a medium of connection, binding father and daughter in acts of sharing, looking, and remembering. The camcorder also mirrors the ways in which masculinity itself is performed, refracted, and never entirely graspable, thus underscoring the relational dimension of gender: masculinity—like any other gender identity—emerges in dialogue with others, mediated by how it is perceived, remembered, and emotionally inscribed. Second, water recurs as a metaphor for affective intensity—oscillating between intimacy, sexuality, and even discomfort—capturing both the ambivalent, shifting terrain of adolescence and masculinity.

The analysis demonstrates how cinema functions as a site of cognitive mediation, where metaphor and emotion converge to reshape collective understandings of gender and vulnerability. By foregrounding *Aftersun* as a paradigmatic case, the paper shows how contemporary film not only reflects cultural change but actively participates in the cognitive and affective reframing of masculinities.

Francesco **Meledandri**, Gaetano **Falco**, Maristella **Gatto** (University of Bari “Aldo Moro”, Italy), ‘@Grok, please explAIIn’: *How AI Assistants Are Shaping Digital Habits and Knowledge Acquisition. Are We Going too Far?*

The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered tools and solutions proved to represent a breakthrough in virtual and real-life practices, as they showed unprecedented skills in terms of reasoning as well as language and multimodal constructions. The latest paradigm is represented by Generative AI (GenAI), which creates “synthetic data that closely resemble real-world data” (Bandi et al. 2023: 1). Trained upon LLMs (Large Language Models) developed by huge stakeholders (Dao, 2023), GenAI is really closer to the idea of “rational thinking” as it generates plausible contents dealing with a plethora of topics based on human-induced prompts. At present, there are many GenAI solutions that support users in a multitude of tasks, thus re-defining a long-standing hierarchy within the field of HCI (Human-Computer Interaction) (Sharma and Shrestha, 2024). A particular case in point is represented by Grok, a powerful built-in AI assistant integrated within Twitter/X. Unlike other competitors, Grok is able to work as a standalone tool for typically featured tasks (providing answers, carrying out reasoning procedures, creating multimedia content, etc.),

but it is also a real companion that may intervene in any online discussion within Twitter/X itself. By simply tagging the account @Grok, common users ask the AI system to interpret the meaning – even interlingually or intersemiotically – of a text-only or multimodal tweet, thus positioning itself as a proper interactive user. It derives that a growing number of tweets and user-based interactions include the presence of this “digital oracle”, at times sparking new discussions and back-and-forth-interactions between *real* accounts and an entity that provides (erroneous, at times) replies in real time. This presentation aims at showing examples of the (over)use of this new form of interaction, assessing its impact in online discursive practices and questioning the consequences it may have on users’ cognitive level. Such a minimum-effort approach to (alleged) knowledge via AI assistants may have repercussions on the idea of truth, source-based information retrieval and peer communication, potentially flattening critical thinking-related abilities (Gerlich 2025; Kosmyna et al. 2025) and highlighting the importance of human cognition as a resource to care about (Singh et al. 2025).

Michaela **Quadraro** (University of Calabria), *Constructing Dystopian Futures in Media Forms: An Analysis of the Discursive Construction of Fear in Short Films*

At the core of this paper lies a crucial question: how do audiovisual productions shape the perception of fear? In particular, how can media forms depict the dehumanising effects of discrimination and social divisions? For example, the short film *Hiding in Daylight* (2019), set in the USA in a dystopian near future, portrays four gay friends who pretend to be two heterosexual couples to hide their true identities and queer relationships in a society experiencing a “post-gay purge,” where homosexuality is punishable by imprisonment. Despite the risk of large-scale raids by authorities and suspicious neighbours, the four gather weekly for what appears to be a normal dinner party, allowing them to live openly for one night and conceal themselves behind dark curtains. As the film states in the closing credits, there are several countries where consensual same-sex acts remain illegal—specifically, sixty-one according to Equaldex 2025. From a multimodal perspective, we can examine how the multiple semiotic resources align the portrayed participants with viewers, fostering emotional engagement and evoking a sense of fear about a possible future that might actually become a reality.

José Antonio **Rosado Terrero** (University of Pablo de Olavide), and Elisa **Alonso Jiménez** (University of Pablo de Olavide), *Generative AI and the Framing of Spanish Electoral News: Cognitive Perspectives on Political Fiction and their Translation*

This study explores the cognitive implications of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in the production and translation of electoral news, with a particular focus on framing effects. Drawing on a corpus of Spanish electoral news generated and translated by ChatGPT-3 (68 news items generated in Spanish and their translated English versions), the research examines how AI influence the perception of political narratives across linguistic and cultural contexts.

Framing is a central concept in political communication, shaping how audiences process, evaluate, and emotionally respond to information (Lakoff 2014). When electoral news are produced or translated by AI, subtle shifts in macro-structure, lexical choice, syntax, and cultural adaptation can amplify or attenuate particular frames, thereby influencing audience

cognition. The research applies both discourse analysis in Atlas.TI and translation quality assessment models (in this case, MQM Core error model) to identify patterns and trends in AI-news creation and translation.

The framings that AI prioritises have been identified in this study: The electoral victory of the parties is narrated in a context of a positive emotion, almost euphoric and utopian (political-fiction), with large majorities, an overwhelming citizen participation, and positive reading by political analysts regarding the electoral triumph, no matter which party was called as the winner and for which newspaper it was to be published. AI creates news items in which the framing codes linked to political actions (mostly related to economy, social policy, and sustainability) stand out. ChatGPT-3 can create news items that resemble the genre of the usual news, but are more superficial. AI tries to emulate elements such as the use of sources (authoritative voices, figures, or data) in order to give credibility to the pieces of news that it creates. However, it does not always do so accurately, due to its lack of pragmatic knowledge. This weakness becomes even more prominent in translated news which exhibit culture, terminology and style errors. The study contributes to ongoing debates about the cognitive impact of multilingual media environments and the role of AI in shaping journalistic narratives.

Agis **Sideras** (University of Heidelberg), *Methods of Deconditioning as Tools for the Development and Emancipation of the 21st Century Mind*

Deconditioning in its specific cultural sense is a term coined by the American writer William S. Burroughs (1914-1997). It refers to the conscious and purposeful challenging and changing of internalized propagandized cognitive reactions to words, broader semantic units and images. Taking its inspiration from Burroughs as well as from Guy Debord (1931-1994), my paper wants to show that certain practices of deconditioning are useful tools in shaping the emancipated mind of the 21st century, especially regarding the role of contemporary media in the development of subjectivity. The paper is divided in two main parts. Starting from a quote by Debord some 45 years ago in which average US citizens are mocked for “staring at their TV set three whole hours a day”, the first part looks back at the development of mediated visibility in everyday life from cinema and television to the reign of the audiovisual in the current digital age. The second part is longer and analyses the aims and usages of a number of deconditioning practices like, for example, textual and audiovisual cut-ups. Starting from the thesis that the “society of the spectacle” (Debord) in the latest stage of its development in the last 40-50 years has led to a form of “real-idealism” and the hypostatization of cinematic continuity, challenging widespread and often false and manipulative narratives is all the more necessary in order to form minds capable of envisioning and practicing freedom. Under the current circumstances, in which all around the whole wide web-world “screen generations” are bred that do not spend much more than three hours awake *without a screen in front of them*, scholars in cognitive science, AV and translation studies have to ask themselves, if they want to continue to mainly exploit the immense varieties of digital creation, or rather contribute to forms of cultural production that aim at the development of free, resilient and truly prosperous societies.

Eleni **Timplalexi** (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens), *Expanding the Sensorial Through Emerging Technologies: Speculations and Elaborations on Performance and Theatre*

Performance, with its multiple meanings and vast typology, has been fascinated by emerging extended reality (XR) technologies that promise even more immersion to the contemporary performing and spectating subject. As they grow on the body of the digital, these technologies reframe and rephrase performance and theatre, enriching their experience sensorially and affectively for various audiences. The contribution focuses on mapping the sensorial in theatre and performance in light of emerging technologies, while elaborating on the consequent semiotic impact. XR online and interactive-immersive performances are discussed, reaching conclusions on achievements and pitfalls in the contemplation of performances based on emerging technologies.

The established distinctions between the performing subject, tools and performance are revisited and challenged through the prism of recent evolvments in intermediality and human-computer interaction.

Sonja **Trzin Berta** (University of Innsbruck), *Unwanted Media Attention: When Interpreting Turns Out to Be a Reputational Risk*

We have all seen it on TV and online—the interpreters who have unwillingly become targets of public ridicule and social media outrage by simply doing their job, often under challenging conditions. Many such cases have occurred worldwide: the interpreter whose comment intended for the production team during Trump’s second inauguration garnered significant attention in the German media, or the moment of confusion exhibited by Meloni’s interpreter at the White House, which gained widespread attention online—to name just a few recent examples.

In these situations, media coverage often prioritizes provocative headlines and dramatic framing over factual accuracy, amplifying unwanted attention by publishing interpreters’ names, photographs, and links to personal social media profiles. Concurrently, online commentators and trolls frequently engage in incivility and sometimes disseminate hate speech within public comment sections.

This intensified negative publicity can have far-reaching consequences, impacting both individual interpreters and the reputation of the profession as a whole.

While it could be argued that working in the public eye brings such pressure for many other professionals—athletes, news presenters, politicians, and influencers—who may expect and be prepared for scrutiny, interpreters typically do not seek attention and lack training or support for reputational crises.

This case study conducts an analysis of recent cases and associated media coverage to explore the underlying factors leading to such unwanted attention. It assesses the cognitive, emotional, and professional implications for interpreters and proposes practical strategies for interpreters, clients, and professional associations to mitigate reputational damage.

By integrating perspectives from media studies, social cognition, and professional ethics, this research addresses contemporary challenges of media visibility and representation, with an emphasis on the transcultural and digital-era risks faced by interpreters.

Yvonne **Tsai** (National Taiwan University), *Gendered Cognition and Media Perception: Taiwanese Lunar New Year Traditions in Focus*

This study explores how media representations of Taiwanese Lunar New Year traditions shape cognitive engagement with gendered cultural practices. The research examines the perceptual and emotional framing of women's roles in festive rituals, highlighting how domestic labor and intergenerational responsibilities are often marginalized in global and local media portrayals. While mainstream narratives frequently emphasize unity, celebration, and cultural heritage, these depictions tend to obscure the emotional and physical labor that structures the holiday experience, particularly for women.

Through comparative media analysis, the study investigates how rituals such as returning to the natal home, preparing celebratory meals, and performing caregiving roles are represented across news platforms, promotional campaigns, and cultural commentary. The study focuses on how narrative structure and emotional tone influence attention, memory, and affective response in the audience. The gap between what is shown and what is experienced reveals a cognitive dissonance between celebratory scripts and lived realities. Additionally, the study addresses how digital storytelling enables alternative cognitive framings of the Lunar New Year. On platforms such as Facebook and Taiwanese online forums, women increasingly share first-person accounts of exhaustion, resistance, and negotiation in response to traditional expectations. These posts disrupt dominant media narratives and create new channels for affective identification and audience empathy. By circulating narratives that foreground emotional labor, such storytelling contributes to reframing collective memory and social cognition around holiday customs.

Grounded in cognitive theories of media processing, emotion, and narrative comprehension, this research demonstrates how gendered experience is mediated, intensified, or erased by media forms. The study contributes to broader conversations on cognition and the media by illustrating how cultural rituals function as sites of cognitive tension between symbolic celebration and invisible labor, inviting more critical engagement with how media shape social understanding.

Isabella **Wetson** (Aston University), *Using Cognitive Grammar and the Media to Support Pedagogical Resources*

The theory of Cognitive Grammar (CG) has been widely applied in L2 education contexts such as Kaleta (2008), Llopis-García (2010), and Kermer (2016) but less has been done in L1, with some notable exceptions including Giovanelli and Harrison (2022). Research on secondary school English teachers in the UK suggests that many teachers hold deficit views of grammar and grammar teaching, conceptualising it as being directly opposite to creativity (Watson, 2015).

In this talk, I highlight how some central concepts from Cognitive Grammar may be used to support the teaching of David Almond's 'Skellig' and how the film adaptation can enhance the teaching of these concepts in the secondary English classroom. Here, I explore how film and visual systems provide a useful touchpoint for Cognitive Grammar, and how analogies of camera movements and close-ups, for example, can be used to help demonstrate specific and schematic construal operations. Using the media as a teaching tool in this way seems particularly relevant to CG as the visual system is referenced in the original explanations of the model by Langacker's stage metaphor.

This talk concludes by discussing teacher identity and how the above serves teachers as a new and empowering way to teach grammar. Focus can be placed on fusing together awareness of linguistic forms and their sociolinguistic functions due to CG's usage-based

approach, shifting conceptualisations of grammar towards ‘craft’, ‘design’ and ‘choice’ and away from ‘rules’ and ‘constraints’ (Cushing, 2019). This is relevant to all educational jurisdictions, not just the UK.