Seminario di Linguistica permanente

GiNeStRe - Generi, Narrazioni e Strategie di Resistenza

22 luglio 2025, h. 14.30

Polo didattico, via delle Fontane 10, aula B

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"WHEN THEY FOUND OUT I WAS PASSING IT GOT UGLY"

The relationship between **social identity** and **implicature**

in exploring **transgender coming out narratives** within **videogames**

Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81302658064?pwd=wbgb9tcFFClfUYomv6a1K4hshWm3sW.1

Despite being one of the most popular forms of media, **videogames** are an underresearched text type within **linguistics**. This paper examines the language used within videogames, specifically in relation to how videogame writers index the identities of transgender characters. Utilising data from the **LGBTQ Video Game Archive** (Shaw, 2017), which documents the history of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer content in games, I identify 23 videogames which contain references to **transgender characters**.

A close qualitative reading of instances where transgender characters occur reveals two broad trends:

i) there are multiple instances where such representation is unclear and ii) transgender identities are rarely overtly indexed. Within this second trend, I specifically focus on the role of **implicature** and **inferencing** in how transgender identities are constructed. That is, how these characters implicitly "come out" to the player and the **shared knowledge** needed to understand these implicatures. I argue that such shared knowledge is influenced by the social identities and lived experiences of the interpreter, which should be considered in the degree to which meaning is considered relevant. The research presented has implications for analysing more **coming-out narratives** and creating more connections between pragmatics, language, gender, and sexuality studies, as well as videogame/media studies.

Frazer Heritage è Senior Lecturer in Linguistics presso la Manchester Metropolitan University. È autore di *Language Gender and Videogames: Using Corpora to Analyse the Representation of Gender in Fantasy Videogames* (Palgrave, 2021) e di *Incels and Ideologies: Exploring How Incels Use Language to Construct Gender and Race* (Palgrave, 2023).