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Caterina Agostini

Deciphering the Past: AI -Enhanced Reading of the Manuscripts of Galilei and Harriot

Abstract: How do we read historical manuscripts in their digital form? This paper examines the intersection of human and machine reading through a comparative analysis of in-person and AI-assisted interpretations of texts by Galileo Galilei and his English contemporary, Thomas Harriot. Drawing on case studies, it explores the use of tools such as Transkribus, GPT-4, and Amazon Web Services in teaching early modern primary sources. As students use AI tools alongside traditional reading skills to model transcription workflows, questions arise regarding iteration, validation, and scholarly responsibility. By integrating Handwritten Text Recognition technologies with close reading and paleographic analysis, the study reflects on the transformative potential— and limitations—of artificial intelligence in humanities research and pedagogy. Key Words: Galileo Galilei, Thomas Harriot, Pedagogy and Manuscript Studies, Artificial Intelligence, Handwritten Text Recognition.

Key Words: Galileo Galilei, Thomas Harriot, Pedagogy and Manuscript Studies, Artificial Intelligence, Handwritten Text Recognition.

Pablo a Marca

A New Classification of Fairy Tales Using Topic Modeling

Abstract: Fairy tales have traditionally been classified based on diverse criteria such as plot, the Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) index, functions (Propp), authorship, time period, or thematic interpretations devised by scholars. These manual categorizations, while useful, can be subject to criticism. However, classifying fairy tales can be a way of simplifying the study of this vast corpus. The article takes advantage of the emergence of AI and machine learning to present a new categorization of fairy tales by topic modeling a corpus of European classic fairy tales. Topic modeling, a statistical modeling technique that uses machine learning, identifies word co-occurrences within a corpus, organizing them into clusters or topics. The results confirm the validity of plot-based categories (the ATU index), but also the possibility to find new connections between the tales. Thus, this method offers a new classification approach, opening new research avenues.

Key Words: fairy tales, Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU), tale-type index, topic modeling, machine learning.

Cecilia Marchetti

I giardini fantastici e perduti del Ducato Estense: intelligenza artificiale e archeobotanica nell'*Inamoramento de Orlando* di Boiardo

Sinossi: Profondamente legata alla Natura, la Casa d'Este creò numerosi giardini nella Ferrara del Quattrocento, oggi scomparsi. I *loci amoeni* non solo arricchivano la città, ma permeavano anche le opere dei poeti estensi, come l'*Inamoramento de Orlando* di Boiardo. Il presente studio esplora la sinergia tra giardini reali e fantastici nell'immaginario estense, utilizzando l'AI per analizzare queste connessioni. Sono

stati adottati due approcci distinti: il primo è finalizzato all'interpretazione del testo di Boiardo attraverso le immagini generate dall'AI; il secondo ha lo scopo di ricostruire fedelmente i giardini perduti combinando dati filologici e archeobotanici. L'AI consente di approfondire il dialogo dinamico tra arte e realtà.

Parole chiave: arte generativa, Boiardo, botanica, Erbario, Ferrara, giardino, Inamoramento de Orlando, Intelligenza Artificiale, simulazione, Visibilità.

Abstract: Deeply connected to nature, the House of Este created numerous gardens in fifteenth-century Ferrara, which are now lost. These *loci amoeni* not only enriched the city but also permeated the works of Este poets, such as Boiardo in his *Inamoramento de Orlando*. This study explores the synergy between real and imaginary gardens in the Este imagination, using AI to analyze these connections. Two distinct approaches have been adopted: the first aims to interpret Boiardo's text through AI-generated images; the second seeks to faithfully reconstruct the lost gardens by combining philological and archaeobotanical data. AI makes it possible to deepen the dynamic dialogue between art and reality.

Keywords: Generative art, Boiardo, botany, Herbarium, Ferrara, garden, *Inamoramento de Orlando*, Artificial Intelligence, simulation, Visibility.

Giuliano Cenati

Il bot e il boomer: il dialogo narrativo semiartificiale *Non siamo mai stati sulla Terra*, di Rocco Tanica e Out0mat-B13

Sinossi: *Non siamo mai stati sulla Terra* (2022) rappresenta uno dei primi tentativi di collaborazione letteraria tra uno scrittore e un'intelligenza generativa della famiglia ChatGPT. L'esperimento consente di verificare risultati significativi della macchina entro il passo breve e vario del dialogo narrativo con l'autore umano, nella gestione di registri espressivi tra i più complessi da simulare creativamente, come l'ironico, l'umoristico, il *nonsensical*. Prossima alla letteratura d'intrattenimento, la scrittura "automatica" di Tanica, diversamente da tanta letteratura elettronica di indole avanguardistica o sperimentale, si sposa con modalità di comunicazione letteraria accessibili a un pubblico ampio. Cimento formale e cordialità espressiva una volta tanto procedono all'unisono.

Parole chiave: narrazione AI, generi letterari, umorismo, scrittura automatica, relazione autore-pubblico.

Abstract: *We Have Never Been on Earth* (2022) represents one of the first attempts at literary collaboration between a writer and generative intelligence from the ChatGPT family. The experiment makes it possible to observe significant results achieved by the machine within the short and varied rhythm of narrative dialogue with the human author, particularly in managing expressive registers among the most complex to simulate creatively, such as the ironic, the humorous, and the nonsensical. Closer to popular literature, Tanica's "automatic" writing—unlike much electronic literature of avant-garde or experimental inclination—aligns with forms of literary communication accessible to a wide audience. For once, formal challenge and expressive warmth proceed in unison.

Key Words: AI narrative, literary genres, humor, automatic writing, author–audience relationship.

Annali d'Italianistica

Giovanni Miglianti

If This Is an Author: Sci-Fi and AI in the Literature Classroom

Abstract: This article presents a pedagogical experiment conducted within the first-year seminar "If This Is an Author: Primo Levi and the Politics of Authorship" at Wesleyan University in the fall of 2023 and 2024. Part of a unit on science fiction and artificial intelligence, the experiment used Primo Levi's playlet "Il Versificatore" ("The Versifier"), centered on a verse-writing machine, as a springboard to discuss contemporary notions of authorship, reception, and appropriation. By integrating the use of ChatGPT in the classroom, the experiment aimed at exploring the potentialities and limits of generative AI, as well as to raise questions about the evolving nature of authorship in the digital ecosystem. The article provides a description of these activities and draws on AI-generated texts and students' comments to provide a model for merging theoretical exploration and practical application of generative AI in a literature classroom.

Key Words: artificial intelligence, authorship, ChatGPT, critical thinking, generative AI, literacy pedagogy, Primo Levi, Versificatore, Versifier, writing pedagogy.

Ruoci Song

"Segni de l'antica fiamma": Mapping Intertextuality between Virgil and Dante in the *Divine Comedy*

Abstract: This study examines the intertextual relationships between Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* and the works of Virgil, integrating classical literary analysis with advanced computational methods. To overcome current challenges in cross-language intertextuality calculation, I selected and digitized Giovanni da Serravalle's Latin translation of the *Divine Comedy*, making the intertextuality between Virgil and Dante computationally analyzable. By replicating and enhancing the Tesserae platform, we developed a custom program that calculates intertextuality scores using cosine similarity. This innovation allowed us to detect intertextual connections even when wording differs but semantic content is similar. Analyzing each canto against Virgil's works, we generated an intertextuality map visualizing the density and distribution of Virgilian influence throughout the epic. Our findings reveal patterns of literary borrowing and transformation, demonstrating the potential of computational techniques to enrich understanding of classical texts and suggesting pathways for future research in cross-language intertextuality detection. Additionally, we propose developing a web-based platform to visually present our intertextuality results, providing a resource for other scholars.

Key Words: Dante Alighieri, Virgil, Divine Comedy, intertextuality, digital humanities, computational text analysis, n-gram, cosine similarity.

Pietro Mazzarisi

A Diegetic-Mimetic Axis Analysis of Author's Agency and Exclusive Language in Literature

Abstract: The goal of this article is to illustrate the potential of Diegetic-Mimetic Axis Analysis (DMA) in critically examining the relationship between exclusive language and authorial agency in literary texts. DMA is a methodological-theoretical approach for Distant Reading that is based on the theoretical

distinction between diegesis and mimesis and in the employment of differential analysis. The software employed here is Voyant Tools and the corpus under investigation and application of the new methodology is composed of all the texts that are known as *Le indagini del commissario Montalbano*, one of the most famous literary serials of recent decades in Italy.

Key Words: Distant Reading, author's agency, exclusive language, literature, diegesis, mimesis.

Iuri Moscardi

Twitteratura: ridefinizione di autore e lettore nell'ambito della lettura digitale

Sinossi: Il saggio analizza due progetti di Digital Social Reading, svoltisi nel 2012- 13 su Twitter seguendo il cosiddetto metodo *twitteratura* dell'Associazione Culturale TwLetteratura, che hanno creato comunità di utenti dedicati al commento social di testi letterari. I loro tweets sono l'attualizzazione di pratiche antiche come i *marginalia* e permettono di studiare alcuni dei cambiamenti che le figure e i processi di autore e lettore subiscono all'interno del contemporaneo ecosistema digitale. Gli utenti chiamati a commentare i testi sono allo stesso tempo sia lettori che a loro volta autori di micro-testi, ovvero tweets, che—sebbene privi dell'autonomia del testo letterario— vengono tuttavia pubblicati per essere letti dal pubblico di Twitter. Tramite la piattaforma Tweetbook, molti utenti hanno poi raccolto tweets propri e altrui in libri digitali, fatto che ne enfatizza il ruolo di autori. L'analisi quantitativa e qualitativa di tali tweets rivela come questi siano la dimostrazione pratica della teoria della ricezione del testo elaborata da Wolfgang Iser, in base alla quale la costruzione del senso di un testo letterario avviene solamente durante la fase della lettura, attuata dunque da ogni singolo lettore, chiamato a riempite le lacune contenute nel testo di partenza.

Parole chiave: Teoria della ricezione, twitteratura, Twitter, Cesare Pavese, Pier Paolo Pasolini, letteratura italiana contemporanea, Wolfgang Iser, Digital Social Reading.

Abstract: The essay analyzes two Digital Social Reading projects carried out in 2012–13 on Twitter, following the so-called *twitteratura* method of the cultural association TwLetteratura. These projects created communities of users dedicated to the social commentary of literary texts. Their tweets represent a modern actualization of ancient practices such as *marginalia* and allow for the study of some of the changes that the figures and processes of author and reader undergo within the contemporary digital ecosystem. The users invited to comment on the texts are at once both readers and, in turn, authors of micro-texts—namely, tweets—which, although lacking the autonomy of a literary text, are nonetheless published to be read by the Twitter audience. Through the Tweetbook platform, many users later collected their own and others' tweets into digital books, further emphasizing their role as authors. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of these tweets reveals that they serve as a practical demonstration of Wolfgang Iser's theory of textual reception, according to which the construction of a literary text's meaning occurs only during the act of reading—carried out by each individual reader—who is called upon to fill in the gaps contained in the original text.

Key Words: Reception theory, *twitterature*, Twitter, Cesare Pavese, Pier Paolo Pasolini, contemporary Italian literature, Wolfgang Iser, Digital Social Reading.

Annali d'Italianistica

Gilda Policastro

The Development of I/O Techniques in Literature: From Nanni Balestrini's Autocoder to K. Silem Mohammad's Flarf and the Advent of Chatbot Poetics

Abstract: In the new millennium, the concept of authorship in poetry undergoes significant transformations due to the pervasive influence of information technology and new media. These widely accessible tools challenge traditional notions of authorial intention and individual creativity among both creators and consumers. In Italian poetry, Nanni Balestrini's *Tape Mark I* (1961), a text programmed—rather than "written"—by the poet in collaboration with IBM engineers, serves as a key precedent. Utilizing the Autocoder system, Balestrini generated a text through the machine's algorithmic aggregation of strings that defied conventional inspiration and authorial control rooted in Romantic poetics. Contemporary practices see authorship evolving into an "event-based" concept, defined by the discovery and manipulation of language within the vast, undifferentiated internet. This shift aligns with the principles of *googlism*, as theorized by K. Silem Mohammad, where authorship intertwines with digital indexing, searching, and postproduction. This is how collective authorship gives rise to an ego that chooses, orders, and therefore composes, albeit replacing inspiration with search or found.

Key Words: machine, procedure, poetry, neural networks, googlism, creativity, subjectivity, bot training.

Daniel Raffini

Intelligenza artificiale e scrittura letteraria: lo spettro dell'autore e le nuove forme dell'autorialità

Sinossi: Il contributo analizza l 'utilizzo dell'intelligenza artificiale generativa nella scrittura letteraria, con particolare attenzione alla ridefinizione del concetto di autorialità. Dopo aver ripercorso l'evoluzione storica dei sistemi di generazione automatica di testo, dai primi modelli a regole fino agli attuali *Large Language Models*, il saggio esplora le modalità di impiego dell'IA nella creazione di opere letterarie e i diversi gradi di interazione tra essere umano e macchina. Viene distinta la nozione di autore da quella di autorialità, privilegiando quest'ultima per lo studio dei testi generati con IA. Attraverso l'analisi di casi studio come "The Day a Computer Writes a Novel", *1 the Road e Non siamo mai stati sulla Terra*, si evidenziano le molteplici forme di autorialità emergenti, che spaziano dall'autorialità combinatoria e regolatoria fino a modalità co-autoriali e dialogiche. Il saggio indaga inoltre, da un punto di vista narratologico, la costruzione linguistica della soggettività fittizia nei testi in cui i sistemi di IA assumono la parola in prima persona. L'analisi congiunta dei processi di generazione, delle dinamiche di interazione e dell'istanza autoriale permette infine di delineare la complessità dell'autorialità nei testi letterari prodotti tramite IA.

Parole chiave: autorialità, letteratura, intelligenza artificiale, creatività.

Abstract: The essay analyzes the use of generative artificial intelligence in literary writing, with particular attention to the redefinition of the concept of authorship. After tracing the historical evolution of automatic text generation systems—from the first rule-based models to today's *Large Language Models*—the study explores the ways in which AI is employed in the creation of literary works and the various degrees of interaction between human and machine. A distinction is drawn between the notion of *author* and that of *authorship*, with the latter being favored for the study of AI-generated texts. Through the analysis of case

studies such as *The Day a Computer Writes a Novel*, *1 the Road*, and *We Have Never Been on Earth*, the essay highlights the multiple emerging forms of authorship, ranging from combinatory and regulatory authorship to co-authorial and dialogic modes. From a narratological perspective, the essay also examines the linguistic construction of fictional subjectivity in texts where AI systems speak in the first person. The combined analysis of generation processes, interaction dynamics, and the authorial instance ultimately makes it possible to outline the complexity of authorship in literary texts produced through AI.

Key Words: Authorship, literature, artificial intelligence, creativity.

Lucia Giagnolini

Riflessi digitali: indagine sugli archivi d'autore contemporanei

Sinossi: L'evoluzione digitale ha trasformato le pratiche di scrittura e archiviazione, ponendo nuove sfide per la conservazione del patrimonio letterario. Attraverso l'analisi di cinquanta interviste a finalisti dei premi Strega e Campiello degli ultimi trent'anni, questo studio indaga la gestione autoriale dei materiali digitali e le relative implicazioni archivistiche. L'indagine evidenzia la centralità del digitale nel processo creativo e un panorama archivistico eterogeneo: mentre alcuni autori adottano strategie strutturate, altri ricorrono a pratiche occasionali, aumentando il rischio di dispersione documentaria. La ridondanza informativa e lo sconfinamento degli archivi verso siti web e social media complica ulteriormente il quadro. Nonostante una diffusa percezione della fragilità del digitale, solo pochi adottano strategie pianificate per la trasmissione del patrimonio documentale. In questo contesto, è fondamentale che le istituzioni culturali promuovano un dialogo continuo tra autori, eredi e archivi, ma soprattutto che adottino approcci integrati, capaci di coniugare preservazione, accessibilità e comprensione dei contesti digitali.

Parole chiave: archivi nativi digitali, digitale d'autore, conservazione digitale, archivi d'autore, archivistica.

Abstract: The digital evolution has transformed writing and archiving practices, presenting new challenges for the preservation of literary heritage. Through the analysis of fifty interviews with finalists of the Strega and Campiello Prizes from the past thirty years, this study investigates how authors manage digital materials and the related archival implications. The research highlights the centrality of digital tools in the creative process and reveals a heterogeneous archival landscape: while some authors adopt structured strategies, others rely on occasional practices, increasing the risk of documentary loss. Informational redundancy and the expansion of archives into websites and social media further complicate the picture. Despite a widespread awareness of the fragility of digital media, only a few authors adopt planned strategies for transmitting their documentary heritage. In this context, it is essential that cultural institutions promote continuous dialogue among authors, heirs, and archives—and, above all, that they adopt integrated approaches capable of combining preservation, accessibility, and an understanding of digital contexts.

Key Words: Born-digital archives, author's digital materials, digital preservation, author archives, archival studies.

Annali d'Italianistica

Emmanuela Carbé and Mariangela Giglio

Filologia forense e digitale d'autore, con un esempio sul caso Fortini

Sinossi: Il contributo propone una riflessione sull'applicazione di tecniche di informatica forense alla filologia d'autore, con degli esempi provenienti dall'archivio digitale di Franco Fortini, primo caso italiano trattato con questi metodi. L'indagine si inserisce in una più ampia disamina degli archivi ibridi di scrittori contemporanei, in cui convivono materiali cartacei e digitali, e si misura con la complessità derivante dall'assenza dell'hardware originale e dalla trasmissione non lineare dei documenti, pervenuti nel caso di Fortini grazie a tre gruppi distinti di backup del suo ultimo computer. L'articolo documenta il lavoro di ricostruzione filologica e forense condotto a partire da 115 floppy disk, basato su tecniche di *clustering*, analisi dei metadati, lettura esadecimale e ricostruzione tramite emulatori, al fine di restituire la genealogia dei documenti digitali e delineare una cronologia plausibile delle loro modifiche, contribuendo a quella che Thorsten Ries ha definito *hard drive philology*.

Parole chiave: archivi d'autore nati digitalmente, archivi ibridi, Franco Fortini, filologia digitale, informatica forense.

Abstract: This contribution offers a reflection on the application of forensic computing techniques to authorial philology, with examples drawn from the digital archive of Franco Fortini—the first Italian case to be examined using these methods. The study is part of a broader analysis of contemporary writers' hybrid archives, where paper and digital materials coexist, and it grapples with the complexity arising from the absence of the original hardware and the non-linear transmission of documents, which in Fortini's case have survived thanks to three distinct backup sets from his last computer. The article documents the philological and forensic reconstruction work carried out on 115 floppy disks, based on clustering techniques, metadata analysis, hexadecimal reading, and reconstruction through emulators, in order to restore the genealogy of the digital documents and outline a plausible chronology of their revisions—thus contributing to what Thorsten Ries has termed *hard drive philology*.

Key Words: born-digital author archives, hybrid archives, Franco Fortini, digital philology, forensic computing.

Carmen Ragusa

Gli esordi della videoscrittura letteraria in Italia: una prima analisi della produzione di Luciano De Crescenzo

Sinossi: Il presente contributo ipotizza che *Storia della filosofia greca. I presocratici* di De Crescenzo (Mondadori, maggio 1983) sia stato il primo testo italiano scritto al computer a essere pubblicato. Inoltre, con l'obiettivo di valutare specifici tratti stilistici indotti o determinati dall'utilizzo di sistemi di videoscrittura, l'articolo espone i risultati di una prima analisi stilometrica e quantitativa realizzata attraverso un confronto tra le prefazioni di *Così parlò Bellavista. Napoli, amore e libertà*, opera di De Crescenzo scritta in maniera tradizionale, e *Storia della filosofia Greca. I presocratici*, composta ricorrendo ai mezzi digitali. Parole chiave: videoscrittura, Luciano De Crescenzo, filosofia, informatica, granularità.

Parole chiave: videoscrittura, Luciano De Crescenzo, filosofia, informatica, granularità.

Abstract: This contribution proposes that *Storia della filosofia greca. I presocratici* by De Crescenzo (Mondadori, May 1983) was the first Italian text written on a computer to be published. Furthermore, with the aim of evaluating specific stylistic features influenced or determined by the use of word processing systems, the article presents the results of an initial stylometric and quantitative analysis based on a comparison between the prefaces of *Così parlò Bellavista. Napoli, amore e libertà*—a work by De Crescenzo written in the traditional manner—and *Storia della filosofia greca. I presocratici*, composed using digital tools.

Key Words: word processing, Luciano De Crescenzo, philosophy, computer science, granularity.

Alessandro Puglisi

Insegnanti d'italiano L2/LS e ChatGPT: usi, credenze, atteggiamenti

Sinossi: L'intelligenza artificiale generativa, come significativo avanzamento tecnologico, mostra potenzialità di grande innovazione anche nel campo dell'insegnamento delle lingue. Oltre a verificare le possibili applicazioni concrete di sistemi come i Large Language Models, è opportuno approfondire gli atteggiamenti e le convinzioni maturate dagli insegnanti nei confronti degli strumenti che esemplificano questa declinazione dell'intelligenza artificiale. Il contributo si propone di approfondire il rapporto tra insegnanti e intelligenza artificiale generativa, con particolare riferimento a ChatGPT, adottando il punto di vista della Language Teacher Cognition. Attraverso la diffusione di un questionario composto da 21 domande a risposta chiusa, lo studio fa luce su utilizzi, atteggiamenti e preoccupazioni degli insegnanti, mostrando da un lato una discreta conoscenza di concetti come *intelligenza artificiale*, ma d'altro canto uno scarso tasso di adozione di ChatGPT nella didattica, unito a significative preoccupazioni circa l'affidabilità, i *bias* e i possibili usi non etici dell'intelligenza artificiale generativa.

Parole chiave: insegnamento, apprendimento, italiano L2/LS, ChatGPT, language teacher cognition.

Abstract: Generative artificial intelligence, as a significant technological advancement, shows great potential for innovation in the field of language teaching. Beyond examining the possible practical applications of systems such as Large Language Models, it is important to explore the attitudes and beliefs that teachers have developed toward tools representing this branch of artificial intelligence. This contribution aims to deepen the understanding of the relationship between teachers and generative artificial intelligence, with particular reference to ChatGPT, adopting the perspective of *Language Teacher Cognition*. Through the administration of a questionnaire consisting of 21 closed-ended questions, the study sheds light on teachers' uses, attitudes, and concerns—revealing, on the one hand, a fair understanding of concepts such as artificial intelligence, but, on the other hand, a low rate of ChatGPT adoption in teaching, coupled with significant concerns regarding the reliability, bias, and potential unethical uses of generative AI.

Key Words: teaching, learning, Italian as L2/FL, ChatGPT, language teacher cognition.

Annali d'Italianistica

Stefano Maranzana and Sandra Descourtis

Using AI-Generated Audio and Dialogues to Improve Italian Listening Comprehension

Abstract: Listening comprehension plays an essential role in Italian language acquisition, yet learners often lack adequate listening practice. This article explores the use of generative AI to create personalized Italian listening activities. Specifically, it examines integrating large language models like ChatGPT with text-to-speech technology to generate customized Italian dialogues, comprehension questions, and audio files. As Gayed et al. and Godwin-Jones have shown, AI writing assistants significantly improve learners' language abilities. AI audio generation technologies allow control over speech speed, accent, and complexity to target different proficiency levels. Thus, AI tools can provide Italian listening practice with diverse, authenticsounding voices. This contribution shows how AI can be leveraged to create customized listening activities in Italian that match individual learners' needs and goals, engage students, enrich their learning experience, and advance their Italian language proficiency.

Key Words: AI in language learning, Text-To-Speech for Italian listening comprehension, Italian listening practice, Italian as a foreign language, ChatGPT for Italian instruction, customized listening activities.

Aria Zan Cabot

"Sono qui per aiutarti!" Practical Applications of Generative AI in Novice, Intermediate, and Adv anced Italian Language Courses

Abstract: This paper provides practical examples of how ChatGPT can be incorporated into classroom activities and homework assignments for students of Italian with various proficiency targets and across all three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational). First, for novice learners, ChatGPT can be used for targeted vocabulary practice and to generate interpretive reading assignments for in-class activities or independent work outside of class. Second, ChatGPT can be used at the intermediate level for these same tasks, and also for synchronous interpersonal communication to help students prepare for spoken conversations with native speakers. Finally, ChatGPT is an excellent tool for building presentational writing skills in advanced courses, serving as an aid for improving student writing rather than a substitute for creating their own work. For each of these examples, concrete examples of AI-generated activities are provided.

Key Words: Artificial Intelligence (AI), EdTech, adaptive learning, personalized learning, language proficiency, ChatGPT, chatbots, language learning.

Annali d'Italianistica

Ryan Calabretta-Sajder and Claudia Devich

Teaching Italian through Virtual Reality and Digital Games: From Preparing Bucatini to Shopping at the Prati Market

Abstract: In this piece, we present theoretical and practical information used to incorporate Virtual Reality technology into the Italian curriculum at the University of Arkansas. We briefly discuss the "how" and "why" of Virtual Reality (VR) in the Italian program, demonstrating how VR permeates the language curriculum through a series of connected, task-based learning modules that incorporate authentic materials (places, spaces, language, and culture). We also analyze its successful integration, utilizing linguistic and cultural evidence (quantitative results), and explore the effect on students' learning and motivation (qualitative results). This contribution concludes with advice on how to adopt VR in a language curriculum. In addition, the advantages and disadvantages, including challenges concerning the adoption of VR will also be addressed. We will also share how VR can be used to address diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. In the end, student pre- and post-surveys and future directions for the project will be highlighted. We conclude that students learn as much, if not more, through the Virtual Reality setting and, afterwards, are also highly motivated to continue studying Italian on-campus and abroad.

Key Words: task-based learning, game-based learning, Virtual Reality, Italian vocabulary, Italian grammar, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).