

**Sorceresses and witchers:
The representation of gender in *The Witcher* videogame series**

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Mass-media, such as videogames, can reinforce social expectations of gender and sexuality. To date, there is a growing body of research which examines the discourses of videogames (see for example, Ensslin 2012). However, the majority of linguistic studies examine the discourses surrounding videogames, such as in online fora (for example, Ensslin 2012; Potts 2015). I take a different approach and examine videogames as a text in their own right. In this paper, the videogame series *The Witcher* (Projekt Red 2007-2015) is taken as a case study for lexicogrammatical analysis via corpus methods. I start by examining gendered characters who occur as keywords. The shared collocates of these characters are examined and cross-referenced with visual representations. I argue that the female characters are typically represented as physically weak but intelligent. When discussing strength, women are referred to as emotionally strong, while men are seen as physically strong. Male characters typically occupy positions of physical and economic power, while female characters are subject to the glass ceiling effect. I also use corpus-assisted approaches to analyse the agency of women within the series (similar to the work of Hunt, 2015). The findings reveal that women typically occupy the patent position of transitive verb constructions, especially in constructions about sexual intercourse. I argue that this contributes to a negative representation of women.

References

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