

Theory and Practice in Language Studies

ISSN 1799-2591

Volume 15, Number 12, December 2025

Contents

REGULAR PAPERS

Language Advocacy – From the Mindset to the Skills Set <i>Kathleen Stein Smith</i>	3817
Understanding Teacher Challenges in Online ESL/EFL Instruction: A TPACK-Based Analysis <i>Altijana Skopljak</i>	3824
Leveraging Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing for Emotional and Thematic Analysis in Three Selected Contemporary English Novels <i>Shaimaa Mohamed Hassanin, Eman Mohammed Al Bayomy, and Marwa Aly Eleleidy</i>	3833
Folk Motifs in Poetic Language of Ilyas Zhansugurov and Their Interpretation in Modern Times <i>Shara Kyyakhmetova, Mamilya Jakypbekova, Muratbek Imangazinov, Gulim Shukenay, and Aina Abyzova</i>	3841
Poetry Criticism Through the Lens of Artificial Intelligence and Its Ilk: Touted Perfection Marred by Indeterminacy <i>Mounir Ben Zid</i>	3854
Multimedia Communication and the Structuring of Migration Decisions: A Comparative Study of Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Malaysia in the Context of Regional Labor Cooperation <i>Cu Ngoc Dang</i>	3864
Exploring Thai Cuisine Through Language: Ingredients and Global Perceptions <i>Piyada Low, Piyada Ukachoke, and Pohnlerd Chujoh</i>	3877
Naming of Homestays in Public Spaces of Borobudur Temple Tourism Area as a Representation of Identity and Culture: A Linguistic Landscape Study <i>Dwi Atmawati, Ade Mulyanah, Sariah, Rini Widiastuti, Prima Hariyanto, Tri Wahyuni, Resti Nurfaidah, Emma Maemunah, Imelda, Ricky Aptifive Manik, Royan Nur Fahmi, and Arif Izzak</i>	3889
Sillinity as Survival: Humor and the Modern Refugee Condition in Three Narratives <i>Bayan ALammouri, Sukayna Ali, and Hanan Al-Jabri</i>	3901
Fragmented Voices and Sonic Resistance: Trauma, Memory, and the Politics of Healing in Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> <i>Srividya Lakshmi K, Priyadarshini M.C, Karthik Kumar S, and K. Gobalakrishnan</i>	3910
Culinary Spaces for Subaltern Sites of Resistance: A Subaltern Studies Reading of <i>Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada</i> by Shahu Patole <i>Ng Miew Luan, Megala Rajendran, Subhash Y. Kamalkar, J. Sathish Kumar, Tan Tiam Lai, Keerthana R, Parthasarathy S, and Prakash A</i>	3920
Translating Contract Law Terminology in the <i>Civil Code of the P.R.C.</i> : A Corpus-Based Analysis <i>Jing Duan and Lin Sun</i>	3930
-

Bilingual Communication Dynamics in Saudi Colleges: Non-Arab Speakers' Perceptions <i>Mazeegha Al-Tale and Tanzina Halim</i>	3939
Designing Graded Grammar Modules for Autonomous Language Learning <i>I Made Rai Jaya Widanta, Anak Agung Raka Sitawati, Sri Hardiningsih H.S., Putu Dyah Hudiananingsih, Ni Putu Somawati, I Made Darma Sucipta, Ni Nyoman Ayu Tri Hidayanti, Luh Nyoman Chandra Handayani, I Nyoman Sukra, and I Wayan Dana Ardika</i>	3947
Sacred Ecoscapes: Ethics of Ecology From the Ramayana <i>Ishwaria Prabhakaran and Soumen Mukherjee</i>	3958
Displacement, Alienation, and Intergenerational Conflicts in Arab Diasporic Literature <i>Baraah I. AlGharaibeh</i>	3967
Clause Structure and Topicalization in Nias Language: A Typological Analysis <i>Ida Basaria and Dardanila Dardanila</i>	3974
Exploring the Factors Influencing Novice Saudi EFL Teachers' Implementation of Educational Action Research as a Professional Development Tool <i>Musa A. Alghamdi</i>	3984
An Optimality-Theoretic Account of Superheavy Syllables in Urban Irbid Dialect <i>Bilal Alsharif, Razan Khasawneh, and Rula Abu-Elrob</i>	3995
The Influence of Social Norms and Etiquette on the Behavior and Decision-Making of Characters in Jane Austen's <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> <i>Brezky Simare Mare, Burhanuddin Arafah, Herawaty Abbas, Winnie Alisa Rano, Ummul Hayat Almahdali, Catleya Karenina Wicaksono, Ririn Arnita Sari, and Nurroidah Fadhillah Malik</i>	4006
A BLEU-Based Evaluation of ChatGPT's Chinese-to-English Translation <i>Linli He and Mozghan Ghassemiazghandi</i>	4017
Language and Terrorism: A Pragmatic and Semiotic Analysis of the Girls' Transformation in <i>Four Daughters</i> (2023) <i>Fuad Khasawneh, Qasem Abdelkarim Shukran, Abdullah Hussein Obeidat, Mahmoud Nayel Taani, Amer Fathi AL-gharaibeh, BILAL Mohammad Aldiabat, and Mowafaq Alsaggar</i>	4027
Semantic Extension of HEAD in Korean and Thai: A Contrastive Perspective <i>Seongha Rhee, Aphiwit Liang-Itsara, and Kultida Khammee</i>	4036
Memoir as Resistance: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Patrisse Khan-Cullors' <i>When They Call You a Terrorist</i> <i>Aishwarya Mary Thomas and Mohamed Sahul Hameed M. A</i>	4047
English Subtitling Strategies for Mythological Names and Titles in Beijing Opera Film: A Case Study of <i>Havoc in Heaven</i> <i>Yang Qiuling, Syed Nurulakla bin Syed Abdullah, Pabiyah HajiMaming @ Pabiyah Toklubok, and Yi Liu</i>	4056
Minority Language Maintenance: A Case Study of Mandaran Language in Kampung Mandar Village, Banyuwangi <i>Agus Sariono, Bambang Wibisono, Hairus Salikin, Akhmad Haryono, and Muta'allim</i>	4067
AI Tools and Saudi University English Translation Students: A Mixed-Methods Study Based on TAM <i>Muneer H. Alqahtani and Arif A. Al-Ahdal</i>	4077
The Kindness of Nature in Aboulela's <i>The Kindness of Enemies</i> : An Ecocritical Reading <i>Majd M. Alkayid, Raed A. Alqassas, Murad Al Kayed, Mais N. Al-Shara'h, and Malik N. Alkhawaldeh</i>	4087

Discursive-Integrative Politeness Meanings in Digital Spaces: A Third-Wave Pragmatic Analysis of Face-Threatening Acts in Online Communication <i>R.Kunjana Rahardi, Yuliana Setyaningsih, Roni Sulistiyono, and Seli Tria Febriani</i>	4096
Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills: The Impact of Improv Cards in Role-Playing Technique <i>Rabaa Said Mohamed Aljingawi, Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh, and Wedad A Abdelgawad Abdella</i>	4108
The Correlation Between the Use of AI Translation Tools in Foreign Language Learning and the Positive Performance of Foreign Language Students <i>Nabil Al-Awawdeh, Mahmud Mohammad Kaddum, Dorine Nasr, Nermine Merhye, and Maria Nasr</i>	4117
The Reflection of the Local Cultural Value of Javanese Literature in an Ethno-Pedagogy Context <i>Octo Dendy Andriyanto, Darni, Heny Subandiyah, Sukarman, Yohan Susilo, Latif Nur Hasan, Meilita Hardika, Bahar, and Pensri Panich</i>	4127
Navigating and Surpassing the Survival Works: The Relationship Between Occupations and Identity Construction in Hijra Life Writings <i>Sakthi Brinda D and Gayathri N</i>	4134
The Puzzle of Words: Discovering Semantic Change in Malay–Sanskrit Loanwords Shared With Thai <i>Kowit Pimpuang</i>	4143
Medical Students' Perceptions of the Value of Communication Skills and Their Attitudes Towards Learning Soft Skills <i>Habibullah Pathan, Muhammad Arif Soomro, Oksana Ivanovna Aleksandrova, and Shazia Ayyaz</i>	4154
Linguo-Conceptual and Linguocultural Analysis of the Concept "Memory": Semantic Typology of Kazakh-Russian-English Phraseology <i>Altyn Bakytzhanova, Saltanat B. Bekmukhambetova, Elmira K. Utemissova, Syrym Zhanzhigitov, Aigul Y. Alpysbayeva, Gulmira S. Omarbayeva, and Svetlana S. Tatiyeva</i>	4162

Language Advocacy – From the Mindset to the Skills Set

Kathleen Stein Smith

Fairleigh Dickinson University, Metropolitan Campus, Teaneck, NJ, USA

Abstract—Language skills and cultural knowledge are essential in the globalized world, and more than half of Americans surveyed indicated that they regretted not having done more language study while in school, yet not every US student has the opportunity to learn an additional language. Languages face serious challenges in the US. Relatively few US students learn an additional language, and many students do not have the opportunity to learn a world or heritage language, despite the current and growing importance of language skills in the workplace and the job market. However, rather than dwelling on the challenges – serious though they may be – it is important to focus on how we can address these challenges, and even turn them into opportunities for educators, learners, and language stakeholders, supporters, and enthusiasts.

Index Terms—language advocacy, language learning, language use, language deficit

I. INTRODUCTION

Language skills and cultural knowledge are essential in the globalized world, and more than half of Americans surveyed indicated that they regretted not having done more language study while in school, yet not every US student has the opportunity to learn an additional language (LCF, 2025; AMACAD, 2017; AMACAD, 2020; AMACAD, n.d). In addition, language programs in the US are threatened with cutbacks, and even elimination – with West Virginia University among the most widely discussed examples (Pettit, 2023). Despite the global attention focused on Paris during the 2024 Olympics, French enrollment has declined in the US in recent years, and French programs are among language programs and many others considered for cutbacks and even elimination (MLA, 2023).

Languages face serious challenges in the US. Relatively few US students learn an additional language, and many students do not have the opportunity to learn a world or heritage language, despite the current and growing importance of language skills in the workplace and the job market (AMACAD, 2017; NAE, 2017; ACTFL, 2019). However, rather than dwelling on the challenges – serious though they may be – it is important to focus on how we can address these challenges, and even turn them into opportunities for educators, learners, and language stakeholders, supporters, and enthusiasts. Challenges include both the history of language loss in the US and a perceived reluctance among Americans to learn additional languages. Opportunities include both the globalized and interconnected world, and the increased need for global citizenship, along with the technologies that enhance access to authentic language for all. Language advocacy can play a role both in defending programs that may be in danger or at risk, and in supporting language learning and use in our schools and communities.

In response to these challenges, language advocacy is needed. In order to develop effective language advocacy initiatives, it is necessary not only to recognize the role and importance of advocacy in encouraging the learning and use of additional languages, in supporting both existing language programs and the development and implementation of new language programs at all levels, including immersion programs, but to also have the mindset and skills needed for effective advocacy.

In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to be aware of the importance of language advocacy, to understand its role and nature, to recognize that language advocacy comprises both a mindset and a skills set, and to include both in the conversation on advocacy and in training and mentoring of current and future language advocates.

II. THE ROLE AND NATURE OF LANGUAGE ADVOCACY

Facing the challenges of limited access and opportunity to learn a language, along with declines in enrollment and elimination of language programs, especially at the college and university level, advocacy is needed more than ever. (*this is being repeated*) The good news is that language educators and their professional associations work in their classrooms, institutions, and communities to encourage language learning and to defend programs that are at risk or in danger. In the US, organizations at the national, regional, and state levels have developed and implemented ongoing advocacy initiatives.

Advocacy has been defined as “persuading people who matter to care about your issue.” This a broad concept, including strategies and methods encompassing geographic areas of varying size, as well as collaborations along with individual efforts. It also includes online and in-person advocacy, as well as advocacy through research, writing, and professional engagement. Important aspects of advocacy include “getting listened to, being at the table, and being heard, as well as

speaking and writing in compelling ways.” As advocacy means “overcoming obstacles,” moving from the broad concept of persuasion to the action steps mentioned is a process requiring active engagement and commitment, and enhanced by a wide range of skills and mindsets (Daly, 2011). (So what do you propose, the stakeholders do beyond what is already in place??) Advocates need to work to ensure that the mindset and skills of advocacy are better known and that potential advocates realize that advocacy is for everyone.

A. “Everyday” and “Emergency” Advocacy

Within the framework of advocacy, it is important to bear in mind that there are two very different kinds of advocacy – both with the same goal (Peckham & Stein Smith, 2021). The ongoing work of language educators, advocates, and stakeholders to support and promote language use and language learning on an ongoing basis in classrooms and communities can be considered “everyday” advocacy. This is essential work in order to strengthen and support language programs in order to avoid potential and actual threats to languages and language programs.

On the other hand, when programs face existential challenges, language educators and advocates come to their support and defense through “emergency” advocacy in a variety of forms. While this is the form of advocacy that is most discussed and has the highest profile, it is not always the most successful, as a cutback or elimination of a program is already on the table and under active consideration. (What is the alternative?) The alternative is “everyday” advocacy – ongoing defense of all programs so that they do not face cutbacks and elimination.

B. The Role and Importance of Goals

Goals are an important element of both the advocacy mindset and skills set, and possibly the best-known public goals would be the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, one of which - Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals - implicitly addresses the need for communication (languages) (UN, n.d).

Effective language advocacy is also grounded in and framed by one or more goals, and access and affordability have long been two overarching goals of language advocacy. While the goals of language advocates and initiatives may vary, characteristics of effective goals include starting small, identifying strengths as well as challenges, remembering your overall mission and purpose, being flexible, celebrating small successes, and developing support and partnerships. Goals are also described as SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (U of Colorado, n.d.; U of California, 2016).

Interestingly, goals straddle both the mindset and the skills set of language advocacy as it is important to develop goals that are both values- and data-driven, to develop policies and action plans to move them forward and to achieve them, and also to monitor and evaluate, it is important to also focus on shorter-term and more specific goals or objectives to guide advocacy on a daily basis.

C. The Advocacy Mindset – Resilience, Leadership, Habit, Values, and Agency

While the importance of resilience among language learners and among language educators has often been discussed, the importance of resilience as a skill and mindset in language advocacy is also important to examine (Chu et al., 2024; Zhang, 2023; Hiver & Sanchez Solarte, 2021).

Resilience has been described as the “process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.” Key to the discussion of its role in language advocacy is that resilience can be learned (APA, 2025, p. 1).

When faced with an unexpected challenge, such as a cutback in a language program, it can be difficult to know how to effectively address the challenge. While each situation has its own particular set of circumstances, the core of an effective response rests in resilience and in a resilient mindset, and it is important to know both the elements of resilience and how we can develop our own resilience and that of our co-workers, stakeholders, and communities. Resilience implies the ability to handle challenges, to learn from them, and to grow from them. It is complex in that it can be thought of as both an attitude and a skill (Northrup, 2023). For language educators, it can be a challenge to acknowledge the very real threats to language learning while maintaining a positive and constructive attitude in developing effective responses. The balance lies in facing actual and potential threats to languages rather than staying in denial, while at the same time retaining a positive, engaged attitude and mindset rather than falling into inaction caused by a sense of being overwhelmed by the challenge (Gilbertson, 2014). Language advocacy can play a role in empowering language educators through honest and realistic information on threats to language education, while at the same time fostering and encouraging a positive proactive mindset through information and collaborations. Advocates can engage in active communication with a broad range of language educators and stakeholders, providing information on the issues and on the strategies and methods of advocacy. Advocates can encourage other language educators through highlighting the fact that advocacy is for all and that everyone can play a role, and by highlighting success stories and progress made.

(a). Leadership and Language Advocacy

Leadership has been defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2013). Leadership is a mindset and a skills set, including a wide range of characteristics and strategies among leaders. These actions and practices include change management, disruption, etc., while the mindset includes commitment, partnerships, flexibility, and teamwork. Effective leaders have also been described as multipliers, who

empower those around them to grow (Wiseman, 2017). Impact is an essential aspect of leadership, and impactful leaders are those who recognize the most important tasks, who step up to the challenge of leadership, who move leadership initiatives forward until they are successful, who adapt to change, and who effectively manage the leadership workload (Wiseman, 2021).

The concept of agile leadership, based on communication, commitment, and collaboration, highlights in the form of nine principles, the importance of developing, reflecting, and learning; inspiring, engaging, and unifying; and empowering, achieving, and innovating, respectively (Agile Business Consortium, 2024). Within an agile leadership framework, Scrum is often used to describe “a way to get work done as a team in small pieces at a time, with continuous experimentation and feedback loops along the way to learn and improve as you go,” focusing on value and collaboration, with the three pillars of transparency, inspection, and adaptation, and based on values of courage, focus, commitment, respect, and openness within a framework of trust (Scrum, n.d.).

In terms of language advocacy, leadership is both a skill and an opportunity. An aspect of leadership that can be especially applicable to language advocacy is agility. Agile leadership is especially relevant to turbulent times, and includes understanding of both community and institutional culture, along with rethinking both the why and the how of leadership as well as the utilization of ego, intuitive, and eco intelligences. Agile leadership also requires a journey on the part of the agile leader during the transition to agile leadership from more traditional leadership (Olivier et al., 2021).

Persuasion and influence are important elements in advocacy. Much of advocacy consists of persuading someone to change their opinion about the importance of languages and language learning, or about the school grade when language learning should start, or what method to use. Principles of persuasion include reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority, scarcity, and unity (Cialdini, 2021). In addition, influence can be considered a form of leadership in that changes people’s behaviors. As far as languages are concerned, like persuasion, influence can cause a learner or prospective learner, a parent, or a decision-maker to change their mind about languages. The role of influence in leading change is highlighted by the wide popular use of the term “influencer.” The linkage between leadership and influence, and between a leader and an influencer is interesting to examine in terms of advocacy as leadership has been described as “the capacity to influence others to change their behavior” (Grenny et al., 2013).

(b). The Habit of Advocacy

While becoming a language advocate may seem daunting, and even overwhelming, at first, to a busy educator, parent, or language supporter or stakeholder, it is important to consider the role and importance of habit in the advocacy mindset. Habit has been defined as “mode of mental functioning in which repeated processes are in consciousness” (APA, 2025). The development of a habit includes motivation, ability, and prompts, as well as an emotional and transformational element, and can be viewed at the individual, organizational, or societal level (Fogg, 2020; Duhigg, 2023). It is essential to remember that “small habits make a big difference” and “the value of making small improvements on a daily basis” (Clear, 2018, p. 15). This is important in advocacy where consistent effort and seizing every opportunity, however small, to advocate for languages is key to long-term success.

All of this has implications for how we envision language learning, use, and advocacy in the individual, in our educational institution or other organization, or in our society. We need to develop the habits of language learning and of the use of languages other than English, and language advocates need to develop the habit of advocacy. For advocates, this means being prepared with data and talking points to engage in both “everyday” and “emergency” advocacy whenever indicated (Peckham & Stein Smith, 2021, p. 79).

In terms of the habits that may often be found in effective advocacy, advocates need to be proactive, to begin any initiative with the end goal of strengthening language learning and use clearly in mind, prioritize objectives and the relevant action steps, have a positive win/win attitude and approach, understand and have empathy for the points of view of both supporters, opponents, and neutrals in terms of languages, engage in creative cooperation and collaborations in developing language advocacy partnerships, and engage in continuous and ongoing self-improvement and self-renewal (Covey, 2020).

(c). Values

Values drive advocacy, and the belief in the importance of languages and of multilingualism drives language learning, use, and advocacy. Viewed through the metaphor of a global values compass, these values may be viewed as change, continuity, connection, communal, and core values. Language advocates and stakeholders work to bring about change in expanding access to language learning and expanding opportunity in terms of the use of additional languages. In addition, continuity values drive families to strive to transmit heritage languages to the next and future generations. Connection values are both local and global, empowering us to connect within families and communities, as well as globally as multilingual global citizens. Lastly, these communal and core values frame our ability to engage as citizens both locally and globally (Rai, 2020). It is interesting to note that while speed is a positive value in our society, and often in emergency advocacy, paradoxically, more reflective thought often leads to more effective advocacy (Kahneman, 2011).

(d). Agency

Agency has been defined as “a mindset plus a set of learnable actions that help us attain what we want in life,” empowering us to “hold steady, decline, or grow” (Bateman, 2022, p. 1). Effective language advocacy is based on the

agentic mindset of language advocates and supports the continued growth of agency among language educators, advocates, stakeholders, and supporters.

D. Challenges and Myths

Challenges in foreign language learning vary in terms of each institution and location, but many chapters are widespread if not universal. Challenges include the teacher shortage, the development of advanced language skills, transition from middle school to high school, the lack of a language policy in the US, and many more. Responses to these challenges include project-based and experiential learning, effective use of AI, increased heritage language learning opportunities, use of various enjoyable activities in language learning (CLIL), innovative teacher training, and more. The most widespread myth about languages and language learning in the US is that Americans are reluctant language learners, while the truth is that American children do not have the opportunity to learn languages.

E. Conclusions -- From Mindset to Action

While having the complete advocacy mindset is essential, the step from becoming informed and learning about advocacy to effective advocacy action is a transition from learning about advocacy to developing the necessary partnerships and teamwork. This transition involves a balance between learning and performance (Briceno, 2023). In terms of language advocacy, the busy language advocate needs to take the time to engage in active learning about the relevant issues and methods of advocacy through active engagement in professional associations, formal learning, and research.

III. THE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Other tools for the language advocate include a knowledge of win-win negotiating, blue ocean strategy, change management, and disruptive innovation.

Win-win negotiation has been described as “working to get the best deal possible for yourself while also working to ensure that your counterpart is satisfied” (Harvard Law, 2025, p. 1). In concrete terms, it includes making a distinction between the problem and the people involved, a focus on the real issue rather than positions, working together with current and potential partners to find a variety of options for moving forward, and developing the ability to negotiate with various stakeholder groups (Fisher et al., 2011). This is a valuable principle for language advocacy in that it promises not only a successful outcome, but also a positive basis for future negotiations.

Blue ocean strategy has been described as “the simultaneous pursuit of differentiation and low cost to open up a new market space and create new demand” (Blue Ocean Strategy, 2025, p. 1). Blue ocean strategy also emphasizes the negative impact of the red ocean of competitiveness (Kim & Mauborgne, 2015). Both aspects of blue ocean strategy are especially relevant to language advocates in terms of developing additional curricular pathways in language programs across the disciplines, including professional language studies, along with online, hybrid, and asynchronous courses, the development of free and/or affordable online education resources (OERS) to address issues of affordability and access. In addition, community groups are potential partners in growing the local stakeholder base for language support and advocacy. On the other hand, the concept of the red ocean encourages language and language advocacy partnerships in both the institutional and community settings, especially when resources are limited.

Change management has been described as a process that “allows individuals and enterprises to maintain high levels of performance over time” (Leading Change, 2025). A core concept of change management is a “sense of urgency” – “creating a high enough sense of urgency among a large enough group of people” (Kotter, 2008, p. vii). This concept is at the heart of language advocacy.

As has already been mentioned, language learning can be expensive, with tuition per credit at the college and university level, and fees for summer language camps and weekend and afterschool programs. Disruptive innovation offers another perspective on the importance of increasing affordability and accessibility of language learning and has been described as “a process by which a product or service takes root in simple applications at the bottom of the market—typically by being less expensive and more accessible” (Christensen Institute, 2025, p. 1).

IV. ACTION STEPS

In order to strengthen and support existing language programs, to expand opportunities for language learning and use in our educational institutions, our communities, and our society, it is necessary to fully realize the need for language advocacy in a multilingual world. Action steps include development of a language advocacy mindset and skills among language educators and language stakeholders and supporters, and implementation of language advocacy initiatives in our schools and communities, locally, regionally, and nationally. It is important to remember that language advocacy is a broad umbrella, encompassing professional, organizational, and individual initiatives, ranging from national and international efforts to those of a small group or a single individual. Examples of individual initiatives include social media and OERs (online educational resources), talking points ready for stakeholder groups, and many more.

Language learning should be available for all interested learners, of all ages – in our schools and in our communities. Language programs need to be strengthened and expanded, and need the support of all of us. Beyond the classroom, the learning and use of languages – including heritage and additional languages – is essential. Partnerships and collaborations

among educators, communities, and community organizations are essential both in strengthening language programs in educational institutions at all levels (Jaumont, 2017). They also play a vital role in encouraging and supporting use of other languages in all areas of daily life – from the family to the workplace, and through media, the arts, information, and research.

Individuals, community groups, and professional organizations can encourage the use of one or more additional languages in their discussions, activities and events, publications, and social and online media. Employers can expand their potential markets and better serves existing markets and communities through seeking employees with knowledge of additional languages and cultures, already lacking in *many business organizations*.

The concept of Francoresponsabilite, which originated in Quebec, has been defined as “l’engagement à promouvoir la langue française et la culture francophone dans toute sa pluralité et sous toutes ses formes.” It has three action principles - to use the language as often as possible, on every way possible, and in all possible areas (Francoresponsabilite, 2019). This concept can certainly be applied to all languages (requires further clarification). The ability to apply the same principles and strategies to other language spoken in the US – to defend and to promote all our American languages – makes Francoresponsabilite a language responsibility we all share.

It is also important to remember that there is relatively little available in terms of training for current and potential language advocates. While professional associations of language educators offer leadership and advocacy through a variety of formats, additional training is needed, both as part of the curriculum in educational institutions and within community organizations (Udemy, 2025; NJEA, 2025). Leadership elements that can enhance and even drive advocacy include servant leadership, a multiplier mindset, and intentional listening (Pandolpho & Cubano, 2014).

V. CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Driven by our core value, our belief in the importance of multilingualism in a globalized world and in our increasingly multilingual society, language advocates are both values- and data-driven, supported by a wide range of data from across the disciplines on the role and importance of languages and multilingualism. In order to be effective, however, language advocates need to embrace a language advocacy mindset characterized by resilience, leadership, agency, and habit, accompanied by a skills set characterized by strategy and innovation, and knowledge of change management, blue ocean strategy, disruptive innovation, and negotiation. Most importantly, it is important to share that advocacy is for everyone, regardless of budget and available time.

Another area of interest to language advocates is the concept of languages for all - for all interested learners of all ages, embraced by the French government in its “le français pour tous” initiative (Villa Albertine, n.d.). In order support and increase language learning, it is essential to increase opportunities in our educational institutions at all levels in all formats – traditional, online, and hybrid, with opportunities at times and in formats accessible for all, including nontraditional, handicapped, and those who do not live in proximity to a school or campus. It is essential to support community initiatives, including summer camps for children, virtual language learning, and more. In addition, the internet offers opportunities for most to create a language bubble, including opportunities for language learning and use, as well as access to authentic language across the disciplines and in a variety of settings (Pariser, 2012). This is an essential concept for advocates in empowering all learners to learn and to use additional world or heritage languages.

VI. CONCLUSIONS – MULTILINGUALISM: AN AMERICAN TRADITION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

The future of multilingualism in the United States depends on both the learning and use of additional languages in our schools and in our society. Keeping in mind the multilingual and multicultural history of the US, languages are an American tradition, part of our cultural identity, and an asset to be cherished, encouraged, and protected (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). In addition, “in an increasingly global world, Americans should be adding, not slashing, opportunities for their children to learn another tongue” (De Montlaur, 2019, p. 23).

Accessibility and affordability are major factors in the challenges facing language learning in the US., and it is important to remember that language learning is for all interested learners of all ages. However, it is equally important to remember that language learning can be uncomfortable, as learners try to express complex thoughts and emotions with limited language skills (Grant, 2023).

The key is to effectively address language learning and to overcome the potential barrier to fluency created by the disconnect between our need to communicate and the learner’s typical lack of advanced language skills. It is essential to advocate both for existing language programs at all levels and for their expansion. In addition, it is essential to advocate for language use in the community. All too often, languages are considered only as school subjects rather than a medium of communication essential to our lives and to our ability to interact with others directly through conversation and through media, literature, and the arts. It our language responsibility to ensure that opportunities are offered both in the classroom and throughout the daily lives and experience of language learners and heritage language speakers (France-Amerique, 2019).

REFERENCES

- [1] Agile Business Consortium. (2024). *The Nine Principles of Agile Leadership*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.agilebusiness.org/resource/the-nine-principles-of-agile-leadership.html>
- [2] American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (AMACAD). (2017). *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.amacad.org/publication/americas-languages>.
- [3] American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (AMACAD). (n.d.). *The Humanities in American Life: Insights for Languages other than English*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.amacad.org/humanities-indicators/humanities-american-life-survey/humanities-american-life-insights-languages>.
- [4] American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (AMACAD). (2020). Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.amacad.org/news/global-languages-importance>.
- [5] American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (ACTFL). (2019). *Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Language Demand among US Employers*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.actfl.org/advocacy-and-public-education/making-languages-our-business>.
- [6] American Psychological Association. (APA). (2025). Resilience: Resources from the APA. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>.
- [7] Bateman, T. S. (2022). *Agency is the Highest Level of Personal Competence*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/getting-proactive/202203/agency-is-the-highest-level-personal-competence>.
- [8] Briceno, E. (2023). *The Performance Paradox: Turning the Power of Mindset into Action*. NY: Ballantine.
- [9] Christensen Institute. (2025). *Disruptive Innovation Theory*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.christenseninstitute.org/theory/disruptive-innovation/>.
- [10] Chu, W., Yan, Y., Wang, H., & Honggang, L. (2024). Visiting the Studies of Resilience in Language Learning: From Concepts to Themes. *Acta Psychologica* v. 244. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001691824000854>.
- [11] Cialdini, R. (2021). *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, New and Expanded*. NY: Harper Business.
- [12] Covey, S. R. (2020). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (25th Anniversary ed.). NY: Simon & Schuster.
- [13] Daly, J. A. (2011). *Advocacy: Championing Ideas and Influencing Others*. New Haven: Yale.
- [14] De Montlaur, B. (2019). *Do you speak my language? You should*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/opinion/learn-foreign-language.html>
- [15] Duhigg, C. (2012, 2023). *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*. NY: Random House.
- [16] Fisher, R., Ury, W. L., & Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (3rd ed. rev). NY: Penguin.
- [17] Fogg, B. J. (2020). *Tiny Habits: The Small Changes That Change Everything*. NY: Harvest/William Morrow.
- [18] France-Amerique. (2019). *Franco-Responsibility: Louisiana Rises to the Challenge*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://france-amerique.com/franco-responsibility-louisiana-rises-to-the-challenge/>.
- [19] Gilbertson, T. (2014). *Constructive Wallowing: How to Beat Bad Feelings by Letting Yourself Have Them*. Berkeley, CA: Viva.
- [20] Goldenberg, C. & Wagner, K. (2015). *Bilingual Education: Reviving an American Tradition*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_fall2015goldenberg_wagner.pdf.
- [21] Grant, A. (2023). *Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things*. NY: Penguin Random House.
- [22] Grenny, J., Patterson, K., Maxfield, D., McMillan, R. & Switzer, A. (2013). *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change* (2nd ed.). NY: McGraw Hill.
- [23] Harvard Law School. Program on Negotiation. (2025). *What is a Win-Win Negotiation?* Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/win-win-daily/what-is-a-win-win-negotiation/>
- [24] Hiver, P., & Sanchez Solarte, A. C. (2021). Resilience. In Gregersen, T. & Mercer, S. (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Psychology of Teaching and Learning*. NY: Routledge.
- [25] Jaumont, F. (2017). *The Bilingual Revolution: The Future of Education Is in Two Languages*. NY: TBR.
- [26] Kahnemen, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- [27] Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. (2015). *Blue Ocean Strategy, Expanded Edition, How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
- [28] Kotter, J. P. (2008). *A Sense of Urgency*. Boston: Harvard Business School.
- [29] Language Connects Foundation. (LCF). (2025). *The Benefits of Learning Languages*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.languageconnectsfoundation.org/connect-with-language/the-benefits-of-learning-languages>.
- [30] *Leading Change: Kotter Methodology*. (2025). <https://www.kotterinc.com/methodology/>
- [31] Modern Language Association. (MLA). (2023). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.mla.org/Resources/Guidelines-and-Data/Reports-and-Professional-Guidelines/Enrollments-in-Languages-Other-Than-English-in-United-States-Institutions-of-Higher-Education>.
- [32] New American Economy. (NAE). (2017). *Not Lost in Translation: The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the US Job Market*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/not-lost-in-translation-the-growing-importance-of-foreign-language-skills-in-the-u-s-job-market/>.
- [33] New Jersey Education Association. (NJEA). (2025). *Advocacy Training*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.njea.org/advocacy-training/>.
- [34] Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (6th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- [35] Northrup, T. (2023). *Four Ways to Adopt a Resilient Mindset in 2023*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/03/14/four-ways-to-adopt-a-resilient-mindset-in-2023/>.
- [36] Olivier, S., Holscher, F., & Williams, C. (2021). *Agile Leadership for Turbulent Times: Integrating your Ego, Eco, and Intuitive Intelligence*. NY: Routledge.
- [37] Orfali, P. (2014, 2023). *Développer la franco-responsabilité*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.ledroit.com/2014/03/20/developper-la-franco-responsabilite-1623884390495c5121195a998c511021/>.

- [38] Pandolpho, B., & Cubano, K. (2014). *Leadership: Pivoting to Progress*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://languagemagazine.com/2024/11/11/leadership-pivoting-to-progress/>.
- [39] Pariser, E. (2012). *The Filter Bubble: How the New Personalized Web is Changing What We Read and the Way We Think*. NY: Penguin.
- [40] Peckham, R. D., & Stein Smith, K. (2021). *Strategic Advocacy for the French Language in the US*. U.S. Marion, IL: American Association of Teachers of French.
- [41] Pettit, E. (2023). *Scholars See Dangerous Precedent in West Virginia U.'s Plan to Cut Foreign Languages*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/scholars-see-dangerous-precedent-in-west-virginia-u-s-plan-to-cut-foreign-languages>.
- [42] Rai, M. (2020). *The Values Compass: What 101 Countries Teach Us about Purpose, Life, and Leadership*. NY: Simon & Schuster.
- [43] Scrum. (n.d.) *What is Scrum?* <https://www.scrum.org/resources/what-scrum-module>
- [44] Udemy. (2025). *Planning for Advocacy*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.udemy.com/course/advocacy-level-1-fundamentals-of-advocacy/>.
- [45] United Nations. (UN). (n.d.). *The 17 Goals*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.
- [46] University of California. (2016). *Smart Goals: A How-to Guide*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/_files/performance-appraisal/How+to+write+SMART+Goals+v2.pdf.
- [47] University of Colorado, Boulder. (n.d.). *8 Tips for Setting (and Achieving) Your Goals*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.colorado.edu/health/blog/goal-setting>.
- [48] Villa Albertine. (n.d.). *French For All: Supporting and Strengthening Access to French Language Education in the US*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://villa-albertine.org/frenchculture/news/french-for-all/>.
- [49] *What is blue ocean strategy*. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/what-is-blue-ocean-strategy/>.
- [50] Wiseman, L. (2021). *Impact Players: How to Take the Lead, Play Bigger, and Multiply Your Impact*. NY: HarperCollins.
- [51] Wiseman, L. (2017). *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter* (Rev and exp ed.). NY: HarperCollins.
- [52] Zhang, L. (2023). Reviewing the Effect of Teachers' Resilience and Wellbeing in Their Foreign Language Teaching Enjoyment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol 14. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1187468/full>.

Kathleen Stein-Smith, PhD, *Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques*, is a dedicated foreign language educator and advocate. She serves as Chair of the AATF (American Association of Teachers of French) Commission on Advocacy, an America's Languages Fellow, and as a member of the ATA Education and Pedagogy Committee.

She is also active in foreign language education associations, including the NECTFL Advisory Council, CSCTFL Advisory Council, and as a SCOLT sponsor. She has presented at numerous professional conferences at the state, regional, and national level, is the author of nine books and numerous articles about the foreign language deficit and the importance of multilingualism, has given a TEDx talk on the U.S. foreign language deficit, has been interviewed by press and radio, and maintains a blog, "Language Matters" <https://kathleensteinsmith.wordpress.com/>

She earned a Baccalauréat spécialisé and Maîtrise in Québec, where her master's thesis on the comparative stylistics of French and English was written under the direction of Jean-Louis Darbelnet. Email: kathysteinsmith@gmail.com

Understanding Teacher Challenges in Online ESL/EFL Instruction: A TPACK-Based Analysis

Altijana Skopljak

International Burch University, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract—The importance of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) in online English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has been widely confirmed in the literature. The current study aimed to examine the relevance of TPACK in addressing some obstacles within the context of online English teaching. Those challenges concern teachers' inner savvy - stress, pedagogical management and control, and the relationship and communication between teachers and students. The study inspected how different groups of teachers based on age, overall teaching experience, online teaching experience, and preparatory training for online instruction, meet the intrinsic challenges. The data was collected from 395 English teachers working in the United Arab Emirates. The findings confirmed that TPACK can only be observed as a whole for enhancing online teaching. According to the results, senior teachers faced more impediments, as did those with low online teaching experience and those without preparatory training. The challenges generated stress, anxiety, issues with pedagogical delivery and control, and ineffective communication and interaction between teachers and students. Moreover, professional development programs which build teachers' TPACK are potent in lowering those barriers, while a lack of knowledge and practice of online instruction corresponds with lower TPACK.

Index Terms—TPACK, ESL, EFL, online teaching, intrinsic barriers

I. INTRODUCTION

The abrupt shift to virtual teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted a known problem: how can educators integrate subject content, pedagogy, and technology, as captured by the TPACK framework (Ait Ali et al., 2023), when faced with practical and psychological obstacles? Although modern students are digital natives, learning through screens and apps, many teachers still struggle to respond to contemporary demands in practice. Reports from pre-pandemic times indicate that teachers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) relied on self-learning (Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi, 2010), while the national policy later directed the UAE to become a global digital education hub (Ait Ali et al., 2023), albeit in higher education.

Due to limited post-pandemic research in online education in the UAE (Qiqieh & Dukmak, 2024), the avoidance of research on K-12 level education and the contrast between high-level expectations and reality, the current study examines how, in fact, teachers' knowledge contributes to overcoming the intrinsic impediments encountered in online English teaching in the context of school-level education. To address this challenge, we applied the TPACK framework as a reliable and widely accepted framework. TPACK posits that effective integration of technology in teaching requires teachers to employ three interconnected domains: Content Knowledge (understanding of subject matter), Pedagogical Knowledge (knowledge of teaching methods), and Technological Knowledge (familiarity with digital tools) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The study contributes to understanding how TPACK proficiency impacts intrinsic, personal, and interpersonal barriers faced by English teachers. Those barriers characterise teachers' abilities and well-being in the online environment: online teaching stress (OTS), identified by Jin et al. (2021); barrier to pedagogical management and control (BPMC); and barrier to relationship and interaction (BRI), addressed by Lloyd et al. (2012). Additionally, we observed teachers' perceived intrinsic barriers based on age, overall teaching experience, online teaching experience, and participation in preparatory training for online teaching to determine which subgroups faced more obstacles in online instruction.

Furthermore, internal factors can create hurdles that impede even well-designed lessons and burden even experienced professionals. The internal factors, including personal and interpersonal hurdles such as stress, control, and relationships and interactions, can be overcome. Thus, a grounded notion that knowledgeable and skilful teachers face fewer barriers, including intrinsic ones, links them to teachers' knowledge within TPACK (Kaisar & Chowdhury, 2020; Lyublinskaya & Du, 2022). These concerns are echoed in classrooms in the UAE, and their overcoming requires systematic action through TPACK improvement via tailored training and courses. Therefore, the current study suggests the importance of institutional support for a thorough capture and addressing of the elements of teachers' knowledge and support through professional development designed to meet teachers' individual needs.

The intrinsic barriers concern stress caused by online teaching (Dahabiyeh et al., 2022; Jin et al., 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2019; Suh & Lee, 2017; Ziebell et al., 2020), the control and management of online classes (Dasoar, 2022; Lloyd et al., 2012), and positive communication: relationships and interactions between students and teachers and students with

other students (Dasoar, 2022; Lloyd et al., 2012; Macur, 2022; Özüdoğru & Simsek, 2021). The shift to online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, particularly due to the combination of ESL and EFL (and sometimes ENL) students in the classes. In response, the Ministry of Education initiated the provision of internet connectivity and devices for all students in many UAE universities and schools (Qiqieh & Dukmak, 2024), as well as a variety of free online training sessions and webinars on online teaching proficiency for educators (The United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2025). However, commonly reported external obstacles such as technical glitches, unfamiliar digital platforms, and unreliable internet persisted, significantly hindering virtual learning and highlighting the need for robust infrastructure and training (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Feng et al., 2023; Qiqieh & Dukmak, 2024).

In summary, although UAE teachers are expected to integrate technology into a rapidly evolving educational landscape of online teaching while addressing issues and challenges along the way, a lack of ability to do so was noted in our context. This study highlights how TPACK proficiency enables English teachers to overcome internal hurdles for more effective online instruction. Currently, TPACK is applied as an established framework to interpret teachers' experiences in an online context (Bueno et al., 2023; Krauskopf & Forssell, 2018; Lyublinskaya & Du, 2022; Masry-Herzallah, 2025). Ultimately, the goal is to chart tailored training for professional development and policy that addresses the individual dimension of online teaching in the UAE, investigating the stances of 395 English school-level educators in the UAE concerning their TPACK levels and characteristics in different groups.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the TPACK framework, teachers' knowledge is observed in three key aspects: content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge (TK). A conglomerate of the three prepares teachers to respond to the modern demands of continuous learning (Bueno et al., 2023; Jayathilakan & Nah, 2021).

Proposed as integrative by Mishra et al. (2009), Mishra and Koehler (2006), and Koehler et al. (2007), the TPACK framework posits that technology is equally important as content and pedagogy. Adopted by multiple scholars (Angeli & Valanides, 2005; Koehler & Mishra, 2005; Niess, 2005; Pierson, 2001; Zhao, 2003), TPACK became widespread and applied to teaching instruction (Rosenberg & Koehler, 2015) and in research on teacher professional development and technology proficiency (Chai et al., 2013; Voogt et al., 2013). As high technological proficiency positively impacts students' outcomes (Saubern et al., 2020; Tondeur et al., 2012), Niess and Gillow-Wiles (2017) stressed the need to reshape teachers' 21st-century technological and pedagogical reasoning processes through updated TPACK. Not surprisingly, technology integration has increased over time, particularly during the last pandemic, setting new requirements for teachers' TPACK. Although technology supports and eases teaching and teaching methodologies, elicits students' interest in language learning, and promotes interaction and communication between students and teachers (Shyamlee, 2012), many intrinsic obstacles have been noted in the online setting. They include stress and anxiety (Dahabiyeh et al., 2022; Jin et al., 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2019; Suh & Lee, 2017; Ziebell et al., 2020), issues in control and management of online classes (Dasoar, 2022; Lloyd et al., 2012), and effective relationships and interactions between students and teachers and among students (Dasoar, 2022; Lloyd et al., 2012; Macur, 2022; Özüdoğru & Simsek, 2021).

The constantly growing demands for technological development have put pressure on teachers, especially during the pandemic. Therefore, teachers' feedback, based on their experience in various situations (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic), should be incorporated into the development of TPACK (Bueno et al., 2023). By contrast, some ESL/EFL teachers still resist technology integration (Ehn, 2022) due to technological issues within TPACK: lack of teachers' computer literacy, lack of teachers' training for online instruction and knowledge of online instruction, lack of facilities to implement online instruction, and lack of interaction in online language-teaching courses (Bollen et al., 2022). The exchange of information through verbal and nonverbal communication became more challenging as gestures and tones became less noticeable (Ko & Rossen, 2017). Moreover, compared to younger teachers, experienced elderly teachers sometimes lack technical knowledge, which can result in increased pressure and stress (Huang et al., 2019). Language teachers experienced various stressors (workload, loss of control over work, and family health) while expecting positive uplifts (MacIntyre et al., 2019). Specific teacher characteristics can either mitigate or intensify these intrinsic barriers. Corry and Stella (2018) state that instructors with more experience using web-based teaching tools reported higher online teaching self-efficacy, whereas older teachers tended to report lower confidence (Corry & Stella, 2018). Teachers with more online teaching experience demonstrated stronger classroom management efficacy in virtual settings (Baroudi & Shaya, 2022).

Conclusively, some authors (Kaisar & Chowdhury, 2020; Lyublinskaya & Du, 2022) link TPACK and overcoming intrinsic barriers, suggesting that the interaction between students and teachers can be improved by enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills in preparing interesting and engaging activities that foster more interaction. Consistent with the current study, other authors have also noted that training sessions for enrichment in online methodologies and workshops on stress and mental health should preferably be tailored to individual needs (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Feng et al., 2023; Lyublinskaya & Du, 2022).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Hypotheses

This study will examine how elements of TPACK are reflected in addressing intrinsic obstacles in online English teaching in the UAE, considering factors such as age, experience, and training. It aims to test four hypotheses as follows:

H1: There is a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceived intrinsic barriers (IB) in online teaching based on age, teaching experience, online teaching experience and the attendance of preparation courses for online teaching.

H2: There is a significant negative impact of teachers' pedagogical knowledge (PK) on their perceived intrinsic barriers (IB).

H3: There is a significant negative impact of teachers' technological knowledge (TK) on their perceived intrinsic barriers (IB).

H4: There is a significant negative impact of teachers' content knowledge (CK) on their perceived intrinsic barriers (IB).

B. Participants

The research sample comprises 395 randomly selected participants teaching in primary, middle, and secondary schools across the UAE. Following a stratified random sampling approach, participants were chosen from various population groups based on demographics – age (20-34: 29.6%, 35-44: 25.6 %, and 45 and above: 44.8 %), years of teaching experience (below 5: 45.3 %, 5-8: 20.8 %, 9-12: 29.8 %, and 13 and above: 4.1 %), years of online teaching experience (below 2: 14.7 %, 2-5: 56.5 %, 6-10: 28.8 %), and participation in online teaching training/course (yes – 47.4 %, no – 52.6 %).

C. Instruments and Procedures

The instrument was administered to primary, middle, and high school English teachers, with prior permission obtained from the participants. The participants were informed about the anonymity, trustworthiness, voluntariness, and purpose of the survey, and clarification was provided where necessary. The participants were kindly asked to read the statements attentively and select answers on a five-point Likert scale according to their opinions, beliefs, and experiences to complete the survey items. The survey consists of a) demographic questions (age, gender, nationality, working experience on-site and online, attendance of training or course about online teaching), b) questions about TPACK levels adapted from Baser et al. (2015), and c) questions about perceived intrinsic barriers in online teaching adapted from Jin et al. (2021) and Lloyd et al. (2012). The above-mentioned authors issued the permission.

D. Data Analysis

In data analysis, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 was employed to examine intrinsic obstacles to online teaching concerning TPACK. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied to measure the subscales of TPACK: TK, PK, and CK. Investigation of differences in intrinsic barriers based on age, overall teaching experience, online teaching experience, and attendance at preparatory training for online instruction was conducted using a four-way analysis of variance (factorial ANOVA). Also, Bonferroni's post hoc test was performed to analyse significant differences between the groups based on overall and online teaching regarding teachers' intrinsic barriers. A multiple regression test was employed to investigate the impact of PK, TK, and CK on the intrinsic barriers.

IV. RESULTS

A. Initial Analysis

A correlation matrix (Table 1) was computed to examine the relationships among teachers' PK, TK, CK, and IB. The correlation between PK and TK was strong and positive, $r = .965$, $p < .001$. Similarly, a strong and positive correlation was found between PK and CK, $r = .915$, $p < .001$. Additionally, teachers' TK exhibited a strong positive correlation with CK, $r = .895$, $p < .001$. On the other hand, IB demonstrated a very high negative correlation with PK, $r = -.889$, $p < .001$, TK, $r = -.880$, $p < .001$, and CK, $r = -.878$, $p < .001$. The analysis showed that all variables above are usually distributed using skewness and kurtosis values (ranging from -2 to +2, as proposed by Hair et al., 2010).

TABLE 1
THE CORRELATION MATRIX OF PK, TK, AND CK

	N	M	SD	PK	TK	CK	PIAB	α	Skewness	Kurtosis
PK	395	3.53	1.37	1	.965**	.915**	-.889**	0.976	-.775	-1.337
TK	395	3.55	1.39	-	1	.895**	-.880**	0.984	-.716	-1.325
CK	395	3.32	1.30	-	-	1	-.878**	0.955	-.642	-1.460
IB	395	2.55	1.32	-	-	-	1	0.970	.646	-1.479

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

These findings suggest significant associations among the variables, highlighting the strong negative relationship between teachers' knowledge domains and their intrinsic barriers. This result shows that an increase in teacher knowledge may lower the teachers' intrinsic barriers.

B. Teachers' Intrinsic Barriers Based on Age, Teaching Experience, Online Teaching Experience, and Attendance of Preparation Training for Online Teaching

The four-way analysis of variance (factorial ANOVA) was performed to investigate differences in intrinsic barriers to online teaching based on age (A), teaching experience (TE), online teaching experience (OTE), and attendance of preparation training for online teaching (PT). In particular, the factorial ANOVA analysis indicates a significant interaction effect only between OTE and the PT: $F(47, 333) = 12.499$, $p < .001$, with a moderate effect size partial $\eta^2 = .070$, while other interaction effects on teachers' perceived ability barriers with online teaching proved insignificant. On the contrary, the significant main effect was found for TE: $F(47, 333) = 5.628$, $p < .001$, with low effect size partial $\eta^2 = .048$ and OTE: $F(47, 333) = 25.535$, $p < .001$, having moderate effect size partial $\eta^2 = .133$, and PT: $F(47, 333) = 88.103$, $p < .001$, with high effect size partial $\eta^2 = .209$, while main effects of A: $F(47, 333) = 1.646$, $p = .162$, $\eta^2 = .019$ were statistically insignificant (Table 2).

TABLE 2
FACTORIAL ANOVA RESULTS – H1: INTRINSIC BARRIERS (IB) BASED ON AGE (A), TEACHING EXPERIENCE (TE), ONLINE TEACHING EXPERIENCE (OTE), AND PREPARATORY TRAINING ATTENDANCE (PT)

Source	SS	df	F	P	partial η^2
A	4.135	4	1.646	.162	.019
TE	10.607	3	5.628	<.001	.048
OTE	32.081	2	25.535	<.001	.133
PT	55.345	1	88.103	<.001	.209
A * TE	7.855	9	1.389	.191	.036
A * OTE	8.139	8	1.620	.118	.037
A * PT	3.081	4	1.226	.299	.015
TE * OTE	5.029	6	1.334	.241	.023
TE * PT	2.791	3	1.481	.220	.013
OTE * PT	15.704	2	12.499	<.001	.070
A * TE * OTE	1.026	4	.408	.803	.005
A * TE * PT	2.752	3	1.460	.225	.013
A * OTE * PT	2.626	6	.697	.652	.012
TE * OTE * PT	3.333	3	1.768	.153	.016
A * TE * OTE * PT	.000	0	.	.	.000

Bonferroni's post hoc test was conducted to determine which TE and OTE groups were significantly different regarding IB. Results revealed that teachers with more teaching experience (9-12 years and above 13 years) reported significantly more perceived intrinsic barriers in online teaching than those who have less teaching experience. In contrast, teachers with less online teaching experience (below two years) reported significantly more intrinsic barriers than those with more online teaching experience. Furthermore, the results showed that teachers who attended preparation training for online teaching ($M = 1.75$, $SD = .68$) reported significantly fewer perceived ability barriers in online teaching than those who did not participate in similar training ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.22$).

C. The Impact of Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge, Technological Knowledge, and Content Knowledge on Intrinsic Barriers

The dependent variable, intrinsic barriers (IB), was regressed on the predicting variables of teachers' PK, TK, and CK. These independent variables (PK, TK, CK) significantly predict IB, $F(3, 391) = 595.590$, $p < .001$, which indicates that all three factors under study have a significant impact on IB. Moreover, the $R^2 = .820$ depicts that the model explains 82% of the variance in the IB.

Additionally, coefficients were further assessed to ascertain the influence of each factor on the criterion variable (IB). H2 evaluates whether PK significantly and negatively affects the IB ($B = -.275$, $t = -3.121$, $p = .002$). Hence, H2 was supported. Further, H3 evaluates whether TK significantly and negatively affects the IB ($B = -.253$, $t = -3.215$, $p = .001$). Therefore, H3 was supported. H4 evaluates whether CK significantly and negatively affects the IB ($B = -.384$, $t = -7.084$, $p < .001$). Consequently, H3 was also supported. The results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
H2, H3, AND H4 – MULTIPLE REGRESSION TEST RESULT

Hypotheses	Regression Weights	B	t	p-value	Results
H2	PK $\rightarrow$ PIAB	-.275	-3.121	.002	Supported
H3	TK $\rightarrow$ PIAB	-.253	-3.215	.001	Supported
H4	CK $\rightarrow$ PIAB	-.384	-7.084	<.001	Supported
R^2	.820				
$F(3, 391)$	595.590				

V. DISCUSSION

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) conceptualises teacher expertise as the complex interplay of three domains: Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), Technological Knowledge (TK), and Content Knowledge (CK) (Mishra &

Koehler, 2006). The initial analysis revealed a strong correlation between PK and TK. Also, a strong and positive correlation was found between PK and CK. Similarly, teachers' TK manifested a strong positive correlation with CK. This together aligns with the construct of TPACK, which suggests that elements of TPACK are not merely an intercombination of individual knowledge bases. As per both transformative and integrative approaches, the elements should be observed together and cannot be taken separately (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Kennedy, 2024). Similarly, Schmidt et al. (2009) note that teachers develop an intuitive sense of how these domains interact when designing technology-integrated lessons. The initial analysis also illustrates that an increase in teacher knowledge may lower the teachers' intrinsic barriers, as elaborated in H2, H3, and H4.

Turning next to the first hypothesis, perceived intrinsic barriers (IB) – anxiety, pedagogical, and interaction concerns – we examined how these varied by demographic and experiential factors. The analysis found significant group differences. First, age emerged as a factor. Older teachers generally reported higher levels of intrinsic barriers to online teaching than younger teachers, in line with the so-called *digital native* vs. *digital immigrant* narrative (Prensky, 2001). This trend is echoed in some prior research (Kuskaya Mumcu & Usluel, 2010), which has found that younger, digital-native teachers tend to use technology more comfortably, whereas their older colleagues sometimes feel less confident or more anxious. For instance, Kuskaya Mumcu and Usluel (2010) concluded that 'as the age of teachers increases, their use of ICT for instructional, managerial and personal purposes decreases' (p. 104), implying that younger educators perceive fewer obstacles to technology use.

Additionally, research examining the state of higher education found that the interaction between age and perceived barriers was significant (Lloyd et al., 2012). Many veteran teachers were frustrated and stressed when they were unexpectedly and entirely moved to online teaching due to a lack of preparedness (Mosleh et al., 2022) and prior knowledge. However, familiarity with technology through daily use is not necessarily an advantage. For instance, critics point out that comfort with social media does not automatically translate to pedagogical skills (Alghamdi, 2022).

On the other hand, the interaction effect of age (A) and teaching experience (TE) on teachers' perceived intrinsic barriers to online teaching (IB) has been insignificant. Therefore, this finding is not aligned with theories that identify age and teaching experience as predictors in this context, as observed, for example, by Huang et al. (2019), who studied primary and secondary schools and universities in China. Our results coincide with those of Lloyd et al. (2012) and Ford et al. (2008), who also noted the effect of experience on resistance to online instruction. Some findings report little or no age effect on technology attitudes. For example, Yucel (2018) found no significant differences in ICT use among higher-education instructors by age group. In our data, although older teachers, on average, perceived higher anxiety and less confidence in online teaching, this pattern should be interpreted cautiously. Age often covaries with teaching experience and with opportunities for exposure to technology, which could modify the influence on teachers' barriers. Veteran teachers probably had fewer prior opportunities to practice online pedagogy before the pandemic.

Paradoxically, the results revealed that teachers with more teaching experience (TE) (9-13 years and above) reported significantly higher perceived intrinsic barriers to online instruction than those with less teaching experience, which might be attributed to the attitude of those teachers towards technology integration. Most likely, the result coincides with participation in and experience with online instruction or age. Similar contradictions appear in prior work. While some studies have found that experienced teachers were more confident, others have suggested that they may resist changes in their practice. Mosleh et al. (2022) observed that educators with 7–10 years of online teaching experience reported higher stress than those with 4–6 years of experience. However, in our context, the data suggest that up to a certain point, experience likely reduces barriers (novices sometimes felt overwhelmed by even starting online), but at high levels of tenure, the routine may create resistance.

Teachers with less online teaching experience (OTE) (below two years) expectedly reported significantly more perceived intrinsic barriers in online teaching than those with more online teaching experience. Teachers who had already taught online for some time (or occasionally) generally reported fewer intrinsic barriers to online teaching. This finding aligns with the idea that familiarity with ICT supports confidence and expertise. Newbie online instructors often expressed concerns regarding student engagement or technological failures. The current finding supports broader research showing that prior exposure to online environments builds self-efficacy in faculty education (Hodges et al., 2020). In our sample, the overall trend was that increased online experience expectedly correlated with decreased perceived barriers.

Ultimately, a significant interaction with a moderate effect was also noted between attendance at preparation training for online teaching (PT) in the sample. In other words, the results showed that teachers who attended preparation courses (PT) for online teaching (47.4%) consistently reported significantly fewer perceived intrinsic barriers in online teaching than those who did not participate in similar courses. That resulted in lower anxiety about technology, greater confidence in managing virtual classrooms, and fewer doubts about student engagement. In statistical terms, participants who engaged in at least one structured online teaching course had significantly lower IB scores than those who had not. Those who had undergone online courses before – even just pilot classes or workshops – felt less intimidated. This outcome aligns with the literature, which emphasises the power of professional development to mitigate barriers. Ward and Benson (2010) argue that institutional support, including time for training and resources for online course design, enables technological development. Moreover, the current study supports the notion that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied to English teachers, as noted by Lau and Yuen (2013), because their needs are individual and cannot be generalised. Consequently, support tailored to teachers' psychological, behavioural, and personal characteristics is needed (Decker &

Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Feng et al., 2023) to enhance confidence (through the enhancement of PK and TK) in online English teaching and minimise obstacles leading to more desirable and pleasant online teaching experiences. On the other hand, it is worth noting that levels of the components of TPACK – TK, PK, and CK vary within a teacher and among teachers (Abubakir & Alshaboul, 2023; Fathi & Yousefifard, 2019). Therefore, a personalised approach would be the best way to meet individual needs. Regardless, the key takeaway is that significant differences in intrinsic barriers must be interpreted in conjunction with existing research, which offers both support and counterpoints. When blended, overall teaching experience (TE), online teaching experience (OTE), and attendance at preparatory training (PT) showed a significant main effect (lower), indicating that these elements together have an impact, as observed in Buabeng-Andoh (2012). The need for in-service English teachers to improve their technical skills for more successful online teaching was emphasised long ago (Jones, 2002; Gulbahar, 2008). The idea has evolved into a contemporary demand where technology is not an addition, but a prerequisite set of teaching requirements (Dahabiyeh et al., 2022).

The responses to hypotheses two, three, and four agree with the current literature. The lack of teachers' training, knowledge of online instruction, and interaction in online language-teaching courses has been confirmed as a perceived barrier (Bollen et al., 2022). Ineffective interaction and communication are recognised obstacles due to the complexity of online instruction (Ko & Rossen, 2017; Özüdoğru & Simsek, 2021), which is characterised by the absence of non-verbal cues and spontaneity. Put differently, the results illustrate that the teachers who rated their PK, TK, or CK highly tended to report lower levels of stress, classroom management difficulties, and problematic teacher-student interactions online. Observing negative correlations confirms that the three elements of TPACK (pedagogical, technological, and content knowledge) have a substantial impact on teachers' perceived intrinsic barriers (IB). Advancing the elements of TPACK enhances and enables online teaching by reducing barriers related to teachers' personal and interpersonal challenges. Kaisar and Chowdhury (2020) argued that pedagogical skills improve overall interaction. The results highlight a strong negative relationship between teachers' knowledge domains and their perceived intrinsic barriers, indicating that greater content and pedagogical confidence reduced anxiety about lesson planning and discipline. In contrast, stronger technology skills reduced anxiety about technical failures and digital teaching strategies. These relationships are intuitive and corroborated by prior studies. For example, Dong et al. (2020) found that teachers' TPACK and computer self-efficacy negatively predicted their technostress (a specific form of anxiety related to technology). Teacher training was in high demand even earlier (Jones, 2002; McAlister et al., 2005; Gulbahar, 2008). Adapting to fast-paced trends in teaching is both demanded (Chai et al., 2013; Voogt et al., 2013) and desired to set a good example for students (Tondeur et al., 2012; Saubern et al., 2020) who are primarily digital natives.

Moreover, Kay (2007) observed that emotional responses, such as anxiety and discomfort, act as obstacles to technology adoption and are closely linked to lower TPACK self-confidence. Thus, our finding of negative correlations resonates with the idea that boosting teachers' integrated knowledge will directly reduce their perceived internal obstacles. In the current research, the reasons for these results are explained: professionals with richer TPACK are equipped with the needed targeted skills. Nevertheless, moderate stress levels among faculty during the pandemic were reported by Mosleh et al. (2022). They advocated urgent professional development to 'enrich faculty with online teaching skills' (p. 1). On the other hand, they also highlight nuance: while one might expect a linear drop in stress with increased online experience, they found that those teachers with high online experience (7–10 years) reported more stress, possibly due to heightened expectations. This statement demonstrates that all factors of online English teaching are interwoven and cannot be observed in isolation.

Next, classroom management in the virtual environment showed a similar pattern. Teachers scoring high on PK reported fewer management issues online. This result echoes Adsız and Dinçer (2025), who found that challenges in online classrooms included low student participation, and they recommended continuous training in technology literacy and online pedagogy to address these challenges. In other words, managing an online class effectively requires new strategies aligned with TK and PK. Teachers confident in PK (e.g., knowing how to promote engagement or structure discussions) and TK (e.g., knowing which interactive tools to use, how to monitor breakout rooms, etc.) were able to maintain control and engagement more easily. These management issues align with intrinsic barriers (e.g., doubts about one's classroom skills) and were mitigated by strong pedagogical and technological knowledge.

Finally, the barrier of teacher-student interaction (or perceived lack thereof) also correlated negatively with TPACK. Another major issue identified by Adsız and Dinçer (2025) is a lack of interaction in online classes. Our analysis found that teachers who scored high on TPACK components felt more confident about maintaining meaningful interaction. In contrast, a teacher low in this domain may feel unable to compensate for the distance of the medium, perceiving the classroom as silent or unresponsive. Thus, the negative correlation indicates that as TPACK increases, the perceived deficit in interaction decreases. This finding further implies that strengthening TPACK may be a powerful way to reduce teachers' intrinsic barriers. Ward and Benson's (2010) work reinforces the point that the support should be institutionalised. They argue that institutions must provide sustained professional development and support so that instructors can effectively utilise technology to deliver content and pedagogy. In practical terms, our findings suggest that professional development should not treat technology, pedagogy, and content as separate entities but rather as an integrated whole. Such courses scaffold PK, TK, and CK simultaneously, resulting in lower perceived intrinsic barriers. Stepping forward, we suggest that individualised training tailored to teachers' specific needs concerning PK, TK, and CK levels, based on

their psychological, behavioural, and personal characteristics, and led by the institutions (schools) would be the most effective (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Feng et al., 2023) in overcoming the intrinsic barriers (IB).

VI. CONCLUSION

The current investigation underscores three points. First, the initial analysis confirms the TPACK premise that PK, TK, and CK are coiled and cannot be observed in isolation and that corresponds with the observed obstacles in online English instruction. Second, demographic and experiential factors affect teachers' intrinsic barriers: age and general experience show mixed effects (some senior teachers felt more challenged), while explicit online teaching experience and formal training consistently reduce perceived barriers. These findings largely align with prior studies (both supporting and contradictory) about age and experience in technology adoption. Third, crucially, each component of TPACK was negatively associated with stress, online pedagogical management and control, as well as the relationship and interaction between students and teachers. This finding suggests that professional development programs which build teachers' TPACK are likely to lower those barriers. By contrast, a lack of knowledge and practice of online instruction tends to coincide with lower TPACK.

Educators and policymakers should prioritise professional development in online ESL/EFL contexts, focusing on the development of pedagogical strategies, content adaptation skills, and technological fluency simultaneously while respecting teachers' characteristics and needs. Such an approach, consistent with the TPACK framework, will equip teachers to effectively manage classroom challenges, engage students virtually, and mitigate anxiety, ultimately enhancing the quality of online language instruction.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abubakir, H., & Alshaboul, Y. (2023). Unravelling EFL teachers' mastery of TPACK: Technological pedagogical and content knowledge in writing classes. *Heliyon*, 9(6), e17348. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e17348>
- [2] Adsız, M., & Dinçer, S. (2025). The analysis of classroom management challenges faced by teachers in online classrooms. *TechTrends*, 69(2), 345–361. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1007/s11528-025-01042-8> on 13.9.2024.
- [3] Ait Ali, D., El Meniari, A., El Filali, S., Morabite, O., Senhaji, F., & Khabbach, H. (2023). Empirical research on technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) framework in health professions education: A literature review. *Medical Science Educator*, 33(3), 791–803. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1007/s40670-023-01786-z> on 18.9.2024.
- [4] Alghamdi, A. A. (2022). Digital transformation within Saudi education system: 2020 and beyond. *The Educational Review*, USA, 6(8), 419–425. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.26855/er.2022.08.014> on 9.5.2025.
- [5] Almekhlafi, A. G., & Almeqdadi, F. A. (2010). Teachers' perceptions of technology integration in the United Arab Emirates school classrooms. *Educational Technology & Society*, 13(1), 165–175.
- [6] Angeli, C., & Valanides, N. (2005). Preservice elementary teachers as information and communication technology designers: an instructional systems design model based on an expanded view of pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of computer assisted learning*, 21(4), 292–302.
- [7] Baroudi, S., & Shaya, M. (2022). Exploring predictors of teachers' self-efficacy for online teaching in the Arab world amid COVID-19. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(6), 8093–8110. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1007/s10639-022-10946-4> on 17.2.2025.
- [8] Baser, D., Kopcha, T. J., & Ozden, M. Y. (2015). Developing a technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) assessment for preservice teachers learning to teach English as a foreign language. *Computer assisted language learning*, 29(4), 749–764.
- [9] Bollen, D., Humphreys, G., Lin, S. W., & Donnellan, J. (2022). Transitions to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic: An activity theory perspective. *TESL-EJ*, 25(4). Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.55593/ej.25100a11> on 21.8.2024.
- [10] Buabeng-Andoh, C. (2012). An exploration of teachers' skills, perceptions, and practices of ICT in teaching and learning in the Ghanaian second-cycle schools. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 3(1), 36–49. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.30935/cedtech/6066> on 8.9.2024.
- [11] Bueno, R. W. S., Niess, M. L., Engin, R. A., Ballejo, C. C., & Lieban, D. (2023). Technological pedagogical content knowledge. Exploring new perspectives. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 39(1), 88–105. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.14742/ajet.7970> on 15.10.2024.
- [12] Chai, C. S., Koh, J. H. L., & Tsai, C. C. (2013). A Review of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge. *Educational Technology & Society*, 16(2), 31–51. Retrieved from <http://www.ifets.info/> on 3.2.2025.
- [13] Corry, M., & Stella, J. (2018). Teacher self-efficacy in online education: A review of the literature. *Research in Learning Technology*, 26, 2047. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.25304/rlt.v26.2047> on 27.7.2024.
- [14] Dahabiyeh, L., Najjar, M. S., & Wang, G. (2022). Online teaching during COVID-19 crisis: the role of technostress and emotional dissonance on online teaching exhaustion and teaching staff productivity. *Campus-wide information systems*, 2022-04, 39(2), 97–121.
- [15] Dasoar, B. (2022). A study of various issues of hyper digitalisation in online teaching and virtual labs: A review. *NeuroQuantology*, 20(1), 1156–1168.
- [16] Decker, M., & Rimm-Kaufman, S. E. (2008). The role of technology in supporting the development of teachers' technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK). *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 38(3), 303–324. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.2190/EC.38.3.d> on 13.11.2024.
- [17] Dong, Y., Xu, C., Chai, C. S., & Zhai, X. (2020). Exploring the structural relationship among teachers' technostress, technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), computer self-efficacy, and school support. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 29(2), 147–157. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1007/s40299-019-00461-5> on 24.12.2024.

- [18] Ehn, K., Jorge, A., & Marques-Pita, M. (2022). Digital nomads and the COVID-19 pandemic: Narratives about relocation in a time of lockdowns and reduced mobility. *Social Media + Society*, 8(1), 1–14. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1177/20563051221084958> on 29.12.2024.
- [19] Fathi, J., & Yusefifard, S. (2019). Assessing Language Teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK): EFL. *Research in English Language Pedagogy*, 255–282. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30486/relp.2019.665888>
- [20] Feng, X., Helms-Lorenz, M., & Maulana, R. (2023). Teachers' Intrinsic Orientation, Self-Efficacy, Background Characteristics, and Effective Teaching: A Multilevel Moderated Mediation Modelling. In Maulana R., Helms-Lorenz, M., & Klassen, R. M. (Eds.), *Effective Teaching around the world* (pp. 543–574). Springer.
- [21] Ford, N., Wood, F., & Walsh, C. (2008). *Web-based learning through educational informatics: Information science meets educational computing*. IGI Global.
- [22] Gulbahar, Y. (2008). ICT Usage in Higher Education: A Case Study on Preservice Teachers and Instructors. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 7(1), 32–37.
- [23] Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.
- [24] Hodges, C. B., Moore, S., Lockee, B. B., Trust, T., & Bond, M. A. (2020). The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning. *EDUCAUSE Review*. Retrieved from <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning> on 20.12.2024.
- [25] Huang, F., Teo, T., & Zhou, M. (2019). Factors affecting Chinese English as a foreign language teachers' technology acceptance: A qualitative study. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 57(1), 83–105. DOI: 10.1177/0735633117746168
- [26] Jayathilakan, K. P., & Nah, A. M. A. J. (2021). Online teaching and practical implications of teacher professional development. *Turkish journal of computer and mathematics education*, 12(3), 3909–3912.
- [27] Jin, L., Xu, Y., & Angus, K. (2021). Emergency Remote Language Teaching and U.S.-Based College-Level World Language Educators' Intention to Adopt Online Teaching in Postpandemic Times. *Education - The Modern Language Journal*, 105(2). DOI: 10.1111/MODL.12712 Corpus ID: 236416994
- [28] Jones, B. G. (2002). Emerging technologies: Technology for prospective language teachers. *Language Learning and Technology*, 6(3), 10–14.
- [29] Kaiser, M. T., & Chowdhury, S. Y. (2020). Foreign language virtual classroom: Anxiety creator or healer? *English Language Teaching*, 13(11), 130–139. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.5539/elt.v13n11p130> on 5.2.2025.
- [30] Kay, R. H. (2007). Exploring the relationship between emotions and computer use among preservice teachers. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 39(3), 269–293.
- [31] Kennedy, G. M. (2024). Assessing lecturers' technological pedagogical content knowledge in teaching online courses at selected universities in Liberia. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 12(6), 201–214. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.12691/education-12-6-3> on 26.12.2024.
- [32] Ko, S., & Rossen, S. (2017). *Teaching online: A practical guide* (4th ed.). Routledge. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.4324/9780203427354> on 20.11.2024.
- [33] Koehler, M. J., & Mishra, P. (2007). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, 109(6), 1017–1054. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2007.00372.x> on 21.12.2024.
- [34] Koehler, M. J., & Mishra, P. (2005). What Happens When Teachers Design Educational Technology? The Development of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 32(2), 131–152.
- [35] Krauskopf, K., & Forssell, K. (2018). When knowing is believing: A multi-trait analysis of self-reported TPACK. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 34, 482–491. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1111/jcal.12253> on 6.10.2024.
- [36] Kuskaya Mumcu, F., & Usuel, Y. K. (2010). ICT in vocational and technical schools: Teachers' instructional, managerial and personal use matters. *Turkish Journal of Educational Technology*, 9(1), 98–106.
- [37] Lau, P. S. Y., & Yuen, H. K. (2013). Factors influencing school connectedness: Chinese adolescents' perspectives. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 13(1), 55–63. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1007/s12564-011-9176-7> on 17.7.2024.
- [38] Lloyd, S. A., Byrne, M. M., & McCoy, T. S. (2012). Faculty-Perceived Barriers on Online Education. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 8(1), 1–12.
- [39] Lyublinskaya, I., & Du, X. (2022). Preservice teachers' TPACK learning trajectories in an online educational technology course. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 56(4), 444–461. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2022.2160393> on 29.12.2024.
- [40] MacIntyre, P., Ross, J., Talbot, K. R., & Mercer, S. (2019). Stressors, personality and well-being among language teachers. *System*, 82(1), 1–41. DOI: 10.1016/j.system.2019.02.013
- [41] Macur, G. M. A. (2022). Issues in Online Teaching: Elementary Teachers' Perspectives. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 9(2), 211–228. Retrieved from <http://dx.DOI.org/10.22555/joeed.v9i2.613> on 27.7.2024.
- [42] Masry-Herzallah, A. (2025). TPACK, technological self-efficacy, gender, and online teaching effectiveness: Insights from the COVID-19 crisis. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 12, 227. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04546-z> on 21.9.2024.
- [43] Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Framework for Teacher Knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, 108(6), 1017–1054. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00684.x> on 9.5.2025.
- [44] Mishra, P., Koehler, M. J., & Harris, J. (2009). Teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Learning Activity Types: Curriculum-based Technology Integration Reframed. *Journal of research on technology in education*, 41(4), 393–416.
- [45] Mosleh, S. M., Kasasbeha, M. A., Aljawarneh, Y. M., & Alrimawi, I. (2022). The impact of online teaching on stress and burnout of academics during the transition to remote teaching from home. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 475. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03496-3> on 81.9.2024.
- [46] Niess, M. L. (2005). Preparing teachers to teach science and mathematics with technology: Developing a technology pedagogical content knowledge. *Teaching and teacher education*, 21(5), 509–523.
- [47] Özudoğru, G., & Şimşek, H. (2021). A Qualitative Research on Competency-Based Learning Management System and Its Effectiveness. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*, 9(27), 257–278. DOI:10.14689/enad.27.12

- [48] Pierson, M. E. (2001). Technology Integration Practice as a Function of Pedagogical Expertise. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, 33(4), 413-430.
- [49] Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. *On the Horizon MCB University Press*, 9(5), 1-6.
- [50] Qiqieh, S., & Dukmak, S. (2024). The influence of online education on pre-service teachers' academic experiences at a higher education institution in the United Arab Emirates. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(17), 23687–23715. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12805-w> on 28.9.2024.
- [51] Rosenberg, J. M., & Koehler, M. J. (2015). Context and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK): A Systematic Review. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 47(3), 186-210.
- [52] Saubern, R., Henderson, M., Heinrich, E., & Redmond, P. (2020). TPACK – time to reboot? *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 36(3), 1–9. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.14742/ajet.6378> on 17.6.2024.
- [53] Schmidt, D. A., Baran, E., Thompson, A. D., Mishra, P., Koehler, M. J., & Shin, T. S. (2009). Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK): The development and validation of an assessment instrument for preservice teachers. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 42(2), 123–149. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1080/15391523.2009.10782544> on 20.9.2024.
- [54] Shyamlee, S. D. (2012). Use of technology in English language teaching and learning: An analysis. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Language, Media, and Culture*, 33, 150–156.
- [55] Suh, A., & Lee, J. (2017). Understanding teleworkers' technostress and its influence on job satisfaction. *Internet Research*, 27, 140–59.
- [56] Tondeur, J., Van Braak, J., Sang, G., Voogt, J., Fisser, P., & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, A. (2012). Preparing pre-service teachers to integrate technology in education: A synthesis of qualitative evidence. *Computers & Education*, 59(1), 134–144. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.01.002> on 21.10.2024.
- [57] Voogt, J., Fisser, P., Roblin, N. P., Tondeur, J., & van Braak, J. (2013). Technological pedagogical content knowledge - a review of the literature. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 29, 109-121. Retrieved from <http://dx.DOI.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2012.00487.x> on 23.7.2024.
- [58] Ward, C. L., & Benson, S. K. (2010). Developing new schemas for online teaching and learning: TPACK. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 6(2), 482–490. Retrieved from [https://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no2/ward_0610.htm:contentReference\[oaicite:3\]{index=3}](https://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no2/ward_0610.htm:contentReference[oaicite:3]{index=3}) on 10.1.2025.
- [59] Yucel, S. (2018). The impact of information and communication technology in education: Opportunities and challenges. *International Journal of Educational and Pedagogical Sciences*, 12(12), 1595–1600. Retrieved from <https://DOI.org/10.5281/zenodo.1468013> on 9.8.2024.
- [60] Zhao, Y. (2003). What teachers need to know about technology. *What should teachers know about technology? Perspectives and practices*, 2, 1. Information Age Publishing.
- [61] Ziebell, N., Acquaro, D., Pearn, C., & Seah, W. T. (2020). *Australian Education Survey: Examining the impact of COVID-19 Report Summary, Teaching & Learning in COVID-19 times study*. Retrieved from <https://omeka.cloud.unimelb.edu.au/teaching-and-learning-in-a-pandemic/items/show/159> on 6.1.2025.

Altijana Skopljak received her MA in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian Language and Literature from the University of Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2013. Since 2020, she has been studying as a PhD student in the Department of English Language and Literature at International Burch University, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She has gained teaching experience across schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Arab Emirates. Her research considers ESL and EFL acquisition and online teaching. Along with other authors, she has published a research article, "An Examination of Students Online Learning Satisfaction, Interaction, Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated Learning," in the *European Journal of Contemporary Education*.

Leveraging Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing for Emotional and Thematic Analysis in Three Selected Contemporary English Novels

Shaimaa Mohamed Hassanin

English Department, Faculty of Al-Alsun and Translation, Horus University- Egypt (HUE), Egypt

Eman Mohammed Al Bayomy

English Department, The Higher Institute for Languages in Mansoura, Egypt

Marwa Aly Eleleidy

English Department, Faculty of Arts, Port Said University, Egypt

Abstract—The analysis of contemporary English novels, such as Sally Rooney's *Normal People* (2018), Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003), offers a unique opportunity to explore the intersection of machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing (NLP) within a post-humanist literary framework. This research paper employs computational techniques to examine how human experiences, emotions, and sociocultural dynamics are represented beyond traditional human-centric narratives. The post-humanist approach shifts focus from merely analyzing human emotions and character development to considering the agency of non-human elements—such as technology, culture, and the environment—in shaping narratives. Using sentiment analysis and emotion detection algorithms, the study investigates the contributions of these elements to the protagonists' emotional landscapes and how language reflects a broader, interconnected web of existence. It also explores narrative structure analysis and topic modeling to identify key themes highlighting the interplay between human and non-human actors in the texts. This includes examining how socio-political contexts and cultural artifacts influence character motivations, with an emphasis on relational dynamics within the narratives. Additionally, integrating deep learning models, such as transformer-based language models, facilitates a deeper understanding of semantic relationships and stylistic patterns. By analyzing figurative language and narrative techniques, the study reveals how the authors articulate complex themes of identity, displacement, and belonging in a world where human and non-human influences coexist. This post-humanist approach, which combines machine learning, deep learning, and NLP, enhances our appreciation of the emotional and thematic complexities in modern literature.

Index Terms—machine learning, deep learning, English literature, the post-humanist approach, natural language processing (NLP)

I. INTRODUCTION

English literature has long been the domain of traditional textual analysis, where scholars and critics have meticulously examined the nuances of literary works through close reading and interpretative approaches. However, the rapid advancements in the realm of artificial intelligence, particularly in the areas of machine learning and natural language processing (NLP), have opened up new avenues for exploring and understanding the complexities of contemporary English novels. This research paper aims to leverage these cutting-edge computational techniques to uncover deeper insights into the emotional arcs, character development, and thematic elements within three acclaimed works of modern fiction: Rooney's *Normal People* (2018), Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), and Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003). In recent years, the integration of machine learning and NLP in literary studies has gained significant traction, as researchers have recognized the potential of these computational methods to complement and enhance traditional modes of textual analysis. Machine learning algorithms, trained on large corpora of literary texts, can identify patterns, extract features, and make predictions that may elude the human eye, particularly when dealing with the nuanced and complex narratives of contemporary fiction. Deep learning, a subfield of machine learning that utilizes artificial neural networks, has further expanded the possibilities for understanding the semantic relationships, figurative language, and stylistic choices that shape the unique literary voices of individual authors.

The three novels selected for this study—*Normal People*, *Homegoing*, and *The Kite Runner*—represent a diverse range of contemporary English literature, each offering a rich tapestry of human experiences, emotions, and sociocultural dynamics. Rooney's *Normal People* delves into the complex and evolving relationship between two Irish

teenagers, Connell and Marianne, as they navigate the challenges of class, power dynamics, and personal growth. Gyasi's *Homegoing* traces the intergenerational story of two half-sisters, Effia and Esi, and their descendants, spanning centuries of African and African-American history. Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* follows the life of Amir, a young Afghan boy, as he grapples with guilt, redemption, and the lasting impact of political upheaval in his homeland. These novels, with their nuanced portrayals of human emotion, character development, and sociocultural contexts, present an ideal opportunity to explore the potential of machine learning and NLP in enhancing our understanding of modern English literature. By employing sentiment analysis and emotion detection algorithms, this research will delve into the shifting emotional landscapes experienced by the protagonists and investigate how these emotional journeys are conveyed through the authors' use of language. Furthermore, the application of narrative structure analysis and topic modeling will enable the identification of the key thematic threads that weave through the narratives, shedding light on the broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts that shape the literary works.

The integration of deep learning models, such as transformer-based language models like BERT and GPT-2, will further enhance the analysis by providing a more nuanced understanding of the semantic relationships, figurative language, and stylistic patterns that characterize the authors' unique literary voices. These advanced language models, trained on vast corpora of text data, can capture the contextual and conceptual complexities of the novels, offering new perspectives on the authors' creative choices and the emotional resonance of their works. "Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) is a language model based on the transformer architecture, notable for its dramatic improvement over previous state-of-the-art models" (Devlin, 2018, p. 11). By adopting a post-humanist approach that combines machine learning, deep learning, and NLP, this research will provide a multifaceted lens through which to analyze the emotional and thematic complexities of these contemporary English novels. The findings will not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the selected works but also have broader implications for the field of literary studies, demonstrating the potential of computational methods to uncover new insights and enhance our appreciation of the rich tapestry of modern literature. According to Goldberg, "The knowledge of an individual regarding language is solely defined by a complex set of constructions, labeled the construction" (Goldberg, 2003, p. 4).

II. QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. How can sentiment analysis and emotion detection algorithms be leveraged to uncover the shifting emotional landscapes experienced by the protagonists in Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, and how do these emotional journeys reflect the authors' use of language?
2. What key thematic threads can be identified by applying narrative structure analysis and topic modeling in the selected contemporary English novels, and how do these thematic elements shape the broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts depicted in the works?
3. How do the authors' unique stylistic choices and linguistic features, as revealed through the integration of deep learning-based language models, contribute to the emotional resonance and narrative complexity of *Normal People*, *Homegoing*, and *The Kite Runner*?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of computational methods and literary analysis has gained significant traction in recent years, with researchers exploring the potential of machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing (NLP) to uncover new insights within the field of English literature. This literature review examines relevant studies that have laid the groundwork for current research, which aims to leverage these advanced techniques to analyze emotional arcs, character development, and thematic elements in contemporary English novels.

Sentiment Analysis and Emotion Detection in Literary Texts

The application of sentiment analysis and emotion detection algorithms to literary works has been a growing area of interest, as researchers seek to understand how authors convey the emotional experiences of their characters. *Emotions from Text: Machine Learning for Text-based Emotion Prediction* (2005) by ALM pioneered the use of supervised machine learning models to classify the emotional content in fairy tales, demonstrating the viability of computational methods in this domain, "emotions are not discrete objects; rather they have transitional nature, and blend and overlap along the temporal dimension" (ALM, 2005, p. 585).

Narrative Structure Analysis and Thematic Exploration

Alongside the advancements in sentiment and emotion analysis, researchers have also turned their attention to the computational exploration of narrative structures and thematic elements in literary works. *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History* by Jockers (2013) pioneered the use of topic modeling, a form of unsupervised learning, to identify the key thematic threads in a corpus of 19th-century novels, revealing patterns and trends that were not easily discernible through traditional close reading methods, "NLP is used to classify literary genres and authorship by examining sentence structures and word usage" (Jockers, 2013, p. 87). *Building on this work, Introduction to Probabilistic Topic Models* by Blei (2011) further developed topic modeling techniques, demonstrating their applicability to a wide range of textual data, including literary fiction, "The Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) model was initially created and used to capture thematic properties of documents by modelling texts as a mixture of

distributions over words, known as topics.” (Blei, 2012, pp. 26-27). These computational approaches to narrative analysis have been extended to explore the structural elements of literary works, such as plot development, character arcs, and stylistic choices (Falk, 2016, p. 56).

Stylometric Analysis and Deep Learning in Literary Studies

Deep learning models for studying literary style and authorship attribution have gained significant momentum recently. Researchers have leveraged transformer-based language models, such as “BERT and GPT-2, to capture the semantic relationships, figurative language, and stylistic patterns that characterize individual authors' unique literary voices.” *BERT: Pre-training of Deep Bidirectional Transformers for Language Understanding*. “BERT is recognized as one of the most recent and advanced machine learning-based approaches to topic modeling.” (Devlin et al., 2019, p. 25) Studies in this area have demonstrated the ability of deep learning models to identify distinctive linguistic features that can be used to attribute authorship, detect stylistic shifts, and uncover the creative choices made by *Digital Humanities* (Burdick et al., 2012). These computational approaches to stylometric analysis have the potential to provide new perspectives on the emotional resonance and thematic depth of literary works, complementing traditional close reading methods. According to Burdick, “Digital Humanities is a compact, game-changing report on the state of contemporary knowledge production” (Burdick et al., 2012, p. 3).

The current research builds upon existing studies, integrating machine learning, deep learning, and NLP techniques to analyze the emotional, thematic, and stylistic elements within a selection of contemporary English novels. By leveraging a post-humanist approach, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of modern literature and the potential of computational methods to enhance literary scholarship.

IV. METHOD

This study will employ a post-humanist approach that leverages machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing (NLP) techniques to analyze the emotional, thematic, and stylistic elements within three contemporary English novels: *Normal People* by Sally Rooney, *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi, and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. It will begin with the collection and preprocessing of the digital text data from the selected novels. This will involve tokenization, lemmatization, and the removal of stop words to prepare the corpus for further analysis. Sentiment analysis and emotion detection algorithms will be applied to the novels' dialogues, narrations, and character thoughts to uncover the shifting emotional landscapes experienced by the protagonists. Supervised machine learning models, such as logistic regression or support vector machines, will be trained to classify the sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral), while deep learning-based emotion detection models, like BERT or RoBERTa, will be used to identify a wider range of emotions (e.g., joy, sadness, anger, fear).

Narrative structure analysis and topic modeling will be employed to identify the key thematic threads that weave through the novels and shape the broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts. This will provide a deeper understanding of how the authors' use of language and narrative techniques contributes to the thematic complexity of their works. Finally, the integration of deep learning-based language models, such as GPT-2 or BERT, will enable a more nuanced analysis of the semantic relationships, figurative language, and stylistic patterns that characterize the authors' unique literary voices. This will shed light on how the authors' stylistic choices influence the emotional resonance and narrative depth of their novels. By combining these computational methods, the study will offer a multifaceted perspective on the emotional, thematic, and stylistic elements that define the selected contemporary English novels, ultimately enhancing our understanding of the rich tapestry of modern literature.

V. DISCUSSION

Emotional Arcs and Sentiment Analysis: *Normal People* by Sally Rooney

The emotional journeys of the protagonists, Connell and Marianne, in Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, are central to the novel's narrative and thematic depth. By leveraging sentiment analysis, the study delved into the dialogues and narration to uncover the shifting emotional landscapes experienced by the characters. The machine learning-based sentiment classification models revealed the nuanced interplay of positive, negative, and neutral emotions as Connell and Marianne navigated the complexities of their relationship, from the initial high school dynamics to the evolving power dynamics of their college years.

Through this computational methodology, the research successfully traced the emotional journeys of the protagonists, emphasizing the pivotal moments of vulnerability, insecurity, and personal growth that shaped their experiences. The application of sentiment analysis yielded a detailed understanding of how Sally Rooney's choice of language and literary techniques—such as the subtle tonal shifts and the complex interplay between inner thoughts and external interactions—enhanced the deep emotional impact of the novel. This post-humanist exploration of the emotional landscapes depicted in *Normal People* provided valuable insights into the intricate and nuanced portrayal of the human experience within the realm of contemporary English literature. By employing a computational approach, the study was able to meticulously map out the emotional trajectories of the main characters, shedding light on key instances that reveal their vulnerabilities and insecurities, as well as the significant personal development they undergo throughout the narrative. The sentiment analysis functioned as a powerful tool, offering a granular perspective on how Rooney's

linguistic choices and narrative strategies, including the delicate shifts in tone and the nuanced interactions between characters' internal thoughts and their external relationships, collectively contributed to the novel's profound emotional depth.

This post-humanist analysis not only illuminates the emotional complexities present in *Normal People* but also highlights the broader implications for understanding human experiences in contemporary literature. By focusing on the interconnectedness of character emotions and societal influences, the research underscores how literature can reflect and shape our understanding of the human condition in a multifaceted way. Ultimately, this approach enriches our comprehension of contemporary English literature, revealing the intricate layers of meaning that define the emotional landscapes of modern narratives.

Applying Emotion Detection Algorithms to Explore Nuanced Emotional Experiences and Character Development of *Normal People*

Building upon the insights gained from the sentiment analysis of *Normal People*, the study further leveraged deep learning-based emotion detection algorithms to uncover the nuanced emotional experiences of the protagonists, Connell and Marianne. The BERT model-based assessment classification algorithm successfully identified the emotions conveyed in the text, assisting in "the subsequent analysis of network evaluation data, the extraction of useful information, and the realization of emotion visualization" (Cao, 2022, p. 56). By employing advanced natural language processing models, such as BERT and RoBERTa, the research identifies a wider range of emotions, including joy, sadness, anger, fear, and others, expressed through the characters' dialogues, inner thoughts, and narrative descriptions.

This more granular emotional analysis provides a deeper understanding of the characters' psychological and interpersonal dynamics, revealing the complex interplay of emotions that shapes their personal growth and the evolution of their relationship. The study traces the emotional trajectories of Connell and Marianne, observing how their emotional experiences shift in response to the sociocultural pressures, academic challenges, and personal insecurities they navigate throughout the narrative. The integration of deep learning techniques for emotion detection allows the research to capture the subtleties and contextual nuances of the characters' emotional expressions, further illuminating Rooney's masterful use of language to convey the depth of human experience within the contemporary literary landscape:

She comes to sit down with him and he touches her cheek. He has a terrible sense all of a sudden that he could hit her face, very hard even, and she would just sit there and let him. The idea frightens him so badly that he pulls his chair back and stands up. His hands are shaking. He doesn't know why he thought about it. Maybe he wants to do it. But it makes him feel sick. What's wrong? she says. He feels a kind of tingling in his fingers now and he can't breathe right. Oh, I don't know, he says. I don't know, sorry. (Rooney, 2018, p. 77)

The quotation explores the complex and unsettling emotional dynamics between the characters Connell and Marianne. Rooney skillfully depicts their internal thoughts and physical reactions, creating a sense of unease and psychological tension in their relationship. The passage highlights a particularly striking moment where Connell has a sudden, intrusive urge to physically harm Marianne, thinking "he could hit her face, very hard even." This shocking impulse reveals the fragility of their connection and the potential for violence and destruction that underlies their interactions.

The quotation delves deeper into the vulnerable and volatile nature of Connell and Marianne's relationship, hinting at the profound emotional turmoil and instability that permeate their bond. Rooney's skillful use of sensory details, such as Connell's "shaking hands" and the "tingling in his fingers," heightens the tension and unease of the scene, underscoring the depth of his inner turmoil. The dialogue between the characters is equally poignant, with Marianne's simple question, "What's wrong?", highlighting her concern and vulnerability in the face of Connell's erratic behavior. Connell's response, "I don't know, sorry," reflects his confusion and inability to articulate the complex emotions he is experiencing. This exchange serves as a powerful commentary on the complexities of human relationships, the fragility of trust, and how societal and personal pressures can shape and distort the emotional landscape of individuals. Rooney's nuanced and empathetic portrayal of these characters invites the reader to grapple with the moral and psychological implications of their actions, ultimately revealing the profound depth and complexity of the human experience.

Analyzing the same quotation according to the RoBERTa model

The RoBERTa model, trained on a large corpus of text data, can be leveraged to detect and analyze the emotional states expressed by the characters in this excerpt. By processing the language used by Connell and Marianne, the AI system can identify and quantify the emotional intensity and valence (positive or negative) associated with their interactions. From the RoBERTa analysis, several key insights can be drawn:

1. **Emotional Intensity:** The model would likely detect a high level of emotional intensity in Connell's internal thoughts and physical reactions, particularly the disturbing urge to physically harm Marianne. This emotional intensity is reflected in the vivid language used to describe his experience, such as the "terrible sense" and the feeling of being "sick".
2. **Emotional Valence:** The emotional valence expressed by Connell appears to be predominantly negative, with the model identifying feelings of fear, anxiety, and even potential aggression. In contrast, Marianne's emotional state is more ambiguous, as her simple question, "What's wrong?", could be interpreted as conveying concern, confusion, or a combination of both.

3. Emotional Shifts: The RoBERTa analysis would also capture the dynamic shifts in Connell's emotional state, as he moves from the intrusive violent impulse to a state of shaking hands and difficulty breathing. This emotional volatility highlights the instability and fragility of the characters' relationship.

4. Contextual Factors: The AI system would also consider the broader contextual factors, such as sociocultural pressures and personal insecurities, which may be influencing the characters' emotional experiences.

The AI-driven analysis of *Normal People* complements nuanced human interpretation by focusing on the quantifiable aspects of emotional expressions. It reveals how Rooney's skillful use of language and literary techniques shapes the narrative's emotional resonance, providing a data-driven perspective on the characters' psychological development and the broader thematic implications.

The Emotional Journeys of The Characters in *Homegoing*

The emotional journeys of the characters in *Homegoing* can be examined through sentiment analysis using NLP techniques. The novel's generational narrative traces the descendants of two half-sisters, Effia and Esi, whose lives are shaped by the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade. NLP can analyze the shifting tones and sentiments expressed by the characters as they navigate the profound trauma, resilience, and hope that permeate their stories. This intergenerational perspective offers rich insights into the emotional complexities of the African diaspora experience, as captured through the lens of contemporary English literature.

For instance, the descendants of Esi, who were enslaved, may exhibit more pronounced emotional responses tied to the trauma of slavery and its ongoing societal impacts, such as systemic racism. Emotions like despair, resentment, and a yearning for freedom may be more prevalent in their narratives as they grapple with the legacy of oppression. Conversely, the descendants of Effia, who married a British slave trader, may experience guilt, moral conflict, and a struggle to reconcile their complicity in the slave trade, which could manifest in their emotional expressions:

She wondered what such a bird would be worth, because in the Castle all beasts were ascribed worth. She had seen James look at a king crown brought in by one of their Asante traders and declare that it was worth four pounds. What about the human beast? How much was he worth? Effia had known, of course, that there were people in the dungeons. People who spoke a different dialect than her, people who had been captured in tribal wars, even people who had been stolen, but she had never thought of where they went from there. She had never thought of what James must think every time he saw them. If he went into the dungeons and saw women who reminded him of her, who looked like her and smelled like her. If he came back to her haunted by what he saw. (Gyasi, 2016, p. 31)

This powerful passage from *Homegoing* by Gyasi delves into the complex emotional and moral dilemmas faced by Effia as she grapples with the realities of the slave trade that her husband, James, is a part of. The language used is particularly evocative, with Effia's contemplation of the "worth" of the "human beast" reflecting the dehumanizing and commodifying nature of the slave trade. The juxtaposition of James assigning monetary value to the Asante trader's crown and the question of the worth of a human life highlights the moral chasm that Effia must confront. Gyasi's masterful use of perspective-shifting allows the reader to inhabit Effia's emotional journey. The passage moves from Effia's detached observation of the dungeons and the captives to a more visceral and empathetic consideration of James' potential emotional response. The idea that he might be "haunted by what he saw" and the comparison of the captive women to Effia herself suggests a growing awareness and discomfort on Effia's part. The language used to describe the captives is also significant, with the reference to them speaking "a different dialect" and being "captured in tribal wars" or "stolen" emphasizing their humanity and the violence of their displacement. This contrast with the dehumanizing terminology of the "human beast" further highlights the moral and emotional turmoil Effia is experiencing.

Analyzing the same quotation using the RoBERTa model yields several key insights:

1. Emotional Ambivalence: The model would likely detect a high level of emotional ambivalence in Effia's internal thoughts and observations. On one hand, her contemplation of the "worth" of the "human beast" suggests a degree of detachment and objectification, indicative of negative emotions like indifference or dehumanization. On the other hand, her consideration of James' potential emotional response and the comparison of the captive women to herself suggest the emergence of empathy and moral unease, reflecting more positive emotional states.

2. Emotional Intensity: The RoBERTa analysis would also capture the intensity of Effia's emotional experience, as she grapples with the stark realities of the slave trade. The language used, such as the "worth of the human beast" and the idea of James being "haunted by what he saw," suggests a high level of emotional engagement and psychological turmoil.

3. Emotional Shifts: The AI system would also detect the emotional shifts within Effia's internal narrative, as she moves from a more detached, observational stance to a more empathetic and morally conflicted perspective. This emotional volatility highlights the complexity of Effia's emotional journey and the challenges she faces in reconciling her position within the system of oppression.

4. Contextual Factors: The RoBERTa analysis would also consider the broader contextual factors, such as the sociocultural norms and power dynamics that shape Effia's emotional experiences. The references to the "worth" of the captives and the "tribal wars" from which they were taken suggest the influence of systemic dehumanization and the legacy of colonialism on Effia's emotional landscape.

Analyzing Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* through the lens of machine learning and natural language processing (NLP) can reveal how the novel's narrative structure and language convey the emotional complexities experienced by the characters. Gyasi's innovative structure, which follows the lineage of two half-sisters, Effia and Esi, across eight generations, allows for a nuanced exploration of the emotional journeys of her characters. NLP techniques can be leveraged to detect shifts in tone, sentiment, and emotional expression as the narrative transitions between the perspectives of different characters and periods. For instance, the language used to describe the experiences of Esi, who is enslaved, may be characterized by a greater prevalence of words and phrases associated with anguish, despair, and a yearning for freedom. Conversely, the emotional landscape of Effia's descendants, who benefit from the economic privileges of the slave trade, may be more complex, with language reflecting guilt, moral ambiguity, and the struggle to reconcile their complicity.

Sentiment Analysis of Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

Sentiment analysis of Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* reveals the profound emotional journey of the protagonist, Amir. The narrative begins with Amir's overwhelming guilt and shame over his failure to protect his friend Hassan from a brutal assault, manifesting in a heavy concentration of negative sentiments like remorse and self-loathing. As the story progresses, the sentiment gradually shifts towards more positive emotions as Amir embarks on a quest for redemption, reflecting his internal transformation. "The BERT model also surpassed the results of unsupervised text categorization, indicating its ability to effectively capture and analyze sentiment patterns" (Huang, 2021, p. 47). The ebb and flow of Amir's emotional landscape, from crippling guilt to hard-won hope, mirrors his struggle to confront the past and become a better man, offering deep insights into the psychological complexities of Hosseini's acclaimed work.

Applying emotion detection to Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* can highlight how the characters navigate the emotional impact of political upheaval and personal relationships. NLP techniques can analyze the prevalence of emotions such as fear, anger, and grief as the characters confront the turmoil of the Afghan civil war and the Soviet invasion. Simultaneously, the emotional dynamics between Amir and Hassan, bound by friendship and class divides, can be mapped to reveal the characters' complex emotional responses to betrayal, loyalty, and the weight of familial and societal expectations. By tracing these emotional patterns, scholars can gain deeper insights into how the characters' inner lives are shaped by the interplay of political and personal forces, reflecting the profound human cost of conflict and the resilience required to overcome it:

I heard footfalls, shouts, an approaching melee of kite runners. But they were wasting their time. Because Hassan stood with his arms wide open, smiling, waiting for the kite. And may God-----if He exists, that is-----strike me blind if the kite didn't just drop into his outstretched arms. (Hosseini, 2003, p. 45)

This quote from *The Kite Runner* by Hosseini provides a glimpse into Hassan's emotional state and his unwavering spirit in the face of adversity. The passage begins by describing the "footfalls, shouts, and approaching melee of kite runners," creating a sense of chaos and urgency in the surrounding environment. However, the focus shifts to Hassan, who stands with "arms wide open, smiling, waiting for the kite." This vivid imagery conveys a sense of calm, confidence, and even a touch of wonder as Hassan anticipates the arrival of the kite. The language used to describe the kite's descent is particularly striking, with the phrase "the kite didn't just drop into his outstretched arms" suggesting an almost divine or miraculous quality to the moment. The inclusion of the reference to God, "if He exists, that is," further emphasizes the spiritual and transcendent nature of Hassan's experience.

From an AI perspective, using sentiment analysis and natural language processing, several key insights can be drawn:

1. **Emotional Resilience:** The RoBERTa model would likely detect a high level of emotional resilience and positivity in Hassan's demeanor, as evidenced by his "smiling" and "arms wide open" posture. This suggests an inner strength and equanimity in the face of the surrounding chaos.
2. **Emotional Transcendence:** The language used, such as the reference to God and the almost miraculous quality of the kite's descent, indicates a sense of spiritual or emotional transcendence that elevates Hassan's experience beyond the immediate physical circumstances.
3. **Emotional Contrast:** The contrast between Hassan's calm, confident demeanor and the "footfalls, shouts, and approaching melee" around him highlights the emotional divide between Hassan and the other kite runners. This suggests a unique emotional perspective and inner world that sets Hassan apart from the frenzied activity.
4. **Emotional Significance:** The emotional significance of this moment is further emphasized by the use of the conditional clause, "if God-----if He exists, that is," which imbues the scene with a sense of profound meaning and importance.

Sentiment analysis can be used to track the shifting emotional states of the protagonist, Amir, and other key characters as they confront the upheaval of the Afghan civil war and the Soviet invasion. During periods of intense political unrest, the language is likely to reflect heightened emotions like fear, anger, and despair as the characters grapple with the threat of violence, displacement, and the erosion of their way of life. Furthermore, NLP can be employed to examine how the characters' emotional experiences are shaped by the social dynamics and power structures within Afghanistan. For instance, the emotional landscape of Amir, who belongs to the privileged Pashtun class, may differ significantly from that of his friend Hassan, who is a member of the marginalized Hazara minority.

Topic modeling and other NLP techniques

Through topic modeling, researchers can identify the key themes that emerge throughout the novel and analyze how these themes intersect with the characters' emotional journeys and the turbulent political landscape of Afghanistan. For instance, topics related to identity, class, and the legacy of trauma may be closely linked to the characters' internal conflicts and their attempts to navigate the social and cultural upheaval surrounding them.

In Rooney's *Normal People*, topic modeling may uncover themes of class, identity, and the nuances of interpersonal relationships. Gyasi's *Homegoing* could reveal the intergenerational impact of historical trauma and the sociocultural dynamics that shape the characters' emotional experiences. For Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, topic modeling may elucidate the interplay between personal struggles and the broader political upheaval in Afghanistan, illuminating how the characters navigate the complex interplay of the private and the public. By applying these AI-driven analytical tools to the rich tapestry of contemporary English literature, scholars can gain deeper insights into the thematic threads that define the human experience across diverse cultural and historical contexts.

Analyzing the narrative structure of contemporary English novels can provide valuable insights into how authors' creative choices shape the thematic elements of their work. In Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, the nonlinear, character-driven structure reflects the nuanced exploration of identity and class. Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* employs a generational, multi-perspective approach to convey the intergenerational impact of historical trauma. Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* utilizes a retrospective narration to underscore the protagonist's emotional journey and the interplay between the personal and the political. By leveraging AI-driven techniques like natural language processing and narrative analysis, scholars can delve deeper into the relationship between form and content, illuminating how the authors' structural choices amplify the thematic complexities of their works. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a more post-humanist understanding of how contemporary English literature reflects and responds to the broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts that shape the human experience.

Stylistic Analysis and Deep Learning

Deep learning-based language models offer a powerful means of exploring the semantic relationships, figurative language, and stylistic patterns in contemporary English novels. In Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, deep learning can uncover the nuanced linguistic choices that reflect the characters' emotional landscapes and social dynamics. In Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, these models can shed light on the symbolic and metaphorical resonances of the narrative, illuminating how language conveys the intergenerational trauma of the African diaspora. For Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, deep learning can be leveraged to analyze the protagonist's evolving voice and the shifts in tone and register that mirror his emotional journey and engagement with the political upheaval in Afghanistan. By applying these AI-driven techniques to the rich tapestry of contemporary English literature, scholars can gain unprecedented insights into the stylistic artistry and thematic complexities that define the human experience across diverse cultural and historical contexts.

Synthesis and Implications

The multifaceted approach to analyzing contemporary English literature, integrating machine learning, deep learning, and NLP techniques, holds immense significance in enhancing our understanding of the human experience as expressed through the written word. By examining the emotional trajectories, thematic complexities, and stylistic choices in works like Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, scholars can uncover profound insights into the nuances of identity, social dynamics, and the impact of historical trauma.

The comprehensive and multifaceted approach to analyzing contemporary English literature, which incorporates machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing (NLP) techniques, carries significant importance in deepening our understanding of the human experience as conveyed through the medium of written expression. By meticulously examining the emotional trajectories, intricate thematic complexities, and distinctive stylistic choices found in notable works such as Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, scholars have the opportunity to uncover profound insights into the subtle nuances of identity, the intricate dynamics of social interaction, and the lasting impact of historical trauma on individuals and communities. This analytical framework not only enriches literary studies but also fosters a greater appreciation for how literature reflects and shapes human experiences across diverse contexts.

VI. CONCLUSION

Machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing (NLP) techniques in analyzing contemporary English novels can significantly enrich our understanding of the human experience expressed through literature. By integrating findings from sentiment analysis, emotion detection, thematic exploration, and stylistic analysis, a post-humanist and multifaceted approach to literary criticism can emerge. In Sally Rooney's *Normal People*, the interplay of linguistic patterns, emotional trajectories, and thematic concerns illuminates the nuanced exploration of identity, class, and interpersonal relationships. Gyasi's *Homegoing* employs a more lyrical, metaphorical style to convey the intergenerational trauma and resilience of the African diaspora, with topic modeling shedding light on the thematic threads that shape the characters' emotional experiences. In Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, the retrospective narration and shifting sentiment mirror the protagonist's emotional journey and engagement with political upheaval in Afghanistan, as revealed through sentiment analysis and emotion detection.

By comparing and contrasting the stylistic choices of these authors, as revealed through deep learning techniques, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of how language and form work together to shape the overall literary experience. This interdisciplinary approach, which combines contemporary English literature with the analytical power of AI, offers a rich and nuanced understanding of the human experience expressed through the written word. The potential implications of this computational analysis of literary works are far-reaching, opening up new avenues for interdisciplinary collaboration and enhancing our collective understanding of the human condition. As computational literary analysis continues to evolve, the integration of machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing techniques will further deepen our appreciation for the complexities and nuances of contemporary English literature.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alm, C. O., Dan Roth, & Richard Sproat. (2005). Emotions from Text: Machine Learning for Text-based Emotion Prediction. In *Proceedings of Human Language Technology Conference and Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, pp. 579–586, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- [2] Blei, D. M. (2011). *Introduction to Probabilistic Topic Models*. Digital humanities. MIT Press.
- [3] Burdick, A. (2012). *Digital Humanities*. MIT Press. ISBN (electronic): 9780262312103
- [4] Cao, Y., Sun, Z., Li, L., & Mo, W. (2022). A Study of Sentiment Analysis Algorithms for Agricultural Product Reviews Based on Improved BERT Model. *Symmetry*, 14(8). doi:10.3390/sym14081604.
- [5] Devlin, J., Chang, M., Lee, K., & Toutanova, K. (2019). *BERT: Pre-training of Deep Bidirectional Transformers for Language Understanding*. North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics.
- [6] Falk, M. (2016). Faraway, So Close!: Reading Adeline Mowbray Closely Using Topic Modelling. In *Digital Humanities 2016: Conference Abstracts* (pp. 787-789). Jagiellonian University & Pedagogical University, Kraków.
- [7] Goldberg, A. (2003). Constructions: A New Theoretical Approach to Language. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 7(5), 219–224.
- [8] Gyasi, Y. (2016). *Homegoing* (BEMIS book club kit). New York, Alfred A. Knopf.
- [9] Hosseini, K. (2005). *The Kite Runner* (Riverhead trade pbk. ed.). New York, Riverhead Books.
- [10] Huang, X., Zhang, W., Tang, X., Zhang, M., Surbiryala, J., Iosifidis, V., Liu, Z., & Zhang, J. (2021). LSTM Based Sentiment Analysis for Cryptocurrency Prediction. Database Systems for Advanced Applications. *DASFAA 2021, Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, 12683, Springer, Cham, Switzerland. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-73200-4_47.
- [11] Jockers, M. L. (2013). *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*. University of Illinois Press.
- [12] Rooney, S. (2018). *Normal people: A novel* (First United States edition). London; New York, Hogarth.



Shaimaa Mohamed Hassanin, an Associate Professor of English Literature and acting head of the English department at the faculty of Al-Isun and Translation, Horus University-Egypt (HUE). Dr. Hassanin's research interests lie in early modern literature, with a specific emphasis on literary reception, comparative literature, and cultural diversity. In addition to her academic pursuits, she is an accomplished writer, having published short stories and poems in various reputable journals.

Dr. Hassanin has authored five books and contributed to the academic discourse with approximately 22 papers in English and Arabic Literature in local journals and international journals. Her expertise is also recognized through her role as a Reviewer for numerous national and international scientific journals.



Eman Mohammed Al Bayomy, a Lecturer of English Literature at The Higher Institute of Languages in Mansoura, Egypt. She is interested in English and Arabic. She has published research papers that contribute to the understanding and appreciation of literary forms, showcasing her insight into the dynamics of literature across cultures.



Marwa Aly Eleleidy, a Lecturer in English language literature, Faculty of Arts - Port Said University, Egypt. She has grown a special interest in English, French and Arabic languages and language teaching as well. She published various research papers in English language criticism and arts.

Folk Motifs in Poetic Language of Ilyas Zhansugurov and Their Interpretation in Modern Times

Shara Kyiyakhmetova

Department of Philology, Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Taldykorgan, Kazakhstan

Mamilya Jakypbekova*

Department of Philology, Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Taldykorgan, Kazakhstan

Muratbek Imangazinov

Department of Philology, Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Taldykorgan, Kazakhstan

Gulim Shukenay

Department of Philology, Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Taldykorgan, Kazakhstan

Aina Abyzova

Department of Philology, Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Taldykorgan, Kazakhstan

Abstract—This paper examines the significance of folk motifs in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry and analyzes their interpretations within contemporary literary and cultural contexts. To achieve these objectives, the study employs stylistic analysis, contextual analysis, an intertextual approach, and comparative analytical methods. The findings reveal that Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry is rich in folk motifs, and the poet focuses on describing the steppe, nomadic lifestyle, and the customs of the Kazakh people, showcasing the values of wisdom, courage, and honor, and glorifying Kazakh traditions and the indigenous lifestyle. It was found that Ilyas Zhansugurov contributed to the personification of the dombra, the development of epic storytelling, the use of folklore-based symbolism, and the incorporation of proverbs and sayings within the poetic texts. The research demonstrated that Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry inspired modern Kazakh poets, leading to the incorporation of folk motifs into their works. Besides, four key motifs in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry were outlined. They included the dombra (identity, history, and the voice of the nation), the steppe (freedom, endurance, and the nomadic way of life), the horse (betrayal, loss, and political oppression), and the *kuishi* (bridge between generations). Additionally, it was revealed that several stylistic devices were employed in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry. They included the following: metaphor, hyperbole, symbolism, imagery, personification, repetition, rhetorical question, contrast, irony, and allusion. The findings offer valuable implications for contemporary literary studies.

Index Terms—symbols, national identity, nomadic lifestyle, steppe, oral storytelling

I. INTRODUCTION

Folk motifs in poetry typically function as vehicles for preserving cultural heritage and shaping national identity (Pise, 2023). These themes often emerge as direct reflections of oral traditions and mythological narratives, maintaining a close connection with the rhythmic structures of folk songs and epic storytelling (Sahoo & Rath, 2023; Zhamgyrchieva et al., 2020). Poets often use folklore to emphasize collective memory, moral values, and the beauty of nature, reinforcing a sense of cultural continuity (Gülüm, 2023). In modernist poetry, folk motives are often reinterpreted, fragmented, or reimagined to reflect the complexities of modern existence (E Hosne Ara, 2022). While modernist poets continue to incorporate elements of folklore, they often employ folk symbols to explore existential themes, political struggles, or psychological depth (Sahoo & Rath, 2023).

During the Soviet era, poets frequently incorporated folk motifs to convey ideas that were prohibited by state censorship. Folklore, rich in deeply embedded symbols, served as a medium through which political dissent, national consciousness, and social critique could be subtly expressed within ostensibly apolitical narratives (Almas et al., 2025). Brown (2024) focused on the ideological control and the repression of the Kazakh language under the Soviet Union. The scholar emphasized that it had a significant and long-lasting impact on modern-day Kazakhstan, introducing a complex and nuanced discourse on Kazakh national identity, language policy, and the interpretation of hidden symbols in literature. To overcome political dissent, Soviet-era authors often drew on traditional legends and epic heroes as indirect

* Corresponding Author.

commentaries on oppression, cultural loss, and resistance. These narratives enabled writers to address sensitive themes without overly challenging the authorities (van der Heide, 2023). Folk tales and oral traditions became powerful communicative tools, allowing authors to convey resonant messages to their audiences while avoiding confrontation with Soviet authorities. This use of folk motives became an instrument of poetic freedom, enabling writers to preserve historical memory and critique Soviet policies under the guise of celebrating folklore and tradition (Jacquesson, 2022).

Kazakh poets, particularly Ilyas Zhansugurov, employed various symbols and legends to convey national identity, historical memory, and a spiritual connection across generations. The dombra is considered a powerful symbol, often used in Kazakh poetry. For example, in his poem, *Dombra*, Zhansugurov praises the dombra as the bearer of the soul of the people, its history, and its feelings. He wrote:

*Play your kui, dombra, play.
Spread a wonderful melody,
Babble like mountain streams,
Sing joy into your heart.
So that all the fog in the mountains disappears,
So that all the clouds come down from the sky,
So that everyone listens to you,
Loving your melody.*

These lines illustrate the intrinsic unity between music and nature, wherein the melody of the dombra appears to intertwine with the winds of the steppe. The instrument assumes a symbolic voice of the Kazakh land itself, reflecting its vastness, beauty, and freedom.

Kazakh folk culture is incredibly rich, originating in the nomadic traditions that have shaped the identity, worldview, and artistic expressions of the Kazakh people for centuries (Kuzembayeva, 2024). This cultural wealth is reflected in epic poetry, oral storytelling, proverbs, and traditional music, all of which capture the spirit of the steppe, the deep connection to nature, and the values of hospitality, bravery, and freedom (Abduov et al., 2020). These nomadic themes have inspired many writers and poets, describing vast landscapes, horses, yurts, and spatial mobility (Tokşılıkova & Abdul Rakhmanuly, 2023). The nomadic lifestyle, often associated with people's survival, is a metaphor that represents the resilience, freedom, and brevity of the Kazakh population (Shoinzhanova et al., 2024). Ilyas Zhansugurov made significant contributions to Kazakh poetic culture and significantly influenced the development of Kazakh oral folk art (Aitbaeva & Tarakov, 2023). Under the impact of Kazakh epos, he incorporated folk motifs, national traits, and values into his works. Importantly, Zhansugurov's poetry preserved the traditional Kazakh verse and extended its artistic potential through expressive language and symbolism. Additionally, his works were influenced by the socio-political context of that time and Soviet censorship. The experience of life on the steppe and as a nomad enabled Zhansugurov to describe the social and cultural identity of the Kazakhs and adapt folk traditions to new literary forms (Zhansugurov, 1984). Several literary critics have agreed that Ilyas Zhansugurov contributed to the collective memory by articulating folk literature (Mamayev et al., 2021). They emphasized that the poet possessed a unique ability to present oral folk art to a modern audience, thereby facilitating the further development of Kazakh literature. It is important to note that several contemporary Kazakh poets adapt folk motifs in their works, but they draw on them through 21st-century realities. For example, dombra, steppe, and aul, which Ilyas Zhansugurov described as symbols of culture and ideological resistance, are currently depicted through the influence of technology, globalization, and multiculturalism (Boman & Mussakhanova, 2024). Additionally, poetry is a powerful medium for conveying Kazakh history, the national challenges, joys, and sorrows of a typical Kazakh in modern society (Omarova et al., 2020).

The research aims to analyze Ilyas Zhansugurov's role in the development of Kazakh literature, examine the influence of folk motifs in his poetic works, and explore the interpretations of these motifs in contemporary literary and cultural contexts.

The study focused on answering the following *research questions*:

- (1) How do folk motifs in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry reflect Kazakh national identity and cultural heritage during the early Soviet period?
- (2) What aspects of Kazakh poetic traditions are influenced by Ilyas Zhansugurov's folk motifs?
- (3) In what ways are Zhansugurov's folk motifs interpreted in modern times, particularly in relation to contemporary socio-political issues?
- (4) What stylistic instruments does Ilyas Zhansugurov use in his poetry?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since incorporating folk motifs into written literary forms is an extensive scientific problem, some poetic works are devoted to symbolism and imagery (Sahoo & Rath, 2023). According to Khayrilloevna (2024), these elements carry deep cultural meanings that enrich poetic expression. Asaqli and Masalha (2020) investigated specific rhythmic and structural patterns in traditional folk poems, including repetition, parallelism, and musicality. In Kazakh literature, motifs related to nomadic heritage and heroic epics serve as a means of cultural continuity (Kuzembayeva, 2024). Research findings suggest that folk motifs frequently draw on mythological and legendary archetypes, including spirits and supernatural beings (Zhamgyrchieva et al., 2020). At the same time, folk traditions influence the language of literary

works, contributing unique expressions, proverbs, and metaphors derived from oral storytelling (Rakymzhan et al., 2022). Zakirova et al. (2023) argue that folk motifs address universally resonant themes, including love, the pursuit of a better future, interpersonal relationships, and humanity's bond with nature.

History is a key topic that focuses on societal transformations and the formation of national identity (Matayeva et al., 2025). Özkan (2020) supported this idea, indicating that incorporating myths and folk tales paints a peculiar picture of Kazakh character and mentality. Many writers incorporate folk motifs, traditional storytelling techniques, and epic narratives to connect the past with contemporary literature, thereby ensuring cultural continuity (Almas et al., 2025). Some findings outlined the literature as a carrier of national identity (Sadvokassova et al., 2024). For example, Chaika et al. (2024) stated that literature contributes to preserving national languages, particularly in societies where linguistic assimilation has threatened the native tongue. Besides, some sources investigated the role of myth and heroic figures in national consciousness (Bekzhanova & Durrani, 2025). Moreover, it established the importance of postcolonial and post-Soviet identity reconstruction (Kossyn, 2024). Literature often engages in the re-examination of national identity since it questions past narratives, reclaims indigenous cultural elements, and redefines the nation's place in the global context (Adedeji, 2024).

The analysis of scientific literature has shown that oral tradition has long been a foundational element of written literature, shaping storytelling, thematic depth, and cultural expression, and positively affecting social responsibility and ethics (Nikolenko et al., 2024). Before the widespread development of written texts, societies preserved their histories, beliefs, and moral values through oral storytelling, epic poetry, and folklore (Zakirova et al., 2023). These oral traditions influenced later written literature by providing a rich reservoir of narratives, archetypes, and poetic forms (Toktanova et al., 2021). Many literary works use oral storytelling, which enhances the readability of texts and strengthens their connection to cultural memory and common values (Zehadi, 2024).

In the case of Kazakh literature, oral tradition is deeply connected with its written forms, particularly due to the nation's historical reliance on oral storytelling (Bekzhanova & Durrani, 2025; Kuzembayeva, 2024). Kazakh literature has its roots in the epic poetry of *zhylrau* (bardic poets), who recited heroic tales and lyrical narratives that conveyed historical events, moral values, and philosophical reflections (Egamkulova, 2024). During the 19th and early 20th centuries, when it was possible to document oral epics, many representatives of Kazakh literature, including Ilyas Zhansugurov, started to integrate folk tales and other traditional patterns into modern texts (Matayeva et al., 2025). Recent findings demonstrate that Soviet-era Kazakh writers extensively incorporated folk elements into their literary works, as they sought to preserve national heritage and resist ideological constraints (Nurgali et al., 2021).

Folk motifs continue to evolve in modern literature. Their primary role is to reflect contemporary realities through the use of language devices. Modern poetic texts transmit myths and legends but, at the same time, figuratively explain burning issues such as identity crises, globalization impact, multiculturalism, environmental concerns, social justice (Boman & Mussakhanova, 2024), the use of artificial intelligence and virtual reality which can contribute to the creative processes (Sobolenko et al., 2024). One example is the manifestation of the image of *Korkyt Ata*, a legendary 9th-century Turkic songwriter (Zakirova et al., 2023). Another example refers to nomadism in modern literature. Usually, it is portrayed as a counteraction to modern urbanization (Özkan, 2020). It is important to mention the literary transformations of ancient archetypes in contemporary narratives. For example, the *batyr* (warrior) was historically depicted as a defender of the people. Still, in modern works, this image represents the struggle against ideological oppression and the necessity to be confident and determined (Zharylgapov & Takirov, 2023).

According to Özkan (2020), Ilyas Zhansugurov remains one of the most eminent Kazakh poets, widely recognized for his vivid portrayals of nomadic life. It was emphasized that Zhansugurov is skilled in conveying the values of freedom, resilience, and the spirituality of the Kazakh people (Mamayev et al., 2021). Aitbaeva (2022) noted that Zhansugurov developed a distinctive poetic language by incorporating various customs, myths, and proverbs into his works. At the same time, Zhansugurov's literary style is characterized by rich and expressive poetic language (Aitbaeva & Tarakov, 2023). He often employs parallelism, repetition, and alliteration (Mukhtarova et al., 2024). The scholars refer to these techniques as a mirror of the structure of Kazakh oral poetry. Additionally, the use of metaphors and personification adds emotional depth to his verses. Zhansugurov demonstrates a strong narrative style, particularly in his long poems, where he weaves historical and contemporary themes (Bulanov & Kyiakhetova, 2024). Thematic analyses of his poetry (Aitbaeva, 2022; Özkan, 2020) highlight recurring concerns with national identity, social justice, and the transformation of Kazakh society under the dual pressures of modernization and political change. Other scholars underscore his emphasis on cultural preservation, resistance to oppression, and the dignity of labor, portraying the working class (Syzydykova et al., 2023). It was also noted that Zhansugurov drew inspiration from ancient times, capturing the nostalgia of traditional Kazakh customs and heroic historical episodes (Kungurova et al., 2021).

Therefore, this scholarly investigation is vital for understanding the profound connection between oral folk traditions and the written literary heritage of Kazakhstan. Analyzing folk motifs in Zhansugurov's poetry may reveal the new meanings of traditional symbols, myths, and values in Kazakh society. Interpreting these motifs may also outline their evolution in today's literary discourse.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The research emphasized the role of literature in shaping cultural identity with a particular focus on the broader context of Kazakh oral and written heritage. By examining Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry, it was found that integrating traditional imagery, symbols, and themes enriches a poetic line and conveys the cultural background of the Kazakh language through literature. The research model implied a hermeneutic approach, defining a folk motif as a constantly evolving cultural element with significant historical, social, and philosophical meanings (Fluck, 2019). This methodology enabled an exploration of Zhansugurov's contribution to the synthesis of folklore and modern literary expression, allowing the researchers to trace the historical transformations and evolving practices of Kazakh ritual culture as reflected in modern poetic texts.

Furthermore, the research model is grounded in literary theory, with a focus on the interrelationships between narrative texts and their contexts (Ibrahim et al., 2024). The theory was employed to describe the functions of folk motifs through intertextual references, thereby forming a positive national identity, promoting patriotism, and evoking collective memories related to the native country. Additionally, the research elucidated the peculiarities of Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetic language by comparing it to similar cultural narratives in other literary traditions. This theory encouraged us to conduct the aesthetic and structural analysis of Zhansugurov's folk motifs and to reveal their meaning in different historical contexts, illuminating the interplay between culture and history.

B. Data Collection

This research aimed to analyze the influence of folk motifs in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry and to interpret these elements within contemporary literary contexts. The primary data consisted of original poetic texts that featured folk motifs. The study systematically examined Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetic works, prioritizing those that incorporated elements of oral folklore and traditional symbols. These texts included poems *Dombra* (1924), *Kui* (1929), *The Steppe* (1930s), *Kuishi* (1934), and *Kulager* (1936). The selection criteria were based on the following parameters: (1) poems should reflect Kazakh oral heritage; (2) poems should be widely recognized and demonstrate the author's literary style; (3) poems should be written at various times (between 1924 and 1936) representing the change of author's emotional state and external circumstances. Literary critiques and historical documents were used to provide a comprehensive understanding of Zhansugurov's contribution to the development of Kazakh national literature. The researchers utilized both the Web of Science and Scopus databases for literary journals. Also, they added all journals that met several requirements: (1) journals with a specific focus on literary theory; (2) journals published by Kazakh educational institutions and research organizations; (3) journals published during the recent five years; (4) journals with a high impact factor. Furthermore, 133 articles were selected, ensuring a comprehensive overview of the research problems. Thematically, they can be divided into five groups: (1) articles on general literary studies – 18; (2) articles revealing the connection between the development of Kazakh literary and socio-political events at a certain period – 23; (3) articles studying the folklore in poetry – 34; (4) articles examining the works of certain Kazakh poets – 41; and (5) articles specifically addressing the literary contributions of Ilyas Zhansugurov – 17.

C. Instruments and Procedures

A combination of methodological approaches was employed to achieve the research objectives. First, historical analysis was used to examine Ilyas Zhansugurov's literary texts under the impact of the early twentieth century's social, cultural, and political circumstances (cultural suppression, land seizures, economic displacement, industrialization, and urbanization). Second, stylistic analysis served as a main instrument to identify the integration of folk elements in Zhansugurov's poetic expression. This analysis involved a detailed examination of the linguistic instruments in his works, such as metaphors, symbolism, repetition, and rhythmic structures, and their subsequent categorization. Third, contextual analysis established the connection between folk motifs and their background. During the research, Zhansugurov's poetry was studied as an example of a reflection of folk motifs in collective memory. Fourth, the intertextual approach was applied to enhance the study. It examined the interaction of Zhansugurov's folk motifs with other literary and folkloric texts. Fifth, a comparative analysis was used to compare Ilyas Zhansugurov's texts with works of other Kazakh poets who depict folklore patterns. Table 1 represents the overview of instruments and procedures used during the research.

TABLE 1
OVERVIEW OF INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Method	Purpose	Units for analysis
Historical analysis	To understand the impact of specific periods and events on the literary themes in Zhansugurov's poetry	Historical sources, literary critiques, and ethnographic studies
Stylistic analysis	To explain the uniqueness of Zhansugurov's style	Linguistic and structural levels of poems
Contextual analysis	To understand the impact of external factors on the themes used in the poetic texts of Zhansugurov	Author's biography, reception context
Intertextual analysis	To examine the relationships between Zhansugurov's poetry and folklore texts	Fairy tales, songs, and legends
Comparative analysis	To explore the relationships between Zhansugurov's poetry and other literary works	Poetry of classical and modern authors

D. Data Analysis

The data analysis combined statistical and descriptive methods to study the peculiarities of folk motifs in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry and interpret them in light of modern times (Figure 1).

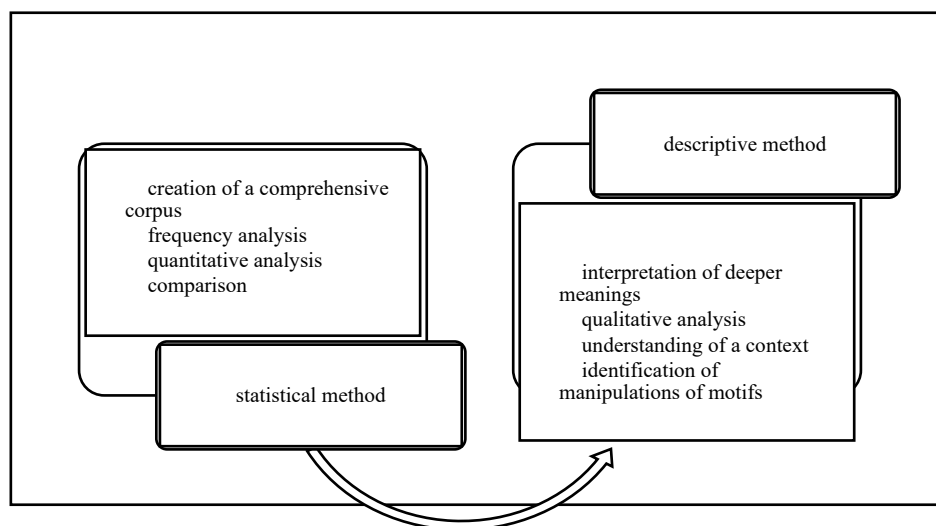


Figure 1. Data Analysis Framework

The first step was to apply the statistical method. It involved the creation of a comprehensive corpus of Zhansugurov's works, selecting poems where folklore patterns were used extensively. Then, a frequency analysis was conducted. It helped identify the use of specific motifs in the text. Additionally, the data were analyzed quantitatively to measure the frequency of each pattern and identify the use of various motifs. The statistical analysis also included comparative techniques. The motifs in Zhansugurov's poetry were compared with Kazakh folklore texts of different genres (epic poems, traditional songs, proverbs and sayings, folk tales, legends, ritual chants, folklore performances with music, and oral poetry). A descriptive method was used to supplement this. It interpreted the meanings of motifs selected during the statistical analysis. It included qualitative analysis to reveal symbols and hidden connotations in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry. Other techniques focus on understanding the chosen texts and identifying the manipulations of folk motifs.

IV. RESULTS

A. The Depiction of Kazakh National Identity and Cultural Heritage During the Early Soviet Period

The Soviet period profoundly transformed Kazakhstan's political, social, and cultural landscape (Cameron, 2020). The Bolshevik government implemented aggressive policies of Sovietization, which aimed to negatively affect traditional Kazakh structures. Soviet authorities also sought to suppress the Kazakh language, customs, and religious practices. Then, Zhansugurov faced significant oppression due to his unflinching commitment to Kazakh national identity and cultural heritage (Nakispekova, 2024). His work, rooted in Kazakh traditions, was often seen as politically unaligned with the Soviet project. Besides, his open criticism of Soviet policies, such as forced collectivization, led to his persecution.

Studying Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry (Zhansugurov & Seifullin, 1973), it was found that the steppe and the nomadic lifestyle are central themes. In *The Steppe*, he reflects on the land's spiritual significance and its role in shaping Kazakh identity. He portrays the steppe as a symbol of the Kazakh people's deep connection to their heritage. In *Dombra*, Zhansugurov emphasizes the role of the dombra, a traditional string instrument, as a symbol of the Kazakh spirit and identity. In *Kui*, the poet elevates the role of conventional music, expressing the soul of the Kazakh people, who lived in harmony with nature and respected their traditions. These works reflect Zhansugurov's efforts to immortalize the Kazakh way of life in the face of rapid political and social change during the Soviet era. In *Kulager*, Zhansugurov draws on the heroism of the nomads, showcasing the courage of a people who, despite political upheaval, remain rooted in their ancestral traditions. Table 2 presents an analytical overview of how Kazakh national identity and cultural heritage are depicted in Zhansugurov's poetry.

TABLE 2
THE DEPICTION OF KAZAKH NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH ZHANSUGUROV'S POETRY

Category	Depicted elements
Traditional culture	Description of the steppe, nomadic lifestyle, and the customs of Kazakh people
Ancestral wisdom	Showing the values of wisdom, courage, and honor
Resistance to Sovietization	Glorification of Kazakh traditions and the indigenous lifestyle
Heroism and national pride	Mentioning of Kazakh historical figures

Zhansugurov’s portrayal of Kazakh national identity not only captured the essence of the steppe, nomadic lifestyle, and ancestral values but also played a significant role in revitalizing his people’s literary heritage.

B. The Influence of Zhansugurov’s Folk Motifs on Kazakh National Poetic Traditions

The analysis of Zhansugurov’s (1958, 1973, 1984) poetry revealed that he skillfully adapted traditional Kazakh folk motifs into his written poetry, preserving and revitalizing the nation’s cultural heritage. In the epic poem, *Kulager*, he employs rhythmic, musical language and vivid imagery to narrate the tragic fate of a legendary racehorse, a symbol of freedom and national pride in Kazakh folklore. In *Dombra*, he personifies the traditional Kazakh musical instrument, weaving it into the fabric of oral traditions, much like *zhyrau* did through song and verse. *Kui* and *Kuishi* further illustrate this connection by transforming musical compositions and their historical narratives into poetic form.

During the research, it was found that Zhansugurov’s use of folk motifs contributed to the strengthening of Kazakh national identity and cultural pride, particularly during the early Soviet period, when policies of collectivization and Russification threatened indigenous traditions (Bulanov & Kyiakhmetova, 2024). Zhansugurov’s poetry served as both a celebration of cultural identity and a reflection on the beauty and the pain of the past; the author also declared the acts of resistance against Soviet efforts to strengthen a national identity through aesthetic elements and structures in poems (Aitbaeva & Tarakov, 2023). At the same time, incorporating folk songs and legends ensured that Kazakh heritage remained a living force rather than a relic of the past (Zakirova et al., 2023).

Based on literary sources (Zhansugurov, 1984) and recent scholarly research (Aitbaeva, 2022; Toksılıkova & Abdul Rakhmanuly, 2023), this study highlights the significant contribution of Zhansugurov’s folk motifs to the development of Kazakh poetic traditions and the preservation of oral folk art (Figure 2).

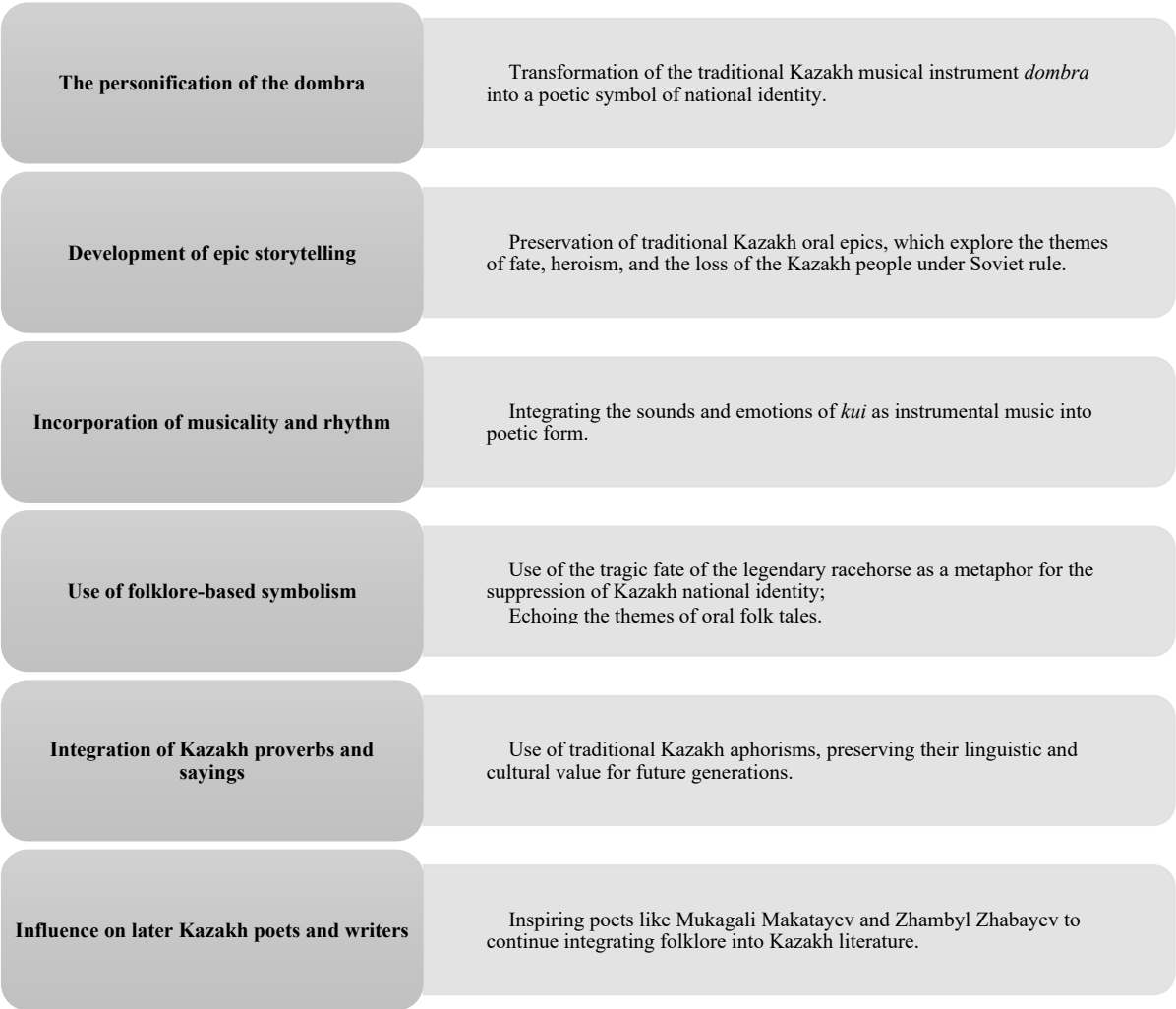


Figure 2. Zhansugurov’s Contribution to the Development of Kazakh National Poetic Traditions

In this context, it is important to compare Ilyas Zhansugurov’s use of folk motifs with that of other prominent Kazakh poets. Thus, Zhansugurov’s use of folk motifs stands out among Kazakh poets due to his ability to blend oral tradition with literary expression, creating a rich, rhythmic, and deeply symbolic poetic style. Unlike Saken Seifullin, who focused on revolutionary themes and the modernization of Kazakh society, Zhansugurov remained deeply rooted in traditional Kazakh folklore, myths, and legends (Omarov, 2021). Zhansugurov’s epic poem, *Kulager*, is a vivid example of utilizing

the oral storytelling tradition in written form. Hence, Zhambyl Zhabayev, a qayyn or Kazakh traditional folksinger, incorporated several folklore variations into his poems, making them accessible to most people (Telegenov & Kozhashev, 2019). A comparative analysis of the poetry of Mukhtar Auezov, Olzhas Suleimenov, and Ilyas Zhansugurov was conducted. For example, Auezov introduced a native form of poetic folklore as a lyric-epic story with a dramatic plotline (Nurgali et al., 2021). Suleimenov used folklore to synthesize Soviet anticolonial themes (Caffee, 2020). To compare, Zhansugurov explored various topics and incorporated folk symbols to illustrate the aesthetic richness and mythic depth of Kazakh culture (Aitbaeva & Tarakov, 2023).

C. Interpretation of Zhansugurov's Folk Motifs in Modern Times

Ilyas Zhansugurov's use of folk motifs remains highly relevant in modern times. According to scholars (Matayeva et al., 2025; Özkan, 2020), they continue to shape Kazakh national identity and literary traditions. Through his symbolism, oral storytelling, and folk legends, he reconnects contemporary readers with their cultural heritage (Kungurova et al., 2021; Zhansugurov, 1973). For example, the traditional Kazakh musical instrument featured in *Dombra* serves as a potent metaphor for national spirit, resilience, and historical continuity. And today, the dombra remains a powerful symbol of Kazakh identity (Rancier, 2024). His poem, *Kulager*, goes beyond a simple folk tale to symbolize the loss of innocence, betrayal, and the harsh realities of life. This theme remains relevant today as Kazakhstan navigates its post-Soviet identity and grapples with historical memory (Boman & Mussakhanova, 2024). *Kui* illustrates historical narratives with the use of traditional melodies, which is a widely used technique among modern poets. Thus, Sabit Mukanov, in his poem *Song about an Orphan*, explains the bitter emotions of an orphan, describing *domra* and *kui* (Bahargul, 2023).

A detailed analysis of Zhansugurov's (1973, 1984) poetry identified four key motifs: the dombra, the steppe, the horse, and the *kuishi*, each serving as a powerful symbol of Kazakh cultural traditions (Figure 3).

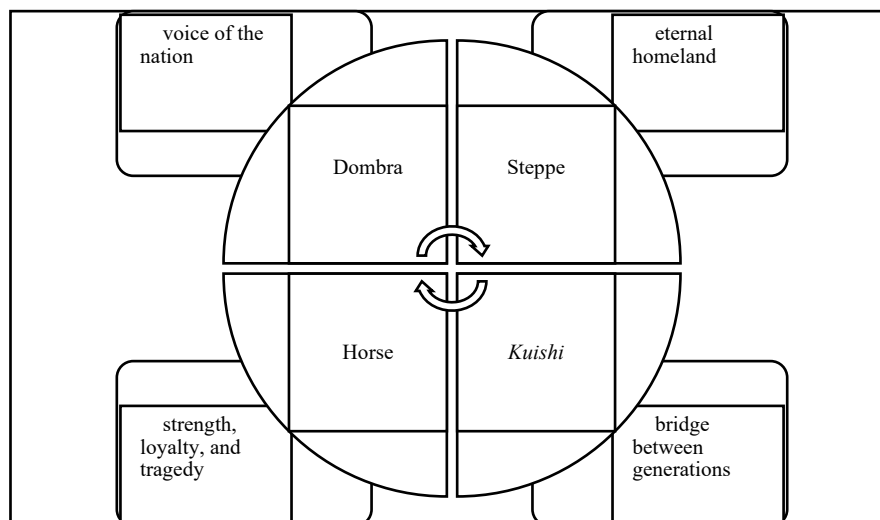


Figure 3. Key Motifs in Zhansugurov's Poetry

The dombra is portrayed as a symbol of Kazakh identity, history, and cultural expression. A cultural phenomenon of the great steppe is another motif, particularly in *The Steppe*, where Zhansugurov describes the nomadic spirit in the mysterious land. Figuratively, the steppe represents freedom, independence, courage, and endurance. Today, the concept of the "Great Steppe" is utilized as an ideological management tool, representing Kazakhstan's positioning in the Eurasian geopolitical arena (Ismakova et al., 2019). Horses are often described as symbols of cultural identity and resistance, as well as carriers of historical myths and cultural artifacts (Tokshylykova et al., 2024). Regarding Zhansugurov's poetry, *Kulager's* story describes a horse as a metaphor for betrayal, loss, and political oppression. The *kuishi* appears in *Kuishi* and *Kui*, where it is depicted as a bridge between generations. Music is considered a keeper of Kazakh oral traditions, using melodies to tell stories of love, war, and heroism. Zhansugurov's *kuishi* stresses the importance of cultural continuity, reminding us about folk traditions.

It is important to reveal the adaptation of Ilyas Zhansugurov's traditional ideas and motifs in the works of modern Kazakh poets. For example, the steppe, celebrated as the idealized space, symbolizes freedom in Zhansugurov's poems. Still, it is viewed as a nostalgic image, highlighting the contrast between traditional nomadic life and contemporary city life. For example, Ilyas Zhansugurov wrote in his poem *The Steppe Today*:

*The spring sun rays shine,
And you reflect them in the sky again,
Spacious steppe, endless land.*
Olzhas Suleimenov describes the steppe in *Argamak*:
*You are famous for your herds,
There roam the black horses.*

*In showers of dry grass.
Give me a young horse,
The veins play inside,
I will gallop to the edge,
The city and the steppe
Tilting.*

In *Kulager*, Zhansugurov showed the loss of freedom and the traditional nomadic life through the image of the horse. Importantly, the horse was compared to a suppressed nation. He wrote:

*My incomparable Kulager, help me live,
How you would now gallop ahead of the baigi!
Here in the fatal ravine, in the gloomy place
I mixed your blood and my tears.*

Galym Zhailybai, in his poem *From Altai to Tanirtau*, wrote the following line:

*Let the bird Tanirtau flash for me
With its blue fiery wing.
Let the horse that was under the Hun's saddle
neigh at the ancient kurgan.*

Here, the horse is depicted as a symbol of military glory, evoking Kazakhstan's rich military heritage. The poet also speaks about independence, speed, and the greatness of nature.

Thus, contemporary Kazakh poets could reinterpret Zhansugurov's folk motifs, adapting them to new realities. At the same time, folk motifs in poetry require careful expression through distinct literary techniques and instruments.

D. Use of Stylistic Instruments in Zhansugurov's Poetry

Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry introduces numerous stylistic instruments (Rakymzhan et al., 2022; Zhansugurov, 1984). Through the use of symbolism, Zhansugurov elevates the themes of nomadism. His metaphors are often rooted in the natural world, where elements like the steppe, the dombra, and the wind serve as literal images and symbols of the Kazakh spirit. These stylistic tools help Zhansugurov convey a connection to his cultural roots. Also, he skillfully utilizes rhythmic patterns and repetition to reflect the oral traditions of Kazakh poetry. Notably, the recurrent emphasis on motifs such as the dombra and the steppe underscores their significance as emblems of Kazakh identity. Other stylistic instruments include hyperbole, contrast, imagery, allusion, irony, and rhetorical questions. Table 3 provides a detailed analysis of the stylistic instruments employed throughout Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetic oeuvre.

TABLE 3
STYLISTIC INSTRUMENTS USED IN ILYAS ZHANSUGUROV'S POETRY

Poem	Instrument	Explanation
<i>Dombra</i>	Metaphor	The dombra symbolizes the spirit and soul of the Kazakh people.
	Hyperbole	The poet describes the music of the dombra as "reaching the heavens," emphasizing its cultural significance.
<i>Kui</i>	Symbolism	The steppe is used as a symbol of freedom and heritage.
	Imagery	Zhansugurov describes the steppe's colors and sounds to create a vivid picture of the natural world.
	Personification	The wind is personified as a messenger carrying the dombra's tune.
<i>Kulager</i>	Repetition	The phrase "Kulager, my dear Kulager" creates an emotional connection to the horse.
	Rhetorical Question	The poet asks, "What is freedom?" referring to deeper meanings of life.
<i>The Steppe</i>	Contrast	Zhansugurov contrasts the harsh realities of life with the beauty of the Kazakh landscape.
	Irony	The poet reflects ironically on the "progress" that means cultural loss.
<i>Kuishi</i>	Allusion	Zhansugurov references Kazakh myths and historical figures in his poems.

Various stylistic techniques add richness and depth to a poem. These techniques allow the poet to engage the reader's senses and emotions, creating a deeper connection with the poetic text.

V. DISCUSSION

The comprehensive literature review revealed that folk motifs are extensively employed in both classical and modern Kazakh poetry (Shoinzhanova et al., 2024). These motifs, rooted in folklore and oral literature, challenge mainstream ideas of Kazakh identity, the nomadic lifestyle, and the connection between humans and their surrounding nature (Kungurova et al., 2021). Recent findings (Bekzhanova & Durrani, 2025; Mamayev et al., 2021) demonstrate that Kazakh poetry has evolved into a tool for both personal and national reflection, with the incorporation of folk motifs facilitating the ongoing redefinition of identity. At the same time, the research outcomes revealed that Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry incorporates several folk motifs, including the steppe, nomadic lifestyle, and Kazakh customs, which are representative of traditional Kazakh culture. Additionally, the poet emphasizes the manifestation of wisdom, courage, and honor in his poems. Some works relate to resistance to Soviet rule by glorifying Kazakh traditions.

According to several scientific sources, traditional culture has been known to shape modern Kazakh literature, as it establishes values and themes, and employs specific storytelling techniques and genres (Özkan, 2020). It was found that incorporating folklore elements into modern Kazakh literature helps keep it dynamic, socially conscious, and globally aware (Boman & Mussakhanova, 2024). The use of folk motifs makes Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry a unique and symbolic phenomenon within Kazakh literature. Studying the role of Ilyas Zhansugurov revealed several objective transformations that remain relevant today. Thus, the analysis of Zhansugurov's poetic texts demonstrated that his contribution encompasses the personification of the *dombra*, the refinement of epic poetry form, and the utilization of folklore-based symbolism. Also, the researchers outlined that Ilyas Zhansugurov could integrate several proverbs and sayings effectively into poetry. This technique enhanced the characters described, making them appear wise, experienced, or culturally rooted. More importantly, the research revealed that Zhansugurov's poetry inspired later Kazakh poets, who were able to explore national identity and historical memory in their works.

In modern Kazakh literature, folk motifs are frequently reinterpreted in light of the evolving socio-political landscape (Kungurova et al., 2021; Zakirova et al., 2023). Writers typically introduce traditional themes that portray the nomadic life or a hero's destiny, often alongside burning issues such as the struggles of post-Soviet society, globalization, and digitalization (Boman & Mussakhanova, 2024). According to Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry, four main motifs were differentiated – the *dombra*, the steppe, the horse, and the *kuishi*. The findings emphasized that these motifs serve as powerful symbols of the Kazakhs. For example, the *dombra* is closely tied to the voice of the nation, and the steppe represents the freedom and courage of the nomad. The horse depicted betrayal, loss, or even Stalin-era repression. The *kuishi* appeared as a tool to foster dialogue between different generations.

Considering the recent findings, stylistic devices enhance the text's expressiveness and contribute to the author's unique style (Bataeva & Zhaksylykova, 2024). Currently, Kazakh poetry is facing new trends, particularly the use of various stylistic devices aimed at enhancing a text's aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual impact. Some of them refer to metaphor (Rakymzhan et al., 2022), parallelism (Khaybullina et al., 2022), comparison, synecdoche, metonymy, and irony (Tortkulbaeva, 2023). Some authors (Aubakir et al., 2019) note that Kazakh poets often employ culturally specific poetisms to name realities or individual notions. The stylistic instruments in Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry included metaphor, hyperbole, symbolism, imagery, personification, repetition, rhetorical question, contrast, irony, and allusion. The findings demonstrated that incorporating various stylistic elements into his poetry imbues the works with profound meaning, vivid complexity, and deep emotional impact.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study outlined the richness of Ilyas Zhansugurov's poetry in folk motifs and their impact on the reader's emotions and thoughts. It was found that the poet focused on describing the steppe, the nomadic lifestyle, and the customs of the Kazakh people, showcasing the values of wisdom, courage, and honor, and glorifying Kazakh traditions and the indigenous lifestyle. The use of folk motifs makes Zhansugurov's poetry unique in Kazakh national literature. The findings showed that Ilyas Zhansugurov contributed to the personification of the *dombra*, the development of epic storytelling, the use of folklore-based symbolism, and the incorporation of proverbs and sayings within the poetic texts. The research proved that Zhansugurov's writings inspired later Kazakh poets and encouraged them to integrate folk motifs. Besides, four key motifs were differentiated in Zhansugurov's poetry. They included the *dombra*, the steppe, the horse, and the *kuishi*. At the same time, it was revealed that several stylistic devices were employed by Zhansugurov, including metaphor, hyperbole, symbolism, imagery, personification, repetition, rhetorical questions, contrast, irony, and allusion.

This research demonstrates the deep connection between oral traditions and written literary forms. This understanding reinforces the role of folklore as a foundation for national poetry. Moreover, it highlights the significance of cultural heritage in shaping national identity and consciousness. Beyond literary analysis, the study has implications for Kazakhstan's broader socio-cultural and historical context. The examination of Zhansugurov's poetry reveals the national identity of the early Soviet period and explores the intricate relationship between cultural preservation and political influence. The findings suggest that folk motifs were not just poetic devices but also subtle forms of resistance and self-assertion in the face of Soviet efforts to reshape Kazakh traditions. This perspective enriches discussions on cultural resilience, illustrating the role of literature in negotiating identity and historical memory during ideological transformation. Additionally, interpreting Ilyas Zhansugurov's folk motifs in modern times opens new gaps for contemporary literary studies. The insights gained from this research can be applied to a comparative analysis of modern Kazakh poets and writers, facilitating a deeper understanding of the traditional folk elements they incorporate into their works.

FUNDING

This paper was written within the framework of the scientific project AP19680053, titled 'Ilyas Zhansugurov's Legacy in the Development of Humanities: in the Context of the 21st Century,' funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The project is part of the basic research program in the social sciences and humanities for the period 2023-2025.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abduov, M., Abduova, N., & Stanciu, N. (2020). Image, Function, Meaning, and Structure: The Role of Aphorisms in the Kazakh Epic Poem Kyz Zhibek. *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 23, 99 – 118. <https://doi.org/10.3986/SMS20202306>
- [2] Adedeji, A. (2024). Dimension of Religious Violence and Its Antecedent Effects on National Integration and Social Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary Philosophical and Anthropological Studies*, 2(2). Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.59652/jcpas.v2i2.177>
- [3] Aitbaeva, K. B. (2022). Vidy leksicheskikh transformatsii pri perevode poemy Ilyasa Zhasugurova “Kulager” [Types of lexical transformations during translation of Ilyas Zhasugurov’s poem “Kulager”]. *European Research Materials*, 1. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://ojs.publisher.agency/index.php/ERM/article/view/475> [in Russian]
- [4] Aitbaeva, K., & Tarakov, A. (2023). Ipponim “Kulager” v onomasticheskom prostranstve poemy Ilyasa Zhasugurova i osobennosti ego perevoda [Eponym “Kulager” in onomastic space of Ilyas Zhasugurov’s poem and the peculiarities of its translation]. *Keruen*, 78(1). Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.53871/2078-8134.2023.1-07> [in Russian]
- [5] Almas, O., Auyesbayeva, P. T., Mambetov, Z., Daribaev, S., & Karbozov, Y. (2025). Preserving Cultural Heritage: A Study of Abdygali Sariyev’s Poetic Vision. *Journal of Ecocriticism*, 4(1), 632 – 642. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v4i1.5871>
- [6] Asaqli, E., & Masalha, M. (2020). Folk Songs and How Amal Dunqul Uses Them in His Poetry. *Advances in Literary Study*, 8, 78-105. doi: 10.4236/als.2020.82008
- [7] Aubakir, S., Bizhkenova, A., Kapenova, Z., Aubakirova, S., & Zhumabekova, B. (2019). Interpretation of non-standard words in poetic discourse: examples of Kazakh poetry. *Opción*, 35(90-2), 172-186. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://produccioncientificaluz.org/index.php/opcion/article/view/30565>
- [8] Bahargul, D. (2023). Sabit Mukhanov’s Works. *International Journal of Formal Education*, 2(3), 38–41. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <http://journals.academiczone.net/index.php/ijfe/article/view/612>
- [9] Bataeva, F. A., & Zhaksylykova, A. E. (2024). Stylistic means of expressing time and space in English and Kazakh languages. *Science and Reality*, 1(17), 93-96. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/stylistic-means-of-expressing-time-and-space-in-english-and-kazakh>
- [10] Bekzhanova, Z., & Durrani, N. (2025). The Intersection of Gender and National Identity in History Textbooks in Kazakhstan. In *Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education* (pp. 79–101). Springer Nature Switzerland. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75301-5_4
- [11] Boman, B., & Mussakhanova, A. (2024). Going in three directions: parallel trajectories of Kazakhstanization, Westernization, and Post-Soviet multiculturalism in Kazakhstan’s elementary and secondary education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 1–11. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2024.2355203>
- [12] Brown, M. T. (2024). “Kazakh means freedom” – Kazakh language policy and national identity before and during the Ukraine war (Senior Thesis No. 684). Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/senior_theses/684
- [13] Bulanov, E., & Kyiakhmetova, Sh. (2024). Kolonizatsiya Zhetysuskogo kraya Rossiiskoi imperiei (na osnove trudov Ilyasa Zhasugurova) [Colonization of Jetisu kray by Russian Empire (on the basis of Ilyas Zhasugurov’s works)]. *Vestnik Kazakhskogo Natsionalnogo Universiteta – Bulletin of Kazakh National University. Series historical*, 112(1), 19–29. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.26577/JH.2024.v112.i1.02> [in Russian]
- [14] Caffee, N. (2020). Between First, Second, and Third Worlds: Olzhas Suleimenov and Soviet Postcolonialism, 1961–1973. *Russian Literature*, 111-112, 91-118. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ruslit.2020.03.004>
- [15] Cameron, S. (2020). Russia Looks East: Kazakhs and the Russian and Soviet State. *Russian Studies in History*, 59(4), 330–335. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611983.2022.2065171>
- [16] Chaika, O., Sharmanova, N., & Makaruk, O. (2024). Revitalising Endangered Languages: Challenges, Successes, and Cultural Implications. *Futurity of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 38–61. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.57125/FS.2024.06.20.03>
- [17] E Hosne Ara, J. (2022). Harmonization of Mythology into the Poetry of the Modern Poets: A Study on the Selected Poems of Yeats, Eliot and Auden. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 4(3), 165–175. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i3.969>
- [18] Egamkulova, G. M. (2024). Historical Reality in Zhyrau’s Poetry. *Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History*, 5(4), 196-199. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://cajssh.centralasianstudies.org/index.php/CAJSSH/article/view/1117>
- [19] Fluck, W. (2019). The Limits of Critique and the Affordances of Form: Literary Studies after the Hermeneutics of Suspicion. *American Literary History*, 31(2), 229–248. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajz003>
- [20] Gülüm, E. (2023). Folkloric memory: (Re)connecting the dots for broader perspectives. *Memory Studies*, 16(6), 1466-1483. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980231204175>
- [21] Ibrahim, A. M., Almazaidah, I. S., & Allawzi, A. (2024). Literary theory and its role in modern and contemporary criticism: A critical approach. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 5(1). Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.58256/zebr1z41>
- [22] Ismakova, A., Akysh, N., Akhmetova, A., Kaliyeva, A., & Shortanbayev, S. (2019). Seven Aspects of the Great Steppe in the Modern Kazakh Prose – the National Conception of Eternal Nation and Art Discourse. *Space and Culture, India*, 7(3), 68-75. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.20896/saci.v7i3.468>
- [23] Jacquesson, S. (2022). From Folk Epics to Epic Monuments: Studying and Publishing Epic Lore in the Soviet Union (1920s–1960s). *Journal of Central Asian History*, 1(1), 100-129. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1163/27728668-12340003>
- [24] Khaybullina, A. A., Nagumanova, E. F., & Nurgali, K. R. (2022). Genre Strategy of Modern Russian-Language Poetry in Kazakhstan. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, 9, 2609–2615. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.321>

- [25] Khayrilloyevna, K. N. (2024). The Importance of Symbolism in World Literature. The Examples of Symbolism in different works of writers. *European Journal of Innovation in Non-Formal Education*, 4(9), 166–170. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://inovatus.es/index.php/ejine/article/view/4063>
- [26] Kossyn, M. (2024). Genealogy of Being in Postcolonial Kazakh Culture: Re-Reading the Words of Edification. *Comparative Literature: East & West*, 8(2), 196–206. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/25723618.2024.2433842>
- [27] Kungurova, O., Goraeva, S., & Afanaseva, I. (2021). “Step” kak obraz i kontsept v kazakhstankoi literaturno-khudozhestvennoy traditsii [“Steppe” as an image and concept in Kazakh literature and fiction tradition]. *3i: intellect, idea, innovation*, 2. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://ojs.ksu.edu.kz/index.php/3i/article/view/60> [in Russian]
- [28] Kuzembayeva, G. (2024). The Ethnic Content of the Values Son and Daughter in the Kazakh Culture: Ethnopsycholinguistic Study of Family and Relative Values. *Psycholinguistics*, 35(2), 82–107. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2024-35-2-82-107>
- [29] Mamayev, Z., Boranbayev, S., Karabayeva, K., Issayeva, Z., & Mamayeva, G. (2021). Kazakh-Uzbek literary relations: History and specificity of literary translation. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 9(2), 114–122. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from https://www.ijscsl.com/article_245185_ddd87ea4a6fa4550f051497c88232c07.pdf
- [30] Matayeva, A., Zhumagul, S., Sarybayeva, B., Yerlanova, A., & Chuzhayeva, A. (2025). Problems of the theory and methodology of modern Kazakh literary studies. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy, and Development*, 9(1), 10392. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd10392>
- [31] Mukhtarova, S., Karagulova, B., Yergazina, A., Imangazina, A. & Kyyakhmetova, S. (2024). Bridging Cultural Boundaries: Translating Untranslatable Vocabulary in Kazakh-English Literary Texts. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 1-15. doi: 10.22034/ijscsl.2024.2034397.3554
- [32] Nakispekova, A. (2024). Kazakhstan Marks 130 Years of Renowned Poet Ilyas Zhansugurov - The Astana Times. *The Astana Times*. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://astanatimes.com/2024/05/kazakhstan-marks-130-years-of-renowned-poet-ilyas-zhansugurov/>
- [33] Nikolenko, K., Poperechna, G., Diatlova, I., Kvitkin, P., & Hrytsenko, A. (2024). Philosophical and Psychological Foundations of Social Responsibility and Ethics. *Futurity Philosophy*, 3(3), 95–113. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.57125/FP.2024.09.30.06>
- [34] Nurgali, K. R., Suleimenova, S. B., & Bogdanova, Y. V. (2021). Conflict and ways of individualising mass images in early Kazakh prose. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3), 1277–1289. doi: 10.52462/jlls.91
- [35] Omarov, B. (2021). Indian plots in the poem by Saken Seifullin «Kokshetau». *Turkic Studies Journal*, 2(4), 37–46. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.32523/2664-5157-2020-2-4-37-46>
- [36] Omarova, A., Kaztuganova, A., Akimzhanov, B., Sultanova, A., & Zhamanbalinov, Y. (2020). Kazakh musical and poetic art in the context of globalization. *Opción*, 36, 387–406. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://produccioncientificaluz.org/index.php/opcion/article/view/31721>
- [37] Özkan, A. (2020). *The effect of the nomadic/settled contradiction on the transformation of the Kazakh identity: a reinterpretation* [Thesis (M.S.)]. Middle East Technical University. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://open.metu.edu.tr/handle/11511/45427>
- [38] Pise, R. (2023). The Role of Folklore in Shaping National Identity. *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture*, 36, 351–359. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.59670/z02xbh19>
- [39] Rakymzhan, O., Shalabay, B., Zhumagulova, O., Kazhibayeva, G., & Kairbekova, I. (2022). Existential Loneliness in Kazakh Literature and Modern World Literature: Insights from Metaphors and Frame-Based Analysis. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 10(3), 103–116. doi: 10.22034/ijscsl.2022.543086.2468
- [40] Rancier, M. (2024). “The Real Kazakh is a Domyra”?: Musical Instruments and Nation Branding in 21st-Century Kazakhstan. *Journal of Musicological Research*, 43(2–3), 159–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411896.2024.2376938>
- [41] Sadvokassova, A., Burkhanov, A., & Sharipova, D. (2024). In Search for Kazakhstani Identity: Societal Perceptions of Kazakhstan’s Nation-Building. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 31(1), 114–137. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2024.2422198>
- [42] Sahoo, R. R., & Rath, N. (2023). Interrelations of Myths and Motifs: A Socio-Cultural Viewpoint. *Lakhomi Journal Scientific Journal of Culture*, 3(4), 147–157. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.33258/lakhomi.v3i4.838>
- [43] Shoinzhanova, M., Ospanova, G., Kalkabayeva, S., Tleubaev, S., & Mamyrov, S. (2024). Problems and aspects of national mentality in Indian and Kazakh literature. *Scientific Herald Uzhhorod University*, 56, 2703–2710. doi: 10.54919/physics/56.2024.270wh3
- [44] Sobolenko, L., Davydiuk, A., Kornieva, V., Lopatynska, I., & Bazyl, O. (2024). Optimisation of Learning and Development of Cognitive Skills through the Use of Integrated Technologies of Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence among Students. *E-Learning Innovations Journal*, 2(2), 102–118. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.57125/ELIJ.2024.09.25.06>
- [45] Syzdykova, M., Abdiramanova, A., & Yenseeva, V. (2023). Rol traditsionnykh i innovatsionnykh tsennostei v obshchestve (na primere regionov Yuzhnogo Kazakhstana) [The role of traditional and innovative values in the society (by the example of South Kazakhstan regions)]. *Keruen*, 80(3), 235–255. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.53871/2078-8134.2023.3-21> [in Russian]
- [46] Tebegenov, T., & Kozhashev, M. (2019). Zhambyl - Poet of the Great Steppe. *Bulletin of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Philology Series*, 128(3), 68–73. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.32523/2616-678X-2019-128-3-68-73>
- [47] Tokshylykova, G., Abdul Rakhmanuly, A., Assylbekuly, S., Kalibekuly, T., & Askarova, G. (2024). The horse as a symbol of cultural identity and resistance in Kazakhstan’s colonial history. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy, and Development*, 8(12), 9038. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i12.9038>
- [48] Tokşılıkova, G., & Abdul Rakhmanuly, A. (2023). The Image of the Horse in Kazakh Poetry. *RumeliDE Dil Ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Ö12, 423–431. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.29000/rumelide.1330513>
- [49] Toktanova, A., Nussupova, A., Kyyakhmetova, S., Imatayeva, A., & Jakypbekova, M. (2021). Prerequisites for Defining Linguistic Reflection. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 9(2) (Themed Issue on Modern Realities of National

- Languages of CIS Countries), 180-188. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from https://www.ijscs.com/article_246330_36ccc813f55707f2134e2516d5ad87b4.pdf
- [50] Tortkulbaeva, T. A. (2023). Features of the Genre of the Work of Kazakh Poets of Karakalpakstan. *Miasto Przyszłości*, 39, 77–83. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://miastoprzyszlosci.com.pl/index.php/mp/article/view/1677>
- [51] van der Heide, N. (2023). Chapter 4. The Epic Hero Manas as the Archetype of Autonomy – Nostalgia and Futurities in Kyrgyz Spiritual and Ethno-Nationalist Discourses. In *Memory and Commemoration across Central Asia*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004540996_006
- [52] Zakirova, A., Maigeldiyeva, S., & Tuyakbayev, G. (2023). Linguacultural and cognitive aspects of teaching the language of Kazakh legends. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, 22(3), 137-151. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1177/14788047231221109>
- [53] Zehadi, I. A. (2024). Teachers' Beliefs on Fostering Democratic Values and Skills in Bangla Language Classroom. *EIKI Journal of Effective Teaching Methods*, 2(4). Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.59652/jetm.v2i4.304>
- [54] Zhamgyrchieva, G., Bekmukhamedova, N., Temirova, M., Madanova, K., Sulaymanova, M., Takhirova, N., & Abdullaeva, Z. (2020). Sacred Tree as an Archaic Motif in Kyrgyz Epic. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 10, 834-839. doi: 10.4236/ojml.2020.106053
- [55] Zhansugurov, I. (1958). *Stikhotvoreniya i poemy* [Poems]. Alma-Ata: Kazakh State Publisher of Fiction Literature. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://online.pubhtml5.com/poge/xjxb/#p=4> [in Russian]
- [56] Zhansugurov, I. (1984). *Izbrannoye* [Selected works]. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from <https://project.orenlib.ru/litmap/index.php?dn=person&to=open&mid=2&id=697> [in Russian]
- [57] Zhansugurov, I., & Seifullin, S. (1973). *Stikhotvoreniya i poemy* [Poems]. Soviet writer. Retrieved 1 July, 2025, from https://imwerden.de/pdf/dzhansugurov_seyfullin_stikhotvoreniya_i_poemy_1973__ocr.pdf [in Russian]
- [58] Zharylgapov, Zh. Zh., & Takirov, S. U. (2023). The study of the image of Agybai Batyr in Kazakh literary studies. *Bulletin of the Karaganda University. Philology series*, 3(3), 86-93. doi: 10.31489/2023Ph3/86-93



Shara Kyyakhmetova – candidate of philological departments, associate professor. Graduated from KazSU named after S. M. Kirov (KazNU named after Al-Farabi) in Almaty, majoring in Kazakh language and literature. Currently works in Kazakhstan at the Department of Kazakh Language and Literature of Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov. Research area: history and theory of Kazakh literature, literature of the Alash era, Ilyas studies.



Mamilya Jakypbekova – graduated from the Kazakh National University named after al-Farabi. Currently, she is an associate professor at Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov in Kazakhstan. Research area: folklore studies, ethnocultural vocabulary, Kazakh literature, Ilyas studies. Her main interests are literary theory, ethnography, linguistics.



Muratbek Imangazinov – graduated from the Kazakh State University named after S.M.Kirov, Doctor of Philology, Professor. He works as a professor at the Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov. Head of the Scientific and Practical Center for Ilya Studies. Research field – literary studies, history of literature, comparative literature (comparative studies), ancient literature, literature of antiquity. Main publications – topical issues of literary studies, history of literature, literary studies.



Gulim Shukenay – graduated with a master's and doctoral degree in «Kazakh Language and Literature» in Zhetysay University named after I.Zhansugurov in Kazakhstan. Currently, she works at the Department of Kazakh Language and Literature at Zhetysay University named after I.Zhansugurov in Kazakhstan. Her research interests include ecology of language, methods of teaching Kazakh language and Ilyas studies (the study of Ilyas Zhansugurov's works). Her main publications focus on ecology of language, language environment and literary language.



Aina Abyzova – graduated with a master's and doctoral degree in «Kazakh Language and Literature» in Zhetysay University named after I.Zhansugurov in Kazakhstan. Currently, she works at the Department of Kazakh Language and Literature at Zhetysay University named after I.Zhansugurov in Kazakhstan. Her research interests include anthropocentric directions of language, cognitive linguistics, and Ilyas studies (learning the language of Ilyas Zhansugurov's works). Her scientific publications are devoted to the study of the relationship between language and intelligence.

Poetry Criticism Through the Lens of Artificial Intelligence and Its Ilk: Touted Perfection Marred by Indeterminacy

Mounir Ben Zid

Department of English and Translation, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman

Abstract—In today's climate of technological advances, literary criticism has been reoriented to utilize technological breakthroughs, with critics encouraged to abandon their traditional approaches to poetry analysis and instead embrace the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Mainstream literary critics concur that AI models and tools can be used to analyze literary texts, expand our ability to decipher and understand those texts, and produce fresh ideas and angles. Despite the strides made to optimize literary criticism through AI tools and their significant benefits, this paper argues that “stupid” artificial automatons are touted as perfection, but that poems' critical analysis through the lens of AI and its ilk generates ambiguous meanings, which cannot replace human intelligence and creativity. To demonstrate those points, this study investigates the use of ChatGPT in understanding and interpreting poems and demonstrates that while AI offers numerous benefits for writers and readers, such as a valuable tool and helpful assistant for authors generating new ideas and creating literary works, mechanical/computational AI automatons cannot replace human intelligence, imagination, and creativity or provide readers with an artistic literary taste and, in this case, a conclusive interpretation of Wordsworth's “Ode: Intimations of Immortality”. On that basis, this paper contends that the unfeeling AI should not be permitted to replace human critics but should offer them assistance, with AI's rise characterized as both a vice and a virtue, given its potential to overshadow the human imagination and dispossess poetry of its human touch and aesthetic beauty.

Index Terms—poetry criticism, artificial stupidity, ChatGPT, human intelligence, linguistic criticism

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid emergence and significant uptick of interest in artificial intelligence (AI) have seen a surge in related research and use, particularly since the arrival of ChatGPT. Over the last few years, artificial intelligence has provoked considerable discussion and has become one of the most captivating areas of technology due to its resemblance to human intelligence. Many of us continue to be enamored of the idea that automated machines such as AI and robots are modern phenomena, but artificial intelligence is, in fact, deeply embedded in our culture and appeared in Western literature almost as far back as 3,000 years ago. Historians have uncovered notions of AI or automatons emerging in the Middle Ages, coinciding with the initial invention of self-propelled devices. More generally, the idea of non-natural creatures and our ability to imagine artificial intelligence date back to ancient times, myths, and legends.

Long before Isaac Asimov envisaged the laws of robotics (1968) and John McCarthy devised the term “artificial intelligence” (1995), and before self-driving cars and machine learning came to be realized, Ancient Greek myths offered up stories on the powers of intelligent humanoids. According to the historian Mayor (2018), ancient people foresaw many of the technological trends being introduced today, including human-assistive robots, and Ancient Greek myths served as the forerunners of AI. In fact, the concept of artificial intelligence can be traced back to legends and myths from as early as 2,700 years ago. Mayor (2018) opines that “Our ability to imagine artificial intelligence goes back to the ancient times [...] long before technological advances made self-moving devices possible, ideas about creating artificial intelligence, life, and robots were explored in ancient myths” (p. 55). They add that “many of the technology trends we grapple with today including androids, GPS and AI-powered helper robots” (p. 55) appeared in the works of ancient Greek poets, such as Hesiod's story of the giant bronze Talos and Homer's myth of the artificial woman Pandora, characters which are believed to represent automatons. These characters, and their creator, the god Hephaestus, were each imagined up and written into legend between 750 and 650 BCE, filling the imaginations of people in Ancient Greece.

In recent times, proposals to integrate artificial intelligence through language models such as OpenAI's GPT have sparked enthusiasm and controversy in the evolving landscape of literary studies. Several scholarly books and articles have focused on different forms of artificial intelligence, and myriad methodologies have been applied in various literary genres, such as poetry, to demonstrate the potential for how “AI can solve intricate literary discourses” (Garret & Nevedha, 2024, pp. 53–54). In particular, with the recent adoption of large language models such as ChatGPT, there has been much hope and hype about what AI may achieve in literary analysis. Many different methods and tools are currently used in literary studies, such as machine learning and ChatGPT. Mainstream critics and literary analysts, such as Garret and Nevedha (2024), opine that AI “has shown great potential and revolutionized different sectors” (p. 51), including the

domain of literature and literary criticism, and that incorporating AI tools and making use of ChatGPT can allow for crunching enormous amounts of data, identifying patterns that escape our human perception, and utilizing “an opportunity to discover hidden trends, understand themes, and obtain novel perceptions on the complexity of literary compositions which might have been omitted” (p. 53). Furthermore, according to different critics and authors, recent developments in works of literature created by AI tools indicate that AI “can mimic the tools humans handle” and develop machines “that can do things as well as humans can, or possibly even better” (Nilsson, 1998, p. 2).

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, there are great potential benefits of AI in the literary field. For example, AI can enable individuals to create their own stories or become leading writers, inspire authors by generating content, and provide a valuable resource for education and research through its capacity to analyze existing literary works. The potential of AI in literary criticism, meanwhile, lies mainly in its quantitative analytical ability to source and examine enormous volumes of data, scan numerous texts, identify patterns, and generate summaries with impressive speed.

However, while the realm of interpretation remains open-ended and AI applications and tools are said to unearth a trove of surprising insights, this research paper argues that the potential of AI interpretations is limited and does not extend to replacing human literary analysis, which cannot be matched in its breadth and depth; nor can AI-driven analysis offer a more holistic, accurate, enriching, or insightful interpretation, and certainly not one that captures the essence of a poem in the same way a human can (Garret & Nevadha, 2024).

Since literary criticism is qualitative and subjective in nature, meaning it transcends objective quantitative analysis; as it involves the insight, intuition, and imagination of a human critic; and because AI lacks the personal and cultural experiences that shape human understanding, this study aims to demonstrate that while AI and its ilk can enhance the efficiency and depth of literary analysis and generate analyses of poems that are similar to interpretations created by human authors, they have certain shortcomings in literary criticism. Chiefly, AI and its ilk tend to be indeterminate, “formulaic and mechanic”, do not “possess the human creativity and emotional intelligence that is an essential constituent” of great poetry analysis, and “do not replace the critical and creative thinking of human scholars”, nor can they appreciate the subtleties of literary devices, linguistic structures, and narrative style (Rathna, 2023, p. 192).

As a case in point, this study will investigate the use of ChatGPT in understanding and interpreting poems and demonstrate that while AI can offer numerous benefits for writers and readers, such as serving as a valuable tool and a helpful assistant for authors in generating new ideas and creating literary works, “stupid” mechanical/computational AI automatons cannot replace human intelligence, imagination, and creativity, provide readers with an artistic literary taste, or, in this case, suffice for the analysis and interpretation of Wordsworth’s “Ode: Intimations of Immortality”. Quite the reverse, this paper contends that the unfeeling AI should be viewed as an assistant rather than a replacement for human critics, given its potential to overshadow the imagination we are gifted as humans and dispossess poetry of its human touch and aesthetic beauty. To reach that conclusion, this study employs a dual-lens by examining the intersection of generative AIs (GenAIs) and scholarly analysis, considering both the benefits and challenges of AI integration into poetry criticism. On balance, I argue that while AI can offer numerous benefits for literary analysis, its use should still be considered controversial and requires further exploration and discussion.

II. GENERATIVE AIs: TOUTING A PERFECT APPROACH TO LITERARY ANALYSIS

Artificial intelligence and its ilk are having an enormous impact on literary analysis, taking critics into new realms of exploration. Myriad automated tools such as ChatGPT, QillBot, Synthetica, Bard, Amazon Lex, Microsoft Bing Chat, text-mining software, natural language processing, and machine learning are enabling scholars and critics to examine literary texts in unconventional ways. For instance, by analyzing their language and style, these tools uncover patterns that the human eye might have previously overlooked. Furthermore, these tools are helping critics generate detailed reports and present their findings in a more structured and clear manner than in the past. With these new tools and untrodden paths, AI provides an innovative way to engage with literary works, transforms how we understand texts, and enables literary critics to unearth hidden meanings in poems.

Several studies have focused on the potential benefits of different forms of artificial intelligence for analyzing poems and managing the intricacy of their textual elements. Leading critics and scholars have proposed that “Artificial intelligence in literary analysis represents a groundbreaking advancement in the study and interpretation of literature” and that it has the capacity “to dissect and scrutinize literary texts with unparalleled precision and depth” (Rathna, 2023, p. 190). In particular, ChatGPT is viewed as an “invaluable tool for poets and poetry critics alike” (Frackiewicz, 2023, p. 2) because it can generate insightful and accurate poetry critiques. Dabhade and Narula (2023) describe how the use of machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, and text-mining approaches for automated literary analysis can reveal “hidden insights and patterns that could evade human scholars” (p. 3). GenAIs, the authors further contend, go through many stages in analyzing a poem. First, they break a poem into several components, then use natural language processing to identify patterns in the text and generate an analysis of the poem; this analysis includes a detailed breakdown of the poem’s structure and meaning (Dabhade & Narula, 2023).

In a similar vein, literary critics Frackiewicz (2023), Garret and Nevadha (2024) note several benefits of analyzing a poem using AI tools and ChatGPT prompts. First, the analysis generated by ChatGPT requires little time and effort, is consistent in identifying patterns across different texts, is free of human biases, is “more accurate and comprehensive than

traditional methods of poetry analysis”, and can “identify subtle nuances in the text that would be difficult to detect by a human reader” (Frackiewicz, 2023, p. 2).

Second, these authors and critics also assert that AI-powered poetry and critique tools can provide “an objective assessment of a poem ... identify and explore the various elements of a poem, such as its structure, themes, and imagery” (Frackiewicz, 2023, p. 4). Further benefits of using AI tools and ChatGPT prompts in analyzing poetry, according to Frackiewicz (2023), Garret and Nevedha (2024), are that they can crunch enormous amounts of data, analyze literary techniques, extract underlying messages, and generate ideas for further analysis. On a similar note, they describe ChatGPT as a super-powered magnifying glass and a detective that can provide a better understanding than we would otherwise have, which is delivered via detailed feedback on a poem. In this way, ChatGPT can help “to identify the various literary devices used in a poem” and explore “the different interpretations of a poem and the various techniques used by different poets” (Frackiewicz, 2023, p. 4). The authors also note a use for ChatGPT in improving the search functions on internet browsers and following up an initial search with additional information and questions, which has relevance in the poetry field. Overall, they ascribe the main advantage of using ChatGPT in poetry analysis as being its ability “to revolutionize our interactions with poetry, [providing] an opportunity to discover hidden trends, understand themes, and obtain novel perceptions on the complexity of literary compositions which might have been omitted” (Garret & Nevedha, 2024, p. 53).

By the same token, Jebaselvi et al. (2024) note that “Artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms can reveal obscure themes, linguistic subtleties, and hidden patterns that are invisible to conventional literary analysis techniques” (p. 53). The authors go further to add that the computational capability of AI, for instance, in the use of text-mining tools or sentiment analysis, can produce insights that allow for fresh interpretations and points of view, which are uncovered through an analysis of “enormous volumes of texts in the field of literary analysis, finding themes, patterns, and connections that human readers could miss” (p. 54). Likewise, Browne (2022), Smith and Jones (2020) purport that the shift toward data-driven criticism is transforming scholarly approaches to interpreting literary works by “offering new methodologies that complement traditional critical approaches [and providing] insights that might be difficult for human critics to discern” (as cited in Premkumar, 2024, p. 38).

Notwithstanding that AI and its ilk, mainly ChatGPT, are valuable tools in literary analysis, the author of this paper believes that ChatGPT has some key drawbacks to consider, including its production of interpretations of poems that appear plausible at first glance but ultimately prove inaccurate and indeterminate. Another drawback of ChatGPT is that it does not generate new knowledge or data on a poem and uses information about the poem or poet already available on the internet in the public domain. ChatGPT provides few insights, as it can only reproduce the available data and recycle extant ideas. This means that the analysis produced by ChatGPT for a particular poem is likely already available online. Its ability to create is practical and impressive, albeit an unnecessary and imitative touted perfection. Although AI tools such as ChatGPT can dissect complex layers, offer new perspectives, and contribute valuable insights to poetry analysis, they cannot delve into the intricate web of a text to interpret its messages and broader implications.

Another important flaw of ChatGPT is that themes and patterns in a poem are not always straightforward and have different layers of meaning that can only be interpreted by subjective human intelligence. All in all, while ChatGPT is a powerful tool, it should be viewed as an assistant rather than a replacement in poetry analysis because it lacks the crucial element of human intuition, which underlies the capacity to take a deep dive into a poem’s raw emotions and complexities. In the words of Marcin Frackiewicz,

The integration of AI into the world of literature is not without its challenges. One major concern is the potential loss of human touch [...] While AI-generated content may be grammatically correct and contextually relevant, it may lack the emotional depth and nuance of human experience. (2023, p. 1)

III. POETRY CRITICISM: WHY AND WHEREFORE?

Before delving into how ChatGPT analyzes poetry, it is essential to discuss the differences between poetry analysis, interpretation, and criticism. Poetry analysis is the careful examination of a poem to uncover its intricate layers. It goes beyond the surface level to delve deeper into a text’s meanings and linguistic structures, break it down, summarize the content, identify themes and patterns, analyze their elements, such as figures of speech and themes, and explore the text from different perspectives.

Poetry criticism, while working hand in hand with literary analysis and interpretation, goes beyond breaking a text down and engages in a critical discussion, seeking to evaluate and make meaningful, conclusive assessments of a poem. This poetry criticism entails interpreting the meaning, structure, and style of a literary text as well as providing a critic’s evaluation, or “kritikos”. Here, the critic judges a literary text and provides readers with determinate and fresh points of view on relevant issues, often complex and controversial. In other words, in poetry criticism, more of the critic’s opinion comes through. Unlike literary analysis, which is confined to a careful, objective reading of the components in a poetic text, poetry criticism involves a subjective examination of the writer’s intention and motive, together with the objective process of gathering data from a poem to support and defend a personal thesis and opinion. Poetry criticism, as Rawlinson (1971) puts it,

can be no more than a reasoned account of the effect produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing; criticism can never be a science; it is, in the first place, much too personal, and in the second, it is concerned

with values that science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotions and nothing else. (p. 2)

The above discussion leads me to contend that artificial intelligence may be applied effectively to analyze poems, generate ideas, understand the writer's style and themes, dissect and uncover new patterns, and perform basic functions such as summarizing poems and describing poetic devices in a text. However, I seriously doubt that AI tools can replace human critics or handle more complex tasks such as critically evaluating a poem, analyzing texts beyond the surface level, offering quality and vital insights that may go unnoticed by human scholars, or helping unearth new meanings and all-important intentions of poets and messages in their poems. With that in mind, the case study in the following section of this research will compare AI-generated insights with a human analysis of Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality", aiming to highlight the capabilities and limitations of AI in poetry criticism. In this way, I will show that its touted perfection gives a false impression; instead, we should acknowledge the limitations of AI and illuminate the remarkable talent and irreplaceable depth of human interpretative skills.

IV. POETRY CRITICISM THROUGH THE LENS OF CHATGPT: WORDSWORTH'S "ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY" AS A CASE STUDY

The experimental research and case study in this section of the paper employ ChatGPT to analyze William Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality". Here, I will demonstrate how generative GenAIs, specifically ChatGPT, are touted as offering perfection, since artificial intelligence allows for a "combination of intelligence, that is, machines capable of demonstrating human intelligence and of making decisions with human skills" (Sun et al., 2020, p. 2), but fail at unveiling Wordsworth's intention and the poem's ultimate message. To exemplify this, a human reading of "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" is offered. The case study will demonstrate that the literary interpretations of the poem generated by ChatGPT at best offer form without meaning and render meaning senseless and sterile.

The simplest way for ChatGPT to analyze Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" is to type the poem's title and the poet's name into the tool. Accordingly, when I carried out this exercise, I used the first prompt to ask ChatGPT to analyze Wordsworth's poem, providing only the poem's title and the poet's name. Based on my instructions, ChatGPT's interpretation of the poem was as shown overleaf.

william wordsworth ode: intimations of immortality

William Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Early Childhood* is one of his most famous and revered poems, originally published in 1807. The poem reflects Wordsworth's philosophical and spiritual concerns about the nature of life, memory, and the soul. It explores the idea of "intimations of immortality," a belief that humans possess an innate sense of something beyond the material world, which can be most keenly felt in childhood but fades as they grow older.

The poem is divided into 11 stanzas, and in it, Wordsworth grapples with the loss of the vivid sense of wonder and connection to the divine or eternal that children experience. As adults, people tend to forget this connection, but the poet suggests that hints of it remain throughout life, albeit in a more muted form.



Key Themes of the Ode:

Message ChatGPT



ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.

Key Themes of the Ode:

1. **Memory and Childhood Innocence:** Wordsworth mourns the loss of the intense spiritual connection to nature and the divine that children experience, which seems to fade with age.
2. **Intimations of Immortality:** The poet suggests that children, in their purity, have an almost direct connection to the divine and the eternal, a connection that provides them with insights into an immortal existence. As they grow older, the "intimations" of immortality become more difficult to perceive, but they do not disappear entirely.
3. **Nature and the Spiritual World:** Throughout the poem, Wordsworth expresses a deep reverence for nature as a reflection of the divine. He suggests that through nature, one can reconnect with the eternal truths and divine forces that children innately sense.
4. **The Power of the Imagination:** The imagination, for Wordsworth, is a vital faculty that allows people to perceive the spiritual dimension of life. In childhood, the imagination is strong, but as people grow older, their ability to access these spiritual truths through imagination often

Message ChatGPT



ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.

- **Alliteration and repetition** to emphasize key emotional moments,
- **Personification** to give human qualities to elements of nature.

The Evolution of the Poet's Thought:

The poem can be seen as a journey from sorrow to acceptance. In the first stanzas, Wordsworth expresses sadness over the fading of childhood's divine perceptions. But as the poem progresses, the tone becomes more hopeful, suggesting that while the intense "intimations" of immortality may wane, a more mature sense of spiritual understanding can still be cultivated.

Ode: Intimations of Immortality is considered one of the central works of the Romantic movement, combining deep philosophical reflection with a powerful connection to nature.



Message ChatGPT



ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.

5. **Philosophical and Religious Reflection:** The poem reflects Wordsworth's belief in a spiritual dimension to life, where human beings are connected to something greater than themselves. The loss of youthful vision is a sorrowful but inevitable part of life, yet the poet finds comfort in the idea that the soul, or spirit, continues to live on in some form after death.

Structure and Style:

The poem is written in a stately, reflective style and employs various poetic devices, including:

- **Blank verse** (unrhymed iambic pentameter),
- **Imagery** (especially nature imagery, such as stars, trees, and fields),
- **Alliteration** and **repetition** to emphasize key emotional moments,
- **Personification** to give human qualities to elements of nature.

The Evolution of the Poet's Thought. ↓



Figure 1. ChatGPT's Interpretation of Wordsworth's "Ode"

It can be observed that ChatGPT successfully produced some interpretations of the poem, commenting largely on childhood experiences, the eternal nature of the human soul, and personal loss. The analysis of the poem by ChatGPT, however, is repetitive and verbose in statements such as "the poem reflects Wordsworth's philosophical and spiritual concerns about nature... [and] Wordsworth mourns the loss of the intense spiritual connection to nature", and it does not explore whether Wordsworth is celebrating eternal life or mourning his ephemeral life. Rather than realizing that the poem highlights the idea of immortality, ChatGPT fixates on the poem's literal meaning. Furthermore, there is no attempt to identify any linguistic or structural techniques and explain how meaning was arrived at within the poem before proceeding with its interpretation.

With this in mind, and to see if ChatGPT could produce a more accurate analysis of the poem and offer a judgment and opinion, in my second instruction, I asked ChatGPT to delve deeper into the poem to explore the poet's final message, as well as asked whether Wordsworth intended to defend his belief in the inevitability of death or celebrate immortality. Here is what ChatGPT produced:

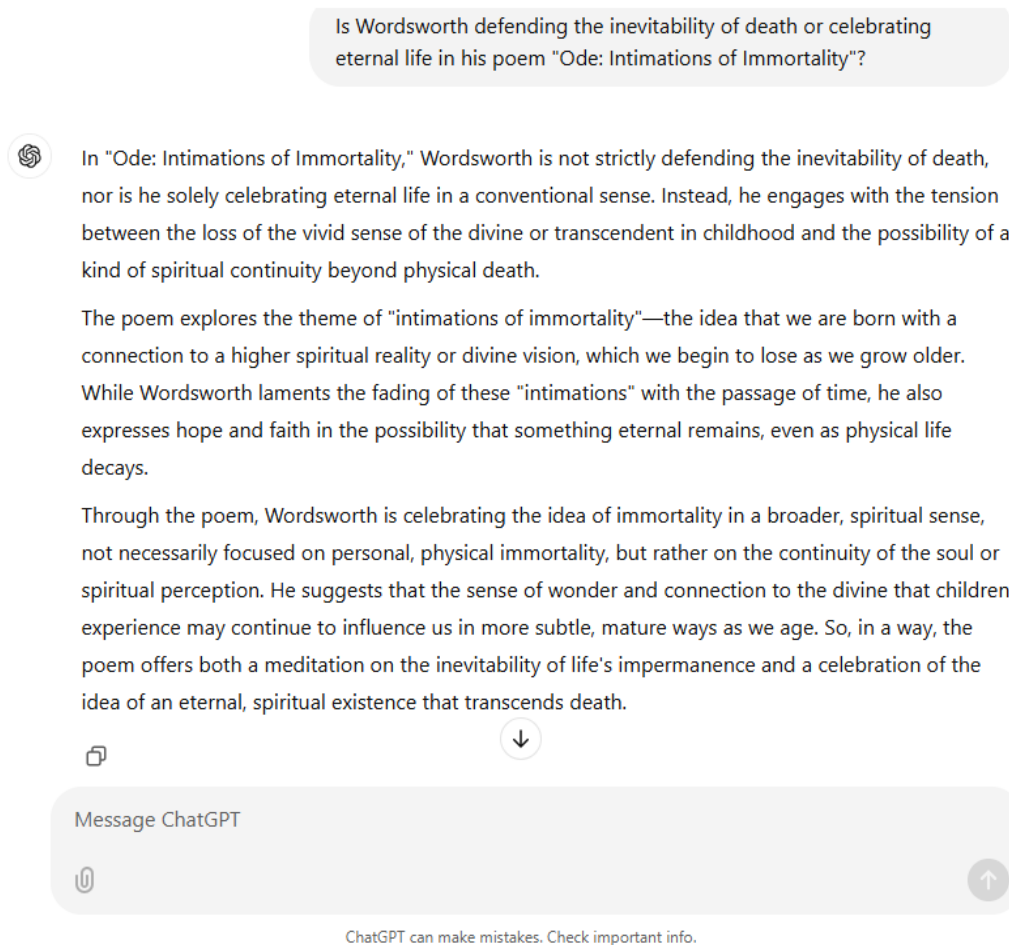


Figure 2. ChatGPT's Final Interpretation of Wordsworth's "Ode"

It is clear from the above that an analysis of Wordsworth's "Ode" through ChatGPT cannot truly reveal the poem's complexity, and the tool's output is open to attack on several grounds. Chiefly, ChatGPT's statements such as "the poem offers both a meditation on the inevitability of life's impermanence and a celebration of the idea of an eternal, spiritual existence that transcends death" can be criticized for being vague, basic, arbitrary, and inaccurate. By making general statements, rather than engaging with the details and linguistic structures of the text, the analysis fails to give a clear, determinate, and convincing conclusion on whether Wordsworth intended the poem to admit his mortality or rather celebrate eternal life. Its surface-level analysis also fails to provide a critical judgment, final opinion, or "kritikos". As such, it does not unearth the poem's deeper meaning and the poet's hidden intention by identifying any of the many linguistic techniques used by Wordsworth. Instead, ChatGPT's limited analysis of the poem is reminiscent of paraphrasing a pre-existing analysis, leaving it falling short of giving an insightful interpretation.

To go further in showing that ChatGPT's analysis of the poem is indeterminate though touted as perfection, I will offer a final, more convincing interpretation. To that end, I explored the contributions of human intelligence in critical linguistics, which yielded helpful clues that ChatGPT overlooked in interpreting the "Ode", thereby erasing any uncertainty and offering a conclusive judgment and opinion.

V. FROM ARTIFICIAL STUPIDITY TO HUMAN INTELLIGENCE: A CRITICAL LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF WORDSWORTH'S ODE

While the automated analysis of a poem through ChatGPT is beneficial in dissecting its meaning, patterns, and style, a manual technical analysis with a "focus on linguistic details can add to our comprehension and appreciation of the literary text" (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 59) by unmasking important features not identified by the artificial and "automated" analysis, as is the case for Wordsworth's poem.

Interpreting a poem is a convoluted process with many interrelated aspects. For each poem, specific characteristics will come into play of its intricate language and the constituents essential to our understanding of themes, figures of speech, style, etc. However, it would be misleading to regard the interpretation of a poem as a mere result of independently determined understandings of the myriad constituents of the poem. Instead, the human interpretation of a poem through critical linguistics will help achieve something more overarching, as was the case for Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality".

For instance, using Deictic Shift Theory as an analytical framework, Segal (2000) suggested exploring the poem via three linguistic devices: deixis, semantic agentivity, and tense and aspect, and showed that examining specific linguistic elements helps remove the mystery of the poem, supporting a final argument for one interpretation as superior to another.

First, exploring deixis will empower us to grasp how the different scenes in the poem are described and from which perspective the events are reported or ventriloquized (Segal, 2000). Carefully analyzing the poem discloses the presence of second-person pronouns “you”, “thou”, “ye”, and “thee”, along with embedded occurrences of “your” and “thy”. Delving deeper into the poem, we also detect the presence of third-person pronouns “he” and “she”, along with “his” and “her” embedded in its verses; otherwise, the poem uses first-person pronouns (“we” and “I”) (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 59). The inference is that “the narrator, who has not retreated from the text, is not deictically detached at the personal level and does not distance himself from the scene he describes” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 60).

In addition, the study noted that “the spatial coordinates in the poem are arranged into two different deictic spheres: the narrator’s implied ‘here’ and an embedded axis of reference within the reported scenes” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 60). As regards the narrator’s here, “the locations given are perceived as indefinite—‘brought us hither’, ‘on a starry night’, ‘round me’, and ‘round the setting sun’—where the definite article” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 60) is of no purpose to specify the right place. In addition, the locations “that immortal sea”, “travel thither”, and “whence he came” (Ben Zid, 2013) are identified as distant and “not here from the narrator’s place” (p. 60). It can be inferred that “there is a lack of coordinates” and accuracy, and creating distance by setting referents apart from the narrator’s here does not strengthen “the effect noted at the person’s deictic level” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 61). Hence, I may argue that while the narrator proclaims “a lack of certainty at the descriptive level” (Ben Zid, 2013), he “disengages himself at the spatial deictic level to deliver his ideological judgments on the reported state of affairs” (p. 61).

An examination of “the temporal deixis” (Segal, 2000) in the poem also reveals that the narrative in past tense—“there was”, “what was”, and “of yore” as a deictic adverb—is designated as “‘not now’ from the perspective of the narrator’s foregrounded ‘now’” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 62). Furthermore, because there are many linking phrases in the poem, the present tense can be found in “it is not now”, “I know”, and “lovely is the rose”, with the added ideological phrases “I know”, “To me alone”, “not for these”, “But for those”, “did seem”, and “no more shall”, deriving from “the narrator’s subjective consciousness” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 62). The indication is that switching past for present tense marks a transition from objective reporting to professing something conceptual, subjective, or based on personal opinion (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 62).

Second, digging for agentivity in the poem serves to identify verbal and nominal forms of expression of some comprehension of agentivity (Segal, 2000), as well as determine what the speaker attempts to achieve by describing incidents from this perspective. Accordingly, the portrayal of agentivity is never innocent and reveals the speaker’s intervention in incidents and therefore his ideological viewpoint.

Using the passive in “something that is gone” and “whither is fled” also reveals the semantic concealment of the agent and the perceiver’s passivity, which is an important indication that this perceiver is “the observing and narrated child” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 63). However, “the syntactic use of the active in ‘I only have relinquished one delight’, ‘I love the brooks’, and ‘I tripped lightly as they’ (stanza XI) in the first person” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 63) is a crucial clue that the deictic center is that of the feeling and narrating adult.

Last, tenses can be ambiguous in a piece of narrative discourse since the writing may be canonical, with complete correspondence between “the deictic center and the ‘here’ and ‘now’ of the speaker, or displaced, where these two axes of reference do not overlap” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 62). For instance, in the opening stanza of Wordsworth’s “Ode”, the use of the present tense in “it is not” and “I now can see” in the past-tense narrative “there was a time when meadow, grove and stream ... To me did seem appalled in celestial light” (de Selincourt & Darbishire, 1952, “Ode”, ll. 1–9) is an important clue pointing to a shift in focus from reporting to taking an experiential perspective, giving the reader access to the narrator’s consciousness.

Additionally, the presence or absence of aspectualized tenses in a poem can provide important information on how the speaker is oriented. I previously proposed that simple non-aspectualized forms reveal “an objective point of view”, while aspectualized forms “indicate a subjective point of view on the part of the speaker” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 62). In regard to the second stanza of the poem, I added, “the speaker uses tenses in their simple and aspectualized forms when he says, ‘The Rainbow comes and goes, And lovely is the rose’” (2013, p. 63), and the same is true of “But yet I know that there hath past away a glory from the earth!” (de Selincourt & Darbishire, 1952, “Ode”, ll. 10–18). The perfective aspect in “there hath past”, as opposed to a non-aspectualized form, hints at an experiential report of what happened as experienced directly by the speaker (Segal, 2000).

The linguistic insights above lead me to note that following Geoffrey Leech’s “Style Indirect Libre” (1969), the poet has created a poetic and human voice and mixed the author’s *histoire* with a speaker’s discourse, shifting between the narrated child’s experiential and observing mode of description and the poetic and visionary discourse of the narrating adult, to ventriloquize rather than report the past, which comes alive again and intimates immortality (Segal, 2000).

Given the evidence set out, I surmise that while Wordsworth’s “Ode” conveys a quandary of mortality, the poem exposes, first and foremost, the poet’s feeling of eternal life (Segal, 2000). Wordsworth offers up a mode of regaining moments of immortality and “suggests in the ‘Ode’ that the problem (mortality) and its solution (feeling/intimations of immortality) lie with the individual—in their consciousness, choice, and struggle—as he speaks of in the prelude’s key lines: ‘I feel, that from thyself it is that thou must give, Else never canst receive’” (Ben Zid, 2013, p. 63).

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper has investigated the rise we are currently witnessing of AI and its ilk, specifically focusing on ChatGPT. It has shown these content-generating tools to be disruptors that are generating more of a curse than a charm, overshadowing the talent of human critics and the brilliance of the human imagination. The results of this research yield several conclusions. First, artificial intelligence has the potential to unmask hidden patterns in a poem, and AI tools such as ChatGPT have impressive abilities in this regard; accordingly, they may play a crucial role in poetry analysis and have already become valuable assistants, employed to uncover themes and improve our understanding of complex texts. This study has also emphasized that AI's abilities to crunch enormous amounts of data and produce insights that escape human perception make it a powerful tool, which may lend support in generating paragraphs of eloquently structured sentences and offer interpretations that would otherwise have eluded us of a poem. However, this study has also revealed that only humans can bring life and meaning to the patterns that it detects, and that AI and its ilk should not be viewed as super-powered literary detectives since they can never replace the spark of human beings. Instead, they pose the danger of stripping works of literature of their human touch and originality. As an assistant rather than a replacement, AI is not all-encompassing and lacks the crucial element of human intuition, along with the capacity to take a deep dive into a poem's complexities and raw emotions. AI will never be able to employ genuine imagination and cannot replace the boundless depth of human creativity. These assertions underscore that AI and its ilk can enhance the field of literary criticism by providing valuable data-driven insights but cannot replace the depth, empathy, and creative interpretation of human critics.

Rejecting the proposal that we should now shift from traditional to completely automated interpretations of poems, which is viewed by the author as a transition from human intelligence to artificial stupidity, this study argues in favor of combining AI tools with human knowledge and talent. In this view, humans can provide extra information about the context and a deeper understanding using the diverse data AI has generated before drawing any conclusions about a poem. In brief, the key to unlocking the potential of poetry criticism in the future lies in the collaboration between AI tools and human talent, which may serve to achieve more comprehensive insights. With joint efforts comprising experts in AI, linguistics, and literary criticism, robust frameworks for poetry analysis can be developed, using AI's computational power while valuing human interpretive skill and giving it the upper hand in poetry analysis. As this investigation comes to a close, my outlook is that, in future years, efforts to incorporate GenAIs into literary criticism will continue to open up new vistas of comprehension. To support that future insight, I recommend that researchers and scholars replicate this study with different styles of poems to determine how ChatGPT and other AI tools handle those materials. However, it is my hope that AI tools will never replace human creation or stand in the way of us appreciating the beauty of poetry. The goal of such immense technological progress is surely not for uncontrolled AI to transform into a force of creative destruction, one which would seriously threaten the field of literary criticism.

REFERENCES

- [1] Asimov, I. (1968). *The rest of the robots*. Grafton Books, London.
- [2] Ben Zid, M. (2013). Linguistics with a small 'l': Toward a deictic shift theory in the exploration of Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality". *Anglisticum*, 2(3), 56–64. Retrieved March 25, 2024, from https://www.academia.edu/34700630/Ben_Zid.
- [3] Browne, M. (2022). The role of AI in modern literary criticism. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 14(2), 115–132. Retrieved April 10, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/12345678.2022.1234567>.
- [4] Dabhade, A., & Narula, S. (2023). Artificial intelligence in English literature: Revolutionizing research methodologies, unveiling insights, and catalyzing social transformation. *Journal of Thematic Analysis*, pp. 1–17. Retrieved October 12, 2024, from <https://independent.academia.edu/SnehaNarula1>.
- [5] Frackiewicz, M. (2023). ChatGPT and the future of assistive technology: Advancing AI-driven accessibility and inclusion. *TechnoSpace2*. Retrieved December 11, 2024, from <https://pl/en/chatgpt-and-the-future-of-assistive-technology-advancing-AI-driven-accessibility-and-inclusion>.
- [6] Garret, S., & Nevadha, P. (2024). AI-driven literary analysis: Exploring the role of ChatGPT in understanding and interpreting literary texts. *Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities*, 8(2), 51–59. Retrieved June 22, 2024, from https://www.academia.edu/112615226/AI_Driven_Literary_Analysis_Exploring_the_Role_of_ChatGPT_in_Understanding_and_Interpreting_Literary_Texts.
- [7] Hu, Y. (2023). Literature in the age of artificial intelligence: A preliminary study on the big language model AI. *Proceedings of the 2023 9th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR)*. Retrieved 5 August, 2024, from https://www.doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-092-3_228.
- [8] Jebaselvi, C., Mohanraj, Alice K., & Anitha, T. (2024). The rise of AI in English language and literature. *Shanlax International Journal of English*, 12(2), 53–58. DOI:10.34293/english.v12i2.7216. Retrieved November 15, 2024, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378882001_The_Rise_of_AI_in_English_Language_and_Literature.
- [9] Johnstone, B. (1987). "He says...so I said": Verb tense alternation and narrative depictions of authority in American English. *Linguistics*, 25, 1. Retrieved 10 May, 2023, from [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(95\)00062-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(95)00062-3).
- [10] Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics* (vol. 2). Cambridge University Press. Retrieved 25 September, 2023, from https://www.academia.edu/126467696/Semantics_Volume_2_John_Lyons.
- [11] Mayor, A. (2018). *Gods and robots: Myths, machines, and ancient dreams of technology*. Princeton University Press. Retrieved 22 January, 2024, from https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691183510/gods-and-robots?srsId=AfmBOop_uJdA4nRZ2THMJchaKo7SLCfWzrurW17_IhXaW8Pkyll0qRsA.

- [12] McCarthy, J. (1995, July). *Making robots conscious of their mental states* [Conference presentation]. Machine Intelligence 15 Workshop, Oxford University, Oxford, UK. Retrieved 28 February, 2024, from <http://s.www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/conconsciousness/consciousness.html>.
- [13] Nilsson, N. J. (1998). *Artificial intelligence: A new synthesis*. Morgan Kauffman. Retrieved 11 March, 2024, from <https://dl.acm.org/doi/book/10.5555/2974990>.
- [14] Premkumar, B. (2024). The impact of artificial intelligence on literary creation and criticism: Emerging trends and implications. *International Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, 4(4), 37–41. Retrieved 5 March, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijllc.4.4.5>.
- [15] Rathna, V. E. (2023). Leveraging artificial intelligence for the future of literature education. *International Journal of Research Publications and Reviews*, 4(10), 190–192. Retrieved 7 April, 2024, from <https://www.chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V4ISSUE10/IJRPR18034.pdf>.
- [16] Rawlinson, D. H. (1971). *The practices of criticism*. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved 3 June, 2024, from http://librarycatalog.bau.edu.lb/cgi-bin/koha/opac-search.pl?q=ccl=an%3A119255&sort_by=relevance_dsc&limit=su-to:Criticism.
- [17] Segal, E. M. (2000). *A cognitive-phenomenological theory of fictional narrative*. Duchan, Bruder, and Hewitt.
- [18] de Selincourt, E., & Darbishire, H. (Eds.). (1952). *The complete poetical works of William Wordsworth* (2nd ed., 5 vols.). Oxford University Press. Retrieved 16 May, 2024, from <https://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/display/10.1093/oseo/person.00000020>.
- [19] Sun, Z., Anbarasan, M., & Praveen, K. D. (2020). Design of online intelligent English teaching platform based on artificial intelligence techniques. *Computational Intelligence*. Retrieved 24 June, 2024, from <http://doi.org/10.1111/coin.12351>.

Mounir A.-J. Ben Zid is an Assistant Professor at Sultan Qaboos University. His career spans English literature, literary linguistics, and poetry translation criticism. At Sorbonne University (France), Dr. Ben Zid earned his M.A. in British Literature and received his Ph.D. in English Language and Literature. Dr. Ben Zid has held a range of academic positions and has served as a member of important committees within the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and at the university where he currently works. Furthermore, he has published several articles on literature, language, linguistics, and poetry translation in high-impact-factor journals.

Multimedia Communication and the Structuring of Migration Decisions: A Comparative Study of Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Malaysia in the Context of Regional Labor Cooperation

Cu Ngoc Dang

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Nam Can Tho University, Vietnam

Abstract—This study investigates how multimedia communication influences the migration decisions of youth in Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Malaysia—not merely as a reaction to economic constraints, but as a culturally mediated process shaped by metaphorical cognition and affective structures. Drawing upon conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the politics of emotion (Ahmed, 2004), gender performativity (Butler, 2004), and the sociology of communication (Bourdieu, 1991; Bauman, 2000; Virilio, 2006), the research analyzes 500 survey responses and 80 in-depth interviews conducted across the four countries. The findings indicate that migration is conceptualized through dominant metaphors such as “escape”, “sacrifice”, “flight”, and “mature responsibility”, which are continuously circulated, legitimized, and normalized by regional media. These metaphors not only frame migration as a desirable rite of passage but also delegitimize immobility by associating it with emotional stagnation or social failure. The study proposes an original regional analytical model, demonstrating how transnational media infrastructures condition the emotional and cognitive architectures of migration imaginaries in contemporary Southeast Asia.

Index Terms—migration discourse, conceptual metaphor theory, multimedia communication, affective politics, Southeast Asia

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Context and Rationale

In recent years, international labor migration has emerged as a dominant livelihood strategy across several Southeast Asian nations, particularly Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Indonesia—countries recognized as major labor-exporting economies. While economic imperatives and structural labor inequalities remain central explanatory factors, multimedia communication has increasingly surfaced as a powerful cultural force shaping the perceptions, emotional registers, and aspirations of young migrants. The rapid proliferation of social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook has not only accelerated transnational flows of information but has also constructed potent symbolic imaginaries of success, autonomy, and “escaping poverty”—images deeply embedded in narratives of departure and transformation. Despite this growing influence, the role of digital media in migration decision-making remains insufficiently examined, especially through a cross-national, theoretically grounded comparative lens.

B. Research Question and Objectives

This study investigates a central research question:

How does multimedia communication structure labor migration decisions among youth in Vietnam and selected Southeast Asian countries?

To address this, the research is guided by three core objectives:

- (i) to analyze the symbolic, affective, and identity-based motifs recurrently reproduced in migration-related media discourse;
- (ii) to compare thematic convergences and divergences in migration imaginaries across national contexts; and
- (iii) to develop a conceptual model that elucidates the interrelations between media infrastructures, emotional economies, and migration behavior.

C. Scope and Methodological Approach

The empirical scope encompasses four Southeast Asian countries—Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Indonesia—each characterized by extensive labor exportation and deep integration into global media circuits. The data corpus comprises:

- (i) mass media and social media content related to migration circulated between 2020 and 2025;
- (ii) a quantitative survey involving 800 young workers aged 18–35; and
- (iii) 80 in-depth interviews with individuals who have migrated, are currently in transit, or are actively planning to migrate.

The research employs an interdisciplinary methodological synthesis that integrates content analysis, semiotic motif analysis, and behavioral modeling. These methods are anchored in theoretical insights from conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), affect theory (Ahmed, 2004), gender performativity (Butler, 2004), and the sociology of symbolic power and mobility (Bauman, 2000; Bourdieu, 1991; Virilio, 2006).

D. Research Gap and Contribution

Although the scholarly literature on labor migration is extensive, it tends to foreground macroeconomic structures, remittance flows, or policy regimes, with limited attention to the symbolic and affective architectures that underlie migratory imaginaries. Particularly underexplored is the influence of digital media ecologies in reconfiguring how individuals conceptualize sacrifice, mobility, success, and futurity (Ahmed, 2004; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This study addresses that gap by bridging media theory, semiotics, and cognitive metaphor theory, offering a novel analytical model that traces how mediated discourse contributes to the moral and emotional scripting of migration. Furthermore, the study proposes policy-oriented recommendations aimed at fostering a more human-centered and ethically responsive media ecosystem within frameworks of regional labor governance (Bauman, 2000; Butler, 2004).

E. Structure of the Paper

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows:

- **Section 1** introduces the research context, guiding questions, and methodological scope.
- **Section 2** develops the theoretical framework, drawing from symbolic communication, affect theory, and migration studies.
- **Section 3** outlines the research design, including data collection procedures and analytical strategies.
- **Section 4** presents the findings from cross-national data analysis.
- **Section 5** discusses the theoretical and policy implications and offers directions for future interdisciplinary research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Literature Review

(a). Symbolic Communication and the Media Construction of Migration

Communication is not a passive conduit for information, but a generative system of meaning that shapes social behavior. Within this semiotic paradigm, signs and symbols do more than represent—they structure how individuals perceive and respond to the world. Barthes (1972) conceptualized modern communication as a “mythological system,” wherein everyday narratives are naturalized into cultural truths. The notion that “going abroad equals success,” for instance, functions as a modern myth, shaping both self-conception and social status through repetitive media reinforcement.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert that conceptual metaphors are not stylistic devices but cognitive mechanisms that structure human understanding. In migration discourse, metaphors such as “migration is escape” or “departure is transformation” provide organizing schemas through which individuals internalize migration as heroic, necessary, or morally desirable. These metaphors circulate through mass and digital media, contributing to affective and moral economies that shape identity and aspiration. Thus, communication emerges as a symbolic infrastructure through which structural constraints are rearticulated as emotionally resonant narratives.

(b). Media, Emotion, and the Affective Economies of Migration

Ahmed (2004) introduces the concept of affective economies to demonstrate how emotions function as social forces that circulate through cultural forms. Hope, shame, envy, and pride are not merely individual states but are conditioned and intensified by media. TikTok tributes to migrant success or Facebook livestreams from overseas labor sites create immersive emotional environments—what Ahmed (2004) terms “circuits of desire.” In this framework, affect becomes a subtle but powerful form of governance, shaping not only what is imagined but also what is deemed legitimate and desirable.

Expanding this lens, Butler (2009) reconceptualizes precarity as an affective, not merely material, condition. For many Southeast Asian youth navigating unemployment and familial pressure, migration offers an emotionally charged response to systemic vulnerability. Through symbolic media templates, hardship is recoded as agency, and departure becomes a culturally sanctioned script of self-transcendence.

B. Theoretical Framework

(a). Media Fields, Symbolic Capital, and Migration Imaginaries

Bourdieu (1991) views media as a field of symbolic power where narratives are not transmitted neutrally but are actively produced, legitimated, and naturalized. Media possesses symbolic capital that reshapes habitus—the internalized structures of perception and disposition—such that migration appears self-evident, even morally imperative. This power lies in normalization through repetition, often masked as common sense.

Appadurai's (1996) concept of the mediascape further highlights how globalized image flows construct aspirational futures. These symbolic grammars—success, sacrifice, redemption—are localized into what he calls “migration imaginaries”: culturally specific interpretive frameworks that shape not only where individuals aspire to go, but why they go and how they assign moral value to the act of migration. The mediascape is thus a symbolic terrain where global narratives and local aspirations converge and co-construct the social meaning of mobility.

(b). Toward a Semiotic and Affective Model of Migration

Traditional migration literature in Southeast Asia has focused on macroeconomic forces, policy infrastructures, and kinship networks (Asis, 2006; Nguyễn & Dang, 2021; Silvey, 2007). While essential, such perspectives often marginalize the symbolic and affective dynamics that shape how migration is imagined and enacted.

Recent studies increasingly acknowledge the role of media, framing it either as an information conduit (Loh, 2020) or a platform for political contestation (Thompson & Chua, 2022). These analyses, however, often remain content-centric and insufficiently theorized with respect to how metaphor, emotion, and symbolic form animate social behavior.

This study proposes a conceptual shift: media is not merely a channel, but a structuring environment that encodes emotional and moral meaning. Conceptual metaphors such as “going abroad is transformation” function as cognitive scripts that justify migration and delegitimize alternatives. Emotions such as shame, hope, or pride are not viewed as internal sentiments, but as socially circulated energies that propel action through symbolic mediation.

By integrating metaphor theory, affect studies, and symbolic power, this framework reconceptualizes media as an active architect of the moral, emotional, and existential terrain of migration. It contributes a transdisciplinary lens that expands migration studies beyond materialist and institutionalist paradigms, foregrounding the affective and semiotic logics underpinning decision-making in a media-saturated era.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA

A. Cross-National Research Design and Methodological Orientation

This study employs a cross-national comparative design to investigate how multimedia communication shapes migration behavior in four Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Indonesia. These countries share structural similarities—such as labor-export economies and dynamic digital media ecosystems—while also displaying distinct emotional cultures and migration regimes. Such variance provides fertile ground for identifying both universal patterns and culturally specific trajectories in media-driven migration behavior (Nguyễn & Dang, 2021; Silvey, 2007).

Methodologically, the research adopts a mixed-methods framework that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches to balance symbolic interpretation with statistical generalizability. The qualitative component enables in-depth exploration of media motifs, symbolic structures, and affective responses (Barthes, 1972; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), while the quantitative component empirically assesses the scope and pattern of media influence on migration decisions (Loh, 2020; Thompson & Chua, 2022). This dual approach enhances both the interpretive depth and the explanatory breadth of the study (Appadurai, 1996; Bourdieu, 1991).

B. Data Collection and Organization

(a). Media Content Analysis

- **Data sources:** TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, state-run television, and digital news platforms.
- **Collection period:** 2020–2025.
- **Selection criteria:** Media artifacts (videos, clips, articles) that directly or indirectly reference labor migration, including themes such as economic success, sacrifice, emotional hardship, remittance practices, and symbolic notions of homeland (Ahmed, 2004).
- **Estimated sample size:** 200 media items (50 per country).

(b). Quantitative Survey (n = 800)

- **Target group:** Young workers aged 18–35 who have migrated, are currently in transit, or are planning to migrate abroad (Asis, 2006; Nguyễn & Dang, 2021).
- **Sample allocation:**
 - (1) Vietnam: 200
 - (2) Philippines: 200
 - (3) Myanmar: 200
 - (4) Indonesia: 200
- **Instrument:** A 25-item self-constructed questionnaire organized into three thematic sections:
 - (1) Media exposure and frequency of engagement with migration-related content.

- (2) Emotional associations and imagery linked to migration.
- (3) Perceived influence on personal decisions and future expectations.

(c). *In-Depth Interviews* ($n = 80$)

- **Participants:** 20 individuals per country, ensuring demographic balance across gender, age, occupation, and migration status (Butler, 2009).
- **Key interview prompts:**
 - (1) What media images or narratives left the strongest impression on you?
 - (2) How did you emotionally respond to these portrayals?
 - (3) In what ways do you perceive media as influencing, shaping, or compelling your migration decisions?
 - (4) How does media shape your sense of future possibility or self-projection?

C. *Data Analysis*

Qualitative analysis (media content and interviews):

- **Semiotic motif analysis** grounded in Barthesian semiology (Barthes, 1972).
- **Thematic coding** using NVivo to trace recurrent emotional and symbolic patterns.
- **Conceptual metaphor analysis** to identify core metaphors structuring media narratives and individual cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Quantitative analysis:

- **Statistical processing** using SPSS and/or R.
- **Analytical procedures** include descriptive statistics, correlation matrices, and multiple regression models to evaluate the relationship between media exposure and migration intent.
- **Modeling** of influence networks across three clusters: media engagement, emotional response, and behavioral intention (Bourdieu, 1991; Virilio, 2006).

IV. FINDINGS

A. *Vietnam: Media and the Metaphor of “Departure as Escape”*

In Vietnam’s mass and social media, labor migration is portrayed not merely as an economic strategy but as a moral imperative—a rite of existential transformation. National television and viral TikTok videos celebrate the narrative of young individuals “rising from a poor village to succeed abroad,” reinforcing a binary symbolic geography: the homeland is associated with stagnation and poverty, while foreign countries are depicted as aspirational and redemptive spaces (Nguyễn & Dang, 2021; Silvey, 2007). Captions such as “One month in Japan and I bought my father a motorbike” encode a cognitive–emotional schema wherein staying is equated with failure and leaving with honor and hope.

At the core of this discourse lies a dominant conceptual metaphor: migration as escape. Here, departure is not framed as loss but as redemption—liberating the self from stagnation and the family from inherited poverty (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Vietnamese media consistently deploys orientational metaphors to organize perception into moral binaries:

- Homeland → darkness – poverty – stagnation
- Abroad → light – opportunity – honor
- Departure → ascent
- Staying → decline

This moral mapping aligns with Barthes’s (1972) notion of myth, transforming migration into a naturalized truth: to be filial is to depart; to remain is to fail.

Quantitative Survey: The Extent of Media Influence

To assess the emotional and behavioral influence of media on migration perceptions among Vietnamese youth, a survey was conducted from November to December 2024 across four high-labor-export provinces: Nghệ An, Hà Tĩnh, Long An, and Bến Tre. The sample included 200 respondents (aged 18–35), evenly balanced by gender and age group, recruited through local networks, labor brokerage centers, and online communities on TikTok and Facebook (Loh, 2020; Thompson & Chua, 2022).

TABLE 1
SURVEY RESULTS ON MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON MIGRATION DECISIONS IN VIETNAM (N = 200)

Survey Content	Male (25)	(18– Female 25)	(18– Male 35)	(26– Female 35)	(26– Total Agree	% Agree
Ever felt emotionally affected by migration media	48	52	42	42	184	92.0%
Believe departure is the only way to prove worth and filial duty	38	39	30	18	125	62.5%
Felt compelled by successful role models in media	34	31	25	18	108	54.0%
Highly value TikTok/YouTube as decision-making sources	29	26	21	20	96	48.0%
Feel ashamed to stay while others have left	20	21	18	17	76	38.0%
Total (n = 200)	169	169	136	115	—	—

Source: Author's fieldwork and data analysis, 2024.

Note: Percentages are based on total sample size (n = 200).

These findings reveal the extent to which media representations permeate migration imaginaries. The most pronounced agreement—92%—concerned emotional influence, supporting Ahmed's (2004) thesis that affect circulates through media as a social force. Notably, respondents aged 18–25, particularly women, reported the strongest emotional responses, indicating a generational and gendered susceptibility to idealized migration imagery. Conversely, respondents aged 26–35 showed more moderated responses, suggesting a potential post-idealization reassessment. Overall, the data affirm that media functions not merely as a backdrop to behavior, but as an affective infrastructure shaping perception, emotion, and decision-making (Bourdieu, 1991; Appadurai, 1996).

In-Depth Interview Excerpts: Emotionalization, Moralization, and Social Pressure

Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted in January and February 2025 with Vietnamese youth at various stages of the migration process—pre-migration, in transit, and post-migration—through both in-person sessions (Cần Thơ and Vĩnh Long) and online interviews with overseas workers in Singapore and Dubai (Butler, 2009). The following excerpts exemplify how media not only informs but emotionalizes and moralizes migration:

(1) Emotional impact from media

“Em không có ý định đi Nhật đâu. Nhưng xem clip bạn em đăng TikTok về làm nông trại ở Hokkaido, thấy trời tuyết, thấy bạn cười, thấy cả lúc gửi quà về cho mẹ... Em xúc động lắm, tự dưng thấy mình cũng muốn được như vậy.”

(I had no plan to go to Japan. But seeing my friend's TikTok video about farming in Hokkaido—the snow, the smiles, and how she sent gifts to her mother—I was so moved. Suddenly, I wanted that too.)

— Female, 22, Long An

(2) Departure as filial obligation

“Hồi ba em bệnh, em nghĩ nếu mình đi Hàn thì mới kiếm được tiền đủ để mua thuốc, lo cho ba. Ở đây làm gì có cơ hội. Em đi vì muốn làm một đứa con có hiếu, chứ không phải vì em muốn giàu.”

(When my father was sick, I thought the only way to earn enough for his medicine was to go to Korea. There's no opportunity here. I didn't leave to get rich—I left because I wanted to be a good son.)

— Male, 26, Nghệ An

(3) Pressure from success models in media

“Coi livestream mấy anh chị đi Đài Loan, họ khoe nhà xây, xe mới, em cứ thấy như họ đang gián tiếp nói với tụi em là ‘đi đi, ở lại thì chẳng có tương lai đâu’. Em không biết họ có ý không, nhưng coi hoài thì cũng thấy chột dạ.”

(Watching livestreams from Taiwan—new houses, new cars—it's like they're telling us: ‘Go, or there's no future here.’ Maybe they don't mean it, but watching all the time really gets to you.)

— Female, 21, Sóc Trăng

(4) Media as practical guidance

“Em tìm hiểu công ty môi giới không qua bạn bè, mà toàn coi review trên YouTube. Nhiều clip hướng dẫn kỹ lắm, từ xin visa tới làm hồ sơ. Có kênh nói chuyện vui, dễ hiểu nên em tin tưởng. Nhờ mạng mà em mới quyết định đi.”

(I didn't hear about agencies from friends—I watched YouTube reviews. Some channels explained everything, step by step, clearly and in a friendly way. That's what convinced me to go.)

— Male, 24, Hà Tĩnh

(5) Shame and moral pressure

“Lúc cả nhóm bạn em đều đi rồi, người đi Nhật, người đi Đài, còn mình vẫn ở nhà phụ mẹ bán hủ tiếu. Coi mạng thấy họ gửi tiền, mua quà cho gia đình, em cảm thấy mình thất bại, kém cỏi. Em thậm chí tránh gặp lại họ vì mặc cảm.”

(When all my friends left—some to Japan, others to Taiwan—and I was still helping my mom sell noodles, I saw them sending money and gifts home. I felt like a failure. I even avoided them out of shame.)

— Female, 25, Bến Tre

Together, these interview data demonstrate that media not only disseminates aspirational content but encodes moral imperatives, emotional cues, and collective expectations. Migration is not merely a rational response to structural inequality—it is an emotive, semiotic, and moralized decision space shaped by the symbolic and affective economy of digital media.

B. Philippines: Migration as a Moral Calling – Media and the Image of the Migrant as Community Servant

(a). Conceptual Metaphors and the Moralization of Migration Through Media

In the Philippine context, media constructs the migrant not simply as a breadwinner, but as a *bagong bayani* (modern-day hero)—a figure deeply intertwined with ideals of sacrifice, filial piety, and civic duty. This narrative pervades diverse platforms, including mainstream television (e.g., ABS-CBN, GMA), film, religious institutions (notably the Catholic Church), and social media, particularly Facebook and YouTube (Encinas-Franco, 2015; Rodríguez, 2015). Within this discursive framework, migration is transformed into a sacred moral endeavor.

The dominant conceptual metaphor that structures this discourse is:

“Migration is community service.”

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphors project moral schemas onto social behavior, thereby reframing migration as a culturally sanctioned act of collective service. Barthes (1972) would characterize this transformation as the *mythologization of civic obligation*, while Ahmed (2004) would read it as the *collectivization of affect*, wherein emotions such as pride, shame, and duty are orchestrated through media narratives. Through these frameworks, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are elevated from individual agents to symbolic participants in a national moral economy.

(b). Quantitative Survey: The Symbolic Power of Media

Period: November–December 2024

Locations: Metro Manila, Cebu, Pampanga

Participants: 200 individuals (aged 18–35), evenly stratified by gender and age group

TABLE 2
AGREEMENT LEVELS WITH MEDIA-DRIVEN MORAL NARRATIVES ON MIGRATION (N = 200)

Survey Item	Male 25)	(18– Female 25)	(18– Male 35)	(26– Female 35)	(26– Total Agree	% Agree
Pride in OFWs being called heroes	40	44	46	48	178	89.0%
Viewing migration as a duty to parents and nation	36	42	41	46	165	82.5%
Emotional response to OFW tribute videos	34	37	38	40	149	74.5%
Belief that media evokes duty more than economic necessity	29	28	35	39	131	65.5%
Feeling guilt/shame for not contributing while staying	26	22	28	40	116	58.0%
Total (n = 200)	165	173	188	213	—	—

Source: Author’s fieldwork and survey data, 2024.

Note: Percentages are based on the total sample (n = 200).

The results demonstrate the symbolic and affective reach of media in shaping migration decisions. An overwhelming 89% of participants agreed that OFWs are rightly seen as “heroes,” while 82.5% associated migration with moral duty to both family and nation (Ahmed, 2004). These sentiments were especially prevalent among women aged 26–35, reinforcing their central role in the affective and moral architectures of migration. Filipino media routinely portrays women as “dutiful daughters,” “self-sacrificing mothers,” and “community-centered providers,” positioning migration not as a transactional economic act but as an ethical imperative (Barthes, 1972).

Furthermore, 58% of respondents reported feelings of guilt for not contributing economically while remaining at home—a pattern particularly pronounced among women over 25. This suggests that media not only valorizes departure but also engenders affective penalties for those who stay, especially if they fail to fulfill the socially prescribed roles amplified by religious, community, and media institutions (Encinas-Franco, 2015; Rodríguez, 2015).

(c). In-Depth Interviews: Media and the Internalization of Duty

Period: January–February 2025

Locations: Taguig, Iloilo, Quezon City; online interviews with OFWs based in the UAE and South Korea

Participants: 20 individuals (10 male, 10 female), selected for demographic diversity and migration status

Selected excerpts illustrating the affective-symbolic themes from the survey:

(1) Pride in OFWs being called “heroes”

“Hindi pa ako nakakapag-abroad, pero tuwing pinapakita sa TV yung mga parangal para sa mga OFW, naiiyak ako. Parang sinasabi nila na hindi lang basta trabaho ‘yan – kundi representasyon ng bansa. Gusto ko isang araw, tawagin din ang nanay ko na bagong bayani.”

(I haven't gone abroad yet, but whenever I watch OFW tribute ceremonies on TV, I'm moved to tears. It's like they're saying this isn't just work—it's national representation. I hope one day my mother will be called a bagong bayani.)

— Male, 23, Pampanga

(2) Migration as familial and national duty

"Yung tatay ko driver, nanay ko nagtitinda sa palengke. Gusto nila makaalis ako. Tuwing may balita tungkol sa remittances ng OFW, parang nararamdaman ko yung obligasyon. Hindi dahil pinilit ako, kundi dahil parang tungkulin 'yan na mas malaki pa sa sarili ko."

(My father's a driver, my mother sells at the market—they hope I'll go abroad. Whenever I see news about remittances, I feel a responsibility. Not because I'm forced, but because it feels like a duty bigger than myself.)

— Female, 27, Cebu City

(3) Emotional response to OFW tribute videos

"Umiyak ako nung napanood ko 'yung video ng isang nanay na OFW sa UAE na nagpadala ng mensahe sa anak niya sa graduation. Para bang sinasabi ng media na ang pagmamahal, hindi namamatay kahit malayo. Ramdam mo talaga 'yung sakripisyo."

(I cried watching a video of an OFW mother in the UAE sending a message to her daughter's graduation. The media made it feel like love never dies, even from afar. You really feel the sacrifice.)

— Female, 25, Iloilo

(4) Belief that media evokes duty beyond economic need

"Hindi naman kami gano'n kahirap, pero nung nakita ko sa Facebook at sa simbahan na parang ang OFW ay 'service from afar', naisip ko na ang pag-alis ay paraan ng pananampalataya. Ginawa ng media na parang may sagradong pangako ang pag-alis."

(We're not that poor, but when I saw Facebook posts and church messages calling OFWs 'service from afar,' I began to think of migration as a form of faith. The media made it feel like leaving is a sacred promise.)

— Male, 28, Taguig

(5) Guilt or shame for not leaving

"Yung kapatid kong babae, nag-Korea siya nung 22, ngayon palagi nagpapadala. Ako nandito lang, part-time sa shop. Kapag sinasabi ng mga kamag-anak na 'ang galing niya', ngumingiti na lang ako. Sa media, ang OFW ang anak na uliran – so ano ako?"

(My sister went to Korea at 22 and now sends money home. I'm still here, working part-time. When relatives say, 'she's amazing,' I just smile. In the media, OFWs are the model children—so what does that make me?)

— Female, 30, Quezon City

These testimonies reinforce the findings that media in the Philippines functions not merely as a source of information, but as a moralizing apparatus—shaping affective economies, constructing symbolic identities, and internalizing expectations of sacrifice. Migration, thus, becomes not only a livelihood option but a culturally encoded obligation, reinforced across religious, familial, and state-sponsored media channels.

C. Myanmar: Migration as a Survival Instinct – Media and the Affective Economy of Escape

(a). Conceptual Metaphor: Migration as Survival

In Myanmar, amidst protracted political turmoil and economic collapse following the 2021 military coup, migration is not framed by media as a dream or national obligation, but rather as a matter of existential urgency. Viral TikTok and Facebook videos titled *"I went to Bangkok not because I wanted to—but because I needed to survive"* reflect a dominant conceptual metaphor that anchors this discourse:

"Migration is a survival instinct."

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain, conceptual metaphors operate by projecting structures from one cognitive domain onto another—in this case, mapping *biological instinct* onto *social behavior*. Migration becomes an involuntary, reflexive act, no longer perceived as elective but as biologically imperative. Within this framework, media narratives frequently circulate emotions of fear, urgency, and despair, aligning with Ahmed's (2004) theory of *affective economies*, wherein emotions become politically charged entities that intensify through repetition and circulation in digital spaces.

(b). Quantitative Survey: Media and the Feeling of Being Pushed to Leave

Period: December 2024 – January 2025

Locations: Yangon, Mandalay, Hpa-An

Participants: 200 individuals (aged 18–35) with regular exposure to social media platforms

TABLE 3
AGREEMENT WITH MEDIA-DRIVEN SURVIVAL NARRATIVES ON MIGRATION (N = 200)

Survey Content	Male (18–25)	Female (18–25)	Male (26–35)	Female (26–35)	Total Agree	% Agree
Feel that media portrays staying as dangerous or stagnant	42	46	39	41	168	84.0%
Empathize with the message “leaving is survival” on TikTok/Facebook	38	44	36	39	157	78.5%
Haunted by videos of exploited laborers who still choose to leave	34	32	33	36	135	67.5%
Believe media makes them feel “swept away” rather than choosing	30	27	28	31	116	58.0%
Feel they have no future if they stay, as shown in media narratives	36	40	37	38	151	75.5%
Total (n = 200)	180	189	173	185	—	—

Source: Author’s fieldwork and data compilation, 2025.

Note: Total percentages calculated from n = 200.

The data indicate that digital media plays a pivotal role in shaping a collective affective perception of crisis in Myanmar. A striking 84% of respondents agreed that media portrays staying as dangerous or stagnant, while 78.5% reported emotional alignment with the narrative that “leaving is survival.” These responses underscore how media shifts migration from a strategic life choice to an affectively framed survival mechanism.

Notably, young women aged 18–25 exhibited the highest agreement (40 out of 50) with the statement that staying offers “no future,” highlighting their heightened vulnerability to survivalist messaging. Short-form digital content—such as the widely circulated clip “*My sister went to Thailand to work as a maid so she wouldn’t starve in Yangon*”—functions as a potent semiotic vehicle, encoding trauma, agency, and urgency within accessible digital formats.

(c). *In-Depth Interviews: Media and the Condition of Forced Movement*

Period: January–February 2025

Locations: Yangon, Mawlamyine, Hpa-An; online interviews with migrant workers in Bangkok

Participants: 20 individuals (10 male, 10 female)

Selected quotes aligned with survey themes:

(1) Media constructs the belief that “staying equals death”

“နေရင်ဆင်းရဲမယ်၊ ဖမ်းခံရမယ်ဆိုတဲ့ဗီဒီယိုတွေကိုတချိန်လုံးကြည့်နေရတယ်။ မသွားရင် တဖြည်းဖြည်းသေမယ်ထင်လာပြီ။”

(Social media is full of videos showing how staying means hunger, arrest, or worse. After watching them so often, I began to believe that not leaving was like dying slowly.)

— Male, 24, Yangon

(2) TikTok reinforces survival messaging

“မိန်းကလေးတစ်ယောက် ထိုင်းကိုလမ်းလျှောက်သွားတယ်ဆိုတဲ့ TikTok ဗီဒီယိုရှိတယ်။ သူပြောတာက ‘သွားချင်လို့မဟုတ်ဘူး၊ အသက်ရှင်ချင်လို့’ ဆိုတာ။ ငါမြင်တာနဲ့ တစ်ခါတစ်လေ ကြည့်ပြီးတောင်ငိုမိတယ်။”

(There’s a TikTok video of a girl walking to Thailand. She said, ‘I didn’t want to go—I needed to survive.’ I’ve watched it over and over. It felt like it was telling my own story.)

— Female, 22, Hpa-An

(3) Even images of exploitation appear better than staying

“ပင်ပန်းရတယ်၊ ဆုပ်ရှားရတယ်။ ဒါပေမဲ့ ငွေရှိတယ်။ ငါတော့ ဒီမှာဘာမှမရှိဘူး။”

(They show people working to exhaustion, being yelled at, exploited. But they still send money home. Me? I have nothing here.)

— Male, 28, Mandalay

(4) A sense of being pulled, not choosing

“ငါမရွေးချယ်တာမဟုတ်ဘူး။ ဒါပေမဲ့ တစ်ယောက်ယောက် ပြေးလွှားနေတာတွေ့တိုင်း ကိုယ်ကိုယ်စွဲခံရတယ်။ မသွားရင်လူမဖြစ်တဲ့ခံစားချက်တောင်ဖြစ်တယ်။”

(It’s not like I decided to go. But every time I see someone escape, I feel dragged along. It’s like if I don’t leave, I’m no longer even human.)

— Female, 25, Mawlamyine

(5) No future if staying—perceived as collective reality

“အခုတော့ များများနေရမယ်လို့မပြောတော့ဘူး။ လူတိုင်းပဲသွားဖို့ စဉ်းစားနေကြတယ်။ အင်တာနက်က ငါ့ကို ဆိုင်းငံ့နေတဲ့ လူငယ်တစ်ယောက်လို ခံစားစေတယ်။”

(Now, no one around me talks about staying. Everyone is planning to leave. Social media makes me feel like staying is just burying your youth.)
— Male, 23, Yangon

These findings underscore how digital platforms in Myanmar function not simply as sources of information but as affective infrastructures of desperation. The media’s repeated invocation of danger, decay, and urgency does not merely depict crisis—it *produces* it affectively. Migration is no longer framed as a proactive decision, but as an instinctive, near-biological response to systemic disintegration—distinct from the moralized migration logics of the Philippines or the aspirational frame in Vietnam. In Myanmar, media scripts survival, not aspiration.

D. Malaysia: Migration as an Enactment of Responsibility – Media, Gender, and the Expectation of Maturity

(a). Conceptual Metaphor: Migration as the Enactment of Responsibility

In the Malaysian media ecosystem, migration is not primarily portrayed as an aspirational journey (as in Vietnam) or a civic-religious duty (as in the Philippines). Rather, it is framed as a gendered performance of responsibility and maturity. TikTok videos, YouTube vlogs, and local civic journalism consistently valorize the figure of the *abang overseas*—the responsible male breadwinner who migrates to provide for his family, thereby attaining social status and moral validation.

The central conceptual metaphor here is:
“Migration is the enactment of responsibility.”

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert, such metaphors are not merely linguistic but ontological, shaping how people conceptualize life stages and moral agency. In this case, migration is imbued with the logic of a rite of passage: to migrate is to transition from immaturity to adulthood. This framing is gendered. Whereas women may be praised for staying and caregiving, men are implicitly—and often explicitly—expected to leave. Ahmed (2004) explains how affective expectations are encoded into media imagery, creating emotional economies where failure to conform leads to guilt, shame, and diminished masculine identity.

(b). Quantitative Survey: Media and the Pressure to Mature Through Migration

Period: January–February 2025
Locations: Johor Bahru, Sabah, Kelantan
Participants: 200 individuals (aged 18–35), with balanced gender and age representation

TABLE 4
AGREEMENT WITH MEDIA-DRIVEN NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION AS RESPONSIBILITY (N = 200)

Survey Content	Male (18–25)	Female (18–25)	Male (26–35)	Female (26–35)	Total Agree	% Agree
Believe media frames migration as proof of adulthood	39	32	37	30	138	69.0%
Feel pressured to leave to prove they are responsible	38	30	35	29	132	66.0%
Moved by media portraying migrants as “family heroes”	34	31	36	33	134	67.0%
Believe TikTok/YouTube reinforce the ideal of men working abroad	36	28	34	27	125	62.5%
Feel guilty for staying while peers succeed abroad	33	27	30	26	116	58.0%
Total (n = 200)	180	148	172	145	—	—

Source: Author’s field data, 2025.
Note: Percentages reflect proportion of respondents in agreement per category.

The data reveal that Malaysian media constructs a strong symbolic association between masculinity, migration, and maturity. A majority (69%) of respondents agree that migration is framed as a marker of adulthood, with this view most strongly held among young men aged 18–25. Similarly, 66% feel pressured to migrate as a demonstration of responsibility, suggesting that media does not merely inform but commands a normative path toward social legitimacy. In contrast, women report lower levels of pressure, underscoring the gender asymmetry in how the metaphor of migration-as-responsibility operates.

These findings confirm that Malaysian digital culture, unlike that of the Philippines or Myanmar, presents migration not as moral heroism or emergency escape, but as a social contract—one particularly imposed on men to perform economic provision as proof of gendered adulthood.

(c). In-Depth Interviews: Migration as a Rite of Passage – Media and Gendered Pressure

Period: February 2025
Locations: In-person interviews in Perak and Selangor; online interviews with Malaysian migrants in Singapore and Dubai
Participants: 20 individuals (10 men, 10 women)
Selected excerpts, with original Bahasa Malaysia and English translation, illustrate five key themes:
(1) Migration as proof of adulthood

“Mak saya cakap, lelaki yang betul mesti berani keluar cari nafkah. TV pun selalu tunjuk abang-abang yang balik bawa duit. Saya rasa itu macam bukti jadi anak jantan.”
(My mother says a real man must be brave enough to go out and earn. TV always shows men coming home with money. That feels like proof that I’m a real man.)

— Male, 24, Perak

(2) Media constructing the ideal of men who must migrate

“Kalau tengok TikTok, semua hero kerja overseas. Yang stay kat kampung, macam takde nilai. Itu yang buat saya rasa malu.”
(On TikTok, all the heroes work abroad. Those who stay in the village seem worthless. That makes me feel ashamed.)

— Male, 22, Selangor

(3) Migration seen as duty, not choice

“Bila orang kata ‘kau lelaki, tanggungjawab keluarga kat kau’, saya rasa macam tak boleh tolak. Tak pergi kerja luar, rasa bersalah sangat.”
(When people say, ‘You’re the man, the family’s responsibility is on you,’ I feel like I can’t refuse. If I don’t go abroad, I feel so guilty.)

— Male, 26, Klang

(4) Women feeling pressure despite staying

“Saya tak boleh pergi sebab jaga ibu, tapi tiap kali tengok IG orang hantar duit, saya rasa macam ketinggalan.”
(I can’t go because I’m caring for my mother, but every time I see Instagram posts about sending money, I feel left behind.)

— Female, 25, Kelantan

(5) Feeling inadequate for staying behind

“Saya kerja kilang dekat rumah je. Tapi kawan-kawan dah pergi Dubai, Korea. Saya rasa saya tak cukup kuat.”
(I just work at a factory near home. But my friends have gone to Dubai or Korea. I feel like I’m not strong enough.)

— Male, 28, Johor Bahru

E. Comparative Analysis of Four Countries: Media and Conceptual Metaphors in Migration Behavior

(a). Commonalities Across Four Countries: Structuring Emotions and Obligations Through Media

Despite divergent political regimes, economic structures, and religious orientations, media in Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Malaysia converges in its performative function: shaping not only perceptions of migration but also the emotions, metaphors, and moral imperatives through which migration is understood. Across these cases, media does not simply mirror social realities—it constructs symbolic worlds that guide behavior. Whether through television, church messaging, or short-form digital content, media has become a semiotic engine of what Ahmed (2004) calls “affective economies,” where emotions are circulated, codified, and moralized.

The migrant subject in each country is rendered intelligible through collectively distributed metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which transform migration from a pragmatic choice into an emotionally and morally saturated act. These metaphors structure what it means to be honorable, successful, or responsible—while stigmatizing the alternative of staying. This process is summarized in Table 5:

TABLE 5
COMMONALITIES IN MEDIA AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS ACROSS FOUR COUNTRIES

Classification	Vietnam	Philippines	Myanmar	Malaysia
Media’s role in shaping behavior	Success archetype	Service archetype	Escape archetype	Maturity archetype
Central conceptual metaphor	Escape	Moral duty	Survival instinct	Enactment of responsibility
Image of the migrant	The victor	The hero	The fugitive	The mature adult
Dominant emotional structure	Hope – confidence	Pride – devotion	Fear – resignation	Pressure – obligation
Multi-platform media	Newspapers, social media, film	TV, church, TikTok	TikTok, Facebook	YouTube, TikTok, television

Source: Author’s synthesis from field data and theoretical frameworks (Ahmed, 2004; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

A prominent convergence across all four contexts is the rise of “migration ideology”—a socially endorsed framework that naturalizes departure and problematizes immobility. Social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube, in particular, operate not as passive distributors of information but as affective infrastructures, amplifying normative messages about success, duty, and responsibility.

These metaphors do not arise organically; rather, they are circulated, ritualized, and normalized until they function as pre-reflective truths. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize that when conceptual metaphors become entrenched, they stop merely describing the world and begin to constitute its emotional and moral coordinates. In such contexts,

individuals who do not migrate are no longer seen as financially constrained—they are marked as socially deficient, lacking ambition, honor, or maturity.

(b). Differences Across Four Countries: Variations in Metaphor, Emotion, and Social Pressure

Beneath the shared structural function of media lies a complex landscape of nationally specific affective logics and metaphorical codings. While each country employs a dominant metaphor to frame migration, the emotional targets, moral grammars, and media modalities differ significantly, revealing how deeply media narratives are embedded in local gender norms, class structures, and historical traumas.

TABLE 6
DIFFERENCES IN MEDIA'S ROLE IN SHAPING MIGRATION BEHAVIOR

Classification		Vietnam	Philippines	Myanmar	Malaysia
Primary emotional target		Aspiration – success	Duty – sacrifice	Insecurity – survival	Responsibility – gendered expectations
Dominant moral framework		Filial piety – social mobility	Community service	Instinctive survival reflex	Proof of adulthood
Dominant media forms		State newspapers, films	National TV, church	User-generated (TikTok/Facebook) videos	YouTube, TikTok, television
Most affected demographic		Young vocational workers, rural women	All social classes, esp. young mothers	Young women, the poor	Young men (18–25)
Unique social outcome		Normalization of upward mobility	Internalization of self-sacrifice	Paralysis of choice – resignation	Masculinization of migration pressure

Source: Field data, media corpus analysis, and interview excerpts (2024–2025).

These findings demonstrate that media functions not as a neutral channel but as a socio-cultural amplifier, intensifying the anxieties, ideals, and symbolic burdens specific to each national context. In Vietnam, migration is portrayed as a path to transcend poverty; in the Philippines, it is framed as sacred service; in Myanmar, as an act of desperate survival; and in Malaysia, as a masculine rite of passage tied to familial duty.

The critical difference lies not in the degree of media influence, but in its emotional encoding and targeted subject formation. National media ecosystems assign moral value to specific behaviors and identities, consistently elevating mobility over stasis and idealizing the migrant as morally superior. As Ahmed (2004) observes, emotions are not private experiences but public scripts—circulating through media, binding communities, and compelling action.

The cumulative effect is the emergence of nation-specific affective regimes in which migration is no longer a pragmatic choice negotiated through material conditions, but a socially mandated horizon of legitimacy. Media, in this sense, does not merely inform—it adjudicates. It determines who is to be admired and who is to be pitied, who fulfills their social role and who is cast as failing it. Within this framework, staying becomes not just economically limiting but morally suspect in the eyes of the collective.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Media as a Structuring Force in Migration Choices

Findings from Section 4 demonstrate that media does not merely reflect migration realities—it actively configures them. Across Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Malaysia, migration emerges not as a strictly private or economically driven decision but as a socially orchestrated act embedded in a matrix of symbolic expectations and emotional imperatives (Ahmed, 2004; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Media functions as a normative infrastructure that prescribes what qualifies as a “rational” or “moral” choice. Conceptual metaphors—“escape” (Vietnam), “service” (Philippines), “survival” (Myanmar), and “responsibility” (Malaysia)—operate as affective maps. These metaphors do not merely describe migration; they prescribe emotional orientations and legitimate behavior within culturally specific value systems.

B. Theoretical Connections: Emotion, Morality, and Social Perception in Media

The theoretical scaffolding outlined in Chapter II offers a lens for interpreting the findings. Conceptual metaphors, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue, function not merely as cognitive tools but as socio-discursive mechanisms that encode culturally sanctioned behavior. Media metaphors regulate what is imaginable and desirable. Emotional responses—such as feeling “moved” by TikTok tributes or ashamed by peer success—are socially orchestrated. Ahmed (2004) contends that emotions circulate within “affective economies,” accruing normative weight through repetition. Butler’s (2004) theory of performativity clarifies how gendered scripts—particularly in Malaysia—render migration an enactment of masculinity. Drawing from Bourdieu (1991), media operates as a field of symbolic capital, legitimizing behavior through moral and aesthetic codes. Despite variation in political regimes, media fields across Southeast Asia share convergent affective logics. Finally, digital imagery, as Bauman (2000) and Virilio (1997) suggest, accelerates normative expectations—rendering non-migration a form of symbolic invisibility.

C. Southeast Asia as a Regional Affective Media Space

This study identifies a shared affective regime that transcends national boundaries. Despite differences in religion, governance, and media freedom, Southeast Asian countries form an emotionally integrated media space. Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook serve not merely as conduits of content but as infrastructures of affect. They circulate recurrent tropes—the sacrificial daughter, the heroic remitter, the responsible son—that collectively construct a moral script in which migration is coded as social maturity and moral worth. Even for those who do not migrate, these narratives create an emotional consensus that privileges departure over rootedness.

D. Policy Implications: Redefining Moral Legitimacy in Media

The findings reveal a deep normative asymmetry: while migration is valorized, non-migration is symbolically voided. Those who remain are often rendered invisible or morally suspect. To address this, media narratives must shift toward pluralism. Rather than reinforcing coercive metaphors, they should cultivate discourses that affirm localized forms of care, labor, and belonging. As Virilio (1997) cautions, the temporal acceleration of mediated imagery must be slowed to allow moral deliberation and diversified imaginaries of success.

E. Theoretical Implications and Future Research

This study underscores the necessity of situating migration metaphors within media-ecological frameworks. Linguistic analysis alone cannot account for the coercive and affective force of visual and digital cultures. Future research should extend this model to under-theorized migration corridors—such as Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor—and further examine symbolic absences: the elderly caregiver, the returnee, the non-remitting youth. These silences are not incidental; they structure the moral boundaries of visibility and legitimacy in regional migration imaginaries. A comprehensive theory of migration must include not only those who move, but also those rendered invisible within the collective affective order.

VI. CONCLUSION AND ACADEMIC–PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

A. Summary of Core Contributions

This study demonstrates that multimedia platforms are not merely conduits of information, but active infrastructures that generate emotions, shape identities, and condition migration behaviors among Southeast Asian youth (Ahmed, 2004; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Contrary to economic deterministic models, the findings reveal that decisions to migrate are structured within a semiotic–affective framework in which the sensation of “not being present” becomes the dominant trigger for departure. In this sense, staying behind is no longer interpreted as a neutral or passive choice; it is symbolically framed as failure, stagnation, or backwardness within the hyper-visual ecosystem of social media. Thus, media does not simply follow migration—it precedes, incites, and structures it.

B. Academic Implications

(a). Expanding the Application of Conceptual Metaphor in Media Studies

While conceptual metaphor theory has traditionally focused on linguistic cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), this research demonstrates that such metaphors are increasingly mediated, visualized, and affectively intensified through digital ecosystems. Metaphors such as “migration as escape,” “as duty,” or “as survival” are not confined to language; they are circulated via TikTok visuals, Facebook image posts, and the ambient collective memory of digital publics. This confirms that metaphors are not merely symbolic—they are operational mechanisms for structuring mass behavior.

(b). Repositioning the Politics of Emotion in Media Sociology

Building on Ahmed’s (2004) theory of affective economies, this study proposes a reconceptualization of emotion as social infrastructure: pride (Philippines), guilt (Malaysia), fear (Myanmar), and obligation (Vietnam) are not just internal feelings but publicly circulated, shared, and anticipated affective codes. These “default emotional registers” are absorbed by youth as normative filters for interpreting life choices, especially migration.

C. Policy and Media Implications

(a). Building Multi-Vocal Media Systems to Counter Emotional Monologues

Contemporary regional media infrastructures largely reproduce a singular moral code: migration is good, right, and necessary. This monoculture of affect hardens social expectations and impoverishes the moral complexity of human action. Future media interventions should:

- Counter single-tone emotional narratives by affirming the legitimacy and dignity of those who remain.
- Revitalize imagery of local community and care as worthy, sustainable forms of social participation.
- Challenge the acceleration of success imagery (Virilio, 1997) by promoting slower, more nuanced temporalities of personal fulfillment.

(b). Integrating Humane Media Into Labor Migration Policy

Beyond regulating contracts or ensuring safe mobility, migration governance should include community-centered media literacy and affective awareness programs. Such initiatives would help migrants understand that their value is not reducible to remittances, but includes relational labor: memory, language, family connection, and cultural continuity.

D. Directions for Future Research

Future studies should:

- Examine “symbolic absences” in media narratives, such as elderly caregivers, returnees, or those unable or unwilling to migrate, to better understand how memory and erasure function within migration discourse.
- Expand the comparative lens beyond ASEAN (e.g., Nepal, Bangladesh, Mexico) to trace whether similar metaphorical structures operate in other migration corridors.
- Utilize AI-based visual analysis to map transnational flows of mediated emotion—tracking how specific TikTok videos or Facebook memes catalyze emotional contagion across national borders.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Edinburgh University Press.
- [2] Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
- [3] Asis, M. M. B. (2006). *The Philippines' culture of migration*. Migration Information Source. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved February 15, 2025, from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/philippines-culture-migration>
- [4] Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.). Hill and Wang (Original work published 1957).
- [5] Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Polity Press.
- [6] Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power* (J. B. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- [7] Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. Routledge.
- [8] Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Verso.
- [9] Encinas-Franco, J. (2015). From “Bagong Bayani” to “Bagong Kabarangay”: Reimagining Filipino migrants through Philippine television programs. *Communication Research and Practice*, 1(3), 263–276. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2015.1073138>
- [10] Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- [11] Loh, D. (2020). Media and migration: Emerging agendas in Southeast Asia. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 30(2), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2020.1725063>
- [12] Nguyễn, T. T., & Dang, T. A. (2021). Migration, media, and meaning-making: A Vietnamese youth perspective. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 31(4), 387–403. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2021.1930961>
- [13] Rodriguez, R. M. (2015). *Migrants for export: How the Philippine state brokers labor to the world*. University of Minnesota Press.
- [14] Silvey, R. (2007). Unequal borders: Indonesian transnational migrants at immigration control. *Geopolitics*, 12(2), 265–279. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040601168841>
- [15] Thompson, M., & Chua, L. H. (2022). Mediating migration in Southeast Asia: Platform politics and mobile imaginaries. *Media, Culture & Society*, 44(1), 76–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437211034065>
- [16] Virilio, P. (1997). *Open sky* (J. Rose, Trans.). Verso (Original work published 1995).
- [17] Virilio, P. (2006). *Speed and politics: An essay on dromology* (M. Polizzotti, Trans.). Semiotext(e) (Original work published 1977).

Dang Ngoc Cu, born on October 23, 1970, in Da Nang City, is currently a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Nam Can Tho University. With over 20 years of experience in teaching and research, his academic focus lies in applied linguistics, comparative literature, and cultural semiotics.

He earned his Ph.D. in Linguistics and has taught a wide range of courses, including English Linguistics, Academic Writing, Translation and Interpreting, and Comparative Literature. His research interests encompass cognitive linguistics, symbolism, and the poetics of Vietnamese literature in dialogue with international literary traditions.

Dr. Cu has published numerous scholarly articles and actively participated in academic conferences. He also supervises graduate students, conducts research projects, and contributes to curriculum development.

Fluent in both Vietnamese and English, Dr. Cu is a member of several academic associations related to language and literary studies.

Exploring Thai Cuisine Through Language: Ingredients and Global Perceptions

Piyada Low

Faculty of Management Sciences, Kasetsart University Sriracha Campus, Chon Buri, Thailand

Piyada Ukachoke

Faculty of Management Sciences, Kasetsart University Sriracha Campus, Chon Buri, Thailand

Pohnlerd Chujoh*

Faculty of Management Sciences, Kasetsart University Sriracha Campus, Chon Buri, Thailand

Abstract—The study aims to identify types of food ingredients, frequent words, and key terms, as well as to explore global perceptions of Thai cuisine on social media. A total of 155 Thai dishes were collected from TasteAtlas, and KH Coder was employed to analyze linguistic data for high-frequency words and the co-occurrence network of key terms. Three linguistic strategies—English transliteration, translation with descriptors, and loanwords—are used to present Thai food names, ingredients, and descriptions. The words ‘sauce’, ‘garlic’, and ‘chili’ were found to be the most common ingredient-related terms, indicating the fundamental role of these items in Thai flavor profiles. Network analysis revealed key functional clusters, such as aromatic herbs and flavor-balancing agents. The terms ‘Thailand’, ‘traditional’, and ‘originate’ highlighted sensory details and the authenticity of Thai cuisine. Transliteration of ingredient names and culinary terms from the Thai language, as well as translation, helps disseminate Thai cuisine globally.

Index Terms—frequent words, linguistic, social media, TasteAtlas, Thai food

I. INTRODUCTION

Thai cuisine is famous for its rich flavors and variety of ingredients, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage and regional diversity. The global popularity of Thai food has led to an increased interest in understanding its unique components, particularly the ingredients that define its distinctive dishes. A comprehensive wordlist of Thai food ingredients is essential for various stakeholders, including linguists, culinary professionals, educators, and food enthusiasts, to facilitate accurate communication, translation, and preservation of culinary knowledge.

A corpus-based approach offers a systematic method for compiling such a wordlist by analyzing authentic language data to identify and categorize terms related to Thai food ingredients. This methodology ensures that the wordlist reflects actual usage patterns, capturing both common and specialized vocabulary pertinent to Thai cuisine.

The development of a Thai food ingredient wordlist has practical applications in various domains. In the culinary arts, it aids chefs and restaurateurs in maintaining authenticity and consistency in Thai dishes, especially in international settings. Educationally, it serves as a resource for teaching Thai culinary terms to non-native speakers, enhancing cross-cultural communication. Moreover, in the field of natural language processing, such a wordlist can improve the accuracy of machine translation systems and support the development of applications related to food and nutrition.

Digital platforms and governmental initiatives play complementary roles in promoting Thai culinary culture internationally. Online resources such as www.tasteatlas.com and www.allrecipes.com provide extensive information on traditional Thai dishes, ingredients, and regional culinary practices, thereby facilitating global access to and appreciation of Thai cuisine. The use of language on these platforms plays a crucial role in preserving the authenticity of Thai culinary traditions, as detailed descriptions, culturally specific terminologies, and accurate translations help maintain the integrity and richness of the original culinary context.

At the same time, governmental organizations such as the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2024) have developed strategies that emphasize gastronomy tourism as a mean to attract international visitors, while the Government Public Relations Department (2024) promotes Thai food as a key component of the country's cultural diplomacy. Through both online and governmental efforts, language serves as a critical medium in conveying cultural meaning, ensuring that Thai culinary heritage is not only widely visible but also accurately understood and respectfully adapted within global food cultures (Government Public Relations Department, 2024; Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2024).

The integration of data from diverse sources, including governmental publications, culinary websites, and linguistic corpora, is crucial for developing a comprehensive and accurate wordlist. A corpus-based approach allows for the systematic analysis of large datasets, ensuring that the resulting wordlist encompasses the full spectrum of Thai food

* Corresponding Author. E-mail: pohnlerd.c@ku.th; <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4490-0999>

ingredients, from common staples to rare and region-specific items.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify types of Thai food ingredients on the global social media.
2. To develop a list of key words or high-frequent words in Thai cuisine.
3. To categorize and examine the high-frequent words of Thai cuisine.
4. To explore and analyze how Thai dishes are perceived and described by non-Thai perspectives on social media.

The research study aims to respond to the four research questions:

1. What types of food ingredients are found in Thai cuisine from the international perspective / on international social media?
2. What are the high-frequent words or key words of Thai food ingredients?
3. What categories are the high frequent words?
4. How are Thai dishes perceived and described from non-Thai perspectives on social media?

By achieving these objectives, the research will contribute valuable insights into the linguistics of Thai culinary terminology, supporting both academic endeavors in corpus linguistics and practical applications in the culinary arts and education.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Corpus Linguistics*

Corpus linguistics is a quantitative methodological approach involving compilation, examination, and analysis of large bodies of text, with notable usage in the language study area (McEnery, 2019). With an enhanced comprehension of words' frequency and collocation, linguists have gained further insight into the pattern of language usage (Barlow, 2011). Despite several challenges associated with this methodology, including the demands regarding the size and diversity of corpora (Pomat, 2024), it has evolved and gained prominence in the fields of linguistics and educational research (Farr, 2008).

A corpus or a language database (plural: corpora) serves as a resource for linguists to investigate, analyze, and study natural language, and in order to answer various linguistic interrogations, researchers commonly build differently focused corpora (Dash & Selvaraj, 2018). While a small database such as PowerPoint slides for a specific English language course can be used to create a word list on a particular area topic such as food (M Nordin et al., 2013), there are also attempts to gather natural language in larger sources in specific domains such as marketing to create materials for special needs language classrooms (Pomat, 2024).

B. *Word List*

Word lists are structurally organized lists of words that are extracted or derived from the corpora. They can typically be categorized into high-frequency, mid-frequency, and low-frequency. With assessment over time, firstly, the high-frequency word list included the initial 2,000 common words, and the low-frequency word list began with the 10,000th word onwards (Nation, 2001). Later, the recent readjustment expanded the high-frequency word list to the first 3,000 words and adjusted the low-frequency word list to begin at the 9,000th (Nation, 2016).

The word lists can be classified as general word lists, which comprise the most frequently occurring words in the English language, with one of the world's most renowned examples being the General Service List (GSL) (West, 1953). Subsequently, building on the concept of frequency-based lists for general language, Coxhead (2000) developed the Academic Word List (AWL) to cater to vocabulary needs in academic contexts. In addition, technical word lists are compilations of vocabulary used specifically in certain fields, often assigned unique meanings within those domains. Due to their utility, they have gained extensive attention from researchers, particularly language teachers (Rungrueang et al., 2022).

Advancements in corpus linguistics have enabled researchers across fields to generate tailored word lists for specific disciplines. The domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has seen significant practical applications. For instance, Low (2018) addressed students' needs in terms of English vocabulary. In media and television studies, MacFadden et al. (2009) gathered vocabulary appearing predominantly on TV, noting that only a quarter of these terms overlapped with Coxhead's Academic Word List (AWL) (2000).

Food-related word lists have seen increasing development. Rungrueang et al. (2022) invented the Food Service Word List (FSWL) by analyzing a Food Service Corpus (FSC) containing 1,871,271 running words from four food-service industry-related websites. Similarly, Lueangseree and Phoocharoensil (2023) created the Western Food Wordlist (WFWL) specifically for students in culinary arts and food service. Beyond educational purposes, a study has also analyzed and ranked food ingredients appearing in approximately 1.6 million recipe sets from various recipe websites (Chatterjee et al., 2016).

C. *Previous Studies on Food and Menus*

A study on food vocabulary in an ESP course, English for Food and Beverage Service, conducted by Low (2018), identified five groups of food vocabulary that students wanted to learn: 1) herbs, spices, and food seasoning; 2) vegetables;

3) fruits; 4) meat and poultry; and 5) fish. Among these groups, two food groups were considered necessary: herbs, spices, and food seasonings, as well as the fish and shellfish group.

Research studies utilizing online data on food and menus have been conducted (Jurafsky et al., 2016; Low, 2019, 2021) using various sources, including TasteAtlas (Cheng et al., 2024; Rungrueang et al., 2022), Open Recipes (Chatterjee et al., 2016), Allrecipes (Popovski et al., 2019), RecipeDB (Batra et al., 2020), Twitter (Fried et al., 2014), and Instagram (Meluzzi & Balsamo, 2021).

Previous studies have demonstrated efforts in developing specialized vocabularies for the food industry. For instance, Low (2019) identified specialized words of Thai cuisine, such as “chili”, “curry”, “spicy”, “lime”, “sour”, and “tamarind”. These words highlighted the distinct flavor and characteristics of Thai food. Thai cuisine is commonly perceived as spicy and exotic (Lai et al., 2019; Lindblom & Mustonen, 2015; Low, 2021; Putra et al., 2023; Sadiku, 2023). Sadiku (2023) even pointed out that five different tastes could be found in a single bite of Thai food.

Putra et al. (2023) highlighted key ingredients commonly used in traditional Southeast Asian cuisine, including coconut milk, lemongrass, galangal, tamarind, fish sauce, shrimp paste, chilies, and various herbs. They also noted that popular dishes from the region often feature curries, stir-fries, noodles, and rice-based meals.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection

The data of Thai food ingredients were collected in December 2024 from a famous food website called TasteAtlas, which presents itself as ‘an encyclopedia of flavors’ providing local ingredients of traditional dishes and authentic restaurants (TasteAtlas, n.d.).

The Thailand page on the TasteAtlas website was used for the study. There were 170 Thai dishes on the page as shown in the Figure 1. All 170 dishes were collected in an Excel format to be analyzed for word frequency and word categories.

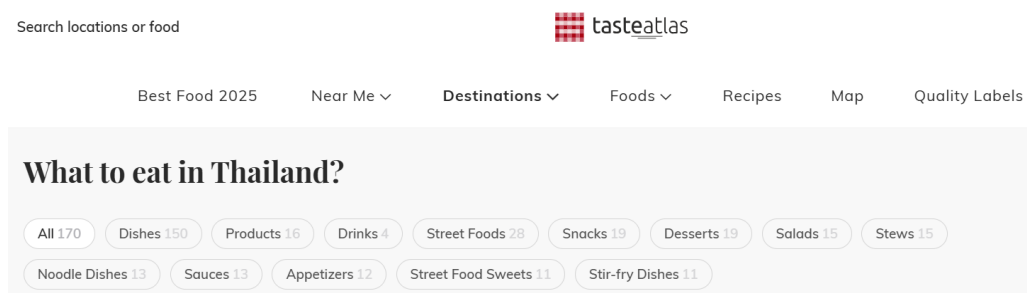


Figure 1. An Image of the Thailand Page on TasteAtlas
Source: <https://www.tasteatlas.com/thailand>

B. Data Processing

Collected data of Thai dish recipes were cleaned by removing words that showed amounts, adjectives, adverbs, and past participles. Only nouns were kept for analysis. Both singular and plural forms of the same word were counted as one term.

For the extraction of word frequency and keyword identification, the study utilized a free software tool called KH Coder (Higuchi, 2016). This tool enhanced the systematic extraction and analysis of linguistic data and identified keywords of the textual corpus.

IV. RESULTS

Thai food on the TasteAtlas page showed the total at 170; however, 155 dishes could be collected from the website and the data excluded products and drinks. The page lists Thai dishes in order of popularity, showing their ratings. An image of the first three popular Thai dishes is shown in Figure 2. All dishes are presented with an overview giving information about cooking methods, ingredients, flavors, condiments, and garnishes.

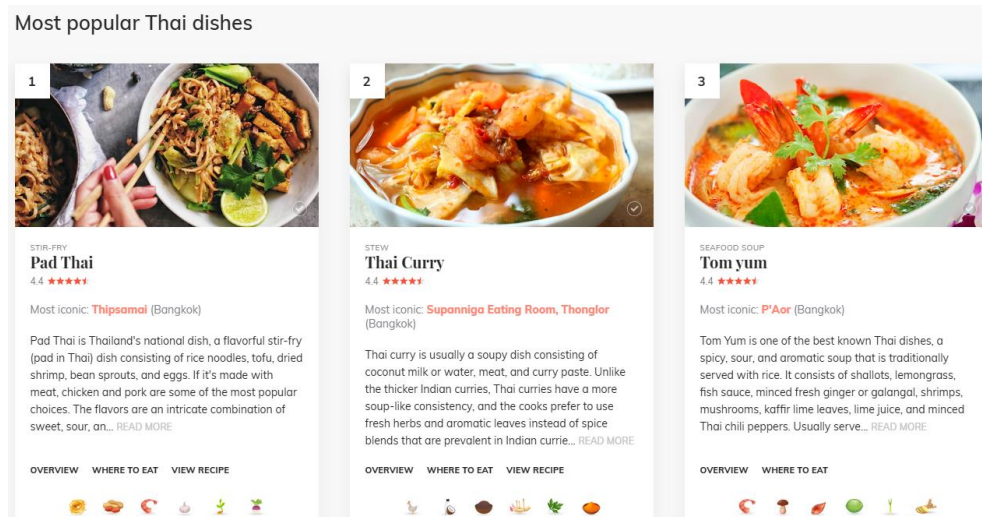


Figure 2. Examples of Popular Thai Dishes
Source: <https://www.tasteatlas.com/thailand>

STIR-FRY, STREET FOOD, NOODLE DISH

Pad Thai

(Kway Teow Pad Thai, Phat Thai, Phad Thai, ผัดไทย)

Pad Thai is Thailand's national dish, a flavorful stir-fry (pad in Thai) dish consisting of rice noodles, tofu, dried shrimp, bean sprouts, and eggs. If it's made with meat, chicken and pork are some of the most popular choices. The flavors are an intricate combination of sweet, sour, and salty, with a well-balanced contrast of textures.

Pad Thai is probably one of the most popular Thai dishes abroad. Its origins can be traced to a period of nationalism in the country, after the 1932 revolution that ended the absolute monarchy. There was a public contest to find a new national noodle dish, and the winner was a Pad Thai consisting of noodles, radish, sprouts, peanuts, and eggs.

Tender rice noodles are additionally flavored with sugar, tamarind, lime juice, vinegar, and fish sauce, and the dish is traditionally served with ground red chilis, white vinegar, sugar, fresh lime wedges, and fish sauce on the side, so each consumer can garnish the meal to their preference.

Figure 3. Example of an Overview of a Thai Dish
Source: <https://www.tasteatlas.com/pad-thai>

The dishes are presented with star ratings from no stars to five stars. The highest star rating is 4.6 for two Thai dishes: Phanaeng Curry and Roti Canai. The dishes with 4.5 are Tom Kha Gai, Massaman Curry, Khao Soi, curry paste, and Thai grilled chicken (Kai Yang). Eight dishes are at 4.4: Pad Thai, Thai Curry, Tom Yum, Green Curry, Red Curry, Phat Kaphrao, Khanom Khrok, and Nam Phrik Phao. There are 41 dishes without any ratings.

Q1: What types of food ingredients are found in Thai cuisine from the international perspectives/ on international social media?

Objective: To identify types of Thai food ingredients on the global social media.

The analysis of the data set reveals a categorization of 11 distinct types of food ingredients, each representing a unique group based on shared characteristics. By synthesizing the data, these categories were formed to allow for the generalization of terms with similar attributes. This categorization method not only helps in organizing the ingredients but also aids in identifying the most commonly used items across various food recipes.

Among the 11 categories, the most commonly used ingredients are meat and poultry as well as fish and shellfish, which frequently appear across multiple dishes. Common examples of meat and poultry include pork, chicken, duck, beef, and sausages, while fish and shellfish are represented by ingredients like fish, shrimp, and crab. These ingredients are integral components of numerous culinary traditions and are frequently seen in the majority of the dishes analyzed.

Additionally, herbs, spices, and vegetables are also highly prevalent, contributing significantly to the flavor profile and authenticity of Thai cuisine. Notable herbs and spices include chili, garlic, coriander, and lemongrass, while vegetables such as onions, shallots, and tomatoes appear frequently in the data set. These ingredients not only enhance the aroma and flavor of dishes but also embody the unique characteristics of the cuisine, highlighting the importance of local herbs and spices.

Furthermore, fruits like lime, mango, and papaya, as well as grains and starches such as rice, flour, and tapioca, form an essential part of the food landscape. The presence of nuts and seeds, including sesame seeds, cashews, and peanuts, also indicates their role in providing texture and additional flavor to many dishes.

Interestingly, edible insects stand out as a distinctive feature, underscoring the unique aspect of Thai cuisine that incorporates insects like grasshoppers and crickets, which are considered delicacies in certain regions. This reflects cultural diversity and resourcefulness in utilizing locally available ingredients.

In terms of seasonings and condiments, items such as sugar, salt, fish sauce, and soy sauce are frequently used to season dishes and enhance their flavor profiles. These ingredients are crucial in bringing out the depth of taste in Thai cooking, and their frequent occurrence in the data emphasizes their importance in the preparation of traditional dishes.

The analysis also identifies dairy and eggs as important ingredients, with butter, eggs, and ghee appearing regularly. These ingredients are often used to add richness and texture to various recipes. Among the animal-derived products, eggs rank highly, followed by chicken, indicating their widespread use in the preparation of diverse dishes.

Ultimately, the findings underscore the central role of these ingredients in the preparation of Thai cuisine, highlighting the combination of familiar items such as meats, vegetables, and spices, alongside more unique ingredients like edible insects, which contribute to the authenticity and cultural identity of the cuisine. The categorization and synthesis of these ingredients provide a comprehensive overview of the ingredients that define Thai food.

Q2: What are the high-frequent words or key words of Thai food ingredients?

Objective: To develop a list of key words or high-frequent words in Thai cuisine.

From the 155 food dishes, KH Coder software shows 2,864 tokens or 1,790 words in use. Additionally, there are 326 types, of which 309 were in use.

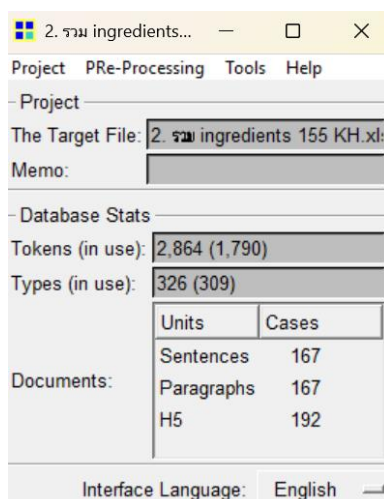


Figure 4. Number of Tokens of the 155 Dishes

A word frequency list was required to identify the key words for Thai food ingredients. The corpus analysis provided the list, including nouns reflecting prevalent ingredients in Thai cuisine, except for 'leave', which was identified as a verb. However, the researchers rechecked all the recipes containing the ingredient and insist that 'leave' is indeed the noun. The word 'sauce' tops the result as the most frequent word with 96 tokens. The other frequent words are 'sugar', 'garlic', 'pepper', 'fish', 'chili', 'lime', 'shrimp', 'coconut', 'pork', 'paste', 'leave', 'lemongrass', 'rice', 'chicken', and 'coriander' respectively, as shown in the Figure 5.

The high-frequency words suggest that Thai cuisine typically features a balance of savory, sweet, and spicy flavors, highlighting elements like sugar, sauces, and aromatic herbs.

Subgraph 03 shows 3 major words: 'rice', 'flour', and 'egg'. This subgraph resonates with the fundamental component of Thai cuisine which is rice. It is the primary carbohydrate in various Thai dishes. Flour is another important ingredient in noodle-based menus. Eggs are also in a variety of dishes either fried as a topping, scrambled into stir-fries, or as a base for Thai-style omelets.

Subgraph 06 shows 4 major words: 'sugar', 'palm', 'milk', and 'coconut'. In the center of the subgraph, sugar acts as the main connector between palm, sugar, and coconut, indicating their roles in both savory and sweet menu applications.

From the revealed connections, the key words can be categorized based on their functions and sensory contributions to the Thai cuisine:

A. Condiments and Seasonings

These ingredients play important roles in sharpening the flavor profiles of Thai cuisine by adding depth, richness, and balance. While soy sauce and oyster sauce provide the salty base, sugar and palm sugar balance out the heat and acidity from other ingredients. To intensify the dishes, pastes are used in many Thai curry menus. Lime juice, as a common acidic component, brightens Thai dishes.

B. Herbs and Spices

The ingredients in this category enhance the bold and aromatic characteristics of Thai cuisine. Garlic and shallot provide a rich and savory base in stir-fries and soups. Heat, an essential aspect of Thai food, is generated from pepper and chili. Moreover, citrusy and earthy aromas are derived from lemongrass, kaffir, lime, cumin, and galangal. Thai food is also well-known for its freshness, which comes from ingredients like coriander and basil. These ingredients are frequently put together in the internationally well-known Tom Yum soup and curries.

C. Fish and Shellfish

Fish and shrimp are particularly prevalent in the coastal cuisine and commonly used in seafood curries.

D. Meat and Poultry:

Pork and chicken are staple meats in stir-fries and soups, commonly paired with garlic, pepper, and basil for a more enhanced flavor.

E. Fruit and Vegetables

Potatoes, beans, sprouts, and onions, as the foundation vegetables, add substance to Thai dishes. Coconut, especially in the form of coconut milk, delivers a creamy consistency to curries and desserts.

F. Grains and Starches

While rice is the fundamental component of Thai cuisine, Jasmine rice is the most widely consumed variety. In addition, sticky rice is common in Northern and Northeastern dishes, and it is often paired with grilled meat and dips. In addition to being used in noodle-based dishes, flour is also used in dumplings and fried dishes.

Q4: How are Thai dishes perceived and described from non-Thai perspectives on social media?

Objective: To explore and analyze how Thai dishes are perceived and described by non-Thai perspectives on social media.

From the overview of the 155 dishes, there are 20,931 tokens or number of words. Of 20,931 tokens or 10,409 words in use, the most frequent word is 'dish' followed by the word 'sauce'.

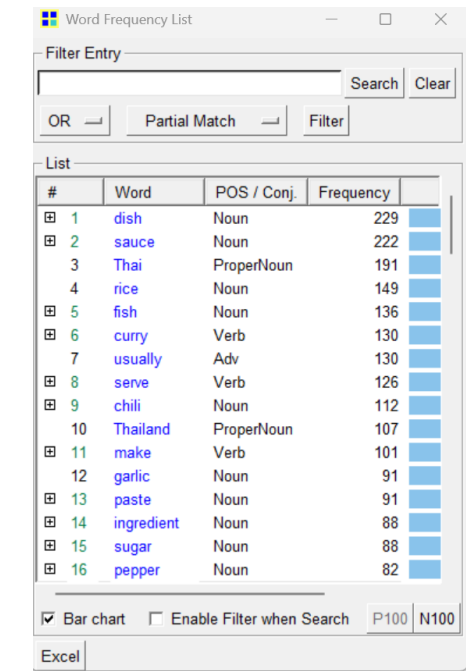


Figure 7. List of the Frequent Words of the Overviews

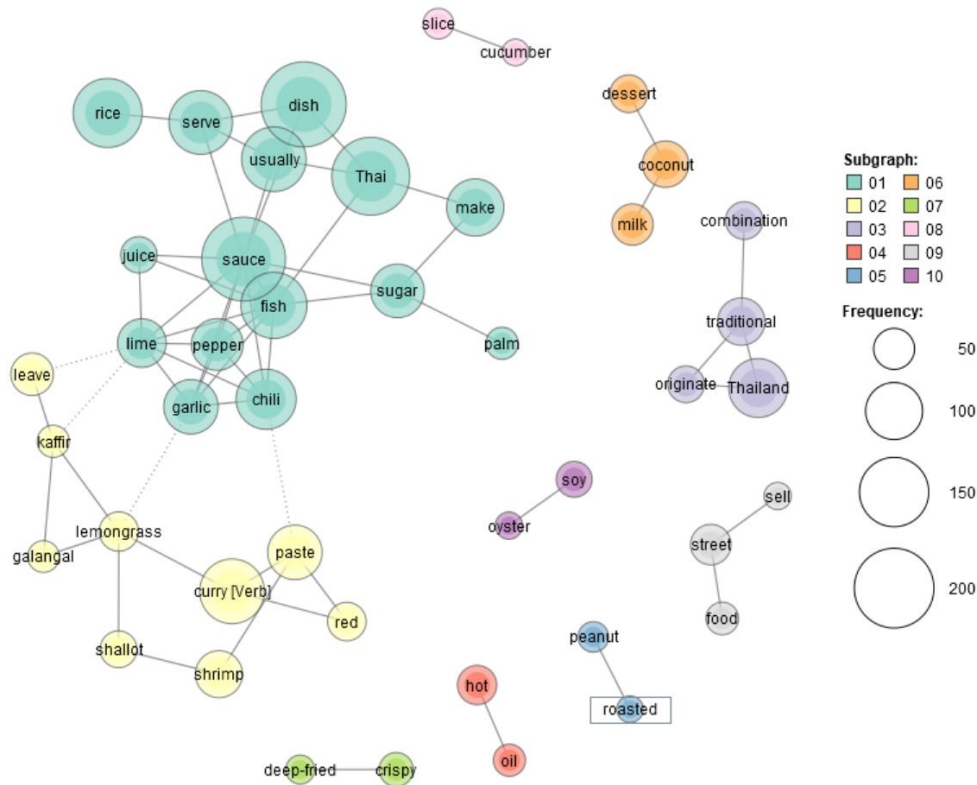


Figure 8. Co-Occurrence Network of Key Words in the Overviews

There are 10 subgraphs of the co-occurrence network of words. The top three subgraphs comprise most of the major words.

Subgraph 01 shows 12 major words: ‘dish’, ‘sauce’, ‘Thai’, ‘rice’, ‘fish’, ‘usually’, ‘serve’, ‘chili’, ‘make’, ‘garlic’, ‘sugar’, and ‘pepper’. Other related words are ‘palm’, ‘lime’, and ‘juice’. Subgraph 02 indicates two major words: ‘curry’ and ‘paste’, and the related words are ‘red’, ‘shrimp’, ‘shallot’, ‘lemongrass’, ‘galangal’, ‘kaffir’, and ‘leaves’. Subgraph 03 comprises four words with one major word ‘Thailand’. Other related words are ‘originate’, ‘traditional’, and ‘combination’.

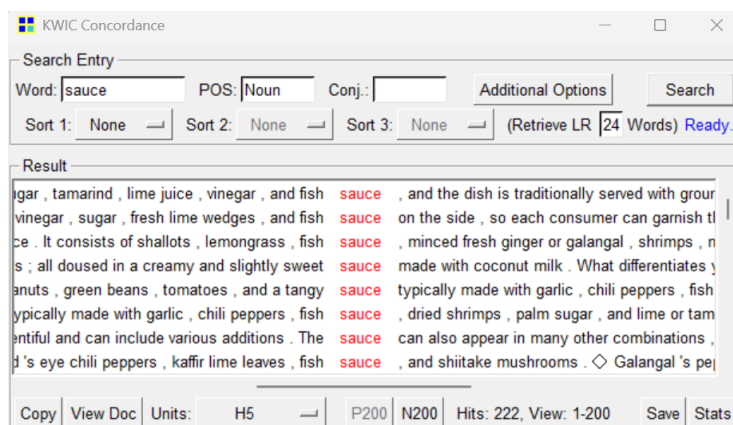


Figure 9. Example of the Contexts of the Word 'Sauce'

Key frequent words in the top two subgraphs with contexts are shown as follows:

Subgraph 01: The frequent words 'sauce' and 'fish' indicate the staple ingredient of Thai cuisine 'fish sauce'. The sauce is always used to season dishes and is a 'must' of Thai cooking. The word 'sauce' also refers to the flavor of mixing the ingredients of the dish.

Examples of contexts:

- Tender rice noodles are additionally flavored with sugar, tamarind, lime juice, vinegar, and fish sauce, and the dish is traditionally served with ground red chilis, white vinegar, sugar, fresh lime wedges, and fish sauce on the side, so each consumer can garnish the meal to their preference.
- Tom Yum is one of the best-known Thai dishes, a spicy, sour, and aromatic soup that is traditionally served with rice. It consists of shallots, lemongrass, fish sauce, minced fresh ginger or galangal, shrimps, mushrooms, kaffir lime leaves, lime juice, and minced Thai chili peppers.
- Apart from thin strips of green papaya, this salad usually includes roasted peanuts, green beans, tomatoes, and a tangy sauce typically made with garlic, chili peppers, fish sauce, dried shrimps, palm sugar, and lime or tamarind juice.
- The spices are usually combined with potatoes and onions; all doused in a creamy and slightly sweet sauce made with coconut milk. What differentiates yellow curry from the other types is the addition of yellow curry powder, giving the dish its distinctive color.

Subgraph 02: The frequent words 'curry' and 'paste' imply the staple Thai curry dishes.

Examples of contexts:

- Thai curry is usually a soupy dish consisting of coconut milk or water, meat, and curry paste. Unlike the thicker Indian curries, Thai curries have a more soup-like consistency, and the cooks prefer to use fresh herbs and aromatic leaves instead of spice blends that are prevalent in Indian curries.
- Red curry is one of the most common curry varieties in Thailand. It combines red curry paste, coconut milk, vegetables, and meat into a delectable and hearty meal. Red curry paste and coconut milk are the foundations of the dish, and their combination results in a perfectly balanced, creamy, and spicy broth.
- In many Thai homes, curry is consumed on a daily basis, and the cooks can choose from two varieties of Thai curry: water-based or coconut milk-based curries. The most popular water-based curry is sour curry, or Gaeng Sohml Plah, which is often prepared with fish or seafood, while the sour flavor comes from tamarind.

Subgraph 03: The only major word 'Thailand' emphasizes the uniqueness and origin of Thai cuisine. Other related words are 'traditional', 'originate', and 'combination'.

Examples of contexts:

- Pad Thai is Thailand's national dish, a flavorful stir-fry (Pad in Thai) dish consisting of rice noodles, tofu, dried shrimp, bean sprouts, and eggs. If it's made with meat, chicken and pork are some of the most popular choices. The flavors are an intricate combination of sweet, sour, and salty, with a well-balanced contrast of textures.
- Tom Kha Gai is Thailand's delicious national dish, coming from the central part of the country and bearing the influence of neighboring Laos. It is a soup whose name translates to boiled galangal chicken soup, consisting of coconut milk, chicken chunks or shreds, galangal (a reddish-brown or pink woody plant related to ginger), lemongrass, garlic, bird's eye chili peppers, kaffir lime leaves, fish sauce, and Shiitake mushrooms.
- Interestingly, Phat Kaphrao is ranked as the fourth most common dish ordered by foreigners in Thailand.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Linguistic Strategies in Thai Food Naming

The linguistic presentation of Thai food names and ingredients demonstrates three primary strategies: *transliteration*, *translation with descriptors*, and *loanwords*. Each reflects how Thai cuisine negotiates between cultural authenticity and global comprehensibility.

(a). *Transliteration*

Transliteration attempts to preserve Thai pronunciation using the Roman alphabets while acknowledging the limitations of cross-linguistic representation (Eberhard et al., 2018; Low, 2025). Popular examples include Pad Thai, Tom Yam Goong, and Khao Soy, which have been adapted for international audiences. The corpus revealed significant inconsistencies in transliteration practices, exemplified by variations such as Pad versus Phat, illustrating the challenges of rendering Thai phonology in English (Enfield, 2013). Tonal and aspirated distinctions, as in Khao, are frequently lost, and multiple transliteration variants exist, e.g., Pad See Ew appears as Pad Siew, and others. These examples highlight the absence of standardization despite guidelines from the Royal Institute of Thailand (1999) and often stem from marketing considerations and audience familiarity (Smalley, 1994). Furthermore, English phonology may influence incorrect assumptions. For example, interpreting ‘ph’ as /f/ instead of aspirated /p/ (Sridhanyarat, 2017).

(b). *Translation With Descriptors*

Descriptive translation prioritizes ingredients’ transparency or preparation methods over linguistic authenticity to enhance accessibility (Baker, 2018). Examples include Tom Kha Gai translated as Chicken Coconut Soup, and Phla Kung as Spicy Shrimp Salad. These translations communicate core culinary elements rather than preserving original Thai terminology. Additionally, Green Curry hints at both color and flavor, prioritizing function over form. Our network analysis demonstrated that these translated descriptors often emphasize the primary ingredients identified in the key ingredients’ co-occurrence network subgraph 01 (lemongrass, galangal) and the key ingredients’ subgraph 02 (sauce, fish, chili), suggesting that translation strategies align with the actual ingredient prominence revealed by the corpus analysis. Low (2025) also emphasize the use of translation with descriptors in communicating Thai dishes.

(c). *Loanwords*

Loanwords in Thai culinary vocabulary—particularly from Chinese, Portuguese, and English—reflect centuries of cultural exchange (Winichakul, 1997). The corpus revealed bidirectional borrowing. First, terms adopted into Thai cuisine. For example, Roti from Indian Muslims and Suki from Japanese Sukiyaki. Other terms, such as mooncake and American Fried Rice, signify cultural borrowing and adaptation. Meanwhile, Thai terms also enter global culinary lexicons. For instance, traditional Thai names like Lot Chong and Thong Yip persist despite Portuguese influence, illustrating selective preservation (Siam Rat Blog, 2019).

B. Ingredient Terminology and Network Relationships

The corpus frequency analysis reveals ‘sauce’ as the most common ingredient-related term (96 occurrences), establishing its fundamental role in Thai flavor construction. This prominence is further validated by the network visualization, where sauce functions as the primary node in the key ingredients’ subgraph 02 with the highest degree centrality. The frequent co-occurrence of sauce with fish, garlic, and chili substantiates previous research on the complex flavor profiles of Thai cuisine (Chotechuang, 2012; Low, 2021).

The network analysis exposes functional relationships between ingredients that extend beyond mere frequency. The key ingredients’ subgraph 01 (the aromatic herb & paste cluster) demonstrates how aromatic ingredients—lemongrass, galangal, and kaffir lime leaves—form a distinct functional cluster despite their lower individual frequencies compared to core ingredients. This finding suggests that while certain ingredients may not dominate quantitatively, their role in creating distinctive Thai flavors remains crucial qualitatively, supporting Low’s (2023) observation that herbs and spices are emblematic of Thai culture and “Thainess”.

The key ingredients’ subgraph 06 centers on sugar, revealing important connections to coconut and milk, forming a discrete flavor profile that appears in both savory applications and desserts. This dual functionality of ingredients represents a distinctive characteristic of Thai cuisine that may not be immediately apparent from frequency analysis alone, highlighting the value of network visualization in understanding culinary systems.

C. Non-Thai Perspectives on Thai Cuisine

From non-Thai viewpoints, Thai cuisine is interpreted through its ingredients, flavor complexity, and cultural identity. The prominence of words such as sauce, chili, garlic, and lime (the dish overviews’ co-occurrence network subgraph 01) reflects sensory emphasis and flavor balance (Low, 2019; Putra et al., 2023). The dish overviews’ subgraph 02 highlights curry and paste, positioning Thai cuisine in comparison with Indian culinary frameworks. These associations serve as reference points for global audiences.

Cultural elements also surface in the dish overviews’ subgraph 03, where terms like Thailand, traditional, and originate frame dishes such as Pad Thai and Tom Kha Gai as not only culinary offerings but also cultural symbols (Watanasin, 2012). These findings underscore how food names carry national and cultural narratives, linking cuisine to identity.

VI. CONCLUSION

Thai dishes, as perceived and described by non-Thai individuals on social media, are celebrated for their cultural authenticity, sensory richness, and distinctive culinary elements. The uniqueness of Thai cuisine is emphasized through frequent references to its national identity, traditional roots, and staple ingredients like fish sauce and curry paste. The

intricate balance of flavors—spicy, sour, sweet, and savory—along with the aromatic and vibrant nature of Thai dishes, captures the attention of a global audience.

The linguistic framing, which often includes detailed explanations of ingredients and preparation methods, reflects an effort to make Thai cuisine accessible and relatable to non-Thai audiences. These descriptions not only highlight the complexity of Thai dishes but also serve as a gateway to understanding Thailand's cultural heritage.

One important aspect of Thai cuisine's global perception and understanding involves the transliteration of ingredient names and culinary terms from Thai language to Roman alphabets. This helps Thai recipes disseminate throughout the world, resulting in how they are perceived and recreated globally. To strengthen the impact of the Thai cuisine, a standardized system of transliterating Thai culinary terms is highly suggested. It would support the uniformity of Thai dish names and ingredient lists across different platforms, enhancing both the accessibility and reachability of Thai cuisine globally. Moreover, it could aid educational and cultural exchanges, ensuring the accuracy of Thai culinary heritage.

REFERENCES

- [1] Baker, M. (2018). *In other words: A coursebook on translation*. Routledge.
- [2] Barlow, M. (2011). Corpus linguistics and theoretical linguistics. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 16(1), 3-44. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.16.1.02bar>
- [3] Batra, D., Diwan, N., Upadhyay, U., Kalra, J. S., Sharma, T., Sharma, A. K., Khanna, D., Marwah, J. S., Kalathil, S., Singh, N., Tuwani, R., & Bagler, G. (2020). RecipeDB: A resource for exploring recipes. *Database*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/database/baaa077>
- [4] Chatterjee, U., Kumar, V., & Madalli, D. P. (2016). Formalizing food ingredients for data analysis and knowledge organization. *COLLNET Journal of Scientometrics and Information Management*, 10(2), 289-309.
- [5] Cheng, E. M., Cheng, C. M., Choo, J., Yan, Y., & Carrasco, L. R. (2024). Biodiversity footprints of 151 popular dishes from around the world. *Plos one*, 19(2). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0296492>
- [6] Chotechuang, N. (2012). Taste active components in Thai foods: A review of Thai traditional seasonings. *Journal of Nutrition & Food Sciences S*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2155-9600.S10-004>
- [7] Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(2), 213-238. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587951>
- [8] Dash, N., & Selvaraj, A. (2018). *History, features, and typology of language corpora*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-7458-5>
- [9] Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fenning, C. D. (2018). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world* (21st ed.). Sil International.
- [10] Enfield, N. J. (2013). *Linguistic epidemiology: Semantics and grammar of language contact in mainland Southeast Asia*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203605196>
- [11] Farr, F. (2008). Evaluating the use of corpus-based instruction in a language teacher education context: Perspectives from the users. *Language Awareness*, 17(1), 25-43. <https://doi.org/10.2167/la414.0>
- [12] Fried, D., Surdeanu, M., Kobourov, S., Hingle, M., & Bell, D. (2014, 27-30 Oct). *Analyzing the language of food on social media*. 2014 IEEE International Conference on Big Data (Big Data).
- [13] Government Public Relations Department. (2024). *Government boosts global Thai cuisine appeal*. Retrieved February 04, 2025, from <https://thailand.prd.go.th/en/content/category/detail/id/52/iid/248768>
- [14] Higuchi, K. (2016). A two-step approach to quantitative content analysis: Kh coder tutorial using anne of green gables (part i). *Ritsumeikan Social Sciences Review*, 52(3), 77-91.
- [15] Jurafsky, D., Chahuneau, V., Routledge, B., & Smith, N. (2016). Linguistic markers of status in food culture: Bourdieu's distinction in a menu corpus. *Journal of Cultural Analytics*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.22148/16.007>
- [16] Lai, M. Y., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Wang, Y. (2019). Food and cuisine image in destination branding: Toward a conceptual model. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 19(2), 238-251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358417740763>
- [17] Lindblom, T., & Mustonen, P. (2015). Culinary taste and the legitimate cuisines. *British Food Journal*, 117(2), 651-663. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-02-2014-0054>
- [18] Low, P. (2018). Students' needs and vocabulary development in English for specific purposes (ESP) course. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 3(2), 151-161. <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v3i2.135>
- [19] Low, P. (2019). Identifying specialized vocabulary in Thai food menus using computer-based approach. *Journal of Advances in Information Technology*, 91-94. <https://doi.org/10.12720/jait.10.3.91-94>
- [20] Low, P. (2021). Descriptive language of "Thai select premium" restaurant menus: Appealing perception and collocations [Journal Article]. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(4), 1669-1683. <https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.122>
- [21] Low, P. (2023). The language and thainess of Thai food products on an e-commerce platform. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(12), 3126-3134. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1312.09>
- [22] Low, P. (2025). An analysis of language use and food menu naming of Thai dishes on social media. *Applied Research on English Language*, 14(2), 159-182. <https://doi.org/10.22108/are.2025.143820.2422>
- [23] Lueangsere, P., & Phoocharoensil, S. (2023). *Developing wordlist of western food: A corpus-based approach* (Publication Number 314793) [Doctoral dissertation, Thammasat University].
- [24] M Nordin, N., Stapa, S., & Darus, S. (2013). Developing a specialized vocabulary word list in a composition culinary course through lecture notes. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 4(1), 78-88.
- [25] MacFadden, K., Barrett, K., & Horst, M. (2009). What's in a television word list? A corpus-informed investigation. *Concordia Working Papers in Applied Linguistics*, 2, 78-98.
- [26] McEnery, T. (2019). *Corpus linguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- [27] Meluzzi, C., & Balsamo, S. (2021). The language of food and wine tourism on the web. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcm/10821>

- [28] Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524759>
- [29] Nation, P. (2016). *Making and using word lists for language learning and testing*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.208>
- [30] Pomat, N. (2024). Corpus-based word usage in social media marketing and e-commerce: Developing word lists and a proposedly designed teaching. *Higher Education Studies*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v15n1p1>
- [31] Popovski, G., Seljak, B. K., & Eftimov, T. (2019). Foodbase corpus: A new resource of annotated food entities. *Database*, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/database/baz121>
- [32] Putra, F. K. K., Putra, M. K., & Novianti, S. (2023). Taste of asean: Traditional food images from southeast asian countries. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-023-00189-0>
- [33] Royal Institute of Thailand. (1999). *Lakken kan thot akson Thai pen akson Roman baep thai siang* [Principles of romanization of Thai script by phonetic transcription]. Retrieved January 11, 2025, from https://www.orst.go.th/iwfm_table.asp?a=36&i=0040002104011001%2F63ERJ5814038
- [34] Rungrueng, T., Boonprasert, P., Poemongsajaroen, S., & Laosrirattanachai, P. (2022). Corpus-based approach to generate a word list for food service. *Thaitesol journal*, 35(1), 57-76.
- [35] Sadiku, M. N. O., Chukwu, U. C., & Sadiku, J. O. (2023). Food around the world. *International Journal of Culture and Modernity*, 27. <https://doi.org/10.51699/ijcm.v27i.490>
- [36] Siam Rat Blog. (2019). *The remarkable history of the Portuguese in Thailand*. Retrieved January 26, 2025, from <https://siamrat.blog/2019/07/06/the-remarkable-history-of-the-portuguese-in-thailand/>
- [37] Smalley, W. A. (1994). *Linguistic diversity and national unity: Language ecology in Thailand*. University of Chicago Press.
- [38] Sridhanyarat, K. (2017). The acquisition of L2 fricatives in Thai learners' interlanguage. *3L: Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 23(1), 15-34. <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2017-2301-02>
- [39] TasteAtlas. (n.d.). *About TasteAtlas*. Retrieved December 15, 2025, from <https://www.tasteatlas.com/about>
- [40] Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2024). *"Amazing food festival 2024" elevates Thailand's gastronomic tourism experiences*. Retrieved February 02, 2025, from <https://www.tatnews.org/2024/07/amazing-food-festival-2024-elevates-thailands-gastronomic-tourism-experiences/>
- [41] Watanasin, R. (2012). Thai food: A gateway to cultural understanding. *The Journal of the Royal Institute of Thailand*, 4, 145-164.
- [42] West, M. (1953). *A general service list of English words, with semantic frequencies and a supplementary word-list for the writing of popular science and technology*. Longman.
- [43] Winichakul, T. (1997). *Siam mapped: A history of the geo-body of a nation*. University of Hawaii Press.

Piyada Low is an assistant professor of English language at the Faculty of Management Sciences, Kasetsart University, Thailand. Her research interests include English for communication, translation, and ESP.

Piyada Ukachoke serves as an English lecturer at the Faculty of Management Sciences, Kasetsart University, Thailand, with research interests focusing on English pronunciation, instructional media, and teaching methodology.

Pohnlerd Chujoh is an English language lecturer at the Faculty of Management Sciences, Kasetsart University, Thailand. His research interests include phonetics, phonology, pitch, syntax, language acquisition, and translation.

Naming of Homestays in Public Spaces of Borobudur Temple Tourism Area as a Representation of Identity and Culture: A Linguistic Landscape Study

Dwi Atmawati*

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Ade Mulyanah

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Sariah

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Rini Widiastuti

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Prima Hariyanto

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Tri Wahyuni

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Resti Nurfaidah

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Emma Maemunah

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Imelda

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Ricky Aptifive Manik

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Royan Nur Fahmi

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Arif Izzak

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract—The many different languages spoken in the public spaces of the Borobudur Temple Tourism Area show the identity and culture of the local community. The present study explores the use of language in the public space of the Borobudur Temple area using the Linguistic Landscape (LL) theoretical framework. The purpose of this study is to reveal the use of language in the names of homestays in public spaces through LL studies. Data collection was carried out by photographing homestay signboards and interviewing homestay owners. The results of this study indicate that the naming of homestays refers to people's names, the name of the place where the homestay is located, conditions, hopes, names of temples and folklore figures, names of fruits, names of flowers, Javanese identity, names of musical instruments and traditional games, names of typical foods, greetings, names of animals, names of wayang characters, names related to the shape of the earth's surface, numbers, colours, and names related to leaves. The types of language used are monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. In the naming of these homestays, the words that come from English tend to be

* Corresponding Author.

only homestay. In addition, most of the vocabulary used is Javanese. The names of the homestays reflect the identity and culture of the local community, for example folklore, cultural sites, traditional foods, agricultural products, arts, names of people in Javanese that have begun to be replaced by foreign languages, philosophy, traditional games, and geographical conditions.

Index Terms—culture, homestay, linguistic landscape, temple, traditional games

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is not just a means of communication, but also a representation of social and cultural identity. A tangible example of this can be seen in the naming of places, buildings and public facilities in public spaces. Landry and Bourhis (1997) introduced the concept of LL, defined as the visual display of languages in public spaces, such as signs, street names and advertisements. These written forms carry both informational and symbolic functions.

Public spaces such as the Borobudur Temple tourist area have a variety of languages and cultural symbols, which function as a reflection of local identity amidst interactions with domestic and international tourists. There are lots of places for tourists to stay in the area. Tourists can choose to stay in a hotel, guest house, villa, or homestay. To make it easier for tourists to understand information, signs in public spaces often use more than one language.

This research focuses on studying the names of homestay-type accommodations. The names of these homestays are interesting to study because the owners are local people. By naming the homestay, we can learn about the community's beliefs and culture. This is different from the names of hotels or villas because these places are usually owned by investors from inside and outside the country.

The names of homestays created by their owners show people's attitudes towards language. The names *Genthong Homestay* and *Punakawan Homestay* use Javanese and English. The Javanese words *genthong* and *punakawan* show that the local language is Javanese. The word *homestay* is already very familiar to the community. So, the community chose the word *homestay* instead of the phrase *rumah tinggal* in Indonesian so that foreign tourists can understand the information more easily.

This study aims to examine the names of homestays, the use of language, and how local culture is represented in the names of homestays in the Borobudur Temple area. As Blommaert and Maly (2014) point out, we can use linguistic landscapes to show social practices and power relations in public spaces. The information for this study was collected by looking at the signs on homestays and talking to some homestay owners. The ideas used in this research are based on the important ideas of 'linguistic landscapes' by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and Gorter (2006). Previous research related to LL that has been carried out includes the rules and types of language in naming hotels in Magelang Regency and City by Wijayanti and Diani (2022). This research is still limited to discussing the correctness of the use of Indonesian language rules in public spaces in the Magelang area. Lestari (2023) discusses the LL variations of warning signs in public spaces in the Regency of Magelang, while the relationship between LL and culture has not been studied.

Through an LL approach, this study attempts to map the patterns of language use on homestay signage, whether monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, while also uncovering the symbolic meanings embedded within them. Artawa et al. (2023), in their study of language choices on restaurant signs in tourism areas, demonstrated that business owners strategically employ a combination of local, national, and international languages to reach diverse visitor segments while simultaneously affirming their ethnic and cultural identities.

The novelty of this research is to reveal the cultural and identity elements contained in the names of homestays through LL studies. In previous studies, this has not been revealed. Analysis of the names of homestays in the Borobudur Temple area can provide in-depth insights into how language is used as a medium to represent identity, culture and a means of improving the economy. This research is expected to contribute to the development of LL research in Indonesia, especially in cultural heritage-based tourism areas, and increase understanding between language, public space, and cultural identity in multilingual communities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In some schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesian is dominant and Javanese is marginalised. Arabic is used as the Islamic identity of the school, while Javanese is used as a cultural symbol (Andriyanti, 2019). Cultural and historical elements are not only found in fonts, materials, colors and decorations, but also in place names and information that tells about the history and culture of Shaoxing, China (Shen, 2022). Marketing strategies can be implemented using symbols that represent local wisdom, both in foreign and regional languages (Lestariningsih et al., 2023).

Theoretical and methodological approaches from the LL perspective can be used to study the political economy of language (Järlehed et al., 2023). The LL of Najran, a city in the southern region of Saudi Arabia, in addition to Arabic and English, also uses expatriate languages, such as Malayalam, Bengali, Tamil, and Hindi (Al-Athwary, 2022). The language landscape in Malaysia is changing as cities develop (Mansoor et al., 2023). Indonesian is the most commonly used language in public spaces in Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia, followed by English and then Javanese (Rohmah & Wijayanti, 2023). This is different from the naming of hotels in Yogyakarta. The names of hotels in Prawirotaman, Yogyakarta, tend to be in English to make it easier for foreign tourists to understand the information

(Yusuf & Datang, 2023). On the public sign of Watugong Vihara, Semarang, there is a representation of cultural, religious and socio-religious identity (Prasetyo et al., 2024). On Facebook and Twitter, Jordanians use social media language practices such as code-switching, local expressions, emoticons and identity affiliations (Amer, 2024). The LL in South Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, tends to use Indonesian and English in monolingual form (Nenotek et al., 2025). Local identities that promote Malang's cultural heritage can be seen in the public space signs at Kotabaru Malang Train Station (Ayyub & Rohmah, 2024). Language signs in public spaces as identity can also be found in other areas.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

LL refers to the visibility and importance of language in public and commercial spaces in a region (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). It is said that the LL is the written language found in public spaces (Gorter, 2006). Language in public spaces is an important resource for learning and teaching, as well as for raising language awareness (Gorter et al., 2021). The LL of a place represents its ideology, culture, identity and linguistic practices (Muriungi & Mudogo, 2021). Commercial names are sometimes created by combining English and Indonesian morphemes for appeal and as an expression of nationalism (Kweldju, 2021). Indonesian has high competence in public spaces where the people of Malang worship (Ardhian et al., 2021).

In multilingual public spaces, the choice of language on signage is indicative not only of people's linguistic preferences, but also of the social and economic implications of that choice (Backhaus, 2007). In the tourism industry, the use of English facilitates ease of communication and enhances the experience of international tourists (Hall & Page, 2014). A universal and easy-to-understand name can create a more effective positive image for global tourists (Kotler & Keller, 2016). One way to show Javanese identity is by using characters from puppetry, like *punokawan*, to name homestays. *Punokawan* means a friend who is clever, trustworthy, open-minded and careful (Sunarto, 2012).

IV. METHODS

This study is a qualitative descriptive study. The data for this study is the language used to name homestays in the Borobudur Temple Tourism Area. The data source is a language sign in the form of the name of the homestay on the homestay sign or building. Data collection was carried out using observation, documentation and interview techniques. The researcher interviews the homestay owner to find out the background of the homestay naming and philosophy.

The analysis of data was conducted through the classification of homestay naming according to the referenced name and language type. The classification of homestays is determined by the referenced name, which is subject to classification in the Indonesian lexicon if it is present in the Indonesian dictionary. In the event of the name of the homestay being a Javanese lexicon, the name of the homestay will be classified in Javanese. Conversely, if the name of the homestay is a foreign language lexicon, it will be classified in a foreign language. The classification of language types in homestay names is as follows: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. A descriptive analysis was also carried out to explain the data obtained. The data coding process involves entering a numeric code in brackets behind the homestay name. This code is listed in the table and description.

The research problem is discussed using the LL theory proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997). His theory states that the LL examines the use of language, including on signs and street names, shop signs, place names and boards in public spaces. Backhaus (2007) posits that signs in public spaces are an inherent aspect of language, reflecting its presence and function. Consequently, these signs can be analysed in LL studies.

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A homestay constitutes a local house that is rented to tourists, both domestic and foreign. The owner usually lives in the same house as the tourists in the homestay. To attract tourists, homestay owners name their homestays with names that show the identity of their area.

This study identified 85 homestay names in the Borobudur Temple area. These names were then grouped into 17 categories. The classification refers to: 1) names of the person, 2) homestay location, 3) conditions, 4) hopes, 5) the names of temples and folklore characters, 6) fruit names, 7) flower names, 8) Javanese identity, 9) traditional musical instruments and games, 10) typical food names, 11) greeting names, 12) animal names, 13) puppet character names, 14) names related to the shape of the earth's surface, 15) numbers, 16) colours, and 17) names related to leaves.

Homestay owners write the word *homestay* in various ways. Some follow Indonesian grammar, for example *Homestay Indriyani*, while others follow English grammar, for example *Wilujeng Homestay*. Additionally, some write the word *homestay* as *home stay*. The following table presents a classification of homestay names and their percentages.

A. Homestay Names in the Borobudur Temple Tourism Area

This table lists 85 names of homestays collected as research data and their classification.

TABLE 1
NAMES OF HOMESTAYS IN THE BOROBUDUR TEMPLE TOURIST AREA AND THEIR PERCENTAGE

No.	Homestay Name Classification	Homestay Name and Data Number Code	Number of Homestay Names	Percentage (%)
1.	The name of the homestay refers to the name of the person.	Homestay Fadilah (1) Home Stay Ana Indah (2) Home Stay Anggi Syariah (3) Homestay Bahrodin (4) Homestay Bu Indarto (5) Homestay Choirul Anam (6) Homestay Eni (7) Homestay Hedi (8) Home Stay Indriyani (9) Homestay Lelah Cahyono (10) Homestay Lilik (11) Homestay Mbak Heny (12) Homestay Menik Mubingah (13) Homestay Muh. Talpur (14) Homestay Muhrodin (15) Homestay Pak Rohadi (16) Home Stay Rivalia (17) Homestay Samliki (18) Homestay Sarwit (19) Home Stay Sutrisno (20) Homestay Tri Muriyah (21) Homestay Wahyu (22) Homestay Wanudjiwo (23) Home Stay Wibowo (24) Homestay Wiro Senjoyo (25) Homestay Wulan (26) Putro Yono Homestay (27) Tata Homestay Keluarga (28) Home Stay Lolita (29) Homestay First Kinara (30) Griya Safira Homestay (31)	31	36.47
2.	The name of the homestay refers to the name of the place where the homestay is located	Homestay Anugrah Borobudur (32) Borobudur Cluster Homestay Candirejo (33) Borobudur Homestay (34) Griyo Jagalan Homestay (35) Homestay/Penginapan Bro Budur (36) Homestay Cluster Bojong (37)	6	7.05
3.	The name of the homestay refers to the conditions	Efata Homestay (38) Faza Homestay (39) Joho Homestay (40) Putri Tunggal Homestay (41) Sandyakala Borobudur Homestay (42)	5	5.88
4.	The name of the homestay refers to hope	Cahaya Homestay (43) Homestay Berkah (44) Homestay Damai (45) Home Stay Sakinah (46)	4	4.7
5.	The name of this homestay refers to the name of a temple and a character in a folklore	Homestay Candi Pawon (47) Homestay Roro Mendut (48)	2	2.35
6.	The name of the homestay refers to the name of a fruit	Home Stay Durian (49)	1	1.18
7.	Homestay names related to flower names	Homestay Azhalya (50) Homestay Melati (51) Homestay Sekar (52) Homestay Tulip (53) Home Stay Wijaya Kusuma (54)	5	5.88
8.	Homestay name that refers to Javanese identity	Genthong Homestay (55) Griya Wening Homestay (56) Home Stay Griyo Enggal (57) Homestay & Resto Joglo Dhepis (58) Home Stay Kampung Ndalem (59) Homestay Kebon Ndalem (60) Homestay Latar Ombo (61) Home Stay dan Penginapan Mbok Dhe (62) Moro Budur Homestay (63) Homestay Nitiharjan (64) Omah Ndeso Homestay (65) Home Stay Omah Wetan (66) Saka Homestay & Café (67) Kendi Ombo Homestay (68) Daleme Mak'e (69)	17	20

		Pendawi Putri Homestay (70) Wilujeng Homestay (71)		
9.	The name of the homestay refers to traditional musical instruments and games	Homestay Angklung (72) Homestay Dakon (73)	2	2.35
10.	Homestay names that refer to food	Homestay Roemah Beong (74)	1	1.18
11.	Homestay names that refer to greetings	Homestay Asyuban (75) Kaluna Homestay (76) Penginapan Keluarga Homestay Mami (77)	3	3.53
12.	Homestay names that refer to animals	Dragonflies Homestay (78) Homestay Musang (79) Pinako Lobster Homestay (80)	3	3.53
13.	Homestay names that refer to puppet characters	Homestay Punokawan (81)	1	1.18
14.	Homestay names that refer to names related to the shape of the earth's surface	Homestay Bukit Dagi (82)	1	1.18
15.	Homestay names that refer to number	Homestay 77 (83)	1	1.18
16.	Homestay names that refer to colours	Rumah Merah Homestay (84)	1	1.18
17.	Homestay names that refer to names related to leaves	Pinnara Homestay Exclusive (85)	1	1.18
	Total number		85	100

The following shows 17 examples of homestay names. Each one represents a different classification.



Figure 1. Homestay Menik Mubingah (13)



Figure 2. Homestay Cluster Bojong (37)



Figure 3. Sandyakala Borobudur Homestay (42)



Figure 4. Cahaya Homestay (43)



Figure 5. Homestay Candi Pawon (47)



Figure 6. Homestay Durian (49)



Figure 7. Homestay Wijaya Kusuma (50)



Figure 8. Moro Budur Homestay (63)



Figure 9. Homestay Dakon (73)



Figure 10. Homestay Roemah Beong (74)



Figure 11. Kaluna Homestay (76)



Figure 12. Homestay Musang (78)



Figure 13. Homestay Punokawan (81)



Figure 14. Homestay Bukit Dagi (82)



Figure 15. Homestay "77" (83)



Figure 16. Rumah Merah Homestay (84)



Figure 17. Pinnara Homestay Exclusive (85)

(a). *The Name of the Homestay Refers to the Name of the Person*

In this study, it was found that the names of homestays that refer to people's names were 31 names or 36.47%. The names of homestays (1-31) are listed in the table. The names of the people referred to include elements of words from Arabic, Javanese, Indonesian, Spanish, and Swahili. The names of people that indicate elements of words from Arabic, for example *Homestay Fadilah* (1), *Homestay Anggi Syariah* (3), *Homestay Choirul Anam* (6), *Griya Safira Homestay* (31). In Arabic, the word *fadilah* means 'virtue', the word *syariah* means straight path, the word *safira* means beautiful. The name of *Homestay Ana Indah* (2) contains elements of Indonesian words, namely *indah* 'beautiful'. The name *Tata Homestay Keluarga* (28) contains elements of Indonesian words, namely *tata* 'to organize' and *keluarga* 'family'. The names of homestays (3-5, 7-27) contain elements of Javanese words. Data code numbers (3-5, 7-27) contain elements of words that come from Javanese, in addition to the word homestay which comes from English. In the name *Home Stay Lolita* (29) there is an element of the Spanish word, namely *lolita* 'girl'. In the name *Homestay First Kinara* (30) there is an element of the Swahili word, namely *kinara* 'candle holder'.

Figure 1, the name *Homestay Menik Mubingah* (13) contains elements of the English word *homestay* and the Javanese word *menik mubingah*. The word *menik* means small, and *mubingah* means happy. Using foreign words in the homestay name makes it easier for foreign tourists to understand the information. Using Javanese words in the name of the homestay is a way of showing that Javanese is one of the cultures of the community.

(b). *The Name of the Homestay Refers to the Name of the Place Where the Homestay Is Located*

In this study, six homestay names (32-37) or 7.05% were obtained which referred to the name of the place where the homestay was located. These names refer to hamlets, villages or sub-districts. For example, the name of *Homestay Borobudur* (34) indicates that the homestay is located in the Borobudur area. Figure 2, *Homestay Cluster Bojong* (37) indicates that the location of the homestay is in Dusun Bojong, Wringinputih Village, Borobudur District. In Javanese, the word *bojong* means 'jutting land'. This is consistent with the hilly terrain around Borobudur Temple.

(c). *The Name of the Homestay Refers to the Conditions*

In this study, five homestay names (38-42) or 5.88% were obtained which referred to the conditions. *Putri Tunggal Homestay* (41) name, refers to the fact that the owner of the homestay only has one child, a daughter. *Putri* means 'woman' and *tunggal* means 'one'. Figure 3, *Sandyakala Borobudur Homestay* (42) name refers to the afternoon. The word 'sandyakala' (Sanskrit) means 'red light at dusk'.

(d). *The Name of the Homestay Refers to Hope*

The name of the homestay (43-46) is related to the concept of hope. Based on the data, it is known that four homestay names refer to hope, accounting for 4.7% of the total. Figure 4, *Cahaya Homestay* (43) is expected to bring light and happiness to the life of its owner. The use of the words *berkah* 'blessings', *damai* 'peace', and *sakinah* 'happiness', *Homestay Berkah* (44), *Homestay Damai* (45), and *Homestay Sakinah* (46) shows that the owners of these homestays hope to obtain blessings, peace, and happiness.

(e). *The Name of This Homestay Refers to the Name of a Temple and a Character in Folklore*

Figure 5, the name of the *Homestay Candi Pawon* (47) to introduce one of the historical sites, namely Candi Pawon. The Pawon Temple is located relatively close to the Borobudur Temple. The name of the *Homestay Roro Mendut* (48) refers to a figure in folklore. The percentage of these homestays is 2.35%. The name Roro Mendut is taken from the name of a character in one of the Central Javanese folklores by Mangunwijaya (2008). The name of the homestay (48) is used to introduce one of the famous folklore in Central Java.

(f). *The Name of the Homestay Refers to the Name of a Fruit*

In the Borobudur Temple tourist area, there are 49 homestays with names of fruits, including durian. The data shows that the homestay with the name of the fruit is 1 or 1.18%. There are many durian gardens around Borobudur. Figure 6, the owner named the *Homestay Durian* (49) to show that the area produces durians.

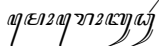
(g). *Homestay Names Related to Flower Names*

In this study, data was obtained on the names of homestays related to the names of flowers as many as 5 or 5.88%. Figure 7, the name of *Homestay Azhalya* 'beautiful flower' (50) contains the word *azhalya* from the Greek language. The names of homestays (51-54) refer to the names of jasmine flowers, *sekar* 'flower', tulip, wijaya kusuma to give the impression of beauty. Some Javanese people believe that the wijaya kusuma flower brings good luck.

(h). *Homestay Name That Refers to Javanese Identity*

The number of homestay names (55-71) that refer to Javanese identity is 17 or 20%. This percentage is the largest number of 85 homestay names collected in the Borobudur Temple area. By naming homestay with Javanese elements, Javanese identity, philosophy and culture can be widely spread.

Figure 8, the name *Genthong Homestay* (55) is a combination of the words *genthong* (Javanese) and *homestay* (English). *Genthong* 'crock' is a large water container usually made of clay (Language Development and Fostering Agency, 2016). In its development, *genthongs* are made of plastic. A *genthong* filled with water represents wealth in a

Javanese family. The name *Moro Budur Homestay* (63) is composed of three words: *moro* 'come', *budur* and *homestay*. The word *budur* is short for *borobudur*. So, *Moro Budur Homestay* means come to the homestay. The inclusion of the Javanese script is part of the representation of Javanese culture expressed through the naming of the homestay (63). On the homestay sign (63) in the public space there is a language sign in Javanese script  'moro budur'.

(i). *The Name of the Homestay Refers to Musical Instruments or Traditional Games*

This study found that 2 or 2.35% of homestay names referred to musical instruments or traditional games. The *Angklung Homestay* (72), for example, is named after a traditional musical instrument from West Java. Figure 9, the *Dakon Homestay* (73) is named after a traditional game from Central Java. By naming his homestay after musical instruments and traditional games, the owner aimed to promote the culture of the community, which has begun to be replaced by modern games.

(j). *Homestay Names That Refer to Food*

One of the typical side dishes in Borobudur is *beong* fish. This *beong* fish is shaped like a real catfish. *Beong* fish can be found in the Progo River, which flows through Borobudur. To promote this traditional dish, the name *beong* fish has been used for a homestay. Figure 10, namely *Homestay Roemah Beong* (74). Based on the data, it is known that the name of the homestay that refers to the name of the typical food is 1 or 1.18%.

(k). *Homestay Names That Refer to Greetings*

The homestay names (75-77) are related to greetings. Three or 3.53% of homestay names refer to greetings. Figure 11, *Kaluna Homestay* (76) name combines the Sanskrit word *kaluna* 'beautiful' and the English word *homestay*.

(l). *Homestay Names That Refer to Animals*

Based on the data, it is known that homestays with names referring to animals account for 3 or 3.53% of the total. Figure 12, these homestays are *Dragonflies Homestay* (78), *Homestay Musang* (79), and *Pinako Lobster Homestay* (80). *Dragonflies Homestay* (78) is located near a rice field where many dragonflies can be seen.

(m). *Homestay Names That Refer to Puppet Characters*

Sunarto (2012) stated that Punakawan are Javanese puppet characters who act as servants, advisors, and helpers for the rulers. Punakawan are a group that conveys humor in stories. The word *punakawan* comes from the Javanese word *pana* which means to know clearly, and *kawan* which means friend or companion. The Punakawan characters are Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong. The characteristic of punakawan is that they often provide advice that inspires kings and nobles. In puppetry, punakawan appear to provide solutions in a humorous manner. Figure 13, the name of the *Punokawan Homestay* (81) refers to the name of the punokawan puppet character. In this study, 1 or 1.18% of homestay names were obtained that referred to puppet characters. The naming of the homestay (81) aims to introduce or disseminate works of art as part of the culture of the Central Javanese people.

(n). *Homestay Names That Refer to Names Related to the Shape of the Earth's Surface*

One of the names of the hill used as the name of the homestay is Bukit Dagi. Figure 14, the name of the homestay is *Homestay Bukit Dagi* (82). This homestay refers to one of the forms of the earth's surface in the form of a hill. Based on this research data, 1 homestay name or 1.18% was obtained which refers to the shape of the earth's surface. The name of this homestay conveys the message that the Borobudur Temple tourist area has a hilly landscape.

(o). *Homestay Names That Refer to Number*

Figure 15, the name *Homestay 77* (83) refers to the number. The number 77 is considered a symbol of good luck. The name of the homestay refers to the number 1 or 1.18%.

(p). *Homestay Names That Refer to Colour*

Figure 16, *Rumah Merah Homestay* (84) is the name of a homestay that refers to colour. Red was chosen as the colour of the homestay. In Indonesian society, red symbolises courage. Homestays with names that refer to colour make up 1 or 1.18% of all homestays.

(q). *Homestay Names That Refer to Names Related to Leaves*

Figure 17, the name *Pinnara Homestay Exclusive* (85) is related to leaves. *Pinnara* 'lotus leaf', symbolises purity and fertility. In this study, homestays with names related to leaves as well as for 1 or 1.18% of the total.

B. *Language Types in Homestay Names in the Borobudur Temple Tourism Area*

Table 2 presents the language types found in the names of homestays in public spaces in the Borobudur Temple area, namely monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual types.

TABLE 2
TYPES OF LANGUAGE SIGNS IN PUBLIC SPACES AT HOMESTAYS IN THE BOROBUDUR TEMPLE TOURISM AREA

Type of Language	Language Name	Number	Data Number Code	Percentage (%)
Monolingual	Javanese	1	69	1.18
	English	4	33, 34, 78, 80	4.70
	Number	5		5.88
Bilingual	Indonesian-English	5	28, 41, 43, 77, 84	5.88
	Indonesian-Arabic	1	31	1.18
	English-Indonesian	16	2, 17, 36, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53, 72, 73, 74, 79, 82, 83	18.80
	Jawa-English	13	27, 35, 40, 42, 55, 56, 63, 65, 67, 68, 70, 71, 85	15.30
	English-Jawa	32	5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 32, 37, 47, 48, 54, 57, 59, 60, 61, 64, 66, 81	37.65
	Sanskrit-English	1	76	1.18
	English-Arabic	4	1, 4, 6, 75	4.70
	English-Yunani	1	50	1.18
	Aram-English	1	38	1.18
	Arabic-English	1	39	1.18
	English-Swahili	1	30	1.18
	English-Spanyol	1	29	1.18
	Number	77		90.59
Multilingual	English-Indonesian-Javanese	2	58, 62	2.35
	English-Javanese-Arabic	1	3	1.18
	Number	3		3.53
Total number		85		100

The following figures represent the names of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual homestays in public spaces in the Borobudur Temple tourist area.



Figure 18. *Daleme Mak'e* (69)

Figure 19. *Dragonflies Homestay* (78)

Figure 20. *Kendi Ombo Homestay* (68)

Figure 21. *Homestay & Resto Joglo Dhepis* (58)

(a). Monolingual

Monolingual is a person who can only speak one language (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). The designation of the homestay with a monolingual language type that utilises Javanese is the data code number (69), whereas English is designated by the data code numbers (33, 34, 78, 80). The percentage of homestay names that are monolingual and utilise Javanese is 1.18%. The limited number of monolingual homestay names that incorporate Javanese is indicative of the community's familiarity with the concept of *homestay*, which has become a widely adopted term in lieu of '*rumah* or *penginapan*'. Consequently, the community or owner generally employs the term *homestay* in preference to *rumah* or *penginapan*. The percentage of monolingual homestay names that use English is 4.70%.

1. Monolingual (Javanese) Homestay Name

Figure 18, *Daleme Mak'e* (69) 'mother's house' uses Javanese *krama*. In Javanese, there is Javanese *ngoko* and *krama*. Javanese *ngoko* is used to communicate with people of the same age or with relatively the same or lower social status. Javanese *krama* is used to communicate with people who are older or have a higher social status. The purpose of choosing Javanese *ngoko* or *krama* is to show respect for the addressee. The word *daleme* 'his house' is a Javanese *krama*. The Javanese *ngoko* '*daleme*' is *omah* 'house'. The word *mak'e* 'mother' is commonly used by people living in villages with low social status. People of middle to high social status tend to use the greeting *ibu* to refer to their mother. Naming a homestay with the name *daleme mak'e* is to show the Javanese identity and feel the Javanese nuance through this language sign.

2. Monolingual (English) Homestay Name

The name of the monolingual (English) homestay is indicated by the data code number (33, 34, 78, 80). The following is an example of the name of a homestay of the monolingual (English) type.

Figure 19, the name of the *Dragonflies Homestay* (78) is monolingual (English). English is used for the name of the homestay because the homestay is located in a tourist area that is visited by many foreign tourists. The use of English in public spaces will make it easier for tourists to understand the information. The name *dragonflies* was chosen because of the many dragonflies around the homestay. The total percentage of homestay names that use the monolingual language type is 5.88%.

(b). *Bilingual*

Bilingual is defined as a speaker's ability to use two languages equally well (Bloomfield, 1933). In the public space of the Borobudur Temple area, there are names of homestays that use bilingual types. The bilingual types in the homestays are Indonesian-English (28, 41, 43, 77, 84) as much as 5.88%; Indonesian-Arabic (31) as much as 1.18%; English-Indonesian (2, 17, 36, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53, 72, 73, 74, 79, 82, 83) as much as 18.8%; Javanese-English (27, 35, 40, 42, 55, 56, 63, 65, 67, 68, 70, 71, 85) as much as 15.3%; English-Javanese (5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 32, 37, 47, 48, 54, 57, 59, 60, 61, 64, 66, 81) as much as 37.65%; Sanskrit-English (76) as much as 1.18%; English-Arabic (1, 4, 6, 75) as much as 4.7%; English-Greek (50) as much as 1.18%; Aramaic-English (38) as much as 1.18%; Arabic-English (39) as much as 1.18%; English-Swahili (30) as much as 1.18%; English-Spanish (29) as much as 1.18%. The total percentage of homestay names using the bilingual type is 90.59%.

Figure 20, the name of *Kendi Ombo Homestay* (68) uses a bilingual language, namely Javanese: *kendi ombo* 'wide crock' and English: *homestay*. The word *kendi* means a water crock made of soil (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). In Javanese culture, the philosophy of the crock is that it is the source of life because water is the source of life. The name *Kendi Ombo Homestay* shows the Javanese cultural identity.

(c). *Multilingual*

Multilingual societies are easy to find in various countries, while monolingual societies are rare (Spolsky, 2003). In this study, the names of homestays with English-Indonesian-Javanese (58, 62) were found to be 2.35%. The names with English-Javanese-Arabic (3) were found to be 1.18%. The total percentage of homestay names using multilingual language types is 3.53%.

Figure 21, the name of *Homestay & Resto Joglo Dhepis* (58) uses a multilingual language type. The name of the homestay is composed of English: *homestay*, Indonesian: *resto joglo* and Javanese: *dhepis*. The word *resto* is short for *restaurant*. *Joglo* is a typical Javanese building as a residence, the roof is trapezoidal, the middle part rises in a pyramid shape, the front porch is wide, the living room is not divided by partitions and is usually used as a living room (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). The word *dhepis* 'hidden' is Javanese. The language sign of *Homestay & Resto Joglo Dhepis* shows the symbol of Semar, which is one of the characters in puppetry. Semar represents the figure of simplicity as a representation of the Javanese attitude.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that the names of homestays in the Borobudur Temple tourist area represent the local identity and culture of the Borobudur community, Central Java. The types of languages used are monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. The monolingual type is 5.88%, including Javanese and English. The bilingual type is 90.59%, including Indonesian-English, Indonesian-Arabic, English-Indonesian, Javanese-English, English-Javanese, Sanskrit-English, English-Arabic, English-Greek, Aramaic-English, Arabic-English, English-Swahili, and English-Spanish. The name of the bilingual type of homestay with the highest percentage uses English-Javanese, which is 37.65%. The multilingual type is 3.53%, including English-Indonesian-Javanese and English-Javanese-Arabic. Most of the use of English is only indicated by the word *homestay* which is indeed familiar compared to the word *rumah tinggal* 'homestay'. The strong use of Javanese in the homestay name shows that the owner has a high concern for preserving Javanese as a local language.

Through the names of these homestays, the identity and cultural richness of the Javanese people can be known, for example folklore, cultural sites, typical foods, agricultural products, arts, names of people in Javanese that have begun to be replaced by foreign languages, philosophy, traditional games, and geographical conditions.

REFERENCES

- [1] Al-Athwary, A. A. H. (2022). Linguistic landscape in Najran: A sociolinguistic approach. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(12), 2559–2567. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1212.11>
- [2] Amer, M. I. B. (2024). Linguistic landscapes of social media discourse: Exploring language practices and identities on Jordanian online platforms. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(11), 3321–3331. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1411.01>
- [3] Andriyanti, E. (2019). Linguistic landscape at Yogyakarta's senior high schools in multilingual context: Patterns and representation. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(1), 85–97. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v9i1.13841>
- [4] Ardhian, D., Sumarlam, Purnanto, D., & Yustanto, H. (2021). Religious performance in Malang, Indonesia: Linguistic landscape on worship sign. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(2), 983–1000. <https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.68>
- [5] Artawa, K., Mulyanah, A., Atmawati, D., Paramarta, I. M. S., Satyawati, M. S., & Purnawati, K. W. (2023). Language choice and multilingualism on restaurant signs: A linguistic landscape analysis. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*,

- 11(3), 258–271. <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijscel.2023.2007382.3106>
- [6] Ayyub, S., & Rohmah, Z. (2024). The linguistic landscape of Kotabaru Malang Train Station: language representation in public space. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 11(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2389633>
- [7] Backhaus, P. (2007). *Linguistic Landscapes a Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo* (J. Edwards, Ed.). Multilingual Matters. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://dokumen.pub/linguistic-landscapes-a-comparative-study-of-urban-multilingualism-in-tokyo-9781853599484.html>
- [8] Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa [Language Development and Fostering Agency]. (2016). *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* [Big Indonesian Dictionary]. Retrieved September 29, 2020, from <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>
- [9] Blommaert, J., & Maly, I. (2014). Ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis and social change: A case study. In *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies* (Issue June). Retrieved January 27, 2024, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264992781_Ethnographic_Linguistic_Landscape_Analysis_and_social_change_A_case_study
- [10] Bloomfield, L. (1933). *Language*. New York: Henry Holt. Retrieved May 9, 2025, from <https://www.scribd.com/document/492294214/LANGUAGE-Leonard-Bloomfield>
- [11] Gorter, D. (2006). Introduction: The study of the linguistic landscape as a new approach to multilingualism. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 3(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668382>
- [12] Gorter, D., Cenoz, J., & Worp, K. Van Der. (2021). The linguistic landscape as a resource for language learning and raising language awareness. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*, 8(2), 161–181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23247797.2021.2014029>
- [13] Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. (2014). The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space. In *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space* (Fourth, Issue January 1999). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203796092>
- [14] Järlehed, J., Milani, T. M., & Rosendal, T. (2023). Introducing the political economy of language in place/space. *Linguistic Landscape*, 9(3), 219–225. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.23039.jar>
- [15] Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education. Retrieved April 20, 2025, from https://students.aiu.edu/submissions/profiles/resources/onlineBook/S3D7W4_Marketing_Management.pdf
- [16] Kweldju, S. (2021). Incorporating linguistic landscape into English word-formation task in an English morphology course. *Teflin Journal*, 32(1), 29–49. <https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v32i1/29-49>
- [17] Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16(1), 23–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X970161002>
- [18] Lestari, E. Y. (2023). *Lanskap linguistik tanda peringatan di ruang publik Kabupaten Magelang* [Linguistic landscape of warning signs in public spaces of Magelang Regency]. Tidar University. Retrieved April 20, 2025, from https://repositori.untidar.ac.id/index.php?p=show_detail&id=13940&keywords=
- [19] Lestariningsih, D. N., Sihombing, R. M., Okitasari, I., Alaini, N. N., Wardhani, A., & Budihastuti, E. (2023). Multimodal linguistic landscape in Lombok: A case study of product branding. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(12), 3330–3337. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1312.31>
- [20] Mangunwijaya, Y. B. (2008). *Rara Mendut Sebuah Trilogi* [Rara Mendut A Trilogy]. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [21] Mansoor, S. S., Hamzah, N. H., & Shangeetha, R. K. (2023). Linguistic landscape in Malaysia: the case of language choice used in signboards. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(2), 1062–1083. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i2.28338>
- [22] Muriungi, S. W., & Mudogo, B. A. (2021). Linguistic landscape in a multilingual context: A case of Kenyan Universities. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 24(2), 450–460. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v24i2.3673>
- [23] Nenotek, S. A., Paramarta, I. M. S., Sjoen, A. E., Beeh, N., Cornelis, A. R., & Benu, N. N. (2025). The linguistic landscape for sustainable and inclusive tourism: insight from Timor Tengah Selatan, Indonesia. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 12(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2441579>
- [24] Prasetyo, L., Artawa, K., Purnawati, K. W., & Suardiana, I. W. (2024). The linguistic landscape analysis of identity representation in public signs at Watugong Buddhist Monastery Semarang. *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal*, 5(2), 769–778. <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v5i2.1008>
- [25] Rohmah, Z., & Wijayanti, E. W. N. (2023). Linguistic landscape of Mojokari: Language policy, language vitality and commodification of language. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2275359>
- [26] Shen, Y. (2022). Exploring the linguistic landscape of a historical and cultural city in China: From the perspective of language ecology. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(10), 2172–2181. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1210.25>
- [27] Spolsky, B. (2003). *Sociolinguistics* (H. G. Widdowson, Ed.). Oxford University Press. Retrieved May 9, 2025, from <https://library.ablaikhan.kz/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Sociolinguistics-Bernard-Spolsky.pdf>
- [28] Sunarto. (2012). Panakawan wayang kulit purwa: Asal-usul dan konsep perwujudannya [Panakawan purwa shadow puppet: The origins and concept of its realisation]. *Panggung Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 22(3), 242–255. <https://doi.org/10.26742/panggung.v22i3.74>
- [29] Wijayanti, A., & Diani, W. R. (2022). Lanskap linguistik penamaan hotel di Kota dan Kabupaten Magelang [Linguistic landscape of hotels names in municipality and regency of Magelang]. *Mabasan: Masyarakat Bahasa & Sastra Nusantara*, 16(2), 197–210. <https://doi.org/10.26499/mab.v16i2.477>
- [30] Yusuf, N. M., & Datang, F. A. (2023). Sikap bahasa pada lanskap linguistik papan nama penginapan di Kampung Prawirotaman Yogyakarta [Language attitudes in the linguistic landscape of inn signboards in Prawirotaman Village, Yogyakarta]. *Al Mikraj*, 4(1), 1112–1126. <https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v4i1.4295>



Dwi Atmawati finished her first degree in 1992 at the Faculty of Letters, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta. From 2001 to 2015, she worked for the Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah as a civil servant. Then, from 2016 to 2021, she worked at the Balai Bahasa Provinsi Yogyakarta. Since January 2022, she has been working at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She completed her master's degree (2000-2002) and doctoral degree (2007-2012) at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. She has written many articles on language and how language is used in society. Her articles have been published in national and international journals, as well as at conferences. Scopus Id: <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57796044800>; Email: dwi_bbs@yahoo.co.id; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9147-7335>



Ade Mulyanah is a senior researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia (BRIN). She graduated from the English Education Department, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), in 1997. She got her master's degree in English Linguistics at Universitas at Padjadjaran (UNPAD) in 2012. Now, she is continuing her Ph.D. in linguistics at UNPAD. Her research interest is primarily in applied linguistics: language learning and pragmatics. Her research has been published in journals, proceedings, and in a book chapter. Her work experience includes teaching English as a lecturer and teaching the Indonesian language to foreign speakers (BIPA). Email: adem004@brin.go.id; Scopus Id: <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=58143542200>; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7588-7281>



Sariah is a researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She graduated from the Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 1993. She earned a master's degree in the Department of Educational Management, Jakarta State University (UNJ) in 2003 and at the same level a master's degree in Linguistics at Padjadjaran University (UNPAD) in 2013. Now, she is continuing her doctoral education in linguistics at UNPAD. Her research is mostly related to the semantics, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and linguistic landscape. Her research has been published in journals, proceedings, and book chapters. Scopus ID: <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=58523797700>; Email: sari021@brin.go.id; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2367-4118>



Rini Widiastuti is a Junior Researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She graduated from the Arabic Language Education Department at the Indonesian University of Education (UPI), in 2001. She is currently continuing her education to obtain a master's degree in education. Her research has been published in journals, proceedings, and book chapters. Her current research is on intercultural pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics entitled "Attitude Analysis in Assessing Cross-Cultural Experiences of Korean Expatriates in Indonesia: Implications for BIPA Teaching" (Mulyanah et al.); Scopus Id: <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=58523684000>; Email: rini021@brin.go.id; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4515-7912>



Prima Hariyanto finished his first degree in 2010 at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia, Depok. From 2010 to 2021, he worked for the Kantor Bahasa Provinsi Kepulauan Bangka Belitung. Since January 2022, he has been working at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). He completed his master's degree (2023-2024) at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. He is interested in applied linguistics research. His latest article written with colleagues entitled "Language Maintenance and Identity: A Case of Bangka Malay" and "Linguistic and Symbolic Meanings in Ethnic Communities: A Case Study of Tedhak Siten Traditional Ceremony" were published in the *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language* (IJSCL). Email: prim008@brin.go.id; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1140-2673>



Tri Wahyuni finished her undergraduate education at Muhammadiyah University of Semarang in 2004. Her master's education was completed in 2021 at the Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University of Semarang. She started her career as a civil servant at the Lampung Provincial Language Office from 2005 to 2011. She was transferred to the Central Java Provincial Language Center from 2011 to 2021. In 2022 she joined the National Research and Innovation Agency as a researcher until now. Her expertise is in interdisciplinary linguistics. Several of her scientific articles have been published by international and national journals. Readers can trace her scientific footprint on the <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=Lb4TS1YAAAAJ&hl=en>; Email: twahyuni99@gmail.com or triw015@brin.go.id; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8564-2595>



Resti Nurfaidah was born in Bandung, in her daily life is packed with activities as a researcher with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Literature, and Cultural Studies. She used to be a researcher at West Java Language Agency for over 20 years, then moved to National Research and Innovation Agency since 2021. She was graduated from Cultural Studies of Indonesia University on 2014 with the thesis of Masculinity on “Malaikat Tanpa Sayap (The Angel without Wings)” and “Malaikat Bayangan (The Shadow Angel)”. She is an active researcher and literature. She has actively memberships of HISKI, APEBSKID PUSAT, and PPI. She also had many collaborated anthologies with her colleagues. Email: sinenengresti1973@gmail.com; rest013@brin.go.id; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4497-9436>



Emma Maemunah was born in Bandung, West Java, in 1969. She graduated from Diponegoro University majoring Applied Linguistics. She is a researcher at the Research Center for Language, Literature and Community, National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia. Her research area is language, culture, and tradition. Her writings on language in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and semantics studies have been published in national journals and national proceedings. emmamaemunah69@gmail.com. Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=Opu5rFsAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>. Email: emma003@brin.go.id; emmamaemunah69@gmail.com; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8270-4754>



Imelda earned her Bachelor's degree in English Education from the University of Lampung (2001) and a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Indonesia (2005). Since 2006, she has been a language researcher at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, now part of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). For nearly 19 years, her work has focused on minority language communities in Indonesia, with research interests in language documentation, endangerment, sociolinguistics, and discourse studies in traditional and digital media. Her publications include The Dictionary of Gamkonoran-Indonesian-English (Imelda & Bowden, 2020) and a journal article, Uncovering EFL Learners' Demotivation Towards English Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia (SIELE, 2023). Email: imel001@brin.go.id; ORCID iD: 0000-0003-2258-9488



Ricky Aptif Manik. His last education is Master of Literature, Universitas Gajah Mada (2010-2013). His writings in the form of short stories, essays, reviews, and scientific articles have been published in scientific journals and several mass media. His short stories are collected in the short stories anthologies Swarnadwipa (2016), Tamsil Tanah Perca (2015), and Mamayu Hayuni Bawana (2022). The author is an emerging writer in the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival (UWRF) 2022. He currently works as a researcher at the center for Language, Literature, and Community Research, Nasional Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). Email: rickymanik@gmail.com; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4365-5034>



Royan Nur Fahmi was born and lives in Jakarta. He completed his graduate studies at the University of Indraprasta PGRI Jakarta in 2012. Currently, he works as a researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). Prior to this, he contributed his expertise at the Center for Language Strategy and Diplomacy Development (PPSDK), where he was involved in various language development and diplomacy programs. He is actively engaged in writing and conducting research in the fields of Indonesian language for speakers of other languages (BIPA) and applied linguistics. His interest in language teaching and linguistic studies is reflected in the scholarly publications he has produced. In addition to his role as a writer and researcher, He is also an active contributor to the academic community as an editor for several scientific journals. Email: royan_fahmi@yahoo.com; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9355-5835>



Arif Izzak is a researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia (BRIN). He graduated from the English Department, Universitas Jember (Unej), in 1997. Taking master degree in applied linguistic at Diponegoro University from 2009 up to 2010 with the concentration of the thesis namely Classroom Action Research (CAR), concentration of BIPA. His research interest is primarily in applied linguistics: language acquisition and socio-pragmatics. His research has been published in journals and proceedings. Recent collaborative research is on socio-pragmatic entitled “Indirect Speech Acts in Javanese” (2024). His work experiences include teaching the Indonesian language to foreign speakers (BIPA) while in Balai Bahasa Jawa Timur. Email: arief_izzak@yahoo.com; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9344-0563>

Sillinity as Survival: Humor and the Modern Refugee Condition in Three Narratives

Bayan AlAmmouri*

English Language and Literature Department, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Sukayna Ali

English Language and Literature Department, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Hanan Al-Jabri

English Language and Literature Department, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—This paper explores the concept of “sillinity”, an intentional lighthearted absurdity, as a narrative strategy in Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and contemporary refugee memoirs: Atef Abu Saif’s *Don’t Look Left: A Diary of Genocide* (2024) and Yusra Mardini’s *Butterfly: From Refugee to Olympian—My Story of Rescue, Hope, and Triumph* (2018). While Twain’s novel is celebrated for its humor and satire, this study argues that its sillinity operates as an emblem of resilience and survival under precarious conditions. By examining Huck’s humor to navigate societal and geographical borders, alongside Abu Saif’s and Mardini’s use of humor to confront displacement and state violence, the paper highlights sillinity’s ability to transcend temporal and geographical boundaries. This analysis positions *Huckleberry Finn* as a timeless text that offers a nuanced framework for understanding the interplay between humor and endurance in the contemporary refugee narratives and establishes sillinity as a universal tool for reclaiming agency and resisting subjugation.

Index Terms—refugees, humor, sillinity, resistance, displacement

I. INTRODUCTION

Through Humor, you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers. And once you find laughter, no matter how painful your situation might be, you can survive it.

—Bill Cosby

A sense of humor... is needed armor.

—Hugh Sidey

Displacement is as old as humanity. People leave off and travel in search of better realities and in hope of establishing better futures. Nonetheless, forced displacement has only been acknowledged in scholarly work post WWII (Orchard, 2016). This shift in scholarly focus emerged due to the unprecedented scale and systematic nature of displacement during and after the war, which highlighted the need for formal recognition and study of its causes, impacts, and solutions. Kendra Strauss defines displacement as “a moment, when something shifts or changes and creates a corresponding realignment in being, action, or thought” (p. 623). Current sociopolitical orders have created serious unrest especially in the global south and in the MENWA region (Middle East and North West Africa) causing a surge in the number of refugees within the past two decades, such as the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis or the persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar (Becker, 2022, p. 3). These refugees are realigned in being, action, and in thought due to a moment that led to their displacement. Though the moment that creates the realignment of being differs in its geographical, political, and social triggers that set it in motion, it has undeniable overlapping outcomes for all displaced individuals. Sascha O. Becker in “Forced displacement in history: Some recent research” provides a brief taxonomy of forced displacement; “[e]pisodes of forced displacement display substantial variation in scale: conflicts—or, analogously, natural disasters—can affect small groups, in the case of selective expulsions along ethnic, racial or religious lines, or can take the form of mass expulsions of millions of individuals” (Becker, 2022, pp. 3-4). In other words, displacement can be caused by natural disasters or violent conflicts, can result in the displacement of a small number of people or of millions, and it varies in temporality as it can be either “temporary, such as when refugees find transitory shelter in a safe country while waiting to return to their home countries, or it can be permanent, as in the case of forced population movements after WWII when European borders were redrawn” (Becker, 2022, p. 4). In this research article we do not intend to provide a holistic ontology or taxonomy of displacement, but we intend to tackle the meaning of displacement in a way that allows for the disintegration of its characteristics as to show, whether forced or voluntary displacement and whether refugee, migrant, or immigrant, that the moment of displacement calls for a

* Corresponding Author.

realignment in behavioral tactics that refugees equip themselves with to survive.

This research article focuses on refugees—precariat individuals who are internally and externally forced into displacement while that displacement is still ongoing. We closely examine displaced people's reliance on and need for innocent humor, what we call "sillinity" which is lighthearted absurdity to be able to escape their harsh realities and survive. We argue that Mark Twain's Huck in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is an emblematic character who jokes and pranks others around him throughout his journey to be able to connect with his surroundings and reaffirm his realigned being. While Twain's novel is celebrated for its humor and satire, this study argues that its sillinity serves as an emblem of resilience and survival under precarious conditions, a theme that resonates with the lived experiences of modern refugees. By examining Huck's navigation of societal and geographical borders, the paper draws parallels to the refugee's use of humor, improvisation, and subversion in the face of displacement, alienation, and state violence. Through this lens, Huckleberry Finn transcends its historical context, offering a nuanced framework to understand the complex interplay between humor and endurance in the contemporary refugee narrative.

In this article, we scrutinize Huck's "sillinity" as a survival tool that is elastic and contagious. It is contagious as it affects other characters around him lightening their burdens and reminding them that life is worth living. It is elastic as it transcends temporal and literal borders becoming an emblem of the modern refugees' condition of displacement showing that sillinity is not only needed for survival but is also a tool of resistance. We scrutinize refugees' sillinity in literature to reflect on the role literature plays in shaping our understanding of survival under oppressive conditions. And finally, we reflect on how sillinity appears in modern refugee narratives, mainly Yusra Mardini's *Butterfly: From Refugee to Olympian-My Story of Rescue, Hope, and Triumph* (2018) and Atef Abu Saif's *Don't Look Left: A Diary of Genocide* (2024), to reflect on and exemplify its contagion and elastic essence.

II. DISCUSSION

Humor as a term has been researched extensively, yet critics do not agree on a specific definition due to the wide scale of behavioral and cognitive characteristics that this term encompasses. For Sigmund Freud, a humorous joke is a "playful judgment" that grants a form of "aesthetic freedom" through "a sort of judging released from its usual rules and regulations" (Freud, 1990, p. 5). In *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach*, Rod A. Martin describes humor as "a type of mental play involving a lighthearted, nonserious attitude toward ideas and events," while emphasizing that humor also "serves a number of serious social, emotional, and cognitive functions" (Martin, 2007, p. 1). Martin concludes that these characteristics position the study of humor firmly within academic psychology (p. 3). Similarly, Sultanoff (2002) contends that humor is "comprised of three components:" intellectual wit, emotional gaiety, and laughter. Sultanoff further explicates that "we often equate laughter with humor, but you do not need to laugh to experience humor" (Sultanoff, 2002, p. 1). Michael Sliter, Aron Kale, and Zhenyu Yuan, in "Is Humor the Best Medicine?" confirm the claim that humor and laughter are distinct while listing various types of humor. Of particular interest here is "coping humor," that is humor that "can combat the effects of stress" (Sliter et al., 2014, p. 259). Coping humor buffers stress as it facilitates "positive reinterpretation, social bonding, and physiological effects" (Sliter et al., 2002, p. 260). Coping humor aligns with Freud's idea of "playful judgment," it is lighthearted, but most importantly, coping humor is a human social act that is void of feeling.

The distinction between humor and laughter is paramount because monkeys, chimpanzees and other animals can laugh. Thus, coping humor is inherently human and only human. While many critics call the human the laughing animal, it is actually humor that distinguishes the human and not laughter (Bergson, 2014, p. 4a). Henri Bergson in *Humor: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* argues that humor "does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly HUMAN. A landscape may be beautiful, charming and sublime, or insignificant and ugly; it will never be laughable" (Bergson, 2014, p. 4a). When we find a hat or an animal humorous it is only because we "have detected in it some human attitude or expression" (Bergson, 2014, p. 4a). Bergson further argues that another important symptom of coping humor is "the absence of feeling" as it "seems as though the comic could not produce its disturbing effect unless it fell, so to say, on the surface of a soul that is thoroughly calm and unruffled. Indifference is its natural environment" (Bergson, 2014, p. 4a). For Bergson, to "produce the whole of its effect, then, the comic demands something like a momentary anesthesia of the heart" (Bergson, 2014, p. 4b). Thus, for coping humor to manifest itself one needs to detach themselves from the situation that is charged with emotions. Bergson then concludes that coping humor is social in nature. "You would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt yourself isolated from others. Laughter appears to stand in need of an echo" (Bergson, 2014, p. 4b). This does not mean one needs to be in a group to find something humorous, for someone might indeed deem something humorous while in solitude. It rather entails that humor is a social construct that echoes our shared experiences and builds on mutual understandings of life and humanity.

Coping humor manifests prominently in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, particularly through the character of Huck. Huck is represented as an innocent child who contemplates morality, existence, religion, slavery, education, and crime (to name a few) in a lighthearted humorous manner. Nonetheless, Huck's humor is too often unintentional and unconscious. For instance, when Miss Watson, Widow Douglass' sister, attempts to teach Huck about heaven (the "good place") and hell (the "bad place") Huck exclaims:

Then for an hour it was deadly dull, and I was fidgety. Miss Watson would say, "Don't put your feet up there, Huckleberry;" and "don't scrunch up like that, Huckleberry—set up straight;" and pretty soon she would say,

“Don’t gap and stretch like that, Huckleberry—why don’t you try to behave?” Then she told me all about the bad place, and I said I wished I was there. She got mad, then, but I didn’t mean no harm. All I wanted was to go somewhere; all I wanted was a change, I warn’t particular. She said it was wicked to say what I said; said she wouldn’t say it for the whole world; she was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I couldn’t see no advantage in going where she was going, so I made up my mind I wouldn’t try for it. but I never said so, because it would only make trouble, and wouldn’t do no good. (Twain, 1998, pp. 15-16)

Huck’s reaction to Miss Watson’s theological teachings is a classic example of coping humor. His response is an innocent lighthearted and unintentional comeback. Huck is unaware of the humorous effects of his remarks and is also oblivious to what it is he is actually commenting on, which is mainly why Huck is a funny character. Nonetheless, Huck knows that his remarks are what put an end to the conversation. This incident happens in the second chapter of the novel and sets the tone for Huck’s views and attitudes. In other words, because Huck’s humor effectively relieves him from a suffocating and “deadly dull” situation, it is adopted by Huck from this point on and becomes a coping form of humor—it resurfaces and is employed by Huck when he feels the need to escape a situation that is “too dull” or too intense for him.

Huck’s coping humor opens up opportunities for newness. It is a type of humor that is needed, used, and resorted to unconsciously in dire situations to be able to better adapt with new forced circumstances—what we will be calling “sillinity”. This form of humor is not a turn away from the conventional definition of coping humor presented above but a return to it. Sillinity is social, human, and devoid of emotional weight, but most importantly it is innate and usually unintentional. Humor is “a universal aspect of human experience, occurring in all cultures and virtually all individuals throughout the world” (Martin, 2007, p. 3). Its universality lies in its deeply rooted connection to human nature. Rod A. Martin in *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach* observes:

Infants begin to laugh in response to the actions of other people at about four months of age...The innateness of laughter is further demonstrated by the fact that even children born deaf and blind have been reported to laugh appropriately, without ever having perceived the laughter of other...There is evidence of specialized brain circuits for humor and laughter in humans, which researchers are beginning to identify by means of neural imaging studies. Thus, being able to enjoy humor and express it through laughter seems to be an essential part of what it means to be human. (Martin, 2007, p. 4)

The innateness of sillinity creates a balance between critique and entertainment. This form of coping humor helps the individual connect with their inner child and feel safe through deriving a form of “psychological distance” which in turn “helps the individual in detaching emotionally from stressors...[t]his distancing will enable a reduction in the perceived severity” of the situation (Mishra, 2024, p. 3). This psychological distance that sillinity makes possible, is what many displaced individuals resort to in order to protect their agency and their subjectivity of the self (in the Lacanian sense). Refugees, for instance, often resort to sillinity as a coping mechanism that helps them detach from dire realities, if only momentarily, to be able to reconnect with their inner self. This moment of sillinity offers up spaces in which individuals, especially when experiencing displacement and refugeedom, are allowed to reaffirm their humanity and their right to fight for survival.

Aditi Mishra and Shruti Dutt in “Examining the Interplay of Coping Mechanisms and Humor Styles in High-Stress Scenarios” argue that “[s]hared mirth nurtures friendship that is grounded on the sense of shared being which results in mutual engagement and support” (Mishra, 2024, p. 4). Mishra and Dutt elaborate that during challenging times, humor “can help people overcome the struggle of self-expression, to better mingle with one another and show care and compassion” (Mishra, 2024, p. 4). “Humor has been described as producing a cognitive-affective shift or a restructuring of the situation so that it is less threatening, with a concomitant release of emotion associated with the perceived threat” (Abel, 2002, p. 366). When working through a “demanding situation, people can use their humor as a means of asserting control over the situation or even the adversity of life itself, and this helps them to take command and feel empowered and like they can cope well” (Mishra, 2024, p. 4). Accordingly, “migration studies’ failure to recognize migrants as humorous individuals risks feeding into processes of exceptionalization and dehumanization through setting the migrant up as an obscure figure that lacks ‘essentially human’ qualities” (Franck, 2022, p. 1). In other words, humor “is a part of everyday life” and thus it is an integral part of displacement—refugees use it “to interact with each other and with the outside world” (Franck, 2022, p. 3). In this sense, Huck’s sillinity serves as a prototype of refugees’ resistance. As a displaced figure, Huck navigates his journey with a lighthearted resilience that mirrors the experiences of modern refugees.

When Huck struggles with deciding whether he is doing the right thing in helping Jim escape slavery, he questions American morality and compares it to a dog, concluding that if his morality was indeed a dog, he would poison it and kill it because it is dysfunctional:

So we poked along back home, and I warn’t feeling so brash as I was before, but kind of ornery, and humble, and to blame, somehow—though I hadn’t done nothing. But that’s always the way; it don’t make no difference whether you do right or wrong, a person’s conscience ain’t got no sense, and just goes for him anyway. If I had a yaller dog that didn’t know no more than a person’s conscience does I would pison him. It takes up more room than all the rest of a person’s insides, and yet ain’t no good, nohow. (Twain, 1998, p. 240)

Huck's humor highlights his struggle understanding conscience and morality, which he views as an overbearing and useless organ, subtly critiquing the moral contradictions of the American society. For Huck, conscience takes up too much space inside a human body for something that fails at guiding people effectively. His silliness here exposes the defects in the American community's moral compass while offering a moment of humor.

Another instance where Huck employs silliness to create relief and help others resist injustices is when he decides to tell Mary Jane, the daughter of a deceased rich English man, that the Duke and the Dauphine are not her real uncles but frauds deceiving her and her sisters. Huck starts by telling Mary Jane, "I don't want nothing more out of YOU than just your word—I druther have it than another man's kiss-the-Bible" (Twain, 1998, p. 199). Instantaneously, though, he tells her to not "holler. Just set still and take it like a man," forgetting that he just announced he does not trust men—ridiculing societal gender biases (Twain, 1998, p. 199). Huck also resorts to silliness to ease his fear of exclusion when the boys in town gather up to play "robbers" and decide each robber in their gang must have a family for the gang to use that family as leverage, to threaten the gang member if needed:

They talked it over, and they was going to rule me out, because they said every boy must have a family or somebody to kill, or else it wouldn't be fair and square for the others. Well, nobody could think of anything to do—everybody was stumped, and set still. I was most ready to cry; but all at once I thought of a way, and so I offered them Miss Watson—they could kill her. (Twain, 1998, p. 21)

Huck's humorous sacrifice of Miss Watson criticizes how children are disregarded and not taught the value of familial bonds or integrity. Simultaneously, the humorous remark lightens the mood and provides a coping mechanism for Huck. Later in the novel, Huck also engages silliness to criticize figures of authority. When Jim asks what kings are and what do they do, Huck answers: "[t]hey just set around—except, maybe, when there's a war; then they go to the war. But other times they just lazy around; or go hawking" (Twain, 1998, p. 68). The blend of Huck's candid remarks and innocent tone amplifies the humor while subtly criticizing abuse of authority, illustrating how silliness is a tool that questions constructed social ideologies.

Huck's silliness is also often resorted to when Huck grapples with America's slave system and its underlying systematic and institutional racism. When he asks Tom Sawyer not to tell on him for plotting to free Jim, he is completely surprised that Tom offers to help him, as helping Huck indicates that Tom is willing to turn his back on his white supremacist societal norms. Huck exclaims: "I let go all holts then, like I was shot. It was the most astonishing speech I ever heard—and I'm bound to say Tom Sawyer fell considerable in my estimation. Only I couldn't believe it. Tom Sawyer a NIGGER-STEALER!" (Twain, 1998, p. 235). According to Huck's understanding, Tom's agreement to help him do something considered "bad" according to society, indicates that Tom has no principles—which are considered a marker of the white community's characteristics. Similarly, when Jim willingly forfeits his freedom to help Tom who might bleed to death, Huck affirms that even though Jim is black from the outside, "I knowed he was white inside" (Twain, 1998, p. 279). Huck's observation reflects his internalized racial biases but also suggests that it is absurd to define humanity through race, illustrating silliness's ability to tackle heavy themes with levity. Finally, when Huck manages to get to the doctor to ask him to help Tom with his wound, he tries his best to cover up the fact that he and Tom are involved in the runaway slave incident that occurred that evening. Nonetheless, anxious to prevent suspicion Huck ends up saying Tom had a dream, and his dream shot him: "'He had a dream,' I says, 'and it shot him'" (Twain, 1998, p. 281). Huck's silliness here provides comic relief, lightening the mood while navigating the tense circumstances of the characters. Through these examples, Huck's silliness emerges as a tool that balances humor and critique. While Huck's silliness is rooted in his innocence, it extends beyond the personal to reflect broader assessments of morality, authority, and systemic oppression.

Huckleberry Finn is the emblem of the modern refugee condition because his silliness is elastic and is adopted by the modern refugee as a survival toolkit. Huck is a displaced figure whose innate tool of resistance sustains him in his journey in search of a better home away from oppressive figures of authority. The fluidity of his silliness arises from the transcendent nature of his journey. Put simply, Huck, as a classic character created by one of America's most influential nineteenth century realists, transcends geographical and historical borders. His silliness, thus, becomes elastic, affecting those inside and outside Mark Twain's text. Huck's silliness is an integral aspect of the essence of refugeedom in the twenty first century, as modern refugees engage with silliness to be able to transcend their realities into spaces they create for themselves, where they would feel more in touch with their true selves.

One major similarity between Huck and the modern refugee in the narrative form is their shared status of displacement, another, equally significant, is that their resistance to systematic injustices and their ability to maintain their sense of self in the face of radical change is often without direct confrontation. Mark Twain's Novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, bridges a gap in the scholarly examination of humor and displacement, setting a precedent for understanding the role of silliness in the experiences of refugees and displaced figures. Silliness serves as a lens for understanding how people manage their survival and identity during times of upheaval, through the preservation of cultural memory and through the negotiation of new social and political realities. Silliness allows the displaced to resist dehumanization through creativity and humor. It helps the refugee figure reinstate a sense of community and belonging that usually dissolves during forced dislocation. Silliness during displacement helps refugees return to a moment of self-recognition which brings them comfort and warmth, better equipping them to face the cruelties of an exodus. Below, we closely examine two memoirs—Yusra Mardini's *Butterfly: From Refugee to*

Olympian—My Story of Rescue, Hope, and Triumph (2018) and Atef Abu Saif's *Don't Look Left: A Diary of Genocide* (2024)—as archetypal texts that show the high synergy between Mark Twain's narrative techniques and those employed in modern refugee narratives, where silliness is employed as a tool of resistance.

Refugees resist dislocation and displacement in various ways to be able to persist. In "(De)Bordering by Laughter. What Can Different Kinds of Laughter Reveal About the Experiences of Everyday Bordering Among Asylum Seekers and Refugees?" Tiina Sotkasiira and Sanna Rynänen elucidate that one of the main challenges that face refugees as asylum seekers are the bordering practices that are meant to "exclude and marginalize asylum seekers and refugees" in host societies (Sotkasiira, 2024, p. 476). The writers then add that humor and laughter are "de-bordering" activities that are meant to remove societal borders (Sotkasiira, 2024, p. 276). Humor, for the displaced is a tool that flips control and power upside down. It is a tool that helps refugees negotiate and make sense of their forced displacement (Hernann, 2016, p. 58). Humor amongst displaced individuals is, thus, essential because it provides a "cathartic release of anxiety or anger while bringing people together and reinforcing the boundaries between in- and out-group" (Hernann, 2016, p. 58). For Achille Mbembe in *On the Postcolony*, humor is not intended to inflict damage nor is it capable of damaging "the material base" of ruling systems, but it rather exposes the truth that such powers try hard to hide (Mbembe, 2001, pp. 108-111). Thus, Humor does not only resist aggressive regimes (the aggression here is directed towards the refugee figure and not necessarily against other groups) and provide a moment of relief, but for the refugee humor records the historical present that many willingly ignore and actively try to erase. Consequently, many humourology scholars deem it a language—Andrew Hernann, for example, calls humor "an unofficial speech genre" (Hernann, 2016, p. 60). As explained earlier, humor helps the displaced reconnect with their individuality and humanity, and hence, reinstate their agency and sense of belonging. "Earlier anthropologists" examined how "stateless societies" use humor "to remain integrated" as it "maintains order and enhances group solidarity" (Hernann, 2016, p. 64). Humor nurtures a sense of communitas, "easing individual stress and loneliness while also alleviating communal existential anxiety" (Hernann, 2016, p. 72). As the displaced adapt to navigate their new realities they "rely on replacements of one thing by another" (Strauss, 2022, p. 624). Too often, they replace safety, warmth, agency, and the familiar with humor; displaced humor or silliness. Humor, for those on the run, is displaced because it is no longer a natural expression of cheerfulness but a tool for survival. For refugees, humor is a familiar language that helps them reclaim agency in the face of instability. In this sense, silliness transforms fear and disorientation into moments of relief, permitting the displaced to assert their humanity amidst dehumanizing conditions.

An example of a contemporary narrative that engages with silliness as an integral part of the modern refugee's condition is Yusra Mardini's *Butterfly: From Refugee to Olympian—My Story of Rescue, Hope, and Triumph* (2018). Yusra and Sara Mardini are two Syrian refugees forced to leave Syria in 2015. The two sisters leave their family behind and embark on a treacherous journey across the Aegean Sea in hopes of reaching Germany. Yusra, only seventeen at the time, published an autobiographical narrative about her displacement. Her life story became an international sensation because Yusra and her sister swam their way to the Greek Island of Lesbos. The narrative details with chilling effects the horrors of displacement, but is simultaneously rife with humor. Yusra's older sister, Sara, takes it upon herself to ensure that Yusra and the others are always laughing because she knows humor and laughter can sustain resilience. Sara's humor is then picked up by the others transforming the narrative into a brilliant satirical critique from the point of view of a group of teenagers. For example, when the group discusses which option would be best to reach Europe, they are anxious and indecisive. Ahmad, their father's cousin and their companion on the run, says: "'Alright'... We'll take the boat. The swimmers will save us, of course" (Mardini, 2018, p. 77). Ironically, the swimmers do save them.

When everyone is extremely tense and scared as they board the dinghy, Sara makes fun of the muscular smugglers and fashions humorous jokes giving people nicknames related to cartoon shows that she is sure her sister would understand: "this little guy looks just like Mowgli from *The Jungle Book*" Sara announces (Mardini, 2018, p. 82). Yusra bursts out laughing, which annoys the smuggler, but Sara refuses to stop; "Is laughing against the rules or something?" (Mardini, 2018, p. 82). The anxiety they are all experiencing reaches its peak when their dinghy's engine breaks midway to Greece. Instantly, both Mardinis jump into the water to help steer and push the dinghy. The girls spend a long period of time in the water and are unable to push the rubber boat because of the rising tide. Everyone on the boat is silent and terrified until Sara decides to break the tension by drawing attention to her pants:

'Hey, Ayham,' calls Sara after about twenty minutes. 'Can you do something about my jogging pants?' says Sara. 'They keep falling down.'

'I've got a knife,' says Ayham. 'We'll cut them off at the bottom. Pass me your leg.'

Sara spins around to face the open sea and lifts her right leg up out of the water towards him. Her trousers sag around her thighs, exposing her underwear. Despite everything, Bassem and I can't help but giggle. She's laughing too. I reach out with my free hand and hoist up the waistband to save her more embarrassment. (Mardini, 2018, p. 107)

While a girl's exposed underwear might be deemed shameful or even provoke discussions about her compromised honor in Levantine culture, Sara's actions do not dismiss cultural norms but instead repurpose them as material for humor in a calamitous situation. This unintentional act of silliness, where dignity is offered as a sacrificial object, parallels Huck's offering of Miss Watson as collateral damage for the boy gang in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The protagonists, in both instances, destabilize societal expectations—Sara reclaims dignity through laughter, while

Huck, repurposes Miss Watson's societal role to navigate his dilemmas. These acts underscore the ability to overcome anxiety by redefining the norm and criticizing it. Sara and Yusra Mardini's reliance on silliness continues even after the initial survival phase. Their first night in Greece they sleep in a small church. When they wake up, they are haggard from the sea crossing. Sara's "face is red and covered in scratches and blue bruises. Her hair has come out of its bun and sticks up in wiry strands around her head. The ragged remains of her trousers are streaked white with dried salt" (Mardini, 2018, p. 130). Yusra stifles a laugh and says: "My God...What happened to you?" (Mardini, 2018, p. 130). Then, as they walk around the streets of Lesbos. Yusra sees a statue of a "woman in long, flowing robes faces out to sea with one foot forwards. In her right hand she holds aloft a burning torch." Immediately, Yusra exclaims that it must be "the Statue of Liberty" at which Ayham grinningly says "Yeah, that boat must have gotten us further than we thought," so Yusra "whacks his arm" and everyone laughs (Mardini, 2018, p. 134). Humor employed by refugees in situations of displacement becomes an act of silliness—a subversive tool that enables them to maintain agency and resist the dehumanizing forces around them while fostering solidarity.

Humor as a means of survival, particularly amongst Syrian refugees in Lesbos, is closely examined by Anja K. Franck in "Laughable borders: Making the case for the humorous in migration studies." While walking through Mytilene, Franck, accompanied by a group of researchers, encounters a group of Syrian men sitting down in a doorway. The men were preparing to have a meal they have ordered from a nearby restaurant that serves "delicious fried fish on the back of brown paper bags" (Franck, 2022, p. 6). Qasim, "a medical doctor from Aleppo", invites the researchers to join the group for dinner, at which the Syrian refugees "crack jokes about the conditions under which they are now entertaining guests. Under normal circumstances, they chuckle, invited guests are not eating from paper bags" (Franck, 2022, p. 6). During their conversation the Syrian men erupt in laughter at one of their friends "urging the man to open his mouth to show us the missing tooth in his upper jaw. We stare at him – and the others – puzzled by this reaction from the group. Qasim laughingly explains: 'When we stepped ashore on the island, he was so happy he waved his hands in the air and knocked out his own tooth!'" (Franck, 2022, p. 8). These moments parallel Yusra and Sara Mardini's humor. In the context of displacement, humor "should not be underestimated. To the contrary, they can function as tools for temporarily reclaiming time and space, in ways that instill a sense of normality" amongst refugees (Franck, 2022). They go about everyday life activities, eating, sleeping, and conversing with others around them, but as nothing about their everyday life activities is normal, humor is what helps them recover a sense of normality.

The journey of Yusra and Sara Mardini from Hungary to Budapest, charged with tension, is similarly punctuated by humor. Hungary is a high-risk destination especially for Syrian refugees, so the group decides to camp in one of the fields so they can carry on to Budapest in the morning. Yusra notices that one of the young girls in the group "looks close to tears" (Mardini, 2018, p. 151). Yusra approaches the girl and wittingly tells her she has "been looking for a new stylist" and asks the girl to plait her hair (Mardini, 2018, p. 151). The girl gets to work and Yusra manages to distract her. In another instance, while on a train headed to Budapest, the two sisters are caught and hurled into a police truck, where they meet another captured refugee:

'Hello,' says the man on the seat, grinning and flashing his white teeth in the dark.

I jump out of my skin. Sara giggles. In the light from the cabin window I can just make out the man's multicoloured t-shirt and red trousers. The engine starts. The man points over his shoulder towards the two policemen in the cab.

'Look, look, look, look, look, look,' he says in a thick Afghan accent.

I stifle a giggle. The truck turns a corner and rolls down the road. The man pulls out his phone and grins again. He fiddles with the phone until a wheedling pop song blasts out of the tinny speakers. He raises his hands in the air.

'Look, look, look, look, look, look,' he says over the music.

We're all laughing out loud now. Hysteria takes hold inside the van. It's like a release. The laughter gives me courage and strength, makes me feel as if I can take on whatever might be coming next. (Mardini, 2018, p. 178)

The refugee already inside the police truck uses cheerful antics to lighten the grim situation. The moment of humor, which leads to laughter, here, is a moment in which refugees reclaim their subjectivity and humanity. It is a "momentarily 'turning away' from power" that represents a "disinvestment with the order" (Franck, 2022, p. 8). Yusra and Sara refuse to let the police officers intimidate them. They rather persist in acting normal and they spend their time in the police truck laughing. For Yusra, laughter is a "release" that opens up spaces where she can recollect herself and feel empowered.

Once in the Hungarian prison, Sara and Yusra are patted down and stripped of their belongings. Notwithstanding, the girls laugh it off:

'that was fun,' I say once she's gone. 'What was all that about the shoelaces?'

'Yeah, she took mine too,' says Sara. 'As if I could kill myself with a shoelace. What a joke. I told her if we wanted to kill ourselves we would have stayed in Syria'. (Mardini, 2018, p. 180)

The girls' humor in these episodes carry implications of the internalized awareness of the cruelty of displacement. It is evident that the girls' humor identifies the "indecent and indignity" which displaced individuals are forced to experience, but it also "represented a refusal to 'normalize' [such practices] and be drawn into the very politics that

enabled them in the first place” (Franck, 2022, p. 10). Humor exposes the absurdity of life in precarious conditions, and represent refugees’ refusal to succumb to these conditions, a refusal rooted in silliness.

Another contemporary narrative in which silliness is employed as a form of resistance is Atef Abu Saif’s *Don’t Look Left: A Diary of Genocide* (2024). A Palestinian refugee from Gaza and former Minister of Culture in Palestine, Abu Saif’s diary expands on the themes of his earlier work, *The Drone Eats with Me: A Gaza Diary* (2015). Rather than a direct sequel, *Don’t Look Left* is a continuation, showing that as the ongoing war and displacement of Palestinians persist, so do Abu Saif’s diaries and his use of silliness as a form of resistance. For example, after twenty-three days of bombardment, there was a frenzy in Gaza because of the return of phone signal. “The street is once again full of people. Hundreds of them. Nearly everyone is out there. It looks like Eid. Everyone is on their phone calling other parts of their family, as so many are divided. Everyone is happy, even if only for a few minutes” (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 82). Abu Saif adds, no one “cares that the attacks are continuing and the explosions getting louder. Everyone is taking a break from everything else that is happening and just checking their own relatives are okay. It should be a time for mourning and grieving, but for a moment it is time for reunions over the phone” (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 83). Comparing a war zone to Eid celebrations is a layered form of humor, which makes the bleak reality in Palestine clearer. This short moment of reunions and its accompanied momentarily happiness expose the tenderness of the displaced and their desperate need for moments of relief.

On October 30th, 2024 Abu Saif drives his friend Mohammad and his son Yasser back to their flat in Saftawi. Their mission is to retrieve the gas cylinder so the family can cook hot meals. Abu Saif waits for them in the car ready to drive off the minute they are out of the building. Abu Saif “suggest[s] that, on exiting the building, Yasser carries a mattress and a pillow with him so the drone operator thinks [they] are evacuating the apartment” (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 86). As they are anxiously running, carrying their own belongings, Abu Saif jokingly says they “look like they’ve just robbed a bank” (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 86). Abu Saif’s silliness is not meant to dispirit Muhammad and Yasser, but is meant as a refusal to acknowledge the authority of the Israeli Defense Forces, echoing Huck’s refusal to acknowledge and obey authority in Mark Twain’s text to maintain his agency. Lisa Bhungalia in “Laughing at power: Humor, transgression, and the politics of refusal in Palestine” argues that Palestinians’ use of humor as a tool of resistance presents a new form of “political grammar” where “[t]o laugh or smile in the face of power is not necessarily an expression of opposition; it is a refusal to recognize the authoritative figure itself” (Bhungalia, 2020, p. 388). Bhungalia further contends that Palestinian humor “constitutes a mode and practice of refusal to normalize conditions of subjugation...wherein power is not opposed but disavowed” (p. 189). In a similar way, another instance where Abu Saif’s silliness is employed to disavow colonial power is when Israeli jets drop leaflets on Gazans urging them to move south. “The leaflet takes a high-minded, threatening tone. ‘You are being used as human shields,’ it” says (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 145). To which Abu Saif responds: “[t]hanks for that...You’re the ones invading us, killing us, ethnically cleansing us, and you’re the ones taking the moral high ground. We’re not the BBC or CNN, I want to tell them” (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 145). In this instance of humor, Abu Saif not only disarms the leaflet of its power but also ridicules the subject of the joke, bringing in its allies for further mockery. Palestinian refusal to normalize subjugation entails a refusal to acknowledge colonial power and a refusal to grant news outlets recognition.

In addition to challenging authority, Abu Saif’s humor also highlights the absurdities embedded in Palestinians’ everyday experiences under occupation. On Monday the 13th of November, 2024, Abu Saif, like many other Gazans, takes to the streets to see how their city is doing:

Walking on, I’m stopped by another man. He introduces himself as Alaa, someone who was at high school with me. ‘You were one year ahead of me,’ he tells me. He smiles and asks if the drone is still eating with me. He’s referring to the title of my previous war diaries. ‘It never stopped,’ I reply. ‘There’s nothing left on the table, surely,’ Alaa laughs. ‘It’s eaten us out of house and home’. (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 133)

Humor better captures constant Palestinian precariousness in Abu Saif’s autobiographical entries. Alaa is happy to see a school friend, and an important Palestinian writer, alive. Nonetheless, both refugees here cannot engage in normal pleasantries, as they cannot ignore the death and destruction that surrounds them. Instead, they choose to joke about it because silliness has the ability “to serve as a therapeutic critique of the fraught conditions in which the subjugated are enmeshed” (Bhungalia, 2020, p. 395). These fraught conditions take Abu Saif by surprise when, on Thursday November 30th, 2024, he meets a friend and a literary figure who is burning his collection of books to help provide for his family. Abu Saif writes:

I met my two friends, Hani Al-Salmi and Ashraf Sohwaile. Hani is a novelist, specialising in young adult fiction. We all sit together near his little kiosk, where he serves customers hot drinks. In the last few years, this 45-year-old writer has fallen on hard times and become unemployed. Now, with no energy supply, he has found it difficult to do simple things like bake bread. For weeks now, he has been trying to collect wood for his fire to cook. This has proven hard, he tells me, and recently he has been forced to burn the books in his library.

So far, Hani has burned 200 books. ‘My kids need bread,’ he explains. ‘What use are books if I let them die of hunger?’ Then he smiled: ‘Naturally, I’m saving my favourites till last, hoping the war will end before I get to them’. (Abu Saif, 2024, p. 190)

The drones’ survival and the burning of the books while Palestinians lose home, family, and dignity are symptoms of over seventy years of subjugation. Humor, thus, offers an accurate grammar for capturing precariousness and

displacement leading to a new mode of political rhetoric (Bhungalia, 2020, p. 392). Middle aged men joking about drones eating with them, and a writer humorously dismissing the burning of his book collection are not instances of defeat. Humor here becomes a performance in which the subjugated “laughs or smiles when she is expected to cower, to be mute, to be overtaken with fear. To refuse reduction to a mute object ‘bereft of humanity’ is to defy the normative scripts of that encounter. It destabilizes the colonial performance itself” (Bhungalia, 2020, p. 399). Sillinity is not an acceptance but a resistance. It is a tool that denies subjugating powers their desired effects. By adapting Huck’s sillinity, Yusra Mardini and Atef Abu Saif, channel its re-interpretive potential to challenge the broader structures of power that define displacement.

III. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have closely examined precariat displacement and its universal characteristics that lead to a realignment in being, action, and in thought. We explored how Huck’s moment of displacement generated a coping sense of humor, we call “sillinity”, which is a form of humor that is elastic, contagious, and rooted in resistance. Through detailed analyses of texts by Mark Twain, Atef Abu Saif, and Yusra Mardini, we have traced the residues of Huck’s sillinity in modern refugee narratives. Huck’s sillinity, as a refusal to conform to societal expectations, makes him an emblem of the modern refugee condition—a figure who navigates a world that seeks to control and define him, yet finds ways to resist and proclaim his humanity. Mark Twain’s engagement with sillinity in the nineteenth century underscores its continuing relevance for all displaced individuals. This elasticity allows sillinity the flexibility to stretch across the literary canon, geopolitical borders, and temporal limitation.

As demonstrated in various examples throughout the article, sillinity surpasses its literary origins, escaping governance and offering refugees a tool for political defiance and self-assertion. Sillinity is not mere escapism but a deliberate survival strategy that displaced individuals rely on to de-border excluding practices and to regain agency and control over their chaotic realities. This form of humor is a social, human, and emotionless moment that is innate to human nature. Sillinity is far from being purely entertaining, it rather creates a balance between critique and entertainment, allowing displaced writers, like Atef Abu Saif and Yusra Mardini to challenge the normalization of violence and othering. By using humor as a tool to disarm authority and undermine its power without direct confrontation, sillinity becomes a subtle yet powerful mode of resistance. Through sillinity, refugees transcend dire circumstances, reclaiming time and space to experience a fleeting sense of normality. This form of humor helps displaced individuals defy the political grammar of displacement, offering an alternative space where fear and submission are replaced with solidarity, human connection, and an enduring affirmation of dignity.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abel, Millicent H. (2002). “Humor, Stress, and Coping Strategies.” *International Journal of Humor Research*, 15(4), 365-381. DOI:10.1515/humr.15.4.365
- [2] Abu Saif, Atef. (2024). *Don’t Look Left: A Diary of Genocide*. Beacon Press.
- [3] Becker, Sascha O. (2022). “Forced displacement in history: Some recent research.” *Australian Economic History Review*, 62(1), 2-25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aeht.12237>
- [4] Bergson, Henri. (2014). *Humor: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. Martino Fine Books.
- [5] Bhungalia, Lisa. (2020). “Laughing at power: Humor, transgression, and the politics of refusal in Palestine”. *EPC: Politics and Space*, 38(3), 387–404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654419874368>
- [6] Draper, Jamie. (2021). “Justice and Internal Displacement.” *Political Studies*, 71(2), 314-331. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217211007641>
- [7] Franck, Anja K. (2022). “Laughable borders: Making the case for the humorous in migration studies.” *Migration Policy (Mig. Pol.)*, 1(4), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/rgwds>
- [8] Freud, Sigmund. (1990). *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- [9] Hernann, Andrew. (2016). “Joking Through Hardship: Humor and Truth-Telling among Displaced Timbuktuans”. *African Studies Review*, 59(1), 57–76. doi:10.1017/asr.2016.4
- [10] Mardini, Yusra. (2018). *Butterfly: From Refugee to Olympian-My Story of Rescue, Hope, and Triumph*. St. Martin’s Press.
- [11] Martin, Rod A. (2007). *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach*. Academic Press.
- [12] Mbembe, Achille. (2001). *On the Postcolony*. University of California Press.
- [13] Mishra, Aditi., & Shruti, Dutt. (2024). “Examining the Interplay of Coping Mechanisms and Humor Styles in High-Stress Scenarios.” *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 1-11. DOI: 10.25215/1202.229
- [14] Orchard, Phil. (2016). “The Contested Origins of Internal Displacement.” *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 28(2), 210-233. DOI:10.1093/ijrl/eww031
- [15] Sliter, Michael, Aron Kale, & Zhenyu Yuan. (2014). “Is Humor the Best Medicine? The Buffering Effect of Coping Humor on Traumatic Stressors in Firefighters”. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35, 257–272. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1868>
- [16] Sotkasiira, Tiina, & Sanna, Rynänen. (2024). “(De-)Bordering by Laughter. What Can Different Kinds of Laughter Reveal About the Experiences of Everyday Bordering Among Asylum Seekers and Refugees?” *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 39(3), 475-494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2022.2141816>
- [17] Strauss, Kendra. (2022). “Introduction to Displacements.” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 112(3), 621–625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2022.2029087>
- [18] Sultanoff, Steven. (1995). “What is Humor?” *Therapeutic Humor*, 9, 1–2.

- [19] Twain, Mark. (1998). *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Third Norton Critical Edition, Edited by Thomas Cooley). W. W. Norton & Company.

Bayan AlAmmouri is Lecturer in English Literature at The University of Jordan. She holds a PhD from Lancaster University. Her research to date focuses on the intersection of technology and literature in the context of neoliberalism and refugee studies, and her wider interests include postcolonial studies, diaspora, and Palestinian literature.

Sukayna Ali is Lecturer in Translation Studies at The University of Jordan. She holds a PhD from Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research to date focuses on translation and interpretation, audio visual translations, dubbing, and subtitling, and her wider interests include literary translations and interpretations, and pragmatics and humor.

Hanan Al-Jabri is an Associate Professor in Translation Studies at The University of Jordan. She holds a PhD from University of Surrey. Her research to date focuses on translation and interpretation, and her wider interests include literary translations and interpretations, and political humor.

Fragmented Voices and Sonic Resistance: Trauma, Memory, and the Politics of Healing in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Srividya Lakshmi K

Department of English, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai,
India;

SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Dept. of Language, Culture and Society, Ramapuram, Chennai, India

Priyadarshini M.C*

Department of English, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, India

Karthik Kumar S

Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram, India

K. Gobalakrishnan

MALLA REDDY(MR) Deemed to be University, Maisammaguda(H), Gundlapochampally (V), Medchal (M). Medchal
– Malkajgiri District, Telangana, India

Abstract—Toni Morrison's *Beloved* explores the enduring impact of slavery on African American identity, memory, and community. This paper examines Morrison's narrative techniques, including fragmented voices, sonic elements, and nonlinear time, to represent trauma and embodied memory. Using interdisciplinary theory, it argues that *Beloved* transforms the discord of slavery into a powerful expression of resistance and healing. The novel's fractured narration and repetition reflect the cyclical nature of trauma, while communal and spiritual spaces offer avenues for reclaiming identity and agency. Additionally, Morrison critiques white liberalism and systemic racism, revealing their ongoing role in racial oppression. *Beloved* stands as a testament to the resilience of those affected by slavery, highlighting literature's capacity to confront historical trauma and envision pathways toward justice and community healing.

Index Terms—embodied memory, neo-slave narrative, sonic resistance, temporal entanglement, trauma

I. INTRODUCTION

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a powerful exploration of the enduring psychological and social impacts of slavery on African American identity and memory. The novel challenges traditional narrative forms through its fragmented voices and nonlinear timeline, revealing the complexity of trauma and resistance. Sethe, the protagonist, kills her child to save herself from the horrors of slavery, an act that embodies both maternal love and desperation. Trauma theory helps explain the novel's treatment of memory as nonlinear and cyclical. Morrison's concept of "rememory" captures how painful experiences resurface repeatedly, affecting both individuals and communities. Morrison employs fragmented narration and spectral elements, such as the ghostly presence of the Beloved, to depict the haunting effects of trauma. Baby Suggs plays a vital role by fostering spiritual gatherings that encourage self-love and communal healing. The novel also critiques white liberalism's contradictions through characters such as the Schoolteacher, who dehumanises enslaved people despite purportedly civil intentions. This exposes systemic racism embedded in seemingly progressive attitudes. *Beloved* draws from the historical case of Margaret Garner, an enslaved woman who killed her child to prevent re-enslavement. By weaving real history into fiction, Morrison reclaims erased narratives and affirms African American experiences—the novel challenges dominant cultural stories that minimise Black suffering and identity struggles. Morrison urges readers to recognise how past injustices shape present realities and the importance of storytelling in the healing process. Ultimately, *Beloved* reveals the ongoing impact of slavery while offering a vision of resilience and the possibility of communal recovery.

* Corresponding Author. Email: priyadarshinimc@veltech.edu.in

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the literature of African Americans, trauma studies, and neo-slave narratives, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison holds a remarkable place. Experts examine the meanings of trauma, identity, resistance, and narrative experimentation within the text. It explores the current critical views, which are essential for the study, focusing on how “sonic alchemy” and narrative elements are used in *Beloved* to illustrate trauma and memory in spatial, auditory, and psychoanalytic ways.

A. Trauma, Memory, and Temporality

Much critical attention has been devoted to how trauma is central in *Beloved*, particularly concerning its unconventional time flow. According to Caruth (1996) and Herman (2015), the events of trauma are difficult to sort into a clear story because they disrupt regular time flow. As Caruth notes, the power of trauma depends on the experience of the event only after it has happened (Caruth, 1996). Morrison’s approach, called “rememory,” looks at painful memories again, in a way that seems repetitive or like a ghost shows an 11th pattern in her writing. Similarly, Balaev (2014) explains that trauma literature often makes memory look like pieces lacking a clear organisation, and Morrison does so in the novel to capture Sethe’s mental breakdown. Similarly, Van der Kolk and McFarlane describe trauma in 2013 as a “black hole of experience” that Morrison depicts by bringing back *Beloved* and making Sethe act very differently than before. This paper contributes to the conversation by demonstrating how Morrison’s use of voice, silence, and memory enables readers to experience the characters’ ordeals. This relates to Eyerman’s (2013) claim that for cultural trauma to matter to a society, it needs to be recorded and remembered in cultural symbols.

B. Embodied Memory and Corporeal Narratives

Several teachers in the field, such as Krumholz (1992) and White (2000), have examined how Morrison employs embodiment to convey trauma in her writings. In Krumholz’s reading, the chokecherry tree scar on Sethe’s back becomes a physical symbol of race and a mother’s hardship (p. 395). He also covers the trauma of slavery by noting that the bodies of Black women show evidence of being used for bad, but also becoming a site for resistance to that abuse. This concept of corporeal cartographies is helpful because it highlights bodily experiences through space and records pain. The sound and space of Baby Suggs’ gatherings in the Clearing helped to heal her community. This backs Waterman’s (2001) observation that sound can either limit us or set us free, and your work emphasises sound as a meaningful activity for both performance and healing.

C. Critical Race Theory and Structural Critique

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2023), Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides Morrison with a valuable framework for examining white liberalism and institutional racism. The School teacher and the Bodwins are good examples of what Bonilla-Silva (2006) describes as “color-blind racism,” by which racial equality in practice means racism continues in society. The author makes it clear that the support for abolition could still be rooted in paternalism, a point also made by Berger (1996) in his analysis of *Beloved* as a reply to the liberal Moynihan Report. Analysing how Morrison’s broken narrative helps challenge hegemonic liberalism agrees with CRT’s call for the centre of discussion to come from marginal voices. What you say about the spirit in *Beloved* as a political character fits Harris’s idea that the presence of Black ghosts underlines the illusion that race is no longer a significant factor.

D. Psychoanalytic Approaches and the Spectral Unconscious

The theory of trauma gained over time from Freudian psychoanalysis offers a valuable basis for research. According to Bennett and Royle (2004), *Beloved* is seen as a version of Sethe’s unconscious guilt and pain. *Beloved* is not only a person in the book; she is also a mirror of Sethe’s inner demons and the trauma she has not overcome. Morrison does not use rituals or moments of repetition to end her stories; instead, you see how such moments help readers relive essential episodes from the past that still hurt them, drawing them back in time psychologically. In turn, Caesar (1994) and Rushdy (1992) emphasise that the novel’s “spectral” focus zooms in on loss, memory, and amends related to historical trauma. Morrison’s writing reveals the unconscious, as if the story is being “warned” by sound through the use of detached prose and spaces of silence.

E. Sonic Resistance and Narrative Alchemy

Although Waterman (2001) and Reinhardt (2002) studied how music is used as a form of protest, your work creatively combines sound as both a narrative method and a metaphor for surviving. Sonic resistance helps us understand that music, moaning, silence, and prayer can, in various ways, challenge and transform the effects of trauma. Baby Suggs’ words about loving your hands are just as much about faith as they are about celebrating freedom from slavery. The author supports Toksöz’s (2024) stance that Morrison employs a fragmented style, allowing the characters to function as both witnesses and repositories of memories. Morrison brings all these voices together as a “harmonic resistance,” a new spiritual and literary approach to healing.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Trauma Theory: Disruption of Linear Time and Its Manifestation in Morrison's Narrative*

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* may be better understood through the prism of trauma theory, as put out by academics like Judith Herman and Cathy Caruth. For many, trauma is more than just a tragic incident; it is a rupture in time itself, wreaking havoc on people's minds and society. A "crisis of narrative," as highlighted by Herman (2015), occurs when a traumatic event fights to be integrated into one's conscious recollection and instead resurfaces in fragmented and disconnected ways. Morrison rejects traditional chronology in favour of a narrative that vacillates between the past and the present, thereby fundamentally disrupting the bounds of time. Despite her emancipation, the trauma surfaces in *Beloved* as Sethe is unable to escape the horrors of slavery altogether. Her traumatic experiences as an enslaved person, including her brutal separation from her mother and the murder of her child, continue to impact her life even now. As Caruth (1996) notes, trauma often "impedes, indeed contests, a distinct separation of past from present" (p. 119). Morrison reflects this temporal entanglement through the use of literary devices, including imagery, fractured language, and repetition. An example of this is how the "chokecherry tree" theme, which appears repeatedly on Sethe's back, both physically and metaphorically, represents the wounds that remain from her previous trauma (Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, 2024). By employing these literary strategies, Morrison skillfully portrays the delayed and invasive nature of trauma, allowing readers to empathise with the disorienting reality of enduring unsettling agony. Furthermore, *Beloved's* ethereal presence exemplifies trauma as a "shattering break" in experience, as eloquently put out by La Capra (cited in Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, 2024). Sethe and other characters are compelled to face the traumas they have buried when *Beloved* returns, underscoring the novel's examination of the interconnectedness between individual and communal history. Morrison highlighted the timeless effects of slavery and the need for healing in the face of its history by jolting linear time.

B. *Critical Race Theory (CRT): Critiquing White Liberalism and Systemic Racism*

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a powerful lens through which to examine how Morrison critiques white liberals and racism in society in *Beloved*. Delgado and Stefancic (2023) described critical race theory as an approach to social, legal, and political inequality and marginalisation that seeks to dismantle structural racism. Morrison reveals the double standard of white liberal principles and the pervasive oppressive systems that continue to hurt Black Americans long after slavery was abolished in her novel *Beloved*. Morrison mainly attacks white liberalism in her portrayal of the Bodwins, abolitionists who fight for the abolition of slavery but are blind to their role in upholding racial inequalities. They exhibit what DeCuir and Dixon (2004) call "color-blind racism," in which altruistic behaviour belies the desire to exploit and dominate those who were once enslaved. The dehumanising beliefs of white supremacy are shown by the Schoolteacher, who also reduces enslaved people to mere objects of study and classification. These depictions show how institutional racism is pervasive and evil; it manifests itself in both overt violent actions and more covert forms of exclusion and erasure. In addition to focusing on the lived realities of African Americans, Morrison highlights the agency and resilience of her characters as they confront institutional injustice. The portrayal of Sethe's choice to murder her child as a manifestation of the mother's love and defiance against the degrading aspects of slavery obscures the complexity of her moral position. In her work, Morrison presents a counter-narrative that upholds the worth of Black existence and history, challenging prevailing narratives that aim to marginalise African American perspectives (Karnan, 2017). By employing critical race theory (CRT), readers can gain insight into how Morrison's work highlights the need for genuine systemic change by critiquing racialised power structures that shape American society.

C. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives: Repression, the Unconscious, and the Spectral Presence of Beloved*

Another critical framework for examining *Beloved* is psychoanalytic theory and, more specifically, Freudian ideas on the unconscious and repression. The psychological processes by which trauma is processed (or repressed) and manifested symbolically shed light on Freud's ideas. *Beloved* depicts Sethe's psychological disintegration as a reflection of the wounds from her tragic past that she has tried to hide but cannot be entirely removed. One possible interpretation of *Beloved* herself is that she represents Sethe's suppressed past and remorse. According to Bennett and Royle (2004), trauma often causes a "loss of identity" as the significance of prior events shifts and transforms (p. 107). For Sethe, the ghost of *Beloved* represents her unresolved trauma in both a physical and symbolic sense, compelling her to face the unpleasant realities she has repressed for so long. To guide readers through this journey of recalling long-lost details, Morrison deftly employed imagery and repetition. For instance, the novel's repeated depiction of birds alludes to past trauma, drawing the reader. At the same time, they are awake and encouraging them to piece together the information hidden in the story (Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, 2024). Morrison also draws similarities to Freud's "repetition compulsion," the underlying tendency of people to relive painful experiences to control them. This psychological process is evident in Sethe's obsessive rehashing of past tragedies and her recurring meetings with *Beloved*. Morrison sheds light on how larger societal and cultural factors influence individual histories by employing psychoanalytic viewpoints to examine the complex relationship between collective and personal traumas.

D. *Sonic and Spatial Dimensions: Sonic Resistance and Oppressive Structures*

The acoustic and spatial qualities of *Beloved* provide another rich source of analysis, drawing on researchers who study sound and silence as strategies of resistance and oppression. Morrison utilises aural elements, such as whispers, music, and silences, to emphasise how the work explores the physical and geographical aspects of trauma. According to Waterman (2001), when people are oppressed or resisting sound, the influence of sound on their subjectivity and memory is especially strong. Sound is a source of pain and a therapeutic tool in *Beloved*. As a reflection of the psychological aftereffects of slavery, the spectral figure *Beloved* is often accompanied by unsettling noise and quiet. On the other hand, the public singing and testimonies that take place during Baby Suggs' meetings in the Clearing serve as an example of "sonic resistance," which gives formerly enslaved people a feeling of community and value. Contrary to white supremacist narratives that dehumanise people, Baby Suggs encourages people to "love your hands" and appreciate their bodies (Morrison, 1987, pp. 103-104). Morrison emphasises the transforming potential of sound in dismantling oppressive systems and recovering agency through these spatial and auditory activities.

Additionally, the novel's spatial dynamics highlight how physical places carry horrific memories. The haunting house on 124 Bluestone Road, where Sethe formerly lived, represents the ineradicable effects of slavery. However, it may also be a place of healing, as the characters are compelled to confront their pasts to move forward. Morrison creates a complex examination of pain and rejection that transcends conventional literary conventions by incorporating spatial and auditory elements into her story. To fully understand *Beloved*, one must consider it through the lens of trauma theory, critical racial theory, psychoanalytic viewpoints, and sonic and spatial elements. Using these theories, Morrison's work becomes a deep contemplation of trauma's complexity, the potential for healing and resistance, and the lasting effects of slavery. The study examines how Morrison challenges mainstream narratives and affirms the validity of African American experiences through the use of narrative tactics, drawing on the work of academics such as Herman, Caruth, Delgado, Stefancic, and Freud. Ultimately, *Beloved* demonstrates how narrative can transform lives by confronting past injustices and fostering hope for the future.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Mapping Trauma and Time in *Beloved*

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a profound exploration of pain, memory, and identity, intimately intertwined with the disruption of conventional notions of time. The book defies the conventions of linear time by weaving events from the past and present together, mirroring the recursive effects of trauma on both people and societies. The work brilliantly depicts the inseparable intertwining of the past and present through Morrison's use of a nonlinear narrative, "rememory," and flashbacks. The idea of "temporal entanglement," the ghostly presence of *Beloved* as a manifestation of unresolved trauma, and Sethe's quest to reconcile her horrific past with her current reality are the three essential components of this temporal entanglement. These characteristics highlight the intergenerational transfer of suffering and the ways trauma resists resolution.

(a). Temporal Entanglement: Flashbacks, "Rememory", and Nonlinear Storytelling

Morrison used the narrative technique of purposeful disruption of linear time in *Beloved*, which reflects the psychological experience of trauma, as one of the most remarkable aspects of the book. According to researchers such as Caruth (1996), trauma can make it difficult to recall events in sequential order, instead leaving them lodged in fragmented memories that emerge unexpectedly. Morrison constructs a narrative framework that mirrors the repetitive and invasive character of trauma through the use of flashbacks, "rememory," and nonlinear storytelling. To grasp Morrison's depiction of the past's enduring presence fully, the idea of "rememory" is crucial. Sethe says in *Beloved* that "rememory" is not a thing you leave behind but rather something that exists apart from you and is ready to be experienced again. This theory aligns with Caruth's assertion that traumatic experiences evade incorporation into conscious memory, instead recurring in overwhelming and unexpected ways (Caruth, 1996, p. 119). Consider how the chokecherry tree scar on Sethe's back brings back the physical and mental agony of her servitude every time she sees it (Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, 2024). Morrison uses the narrative technique of "rememory" to stress that the past is indestructible because it shapes the present in such a deep manner.

Morrison further complicates linear time by employing fragmented narration and flashbacks. The narrative jumps seamlessly between many periods, blending the present with past events. This method captures the essence of trauma psychology, in which unexpected and illogical flashbacks interrupt a current moment. In one case, readers are immersed in Sethe's broken mind as her sporadic memories of murdering her child to escape being sold back into slavery interrupt the story's flow. According to Mingo (2019), the brain has a choice after a traumatic event: either integrate the memory into the past or keep it as a trigger for emotions that bring the past into the present (p. 59). Morrison's use of a nonlinear narrative echoes this process, illustrating how trauma can resurface in unexpected ways. Morrison emphasises the cyclical nature of trauma and its endurance across generations via these storytelling tactics. Historical injustices like slavery continue to impact the lives of the characters in *Beloved*. This intertwining of time emphasises the novel's central point: the past is never truly gone, but rather a persistent presence that necessitates recognition and reconciliation.

(b). The Role of *Beloved*: Spectral Presence and Embodiment of Unresolved Trauma

Beloved, Morrison's central character, represents unresolved pain in both a physical and metaphorical sense through his ethereal existence, which she uses to explore trauma and time. When Beloved comes back from the dead, it throws Sethe's family into disarray and makes everyone face the facts that they have been trying to hide for a long time. According to Balaev (2008), those who have experienced trauma often experience a "speechless fright" that causes them to become estranged from themselves and their memories (p. 149). Sethe's suppressed memories and latent shame are embodied in Beloved, who arrives to symbolise this alienation. The Beloved's function further complicates the novel's chronological structure as a ghostly entity that blurs the boundaries between the past and the present. There is no particular moment in which she is not there; instead, she is a ghost, the reincarnation of Sethe's daughter, who has died, and a representation of the horrors that enslaved people have been through. Morrison has been thinking about unconscious and Freudian notions of repression, and this multiplicity reflects that. Freud posits that repressed memories often reemerge in symbolic manifestations, such as dreams or hallucinations, that need interpretation (Bennett & Royle, 2004, p. 107). Because she is so mysterious, Beloved begs the reader to see her as a miniature representation of Sethe's tragedy, the anguish and longing that gave her birth.

Beloved also showed how trauma affects relationships through encounters with Sethe and Denver. Creating a dynamic that swings between caring and destructive impulses, Sethe's incessant requests for affection and attention reflect Sethe's feelings of guilt and yearning for forgiveness. The more time Beloved spends at Sethe's company, the more she withdraws from the present and the world around her. This regressive episode highlights the novel's examination of how unresolved trauma may alter an individual's identity and interfere with their relationship. In her depiction of Beloved, Morrison emphasises the dual aspect of trauma, showing how it can be both a solace and a trigger for disorder.

(c). *Sethe's Journey: Reconciling Traumatic Past with Present Reality*

Beloved focuses on Sethe's journey of coming to terms with her horrific history and her current situation; this journey highlights the passage of grief from one generation to another. There are protective and destructive ways in which Sethe's actions and relationships are shaped by the permanent psychological scars left by her experiences as a slave. The moral complexity of her choice to murder her child belies the depth of her love and her wish to protect her children from the atrocities of slavery. As noted by Karnan (2017), Sethe's deeds demonstrate the terrible decisions made by imprisoned mothers, who often had to put survival ahead of the traditional ideas of motherhood (p. 3). Throughout her voyage, Sethe tries to push the memories of her past to the back of her mind, but they keep returning in surprising ways. At a pivotal moment in her journey, she forms a bond with Paul D, another free slave. In his confrontation with Sethe about her child's death, Paul D encouraged her to face the consequences of her acts and the trauma that motivated them. To piece together the various parts of her past and present, Sethe is forced to confront the broken pieces of her identity in this encounter. According to Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University (2024), Morrison unveils the layered pain inside Sethe's mind by guiding readers through her psychological environment using language and images (p. 6). The larger concept of communal healing is ultimately interwoven with Sethe's path towards reconciliation. As Sethe meets Baby Suggs, Denver, and other African-American community members, she begins to understand the value of communal resilience and shared memory. The Clearing events, hosted by Baby Suggs, serve as a model for the transformative potential of the community in the face of trauma. They provide a haven where victims can rediscover their inherent value and dignity. Morrison demonstrates that recovering from trauma requires both individual reflection and the support of those who can relate.

(d). *Intergenerational Transmission of Pain*

As the trauma endured by enslaved people impacts succeeding generations, the idea of the intergenerational transmission of suffering emerges again throughout *Beloved*. As a result of their mother's unresolved trauma, Sethe's children, especially Denver, face significant challenges as they attempt to establish their own identities. The lasting impact of slavery, which denies Denver the chance to be educated and independent, is shown in her dependence on Sethe and her solitude. Morrison (1987) observed that people are still oppressed and marginalised because slavery's legacy prevents them from living completely human lives (pp. 103-104). Nonetheless, Morrison presents a picture of perseverance and optimism, implying that it is possible to escape the shackles of history. Morrison stresses the possibility of fresh starts and self-discovery through Denver's slow escape from 124 Bluestone Road. A turning point in the story occurs when Denver decides to reach out to the community for assistance; this action represents her escape from loneliness caused by her trauma and her acceptance of the power of togetherness. The belief in the transformational power of the narrative and community in overcoming past injustices is highlighted by Morrison's act of agency. Toni Morrison deftly charts the interaction between trauma and time in *Beloved*, subverting conventional notions of time "through the use of flashbacks, 'rememory,' and a nonlinear narrative,". While Sethe's quest to heal her past and present highlights the passing of suffering from one generation to another, Beloved's ghostly presence is a potent manifestation of unresolved trauma. Using these aspects, Morrison weaves a story that sheds light on the lasting effects of slavery while also providing solutions for moving forward. Beloved, a lasting monument to the power of narrative in addressing the past and inventing new futures, engages readers in the complexity of pain and memory.

B. *Embodied Memory and Sonic Resistance in Beloved*

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* delves deeply into themes of resistance, memory, and trauma through the use of sound and body sensations. In addition to exploring how sound, in the form of silence, whispers, or songs, serves as a weapon of

resistance against repressive power systems, the book explores how the physical wounds of slavery and the metaphorical burden of embodied memory impact identity. Morrison also used fragmented storylines to reflect the characters' and the African American community's identity crises. With these aspects in place, *Beloved* stands as a monument to the lasting effects of slavery and the strength of those facing its atrocities.

C. Corporeal Cartographies: The Physical Scars of Slavery and Their Symbolic Weight

The use of corporeal cartographies, or the mapping of trauma onto the body, by Morrison to depict the mental and bodily wounds caused by slavery, is one of the most remarkable aspects of *Beloved*. Witnessing the brutality faced and the identities moulded by slavery, the body becomes a location of remembrance. The "chokecherry tree" scar on Sethe's back is a tangible manifestation of the psychological and physical dehumanisation she suffered as a result of the cruel flogging she received at Sweet Home (Morrison, 1987, p. 25). According to Krumholz (1992), who contends that Morrison's writings offer a view of history through the eyes of enslaved African Americans as opposed to the white elite, this scar is more than just an individual wound; it is a collective symbol of the anguish that enslaved people endured (p. 395).

The indelible marks of slavery mould communal identity in ways that go beyond physical. According to White (2000), the oppressive institution of slavery had a profound impact on slave communities' gender roles and identities, particularly on black women who often endured both racial and gendered forms of exploitation (p. 45). At the crossroads of gender, race, and trauma, Sethe put maternal love ahead of social expectations by murdering her child to avoid being enslaved again. Morrison shows these acts not as heroic deeds but as desperate reactions to a cruel society, highlighting how the body stores pain and unmet sadness. Morrison also highlights the symbolic significance of one's physiological experiences in shaping one's identity. The importance of recovering control over one's physical self in the face of systematic erasure is highlighted by Baby Suggs' call to "love your hands" and accept one's body (Morrison, 1987, pp. 103-104). The dehumanising ideals of slavery, which aimed to turn people into nothing more than tools of labour, are opposed by this exhortation to love oneself. Morrison created a story that not only highlights the atrocities of slavery but also provides avenues for self-discovery and healing by concentrating on the physical aspects of trauma.

(a). Sound as Resistance: Silence, Whispers, and Song

Beloved people rely heavily on sound, which functions as a place of pain and a tool for resistance against repressive power systems. Morrison challenges the erasure of African American voices and asserts their humanity in the face of institutional dehumanisation using songs, whispers, and silence. As noted by Waterman (2001), sound shapes human subjectivity and memory, particularly in the context of oppression and resistance (p. 78). The spectral figure of *Beloved* often appears, accompanied by unsettling noises and pauses, mirroring the psychological aftereffects of slavery. An effective means of resistance is to remain silent. Society as a whole has a propensity to bury the terrible memories of slavery, and Sethe's silence on the subject reflects this. Sethe's choice to keep her narrative hidden until she is prepared to face it makes her silence active rather than passive. Mingo (2019) noted that when people experience trauma, they have a choice: either to accept the memory as a part of the past or to hold on to it emotionally, which might bring the past into the present (p. 59). Through the use of silence, Morrison draws attention to the nuances of tragedy and encourages readers to empathise with the unspoken suffering that shapes her characters. Song, on the other hand, has become a means of collective resistance, providing comfort and unity to those who have been oppressed in the past. As people assemble in the Clearing to sing, pray, and affirm their value, Baby Suggs's gatherings show how music can change lives. As an alternative to the degrading narratives propagated by slavery, these assemblies help people feel valued and become part of a community. Reinhardt (2002) notes that marginalised groups can demonstrate their humanity and reclaim their past through storytelling and music (p. 95). Morrison emphasises the strength and defiance of African American culture in the face of tyranny via these musical components.

(b). Fragmented Voices: Mirroring Fractured Identities

The fractured narratives used by Morrison enhance the examination of trauma and resistance throughout the book. In *Beloved*, the characters' identities are shattered by the psychological toll of slavery, and the story's fragmented structure reflects this. According to Balaev (2008), people who have experienced trauma often develop a "speechless fright" that causes them to lose touch with who they are and what they remember (p. 149). Morrison skillfully portrays this disintegration via her unique storytelling skills, combining many viewpoints and timeframes to form a web of interwoven narratives. As her ghostly presence upsets the delicate balance of Sethe's home, *Beloved* personifies the disintegration. This dynamic, which swings between nurturing and destructive impulses, is a reflection of Sethe's shame and need for atonement and manifests in her ravenous need for affection and attention. Caesar (1994) notes that Morrison's depiction of *Beloved* emphasises the recurring nature of trauma, as unprocessed hurt manifests in unexpected forms (p. 115). Morrison employs fractured voices to enable readers to understand the tragedy her characters have experienced by connecting the dots in their lives. In addition, the shattered tales in *Beloved* mirror the larger African American experience, in which prevailing narratives have distorted or obliterated communal history. Scholars such as Delgado and Stefancic (2023) note that critical race theory aims to amplify the voices of marginalised individuals and challenge the dominant narrative (p. 45). This perspective aligns with Morrison's emphasis on storytelling as a means of recovering lost histories.

Morrison highlighted the importance of African American perspectives and the need for fundamental systemic changes via fractured tales.

(c). *Integrating Embodied Memory and Sonic Resistance*

The novel's use of corporeal memory and sonic resistance in *Beloved* highlights the essential themes of perseverance, identity, and trauma. Morrison uses sound to emphasise the transformative power of resistance, and her focus on bodily cartographies reveals how the physical scars of slavery shape individual and social identities. All of these parts come together to form a story that illustrates not only the horrors of slavery but also how people can recover and become stronger. Taking Sethe's quest for reconciliation as an example, she uses embodied memory and sonic resistance in her path. Her encounters with Baby Suggs, Denver, and other Black Americans emphasise the value of communal memory and strength. The Clearing events, hosted by Baby Suggs, serve as a model for the transformative potential of the community in the face of trauma. They provide a haven where victims can rediscover their inherent value and dignity. Morrison demonstrates that recovering from trauma requires both individual reflection and the support of those who can relate. *Beloved* is proof that stories can change lives by bringing light to injustices of the past and inspiring hope for the future. Morrison created a complex examination of trauma and resistance that transcends conventional literary conventions by combining embodied memory with sonic resistance. *Beloved* is a tale that, via Toni Morrison's expert use of bodily cartographies, sonic resistance, and fractured narratives, reveals the lasting effects of slavery and provides a means of overcoming them. To fight back against oppressive power systems, people use physical wounds resulting from slavery, the symbolic significance of embodied memory, and the transforming power of music. Morrison shows how complicated trauma is and how it affects people and communities by using fragmented narratives to reflect the characters' broken identities. All of these things come together to make *Beloved* a profound reflection on trauma, its complexity, its potential for healing, and resistance in the face of the lasting effects of slavery.

D. *Alchemy of Fragmented Voices: Transforming Trauma into Healing in Beloved*

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a brilliant investigation of trauma, memory, and identity, with fractured voices serving as transformational instruments. Morrison emphasises the enduring impact of trauma and provides solutions to recovery through the use of narrative devices, including witness testimony, vivid imagery, and repetition. These literary methods serve a dual purpose: they bring the characters' inner lives to life and establish an emotional connection between the reader and the book. Morrison brings together disparate experiences into a unified force of strength and agency through storytelling, which she uses to recover forgotten past experiences, promote group healing, and rebuild broken narratives. Here, the research examines how the elements of witnessing and testifying, as well as imagery and symbolism, contribute to the transformative process of *Beloved*.

(a). *Repetition: Reinforcing Trauma and Offering Pathways to Healing*

Repetition is one of the most remarkable storytelling devices in *Beloved* as a reflection and tool for processing trauma. To establish control over unpleasant memories, some people experience "repetition compulsion," as pointed out by Mingo (2019, p. 59). Morrison employs a narrative rhythm that reflects the cyclical nature of trauma via the use of recurrent words, pictures, and themes, capturing this psychological process. The recognisable rhythm that emphasises the growth of trauma inside Sethe's home is established by the opening lines of each book: "124 was spiteful" (Morrison, 1987, p. 13), "124 was loud" (p. 134), and "124 was quiet" (p. 186). By making trauma's presence more commonplace, this recurrence encourages readers to confront the intricacy and tenacity of the experience. Readers are led through a range of emotions connected to the lingering effects of slavery by the narrative device of "124 was..." repeated throughout. This structural recurrence suggests that Toksöz (2024) portrays the multifaceted nature of trauma, captivating readers on both unconscious and conscious levels simultaneously (p. 8). Repetition confirms that trauma is inevitable and provides opportunities for recovery. Morrison helps her characters (and, by implication, her readers) deal with unresolved anguish by having them repeat horrific experiences through narrative. One example is how Sethe finds solace in reliving the terrible events surrounding her escape from Sweet Home and her child's death. To transform trauma into a shared experience that fosters empathy and understanding, Morrison employs repetition, which Heinert (2008) notes as creating an opening for conversation and contemplation (p. 112). In addition, the fact that trauma has been passed down through generations is brought to light through repetition. The long-lasting effects of slavery on African American families have been brought to light by the recurrent theme of separation, which may take the form of child loss, relocation, or even death. Morrison deftly incorporates these echoes into her story, ensuring that the past is not a cold, dead memory, but an active part of the present. The transforming power of repetition is highlighted in *Beloved* by its dual function of perpetuating trauma and creating recovery routes.

(b). *Imagery and Symbolism: Creating a Visceral Connection*

Another essential component of Morrison's narrative alchemy is the use of symbolism and vivid imagery, which forge a strong emotional connection between readers and characters. Her descriptions are intricately woven into the cultural and psychological realities of her characters, rather than merely ornamental. Morrison uses visuals to portray the mental and physical wounds of slavery, giving readers a firsthand understanding of the suffering that her characters went through. The "chokecherry tree" scar on Sethe's back, which represents the cruel beating she received at Sweet Home, is among

the most stunning instances of imagery in *Beloved*. This scar serves as a communal reminder of the brutality perpetrated on enslaved people, in addition to being a personal injury. According to Krumholz (1992), Morrison offers a historical viewpoint “from the consciousness of African-American slaves rather than through the perspective of the dominant white classes” (p. 395). The chokecherry tree reminds readers of the tenacity required to endure such horrors and is a potent symbol of resilience.

Beyond personal wounds, symbolism encompasses general concerns about memory and identity. Unresolved trauma is symbolised by the figure of Beloved herself, who represents the persistence of the past in the present. Morrison challenges readers to confront the complexities of pain by blurring the lines between life and death, reality and memory through the ethereal figure of Beloved. Caesar (1994) asserts that Morrison’s depiction of *Beloved* highlights the cyclical nature of trauma, with unresolved anguish resurfacing in unexpected ways (p. 115). Morrison’s use of imagery is crucial in promoting comprehension and empathy. She allows readers to experience their characters’ bodies by depicting the bodily feelings of trauma, such as the weight of chains, suffocating imprisonment, and the agony of whippings. Because of this sensory connection, the story’s emotional effect is enhanced, and the characters’ experiences become more realistic and sympathetic. Toksöz (2024) notes that Morrison’s use of symbolism and imagery turns intangible ideas, such as memory and trauma, into tangible, experienced realities (p. 10).

(c). *Testimony and Witnessing: Reclaiming Lost Histories*

The significance of storytelling as a means of recovering lost history and promoting group healing lies at the core of *Beloved*. Morrison highlighted the importance of witnessing and testifying as crucial steps in trauma healing, emphasising the ability of the story to close the gap between the known and the unknown. Morrison affirms her characters’ humanity and dignity by allowing them to speak about their experiences through narrative. Sethe’s capacity to share her experiences is intricately linked to her recovery path. She is hesitant to talk about her history at first, but eventually opens up to Denver, Paul D., and the community. This act of witnessing engages others in the process of remembering and healing, and is not only a personal catharsis. According to Reinhardt (2002), in the face of systematic erasure, storytelling enables marginalised populations to express their humanity and recover their past (p. 95). Morrison highlighted the transformational power of a story via Sethe’s testimony, transforming personal suffering into a communal experience that promotes empathy and understanding.

In *Beloved*, witnessing is equally significant since it affirms the experiences of trauma survivors. The last action taken by the community was a powerful demonstration of support, acknowledgement, and witness to Sethe’s suffering. This group reaction emphasises the importance of social cohesion in overcoming trauma. White (2000) noted that the institutional oppression of slavery had a significant impact on gender roles and identity in slave societies, with black women often carrying the twin burdens of gendered and racial exploitation (p. 45). Morrison affirms the worth of African American voices and experiences by challenging oppressive institutions through the lens of testimony and witnessing.

Furthermore, Morrison’s narrative structure serves as a witness act in itself. She crafted a tapestry of interwoven tales that represent the larger African American experience by fusing various viewpoints and historical periods. A more comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of history is made possible by the diversity of perspectives, which prevents any single narrative from dominating. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2023), critical race theory seeks to subvert the prevailing narrative and amplify the voices of underrepresented groups (p. 45). Morrison highlighted the importance of African American experiences and drew attention to the need for real systemic change through his testimony and observations.

(d). *Alchemy of Fragmented Voices: Transformation Through Storytelling*

In *Beloved*, Morrison employs the alchemy of fractured voices to transform narratives into a means of healing pain. She creates a story that not only highlights the atrocities of slavery but also provides avenues for resilience and empowerment by using symbolism, testimony, imagery, repetition, and the power of witnessing. Together, these narrative strategies foster a close connection between readers and characters, promoting understanding and empathy. In addition to providing chances for healing, repetition serves to highlight the cyclical nature of trauma as both characters and readers go back over upsetting experiences in the quest for closure. Through the use of imagery and symbolism, the characters’ experiences become concrete and accessible, establishing a visceral connection. Witnesses and testimonies highlight the humanity and dignity of those who have experienced a tragedy. When combined, these components convert disjointed stories into a coherent alchemy of resilience, empowering people and transforming tragedy into a source of strength.

Ultimately, *Beloved* is a testament to the enduring power of narrative to confront past injustices and envision alternative futures. Morrison created a story that transcends conventional literary bounds by recovering forgotten histories and promoting collective healing, enabling readers to engage actively with the complexity of the human condition. Toni Morrison crafts a narrative in *Beloved* that transforms tragedy into healing through her skilful use of symbolism, imagery, repetition, testimony, and the act of witnessing. These narrative devices establish a visceral connection between the book and its audience while also helping the reader better comprehend the psychological landscapes of the characters. Morrison created a unified alliance of resilience and strength by recovering forgotten history and promoting communal healing. Morrison emphasises in *Beloved* the transformational potential of narrative in addressing pain and imagining fresh approaches to equality and justice.

V. CONCLUSION

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* reveals the deep and lasting psychological effects of slavery through its innovative narrative techniques. By portraying trauma, memory, and identity, the novel illustrates how individuals and communities confront the legacy of historical trauma. Morrison's use of fragmented voices and sonic elements transforms suffering into resilience and hope. *Beloved* challenges dominant narratives, emphasising the power of storytelling to confront injustice and envision a more equitable future.

REFERENCES

- [1] Balaev, M. (2014). *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137365816>
- [2] Bell, D. (2008). *Moreover, We Are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*. Basic Books.
- [3] Bennett, A., & Royle, N. (2004). *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. Pearson Longman.
- [4] Berger, J. (1996). Ghosts of liberalism: Morrison's *Beloved* and the Moynihan Report. *PMLA*, 111(3), 408–420. <https://doi.org/10.2307/463337>
- [5] Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- [6] Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press. <https://doi.org/10.56021/j.ctt2j2q9v>
- [7] Caesar, J. (1994). A review of *Beloved*. *African American Review*, 28(1), 105–117.
- [8] Cazenave, N. A. (2015). *Conceptualising Racism: Breaking the Chains of Racially Accommodative Language*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- [9] DeCuir, J. T., & Dixon, A. D. (2004). “So when it comes out, they are not surprised that it is there”: Using Critical Race Theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(5), 26–31.
- [10] Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (4th ed.). NYU Press. <https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479800494.001.0001>
- [11] Eyerman, R. (2013). Social theory and trauma. *Acta Sociologica*, 56(1), 41–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699312466711>
- [12] Foner, E. (2019). *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- [13] Fuston-White, J. (2002). From the seen to the told: The construction of subjectivity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *African American Review*, 36(3), 461–473. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1512200>
- [14] Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1707–1791. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1341787>
- [15] Härtling, H. (1998). Chokeycherry tree(s): Operative modes of metaphor in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 29(4), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ari.1998.0001>
- [16] Heinert, J. (2008). Narrative, memory, and slavery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *College Literature*, 35(4), 114–132.
- [17] Karnan, S. L. (2017). The recalcitrant society and the challenging women in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. *IJELLH*, 5(7), 410–412. ISSN: 2321-7065
- [18] Karnan, S. L. (2023). Study of Black women's emotional struggle in Toni Morrison's novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. *Confluence of Curiosity: Multidisciplinary Explorations in Modern Research*, Paradox International Publications Guide House, (2), ISBN: 978-93-5879-547-9. DOI: 10.25215/9358795476
- [19] Karnan, S. L. (2024). A study of the representation and portrayal of motherhood in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *International Research Journal of Commerce Arts and Science*, 15(7), 397–404. ISSN: 2319-9202
- [20] Mingo, A. (2019). Time, trauma, and narrative in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *The Journal of Narrative Theory*, 49(1), 57–74.
- [21] Morrison, T. (1987). *Beloved: A Novel*. Knopf. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199988239.013.12>
- [22] Parker, L., & Villalpando, O. (2007). A racialised perspective on education leadership: Critical race theory in educational administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(5), 519–524. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X07304955>
- [23] Reinhardt, M. (2002). Music, memory, and African American identity. *Journal of American Culture*, 25(1–2), 89–96.
- [24] Rushdy, A. (1992). Daughters signifyin(g) history: The example of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *American Literature*, 64(3), 567–597. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2927012>
- [25] Toksöz, İ. (2024). Trauma and narrative in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 7(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.47948/efad.1408982>
- [26] Van der Kolk, B., & McFarlane, A. C. (2013). The black hole of trauma. In C. Caruth (Ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (pp. 1–20). Johns Hopkins University Press. <https://doi.org/10.56021/j.ctt2j2q9x>
- [27] Waterman, D. (2001). *In Depth: Trauma and Time*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203994515>
- [28] Weisenburger, S. (1999). *Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South*. Macmillan.
- [29] White, D. G. (2000). *Ar'n't I a Woman? Enslaved Women in the Plantation South*. W.W. Norton.
- [30] Wilkerson, I. (2020). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Penguin UK. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.457>



K. Srividya Lakshmi is working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Language, Culture and Society at SRMIST, Ramapuram. She has 18 years of teaching experience. She has published over 32 research articles in International Journals and Conferences in the areas of Afro American Literature and Technical English. She has published four book chapters and authored a Book published by an international publication in 2023 titled “ELEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE,” the book is for the benefit of undergraduate and postgraduate students to enhance their language expression skills and communication abilities. She has presented more than 14 research papers at an International Conference. She is a Cambridge Speaking BEC Examiner and a member of ELT@I. She has completed more than eight NPTEL and COURSERA courses. She is a faculty coordinator for the Model United Nations.



Priyadarshini M C is an Assistant Professor and Research Supervisor of English, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sangunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai. She 7 years of experience in teaching. Notably, she was honoured with the BEST FACULTY AWARD, RESEARCHER AWARD from the IARA group. She serves as a Cambridge University Business English Certificate (BEC) Speaking Examiner, and she is also a freelance trainer with IELTS. Her research acumen can be understood with her impressive track record of 25 publications, which include books, book chapters, and 4 papers in Scopus-indexed Journals with a high impact factor. She has participated in International Conferences, 10 National Conferences, 10 seminars and 25 workshops. She is the most sought resource person and she has delivered more than 10 invited talks.



S. Karthik Kumar is a Professor of English at Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, India, and he is, at present, heading the century-old department. He is also serving as the Deputy Director, IQAC of the University. He has put in 25 years of teaching and research experience. His research interests lie in Post-Colonial Literature and Eco Studies in Literature. With his research guidance, 20 PhD scholars and 25 M.Phil. scholars have successfully earned their degrees. Karthik Kumar has completed 02 Major Research Projects sponsored by UGC and 01 minor project sponsored by RUSA, and presently he is part of an ongoing project sponsored by the Tribal Welfare Development, Govt. of Tamil Nadu. He has a considerable research publication to his credit: more than 120 articles in National/international journals; 30 articles in edited books with ISBN; and 30 papers in conference proceedings. Besides, he has authored two books and edited nearly 20 books. As Co-

ordinator/Organising Secretary, he has been involved in the conduct of more than 20 workshops/Conferences/Seminars. He is a member of the Boards of Studies in English of as many as 20 institutions across India. As a resource person, he has delivered invited talks in workshops, seminars and refresher programmes. Karthik Kumar has visited Singapore and Australia for academic purposes.



K. Gobalakrishnan is an accomplished academic and researcher currently serving as Associate Professor of English at Malla Reddy (MR) Deemed to be University, Hyderabad. With over six years of teaching experience, he has taught English Language and Literature at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He obtained his PhD in English from Annamalai University for his thesis titled “Social Vision through Magical Realism: A Study of the Select Novels of Gabriel García Márquez.” Dr. Gobalakrishnan has a rich academic portfolio, having published eight research papers in reputed national and international journals, including UGC CARE-listed journals such as the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai and Dhimahi. His research covers diverse areas like American and Indian Literature, Feminist Studies, Postcolonial Theory, and Magical Realism. He has presented papers in several national seminars and contributed to the growing body of contemporary literary

studies. A recipient of the National Faculty Award (2021–2022) for Best Young Researcher and the Global Faculty Award (2022), he is also an Editorial Board Member and Reviewer for leading international journals. Dr. Gobalakrishnan is a lifetime member of the English Language Teachers’ Association of India (ELTAI). His current interests include English language pedagogy, life skills, educational development, and soft skills training.

Culinary Spaces for Subaltern Sites of Resistance: A Subaltern Studies Reading of *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada* by Shahu Patole

Ng Miew Luan

Faculty of Education and Liberal Arts, INTI International University, Nilai, Malaysia

Megala Rajendran

Turan International University, Namangan, Uzbekistan

Subhash Y. Kamalkar

Department of English, Dnyanprassarak Mandal's College and Research Centre (DMC), Assagao, Bardez, Goa, India

J. Sathish Kumar

Department of English, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, India

Tan Tiam Lai

Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Malaysia

Keerthana R

Department of English, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, India

Parthasarathy S

Department of English, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, India

Prakash A*

Department of English, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, India

Abstract—This study, grounded in subaltern studies and culinary nationalism, explores how Dalit kitchens in Marathwada serve as spaces of cultural and political resistance to caste hierarchies. It examines Shahu Patole's *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada* and how Dalit culinary practices, particularly the consumption of non-vegetarian foods like beef, challenge Brahminical purity-pollution notions and assert Dalit identity. Dalit kitchens, through the act of defying food taboos, become sites of cultural resistance, subverting caste-based oppression. Drawing on Marathi Saint Literature, the paper highlights the role of Dalit women as custodians of cultural identity within these kitchens, asserting agency in spaces historically limited by caste and gender restrictions. The research positions food as both a medium of self-assertion and symbolic resistance, transforming the kitchen into a site of resilience. Additionally, it critiques the pervasive caste-based food discrimination, especially the marginalisation of non-vegetarian diets, as tools of social control. The study emphasises how food practices among Dalits, through subtle everyday acts of defiance, challenge the caste system and reclaim their rightful place in India's socio-cultural landscape. Through this analysis, the Dalit kitchen is seen as a domestic space and a political arena where culinary choices actively resist caste domination. The study underscores food's power in resistance and the kitchen's role as a subaltern site of identity and agency in the face of entrenched caste norms.

Index Terms—subaltern studies, cultural identity, poverty alleviation, the resilience of the poor, social protection

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, food culture and caste intersect to reflect socio-political power dynamics. This study offers a Subaltern reading of Dalit food culture in Marathwada, Maharashtra, examining how culinary practices challenge caste hegemony, resist social exclusion, and contribute to poverty alleviation efforts in marginalised communities. *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada* by Shahu Patole gives us a critical perspective on how the historically marginalised can resist upper caste domination and recover their dignity. This research utilises subaltern theory to analyse how culinary practices resist dominant narratives and anthropologically confirm Dalit identity.

To this day in India, the practice of food has been guided by caste with upper caste norms that ascribe vegetarianism

* Corresponding Author. Email: prakasha@veltech.edu.in

as morally superior and 'pure' (Patole, 2024, p. xii). The norms on which these are based are driven by the Savarna ideology, which stigmatises everything Dalit eats, especially the non-vegetarian diet, as 'impure' and 'undesirable.' Claude Lévi-Strauss, a pioneering anthropologist of food, wrote in 1969 that food is not only pleasurable to eat but also intellectually stimulating, noting that it is "not only good to eat but also good to think with" (p. 98). In the Indian context, caste-based food taboos are used as a tool for social control that further perpetuates discrimination and stratification (Caplan, 2001, p. 67).

Furthermore, these norms are perpetuated by institutions like religious texts, education, and media established through Brahminical patriarchy. Chakravarti (1993) shows how foods are perceived as restricting 'caste purity' and what is allowed for consumption based on identity within a caste (p. 28). It follows that non-vegetarian diets for Dalit communities are frequently concealed and met with stigma and discrimination under prevalent social pressures. Food then becomes a site of subjugation and diffidence in this context. The kitchen is a political space (Rege, 2006), and Dalit culinary practices and their forms of resistance challenge the purity–pollution dichotomy imposed by 'upper caste' ideologies (p. 112). This backs up Spivak's (1988) argument that subaltern groups fight against dominant ideologies by writing their own stories of resistance (p. 24).

Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada is an ethnographical representation of Dalit food practices, particularly the consumption of cattle meat, a taboo within the norms of the upper caste. Food is more than just sustenance for Dalits; for them, food is a medium of cultural expression and social assertion (Guru, 2009, p. 41). In celebrating foods that upper caste ideologies deem shameful, Dalit communities effectively defy socio-cultural boundaries meant to silence and marginalise them. Through documenting these practices, Patole shows how these practices make possible a singular food identity, even amid pervasive social exclusion, and positions the Dalit kitchen as, in fact, a space of resistance to caste oppression (Patole, 2024, p. 17).

Even the subaltern studies framework derives importance from emphasising the empowerment of the voices of the marginalised. "The need for 'history from below' to understand struggle outside of dominant power structures" was argued for by Guha (1982, p. 45). This approach finds resonance in the study of Dalit food habits and how food practices are marked out as a distinct and oppositional collective identity, marking itself out from the Savarna dietary hierarchies.

This research examines the socio-political implications of food as a site of resistance by focusing on Dalit culinary traditions. The act of reclamation of agency by Dalits in an oppressive caste system is asserting identity to assert individual autonomy through whatever particular modality of choice they can do so, even if that is around their culinary choices. This research argues that Dalit kitchens are not merely domestic spaces. They qualify as arenas of symbolic resistance as food is reclaimed as a medium of dignity to resist and challenge caste-based discrimination.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Culinary Nationalism and Exclusion

A concept of culinary nationalism has been central to discussions of caste and food, particularly among dominant cultural narratives of uniform Indian gastronomy based around vegetarianism. This narrative is often such that it leaves us with no Dalit and other marginalised food practices in evidence, thereby reinforcing caste hierarchies. Examining the Dalit women's autobiographies, *The Prisons We Broke* by Baby Kamble and *The Weave of My Life* by Urmila Pawar, James and Mathew (2023) view them as texts of resistance. Nonvegetarian Dalit cuisines are viewed as 'counter cuisines' that operate as an opposing force to the purity–pollution binary defined in Hindu cultural nationalism, and these autobiographies highlight the centrality of these nonvegetarian Dalit cuisines, they argue. "These narratives establish alternative national identities, challenging the upper-caste hegemony of food culture while preserving marginalised culinary practices" (James & Mathew, p. 36).

Similarly, Kashyap (2023) critiques the representation of Indian cuisine in national and international spaces. Kashyap argues that dominant portrayals reflect upper-caste vegetarian standards, marginalising regional and Dalit contributions. This exclusion perpetuates cultural elitism, positioning vegetarianism as representative of Indian identity while erasing the diversity of food practices, particularly those of marginalised communities (Kashyap, p. 220). Such portrayals highlight the broader issue of cultural hegemony in constructing national identity through food.

B. Caste-Based Food Discrimination

Dalit communities face everyday discrimination that extends to culinary practices, often referred to as culinary untouchability. Particularly in the Northeast Indian context, casteist ideologies label non-vegetarian foods consumed by Dalit and other marginalised groups as "dirty" or "polluted". Kikon's (2021) ethnographic study reveals how terms like *ganda* (dirty) are used to pathologise Dalit food habits, reinforcing caste and racial hierarchies. These food-based stigmas serve as a mechanism for caste-based exclusion and social stratification (Kikon, 2021, p. 87). This notion is further explored by Guru (2009), who characterises food as a "site of humiliation" within caste-determined social structures. He argues that caste-based food prohibitions restrict Dalit communities to a predefined, inferior food hierarchy, reinforcing the cultural and social divisions imposed by the Savarna order. Guru emphasises that food and its consumption are powerful symbols of caste oppression, acting as both a metaphor and a means for maintaining social stratification (Guru, 2009, p. 4). These insights underscore how food practices, particularly those that defy caste-based norms, become acts of

resistance. By consuming foods deemed "impure", Dalit communities subvert the hierarchical food system and assert their cultural identity.

C. *Dalit Kitchens as Testimonial Spaces*

Dalit food narratives are a critical epistemological framework in subaltern studies for their testimonial power. Gupta (2021) situates texts such as *Isn't This Plate Indian?* as a form of 'testimonial literature' situated as a counter to systemic exclusion through documentation of Dalit culinary practices. Instead, the narratives here place Dalit kitchens not as a mere culinary activity but as cultural ways of being, of resistance. These food narratives are thus entrenched in historical and cultural frameworks that hold food practices within the locus of lived experience, a local narrative that challenges dominant Brahminical discourses (Gupta, 2021, p. 179).

Similarly, Wankhede (2009) examines how Dalit women use food preparation and sharing as acts of resistance. By reclaiming agency within domestic spaces, Dalit women subvert both caste and gender oppression. Wankhede's analysis highlights the transformative potential of food practices in redefining domestic spaces as sites of empowerment and cultural resilience (Wankhede, p. 59).

D. *Public Acts of Culinary Resistance*

Dalit activism has increasingly integrated food into public demonstrations of anti-caste solidarity, mainly through events such as beef festivals. Garalyt  (2023) provides an ethnographic account of Dalit student politics in Hyderabad, where beef festivals serve as resistance against casteist norms. These festivals transform university canteens into spaces of subaltern resistance, challenging the stereotypical hegemonic standards imposed within educational institutions. According to Garalyt , public consumption of beef represents a broader vision of inclusivity and a caste-free society (Garalyt , p. 231).

Natrajan (2018) complements this perspective by situating beef festivals within the movement for "multiculturalism against caste." He emphasises that such events assert Dalit cultural rights while critiquing the Brahminical domination of Indian food culture. However, he cautions that using cultural practices as tools of resistance risks reinforcing caste as a cultural marker, even as it subverts hierarchical systems (Natrajan, 2018, p. 112).

E. *Gendered Dimensions of Culinary Resistance*

The intersection of caste and gender is evident in Dalit women's food narratives. Works like Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* depict the kitchen where Dalit women negotiate subjugation and defiance. James and Mathew (2023) argue that these narratives portray everyday food practices as symbolic resistance, disrupting patriarchal caste norms that regulate women's access to food and agency. Drawing on de Certeau's theory of everyday life, the authors frame these culinary practices as "tactics" of resistance, challenging casteist exclusion subtly but effectively (James & Mathew, p. 37).

Later, Wankhede (2009) explains how Dalit women reclaim their autonomy within oppressive structures through food preparation. The act in which Dalit women turned cooking and sharing food into instruments of empowerment redefines their roles not only at home but also at the level of the social space. This resistance is articulated through meal politics as politics of personal food bridges and bridges the power of food as a feminist tool in its anti-caste movements (Wankhede, 2009, p. 59).

F. *Media Advocacy as a Tool for Cultural Resistance*

While much of the existing literature focuses on culinary practices as subaltern sites of resistance, it is essential to recognise other media through which marginalised communities assert their identity and challenge dominant narratives. In this context, media advocacy is a powerful tool for cultural preservation and resistance, particularly among minority groups.

The case of Sin Chew Daily (SCD), a prominent Chinese-language newspaper in Malaysia, illustrates how journalism can function as a medium for cultural advocacy. SCD has historically played a pivotal role in preserving Chinese cultural identity, advocating for educational rights, and addressing religious freedom issues within the Malaysian Chinese community. This aligns with Peng's (2005) observation that using the Chinese language in media reinforces cultural identity while facilitating linguistic preservation. Furthermore, SCD's extensive coverage of Chinese education highlights ongoing struggles to recognize the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) and funding for vernacular schools, which have historically relied on community support due to governmental neglect (Voon, 2008).

Just as Dalit kitchens in Marathwada provide spaces for resisting caste hierarchies and asserting agency through the act of cooking (Patole, 2024), Sin Chew Daily operates as a symbolic space through which Malaysian Chinese communities contest systemic marginalisation. Both cases illustrate how marginalised groups use the resources available to them, food in one and media in the other, as mechanisms of resistance and identity assignment in the face of erasure.

G. *Intersectionality in Advocacy*

Dalit kitchens and Sin Chew Daily are both sites of intersectional struggles of caste, gender, language, and religion. For instance:

- Kitchens become sites of defiance against patriarchal caste norms for Dalit women reclaiming agency (Wankhede,

2009).

- SCD also tackles some of the problems the Malaysian Chinese community faces, including the diversity of beliefs held and the gender roles and dynamics that persist in preserving culture (Ng & Lee, 2020).

In making these associations, it becomes evident how the subaltern strategy of food practices and media advocacy serves as an essential means of resistance. These media archives marginalised identities and resist systematic exclusion in their respective geo-political contexts.

H. Synthesis and Significance

The literature shows that Dalit food practices have preserved the culture and the resistance. These practices encompass everything from autobiography to public protest and strive to undermine caste hierarchies and reclaim a Dalit identity that asserts its otherness to Brahminical cultural hegemony. Food also has power as a metaphorical site for resistance and dignity (Guru, 2009).

Integrating gendered perspectives, as suggested by Wankhede (2009) and James and Mathew (2023), the review illustrates that Dalit women's culinary practice is potentially transformative. This resistance is carried over into broader social movements as public acts like beef festivals, explored by Garalyt  (2023) and Natrajan (2018), become the means through which they build toward inclusivity and anti-caste solidarity. Collectively, these studies synthesise the resistance to the homogenising tendencies of culinary nationalism, arguing for food as a powerful weapon of cultural stake-claim and social critique.

TABLE 1
OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE ON DALIT FOOD CULTURE AND CASTE RESISTANCE

Author(s) & Year	Key Focus	Significance
James and Mathew (2023)	Autobiographies by Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar emphasise non-vegetarian cuisines as "counter-cuisines", challenging caste binaries.	Establish alternative national identities and preserve marginalised culinary practices.
Kashyap (2023)	Critiques of upper-caste vegetarian dominance in Indian cuisine portrayals.	Highlights the erasure of Dalit and regional cuisines in global and national narratives
Kikon (2021)	Investigates the casteist labelling of non-vegetarian foods as "dirty" in Northeast India and Dalit communities.	Expose food-based discrimination as a tool for enforcing caste hierarchies.
Guru (2009)	Describes food as a "site for humiliation" within caste-based social systems.	Reveals food's symbolic role in perpetuating caste stratification.
Gupta (2021)	Frames Dalit kitchens as testimonial spaces, documenting cultural resilience through food practices.	Counters Brahminical erasure and asserts Dalit heritage.
Wankhede (2009)	Analyses Dalit women's use of food preparation to challenge caste and gender oppression.	Position food as a feminist tool for agency and empowerment.
Garalyt� (2023)	Documents about beef festivals as public protests transforming canteens into spaces of subaltern resistance.	Advocates for inclusivity and anti-caste solidarity.
Natrajan (2018)	Situates beef festivals within movements for "multiculturalism against caste."	Highlights Dalit cultural rights and critiques caste-based food dominance.
Dutta Chowdhury et al. (2022)	Food is both a necessity and a cultural artefact within Dalit narratives, embodying resilience and resistance.	Positions food practices as tools for reclaiming agency and cultural identity, bridging personal and political dimensions.
James and Mathew (2023)	Dalit women's autobiographies (Kamble, Pawar) highlight food practices as subtle yet powerful acts of resistance against patriarchal caste exclusion.	Demonstrates how culinary practices allow Dalit women to defy caste-based restrictions and assert their identity daily.
Wankhede (2009)	Analyses how Dalit women use culinary practices to disrupt caste and gender norms, leveraging food preparation as an avenue to assert identity and autonomy within domestic contexts that extend to broader societal impacts.	Positioning food preparation as a feminist act for Dalit women, highlighting intersections of caste and gender resistance through domestic and communal culinary activities.
Sin Chew Daily	Media advocacy by the Malaysian Chinese community through journalism (<i>Sin Chew Daily</i>).	Demonstrates parallels between media/culinary practices in resisting systemic marginalisation.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present research involves closely reading the primary text, i.e., *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada* by Shahu Patole, and analysing the primary text for the subaltern themes of resistance through culinary practices. This research adopts subaltern theory to analyse Patole's work as a narrative of resistance. It also applies Scott's (1990) concept of infra-politics to examine the subtle forms of defiance in Dalit kitchens, as well as testimonial literature to highlight the personal experiences of Dalit communities in their struggle against caste oppression. This analysis aims to draw a fruitful

cartography for Dalit kitchens as Subaltern sites of resistance, underscoring the act of cooking and eating the 'forbidden' to resist the prevalent norms and critiquing the caste food hierarchies. The study also considers the lens of infra-political ideology and the genre of testimonial literature to analyse the text at hand. The gendered perspective, the sense of nationalism attached to food, and the author's incorporation of local classical literature in the text will also be closely examined.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Dalits' Kitchens of Marathwada as Subaltern Sites of Resistance

Through an investigation of Shahu Patole's *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada*, this research paper maintains that Dalit kitchens work as subaltern spaces of resistance to the caste system. Cooking, on their terms, reverses casteist norms, and this study seeks to identify the counter-hegemonic cultural expressions. Grounded in subaltern studies, this investigation examines how these kitchens operate as intimate and political spaces where marginalised communities mobilise their identities in opposition to the dominance of caste hierarchies over food practices. This paper examines Dalit kitchens as collective spaces for resistance that challenge the inherent limitations of Brahminical supremacy through the symbolic and material significance of the Dalit kitchens.

B. Culinary Practices as a Celebration of the Action of Defiance

This study offers ethnographic insights into Dalit kitchens in Marathwada as sites of defiance against caste-based restrictions daily through cooking and eating. "This quiet defiance of Brahminical purity laws that seek to order every aspect of our existence is what each meal cooked within a Dalit kitchen signifies" (Patole, 2018, p. 17). These tenets of subaltern studies are further reflected as we adopt the principles of privileging subaltern perspectives that have typically been marginalised into narrative silences (Guha, 1982). Through a study of Dalit culinary practices, Patole chronicles a form of cultural resistance in which agency is utilised in the spaces of oppression without open defiance.

Dalit kitchens transform cooking into a ritual of resistance. By preparing and consuming foods deemed 'impure' by upper-caste standards, Dalit communities reclaim agency over their food choices. This defiance challenges caste-based food hierarchies and asserts Dalits' right to cultural self-expression through their culinary traditions. This is extremely important in circumstances in which food choices are controlled by the caste hierarchies that consider certain foods 'pure' or 'impure'. Instead, Dalit kitchens that choose to prepare traditional foods that are sidelined or even deemed unsavoury from the standpoint of the upper castes, like meat (especially beef), are building a form of resistance to the caste-based dietary restrictions (Natrajan, 2020).

C. Infra Politics and Dietary Resistance

The kitchen becomes a space of resistance in the same way as Scott refers to 'infra politics,' which is the subtle means of resistance by marginalised groups that those with power ignore (Scott, 1990). Evidently, in *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada*, Patole explains how making and consuming the foods that are deemed "polluted" by upper castes in Marathwada, Maharashtra, is an infra-political act to fight against Brahminical rules of food preparation and eating. The act of reclaiming food choices within Dalit Kitchens highlights the resilience of the poor and marginalised groups, asserting access to economic resources denied under hierarchies. 'Beyond sustenance,' he says, 'cooking beef in the Dalit kitchen is a radical assertion of who we are' (Patole, 2024, p. 33). This public consumption directly challenges the Brahminical purity-pollution binary and Hindu nationalist vegetarianism.

This culinary decision is significant not only because it rejects dietary rules but also because it serves to make Dalits an example of community strength. Preparing these ingredients as perfect solutions makes eating such meals a loaded statement against practices of exclusion maintained by the upper castes. It empowers Dalits to cook in a social area, free of shame or fear, and celebrate their culinary heritage as they seek to strengthen their collective identity and history.

Additionally, culinary resistance can be viewed as one of the broader social movements of Dalit communities for the reassertion of their identities (Guru, 2009). In the case of Dalits, asserting control over food practice is not only about challenging the dietary restrictions but also subverting the social division of labour and determining who belongs where in their society. More so in today's day and age, when food is still an explosive political issue entangled with identity and wherewithal to acquire power.

D. Critique of Caste Food Hierarchies

Patole's observations popularised the idea that food was the nominal indicator of social stratification and problematised the caste system. He states, "To reject the Brahminical food code is to reject the ideology that seeks to define and diminish us" (p. 45). He continues that these are choices that exist as symbols. This dovetails with Gopal Guru's argument that caste subordination is maintained using food hierarchies linking Dalit modes of alimentation with impurity (Guru, 2009). Cooked food is the theoretical basis on which we understand Dalit kitchens as sites for subverting these social hierarchies through alternative culinary practices (Guru, 2009).

This critique of dietary choices, in turn, implicates something wider than individual dietary choices: a critique of the logic that assigns societal value based on what one chooses to consume through our mouths. Food becomes a battleground in many ways for identifying who one is within a system that is set up for communal marginalisation. Dalits reclaim their

right to choose what they eat and challenge the defining of their worth by ideologies attempting to narrow their value to diet by refusing to adhere to Brahminical standards.

E. Culinary Nationalism and Marginalisation

This discussion also draws on the theoretical framework of culinary nationalism, exploring how food is employed to construct national identities, but through a lens that excludes outlying communities, including marginalised populations. James and Mathew (2018) are lively scholars to argue for the nationalist elevation of vegetarianism, which marginalised the Dalit and other non-vegetarian food traditions to link it with the ideas of the caste structure. Patole challenges this culinary nationalism by documenting persistent Dalit food practices that refuse to assimilate to upper caste norms. Dalit kitchens provide a culinary heritage (Patole, 2024) that resists homogenisation through food rituals and recipes.

However, culinary nationalism does not assign singularity to food; it linearises food towards one conclusive narrative of food – the food promoted is food that fits within upper-caste values, and many food traditions across low-caste spaces are erased. In addition, this narrative removes Dalit contributions to Indian cuisine but also helps reinforce stereotypes that being a vegetarian is superior or 'pure' compared to consuming meat, which is inferior and 'impure.' Patole's work, through foregrounding Dalit culinary traditions, becomes a vital counter-narrative that celebrates diversity over conformity.

In addition, this text is not simply resistance but creating spaces where Dalit food culture can exist without fear of judgment and exclusion. Patole documents recipes, rituals, and practices particular to Dalit kitchens, adding to a growing body of literature that attempts to reclaim and celebrate these traditions and make Dalits a part of the more prominent Indian culinary and cultural heritage.

F. Gendered Dimensions in Culinary Practices

At this point, the discussion takes on a critically profound aspect of the gendered dimensions of Dalit kitchens. Patole emphasises women's significant role in sustaining and transmitting these culinary traditions: According to him, Dalit women have historically been the guardians of our food culture (p. 60). An example would be Vaishali Wankhede's argument that food is how Dalit women routinely articulate symbolic resistance to intersecting oppressions (Wankhede, 2020). They resist caste and patriarchal expectations by deciding what and how food will be prepared and selecting ingredients with cultural value.

As such, the kitchen is a place where women have agency while being inside oppressive systems. Besides maintaining a culinary practice, women care about testing new ways to synthesise current realities and pay tribute to ancestral knowledge. They also occupy the dual role of custodians of cultural identity and family recipes.

Moreover, besides establishing its impact on women working in the domestic spaces, cooking is linked to other social movements associated with women and women's struggle for gender equality in Dalit caste communities (Wankhede & Gawande, 2021). If women claim culinary practices, they also subvert the patriarchal constrictions of being confined to their roles.

G. Testimonio as a Narrative Strategy

This work also embodies elements of the testimonial genre, facilitating an attempt to protect marginalised voices via the personal narrative in a social context. Testimonio is an epistemology of experiences possessing individual stories labelled 'collective struggles' (Gupta, 2006). *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada* is another cobbled-together collection of personal narratives and cultural observations that recounts a tale of a collective Dalit experience.

Patole can hook readers into the personal lives of the Dalit community with testimonials, a narrative strategy. As he discusses these narratives, he portrays how culinary practices constitute identity and are also acts of resistance to systemic oppression. It intertwines the stories to display resilience and conveys how much we need to protect our cultural heritage.

Personal experience is helpful in the discussion of caste and cuisine since it helps readers who do not have that experience understand the ground reality. These concepts, such as testimonials, should be used to humanise the subject for the readers, leading to the development of a sense of belongingness towards fellow humans amongst them.

H. Incorporation of Saint Literature

Patole draws on saint literature—using references to spiritual teachings from popular Marathi saints—to see food in the light of the caste-molded socio-religious context. Using Dalit holy men Eknath and Chokhamela as examples, Patole (2024) shows how religious texts mock caste-inspired dietary customs and praise Dalit experiences. For instance, Patole references Chokhamela's poignant reflections on consuming leftover food rejected by others: We eat the food others have tasted and let go. "Yet we are allowed to worship Lord Vitthal," said Patole.

Saint literature is thereby reframed not as a religious practice but as an act of cultural reclaiming. The examples of saints such as Chokhamela and Namdev, just like other saints, contributed to spirituality and, at the same time, became historical figures against the casteist imposition of food norms with the view to giving equality (Kumar & Jadhav, 2019). In appealing to these saintly understandings, Patole articulates the spiritually meaningful nature of Dalit kitchens and counters acts of caste hierarchy that have already been prevalent for years.

Further, it references saint literature, bringing up the continuity of ongoing but silenced fights for the dignity of the lower caste and present diffusions to reclaim their agency through culinary practice. How spiritual teachings can inspire

resistance movements and create a structure to understand complex connections between belief, identification, and cultures is highlighted.

I. Documentation of Culinary Heritage

Last, but not least, Patole carefully chronicles traditional Dalit recipes with the relevant directions and cultural takes on them. They not only use ingredients marked impure according to the tastes of upper castes but also embody resilience through being resourceful with what they have—a necessary part of survival strategies used by marginalised communities who cannot afford those ingredients (Jadhav, 2022).

For example, his descriptions showcase how Dalit kitchens rely on available resources while maintaining cultural integrity. "Some Dalit kitchens are utilising what is available, transforming it with the knowledge that has been passed down through generations," says Patole. It reflects necessity rather than luxury, a hallmark characteristic of many lower-caste lifestyles.

The documentation process itself serves multiple purposes: It aims to preserve culinary heritage at risk of being lost to modernisation, challenge dominant narratives of purity, and create pride among community members in a composite nation for what they bring to India's much more diverse gastronomic landscape, and celebrate the imagination bound within constrained circumstances.

Recipes, in addition, as recorded in Patole's work illustrate how systems of food production, often based on local agrarian practices, developed in tandem with the locus of social agency exercised by and among the individuals involved at various nodes along the supply chain, and particularly the women, whose labour extends from growing the food to preparing the food to eating the food.

Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada works as an intervention in the way we understand Indian food culture and its subaltern context. It shows us how by replacing discourses of transformative possibility contained in such prejudices, which are rarely infected by injurious movements seeking to deny them the space they desire simply because of categories they inherited like birthright! Patole's oeuvre makes manifest quotidian acts performed in the kitchens of Marathwada (as sites of resistance and resilience) while striating processes that dominate narratives of how we become 'us' and what broader socio-political developments remain central to shaping modern India.

This study contributes significantly to larger discussions around the very issue of intersectionality across multiple axes, including development issue closely intertwined directly with issues about caste discrimination faced as a collective community passed down through many generations until now; it lays out all those often quite poorly reconciled questions, highlighting how this dynamic goes into overdrive emphasising how much defining acceptable/cause unknown ways, ironically quite interestingly carries implicitly much greater emphasis place regain power – it is not either/or so much perspective but both contexts essential reveal hidden power relations transforming spaceure culture through food.

V. CONCLUSION

Focusing on the *Dalit kitchens of Marathwada*, the research investigates the culinary practices of subaltern resistance through the theoretical frameworks of subaltern studies, culinary nationalism, and intersectionality that enable food to be a vehicle for political disobedience and cultural assertion in the region. Moving this kitchen into the politically overcharged risk zone, Shahu Patole employs his signature ethnographic documentation to challenge caste hierarchies and assert the reclamation of the marginalised identities. Culinary practices like these call for systemic interventions, such as social protection and safety nets for vulnerable communities, to address caste-based and economic marginalisation. Eating and cooking food is an act that is not mundane or mechanical. Instead, it is an act of resistance rooted in history, community, and culture.

Dalit kitchens subvert the Brahminical purity-pollution binary by appropriating foods deemed unclean by upper-caste codes, such as beef. Patole's work records how these culinary practices contend with caste ideologies, turning the kitchen into a site of cultural assertion and resistance. This shows how the kitchen can be a counter-hegemonic space where Dalit values for autonomy and dignity come into being. It is not mere rebellion against so-called dietary laws but a battle to take back their culture and history, a declaration of their ongoing resistance to century upon century of institutional oppression.

These kitchens articulate forcefully the notion of infra politics — the term James Scott uses to designate those subtle everyday acts of defiance. These everyday microscopic wars are within us all. For impoverished people, cooking and consuming 'impure' or 'polluted food' is not a matter of nutrition but rather a radical statement of identity. The Dalit people create solidarity and resilience as part of a shared cultural legacy through these acts. Celebrating the consumption of foods historically banned as taboo, Dalit kitchens use them to dismantle the structures of caste discrimination and reassert their place in India's socio-cultural landscape.

This work also identifies the ways Dalit women transform these spaces. Dalit women have adopted the kitchen as a site for empowerment, and the kitchen is dominantly practised by both caste and gender. Their lives are complicated because of the patriarchal nature of their role as custodians and innovators of culinary traditions and the agency they possess within oppressive structures. Dalit women find a way to control food (and its preparation) in food preparation, and by including culturally unique ingredients, they resist intersectional oppression and help maintain cultural identity. Gender dynamics are relevant here only insofar as they operate within the broadest anti-caste resistance path.

In addition, the research critiques a notion of culinary nationalism whereby vegetarianism is made an emblem of identity, denouncing the Indian food culture but deleting the practices of Dalit and regional food cultures. This thesis works to challenge the homogenisation of Indian cuisine and the exclusionary narratives that affirm upper-caste dominance through a focus on Dalit culinary practices. However, Patole's work does more than that: it celebrates the diversity of the Dalit food traditions and claims them as an integral part of India's cultural heritage.

Moreover, Patole's recourse to saint literature employs past and present kinds of resistance. The research links Dalit culinary resistance to a long tradition of defying caste hierarchies. It also calls up figures like *Chokhamela* and *Namdev*, who challenged casteist practices. This research presents the connections between food as a site of cultural and spiritual reclamation and how food and the collective identity and resistance of people and animals are promoted, sustained, and increased.

The documentation of Dalit culinary practices serves multiple purposes: By preserving a threatened cultural heritage, challenging dominant narratives of purity and pollution, and by creating pride among Dalit communities in their unique traditions, it serves many purposes. Patole documents the erasure of Brahminical ideologies by documenting the erasure of the histories he documents. Preservation is a form of resistance that will allow future generations to enjoy this rich culinary heritage.

After analysing the text of *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada*, one can firmly believe that Dalit kitchens function in a dual sense of resistance and reclamation. However, they are not just mere traditional kitchens: places of sustenance; they are locations of identity, agency, and solidarity negotiated and asserted against the oppressive. Not bound by caste, these kitchens do not subscribe to culinary nationalism and do not adhere to patriarchal norms, making them symbols of the resilience of transformation far too rare in our present times. This study foregrounds the everyday acts in these kitchens to understand better how marginalised communities resist the systemic exclusion they face. It is essential to underscore the richness of the marginalised voice in Indian food culture and to celebrate that diversity as a testament to its richness.

To sum up, one may argue that resistance does not have to be big or obvious; it can be as simple as cooking and eating, which often carries deep symbolic meaning. Reclaiming ownership over their food is a way Dalit communities reject the dominant definitions and denigration of themselves and reassert their rightful place in India's socio-cultural scene. These acts from the Dalit kitchens make them subaltern sites of resistance and essential sites from which one can understand how caste, culture, and identity intersect in contemporary India.

This study incorporated a text from Maharashtra that speaks of identity assertion through celebrating culinary heritage. A comparative analysis of this text with texts from other regions of the country or the world can be undertaken for future research. This will give the text a place in the lore of a new culture when compared and analysed with a text from other cultures. This could also reveal variations in resistance strategies and shared cultural practices. This work can also be studied as a seminal text that intersects with works about other marginal communities. Such an investigation of food practices among other oppressed groups, such as tribal or ethnic minorities, will help us identify broader patterns of culinary resistance. One may also study the impact of globalisation and modernisation on Dalit kitchens. A study can be undertaken to analyse how globalisation and modernisation may influence Dalit culinary traditions and whether these changes dilute or enhance resistance. Longitudinal analysis and gender analysis of the topic can be considered for policy making to give a sustainable and holistic approach to the subaltern entities of the world in general and India in particular.

REFERENCES

- [1] Caplan, P. (1997). *Food, health, and identity*. Routledge.
- [2] Chakravarti, U. (1993). Conceptualising Brahmanical patriarchy in early India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28(14), 579–585.
- [3] Dutta Chowdhury, P. et al. (2022). WE ARE WHAT WE EAT: Reading food as a metaphor of cultural identity in select Dalit narratives. *Towards Excellence*, 14(2), 1105 – 1112.
- [4] Garalytė, K. (2023). Imagining an anti-caste utopia through food: Dalit student politics in Hyderabad, India. *Caste: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion*, 4(2), 230-252.
- [5] Guru, G. (2009). *Caste and food: The politics behind dietary practices*. Economic & Political Weekly.
- [6] Guha, R. (1982). *Subaltern studies: Writing on South Asian history and society*. Oxford University Press.
- [7] Guha, R. (1999). *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India*. Duke University Press.
- [8] Gupta, A., & Jadhav, S. (2006). Testimonio: A narrative strategy for resistance. *Journal for Cultural Studies*, 6(1), 45-58.
- [9] Gupta, S. S. (2021). *Subalternities in India and Latin America: Dalit autobiographies and the testimonio*. Routledge.
- [10] Guru, G. (1999). Food as cultural signifier for the marginalised. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(13), 35-42.
- [11] Guru, G. (2009). Food as a metaphor for cultural hierarchies. *Centre for the Advanced Study of India*. New Delhi: CSIA Publications.
- [12] James, C., & Mathew, R. G. (2018). Culinary nationalism: Exclusionary practices in Indian food culture. *Journal for South Asian Studies*, 11(3), 203–215.
- [13] James, C., & Mathew, R. G. (2023). Resisting culinary nationalism: Dalit counter-cuisines in the life narratives of Urmila Pawar and Baby Kamble. *SARE*, 60(1), 34-37.
- [14] Kashyap, R. (2023). Caste: The main character of Indian food. *Contemporary South Asia*, 29, 219-221.
- [15] Kikon, D. (2021). Dirty food: Racism and casteism in India. *Journal of Transnational Perspectives*, 24(10), 86-89.
- [16] Kumar, R., & Jadhav, P. (2019). Saints against caste: The role of Marathi saints in social reform. *Journal for Religious Studies*, 9(2), 142–153.
- [17] Lévi-Strauss, C. (1983). *The raw and the cooked: Introduction to a science of mythology* (J. & D. Weightman, Trans.). University

of Chicago Press.

- [18] Natrajan, S. (2020). Beef festivals: Cultural identity protests amongst marginalised communities. *Journal for Cultural Anthropology*, 13(1), 77–90.
- [19] Natrajan, B. (2018). Cultural identity and beef festivals: Toward a 'multiculturalism against caste'. *Contemporary South Asia*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2018.1504000>.
- [20] Ng, M. L., & Lee, Y. B. (2020). Chinese cultural preservation, identity, and community: Examining the roles of Sin Chew Daily in bridging Chinese education, cultural, and religious rights of the Chinese community in Malaysia. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 28(2), 1271–1287.
- [21] Patole, S. (2018). *Dalit kitchens of Marathwada*. Sage Publications.
- [22] Patole, S., & Jadhav, P. (2022). Documenting culinary heritage: Recipes from Marathwada. *Journal for Food Culture Studies*, 5(1), 55–70.
- [23] Patole, S. (2024). *Dalit kitchens of Marathwada*. HarperCollins India.
- [24] Rege, S. (2006). *Writing caste/writing gender: Narrating Dalit women's testimonios*. Zubaan.
- [25] Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. Yale University Press.
- [26] Spivak, G. C. (1994). Can the subaltern speak? In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory* (pp. 66–111). Routledge.
- [27] Wankhede, V. (2020). Gendered spaces: Women's role in sustaining culinary traditions amongst Dalits. *Journal for Gender Studies*.
- [28] Wankhede, V., & Gawande, S. (2021). Intersectionality in caste and gender dynamics within marginalised communities. *Journal for Social Justice Studies*, 7(3), 98–110.
- [29] Wankhede, V. (2009). Defying oppression: Dalit women's challenge to caste norms. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 1(5), 58–59.



Ng Miew Luan received her B.A., Master and Doctor of Philosophy degree in Journalism from Universiti Sains Malaysia. She is currently an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education and Liberal Arts, INTI International University, Malaysia. She is also served as the Deputy Director of the Centre of Sustainable Business Innovation and Corporate Responsibility at the same university. Her earlier professional experience includes her role as Head of Southeast Asia Regional News and senior writer at *Sin Chew Daily*, one of Malaysia's most prominent Chinese-language newspapers. Her research interests span education, media education, political communication, minority press, language and power dynamics, and disability studies. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ng is the Assistant General Secretary of the Malaysian Social Sciences Association (PSSM). She has contributed to various interdisciplinary research projects and publications addressing sociopolitical issues, communication in marginalised communities, and media representation in Southeast Asia.



Megala Rajendran is currently Vice Rector for Research & Innovation and Director of the Research Center at Turan International University, Namangan, Uzbekistan. She holds a Ph.D. in English Literature and has over 17 years of academic experience specializing in Literary Sex & Sexuality, Feminism, and Research Methodology. She has authored eleven Scopus-indexed publications and presented papers at ten international and fifteen national conferences. Dr. Rajendran has mentored M.Phil. scholars and organized numerous academic events and faculty development programs. She is a Fellow of the Lips Research Foundation, a member of ISTE, and serves as a senior research supervisor with EIU, Paris.



Subhash Y. Kamalkar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Dnyanprassarak Mandal's College and Research Centre, Assagao, Goa. He holds teaching experience of 10 years, and his research interests include culture studies, subaltern studies, translation studies, and postcolonial reading of contemporary art and literature. He has published papers in peer-reviewed journals (listed in UGC CARE)/articles in books, and has presented papers at various international and national conferences.



Sathish Kumar J. was born in 1983 in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English from St. John's College, Palayamkottai. He received his Ph.D. in English from Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science & Technology, Chennai. With over 16 years of teaching experience and 3 years in the corporate sector, he currently serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Vel Tech. Dr. Sathish Kumar has published several research articles in UGC-approved and Scopus-indexed journals. His recent works include studies on Michael Chabon's fiction and postmodern Jewish narratives, with publications in journals such as *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *South India Journal of Social Sciences*, *Kanpur Philosophers*, and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai*. His research interests span Jewish literature, postmodern American fiction, identity studies, and interdisciplinary literary approaches.



Tan Tiam Lai is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Malaysia. His academic expertise lies in Chinese pedagogy, comparative Chinese-Malay linguistics, language acquisition, and educational psychology. He has authored multiple peer-reviewed publications, including research on textbook content perceptions, learner self-efficacy, and anxiety in language learning. His recent work includes a 2025 study on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in adult EFL classrooms. Dr. Tan also contributes to curriculum development and interdisciplinary projects in multilingual education settings. He currently serves as a co-researcher on a grant-funded study titled "*Intergenerational Communication in the Deaf Community*", supported by INTI International University, Malaysia.



Keerthana R. is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in English at Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai. She holds a Master's degree in English from the same institution and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Madras. With experience teaching at the secondary school level and volunteering in education, she has been actively involved in lesson planning, student assessment, and academic support. She has presented and published research papers at national and international conferences and serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Inventive and Scientific Research Studies* and *Literary Enigma*. Her research interests include disability studies, environmental literature, and intersectionality. She continues to enhance her academic and pedagogical expertise through regular participation in workshops, webinars, and faculty development programs.



Parthasarathy S is a Research Scholar in English at Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai. His areas of study include American Literature, Dark Tourism, English Language Teaching Literature and Media Studies, Cultural Anthropology, and Media Representations.



Prakash A is a professor in the Department of English at Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai. He obtained his Ph.D. from Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India. With approximately 18 years of teaching experience, he currently supervises eight Ph.D. research scholars. His areas of expertise include American Literature and Ancient Myths. Dr. Prakash.A has contributed significantly to his field with the publication of 30 research articles in Scopus and WoS. Additionally, he has authored 8 books. He is a member of the Board of Studies (BOS) and ACM. He is also a life member of the Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE). He is also the subject expert and editor of the *Journal of Inventive and Scientific Research Studies (JISRS)* and *English Axis*.

Translating Contract Law Terminology in the *Civil Code of the P.R.C.*: A Corpus-Based Analysis

Jing Duan

Southwest University of Political Science and Law, China

Lin Sun

Southwest University of Political Science and Law, China

Abstract—Terminology has long been a central concern in both theoretical and practical studies of legal translation. This study conducts a comparative and mixed-method analysis of the translation of contract law terminology, based on two pairs of self-compiled corpora: 1) the English monolingual translation of the *Book of Contract* of the *Civil Code of the People's Republic of China* and the official text of *UNIDROIT Principles of International Commercial Contracts 2016*, and 2) the parallel bilingual corpora of these texts. Focusing on three representative pairs of legal terms (*formation/conclusion* of contracts, *terms/clauses* of contracts, and *obligor/obligee* and *creditor/debtor*), the study identifies key inconsistencies in the translated version of the *Book of Contract*. Notably, the terms *formation* and *conclusion* are used inconsistently, and no clear distinction is made between *terms* and *clauses*, in contrast to the usage found in the reference corpus. The study also compares the use of *obligor/obligee* and *creditor/debtor*, offering suggestions for more accurate and contextually appropriate translation choices. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the standardization of legal terminology in Chinese legislative translation, enhance legal translation quality, promote mutual understanding among different legal systems, and foster international legal and commercial cooperation, while providing the global community with clearer access to Chinese legal culture as well.

Index Terms—terminology translation, corpus-based analysis, the *Civil Code of the P.R.C.*, contract law

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Civil Code of the People's Republic of China* (hereinafter the *Civil Code*), the first *Code* since the founding of the People's Republic of China, is a landmark law that incorporates the most comprehensive and systematic codification of civil legal norms in Chinese legislative history. It has established a unified legal framework governing all aspects of civil life, reflecting the significant progress and sustained efforts China has made in advancing the rule of law over recent decades. As China increasingly integrates into the international community, translating the *Civil Code* into precise and accessible English has become essential. Such efforts would enhance mutual understanding among countries with different legal systems, foster international legal and commercial cooperation, and provide the global audience with a clearer understanding of China's legal culture. At the same time, when the domestic development of the legal system reaches a certain level of maturity, an inherent need also emerges to construct and project a corresponding legal image on the international stage (Wu, 2024). Thus, a critical issue arises: how can this evolving legal image be effectively communicated and transmitted across linguistic, legal and cultural boundaries? This challenge places legal translation at the center of broader processes of international legal exchanges and cooperation, where linguistic accuracy, legislative intent and cultural specificity have to be carefully balanced. In this context, the translation of the *Civil Code* serves not only as a medium for normative exchanges but also as a vehicle for China's self-representation within global legal discourses.

In legal translation studies, terminology has long held a central position, as legal terms directly encode system-specific legal concepts. The same term may carry significantly different meanings across distinct legal systems, making precise and contextually appropriate translation both challenging and essential. As a result, legal translation demands rigorous attention to the treatment of terminology. This study adopts a corpus-based approach to investigate the English translation of legal terminology in the *Civil Code*, with a particular focus on the *Book Three: Contracts*. Accounting for nearly half of the *Civil Code*'s content, the *Book of Contracts* reflects the fundamental and extensive role of contractual relationships within civil law. These relationships permeate nearly all aspects of individual and societal life—from birth to death—raising complex legal issues in both theory and practice. Given its scope and importance, the translation of the *Book of Contracts* merits focused scholarly attention. Meanwhile, this study also serves as a follow-up to Duan's (2025) previous investigation into the use of modal verbs in the translation of the *Book of Contracts*, further expanding the scope of research by shifting the focus to the translation of legal terminology. By comparing the English translations of three representative pairs of key contract law terms (namely, *formation* and *conclusion* of contracts, *terms* and

clauses of contracts, *obligor/obligee* and *creditor/debtor*) with those used in the reference corpus—*UNIDROIT Principles of International Commercial Contracts 2016*, this study aims to uncover underlying translation patterns and evaluate their consistency with Chinese legal concepts as well as their alignment with international legal discourse. This detailed analysis of contract law terminology translation not only enhances the accuracy and clarity of legal discourse but also promotes cross-cultural legal understanding and international legal cooperation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Legal Terminology and Translation

Legal translation, as widely acknowledged, constitutes a distinct interdisciplinary field that entails more than the mere linguistic transfer of legal texts from the source language to the target language. It refers to a “translation from one legal system into another—from the source legal system into the target legal system” (Šarčević, 1997). Given the diversity of legal systems, cultural traditions, social customs, and political structures across countries and regions, legal translation studies are inherently connected to multiple fields of inquiry, engaging closely with both legal scholarship—particularly comparative law—and translation studies. Within this compelling field, legal terminology and its translation occupy a central position as legal terminology serves as the foundational architecture on which abstract legal concepts and knowledge are built and understood across different legal systems. These terms are often rooted in the domestic legal and ideological traditions and cannot be translated directly into another language. Meanwhile, legal terms at the national level, along with their culture-bound connotations and characteristics, co-exist with international legal concepts in the development and harmonization of international legal frameworks (Ramos, 2021). Therefore, appropriate translation of such terminology plays a crucial role as it is not merely a linguistic exercise but a complex act of legal and conceptual mediation, vital for ensuring mutual understanding and functional equivalence in multilingual legal contexts.

Both domestic and international scholars have conducted extensive research on legal terminology and its translation. Among these, studies focusing on institutional translation—particularly within contexts such as the United Nations and the European Union—constitute a prominent and influential area of inquiry. Stefaniak (2017) emphasizes the importance of consistency as a key criterion for translational adequacy, noting that the use of multiple translations for the same term in legal texts can mislead readers into perceiving them as different concepts, thereby hindering the interpretation of legislation. In view of the dual expertise required in both law and translation, De Groot (2002) argues that only approximate equivalence, rather than full equivalence, between legal concepts across different legal systems can be achieved and that this level of correspondence is generally sufficient for translational purposes. Moreover, terminological equivalence is more readily attainable between closely related legal systems, where full or near equivalence may be possible. Achieving equivalence becomes significantly more challenging when translating legislation from a civil law system into a language typically associated with the common law tradition (Klaudia, 2014). Similar opinions are shared and developed by Fuglinszky and Somssich (2020), who examine and attempt to resolve terminology-related problems in translating Hungary’s *Civil Code*—rooted in civil law traditions—into English.

Over recent years, the studies on legal terminology and its translation takes a significant “digital turn” towards digital humanities and makes good use of new technologies such as natural language processing, large language models and databases. Based on those technological advancements, an ever-growing variety of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches such as corpus-related, CAT-related and database-related methods are taken on board (Biel, 2010, 2018; Xu & Wang, 2017; Pontrandolfo, 2020; Giampieri, 2021). Corpus-based methodologies are particularly effective in facilitating the analysis of terminological and phraseological features specific to legal genres while also supporting assessments of translational acceptability and the development of lexicographical resources tailored to the needs of legal and institutional translators (Ramos, 2021). Jiang and Yang (2013), based on parallel corpora in PCLLD, examine the translation of modal operators in Chinese legislative texts from the perspective of systemic functional grammar, suggesting cautious handling of modal operators, prioritizing legal equivalence over linguistic variation to best preserve the law’s unity, authority, and binding force. BinMasad and Alotaibi (2024) conduct a mixed-methods, corpus-based study to analyze the English translations of 44 Arabic culture-specific legal terms found in six Saudi laws, with a focus on identifying the translation strategies and procedures employed. Database-related studies are conducted to discuss the reliability and usefulness of Institutional term banks such as InterActive Terminology for Europe (IATE) in the European Union institutions and UNTERM in the United Nations when it comes to legal terms (Ramos & Guzmán, 2023). Song (2024) selects legislative texts from key countries and sectors and constructs a Legal Translation Data Platform that integrates the User Interface layer, Business Logic layer and Data Access layer. She holds that the Platform produces more accurate legal translation than ChatGPT, bridges the gap between different knowledge domains and language domains and provides optimal support for translation teaching and research.

B. Studies on the Translation of the Civil Code of the P.R.C.

Numerous scholars have undertaken multifaceted investigations into the translation of the *Civil Code*. Some have showed great interest in the big picture such as its translation process and factors that influence translation quality (Zhang, 2021), the logic underlying the translation activity (Li & Song, 2022), and rhetorical strategies used therein (Liu & Cao, 2024). Furthermore, it is also suggested that cultural confidence must be integrated into the translation

process to ensure appropriate translation strategies, accurate cultural connotations between two different legal systems and the eligibility and cultural consciousness of the translators, and meanwhile legal translation thinking oriented towards international communication should be developed so as to properly publicize the legal culture of the *Civil Code* and improve the international communication efficiency of the rule of law in China (Li & Zhang, 2022; Zhang & Ma, 2022).

Most studies on the translation of the *Civil Code*—particularly those focusing on legal terminology—echo the broader “digital turn” in legal translation studies. Wu (2021), based on expectancy norms and using the *Civil Code* as a case study, emphasizes the significance of analyzing data-driven results to promote greater standardization in the translation of legal terminology. Drawing on corpora of the English versions of both the *Civil Code* and the *Civil Code of Quebec*, Wang and Tang (2023) examine the collocational patterns of formulaic sequences from a law-and-language perspective, and further explore the underlying factors contributing to these patterns. Yu and Chen (2024), using a corpus-driven approach, focus on a category of phrases conveying the meaning of “according to” in the *Civil Code* through the lens of metafunction. They argue that translation of such expressions should adhere to principles of collocational convention and discourse function. Meanwhile, given distinct characteristics of the Chinese legal system, it is no wonder that particular emphasis has also been placed on the interdisciplinary approach of comparative law that contrasts the civil law and common law traditions. For instance, Zhao and Xue (2022) explore the English translations of some key terms in the *Book of Real Rights of the Civil Code* under comparative law framework. By comparing those legal concepts and their respective English translations in China, Germany and Japan, they discuss the issue of equivalence concerning legal transplant in legal translation across different jurisdictions. Similarly, Herbots (2023) conducts a detailed analysis of the translation of terms in the *Civil Code* like *subrogation*, *commission contract*, *intermediary contract* and the like, discussing errors in the translation of those terms and stressing the distinction between common law and civil law systems.

Building upon existing scholarship, the present study narrows its focus to the translation of legal terminology within the *Book of Contracts* of the *Civil Code*, which remains underdeveloped. A closer examination of contract-related terms and how they are rendered in English is of practical and theoretical significance as contracts occupy a core position in both domestic and international legal systems and cooperations. The study aims to contribute to the refinement of legal translational activities and promote broader understanding of China’s legal discourse in global contexts.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Corpora Compilation

For the purpose of this study, two pairs of corpora have been carefully compiled: the first one consists of the English translation of the *Book of Contracts* of the *Civil Code*¹ (hereinafter as the EBCCC) and the official English version of the *UNIDROIT Principles of International Commercial Contracts 2016*² (hereinafter the UPICC); the other pair comprises the parallel Chinese-English corpus of the *Book of Contracts* of the *Civil Code*³ (hereinafter as the BCCC) and that of the UPICC⁴. The EBCCC utilized in this research is the version produced by a team of experts convened by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. This version has gained widespread national recognition and is considered the authoritative translation. The English-Chinese parallel texts of the UPICC are sourced from the official UNIDROIT website.

The legitimacy of compiling and analyzing these two pairs of corpora lies in the fact that the evolution of Chinese contract law has been significantly shaped by international influences, particularly through the incorporation of principles from the UNIDROIT Principles of International Commercial Contracts (UPICC) and the provisions of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG) (Ferrerri & DiMatteo, 2019). The *Book of Contracts* in the *Civil Code* is derived from the 1999 *Contract Law of China* and introduces extensive revisions and updates to address emerging challenges in contract legislation. It synthesizes China’s legislative, administrative, and judicial experiences, alongside academic input, thereby imbuing the *Code* with distinct Chinese characteristics. At the same time, its drafters consciously engaged with relevant international conventions and model laws—including the UPICC—and drew from both civil and common law traditions. Consequently, the *Book of Contracts* reflects not only China’s domestic legal evolution but also its alignment with global legislative trends and widely accepted norms in international commercial practice (Ji, 2024). Given that several foundational concepts in the *Book of Contracts* are adapted from, and thus closely resemble, those in the UPICC, it is methodologically sound to use the UPICC as the reference corpus for analyzing the translation of contract law terminology in the *Civil Code*.

¹ EBCCC in this study is retrieved on December 16th, 2024 from the official website of National People’s Congress <http://en.npc.gov.cn.cdurl.cn/pdf/civilcodeofthepeoplesrepublicofchina.pdf>

² The English text of UPICC in this study is retrieved on December 16th, 2024 from UNIDROIT’s official website <https://www.unidroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Unidroit-Principles-2016-English-bl.pdf>

³ The Chinese text of BCCC in this study is retrieved on December 16th, 2024 from the official website of National People’s Congress <https://flk.npc.gov.cn/detail2.html?ZmY4MDgwODE3MjlkMWVmZTAxNzI5ZDUwYjVjNTAwYmY%3D>

⁴ The Chinese text of UPICC in this study is retrieved on December 16th, 2024 from UNIDROIT’s official website <https://www.unidroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Unidroit-Principles-2016-Chinese-bl.pdf>

B. Research Methodology

This study adopts a combined methodology of quantitative analysis, comparative analysis and textual analysis. *LancsBox X 5.0.0* (Brezina et al., 2020; Brezina & Platt, 2021) is used as the corpus tool to upload the self-compiled corpora and extract relevant data. The analysis proceeds in four stages. Firstly, three pre-selected sets of contract terms are identified and indexed in the English monolingual corpora—namely, the EBCCC and the UPICC—followed by the retrieval of frequency data. Secondly, the frequency and occurrences of these terms are compared and analyzed across the two corpora. Thirdly, a detailed textual analysis is conducted in the parallel corpora of the BCCC and the UPICC to examine how these terms are used and translated, drawing on data retrieved. Finally, informed by existing scholarship and legal expertise, a comprehensive interpretation is offered to account for the observed discrepancies and to propose recommendations for improving the translation of contract law terminology.

C. Research Questions

By examining the English translations of three representative pairs of terms in the BCCC and comparing them with those in the reference corpus UPICC, this study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How are the selected contract law terms translated in the EBCCC, and how are equivalent concepts expressed in the UPICC?
2. What discrepancies or inconsistencies, if any, exist between the use and translation of these terms in the EBCCC and the UPICC, and what are the possible reasons for their occurrence?
3. What recommendations can be proposed for the translation of contract law terminology, and more broadly, for legal translation practices?

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A distinctive characteristic of modern Chinese legal terminology lies in the use of common, everyday vocabulary that, when applied in legal contexts and legislative texts, acquires specific legal meanings. These meanings often diverge significantly from the words' conventional usage in general language (Cao, 2023). Drawing on this observation, the present study selects the translation of three representative pairs of contract terminology in the BCCC, namely, 合同成立 and 订立合同 (*formation or conclusion of contracts*), 合同条款 (*terms or clauses of contracts*) and 债务人 and 债权人 (*obligor and obligee or creditor and debtor*). Notably, the first two sets of terms also appear to have common usage outside legal discourse. The study examines how these terms are rendered in translation by comparing them with corresponding expressions in the reference corpus, with the aim of exploring patterns of legal meaning transfer and potential challenges in legal translation.

A. Formation or Conclusion of Contracts?

The *formation* and *conclusion* of contracts are terms that cannot be avoided in translating BCCC. In the source text, the terms 合同成立 and 订立合同 are specialized legal expressions used to describe the process of creating a legally binding agreement. In the target text, however, three different verbs—*form*, *conclude*, and *make*—along with their respective inflected forms, are employed as the equivalents for 订立 and 成立. Table 1 presents a comprehensive comparison of the frequencies of these verbs, including their inflections, in the target text, alongside their occurrences in the reference corpus.

TABLE 1
FREQUENCIES OF ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS FOR 订立 AND 成立 IN THE EBCCC AND UPICC

Terms	EBCCC		UPICC	
	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
formation/conclusion	1/12	0.29/3.48	4/15	2.95/11.04
form ⁵ /conclude/make/enter into ⁶	0/22/1/0	0/6.39/0.29/0	0/3/0/1	0/2.21/0/0.74
(be)formed/concluded/made/ entered into	22/20/5/0	6.39/5.81/1.45/0	0/14/2/1	0/10.31/1.47/0.74
forms/concludes/makes/enters into	0/11/0/0	0/3.19/0/0	0/0/0/0	0/0/0/0
forming/concluding/making/entering into	0/10/0/0	0/2.90/0/0	0/2/0/0	0/1.47/0/0

Based on the data presented in the above, three key observations can be made. First, *conclude* and its inflections show the highest frequency of occurrences in the EBCCC and the reference corpus UPICC, meaning the EBCCC aligns with UPICC in the choice of the concerned words. However, the EBCCC exhibits a much stronger preference for the verb form of *conclude* over the noun form with 63 occurrences in verb form and 12 in noun form, whereas the occurrences of its verb and noun forms in UPICC do not exhibit significant differences. Second, all the instances of

⁵ For the purpose of this study, the statistics consider only the collocation of *form* with *contract*. Instances where *form* is used in other senses or meanings have been excluded through careful examination by the author.

⁶ The verb phrase *enter into* (a contract) is used in UPICC although it is not found in EBCCC, and thus it is also listed in the table for comprehensive description.

form in the EBCCC are used in the passive voice except for one instance where it is used as a noun, whereas only *formation*, the noun form, is used in UPICC. Third, when describing the creation of a contract, *make* and *enter into* are least frequently used. Notably, there is no instance of *enter into* found in the EBCCC.

Taking these observations a step further, it is necessary to conduct a more in-depth examination of how 订立 and 成立 are translated respectively into the target language. Following a careful examination of the terms and their translations, Table 2 illustrates the correspondence of these terms within the parallel corpus of BCCC:

TABLE 2
HOW 订立 AND 成立 ARE TRANSLATED IN THE PARALLEL CORPUS OF BCCC

Source Text	Target Text						Total
	formation	formed	conclusion	conclude/ed/s/ing	(be) made	null ⁷	
成立	1	22	4				27 ⁸
订立			8	22/19 ⁹ /11/10	1	9	80

It can be seen from the above table that most instances of (合同)成立 in the source text are translated as *formation* or *formed* in the target text except for 4 instances where it is translated as *conclusion*. Meanwhile, all instances of 订立(合同) are translated as *conclude* or its inflections except for one where it is translated as *(be) made*. These exceptions are presented in Table 3:

TABLE 3
EXCEPTIONS WHERE 成立 IS TRANSLATED AS *CONCLUSION* AND 订立 AS *(Be) MADE* IN THE PARALLEL CORPUS OF BCCC

Term	Source Text	Target Text
成立	第九百六十三条 中介人促成合同成立的, 委托人应当按照约定支付报酬.....	Article 963 Where a middleman contributes to the <i>conclusion</i> of a contract, the client shall pay remuneration in accordance with the agreement...
	因中介人提供订立合同的媒介服务而促成合同成立的, 由该合同的当事人平均负担中介人的报酬。	Where the intermediary services provided by the middleman facilitate the <i>conclusion</i> of a contract, the parties to the said contract shall equally share the disbursement of the remuneration to the middleman.
	中介人促成合同成立的, 中介活动的费用, 由中介人负担。	In facilitating the <i>conclusion</i> of a contract, the expenses incurred in the intermediary activities shall be borne by the middleman.
成立	第九百六十四条 中介人未促成合同成立的, 不得请求支付报酬.....	Article 964 A middleman who fails to facilitate the <i>conclusion</i> of a contract may not request the payment of remuneration...
订立	第四百六十六条 合同文本采用两种以上文字订立并约定具有同等效力的, 对各文本使用的词句推定具有相同含义。	Article 466 Where a contract <i>is made</i> in two or more languages which are agreed to be equally authentic, the words and sentences used in each text are presumed to have the same meaning.

It is reasonable presumption that 订立 and 成立 should correspond to different verbs respectively in the target language because they are different in meanings in the source language just as *form* and *conclude* in the target language. 订立 in Chinese emphasizes the act of ratifying or formalizing a contract, equivalent to *conclude* in English which means the closing, settling or final arranging of a contract. *Conclusion* of a contract is the moment when the process is complete, and the contract is formalized. By contrast, 成立 underlines the entire process through which a contract comes into existence. It involves satisfying all the necessary elements (like offer, acceptance, intention, capacity, etc.) required for a valid contract under the law. This is equivalent to *formation* of a contract which refers to the overall process of creating a valid contract, including all elements necessary to make it legally binding. The contract is *formed* once all the elements are met, meaning the parties have reached mutual agreement on the essential terms and conditions. In practical terms, *conclusion* of a contract can be seen as the final step in the *formation* process, but the act of *conclusion* per se does not necessarily justify the *formation* of the contract.

As shown in Table 3, the intermediary services provided by the middleman, as stipulated in Articles 963 and 964, clearly pertain to the entire process through which a contract comes into existence while also satisfying all the necessary elements to ensure the validity of the contract. If the middleman only facilitates the *conclusion* of a contract, that does not necessarily mean the contract meets all the necessary elements and is thus *formed* or valid under the law. This is not consistent with the legislative purpose. Thus the study holds that the four instances of 成立 should be translated as

⁷ Null here means the translation of the term is omitted in the target text.

⁸ Altogether, the source text contains 30 instances of the term 成立; however, three of these are unrelated to the formation or conclusion of a contract and have therefore been excluded.

⁹ In Article 533, the source text 合同的基础条件, where the term 订立 is not identified, is translated as *a fundamental condition upon which the contract is concluded*. As a result, the data in table 1 shows one additional instance of *concluded* compared to that in table 2, which only accounts for English equivalents of 订立.

formation. Another point worth mentioning is that the instance of 订立 in Article 466 is translated as *(be) made*. Although expressions *make a contract* and *conclude a contract* are often used interchangeably, they have slight differences in connotations, particularly in legal contexts. *Making a contract* is a broader and less formal phrase, encompassing the entire contract formation process—from drafting and negotiating terms to reaching mutual agreement. However, in this instance, the term 订立, based on the content and context, specifically emphasizes the moment of contract conclusion rather than the entire process. Moreover, the translation of legislative texts must strictly adhere to the “law of identity” in order to avoid ambiguity, i.e., the same concepts or terms in the source language should be rendered consistently in the target language (Qu, 2022). Therefore, it is more appropriate to translate 订立 in Article 466 as *concluded* so as to achieve accuracy and consistency in legal translation.

B. Contract Terms or Contract Clauses?

Terms and *clauses*, when used in contract law, refer to specific provisions to outline the complicated details within a contract and clarify rights and obligations between the parties. Clear and comprehensive terms and clauses, by explicitly defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations, establish the framework under which parties collaborate and interact, reducing ambiguity and minimizing the potential for conflicts. Such specificity ensures both parties understand their duties and what is required to achieve the contract’s objectives. Moreover, well-drafted and comprehensive terms and clauses enhance the contract’s legal validity and enforceability if disputes arise. They are foundational elements that are vital to creating a functional, mutually understood, and legally binding contract.

Despite their pivotal roles, the distinction and definition of *terms* and *clauses* in legal translation often lack clarity. In most cases, both *terms* and *clauses* of contracts are translated and understood as 合同条款 in Chinese. However, when 合同条款 appears in Chinese legislative texts, its translation into English remains inconsistent and unclear in the uses of *terms* and *clauses*. As shown in Table 4, both *term(s)* and *clause(s)* are employed in the EBCCC and UPICC. The EBCCC exhibits higher frequencies of *term*, *clause* and *clauses* whereas UPICC demonstrates a significantly higher usage of *terms*, with an absolute frequency of 34 and a relative frequency of 25.04. In contrast, the EBCCC appears to favor the use of *term* the most with an absolute frequency of 67 and a relative frequency of 19.45 while *terms* is used the least with an absolute frequency of 2 and a relative frequency of 0.58.

TABLE 4
FREQUENCIES OF *TERM(S)* AND *CLAUSE(S)* IN THE EBCCC AND UPICC

Terms	EBCCC		UPICC	
	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
term/terms	67/2	19.45/0.58	22/34	16.2/25.04
clause/clauses	30/18	8.71/5.23	5/4	3.68/2.95

However, a detailed examination of both bilingual texts reveals the following interesting facts: 1) All the instances of *term* in the EBCCC are actually unrelated to 合同条款 (i.e., the contractual *term*). Rather, all the Chinese equivalents of *term* are 期限 or 期间, both referring to a limited period of time, which is used to specify the time frame for performing a particular act under the contract. The two occurrences of *terms* appear solely within the phrase *in terms of*, and are likewise unrelated to 合同条款. 2) All instances of 合同条款 in BCCC are translated as either *clause* or *clauses*, with no clear or consistent distinction made between the singular and plural forms. 3) In UPICC, all instances of *term* and *terms* are used to convey the meaning of 合同条款. Similarly, all occurrences of *clause* and *clauses* also serve to express the same meaning (see Table 5).

TABLE 5
HOW 合同条款 IS TRANSLATED IN THE EBCCC AND BY CONTRAST EXPRESSED IN UPICC

条款	term	terms	clause	clauses
EBCCC	0	0	30	18
UPICC	22	34	5	4

It can be seen from this observation that the EBCCC renders all occurrences of 条款 in the source text into *clause(s)* in the target text while UPICC uses both *term(s)* and *clause(s)* for the same purposes. This discrepancy necessitates a close examination of the uses of *term(s)* and *clause(s)* in contract law. *Black’s Law Dictionary* (2009) explains *term* as a contractual stipulation and *clause* as a distinct section or provision of a legal document or instrument. To be specific, contract *terms*, either be express or implied in form, are substantive provisions concerning rights and obligations agreed upon by both parties whereas contract *clauses*, usually in express written form, serve as structural elements of a contract, which organize *terms* into labeled sections or paragraphs. For example, clauses like *Confidentiality Clause*, *Payment Clause* and *Force Majeure Clause* are typical contract *clauses* that divide the contract into different sections where related *terms* under these headings are arranged and set out in a systematic way. Thus, *Confidentiality Clause* would contain *terms* on definition of the confidential information, duration of confidentiality, permitted disclosures, exceptions and the like. The distinction made between *terms* and *clauses* in UPICC also well illustrates this point—*clauses* are employed in headings or to signify individual sections whereas *terms* serve to refer to specific stipulations (see Table 6).

TABLE 6
INSTANCES OF HOW CLAUSES AND TERMS ARE USED IN EBCCC AND UPICC

	EBCCC	UPICC
<i>clauses/terms</i>	(in the part of <i>Nominate Contracts</i>) A (lease/factoring/construction...) contract generally contains clauses specifying ...	Article 2.1.17 (<i>Merger Clauses</i>) A contract in writing which contains a clause indicating that the writing completely embodies the terms on which the parties have agreed cannot be contradicted or supplemented by evidence of prior statements or agreements...
<i>standard clauses/standard terms</i>	Article 498 ...Where a standard clause is inconsistent with a non-standard clause , the non-standard clause shall prevail.	Article 2.1.21 (Conflict between standard terms and non-standard terms) In case of conflict between a standard term and a term which is not a standard term the latter prevails.

Merger Clauses in contract law prioritize written *terms* in the contract over prior negotiations or other evidence, seeking to ensure all discussions are merged into the contract in writing and prevent the parties from making other claims. The *Merger Clauses* obviously serve as a procedural tool that clarify the evidential status of the written contract; and *a clause* as in Article 2.1.17 of UPICC refers to a specific section or paragraph, while *terms* mean the exact content or substantive rights and obligations agreed upon by both parties. In short, *clauses* constitute the structural framework of a contract, arranging and expressing the agreements in an organized form, much like containers. *Terms*, by contrast, embody the substantive content of the contract, setting out the rights and obligations upon which the parties have agreed—the material placed within those containers. As for the instance of *standard clauses* and *standard terms*, the latter refers to the whole set of pre-drafted contractual provisions formulated by a party, often without negotiation, covering everything concerning both parties' rights and obligations; the former, on the other hand, signifies individual sections or specific pieces within the whole set of pre-formulated provisions such as *a limitation of liability clause* and *an arbitration clause*. In the context of the EBCCC, it is advisable to replace *standard clauses* with *standard terms*, as the latter more accurately refers to the entire set of contractual provisions or conditions pre-formulated for repeated use. Therefore, it is both important and necessary to distinguish between contract *terms* and contract *clauses* in order to avoid confusion and to enhance clarity when translating legislative texts.

C. Obligor/Obligee or Debtor/Creditor?

Obligor(s)/obligee(s) or *debtor(s)/creditor(s)*, whose Chinese equivalents are 债务人 and 债权人, can be said to be the most important terms in contract law. It is interesting to note that the EBCCC only adopts *debtor(s)* and *creditor(s)* whereas UPICC *obligor(s)* and *obligee(s)* for the same pair of terms (see Table 7).

TABLE 7
FREQUENCIES OF ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS FOR 债务人 AND 债权人在 BOTH CORPORA

Terms	EBCCC		UPICC (English)	
	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
obligor(s)/obligee(s)	0/0	0.00/0.00	114/71	83.94/52.28
debtor(s)/creditor(s)	140/120	40.64/34.84	0/0	0.00/0.00

In the context of contractual relationships, according to *Black's Law Dictionary* (2009), *obligor* means one who has undertaken an obligation (a promisor or debtor) and *obligee* means one to whom an obligation is owed (a promisee, creditor or donor beneficiary). By contrast, *debtor* refers to one who owes an obligation to another, especially an obligation to pay money and *creditor* refers to one to whom a debt is owed or one who gives credit for money or goods. It is true that the usages of *obligor/obligee* and *debtor/creditor* overlap most times, but strictly speaking, *debtor/creditor* are specifically used in the context of a loan or financial obligation as a *debtor's* primary obligation is to repay borrowed money or fulfill a financial obligation to a *creditor* under a contract. Although most provisions in BCCC are concerned with monetary or financial obligations, it cannot be denied that other legal obligations to perform a duty or fulfill a commitment such as delivering goods, providing services and the like are also included in BCCC. In this regard, *obligor/obligee* are generally used in a broader sense as an *obligor* is defined as being bound by a contract or legal agreement and can be responsible for various types of obligations, not just monetary ones. Additionally, the legal source of a *debtor-creditor* relationship derives from "debt", which typically concerns a monetary obligation, and that is why *debtor* and *creditor* are also the terminology used in bankruptcy proceedings. Considering that the EBCCC targets a global audience, it is advisable to clarify these distinctions to avoid potential confusion.

Consequently, in comparison to the reference corpus of UPICC, which similarly aims to address a global audience while minimizing the influences of various legal systems, the terms *obligor(s)* and *obligee(s)* are more appropriate translation for 债务人 and 债权人. This is because all *debtors* are *obligors*—given their obligation to pay—but not all *obligors* are *debtors*, as their obligations may extend beyond financial debts.

V. CONCLUSION

Legal terminology constitutes a quite important area in legal translation studies where the consistency, adequacy and accuracy of terms across different legal systems are meticulously examined and interpreted. Due to its historic

significance and inclusiveness, the *Civil Code* has had more versions of translation produced by various institutions and individuals than other domestic laws, making the standardization and consistency of its terminology more challenging. Even within a certain version of translation, terminology issues persist and require further clarification. This study focuses on three representative sets of contract law terms—合同成立 and 订立合同 (*formation* or *conclusion* of contracts), 合同条款 (*terms* or *clauses* of contracts), and 债务人和 债权人 (*obligor/obligee* or *creditor/debtor*)—and conducts a detailed corpus-based analysis of their English translations. The findings of the analysis are presented as follows: First, the EBCCC demonstrates a pattern similar to the UPICC in translating 订立, most frequently rendering it as *conclude* and its inflected forms. However, notable inconsistencies appear in the translation of 成立 within the EBCCC, where both *form* (and its inflections) and *conclusion* are used interchangeably, potentially leading to conceptual ambiguity. The EBCCC also appears to make no clear distinction between *terms* and *clauses*, consistently opting for *clauses* in all instances. Moreover, divergent choices are observed between the EBCCC and UPICC regarding the use of the terms *obligor/obligee* and *creditor/debtor*, reflecting different translation strategies or conceptual understandings of the underlying legal relationships. Second, the inconsistencies observed in the translation of legal terminology may, in part, stem from a limited understanding of the common law system. As previously noted, Chinese contract law has been shaped by the influence of international instruments and concepts derived from both civil and common law traditions. Accordingly, the translation of contract law terms should be informed by comparative legal knowledge. For instance, a lack of clarity regarding the distinction between *formation* of contracts and *conclusion* of contracts can lead to terminological confusion, ultimately resulting in inaccurate or misleading translations. Third, corpus has proven to be an effective and valuable tool for evaluating and enhancing the translation of contract law terminology. A corpus-based approach to investigate the EBCCC enables the systematic identification of terminological inconsistencies, thereby contributing to greater standardization and improved translation quality. This point is well illustrated by the distinction between the uses of contract *terms* and contract *clauses*—revealed through corpus data—highlights a key semantic difference: the former refers to the substantive content of contractual obligations, while the latter pertains to the structural organization of the contract.

Through a rigorous comparative analysis of the translation of contract law terminology in the BCCC, this study aims to offer practical recommendations and theoretical insights for promoting terminological standardization and precision in legal translation. It is hoped that the findings will help bridge interpretive gaps between legal systems, thereby improving global access to China's legal framework, fostering transnational legal dialogue, and supporting the harmonization of domestic legislation with international legal norms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is supported by the grant 2021WYZX32 from Chongqing Federation of Social Sciences, the grant 23SKGH023 from Chongqing Municipal Education Commission, the grant 213101 from Chongqing Municipal Education Commission, and the grant 2023 WYZX25 from Chongqing Federation of Social Sciences.

REFERENCES

- [1] Biel, Ł. (2010). Corpus-Based Studies of Legal Language for Translation Purposes: Methodological and Practical Potential. In C. Heine & J. Engberg (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing LSP*. Online proceedings of the XVII European LSP Symposium 2009. Aarhus 2010.
- [2] Biel, Ł. (2018). Corpora in Institutional Legal Translation: small steps and the big picture. In F. P. Ramos (Ed.), *Institutional Translation for International Governance: Enhancing Quality in Multilingual Legal Communication*. London: Bloomsbury.
- [3] BinMasad, S., & Alotaibi, H. M. (2024). Exploring Cross-Cultural Legal Terminology: A Corpus-Based Study of English Translation in Saudi Laws. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, (14)4, 1151-1162.
- [4] Brezina et al. (2020). *#LancsBox 5.0 Manual*.
- [5] Brezina, V., & Platt, W. (2021). *#LancsBox X* [software package].
- [6] Cao, D. (2023). Terminological Features of the Modern Chinese Legal Language. *Handbook of Terminology Online*, Volume 3, 173–190.
- [7] De Groot, G. (2002). Rechtsvergleichung als Kerntätigkeit bei der Übersetzung juristischer Terminologie [Comparative law as a core activity in the translation of legal terminology]. In U. Hass-Zumkehr (Ed.), *Sprache & Recht* [Language and Law]. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- [8] Duan, J. (2025). A Corpus-based Study on Modal Verbs in the Chinese-English Translation of the *Book of Contracts* in Chinese Civil Code. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, (15)1, 262-271.
- [9] Ferreri, S., & DiMatteo, L. A. (2019). Terminology Matters: Dangers of Superficial Transplantation. *Boston University International Journal*, 37, 35-87.
- [10] Fuglinszky, Á., & Somssich, R. (2020). Language-bound terms—term-bound languages: the difficulties of translating a national civil code into a lingua franca. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*, 33, 749-770.
- [11] Garner, B. A. (2009). *Black's Law Dictionary*. Thomson Reuters.
- [12] Giampieri, P. (2021). Can Corpus Consultation Compensate for the Lack of Knowledge in Legal Translation Training? *Comparative Legilinguistics*, 46, 5-35.
- [13] Herbots, J. H. (2023). The Translation of the Chinese Civil Code in a Perspective of Comparative Law. *Comparative Legilinguistics*, 54, 43-69.

- [14] Ji, W. H. (2024). The influence of the UNIDROIT Principles on the contract book of the Chinese Civil Code: process and examples. *Uniform Law Review*, 29, 449–459.
- [15] Jiang, T., & Yang, B. J. (2013). Ji yu ping xing yu liao ku de zhong guo li fa yu pian qing tai cao zuo yu de ying yi tan xi [On Translation of Modal Operators in Chinese Legislative Texts Through Parallel Corpora]. *Wai Guo Yu*, 36(3), 86–93.
- [16] Klaudia, B. (2014). EU Discourse as a Textual, Legal and Linguistic Challenge. *Filológia*, 1–4, 4–17.
- [17] Li, M. Q., & Song, L. J. (2022). Zhong hua ren min gong he guo min fa dian de ying yi luo ji yan jiu [The Logic in C-E Translation of the *Civil Code of the People's Republic of China*]. *Zhong guo fan yi*, 2, 148–155.
- [18] Li, W. L., & Zhang, F. L. (2022). Guo ji chuan bo dao xiang xia de fa lv fan yi si wei tan jiu: yi min fa dian ying yi wei li [International Communication Oriented Legal Translation Thinking: The Case of the English Translation of “The PRC Civil Code”]. *Wai yu yu wai yu jiao xue*, 6, 122–132.
- [19] Liu, J., & Cao, Z. H. (2024). Zhong guo min fa dian ying yi zhong de xiu ci ce lve fen xi: yi he tong bian wei li [Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies in the English Translation of the *Civil Code*—A Case Study Focusing on the *Book of Contracts*]. *Wai yu jiao yu yan jiu*, 12(3), 70–78.
- [20] Pontrandolfo, G. (2020). Corpus Methods in Legal Translation Studies. In L. Biel et al. (Eds.), *Research Methods in Legal Translation and Interpreting: Crossing Methodological Boundaries*. Routledge.
- [21] Qu, W. S. (2022). Zhong guo li fa wen ben dui wai fan yi de yuan ze ti xi—yi min fa ying yi shi jian wei Zhong xin [The System of Principles of Foreign Translation of Chinese Legislative Texts: Based on the English Translation Practice of Chinese Civil Laws]. *Zhong guo wai yu*, 19(01), 9–20.
- [22] Ramos, F. P. (2021). Translating legal terminology and phraseology: between inter-systemic incongruity and multilingual harmonization. *Perspectives*, 29(2), 175–183.
- [23] Ramos, F. P., & Guzmán, D. (2023). Measuring the quality of legal terminological decisions in institutional translation: A comparative analysis of adequacy patterns in three settings. *Handbook of Terminology*, 3, 375–396.
- [24] Šarčević, S. (1997). *New Approach to Legal Translation*. London/Boston: Kluwer Law International.
- [25] Song, L. J. (2024). Fa lv fan yi de shu zi ren wen zhuan xing yan jiu: yi zhuan ti shu juku yu ChatGPT wei zhong xin [Innovative Practices of Digital Humanities Technology in Legal Translation: A Case Study on the Construction and Application of the BRI Legal Translation Data Platform]. *Wai Yu Xue Kan*, 2, 51–57.
- [26] Stefaniak, K. (2017). Terminology work in the European Commission: Ensuring high-quality translation in a multilingual environment. In T. Svoboda et al. (Eds.), *Quality Aspects in Institutional Translation*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- [27] Wang, F., & Tang, W. H. (2023). Zhong hua ren min gong he guo min fa dian ying yi ben wen ti ji fen xi: Ji yu gao pin cheng shi yu da pei [A Study of the English Version of the *Civil Code of the People's Republic of China*: Based on the Collocation of Formulaic Sequences with High Frequency]. *Wai guo yu wen*, 39(2), 13–26.
- [28] Wu, C. H. (2021). Shu zi ren wen fa zhan zhong de fa lv shu yu ying yi gui fan yu ce lve [On English Translation of Legal Terms: Translation Norms and Strategies in the Development of Digital Humanity]. *Wai yu dian hua jiao xue*, 202(6), 81–86.
- [29] Wu, J. J. (2024). Dong fa xi yi: jin dai zhong guo fa lv de dui wai yi jie yu xing xiang zi su [Translating eastern law for the west: the external translation and self-representation of modern Chinese law]. *Hua dong zheng fa da xue xue bao*, 6, 163–176.
- [30] Xu, J., & Wang, Q. R. (2017). Ji yu yu liao ku de fa lv fan yi yan jiu xian zhuang fen xi: wen ti yu dui ce [Corpus-based Analysis of Legal Translation Research: Problems and Countermeasures]. *Wai Yu Xue Kan*, 1(194), 73–79.
- [31] Yu, M. X., & Chen, R. R. (2024). Li fa hua yu zhong “an zhao” lei chang yong ci ying yi de you hua yuan ze: yi min fa dian shuang yu yu liao ku wei fu zhu [Optimizing the English Translation of “According to” in Legislative Discourse: A Corpus-Assisted Study Based on the Bilingual *Civil Code*]. *Shang hai fan yi*, 3, 42–47.
- [32] Zhang, F. L., & Ma, Y. F. (2022). Min fa dian ying yi zhong de wen hua zi xin [The Cultural Confidence in the Chinese-English Translation of the *Civil Code*]. *Jie fang jun wai guo yu xue yuan xue bao*, 1(45), 128–135.
- [33] Zhang, F. L. (2021). Cong min fa dian ying yi kan fa lv fan yi zhi liang guan kong ti xi jian gou [The Construction of a Legal Translation Quality Control System based on the Translation of the *Civil Code*]. *Zhong guo fan yi*, 5, 121–130.
- [34] Zhao, J. F., & Xue, J. (2022). Fa lv fan yi de gai nian yi zhi yu dui deng chan shi: Zhong hua ren min gong he guo min fa dian wu quan bian shu yu ying yi tan jiu [Concept Transplantation and Equivalence in Legal Translation: A Case Study on the English Translation of Key Terms in the *Book of Real Rights of the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China*]. *Shang hai fan yi*, 1, 27–33.

Jing Duan is a lecturer in the School of Foreign Languages, Southwest University of Political Science and Law as well as a PhD candidate at Human Rights Institute, Southwest University of Political Science and Law. Her primary academic interests include legal translation, human rights law, and the interdisciplinary study of law and language. She has translated and published several books including *The Big Law*, *The History of the Contractual Thoughts in Ancient China*, *Selected Cases from the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China* (Volume 1–4) and so on.

Lin Sun, Doctor of Law, tutor of master candidates, associate Professor of Southwest University of Political Science and Law, China. Her current research interests are in the interdisciplinary field regarding language learning and legal study. She has published several papers and books in the foregoing domains, and has held a number of programs in different levels.

Bilingual Communication Dynamics in Saudi Colleges: Non-Arab Speakers' Perceptions

Mazeegha Al-Tale

Department of English, College of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

Tanzina Halim*

Department of English, College of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This qualitative study examines the language barriers faced by non-Arabic-speaking professionals working in Saudi higher education institutions, where Arabic is the dominant language of the workplace despite English being the medium of instruction. Drawing on thematic analysis of interviews with 15 expatriate employees across various roles, including faculty members, nurses, and researchers, the study explores their perceptions of linguistic exclusion, the challenges of navigating Arabic-dominant communication, and their coping strategies. The findings highlight a strong preference for English as a lingua franca and recommend bilingual workplace policies to enhance inclusivity, well-being, and productivity for linguistic minorities in multilingual institutional contexts.

Index Terms—Arabic, communication, English, language barriers, workplace

I. INTRODUCTION

In multilingual academic settings, such as Saudi colleges, where Arabic is the dominant local language and English is the medium of instruction, navigating bilingual communication is a crucial aspect of daily workplace interactions. English has established itself as a prominent global lingua franca, facilitating communication across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts (Al Tale, 2023; Baker & Ishikawa, 2021; Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Toomaneejinda & Saengboon, 2022). It enables effective interaction in multilingual settings. Useche et al. (2018) describe the working environment as comprising all systems, conditions, and situations that affect an employee's ability to perform tasks. Similarly, Bushiri (2014) characterizes it as the total interplay of forces, actions, and both current and potential influences that shape workplace performance. Hence, employers and employees work together in the workplace, giving their best to support the institution's growth and advancement. Communication among them is vital for achieving the institution's goals. If it is positive and constructive communication, it will lead to better achievement of goals. If the case is the opposite, the chance for productivity will be less.

In bilingual and multilingual workplaces, people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact with one another. During their interactions, linguistic and sociolinguistic miscommunications do occur. Canagarajah (2020) argues that contextual workplace interactions are needed in changing settings and task structures. If the dominant language for the majority group in the workplace is used in workplace conversations where there are minority groups with different native languages, those minorities, who find difficulty in fully comprehending those conversations, will undergo stress, tension, and fear of not following up on the updates given in their workplace. These emotions will affect their well-being. The lack of comprehension will also affect their productivity at work. Wahid et al. (2024) state in their study that the more coworkers can communicate without hesitation, the better the chances of establishing harmony in the workplace.

The present study employs a qualitative approach to examine the challenges faced by non-Arabic-speaking employees in Saudi higher education institutions, where Arabic is the dominant language of workplace communication. It explores their perceptions of Arabic usage in professional settings, their emotional responses to linguistic barriers, the strategies they use to overcome these challenges, and their suggestions for improving comprehension of oral and written communication for non-Arabic speakers within these institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language serves as a core component of both individual and collective identity, influencing how people express emotions, share experiences, and interact with others. As Paris and Alim (2017) argue, the marginalization of an individual's language can amount to the marginalization of their identity, as language, literacy, and culture are inextricably connected. Miscommunication becomes particularly pronounced in multilingual contexts, where interlocutors often struggle to engage in effective two-way communication due to language barriers (Rabbani et al., 2017; Ramlan et al., 2018; Kim & Mattila, 2011).

* Corresponding Author.

These language barriers are frequently encountered by foreign employees who do not comprehend the dominant language in the workplace, which can result in misinterpretations, reduced performance, and work-related stress (Javadpour & Samiei, 2017; Valitherm & Rahman, 2014). In such cases, even everyday tasks, such as attending meetings or understanding memos, can become sources of confusion and tension, particularly when coworkers or managers lack proficiency in a shared lingua franca.

In the current era of globalization, described by Elliott and Urry (2010) as "the golden age of mobility," individuals from diverse national, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds often collaborate within the same professional environment. This multilingual reality has prompted scholars to examine how language policies and practices can either support or hinder effective communication (Tikly, 2004; Coleman & Capstick, 2012). According to Tickoo (2006) and Adriano et al. (2021), the presence of multiple languages in the workplace demands thoughtful language planning and policy to avoid miscommunication and marginalization.

A growing body of research explores the experiences of marginalized employees in host countries. For example, Alabi and Šarkiūnaitė (2021) examined how foreign workers struggle to adapt due to linguistic and cultural barriers, while Salleh et al. (2021) found that language differences negatively affect work performance and communication. Gonçalves (2020) further observed that institutional language policies often privilege the dominant language, reinforcing inequality and limiting participation by non-native speakers. In such environments, communication is most effective when it is two-way and uses accessible language, as emphasized by Salleh et al. (2021).

Several researchers and organizational bodies have advocated that supporting minority groups to use their native languages meaningfully boosts social inclusion and promotes a strong sense of belonging. For example, Smolicz (1999) states that preserving native languages is vital for maintaining cultural identity in multicultural societies. Regmi Banjara (2019) also emphasizes the importance of using one's mother tongue in fostering community integration. In addition, international bodies such as UNESCO (2023) and the Council of Europe (2019) called for multilingual policies that support linguistic diversity as a cornerstone of social cohesion. Moreover, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996) emphasizes that including all languages is crucial to promoting equality and enabling full cultural participation.

However, in many institutions, including those in Saudi Arabia, Arabic is the main language of communication, even in workplaces with multilingual staff. Alnasser (2018) observes that while Arabic holds constitutional and cultural authority, English has become functionally significant, particularly in education and commerce. In response to the coexistence of Arabic and English in higher education, several Saudi institutions have adopted bilingual communication strategies to serve their diverse academic communities better. For example, universities like King Abdulaziz University and Alfaisal University often share administrative information in both Arabic and English. This shows a wider effort to support international faculty and non-Arabic-speaking staff in their academic settings (Alnasser, 2018; Iqbal, 2014).

Despite these efforts, language barriers persist in Saudi workplaces where Arab and non-Arab employees interact regularly. English is often used within academic departments, but Arabic tends to dominate administrative communication and informal exchanges (Iqbal, 2014). Although translation services and bilingual personnel provide some support, their effectiveness is inconsistent. Afiliani et al. (2024) note that tools like Google Translate often misrepresent meaning due to their limited understanding of cultural and contextual nuances. As a result, some non-Arabic-speaking employees often feel pressured to learn Arabic to manage workplace communication more effectively.

Unfortunately, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) higher education context, such as Saudi Arabia, opportunities for sustained English communication are often confined to classroom settings. Outside of academic spaces, Arabic continues to prevail in day-to-day interactions, creating a linguistic imbalance that can hinder both the productivity and inclusion of non-Arabic-speaking staff (Alnasser, 2018). Alabi and Šarkiūnaitė (2021) argue that effective communication enhances productivity and reduces workplace conflict, yet many existing studies overlook how these issues unfold in Saudi higher education institutions.

Although previous research has addressed the impact of language barriers on foreign employees, a significant gap remains concerning how non-Arab professionals in Saudi higher education navigate these challenges in environments where Arabic dominates, despite English being the medium of instruction. This qualitative study thus aims to fill that gap by investigating the lived experiences of non-Arab employees who work in a linguistic environment that does not match their communicative competence.

Research Questions

1. How do non-Arab speakers at different colleges in Saudi Arabia perceive the use of Arabic or English in oral and written workplace communication?
2. What challenges do non-Arabic-speaking employees encounter when engaging with Arabic in oral and written workplace communication?
3. What strategies do non-Arabic-speaking employees use to overcome these challenges?
4. What suggestions do non-Arab speakers offer for improving comprehension of work place communication in Saudi higher education settings?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The researchers in this study employed a qualitative research design, which is well-suited for exploring individual's personal and complex experiences. It offered valuable insights into how non-Arabic-speaking employees in Saudi higher education institutions perceive and address language-related challenges in their daily communication and sense of inclusion. This qualitative approach was particularly suited to understanding the nuanced linguistic challenges and coping strategies of participants in a multilingual work environment where Arabic dominates day-to-day communication despite English being the formal medium of instruction. The study adopted an exploratory qualitative approach, allowing themes to emerge inductively from participants' responses without being guided by a predetermined theoretical lens.

B. Participants

TABLE 1
AN OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS

No. of participants	Workplace	Profession/ Position	Years of working in Saudi Arabia	L1
15	King Khalid University, King Saud University, Hail University	Assistant Professors, Lecturers, Nurse Researcher	5-22 years	Bengali, Urdu, Kashmiri, Tagalog, ,English, Romanian

This study applied purposive sampling to recruit participants from a range of professional and linguistic backgrounds. The group consisted of 15 expatriate employees, assistant professors, lecturers, nurses, and a researcher, all of whom worked in major Saudi institutions. Their years of experience in higher education in Saudi Arabia ranged from 5 to 22 years. Their native languages were Bengali, Urdu, Kashmiri, Tagalog, and Romanian.

C. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were employed for data collection, allowing study participants to provide open-ended responses while maintaining consistency across all interviews. All interviews were conducted in English and took place in formats chosen by the participants, including Zoom meetings, WhatsApp audio messages, and written responses. On average, interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. A pre-designed set of guiding questions was used to prompt discussion among participants on their experiences with workplace communication, their perceptions of Arabic and English language use, and suggestions for improvement (See Appendix). All interviews were audio-recorded (when permitted), transcribed verbatim, and anonymized to protect participant identities.

D. Data Analysis Procedure

The researchers analyzed the interview responses using thematic analysis. This analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, which comprises six phases: familiarization with data, generation of initial codes, theme identification, theme review, theme definition, and final reporting. This analysis enabled the systematic identification of patterns in participants' communication challenges, emotional responses, and coping strategies within Arabic-dominant institutional environments. The researchers conducted manual coding, and themes were developed inductively to ensure they were closely aligned with the data.

E. Trustworthiness

To ensure and enhance the reliability and credibility of the study findings, the researchers employed some validation strategies. They reviewed the transcribed responses carefully to confirm their accuracy and consistency. Additionally, triangulation was employed by analyzing data collected in various formats (audio and written) and from participants with diverse professional backgrounds. These steps are deemed to strengthen the depth and rigor of the analysis. Furthermore, the researchers maintained a reflexive journal throughout the study to critically examine their positionality and reduce the potential influence of personal bias on data interpretation. To further maintain objectivity, the study deliberately excluded non-Arab employees whose native language is English, ensuring that any preference for English among participants reflected communicative needs rather than alignment with their first language.

F. Ethical Considerations

The researchers conducted their study by ethical research guidelines. All its participants were fully informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights prior to participation, and each provided informed consent. Participation was entirely voluntary, and individuals were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. To protect confidentiality, all data were securely stored, and the participants' names were kept anonymous. Moreover, the names of the institutions involved were withheld to prevent any potential identification of participants or workplaces.

G. Researcher Positionality

Recognizing their position as multilingual academics with firsthand experience in Saudi higher education, the researchers were motivated to conduct this study. Their knowledge of the region's sociolinguistic context helped shape the study's focus and guided the analysis. This insider perspective added depth and relevance. However, they remained

aware of the potential for bias. To address this, they practiced ongoing self-reflection, kept a reflexive journal, and ensured that the participants' voices guided the interpretation of the data.

Notably, the research team included both a Saudi academic and a non-Arabic-speaking expatriate academic. This collaboration is viewed as a strength, as it provided a balanced perspective and further reduced the risk of cultural or linguistic bias in the interpretation of findings. The study thus aimed to represent the lived experiences of non-Arabic-speaking employees authentically without imposing the researchers' assumptions.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section presents the thematic analysis of responses from 15 non-Arabic-speaking employees working in Saudi Arabian colleges. The results are organized around the study's four research questions and supported by selected participant quotations to illustrate key themes and lived experiences.

A. *Language Use in Workplace Communication*

The majority of participants (80%) reported using English as their primary language of communication at work, while 20% indicated that they occasionally switched to Arabic. Regarding language preference, 90% favored English, while 10% preferred Arabic. These findings address Research Question 1, which explores the perceptions of non-Arab employees regarding workplace communication.

Most participants described English as more accessible and practical for both academic and administrative tasks. Notable comments included:

"Language barriers lead to different challenges, so sometimes I drop the idea of resolving the problem."

"I find the practice of Arabic at the workplace challenging and sometimes even misleading."

"I avoid such issues by strictly keeping conversations focused on job duties and related topics. This provides the comfort of safe, solid ground, where everything is clear since we all follow the same rules and regulations."

B. *Communication Barriers Due to Arabic Dominance*

A significant 90% of participants reported that Arabic's dominance in the workplace posed communication challenges, while 10% did not view it as a barrier. The challenges included difficulties in understanding announcements, emails, administrative forms, attendance lists, and meetings conducted exclusively in Arabic. This theme responds to Research Question 2. Reported barriers were not only linguistic but also emotional and social in nature. Several participants mentioned feelings of exclusion in their responses such as:

"People should be multilingual, especially when they work in a workplace. Non-Arabs should try to learn Arabic simultaneously, and the students and staff should also try to learn English in the 21st century."

"I do not feel included when Arabic is used during meetings or discussions."

"I, for one, always feel included and never excluded."

C. *Coping Strategies and Communication Tools*

In response to communication challenges, most participants (90%) reported using informal strategies. These included seeking help from Arabic-speaking colleagues, simplifying language, using gestures, and relying on digital tools like Google Translate and image translators. Only a few attempted to speak Arabic based on limited knowledge, while others admitted to withdrawing from interactions due to frustration. This theme responds to Research Question 3. Participant responses included:

"I seek help from bilingual colleagues."

"I use Google Translate or an AI interpreter/ Translator/ Image Translator."

"I use body gestures."

D. *Suggestions for Improving Comprehension*

When asked how to improve workplace communication for non-Arabic speakers, 80% of participants recommended bilingual communication, incorporating both English and Arabic in spoken and written forms. The remaining 20% suggested that non-Arabic speakers should focus on learning Arabic. Notable responses included:

"English should be used for teaching, communicating, and doing administrative work."

"In the 21st century, everyone, including staff, colleagues, and students, should be able to speak English, which is the global language."

"Translate everything into English."

"Every instructor should learn Arabic: this is possible theoretically, but it is very time-consuming and impossible for those with many tasks beyond everyday teaching."

These responses address Research Question 4. Most participants advocate for dual-language practices to bridge the comprehension gap. A few participants suggested overcoming the linguistic obstacles by learning the dominant language, Arabic. The institution could offer Arabic training sessions to teach basic Arabic to non-native Arabic speakers employed in colleges where Arabic is the dominant language.

A few participants also proposed language training initiatives for non-Arab employees. One suggested learning "important Arabic vocabulary," while another recommended "subsidized Arabic language courses for expats." A third

participant elaborated:

“Working here for 14 years, what I feel is that there should be at least some basic lessons for non-Arab speakers in universities... That would be a good way to train the non-Arab speakers and a way for us to be more involved in the workplace”.

V. DISCUSSION

This study explored the linguistic communicative challenges faced by non-Arab employees in Saudi higher education institutions where English is the medium of instruction, but Arabic remains dominant in many workplace interactions. The findings highlight how these employees experience language barriers, their communication preferences, and the strategies they adopt to navigate a predominantly Arabic-speaking environment. These findings align with calls from scholars and international organizations advocating for multilingual inclusion as a pillar of social cohesion and identity preservation (Smolicz, 1999; Regmi Banjara, 2019; UNESCO, 2023; Council of Europe, 2019; Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, 1996).

The study findings offer valuable insights for developing more inclusive language policies in bilingual workplaces across Saudi Arabia. Most participants suggest using both English and Arabic in official communication, highlighting the need for a balanced, bilingual approach. Such a strategy supports more transparent communication among all employees and reduces dependence on informal solutions.

In workplaces with non-Arabic-speaking staff, using both languages can foster inclusion and efficiency. These practical steps are supported by Alabi and Šarkiūnaitė's (2021) research. It also aligns with Tickoo (2006) and Adriano et al. (2021), who advocate for language policies that support diverse linguistic realities rather than imposing a monolingual paradigm. Although Arabic is the official language, a linguistically diverse academic staff needs adaptive, responsive, and formalized bilingual policies. Employees should not feel stressed, anxious, or tense while working due to a language barrier in order to fully benefit from the diverse academic staff with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Effective communication is essential. It helps achieve high productivity in the workplace and fewer complaints.

Above all, in the 21st century, where English has spread worldwide, it is equally essential for smooth functioning in any workplace, especially in higher education, to learn the English language. Employers should ensure employees do not feel stressed out or excluded from the workplace due to language barriers. This study also emphasizes the need for two-way communication in delivering instructions, memos, and emails to ensure that messages are conveyed accurately. Two-way communication is very important for effective teamwork. Sharing ideas, providing feedback, and solving problems together is easier. Employees feel more involved and valued at the workplace without a language barrier.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the linguistic challenges faced by non-Arabic-speaking employees in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions, where English is the primary instructional language, and Arabic remains the dominant language in workplace communication. The findings reveal a strong consensus among non-Arab employees that English should also serve as the primary language of the workplace. Participants reported that exclusive reliance on Arabic often caused misunderstandings, feelings of exclusion, and frustration, all of which affected their job performance and satisfaction.

At the same time, they acknowledged the importance of Arabic in the local context. They expressed a growing recognition of the need for balanced use of both Arabic and English in workplace interactions, especially in formal communications such as meetings, memos, and institutional announcements. This dual-language approach was viewed as a practical way to support linguistic diversity and ensure that employees from different language backgrounds could fully contribute to the institution's work.

In addition to advocating bilingual workplace communication, several participants expressed a willingness to learn Arabic. As noted in the findings, suggestions included acquiring essential Arabic vocabulary, providing subsidized Arabic courses for expatriates, and offering basic language lessons tailored to non-Arab staff. These proposals demonstrate a proactive approach to integration and collaboration.

This willingness to learn Arabic indicates that language training programs can do more than improve communication. They can also help foster mutual respect, support cultural integration, and enhance relationships among colleagues from diverse language backgrounds.

Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

This study investigated the linguistic challenges encountered by non-Arabic-speaking employees in Saudi higher education institutions, where English is the medium of instruction, and Arabic remains the dominant language of the workplace. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the findings reinforce Kramir et al.'s (2003) assertion that language barriers in professional environments can create multidimensional challenges. When employees are not proficient in the dominant language, they may struggle with job-related communication. However, employee meaningful engagement becomes more feasible when a common language facilitates interaction across linguistic boundaries.

Based on these insights, the researchers recommend that Saudi higher education institutions take deliberate steps to reduce workplace language barriers. Specifically, English, already the medium of instruction, should be adopted more

broadly as a shared language for workplace communication, especially in institutions employing staff from diverse linguistic backgrounds. A shared linguistic medium allows for more inclusive, respectful, and effective communication across teams.

Saudi higher education institutions are also encouraged to implement official bilingual communication policies, thereby ensuring that both English and Arabic are used in oral and written interactions. Such policies can improve administrative coordination and be inclusive regarding institutional communication. To support these efforts, the researchers suggested training sessions for administrative and support staff to strengthen their competence in written and spoken English, particularly in professional and academic contexts.

These recommendations also reflect a commitment to linguistic equity. As Paris and Alim (2017) argue, equitable language practices not only enhance communication but also recognize and validate the diverse identities of staff members. Promoting language inclusivity is thus both a practical and ethical imperative for institutions that aim to foster diverse and collaborative academic environments.

This study contributes to the expanding literature on language use in multicultural workplaces by highlighting the lived experiences of non-Arabic-speaking professionals in Saudi academia. However, the study has several limitations. First, the study focused solely on Saudi higher education institutions where English is used as the medium of instruction. Future research could extend this inquiry to other Arab higher education settings to assess the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, examining workplaces outside the academic sector, such as hospitals, companies, and industrial sites, would provide a broader view of how language barriers affect non-Arabic-speaking employees across different fields.

Second, while the qualitative research design provided rich and detailed insights, it also limited the generalizability of the findings. Further research could adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data to offer a more comprehensive perspective. Third, the study involved a relatively small sample, 15 participants from four colleges, which may not fully represent the broader population. Thus, expanding the sample size and including a wider range of institutions across different regions of Saudi Arabia would help strengthen the validity of future research.

Finally, this study employed a cross-sectional design, with data collected over a single academic semester. Longitudinal studies are recommended to examine how language practices and policies change over time and how such changes impact workplace inclusion and institutional performance. Comparative research between institutions that use English as their primary language of communication and those that continue to rely primarily on Arabic could also provide valuable insights into effective strategies for managing multilingual work environments.

APPENDIX. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your profession/department?
2. How long have you been working in Saudi Arabia?
3. Do you speak/ understand Arabic?
4. How do you communicate with your coworkers?
5. How do you perceive the use of Arabic in oral and written communications at your workplace?
6. Have you ever faced a language barrier at work? How do/ did you handle it?
7. Do you ever feel that language differences led to misunderstandings or challenges in a professional setting? How did you address or resolve them?
8. How do you convey your messages when language is a barrier?
9. Do you think language diversity in the workplace adds value, or do you find it more challenging? Why?
10. What tools or resources are most helpful in overcoming language barriers at work?
11. What suggestions do you have to enhance comprehension of workplace communications for non-Arabic speakers in Saudi Arabia?
12. Do the staff feel included at the workplace when instructions are communicated in Arabic, both orally and in writing?

REFERENCES

- [1] Adriano, M. N. I., Franco, N. T., & Estrella, E. A. (2021). Language-in-education policies and stakeholders' perception of the current MTB-MLE policy in an ASEAN country. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 44(1), 84–99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03652067>
- [2] Afiliani, A., Tanasale, I. O., & Rijoly, H. M. A. (2024). The use of Google Translate in the translation class at English Education Study Program Pattimura University. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 9(1), 95–109. <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v9.i1.1299>
- [3] Alabi, B., & Šarkiūnaitė, I. (2021, December 3). *The impact of workplace environment on expatriates' adaptation to new workplace*. In 16th Prof. Vladas Granskas International Scientific Conference, Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty.
- [4] Alnasser, S. M. N. (2018). Investigating English language policies in Saudi higher education English departments: Staff members' beliefs. *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 6(4), 157–168. <https://doi.org/10.13189/lis.2018.060402>
- [5] Al Tale, M. A. (2023). Future Saudi female teachers' perceptions of native-like English pronunciation and English as a Lingua Franca. *Saudi Journal of Language Studies*, 3(2), 113–125. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SJLS-07-2022-0062>
- [6] Baker, W., & Ishikawa, T. (2021). *Transcultural communication through Global Englishes: An advanced textbook for students*. Routledge.

- [7] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- [8] Bushiri, C. P. (2014). *The Impact of working environment on employees' performance: The case of Institute of Finance Management in Dar es Salaam* [Master's thesis]. The Open University of Tanzania.
- [9] Canagarajah, S. (2020). Transnational work, translanguaging practices, and interactional sociolinguistics. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 24(5), 555–573. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12396>
- [10] Coleman, H., & Capstick, T. (2012). *Language in education in Pakistan: Recommendations for policy and practice*. British Council.
- [11] Council of Europe. (2019, October 3). *Language policies should accommodate diversity, protect minority rights, and defuse tensions*. Council of Europe. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/language-policies-should-accomodate-diversity-protect-minority-rights-and-defuse-tensions> (Retrieved February 15, 2025)
- [12] Elliott, A., & Urry, J. (2010). *Mobile lives*. Routledge.
- [13] Galloway, N., & Numajiri, T. (2020). Global Englishes language teaching: Bottom-up curriculum implementation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 54(1), 118–145. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.547>
- [14] Gonçalves, K. (2020). Managing people with language: Language policy, planning and practice in multilingual blue-collar workplaces. *Language Policy*, 19(3), 383–407. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-020-09553-1>
- [15] Iqbal, M. (2014). *A study of the significance of business communication in the hotel industry of Dubai* [Unpublished manuscript]. Retrieved April 25, 2025, from <http://jaipuria.edu.in/pgdm/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/A-Study-of-the-Significance-of-Business-Communication-in-the-Hotel-Industry-of-Dubai.pdf>
- [16] Javadpour, A., & Samiei, S. (2017). Motivation and barriers to participation in virtual knowledge-sharing communities of practice. *Management Science Letters*, 7(2), 81–86. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2016.12.007>
- [17] Kim, E. E. K., & Mattila, A. S. (2011). The Impact of language barriers and cultural differences on restaurant experiences: A grounded theory approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(3), 548–558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.10.001>
- [18] Kraimer, M. L., Wayne, S. J., & Jaworski, R. A. (2001). Sources of support and expatriate performance: The mediating role of expatriate adjustment. *Personnel Psychology*, 54(1), 71–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2001.tb00086.x>
- [19] Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.
- [20] Rabbani, M., Farrokhi-Asl, H., & Manavizadeh, N. (2017). Using robust-DEA optimization approach to analyze performance and efficiency of a mine in north of Iran. *Management Science Letters*, 7(2), 97–110. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2016.11.009>
- [21] Ramlan, S. N., Abasha, A., Samah, I. H. A., Abd Rashid, I. M., & Muhammad Radzi, W. N. W. (2018). The Impact of language barrier and communication style in organizational culture on expatriates' working performance. *Management Science Letters*, 8(6), 659–666. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2018.4.025>
- [22] Regmi Banjara, A. (2019). *Linguistic inclusion and minority identity in Nepal*. British Council. <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/BC-Academic%20papers-2.Ambika%20Regmi%20Banjara.pdf> (Retrieved February 23, 2025)
- [23] Salleh, M. M., Mohi, Z., Nordin, N., Mohamad, N. A., & Razali, N. A. S. (2021). The Impact of language barriers and discrimination issues on work productivity of foreign workers. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(16), 42–52. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i16/11261>
- [24] Smolicz, J. J. (1999). *Cultural values and educational policy: A comparative perspective*. University of South Australia.
- [25] Tickoo, M. L. (2006). Language in education. *World Englishes*, 25(2), 167–176. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0083-2919.2006.00454.x>
- [26] Tikly, L. (2004). Education and the new imperialism. *Comparative Education*, 40(2), 173–198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006042000231347>
- [27] Toomaneejinda, A., & Saengboon, S. (2022). Interactional sociolinguistics: The theoretical framework and methodological approach to ELF interaction research. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(1), 156–179.
- [28] UNESCO. (2023, February 21). *Multilingual education: A key to quality and inclusive learning*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/multilingual-education-key-quality-and-inclusive-learning> (Retrieved February 23, 2025)
- [29] Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights. (1996). *World Conference on Linguistic Rights: Barcelona Declaration*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000104267> (Retrieved February 25, 2025)
- [30] Useche, S. A., Montoro, L., Alonso, F., & Oviedo-Trespalacios, O. (2018). Infrastructural and human factors affecting safety outcomes of cyclists. *Sustainability*, 10(2), 299. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10020299>
- [31] Valithern, A., & Rahman, A. (2014). Communication barrier in Malaysia construction sites. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2(1), 1–10. <http://www.ijern.com/journal/January-2014/08.pdf> (Retrieved February 27, 2025)
- [32] Wahid, R., Halim, S., & Halim, T. (2024). Positive communication skills in the workplace. *Migration Letters*, 21(S8), 59–70.

Mazeegha Ahmed Al Tale is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. She has extensive experience in EFL teaching and has published widely in national and international journals. Her research interests include bilingualism, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics in higher education, EFL pedagogy, digital language learning, and inclusive communication practices in multilingual academic settings. Dr. Al Tale actively contributes to the field through scholarly work, workshops, and participation in international conferences. Email: maltaale@kku.edu.sa ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6355-8816>



Tanzina Halim is working as a Lecturer at the Dept. of English, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. She is currently pursuing her PhD from USA. She is a Flash Fiction writer who has an M.A. in Creative Writing and an M.A in English Literature. She is TEFL certified, has Diploma in TESOL and Diploma in Teacher Training. She has publications in many international journals and has participated in many conferences and symposiums. Email: thlem@kku.edu.sa ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2054-4753>

Designing Graded Grammar Modules for Autonomous Language Learning

I Made Rai Jaya Widanta

Mechanical Engineering Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

Anak Agung Raka Sitawati

Business Administration Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

Sri Hardiningsih H.S.

Accounting Department, Semarang State Polytechnic, Indonesia

Putu Dyah Hudiananingsih

Accounting Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

Ni Putu Somawati

Tourism Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

I Made Darma Sucipta

Tourism Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

Ni Nyoman Ayu Tri Hidayanti

English Letters, Bali Dwipa University, Bali, Indonesia

Luh Nyoman Chandra Handayani

Accounting Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

I Nyoman Sukra

Accounting Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

I Wayan Dana Ardika

Civil Engineering Department, Bali State Polytechnic, Kampus Bukit Jimbaran Street, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia

Abstract—This research focused on creating grammar learning modules for a learning centre (LC) based on a self-directed learning (SDL) approach. The primary objective was to design learning materials following the 4-D framework: define, design, develop, and disseminate. Two groups of students participated in the study, contributing to material collection, module design, and trial sessions. Data were gathered through students' test scores from each trial session, along with their feedback on the learning experience. The findings indicated that the LC model for grammar learning using an SDL approach was effective. This conclusion was supported by two key factors: the steady improvement in students' scores across sessions and their positive engagement with the learning model.

Index Terms—developing grammar graded modules, self-directed learning, project-based learning, 4-D development stages

I. INTRODUCTION

Undeniably, English proficiency has become essential in the era of globalization. It is not only important in academic

settings but also serves as a key factor for professional success. Weak language skills contribute significantly to graduate unemployment rates (Ngadiran et al., 2021). Apart from communicative ability, grammatical competence plays a vital role in ensuring that one's English is adequate, standardized, and widely accepted. Moreover, strong grammar skills help prevent misunderstandings among listeners. Mastering grammar also boosts speakers' confidence, as it ensures their English is grammatically correct, universally understood, and free from ambiguity.

Mastering grammatical competence presents significant challenges. Grammar is the foundation of English language proficiency, influencing all key skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Ahmad, 2018). However, students often struggle to grasp it effectively. Many perceive grammar instruction as particularly demanding, and learners frequently report finding grammar lessons stressful. Additionally, limited class time dedicated to grammar, insufficient learning materials, and unsuitable teaching methods further compound the issue, as these approaches often fail to align with students' actual needs.

Contemporary language pedagogy has integrated grammar instruction within communicative approaches, employing implicit teaching methodologies during verbal communication activities. Within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework, which emphasizes fluency prior to accuracy, grammatical elements have been incorporated through various instructional methods. These include task-based language teaching activities, project-based learning implementations, and problem-based learning scenarios. However, this integrated approach has demonstrated limited efficacy in adequately preparing students for standardized assessments such as the TOEIC examination. Empirical evidence from trial examinations at Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB) reveals that student performance generally falls below the established marks. A detailed analysis of examination results indicates that grammatical competence constitutes a significant factor contributing to this suboptimal performance.

Current pedagogical challenges necessitate the implementation of exclusive grammar instruction to achieve optimal learning outcomes. This specialized instruction should be conducted during designated periods in specifically designated learning spaces, carefully selected to maximize student convenience and accessibility. The learning environment must be intentionally designed to minimize distractions and enhance concentration on grammatical acquisition. The allocated instructional time should be exclusively reserved for grammar study, ensuring learners are not encumbered by competing academic obligations. Furthermore, this initiative requires the development of purpose-designed instructional materials specifically tailored for grammatical instruction. To effectively meet these essential criteria for comprehensive grammar education, the establishment of a dedicated grammar Learning Center (LC) is proposed. This specialized facility would serve as an exclusive venue for student-centered grammatical study. The center would be equipped with appropriate furnishings and comprehensive grammar modules to facilitate effective self-directed learning opportunities.

The grammar Learning Center (LC) is specifically designed to facilitate autonomous grammar acquisition among students. This innovative learning space operates without temporal constraints, enabling learners to engage with materials at their discretion. The self-directed learning paradigm employed in the LC enhances the meaningfulness of the educational experience by allowing students to actively construct their understanding of grammatical concepts through self-regulated study. Empirical evidence from multiple research studies has established the LC as an effective framework for supporting independent learning. The center maintains an optimal learning environment through the presence of on-site tutors who fulfill several critical functions: facilitating module-based instruction, evaluating student work, and recording progress metrics on individual assessment cards. For optimal LC implementation, a systematic developmental approach is essential. A key prerequisite is the availability of carefully structured instructional materials. The grammar modules should employ a graded approach, systematically organized according to increasing complexity. This hierarchical structure promotes comprehensive and coherent understanding of grammatical systems. This study addresses two primary research questions: (1) How was the grammar modules developed? and (2) To what extent did the LC program impact student learning outcomes?

II. RELATED STUDIES

A. Some Prior Studies

Recent years have witnessed a growing body of research examining self-directed learning (SDL) methodologies. Hiemstra's (2006) investigation into internet-facilitated SDL in American communities demonstrated the efficacy of this learning approach. The findings indicated that online platforms significantly enhanced learning outcomes by providing broad information access, ultimately enabling participants to implement positive life transformations. These results align with earlier studies by Mok and Lung (2005) and Scott (2006), which established SDL's effectiveness in fostering problem-solving skills and improving academic performance. Scott's (2006) research, involving participants aged over 50, further revealed that autonomous learning approaches contributed substantially to developing learners' self-confidence. This psychological empowerment subsequently led to stronger personal commitment in actualizing their potential. Candy's (1991) theoretical framework emphasizes that SDL cultivates essential character traits through its dual focus on process and outcomes, including personal initiative, self-regulation, and the capacity for independent learning in authentic contexts. SDL model which prioritizes responsibility and self-initiative, long distance learning, personally programmed, independence and students' critical thinking and meaning construction (Stockdale, 2003).

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of self-regulated learning (SRL) models in Indonesian language education. Chiakrawati's (2010) development of an SRL-based Indonesian language program confirmed its pedagogical efficacy, particularly when learners possess adequate self-confidence and the ability to optimize their learning potential (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1996; Zimmerman, 2004). Successful implementation requires supporting factors such as learner self-efficacy and volition (Widodo, 1994). Alternative instructional approaches have been explored for teaching Indonesian to non-native speakers. Siroj (2015) implemented a tutorial model featuring individualized out-of-class sessions with tutor guidance, which proved effective through initial diagnostic assessment of learner weaknesses. Suyanto (2007) developed an ICT-integrated model incorporating multimedia listening exercises and blog-based activities, demonstrating effectiveness for technologically proficient students. In materials development, Suyatno (2007) created comprehensive modules for Indonesian language learners using Dick and Carey's (1990) instructional design model, combining dialog practice, listening comprehension, reading exercises, and grammatical analysis with immersion techniques. Similarly, Putra (2009) established a Learning Center (LC) for TOEIC grammar preparation at Bali State Polytechnic's Business Administration program, while Widanta et al. (2015) developed specialized English modules for TOEIC preparation featuring instructional content and practice tests. In line with materials development, Oranggaga (2022) identified both advantages and challenges in grammar module implementation within distance learning systems, including: learner attitude variations, reduced instructor-learner interaction, technological limitations, restricted social media access, assessment format constraints, perceptions of feedback credibility, excessive workload demands, concentration difficulties, as well as explicit instructional approaches.

Recent educational innovations have seen the development of online learning modules designed to address evolving student requirements (Ngadiran, 2021). Various digital platforms have emerged as viable foundations for creating interactive grammar modules. Joksimović (2015) demonstrated the effectiveness of Learning Management Systems (LMS) in developing module-based instructional materials, highlighting their capacity to facilitate meaningful interactions that positively influence learning outcomes. These systems enable crucial communication channels between students, instructors, and more advanced peers. LMS platforms offer significant advantages in streamlining the administration, delivery, and assessment of educational programs. Advanced systems incorporate robust data collection capabilities and support mobile learning (m-Learning) environments that foster active student engagement (Emelyanova & Voronina, 2014). Beyond serving as knowledge acquisition tools, these platforms create accessible and flexible learning ecosystems (Yuan et al., 2013). They further enhance educational experiences by facilitating knowledge sharing and community development, thereby promoting critical thinking and higher-order cognitive skills through collaborative discourse-essential competencies in contemporary education (Zanjani et al., 2016). Ngadiran's (2021) research findings corroborate these advantages, particularly noting students' strong preference for smartphone accessibility when engaging with TutorMe platforms. This preference reflects the growing importance of mobile-compatible learning solutions in modern education.

Sarrab et al. (2014) conducted research demonstrating how mobile learning (mLearning) enables ESL learners to study diverse language components according to their interests and needs, unrestricted by temporal or spatial limitations. This technological advancement has significantly impacted educational paradigms, catalyzing the evolution of mobile education and electronic learning (eLearning) platforms. The study revealed a distinct preference among university students for mobile devices over personal computers for learning purposes, suggesting their readiness to adopt mobile-based learning solutions. Particularly during independent study sessions, learners showed greater inclination toward utilizing mobile-accessible learning modules.

Complementing these findings, Ngadiran et al. (2021) emphasized that self-directed learning approaches through mobile platforms offer dual benefits: they allow learners to progress at their individualized pace while simultaneously creating personalized learning environments. This research underscores the pedagogical value of mobile technologies in facilitating autonomous language acquisition.

B. Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis (NA) constitutes an essential component in the development of new learning materials, serving as a systematic methodology to identify discrepancies between existing conditions and desired educational outcomes. This process enables organizations and individuals to precisely determine the requirements for achieving their objectives. Widanta (2023) conducted comprehensive NA through both direct and indirect approaches when developing a Nursing English Competency Test. The study employed a benchmarking process involving multiple stakeholders: primary users (the English Competency Test Foundation administering the examination) and secondary users (including nursing academy lecturers, the Indonesian National Nurse Board, and vocational nursing school instructors). These stakeholders provided crucial input regarding competency standards, curriculum development, scoring rubrics, and test design. Complementing direct stakeholder engagement, the research team implemented indirect NA by analyzing relevant documents, including syllabi, lesson plans, and instructional materials from various nursing programs across higher education institutions and vocational schools. This comprehensive approach successfully established standardized content for nursing competencies, assessment criteria, curricular frameworks, and examination components. Recognizing limitations in previous NA methodologies, the current study adopts the CIPP evaluation model (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Gupta, 2014), which systematically examines: Context evaluation by identifying gaps between current and desired conditions; Input evaluation by determining optimal procedural designs and instructional

strategies; Process evaluation by monitoring implementation fidelity through continuous feedback; and Product evaluation by assessing both intended and unintended outcomes. The CIPP framework addresses critical questions at each stage. Process evaluation examines implementation quality ("Is it being executed properly?"). Product evaluation measures overall effectiveness ("Did the intervention succeed?"). This comprehensive approach enables thorough assessment of both short-term and long-term outcomes, including cost-benefit analyses and identification of positive/negative consequences.

C. Module

Module is a specially designed book that enables students to learn on their own, either with or without a teacher's assistance (Prawoto, 2012). It is structured systematically to support students in reaching their learning objectives and includes various theoretical components such as definitions, concepts, exercises, assignments, and assessments—complete with answer keys. These elements make modules more comprehensive than standard textbooks. Well-designed learning modules can enhance student engagement by presenting fresh instructional content (Lubis et al., 2015). A module should typically consist of: an overview (subject description, objectives, structure, and study guide), an introduction (learning outcomes, scope, benefits, instructional sequence, and specific instructions), Learning materials (topic explanations, subtopics, and sample tasks), Exercises or assignments (targeted tasks, problem-solving activities, and performance-based assessments), a summary, and a formative test. Additionally, tasks should incorporate activities that develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills to ensure holistic learning.

D. Development

This study utilized the developmental framework proposed by Thiagarajan et al. (1974), known as the 4D model, which consists of four stages: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. Several factors contributed to the selection of this model, including its structured and systematic approach (Bano, 2018; Arywiantari et al., 2015). Additionally, this model has been widely applied in various educational material developments, such as in mathematics (Nurmanita et al., 2019), chemistry (Andromeda et al., 2018; Sakdimah & Dewata, 2018), and 21st-century learning (Djamarah et al., 2018). The 4D model has gained popularity among educational researchers. For example, Nurmanita et al. (2019) successfully developed project-based mathematics learning materials, demonstrating the model's adaptability despite differences between mathematical and language learning (which involves productive and receptive skills). Similarly, Sakdimah and Dewata (2018) created an effective chemistry module using the 4D approach, while Andromeda et al. (2018) integrated it with a guided inquiry model, yielding supportive learning materials. These studies provide valuable insights and serve as a foundation for developing grammar learning materials. Therefore, this research adopts the 4D development model as outlined by Thiagarajan et al. (1974), supported by the works of Bano (2018) and Arywiantari et al. (2015).

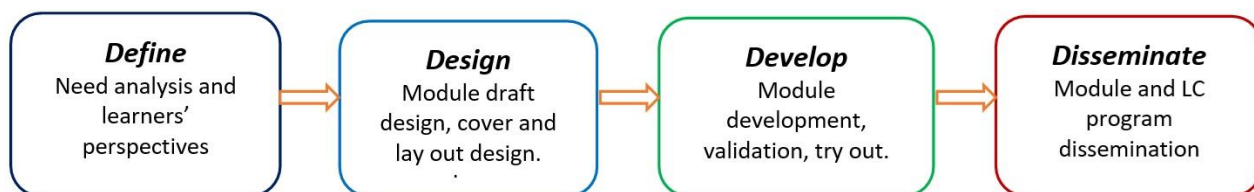


Figure 1. Development Stages

Similarly, Widanta et al. (2023) had implemented this framework on developing English for Nurses competence test. The entire activities respectively included needs and students' perspective analysis, module draft and lay out design, module development, validation and try out, as well as module and LC program dissemination.

E. Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an innovative instructional approach that emphasizes collaboration and student-centered learning. In this model, students engage in solving real-world problems through project work, solution design, and presentation of results (Thomas & Mergendoller, 2000; Larmer et al., 2003; Bell, 2010). PjBL focuses on activating students' prior knowledge, enabling them to independently explore and construct new concepts (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Additionally, it encourages hands-on learning (Kriwas, 2007), incorporates authentic, real-world materials (Ndon, 2011), and emphasizes meaningful learning experiences (Kotti, 2008). According to Gu Ven (2014), PjBL activities—such as exploration, group discussions, report writing, and presentations—help students enhance their communication skills (Harun, 2006) and develop self-directed learning abilities (Imtiaz & Asif, 2012).

Over the past twenty to thirty years, research by Imtiaz and Asif (2012) and Rochmahwati (2016) has demonstrated that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) effectively enhances students' English proficiency. Beyond developing cognitive abilities, PjBL has also proven successful in fostering essential soft skills, including motivation, self-assurance, creativity, teamwork (Astawa et al., 2017), emotional intelligence, learning capacity, and engagement in the learning process (Fragoulis, 2009). Additionally, it promotes autonomous learning and integrated curriculum development (McCarthy, 2010; Lam, 2011), critical thinking (Allan & Stoller, 2005), and vocabulary acquisition (Shafaei & Rahim,

2015). These findings suggest that PjBL empowers students to leverage prior knowledge and enhance language skills through collaborative activities such as group discussions and presentations. By actively engaging with their existing schemata, learners construct new knowledge, concepts, and propositions, ultimately achieving pragmatic competence—the ability to use language appropriately and effectively (Widanta et al., 2018). Furthermore, successful language acquisition depends significantly on the quality of teacher-provided input. For optimal learning, inputs must be clear, comprehensible, and deliberately structured through problem clarification, explicit concept formation, and learner awareness development (Widanta et al., 2020). The more intelligible the input, the more efficiently it is processed into intake, leading to improved linguistic output. In this context, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring learners consciously notice and internalize language features (Schmidt, 1990; Widanta, 2017).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. The participants consisted two-semester-students specializing in English for Business Communication and Professional within the Business Administration of Business Administration Department at Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB). The selection criteria were based on their English major status, demonstrated learning motivation, and accessibility for research coordination. The study was conducted within the Business Administration program, focusing on the English for Business Communication and Professional track. The participants were easily accessible due to the existing professional relationship between the researcher and the instructors. Research data was gathered from students' performance scores across five trial sessions. Two primary data types were collected: assessment scores from the trial sessions and students' feedback regarding the learning model. Data was acquired through standardized tests and structured questionnaires. Quantitative analysis involved aggregating student scores and calculating performance improvement percentages. Qualitative analysis focused on thematic interpretation of student perceptions about the instructional model. Findings were presented through descriptive statistics and narrative analysis.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Grammar Modules Development

Development of grammar module for self-directed learning covered development of the modules themselves and the LC. The development relied on the stages of 4-D. The detailed activities are broken down as follows.

(a). Result of Needs Analysis

Based on the NA using CIPP model, the tendency to be discussed was The Present Tense. The present tense provides various topics and could be graded. The determination gave a conclusion that there were five main topics exposed which were sub-divided into different number of smaller topics. The sub-divisions of the present tense included: (1) Present Tense with Be – Adj (Adjective); (2) Present Tense with Be – N (Noun); (3) Present Tense with Be – Adv. (Averb); (4) Present Tense with V1 (Auxilliary DO); (5) Present Tense with V1 (s/es) (Auxilliary DOES). Each sub-division was sub-divided into different number of modules as detailed in the tables beneath.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF MODULE DEVELOPED

SUB-TOPIC	MODULE
1. Simple Present Tense with Adj.	1. S – BE – Pure Adjectives 2. S – BE – Derivational Adj. 3. S – BE NOT Pure Adjectives 4. S – BE NOT– Derivational Adj 5. BE - S - Pure Adjectives 6. BE – S – Derivational Adj. 7. Negative Interrogative Structure 8. Tag Questions Structure
2. Simple Present Tense with Adv.	1. S _BE – Adverb. 2. S – BE NOT - Adverb 3. BE – S – Adverb? 4. Negative Interrogative 5. Tag-Questions
3. Simple Present Tense with N.	1. S _BE – Noun. 2. S – BE - Noun Phrase 3. S -BENOT – Noun/Noun Phrase 4. Gerund – BE – N/Noun Phrase 5. Wh-Q – BE – N/ Noun Phrase. 6. Negative Interrogative 7. Tag-Questions
4. Simple Present Tense with V1 - Complement	1. S – V1 – Comp. 2. S – Do NOT – V1 – Comp. 3. Do – S – V1 – Comp? 4. Wh-Q- Do – S – V1 – Comp.? 5. Negative Interrogative 6. Tag Questions
5. Simple Present Tense with V1 (s/es)- Complement	1. S – V1 (s/es) – Comp. 2. S – Does NOT – V1 – Comp. 3. Does – S – V1 – Comp? 4. Wh-Q- Does – S – V1 – Comp.? 5. Negative Interrogative 6. Tag-Questions.

(b). *Designing Format and Cover*

Module format and cover were designed upon need analysis. As the format will provide guidance based on which the module is developed, format was designed adequately. The format included some aspects such as content of the module, number of topics, number of modules in accordance with the topics, titles of each module, levels or grades, and the graded title or sub-topics.

(c). *Modules Development*

During this stage, three key activities were carried out: module development, module validation, and module try-out. These activities were completed over a period of approximately five months. The process was driven by the time constraints of the project. The development stage began with compiling grammar materials from various sources. Several students were involved in this material-gathering process. The grammar content was sourced from grammar textbooks, English course books, online resources, English test preparation books, and other relevant materials. These materials were then organized based on their respective topics. The students assisted in collecting the initial raw materials, performing tasks such as taking notes, digitally filing the data, and copying the necessary content. Before data collection began, the students received an orientation on proper data collection methods, note-taking techniques, digital filing procedures, and the specific types of raw data required. Once collected, the materials were handed over to the researcher for further organization.

The researchers were responsible for organizing the module. The arrangement followed a pre-approved module format, progressing systematically from the first sub-division to the last. The process began by stating the title of each module, followed by defining the key variables or subject matter. Next, examples were provided, and finally, an evaluation section—comprising at least ten questions—was included. Completing all modules took several weeks.

The next phase involved validating the module, which was conducted by an expert in learning module development. Prior to validation, necessary instruments—including a module validation checklist and a validation rubric—were prepared. To ensure functionality, the rubric itself underwent validation before being applied to the module. Revisions were made to the instrument to guarantee its validity. The validation process identified areas requiring improvement, such as language use, spelling, content coherence, alignment between definitions and sample questions, and consistency between exercises, theory, and assessments. After revisions, the updated sections were resubmitted to the validator for final approval.

The final stage was the try-out, where selected validated modules were tested. Two groups of students from Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB) participated in the 5-sessions try-out each of which was carried out for 45 minutes. This stage was initiated with a pre-test (T1) and post-test (T2) involving the entire research participants. Those tests

comprise materials derived from materials of grammar modules in the LC. Both tests were undertaken to measure students' grammar competence prior to and upon the try out. The try-out involved 50 second-semester students of Business Administration Department, PNB. The results of students' tests were compared and analyzed using descriptive statistic fostering effectiveness of the modules and LC program.

(d). Dissemination

A dissemination campaign was conducted to promote the tests and their accompanying learning tools. This initiative was carried out on a small scale, targeting students at Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB), with the goal of raising awareness about the newly developed modules and the LC program. The LC is housed in the language laboratory, and several classes participated in the dissemination process. Assigned by the research team leader, the researchers visited selected classrooms to introduce the LC program and the self-directed grammar module. Each session lasted 30 minutes, consisting of a 20-minute presentation followed by a Q&A segment. This activity aimed to effectively inform students about the LC, encouraging them to take advantage of the opportunity for independent, intensive grammar practice in the LC facility.

B. Effectiveness of the LC Program Toward Students' Achievement

The effectiveness of the modular LC program was evaluated through a trial implementation involving a group of students. A second-semester class specializing in English for Business and Professional Communication, Business Administration Department of PNB participated in the trial, where they were invited to use the LC and freely engage with the modules. Each student completed five modules across five sessions, each of which took 45 minutes. The sessions included learning, exercises, and a final module test, after which the instructor assessed and scored their work.

An analysis of student performance revealed scores ranging from the mean of 62.56 (T1) increased to 75.68 (T2), demonstrating clear improvement over time. An increase of 13.12 points indicates a substantial improvement in the average student performance after the intervention. This serves as a primary indicator of the Learning Centre program's effectiveness.

Interviews with participants highlighted strong enthusiasm for the LC program. Students appreciated: (1) the flexibility to manage their own study schedule; (2) the ability to learn grammar at their own pace; (3) the structured module system, which provided clear learning targets and efficient time use; (4) the time-bound tasks, which encouraged punctuality and discipline; and (5) the sense of accomplishment from achieving measurable progress, making learning more meaningful. The effectiveness of LC program is also fostered through statistical analysis beneath.

TABLE 2
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS RESULT

Metric	T1 (Initial)	T3 (Final)	Change
Mean	62.56	75.68	+13.12
Median	64	76	+12
Mode	60, 65	74, 76	-
Minimum	55	70	+15
Maximum	72	84	+12
Standard Deviation	3.67	2.49	-1.18
Variance	13.47	6.20	-7.27

The average score increased by 13.12 points (from 62.56 to 75.68). The minimum score rose by 15 points (55 to 70), indicating effectiveness across all proficiency levels. The mean reflects the central tendency or the overall performance of the data set. An increase of 13.12 points indicates a substantial improvement in the average student performance after the intervention. This serves as a primary indicator of the Learning Centre program's effectiveness. An increase of 13.12 points on a 100-point scale is considerable, suggesting that the majority of students improved, not merely a small subgroup. The higher mean in T3, combined with a lower standard deviation, demonstrates an overall uplift in student performance. Referring to its consistency, standard deviation decreased from 3.67 to 2.49, showing more clustered scores post-intervention. Variance dropped by 46% (13.47 to 6.20), confirming reduced score dispersion. The decrease of 1.18 points indicates that students' scores spread evenly upon the intervention. Student scores became more homogeneous. The variation between students decreased, indicating a more consistent performance across the cohort. This statistical figure implied that the Learning Centre (LC) program not only increased the average scores but also helped narrow the performance gap among students, contributing to a more equitable learning outcome.

The score distribution constitutes that in the initial test (T1), 60% of scores were between 60–65 (modes: 60 and 65) with wide score range between 55–72. However, upon the final test (T3) 86% of scores reached ≥ 74 (modes: 74 and 76) with narrower range (70–84). Overall, the Learning Centre program significantly improved grammar proficiency considering that the mean score increased by 13.12 points. Scores became more consistent (lower variance). The increase in the mean score (+13.12 points) indicates the Learning Centre program's effectiveness in raising overall student performance. The decrease in standard deviation (-1.18) suggests that student scores became more consistent and equitable. The 15-point increase in minimum scores highlights the program's success in uplifting lower-performing students. The shift in mode from 60–65 to 74–76 illustrates a significant upward shift in the distribution of student scores.

C. Discussion

The primary objective was the development of English grammar modules, following the same 4-D development model (Widanta et al., 2023) used for the English for Nursing assessment tool. While both projects shared identical developmental stages, the grammar module development focused solely on core materials without supplementary components like syllabi, learning outcomes, or competency standards. The 4-D model was selected for its clear, systematic approach (Bano, 2018; Arywiantari et al., 2015), which has been successfully implemented in various disciplines including mathematics (Nurmanita et al., 2019), chemistry (Andromeda et al., 2018; Sakdimah & Dewata, 2018), and 21st-century learning frameworks (Djamahar et al., 2018).

The trial implementation demonstrated the module's and LC program's effectiveness in improving students' grammatical competence. This was evidenced by the fact that the mean score increased by 13.12 points which is implicitly fostering a consistent score improvements, it's effectiveness in raising overall student performance. In addition, the standard deviation rate also showed more consistent and equitable toward scored of the students, and similarly pointing a success in uplifting lower-performing students as well as an indication of a significant upward shift in the distribution of student scores. The upward trajectory clearly indicates that repeated engagement with the program led to measurable academic gains. Beyond academic achievement, the modular grammar learning approach successfully increased students' motivation. Key factors contributing to this enthusiasm included: self-directed learning management; flexible study schedules; efficient time utilization; improved time management skills; meaningful learning experiences through measurable progress.

This grammar module development represents a novel contribution to the field, as previous research has addressed different specializations: Putra et al. (2019) focused on Business Administration students Widanta et al. (2015) developed TOEIC preparation materials Fadillah et al. (2018) concentrated on drawing skills for English tests Febrijanto et al. (2017) created nursing English materials using CLT approaches.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the LC with modular grammar learning and self-directed learning was effective. The development of this program was based on 4D model including define, design, develop, and disseminate. The grammar learning modules designed with the concept of autonomous learning in the flatform of LC was effective to motivate students' willingness and engagement of learning grammar. Apart from this condition, students were also assisted with the SDL learning model in the LC program. It was indicated with their increased learning enthusiasm, such as students' free learning management; students' learning flexibility; students' effective learning time; students' punctuation in learning; students' meaningful learning. This model of grammar learning is considered novel as it is different from learning model and materials developed by scholars above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the Politeknik Negeri Bali through Research and Social Service Unit which organized the schedule and financial support so that the research could be successfully conducted.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ahmad, A. (2018). Developing the English Grammar Module Based-Cooperative Learning to Teach Basic English Grammar: Focus on Students' Needs. *ELT- LECTURA: Jurnal Pendidikan*, Vol 5, No 2, pp. 138-148.
- [2] Allan, B., & Stoller, F. (2005). Maximizing the benefits of project work in foreign language classrooms. *English Teaching Forum*, (43)4, 10-21.
- [3] Andromeda, A., Lufri, Festiyed., Ellizer, E., Iryani, I., Guspatni, G., & Fitri, L. (2018). Validity And Practicality of Experiment Integrated Guided Inquiry-Based Module on Topic of Colloidal Chemistry for Senior High School Learning. In *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 335(1), 012099.
- [4] Arywiantari, D., Agung, A. A. G., & Sastra, I. D. K. (2015). Pengembangan multimedia Interaktif model 4D pada pembelajaran IPA di SMP Negeri 3 Singaraja. *E journal Edutech Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha Jurusan Teknologi Pendidikan*, 3(1), 1-12.
- [5] Astawa, N. L. P. N. S., L. P. Artini, & P. K. Nitiasih. (2017). Project-based learning activities and EFL students' productive skills in English. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol 8, No.6, pp. 114-115. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0806.16>.
- [6] Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- [7] Bano, V. O. (2018). Pengembangan model pelatihan pengelolaan penilaian autentik guru IPA SMP. [Developing training model of authentic assessment management for Junior High School Science Teachers]. *Kelola Jurnal Mnajemen Pendidikan*, Vol.5, No.2, Juli-Desember, pp. 139-151.
- [8] Bell, S. (2010). Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future. *The Clearing House*, 83, 39-43. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00098650903505415>.
- [9] Candy, P. (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- [10] Chiakrawati, S. (2010). *Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing melalui Pendekatan SRL*. Tesis Magister Linguistik. UNDIP Press.
- [11] Dick, W., & Carey, L. (1990). *The Systematic Design of Instruction. Second Edition*. Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company.

- [12] Djamahar, R., Ristanto, R. H., Sartono, N., Ichsan, I. Z., & Muhlisi, A. (2018). CIRSA: Designing instructional kits to empower 21st century skill. *Educational Process International Journal*, Vol 7, issue 3, pp. 200-208.
- [13] Emelyanova, N., & Voronina, E. (2014). Introducing a learning management system at a Russian university: Students' and teachers' perceptions. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 15(1), pp. 272-289.
- [14] Fadilah, U., Sugirin. (2018). Developing English Speaking Materials for Nursing Students. *Advances in Social Sciences. Education & Humanities Research*, vol 326. In 3rd International Conference on Current Issues in Education (ICCIE 2018), pp. 503-508.
- [15] Febrijanto, & Kurnianjati. (2017). Developing ESP nursing based on communicative language teaching. *Journal English Teaching and Research*, Vol 2, Number 2, October 2017, pp. 62-87.
- [16] Fragoulis, I. (2009). Project-based learning in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Greek Primary School: From theory to practice. *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 2, No. 3. www.CCSenet.org/journal.html.
- [17] Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). Pfeiffer.
- [18] Gu Ven, Z. Z. (2014). Project Based Learning: A constructive way toward learner autonomy. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*. Turkey: Necmettin Erbakan University Department of Linguistics.
- [19] Harun, Y. (2006). *Project-based learning handbook "Educating the millennial learners"*. Kuala Lumpur: Educational Technology Division Ministry of Education.
- [20] Hiemstra, R. (2006). Is the Internet Changing Self-Directed Learning? Rural Users Period Some Answers. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning*, Vol. 3, No. 2.
- [21] Imtiaz, S., & Asif, S. I. (2012). "I almost learnt to learn": Promoting learner's autonomy through project-based learning in access classrooms. *Language in India*, 12(1), 24-45.
- [22] Joksimović, S., Gašević, D., Loughin, T. M., Kovanović, V., & Hatala, M. (2015). Learning at distance: Effects of Interaction traces on academic achievement. *Computers & Education*, 87, 204-217.
- [23] Kotti, D. (2008). Experiential learning form theory to practice. *Adult education*, 13, 35-41.
- [24] Kriwas, S. (2007). *Pedagogical science. Basic Theme*. Athens: Gutenberg (in Greek).
- [25] Lam Lui. (2011). *"Optimal Teaching Mix in Blended Team-Based Learning (BTBL)"*. International Conference on Hybrid Learning 2011. Local Procs.
- [26] Larmer, J., Markham, T., & Ravitz, J. (2003). *Project-based learning handbook*. Oakland, CA: Wilsted and Tylor.
- [27] Lubis, M. S., Syahrul., & Juita, N. (2015). *Pengembangan modul pembelajaran bahasa indonesia berbantuan peta pikiran pada materi menulis makalah siswa kelas XI SMA/MA* [Jurnal Bahasa, sastra, dan Pembelajaran Universitas Negeri Padang]. Accessed on January 2nd, 2020.
- [28] Mc.Carthy, T. (2010). *Integrating Project-based Learning into a Traditional Skill-based Curriculum to Foster Learner. Autonomy: Actin Research*.
- [29] Mok, M. M. C., & Lung, C. L. (2005). Developing self-directed learning in student teachers. *International Journal of Self-directed Learning*, 2(1), 18-39.
- [30] Ndon, U. (2011). *Hybrid-context instructional model: The internet and the classrooms: The way teachers experience it*. The USA. 28th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning. Information Age Publishing Inc.
- [31] Ngadiran, N. M. D. et al. (2021). *M-learning Module for Self-Directed Language Learning" A study of students' needs analysis*. International Virtual Symposium: Research, Industry & Community Engagement (RICE).
- [32] Nurmanita, Pargaulan, S., & Sitompul, P. (2019). Development of learning device through problem-based learning model assisted by Geogebra to improve students' critical mathematical thinking ability. *Journal of Mathematical Sciences and Applications*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1-9. <http://pubs.sciepub.com/jmsa/7/1/1>. November 2019.
- [33] Oranggaga, A. D. (2022). Challenges and Prospects in Teaching Grammar using the Modular Distance Learning in Marawi City, Philippines. *International Journal of Linguistics Studies (IJLS)*, pp. 40-44. ISSN: 2754-2599. DOI: 10.32996/ijls. www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijls.
- [34] Prawoto, A. (2012). *Panduan Kreatif Membuat Bahan Ajar Inovatif*. Yogyakarta: Diva Press.
- [35] Putra, I G.A.P., Padmadewi, N. N., & Budasi, I G. (2019). Developing English Materials or Nursing Students of SMK Kesehatan Bali Medika Denpasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Indonesia (JPBII)*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 1-10.
- [36] Rochmahwati, P. (2016). Project-based learning to raise students' speaking ability: its effect and implementation (mix-method research in speaking II subject at STAIN Ponorogo). *Kodifikasi*, 9(1), 199-222.
- [37] Sakdimah, Dj, L., & Dewata, I. (2018). Development of chemistry laboratory guides based on chemo-entrepreneurship (Cep) for odd semester in science class second grade. *Proceeding ICESST International Conference on Education, Social Sciences*.
- [38] Sarrah, M., Alzahrani, A., Alwan, N. A., & Alfarraj, O. (2014). From traditional learning into mobile learning in education at the university level: undergraduate students' perspective. *International Journal of Mobile Learning and Organisation*, 8(3-4), 167-186.
- [39] Schmidt, R. (1990). "The role of consciousness in second language learning". *Applied Linguistics*, 11, 129-158.
- [40] Schunk, D. H. (1996). Goals and Self-Evaluative Influences during Children's Cognitive Skill Learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 33, pp. 359-382.
- [41] Scott. K. W. (2006). Self-Directed Learner' Concept of Self as Learner: *Congrous International Journals of Self-Directed Learning*, Vol 3, No. 2, pp. 1-13.
- [42] Shafaei, A., & H. A. Rahim. (2015). Does project-based learning enhance Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary and recall and retention? *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 3(2), pp. 83-99, July 2015.
- [43] Siroj. M. B. (2015). Pengembangan Model Integratif Bahan Ajar Bahasa Indonesia Ranah Sosial Budaya Berbasis ICT Bagi Penutur Asing Tingkat Menengah [Developing ICT-based Integrated Model of Indonesian Language Learning Materials in Socio-cultural Domain for Intermediate Foreign Learners]. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan sastra Indonesia*, 4, Vol. 1. ISSN 2252-6722.
- [44] Stockdale, S L. (2003). *Development of an instrument to measure self-directedness* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

- [45] Stufflebeam, D. L., & Zhang, G. (2017). *The CIPP evaluation model: How to evaluate for improvement and accountability*. Guilford Press.
- [46] Suyatno, I. (2007). Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Indonesia untuk BIPA [Developing Indonesian Language for BIPA Learning Materials]. *Wacana*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 62-78.
- [47] Thiagarajan, S., Semmel, D. S., & Semmel, M. I. (1974). *Instructional development for training teacher of exceptional children*. Blomington: Indiana University Technology.
- [48] Thomas, J. W., & Mergendoller, J. R. (2000). *Managing project-based learning: Principles from the field*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans.
- [49] Weegar, M. A., & Pacis, D. (2012). A Comparison of two theory of learning-behaviourism and constructivism as applied to face-to-face and online learning. In *proceedings E-Leader Conference, Manila*. <https://www.g-casa.com/conference/manila/ppt/Weegar.pdf> (accessed 13/11/2016).
- [50] Widanta, et al. (2015). *Effectiveness of Learning Centre (LC) to Improve Learners' Indonesian Competence*. *Atlantis Highlights in Engineering (AHE)*, volume 1. Atlantis Press. International Conference on Science and Technology (ICST 2018). <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.
- [51] Widanta, et al. (2017). How should pragmatic be taught at vocational school? *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*. Vol 4, 2, pp.110-115. www.ijllnet.com. Retrieved August 5, 2021.
- [52] Widanta, et al. (2018). Interlanguage request modification: a case in vocational college. *Journal of Physics: conference series*, 953(1), 012095, pp. 1-8. doi:10.1088/1742-6596/953/1/012095. Retrieved June 8, 2021.
- [53] Widanta, et al. (2020). Explicit inputs and concept mastery: a case in Indonesian language for foreigner (ILF) instruction. *Asian ESP Journal*, volume 16, pp. 101-126. Retrieved August 5, 2021.
- [54] Widanta, I.M.R.J et al. (2023). Developing English for Nurses in Indonesia: from learning supporting tools to assessment. *Teaching Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 917-926. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1304.13>©.
- [55] Widodo, H. S. (2001). "Pebelajaran Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing Model Tutorial" [Indonesian Language Learning for Foreign Learners]. *Makalah CIS BIPA* [Materials of CIS Indonesian Language for Foreign Learners]. Agustus 2001. Malang: UM.
- [56] Yuan, L., Powell, S., & Cetis, J. (2013). *MOOCs and open education: Implications for higher education*. JISC cetis, University of Bolton. ISSN: 1887-1542. Retrieved from <https://thoughtsmostlyaboutlearning.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/yuan-powell-2013-moocs-and-disruptive-innovation-implications-for-higher-education.pdf> on 5 June 2025.
- [57] Zanjani, N., Edwards, S. L., Nykvist, S., & Geva, S. (2016). LMS acceptance: The instructor role. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 25(4), 519-526.
- [58] Zimmerman, B. J. (2004). Sociocultural Influences and Students' Development of Academic Self-Regulation: A Social Cognitive Perspective. In McInerney, DM & Va Etten's (Eds.), *Big Theories Revisited* (pp. 139-164). Information Age, Green Wich ET.

I Made Rai Jaya Widanta is an associate professor in Linguistics and is currently working as a permanent lecturer at Politeknik Negeri Bali. His research interests include developing learning model, first and second language acquisition, inter-language pragmatics, and language mindset.

Anak Agung Raka Sitawati is a permanent English lecturer at Business Administration department, Politeknik Negeri Bali. Her research interests include developing English learning model, developing agro-tourism and cultural tourism, Learning Centre for Indonesian Language for Foreign Learners.

Sri Hardiningsih is a permanent lecturer at Accounting Department Politeknik Negeri Semarang web-based English learning module designing, syllabus designing, Extensive reading model, vocabularies acquisition, video-based leaning to enhance students' writing skill.

Putu Dyah Hudiananingsih is a permanent English lecturer at Accounting Department Politeknik Negeri Bali. Her researches include developing learning center for teaching Indonesian for foreign students, pragmatics, Task-based language teaching and learning.

Ni Putu Somawati is an English lecturer at Tourism Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali. Her research interests are task-based language teaching (TBLT), pragmatics-based English language teaching.

Darma Sucipta is Indonesian language lecturer at Politeknik Negeri Bali. His research focuses on Indonesian language for Indonesian and foreign learners.

Ni Nyoman Ayu Tri Hidayanti is a lecturer at Bali Dwipa University, Bali, Indonesia. She is assigned to teach both General English and English for specific purposes (ESP). Her research interest includes designing English learning model, task-based language teaching, project-based learning.

Luh Nyoman Chandra Handayani is an English lecturer permanently in charged in Accounting Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali. Her research includes designing on-line materials for English for accounting, designing TOEIC-based English learning materials, and pragmatics-based English language teaching.

I Nyoman Sukra is permanently assigned to teach English in the Department of Accounting Politeknik Negeri Bali. His research focuses on materials designing for teaching English for tourism, second language learning, ESP teaching, and project-based English learning.

I Wayan Dana Ardika is a permanent English lecturer in charged in Civil Engineering Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali. His research includes task-based language teaching, project-based English teaching, designing materials for task-based English for Occupational purposes, and conducting needs analysis for Civil Engineering English students.

Sacred Ecoscapes: Ethics of Ecology From the Ramayana

Ishwaria Prabhakaran

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore Campus, India

Soumen Mukherjee

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore Campus, India

Abstract—The epic Valmiki Ramayana eloquently depicts awareness and preservation of the environment within Hinduism's nature-centric philosophy. Ramayana verses emphasize eco-awareness through concepts such as Panchabhutas, Dharma, and Rta, representing cosmic order. This novel interpretation of the ancient Sanskrit text highlights the interconnection between the ecological web and cultural traditions during the epic era, a connection that remains essential and relevant today. Humankind has exerted dominating control through excessive consumption of resources and energy. Such primacy has led to the dire ecological crisis. There is an urgent need to revisit religious and traditional practices, highlighting a harmonious balance between humanity and nature for a sustainable future. The paper emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary study by focusing on the literature through Hindu philosophical aspects to reorient humans towards ecological integration for global sustainability. 'Ecophilia' refers to a deep bond and harmonious interaction between humans and the natural landscape. These co-existing factors trace to the reading of the Ramayana.

Index Terms—Ecophilia, Hinduism, dharma, Rta, Ramayana

I. INTRODUCTION

[An Ode to Mother Earth] *Prithvi Suktam* says,

Truth, settled laws, sacred oblation, penance, the Supreme Reality, and sacrifice sustain this Earth, which is the presiding deity of all those who exist and are yet to be born. Let this Earth create enough space for all. (Joshi, 2012)

*“satyaṃ bṛhadṛtamugraṃ dīkṣā tapo brahma yajñāḥ pṛthivīm dhārayanti.
sā no bhūtasya bhavyasya patnyurum lokam pṛthivī naḥ kṛṇotu” [1]*

A practice of this 'eco-fullness' found in the 'walking meditation' is presented as a 'Love Letter to the Earth' by Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned poet, peace activist of Zen Buddhism (Arcos, 2024), with the following words:

Dear Mother Earth,

“Every time I step upon the Earth, I will train myself to see that I am walking on you, my Mother. Every time I place my feet on the Earth, I have a chance to be in touch with you and all your wonders. With every step, I can touch that you are not just beneath me, dear Mother, and within me. Each mindful and gentle step can nourish, heal, and bring me into contact with myself and you in the present moment.

Walking in mindfulness, I can express my love, respect, and care for you, our precious Earth.”¹ (Arcos, 2024)

Nature—poets, environmentalists, and critics alike, echo a shared sentiment that we must protect the environment. Henry David Thoreau urged in *Walden*, “Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth.” Rachel Carson warned in *Silent Spring*, “The history of life on Earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings. Only within the moment represented by the present century has one species, man, acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world” (Verma, 2023c). These voices remind us to preserve the natural world.

Environmentalism emerged during the twentieth century as a response to environmental damage caused by industrial pollution and unsustainable methods of depleting natural resources, aiming to protect the ecology. Given the protection of the environment, environmental justice is defined as “the equitable distribution of ecological benefits and hazards in addition to meaningful engagement in environmental decision-making” (Hubble, 2021). Therefore, ecology as an academic discipline emerged to become important. “Ecology is the scientific study of natural interdependencies: it examines the interactions among different species as well as the movement of energy and cycling of matter such as nutrients through ecosystems” (Nadkarni, 2017).

¹ In *Philosophies*, “Elements of a First-Person Ecology: Historical Roots, Recognition and Ecospirituality” (Esteban Arcos et al., 2024), Thich Nhat Hanh's text agrees with all his ecological assertions to explore the type of experience that characterizes ecology. Particularly, the affective engagement and emotions of gratitude and respect may arise from such a metaphor, Mother Earth.

Environmental affinity in society and education pertains to 'biophilia' and 'ecophilia', stated as "nature-friendly". Biophilia refers to our inherent affinity for the living world, the love of life, or, as defined by Wilson (1984), "the innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes". To explain further, 'biophilia' relates to animate nature, whereas 'ecophilia' is connected to both animate and inanimate phenomena. "They share a holistic orientation with sustainability" (Horsthemke, 2018). Therefore, the principle of oneness of existence can serve as the basis for an ethos of a deep ecological approach, justified through the Ramayana that paves the way for equilibrium between the realms of human and non-human life forms.

"Ecophilia, derived from 'ekos' (home) and 'philia' (liking), refers to a deep satisfaction and affinity with one's immediate environment" (Horsthemke, 2018). This concept discusses environmental education, sustainability, and the human-nature relationship. In an ecosophical French perspective of Merleau-Ponty, "ecophilia suggests a harmonious relationship between humans and nature, challenging the negative perceptions of nature and promoting a more intimate connection" (Hung, 2008). Ecophilia, or the love of nature, is a concept that can be deeply rooted in cultural, social, and religious practices. In the Indian context, this relationship with nature is influenced by a rich tapestry of customs, stories, and philosophies that have evolved over centuries. Indian classical fables, such as the Panchatantra and Jataka tales, play a significant role in shaping ecological consciousness. These stories, suitable for children and adults, help develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the natural world (Shanmugapriya, 2023). "Within the sacred realm of Hindu cosmology, Lord Vishnu, the preserver of the universe, manifests four incarnations –*Matsya* [The fish], *Kurma* [The tortoise], *Varaha* [The boar], and *Narasimha* [The man-lion] which symbolizes reverence for the diverse life forms that share earthly abode. In the cosmic ballet, Matsya's grace, Kurma's steadfast resilience, Varaha's mighty strength, and Narasimha's fierce valour collectively convey a profound message. Through these incarnations, the traditions impart the sanctity and intrinsic value of all beings that co-exist on this precious planet" (Neetu, 2024). "The exploration of ecology within Indian customs, cultures, religions, and literary texts like the Ramayana highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to address ecological issues. This approach can help mitigate the exploitation of natural resources and promote ecological equity" (Valmiki, 2021).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

"Eco-Dharma and Climate: An Ecospective Perspective" is discussed based on the Valmiki Ramayana and Hindu ways of preserving nature (Neethu, 2025). "Regestating Eco-Ethics of Ramayana critically investigates eco-ethics and eco-aesthetics," and its knowledge and practices in the society during the epoch of Ramayana (Verma et al., 2023). In 2023, Pal discussed "Tribal life and the environment" in Mahaswetha Devi's ecological rereading of select narratives. Her writings explored India's environmental history, drawing on the Mahabharata and the Ramayana incidents. Through this, she traced the tribes' journey from forest life to industrialization. The lost ecological histories of these tribes were reflected in 'The Book of the Hunter'. In a world increasingly driven by materialism, religion plays a vital role in influencing environmental behaviour by offering ethical and spiritual frameworks emphasizing care for nature. This idea is explored by comparing the idealistic outlook of the Ramayana, which promotes living in harmony with nature (Das et al., 2025). Recent scholarly works have explored the intersection of Hindu and Jain philosophies with environmental ethics, emphasizing concepts such as dharma, nonviolence (*ahimsā*), and ecological consciousness.

Pankaj Jain's study in 2024, "Sustaining Dharma, Sustainable Ecology: Dharma as Rural Environmental Ethics," featured in 'The Routledge Companion to Indian Ethics', examined how communities such as the Bishnois of Rajasthan and the Swadhyayis of Gujarat interpreted dharma not only as a religious doctrine but also as a guiding principle for environmental stewardship. Jain argued that the environmental practices of these communities are deeply rooted in their understanding of dharma, which encompasses ethical and spiritual dimensions that inform their ecological responsibilities. In a 2019 paper titled "Climate Engineering from Hindu-Jain Perspectives," published in 'Zygon: Journal of Religions and Science', Jain further investigated how Hindu and Jain concepts such as *karma*, *ahimsā*, humility (*vinaya*), and renunciation (*samnyāsa*) critique modern climate engineering approaches like solar radiation management and carbon dioxide removal. He suggested that these traditional ethical frameworks provide valuable insights into the moral implications of contemporary environmental interventions.

Ashutosh Awasthi's 2021 article, "A Reinterpretation of Hindu Spirituality for Addressing Environmental Problems," published in 'Religions', explored how Hinduism's openness to change and integration of new ideas can foster environmentally friendly practices. Awasthi emphasized the need to bridge the gap between Hindu philosophical ideals and actual environmental behaviours, advocating for synthesizing cultural and scientific approaches to address ecological challenges. The 2023 study by Mulyanto et al., on "Ethnobotanical Identification of Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.), and Other Fruit Trees Mentioned in Old Javanese Ramayana," published in 'Biodiversitas Journal of Biological Diversity', highlighted the religious and symbolic significance of fruit trees like the Mango in ancient texts. The study highlighted how these trees, depicted in various landscapes such as hermitages and royal gardens, reflect the intricate relationship between spirituality and environmental awareness in Hindu traditions. Verma's (2022) article, "Eco-Consciousness in Valmiki Ramayana: An Aesthetic Study of Ecological Integrity" published in 'The World of Orient', offers an eco-aesthetic reading of the Ramayana. Verma traced expressions of ecological consciousness in the epic, revealing how ancient narratives convey a deep awareness of biodiversity and environmental integrity. Julia Shaw's 2016 article, "Religion, 'Nature' and Environmental Ethics in Ancient India: Archaeological Perspectives on Human– Non–Human

Suffering and Well-Being in Early Buddhist and Hindu Traditions”, published in ‘Archaeology and Environment Ethics’, examined archaeological evidence of early Buddhist and Hindu practices related to land and water conservation. Shaw discussed how these practices reflect a holistic understanding of human and non-human well-being, challenging simplistic views of ancient India through models for collective responses to environmental stress in human and non-human frames. These studies present a rich tapestry of thought in Hindu society, integrating ethical principles with environmental consciousness, and offer valuable insights for contemporary ecological discourse. Thus, this study delves into the Ramayana as an epic that underscores ecological values, examining its portrayal of nature and its ethical implications. Through an eco-ethical lens, it explores how the narrative reflects human-nature relationships, offering insights into sustainable living and environmental stewardship. By analysing these themes, the paper highlights the relevance of the Ramayana in contemporary discussions on ecological ethics and conservation.

III. THEORETICAL APPROACH

“A coherent approach to solving complex problems effectively demands genuine dialogue across disciplines—each field must teach what it knows and learn to see from other disciplinary perspectives” (Hubble, 2021). The article approaches eco-expressions, which function as guiding principles and ‘eco views’ as presented in the text Ramayana, as a core subject to be explored. “While certain sacred texts may sound peculiar to contemporary ears, when interpreted within their specific historical and ecological contexts, they emerge as place-based practices designed to guide sustainable living” (Ryan & Hubble, 2021). “The purity rituals found in the Torah, the Bible, the Qur’an, the Confucian Five Classics, the Bhagavad Gita, and other sacred texts are not the root of our ecological crisis, but rather hold a reservoir of environmentally wise principles” (Tirosh-Samuelson, 2006; cited by Hubble, 2021).

Textual reading of the Valmiki Ramayana² underscores the ecophilic aspects, and to derive the best out of such ancient texts and to contribute towards the environmental paradigm, it requires methods like ‘Reinterpretation, Recovery and Revision’ (Hubble, 2021). Zapf (2016) suggests that instead of being an “escapist fantasy”, literature forms a value in “imagining alternative, sustainable futures,” and therefore needs to be aligned with eco-perspectives to find solutions for ecological problems. This article examines the eco-critical elements in the Ramayana text, promoting the implementation of eco-praxis to foster sustainable development through its philosophical underpinnings.

Barry Commoner, a prominent biologist and environmentalist, is well-known for his “first law of ecology,” which states that “everything is connected to everything else” (Pojman, 2017). In his magnum opus work, “The Closing Circle, Nature, Man & Technology,” published in 1971, Commoner proposed the idea of four laws of ecology, principles that suggest the complexity and interdependence within ecosystems. “An ecosystem, akin to a symphony, can gracefully lose its contributing species and undergo transformative metamorphoses without succumbing to collapse”. This principle underscores “the interconnectedness of natural systems and the impact of human activities on the environment” (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to consider religious practices as “Religion guides us to perceive and engage with every part of the Earth” (Gottlieb, 2006). This view emerges as a robust and resilient oak in light of the environmental crisis, which casts significant uncertainty on humanity's continued existence on Earth.

IV. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A. *Saga of Anthropocene*

Anil K. Tiwari noted, “Anthropocentrism considers human life superior to any other life form, and other life forms are significant only if they serve a purpose to humans. It is this human attitude that led to the emergence of the present era, the Anthropocene” (Verma, 2023). In the Anthropocene, “it is conspicuous that one species, Homosapiens, had attained dominance over nature, jeopardising its own existence and fellow species. As a result, the Earth is struggling against many influential incursions, from the depletion of natural resources and extinction of species to environmental pollution” (Verma, 2023c). Rachel Carson attacked the scientific establishments and the dominance of technology. She blamed modern society for the increasing exploitation of natural resources and the cultural orientation to see nature as a commodity rather than an interconnected living entity (Carson, 2002). These scholars' arguments paved the way for understanding the factors that contribute to environmental degradation. The most inclusive roots are one's religious and cultural beliefs, which have weakened with the adoption of a human-dominated approach. Religion played a vital role in human civilization. It needs to be reconsidered in light of sustainable development and human well-being. “Religion encompasses the cosmological narratives, symbolic systems, ritual customs, ethical frameworks, historical developments, and institutional structures that convey a vision of humans as integral to a world infused with meaning, responsibility, transformation, and celebration. Through these elements, religions have connected people to a divine presence or numinous force” (Tucker, 2009) to reorient human attitudes and curb the prevailing ecological crisis.

The Ramayana, an ancient text of Hinduism, embodies environmental awareness through its ancient eco-ethical wisdom and knowledge. In this regard, Jose Nandhikkara’s editorial remark supported the position, “Listening to great

² The Ramayana of Valmiki (VR), quotes and English translations are retrieved from (Online): <https://www.valmiki.iitk.ac/> and National Sanskrit University Publications (NSP), 2013, Tirupati, which follows Southern recension of Ramayana. There are four main recensions of The Valmiki Ramayana (VR) (to refer Critical edition of The Valmiki Ramayana, Baroda edition, 1960). Also, quotes are taken from Gita Press (GP) English translations of Ramayana.

experiences and insights of religious traditions of humanity is a source of knowledge and ignoring it would be an unacceptable policing by academia, economics, and politics” (Verma, 2023). Therefore, conventional ideas about nature must be revisited and re-evaluated. It is essential to redirect traditional ecological knowledge from the fundamental sources of such texts. The task of re-examining one of the classical epics, the Valmiki Ramayana, is not just a literary production but an embodiment of eco-cultural practices.

B. Research Questions

The study aims to answer,

- 1) How can sources in Hinduism help rebuild environmental ethics?
- 2) How do humans’ ecophilic tendencies support environmental guardianship through reinterpreting the ancient text, Valmiki Ramayana?

Therefore, looking at contemporary ecology-focused religious scholarship is imperative.

C. Religions and Discourse on Ecology

The environmental crisis is a pivotal concern of our era. It is a holistic understanding, recognizing the delicate dance between human life, ethical imperatives, and the well-being of our planet's ecosystems. This profound concept emerged as a discourse, addressing the pressing environmental challenges of the time, striving for a future where humanity and the natural world co-exist in a symphony of sustainability. “Religion substantially impacts how we approach the complex issue of environmental distress”. However, “the complex relationship between religious institutions, practices, beliefs, and environmental change is still an area that warrants further investigation” (Neethu, 2025). A multifaceted tapestry comprised the relationship between religion and environmental catastrophe. The extent to which religion contributes to or exacerbates eco order is contingent upon the specific tenets and rituals observed within each religious tradition. To fully understand the complex dynamics between human societies and the environment, it is vital to develop an understanding of the spiritual aspects that arise from the convergence of ecology and culture. An interdisciplinary field has blossomed, dedicated to unravelling the intricate threads connecting religion to environmental matters and understanding how ecological concepts resonate within religious tenets. “The ongoing degradation of natural resources, the alarming rise in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, the pervasive threat of pollution, the global health crisis, and the looming spectre of irreversible climate change have convinced many that the very existence of communities, cultures, and indeed, the planet itself, teeters on the precipice of jeopardy” stated Tucker.

“Buddhism thinks disasters are artificial. For example, climate change results from our greed and selfishness. We overspend because we are ungrateful” (Lou, 2023). “Buddhist teachings in the Vinaya Pitaka focused on maintaining harmony with nature” (Bayuseto, 2023). Biocentric perspective in Jainism believes that every living entity whether plant, animal, or human, possesses a soul and deserves to be respected (Hall, 2009). Jainism “upholds the kindness and sympathy towards all life forms, including animals, plants, earth, water, and every other form of animate and inanimate being, promoting an ethical approach to conservation founded on the belief that nature holds intrinsic value” (Mitra, 2019). “Jainism, a religion of nature, emphasizes understanding the practical roles and intrinsic significance of plants, worms, and animals, each vital in preserving ecological balance” (Mitra, 2019). Jain doctrines and principles, such as *ahimsa* [non-violence towards all living beings], *aparigraha* [minimal attachment to possessions], *anekantavada* [recognition of multiple perspectives], and *parasparopagraho jivanam* [interconnectedness of all life], are relevant to environmental conservation. These tenets emphasize respect for all life forms, encourage sustainable living, and promote a harmonious relationship with nature. In particular, the reverence for trees, often associated with Jain Tirthankaras, underscores the ecological importance of protecting natural resources as an integral part of spiritual practice. Hinduism is classified as a dharmic religion because it emphasizes dharma as the overarching organizing principle that governs all reality. Hindu adherents maintain a sense of duty, virtue, and moral righteousness. Kautilya’s Arthashastra, for instance, meticulously delineates the repercussions of the felling of trees. The doctrines of various religions regarding the environment emphasize principles of environmental conservation. Hinduism, a highly influential faith with a significant adherent base, is emblematic of India's religious diversity. UNESCO’s 2000 Earth Charter urges modern individuals to acknowledge and safeguard the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom found across cultures, as these practices play a vital role in environmental stewardship, enhancing human well-being (Pojman, 2017).

D. Descriptions of Forest Ecology in Ramayana

The eco-landscape in Book Three, *Aranyakanda* of Valmiki Ramayana (where *aranya* means forest) in general, is described as “*Shanta* (calm), *Madhura* (sweet), *Rudra* (angry) and *Vibhatsa* (fearful), together defining the dominant sentiment of the forest” (Lutgendorf, 2001; Sinha, 1998). Ecology in the Ramayana is an interweaving of culture, human-nature relations, divinity, and worship. As Rama journeys from Ayodhya to Lanka through the forests of Chitrakoot, Daṇḍaka-aranya, Panchavati, and Kishkindhā, the epic vividly depicts a rich diversity of plant species along his route (Amirthalingam, 2013). Geographically located in Karnataka, in Southern India, the Pampa Sarovar is a site of significance. Rama’s travel to Lanka and the Himalayan Mountains, situated beyond Kailasa, reflected the supremacy of nature. The epic portrays multiple ecosystems, such as tropical deciduous forests, dry and moist deciduous woodlands, the evergreen tropical forests of Lanka, and Himalayan alpine semi-forests, each vividly contributing to the landscape (Roy, 2005). Roy described the flora and fauna, water elements, land surface, vegetation, and degrees of wilderness in

detail. Lingam discussed two types of forests portrayed in the Ramayana: Chitrakoot and Dandakaranya, the principal forests, and Panchavati, the subforest. "Continuous streams from waterfalls and forest springs maintain soil moisture, while the dense forest canopy plays a crucial role in conserving water within the hydrological cycle" (Amirthalingam, 2013).

Rama's first halt was in Chitrakoot. He built his ashram in Dandakaranya, described as "abounding in tall, sacred, and sweet, fruit-bearing trees," demonstrating his awareness and importance to the environment. The choice of residence prioritizes an eco-hamlet. Ecological integrity and interconnected biodiversity were prominent themes in Ramayana, often reflected in its depictions of rivers, mountains, and trees. These natural elements were first introduced when Rama arrived at Sringerapur, located on the banks of the Ganga River, during his journey into the forest (Verma, 2022b). He told his charioteer, "Let us halt under this tree, o charioteer! I shall behold the benign Ganga, the foremost river, whose water deserves to be respected by gods, gandharvas (celestial beings), beasts, reptiles, and birds alike" (Valmiki Ramayana, 2006:1.358, GP). The episode revealed his close interaction with nature and deep reverence for water bodies. Hence, reminds us of the ecosophy principle of Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher who introduced the concept of 'Deep Ecology'. Ecosophy T, the version of Deep Ecology proposed by Naess, is named after the Tvergastein Mountains where Naess experienced nature. He describes the experience as 'spontaneous': "the lush green leaves just outside my office window and the sudden joy I feel upon seeing them are a pure and spontaneous delight" (Acros, 2022). Rama experienced a similar natural ambience throughout his forest journey.

Sage Bharadwaj advised Rama to stay in Chitrakoot, a tropical deciduous forest, situated at a distance of ten krosas (measuring distance) from Prayaga. Chitrakoot is a hill to the north of the river Mandakini. Chitrakoot³ is home to a variety of medicinal plant species. Medicinal plants⁴, mentioned in Ramayana, found today in Chitrakoot hills are- [Solanum virginianum] *Svetakanthakar*, called yellow fruit nightshade, which is used in treating epilepsy and bronchial asthma, *Bacopa monnieri*, also known as *Brahmi*. This perennial creeping herb helps improve memory and alleviate insomnia.

The Dandaka Forest named 'Danda' for its dense rows of trees is richly abundant throughout the region. Trees including *Madhukavana* [Indian Butter tree], *Sala* [Axle wood], *Ashvakarna* [Gurjan balsam], *Kakubha* [White marudah], *Bilva* [the Bengal quince], *Tinduka* [the Indian persimmon], *Patala* [the Trumpet tree], and *Badari* [Indian Jujube], are found today. Amirthalingam (2013) describes the following animals, which include *Jhilika* [cricket] a leaping orthopteran insect, *Mahisha* [buffalo], *Prishtha* [Spotted Deer], *Sarasa* [Indian crane], *Vrka* [Wolf], *Vyaghra* [Tiger] and *Bhrngaraja* [Fork-tailed shrike]. Seeing Vali and Dhundubi⁵, demons who destroy the forest, Sage Matanga cursed them, stating, "If the wicked one who desecrated my forest by discarding a demon's corpse, thereby trampling my trees, which I have nurtured as my children, remains here, I shall curse him. I will also curse anyone causing further harm to my sacred grove's leaves, shoots, fruits, and roots" (Valmiki Ramayana, 2006:1.778, GP). Malcolm Miles affirmed, "Viewing the world as mere objects paves the way for exploitation, whereas perceiving and engaging with it as a reflection of ourselves fosters care and interconnection towards ecology rather than domination." Seeing the world as a mere object implies its exploitation, seeing it, feeling it, as a mirror of the self, which is more or less an ecological position, may imply a sense of caring and living with rather than exerting power over the world (Miles, 2014).

Hanuman crossed the Himalayas to reach the medicinal mountains of *Kailasa*, *Rishabha*, and *Oushadhi*. The mountain's southern side was covered with dense forests and home to plants known for their healing properties. *Rudravanti* [Cressa cretica], *Bhooti Sanjeevani* [Selaginella bryopteris], and *Jeevanti Jeevaka* [Flickingeria fimbriata] are three Sanjeevani herbs. *Mrita Sanjeevani* is renowned for its ability to revive the dead. *Vishalyakarani* can remove weapons and heal injuries caused by them, *Swarnakarani* can restore the body to its natural complexion, and *Sandhani* can reconnect severed limbs or heal broken bones (Sivakumar, 2023). A study published in *Current Science*⁶ identified seventeen species named *Sanjeevani*. The researchers determined that *Selaginella bryopteris*, *Cressa cretica*, and *Desmotrichum fimbriatum* [*Sanjeevani*, *Rudravanthi*, and *Jeevaka*, respectively] shared equivalent identity with the *Sanjeevani* plant. Indian traditions emphasize that all forms of life— plants, animals, and humans are deeply interconnected and dependent on each other, and any disruption in one form can endanger the entire ecological balance. "Ecological consciousness is created and developed in collaboration with the environment, and that allows people to feel and experience directly the unity with nature and the world around them" (Verma, 2022b).

E. Dharma, Rta, and the Panchabhutas in Ecological Perspectives

Vedic nature worship is undeniable, considering the "Vedic civilization of India, people worshipped nature and celestial bodies as deities. Vedic people worshipped the *Panchabhutas* which includes *Agni* [fire], *Ap* [water], *Vayu* [air], Maruts [storm wind], *Soma* [moon], *Dyaus* [the sky], *Prithvi* [the Earth], *Usas* [dawn], to seek blessing and to uphold celestial event regularly" (Radhakrishnan, 1923). It is evident through the Aitareya Upanisads that the five fundamental elements of the universe are Ether, Water, Light, Earth, and Air (Verma, 2020a). "Any imbalance or disharmony among these five elements affects the lives of living creatures" (Radhakrishnan, 2006; Verma, 2020a:3). Ramayana is a text that speaks on

³ Information from Deendayal Upadhyay Research Institute, Chitrakoot, India. Online: <https://www.dri.org.in/>

⁴ Information on Medicinal plants retrieved from Plant Diversity in Ramayana, research by Amirthalingam. M, CPR Environment Education Centre, Chennai, India.

⁵ A Demon in the form of a Buffalo in Valmiki Ramayana

⁶ Online: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/health/mountains-of-sanjeevani>, 2016

harmony between all creatures and gives reverence for *Panchabhutas* for ecological balance. Thus, a harmonious symphony is the seamless interplay between Hindu practices and nature revealed in these narratives. This practice is a resounding appeal to all members of society, compelling them to fulfil their sacred eco-dharmic obligation to preserve and safeguard the abundant bounty of the natural World, thus establishing the groundwork for a sustainable and prosperous future.

Throughout the long history of Hindu civilisation, there have been many written scriptures (mainly in Sanskrit) in different periods, such as the Vedas (approximately 1500-1000 BCE), the Upaniṣads (approximately 800-400 BCE), and the Puraṇas (approximately 500-200 BCE). We also find the Sanskrit epics, such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, among many others. These epics are vast compendia of rituals, practices, and eco-ethical conceptions of *dharma* [righteousness] and *rta* [cosmic order]. In the Ramayana, the fifth book, namely the *Sundarakanda*, which narrates Hanuman's journey to Lanka, describes him praying to the Sun God, *Agni* [fire], *Vayu* [wind], *Mahendra* [the mountain], and *Samudra* [the Ocean] before departing for Lanka. The illustration shows reverence for *Panchabhutas* and *Rta*, through Hanuman's worship of the cosmic order.

“Offering salutations with folded palms to the Sun god, to Mahendra, lord of the gods, to the wind god, to the Creator Brahma, and all the attendants of lord Siva, he (Hanuman) made up his mind to proceed (to Lanka)” (Valmiki Ramayana 5.1.8- 5.1.9, NSU).

Rta is synonymous with “natural laws, universal peace, and cosmic order as defined in *Rgveda*”. “Research on the word *rta* has led to a consensus that it means law, order, and truth. The faith in an order—a law makes for regularity and moral order” (Verma, 2023c). *Rta* is “a law of nature holding cosmic order, guided by dharma, a system of activity that directs the world so that *rta* is not violated” (Londhe, 2018). Dharma, rooted in the Sanskrit word *dhr* [sustaining], purports a “holistic ecological perspective against a nature subjugating and idiosyncratic environment within which we conceptualise ethics” (Bilimoria, 2016). Humans uphold this relationship between “*dharma* and *rta* through right orientation, responsibility, and action towards the world by developing values of self-restraint, assistance, and love, which are cornerstones of eco-ethics” (Verma, 2023c). Thus, incorporating the value of the cosmic order, the conscience of righteousness towards the environmental ethos, a fundamental Hindu ecological ethos articulates the conceptions of *dharma* and *rta* through Hanuman's worship.

In the Anthropocene, the conception of *dharma* and *rta* consciousness is delineated for the material exploitation of natural resources. Therefore, re-implication of ecological values of *dharma* and *rta* helps reorient people's attitudes towards the Symbiocene, “a new era with a sustainable human-nature relationship that fosters symbiotic ways of thinking for the mutual benefit of all living beings” (Piotr, 2023). Mahatma Gandhi said, “The Earth has ample resources to fulfill everyone's needs, but falls short when satisfying greed.” The *Hiranyagarbha suktam*⁷ (Rig-Veda) talked about the cosmic egg and the golden womb from which creation or the soul originated. Bilimoria (2016) remarked, “Dharma denotes a universal principle or natural law that binds an individual in two ways: by upholding cosmic, social, and personal orders, and by grounding duties that arise from those dimensions.” From this statement, it is conspicuous that the Hindu view of ethics, as laid down in *dharma*, incorporates different social and religious norms meant for upholding ecological integrity. This integrity is evident through the narratives in the Ramayana.

Environmental protection is regarded by some as an embodiment of dharma within the framework of the human-nature relationship. In environmental ethics, a profound set of responsibilities, akin to a sacred code of conduct, beckons every human being, a set of duties known as *eco-dharma*. This exquisite term seamlessly intertwines ecological stewardship with the timeless principles of *dharma*, found at the core of Indian philosophy and the text *Ramayana*. It is a guiding light, urging individuals and communities to consider the environmental footprint. The fulcrum of eco-dharma lies in aligning actions with principles that transcend mere sustainability, advocating for ecological equilibrium, preservation, and a seamless accord with nature. Within the tapestry of environmental ethics, many practices weave together a harmonious existence with the environment. It extends beyond a call for sustainable living, venturing into environmental stewardship and ethical decision-making.

V. CONCLUSION

Ramayana is a text that encourages individuals to explore their interconnection with the natural web of life as active participants rather than being passive onlookers. Ramayana's ecophilic teachings are based on interconnection with nature. In ancient India, trees were associated with divine beliefs, values, and religious importance. Well-maintained sacred groves serve as reservoirs of valuable medicinal plants with significant economic worth and provide refuge for endangered species. “Socio-cultural aspects like social beliefs and taboos play a key role in protecting the sacred grove” (Khumbongmayum, 2008).

⁷ Rig-Veda, CXXI, Book X, (566) *hiranyagarbhah samavartataagrey bhootasya jaatah patireka aaseet | sa daadhaara prithiveem dyaamutemaam kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema.*

Rig-Veda.

Online: <https://archive.org/details/rigvedacomplete/mode/1up?q=hiranyagarbha+suktam>

“In the beginning, Hiranyagarbha was born only of created beings.

He fixed and holdeth up this Earth and heaven, shall we adore with our oblation? The hymn describes Hiranayagarbha as the primeval source of all creations”.

“The Kalpavrksha, a wish-fulfilling tree symbolises how ancient Hindus viewed trees not merely as sources of wealth but as the foundation of communities growth and prosperity” (Jain, 2024). David Lee stressed that “readings of the ancient text Ramayana might prove to be a compelling 'cultural force' to humanity, upholding ecological balance” (Verma, 2022b). This fact is examined by Dr Radhakrishnan, highlighting the interdependence among various ecological entities from the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad- “The bees make honey and the honey support the bees”⁸, which resonates with the idea of Deep Ecology.

Deep Ecology ideas reflected in the Ramayana are the inherent worth of all human beings, regardless of their instrumental utility to human needs. Arne Naess, the founder of the modern theory of Deep Ecology in the Philosophy Department at the University of Oslo, proposed that “Deep Ecology, also known as ecosophy or 'ecological wisdom', is a movement that advocates profound inquiry and thoughtful set of solutions to our environmental challenges. It challenges some of the fundamental assumptions in our societies regarding consumerism and materialism, and promotes simple living”. Its motto, “Simple in means, Rich in Ends”, suggested a kind of self-realization through oneness with all things. “The ‘ending-sophy’ underscores that our goal is wisdom not mere scientific facts. Philosophy, as articulated wisdom, has to be a synthesis of theory and practice. It must not shun concrete policy recommendations but rather root them in core values and fundamental perspectives on societal development” (Pojman, 2017). The substantial impact of Hinduism and Philosophy on Arne Naess’s ecosophy was introduced in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*⁹, published in 1989.

A shift from an anthropocentric world to an 'ecocentric' world is possible through *Bandhu* (Malhotra, 2013), which is “a concept used to explain how the whole and the parts are held together in integral unity”. As rightly said by Pojman, “a kind of self-realization through oneness with all things”. Ramayana is a narrative that deals with *bandhu* factors of the integral whole. *Bandhu*¹⁰ (Olivelle, 1996; Skof, 2021) describes the mutual relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm. It is not simply a case of separate parts forming a unified structure. Instead, the parts exist only temporarily connected to the whole, never as isolated entities. Despite this, they have distinct roles within the unity, contributing their unique light and beauty to the greater process. Thich Nhat Hanh dealt with this shift by directly addressing the Earth, “Your nature is my nature, and both are woven into the fabric of the cosmos” (Acros, 2024). The following phrase from the Vedas- “*prithvim dharmana dhrtam* (dharma as sustainer of Earth)”, means dharma is the backbone of Earth’s ecosystem, its moral and cosmic law that sustains life, is similar to *rta* (Jain, 2011; Verma, 2022b). Jain asserts, “Both Rta and Dharma reflect the same cosmic order that sustains the universe, reinforcing the harmony and structure of the cosmos”.

The Upanisadic philosophers knew the five elements, the Panchabhutas that make the World: the Earth, water, fire, air, and the ether (Skof, 2021). The teachings from Jaiminiya Upanisads¹¹ (3.2.2) exemplify an analogy between macrocosmic wind, *Vayu*, and microcosmic *Prana* [wind and breathing doctrines]. An example of the relation between the microcosm and the macrocosm is that Hanuman, during his departure to Lanka, prayed to the Panchabhutas for divine and natural guidance. *Vayuputra* [Son of the Windgod], Hanuman took the macrocosm's help, taking a deep breath before He flew. In Panchabhutas, the wind is always active. At the same time, in the human body, through breathing, it is the only element that is continuously seen alive (during sleep, living beings breathe) (Skof, 2021). Hanuman successfully takes his leap in the macrocosm through his internal breath control process.

“Having cast his eyes upward to view the distance and direction in which he had to leap, he restrained his breath in his chest while looking at the sky” (Valmiki Ramayana 5.1.37, NSU).

This standpoint nurtures a deep sense of unity, mutual reliance with the natural world, and interconnectedness with nature. In this interconnectedness, the traditional boundary between inside and outside fades, leading to mindfulness of continuous, reciprocal relationships between humans and nature. Thich Nhat Hanh used the idea of ‘interbeing’ to explain this view. “To experience interbeing is to recognize the inherent other within our ecological self. This shift in orientation awakens us to a deeper reality beyond the ego and connects us to the cosmic dimension”.

“Nature, however, unveiled a grandeur that transcends the metaphorical constraints of individual evolution, showcasing unparalleled complexity, variability, and remarkable resilience. An ecosystem, akin to a symphony, can gracefully lose its contributing species and undergo transformative metamorphoses without succumbing to collapse. However, as Commoner stated, the delicate dance of interconnectedness in nature also unveils a vulnerability, for ecological systems, when subjected to severe stress, may witness sudden, awe-inducing catastrophes” (Neetu, 2025). The ecological system, Commoner wrote, “remains stable through self-compensating mechanisms but if these mechanisms are pushed beyond their limits, a sudden and dramatic collapse can occur.” He further said, “An ecological system acts as an amplifier so that a small perturbation in one place can trigger a significant, distant, and delayed impact elsewhere” (Commoner, 1971).

⁸ See Radhakrishnan, S. (2006). “Principal Upanisads” and “Reconceiving the Ecological Wisdoms of Vedānta in Anthropocene: An Eco-aesthetical Perspective” (Verma & Dwivedi, 2020)—Rupkatha—*parasparam upakarakā- bhavē phalitāmaha*

⁹ Chapter Ecosophy T: unity and diversity of life, on Gita, (194). “Ecology, Community and lifestyle: outline of an ecosophy”, Arne Naess, Trans. and Ed. By David Rothenberg, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

¹⁰ P. Olivelle, Upanishads, trans. and Introd. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. iii). The central concern of all Vedic thinkers, including the authors of the Upanisads, is to discover the connections that bind elements of spheres, macrocosm to microcosm. The assumption is that the universe constitutes a web of relations (of cosmic relations, like bandhu).

¹¹ The Jaiminiya Pg 9 on Vayu

Online: <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.38101/page/n123/mode/2up?q=vayu>

Both of these concepts indicate the presence of a vast network of interconnections in the ecosphere, where various forms of life are intricately intertwined like branches in a lush forest, where individual organisms and their physicochemical environments are metaphorically the verses of a cosmic poem. Therefore, the following verse seeks universal peace through nature,

We seek peace for Universal welfare in the form of appeasing cosmic elements – Earth, peace; atmosphere, peace; space, peace; directions, peace; fire, peace; sun, peace; water, peace; plants, peace; and human, peace. (Lakra, 2024)

Om̐dyauḥśāntir antarikṣagum̐śāntiḥpr̥thivī śāntir āpaḥśāntir oṣadhayaḥśāntiḥ/ vanaspatayaḥśāntir viśve devāḥśāntir brahma śāntiḥsarvagum̐śāntiḥśāntir eva śāntiḥsā mā śāntir edhi// om̐śāntiḥśāntiḥśāntiḥ// (Yajurveda, 36.17)

REFERENCES

- [1] Amirthalingam, & Sudhakar, P. (2013). *Plant and Animal Diversity in Valmiki's Ramayana*, Chennai. CPR Environmental Education Center.
- [2] Arcos, Delorme, & Gerald Hess. (2024). Elements of a First-Person Ecology: Historical Roots, Recognition and Ecospirituality. *Philosophies*, (9)4, p. 91. <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies9040091>
- [3] Awasthi, A. (2021). A Reinterpretation of Hindu Spirituality for Addressing Environmental Problems. *Religions*, 12(5), p. 358.
- [4] Bayuseto, A. (2023). Eco Dhamma: Buddhist Philosophies for Environmental Stewardship in Sukabumi, Indonesia. *Smaratungga: Journal of Education and Buddhist Studies*, 2, 117–132. doi:10.53417/sjebbs.v3i2.119
- [5] Bilimoria, Prabhu, J. & Sharma, R. (2016). *Indian Ethics: Classical Tradition and Contemporary Challenges*. Routledge.
- [6] Carson, Rachel. (2002). *Silent Spring*. Mariner Books.
- [7] Chapman, J. L., & Reiss, M. J. (2012). *Ecology: Principles and Applications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Commoner, Barry. (1971). *The Closing Circle. Nature, Man, and Technology*. New York: Dover Publications.
- [9] Das, Manish, Weng Marc Lim, Sulbhrajit Paul, Abhirupa Roy, & Sonal Purohit. (2025). How can Religion shape Pro-Environmental Behaviour in a materialistic world? Contrasting Idealism with Realism Religious Epic. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 24(3), 1300-1326.
- [10] Deendayal Upadhyay Research Institute. Retrieved February 2, 2025, from <http://www.dri.org.in/>
- [11] Gottlieb, Roger S. (2009). *Introduction: Religion and Ecology- What is the connection and why does it matter?* The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology. Oxford University Press.
- [12] Hall, Mathew, Grimm, John, Tucker, & Mary Evelyn. (2009). “Need for religions to promote the Values of Conservation. *Nature*, 462, 7274-720.
- [13] Horsthemke, Kai. (2018). “Environmental Education and Education for Sustainability, Biophilia and Ecophilia.” *Animal Rights Education*, 131–154. Doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-98593-0-510.
- [14] Hubbell, J. A., & J. C. Ryan. (2021). *Introduction to the Environmental Humanities*. Taylor & Francis.
- [15] Hung, Ruy. (2008). Educating For and Through Nature: A Merleau-Pontian Approach. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 27, 355–367. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11217-007-9059-X>
- [16] Jain, & Suresh Ramana. (2024). Perspective of Jainism on the Socio-Cultural and Environmental Values of Sacred Trees. *Journal of Dharma Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42240-024-00186>
- [17] Jain, Arunachalam, Singh, Handa, Ramanan, & Verdiya. (2024). ‘Perspective of Jainism on the Socio-Cultural and Environmental Values of Sacred Trees. *Journal of Dharma Studies*, Springer, 7(3), 299-313. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42240-024-00189/6>.
- [18] Jain, Pankaj. (2011). *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities: Sustenance and Sustainability*. Surrey, Ashgate.
- [19] Jeffery D. Long. (2022). Advaita Vedanta and Its Implications for Deep Ecology. *Journal of Dharma Studies*, 6(1), p. 12. doi:10.1007/s42240-022-00129-2
- [20] Joshi, Naresh Chandra. (2012). *Atharva Veda Prithvi Sukta*. Navjivan Books.
- [21] Khan, Khumbongmayum, & Tripath, R. S. (2008). Sacred groves and their significance in Conserving Biodiversity: An Overview. *International Journal of Ecology and Environmental Sciences*, 34, 277-291.
- [22] Lakra, Rajen. (2024). Echoes of Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam in Gandhi's Ahimsā, *Journal of Dharma*, 49, 2, 159–172.
- [23] Lee, David. (2000). *The Natural History of the Ramayana* (Christopher. K. Chapple, & Mary. E. Tucker, Eds.). *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky & Water*, 245-268. Harvard, MA: Harvard Divinity School.
- [24] Londhe, Manali. (2018). Vedic concept of Rta. *Indian Philosophies. Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy*, 16, 143–148.
- [25] Lou, Loretta I. T. (2023). Healing Nature, Spiritual Ecology, Self-Cultivation, and Social Transformation in Hong Kong. *Worldviews*, 27, 189–209. Brill.
- [26] Lutgendorf, P. (2001). City, Forest and Cosmos: Ecological Perspectives from the Sanskrit Epics (Christopher Chapple, Key & Tucker, Mary Evelyn, Eds.). *Hinduism and Ecology*, 276-278. UK: Oxford University Press.
- [27] Malhotra, Rajiv. (2013). *Being Different: An Indian challenge to western universalism*. HarperCollins Publishers, India.
- [28] Miles, Malcolm. (2014). *Eco-Aesthetics: Art, Literature and Architecture in a Period of Climate Change*. London: Radical Aesthetics-Radical Art Series. Bloomsbury Academic.
- [29] Mitra, Piyali. (2019). Jainism and Environmental Ethics: An Exploration. *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, 36(1), 3-22.
- [30] Mulyanto D, B., Supangkat, H. E., & Nurseto, J. Iskandar. (2023). Ethno-botanical identification of Mango (*Mangifera Indica* L.) and other fruit trees mentioned in the Old Javanese Ramayana. *Biodiversitas Journal of Biological Diversity*, Vol 24(1), 609-616.

- [31] Nadkarni, N. M. (2017). Ecology (Jenkins, M. E., Tucker, & J. Grim, Eds.). *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, 412–441. London: Routledge.
- [32] Nandhikkara, Jose. (2015). Role of Religion in Society. *Journal of Dharma*, 40(2), 149–154.
- [33] Naess, Arne. (1989). Chapter Ecosophy T: unity and diversity of life, on the Gita (David Rothenberg, Ed). *Ecology, Community and lifestyle: outline of an ecosophy*. Cambridge University Press.
- [34] Neethu, & Bhuvaneswari, V. (2024). Eco-Dharma and Climate Change: An Ecospective Rendition of Valmiki Ramayana and Hindu Eco-Praxis for Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Living. *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society*, 15(1), 145–163. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP/v15i01/>
- [35] Oertel, Hanns (Trans.). (1894). *The Jaiminiya or Talavakara*. New Haven: The American oriental Society.
- [36] Olivelle, Patrick (Trans.). (1996). *Upanishads*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [37] Pal, Payel. (2023). Witnessing Tribal life and the Environment: An Ecological Rereading of the select Narratives of Mahasweta Devi. *NALANS: Journal of narratives and language studies*, 11(21), 118–129.
- [38] Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos. (2011). Looking for the Space between Law and Ecology. *Law and Ecology*, 1–17. Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203829691-1
- [39] Piotr, Ochwat, & Magdalena. (2023). On the Role of Symbiotic Thinking in the Age of the Anthropocene. *Environmental Philosophy as World Philosophy. Dialogue and Universalism*, 33(2), 37–60.
- [40] Pojman, Paul, & Pojman, Louis. (2017). Environmental Ethics: readings in theory and application. *The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecological Movement*, p. 218. Cengage Learning.
- [41] Radhakrishnan, S. (1923). Panchabhutas. *Kerala Sahitya Akademi*, 1(99), 196–199. Indian Philosophy.
- [42] Ram, Tulsi. (2013). *यजुर्वेद* [Yajurveda]. Ajmer, Paropakarini Sabha Press.
- [43] Rangan, R. (2011). *What is Dharma? In the light of the Vedic mantras and the Ramayana*. The core Principles of webolim. Bangalore.
- [44] Roy, Mira. (2005). “Environment and Ecology in the Ramayana”. *Indian Journal of Historical Science*, 40(1), 9–29.
- [45] *ऋग्वेद* [Rig-Veda]. Retrieved February 7, 2025, from <http://archive.org/details/rigveda>
- [46] Shamasastri, R. (1951). Kautilya’s Arthashastra. *Punishment for violating justice*, 13, pp. 292, Mysore Press.
- [47] Shanmugapriya, K., & Christopher, G. (2023). “Eco-philosophy of Indian classical fables”. *Ecocycles*, 9(1), 100–106. <https://doi.org/10.19040/ecocycles.v9i1.286>.
- [48] Sinha, Amita. (1998). Landscapes of Ramayana. *Geographical Review of India*, 60(1), 18–25.
- [49] Sivakumar, T. (2023). Sanjeevani (Selaginella bryopteris): A magical, miracle herb and its Therapeutic applications- An updated review. *Journal of Xidian University*, 2923. doi: 10.37896/jxu17.7/003.
- [50] Skof, Lenart. (2021). The Food, Water, Air, and Fire Doctrines in Ancient Indian and Greek Philosophies from A Comparative Perspective. *Asian Studies*, 9(25), 303–320. doi: 10.4312/as. 2021.9.3.303-320
- [51] *जैमिनिय* [The Jaiminiya]. Retrieved March 2, 2025, from <http://archive.org>.
- [52] *The Ramayana of Valmiki*. Retrieved March 22, 2025, from <https://www.valmiki.iitk.ac/>
- [53] Tucker, Mary Evelyn, & Grimm, John. *The nature of the environmental crisis*. Retrieved March 6, 2025, from <https://earthcharter.org/wp-content/assets/virtual-library2>
- [54] Valmiki Ramayana. (2006). *With Sanskrit Text and English Translation*, vols 1 & 2. Gorakhpur, UP: Gita Press.
- [55] Valmiki, Amita. (2021). Ecofeminism and Social Ecology in Indian Context: Exploration in Customs, Cultures, and Religions. *Future Human Image*, 100, 108. <https://doi.org/10.29202/fhi/16/10>.
- [56] Verma, & Dwivedi. (2020). Reconceiving the Ecological Wisdoms of Vedanta in Anthropocene. An eco-aesthetic perspective. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 12(5), 1–6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha>.
- [57] Verma, & Dwivedi. (2022). Eco-consciousness in Valmiki Ramayana. An aesthetic study of Ecological Integrity and Biodiversity. *The World of Orient*, 4, 221–234. <http://doi.org/10.15407/orientw2022.04.221>
- [58] Verma, & Diwedi. (2023). Re-Gestating the Eco-Ethics of Ramayana in Anthropocene: An Eco-Aesthetical Approach. *Journal of Dharma*, 48(1), 47–64.
- [59] Wilson, Edward. (1984). *Biophilia*. Harvard University Press.
- [60] Zapf, Hubert. (2016). *Literature as Cultural Ecology: Sustainable Texts*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ishwaria Prabhakaran (First Author) is an internal Full-time Research scholar in the Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore campus, India. E-mail: ishwaria.p@vit.ac.in

Soumen Mukherjee (Corresponding Author) is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore campus, India. E-mail: soumen.mukherjee@vit.ac.in

Displacement, Alienation, and Intergenerational Conflicts in Arab Diasporic Literature

Baraah I. AlGharaibeh

English Language and Literature, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—This study explores the themes of displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflict in Arab diasporic literature, highlighting their influence on identity formation and the lived experiences of characters in the diaspora. Displacement, both physical and emotional, is central to these narratives, as characters confront the challenges of adapting to new environments while preserving ties to their cultural heritage. Alienation arises as a consequence of divided identities, with individuals struggling to reconcile their Arab roots with the cultures of their host countries. Intergenerational conflict further complicates these dynamics, as first-generation immigrants seek to preserve traditional values while younger generations strive for autonomy and adaptation. The study presents a comparative analysis of key works by Arab diasporic authors, including Randa Jarrar's *A Map of Home*, Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Hanan al-Shaykh's *The Story of Zahra*, Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. Through the lens of postcolonial, psychological, and acculturation theories, this research examines how these literary works portray the intricate interplay of identity, cultural preservation, and generational tensions. The findings reveal that Arab diasporic literature reflects the complexities of migration, illuminating broader themes of cultural adaptation and belonging in a globalized world. Additionally, the study identifies areas for future research, including underrepresented voices and the role of language in shaping diasporic identity.

Index Terms—Arab diaspora, intergenerational conflict, cultural adaptation, postcolonial theory

I. INTRODUCTION

The Arab diaspora has a rich and complex history, shaped by various political, economic, and social upheavals that have forced millions of individuals to leave their homelands. The Arab world has witnessed waves of migration due to war, political instability, and economic hardship. As a result, Arab diasporic communities have emerged globally, often residing in Western countries such as the United States, France, and Canada, among others. These migrant communities face unique challenges, which are explored in Arab diasporic literature, particularly through themes of displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflicts.

Arab diasporic literature offers profound insight into the experiences of migration and exile, revealing how individuals navigate their new identities and negotiate between their native and adopted cultures. Displacement refers to the physical and psychological uprooting of individuals from their homelands, alienation is the feeling of disconnection from society and self, and intergenerational conflicts describe the struggles between first-generation immigrants and their children. These themes are central to understanding the complexities of diasporic existence and will be explored in this study through a close analysis of key texts.

Displacement is one of the defining characteristics of diasporic life. It involves not just the physical relocation of individuals from their homelands but also the emotional and psychological processes that accompany such a transition. For many Arab migrants, displacement is often driven by traumatic events such as war, political oppression, or economic crises. The loss of home, the rupture of familial ties, and the absence of a stable socio-political environment can leave lasting scars on the psyche of the displaced. In Arab diasporic literature, displacement is portrayed not only as a literal removal from one's homeland but also as a metaphor for the alienation and dislocation experienced in new environments. Writers such as Hanan al-Shaykh and Rachid Boudjedra highlight how the loss of home becomes a central theme in their works. Al-Shaykh's *The Story of Zahra* (1986), for instance, delves into the struggles of a woman displaced by the Lebanese Civil War, exploring the emotional costs of uprooting and the longing for a home that no longer exists.

Alienation, both from the host society and from one's own cultural identity, is another recurring theme in Arab diasporic literature. The concept of alienation, as discussed by scholars such as Marx (1844), Weber (1922), and more recently, Said (1978), involves a feeling of estrangement or marginalization in a foreign society. For many Arab immigrants, the sense of not fully belonging to either the home country or the adopted country creates a liminal space in which they struggle to assert a cohesive identity. The alienation of Arab diasporic characters can be observed in the works of writers like Leila Aboulela, whose novel *Minaret* (2005) follows a young Sudanese woman navigating her identity in London. The protagonist's internal conflict reflects the alienation many Arab immigrants experience in the diaspora, caught between the traditions of her homeland and the secular, often hostile environment of the West. Moreover, the alienation of the body and language is a significant theme. In works by authors such as Ghassan Kanafani and Samira Azzam, the characters frequently encounter challenges in expressing themselves and maintaining connections with their past. The

linguistic divide between Arabic and the host language further complicates the emotional experience of exile, contributing to a sense of fragmentation and loss of self.

One of the most poignant aspects of the Arab diasporic experience is the intergenerational conflict between immigrant parents and their children, who often find themselves torn between the culture of their parents and the dominant culture of the host society. This generational divide is a common theme in literature that explores the Arab diaspora, as it highlights the differing attitudes and values between the first-generation immigrants and their children, who are born or raised in the West. The first generation of immigrants often clings to the values and traditions of their homeland, seeing them as essential to their identity. The second generation, however, grows up in a different cultural milieu, where they experience both the push of their parents' heritage and the pull of the broader, often more liberal, societal values of the host country. This tension can lead to misunderstandings, resentment, and a sense of confusion about one's identity. Authors like Hanan al-Shaykh and Jabbour Douaihy explore these dynamics in works such as *The Invisible Life of Euridice Gusmão* (2016) and *The Vagrant* (2013), respectively, in which the tensions between the desire to assimilate and the obligation to preserve cultural identity come to the forefront.

This generational conflict also manifests in the different ways in which young Arabs navigate their sexuality, religion, and social roles. As noted by scholars such as Selim (2005), the younger generation often feels the weight of both worlds, which can lead to feelings of estrangement from both their parents and their peers in the host society. Arab diasporic literature serves as an invaluable lens through which to explore the themes of displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflicts. These texts provide a rich, multifaceted view of the complexities of migration and exile, offering an emotional and intellectual exploration of how individuals from the Arab world adapt to life in the diaspora while maintaining ties to their roots. By examining these literary works, we can better understand the psychological, cultural, and social dimensions of the Arab diasporic experience.

The analysis of these themes in Arab diasporic literature is crucial for several reasons. First, it sheds light on the experiences of a group often marginalized in mainstream Western discourses. Second, it highlights the emotional toll of displacement and the difficult process of creating a new identity while negotiating the pressures of multiple cultural allegiances. Finally, it underscores the importance of literature as a medium for expressing the nuanced experiences of exile and belonging.

II. DISCUSSION

Displacement in Arab Diasporic Literature

Displacement, often rooted in political upheaval, economic hardship, or social unrest, has profoundly influenced Arab communities worldwide. The Arab diaspora, shaped by historical migration waves—particularly following the Arab Spring, civil wars, and ongoing socio-political turbulence in the Middle East—offers a unique perspective on alienation and intergenerational conflict in literature (Hassan, 2011). Arab diasporic literature, which includes works by writers who have migrated or whose families have migrated, frequently explores the psychological and cultural consequences of migration, the loss of home, and the transformation of identity in a globalized world. These intertwined themes provide insight into the socio-political and personal experiences of diaspora communities. By engaging with these issues, Arab diasporic authors contribute to the broader discourse on migration and identity (Ahmed, 2018).

In Arab diasporic literature, displacement refers to the experience of migration or exile due to political, social, or economic factors, often linked to conflict in the Arab world. This theme is central to understanding the emotional, psychological, and cultural upheavals faced by those uprooted from their homelands. Writers explore the complexities of identity, belonging, memory, and cultural conflict that arise from living between two worlds. Displacement is not merely about physical relocation but also concerns the existential struggle of redefining oneself in a foreign space (Al-Musawi, 2015). The resulting sense of dislocation and alienation is a recurring theme, manifesting in the loss of "home," the trauma of being an outsider, and the challenges of navigating new identities.

Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* is a seminal text illustrating the complexities of displacement and the challenges of reconciling personal and cultural identities. The protagonist, Mustafa Sa'eed, returns to Sudan after years in England, where he experiences both education and alienation. Salih's novel explores how Mustafa's displacement fragments his sense of self, positioning migration as not just an escape from physical circumstances but a psychological transformation (Gana, 2008). His identity remains divided between his Sudanese roots and his European experiences, deepening his sense of internal exile. The novel suggests that displacement can lead to a loss of self and heightened alienation. Additionally, Salih engages with post-colonial themes, illustrating how migration in the context of colonial histories leaves a lasting legacy. Mustafa remains caught between cultures, unable to fully belong to either the Western or the Arab world. Thus, displacement in *Season of Migration to the North* extends beyond physical movement to the emotional and psychological tensions of living between two cultures (Mahjoub, 2013).

Similarly, Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* portrays displacement through the cross-cultural experiences of two women, Anna Winterbourne and Amal al-Ghamrawi. While Anna is not an immigrant in the conventional sense—she is a British woman who voluntarily travels to Egypt during the early 20th century—her immersion into a foreign culture and subsequent emotional and ideological transformation reflect a form of cultural displacement. Her Egyptian lover, Sharif al-Baroudi, though not an immigrant either, returns to Egypt after spending time abroad, grappling with questions of identity and national loyalty in a colonial context (Halim, 2006). Through their descendants, the novel connects the

personal to the political, particularly in Amal's narrative, which engages more directly with the modern diasporic condition through travel and familial legacy. While Anna and Sharif are not immigrants, Soueif uses their transnational movements and hybrid identities to mirror the dislocation experienced by diasporic individuals. The novel underscores how colonial history and imperial legacies construct forms of cultural negotiation that resonate with the immigrant experience—emphasizing memory, hybridity, and longing for home (Moore, 2012).

To further ground this exploration of displacement in the lived realities of Arab immigrants, Randa Jarrar's *A Map of Home* offers a complementary perspective. The novel follows Nidali, a young girl of Palestinian-Egyptian heritage who migrates with her family from Kuwait to the United States during the Gulf War. As Nidali navigates adolescence in the American post-9/11, the novel confronts the emotional and cultural fragmentation of exile. Her experience of displacement includes both a literal migration and the metaphorical struggle to claim identity amid conflicting familial, religious, and national influences. Jarrar's work adds depth to the theme of displacement by illustrating the ongoing identity negotiations that occur in diasporic lives, particularly among second-generation immigrants.

Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* further explores displacement through the life of Khadra Shamy, a Syrian-American woman navigating the challenges of being a Muslim immigrant in post-9/11 America. Kahf's novel examines both the psychological and social dimensions of displacement as Khadra struggles between her parents' traditional Syrian values and the American culture she is trying to embrace (Orfalea, 2014). This tension intensifies in the wake of 9/11, when Khadra becomes increasingly alienated due to racial and religious discrimination. Beyond physical migration, Kahf presents displacement as an emotional struggle for identity, shaped by societal marginalization. As in other works of Arab diasporic literature, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* illustrates how displacement is not merely about changing locations but also about the ongoing quest for belonging and recognition (Abdelrazek, 2007).

Scholars have long recognized displacement as a central theme in Arab diasporic literature. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) underscores how colonial dynamics shape the experience of displacement, arguing that Arab migrants in the West are often viewed through a lens of stereotypes and exoticism. Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) introduces the concept of hybridity, explaining how diasporic individuals create new identities through cultural interaction. Nair (2009) expands on this, examining how Arab diasporic literature reflects the continuous negotiation of identity amid political and cultural upheaval. Through these perspectives, Arab diasporic writers use displacement as a framework to explore migration, home, and the fragmentation of identity.

Alienation in Arab Diasporic Literature

Alienation is a pervasive theme in Arab diasporic literature, arising from displacement, cultural fragmentation, and existential estrangement. It is not merely a result of migration or exile but a complex psychological and cultural process that underscores tensions between identity, belonging, and assimilation. According to Said (2000), alienation in postcolonial literature reflects the struggle of individuals who feel disconnected from their homeland yet cannot fully integrate into their new environment. Moreover, alienation in this literature manifests in various forms; cultural, social, emotional, and psychological, shaping the narratives of many Arab diasporic writers (El-Ariss, 2013).

Arab diasporic writers explore alienation through diverse narrative forms, from personal memoirs to fiction depicting the lives of migrants, refugees, and their descendants. As observed by Nouri (2017), this sense of estrangement often stems from the inner conflict between preserving one's cultural heritage and adapting to the norms of the host society. As a result, writers portray protagonists caught between these expectations, navigating cultural dissonance and societal pressures. For instance, in *A Map of Home*, Randa Jarrar examines the alienation of Nidali, a young Arab-American woman grappling with her identity. According to Alghamdi (2018), Jarrar's work highlights how cultural hybridity contributes to alienation, as Nidali becomes increasingly distanced from both her parents' traditional values and the American culture surrounding her, leading to a profound sense of isolation. Additionally, Jarrar's work explores the racial and cultural dynamics that deepen Nidali's alienation. As noted by Alsultany (2012), post-9/11 narratives often depict Arab and Muslim characters facing intensified discrimination, shaping their experiences of alienation. Similarly, in *Disorder of the World*, Amin Maalouf examines alienation through a protagonist torn between his Arab heritage and Western education, illustrating intellectual estrangement from both cultures. Through this lens, Maalouf critiques the social and political forces that contribute to this isolation, highlighting how globalized societies often fail to fully accept individuals from marginalized backgrounds (Darraj, 2014).

Beyond personal experiences, alienation in Arab diasporic literature is analyzed through post-colonial and critical race theory. Fanon (1963) argues that alienation results from colonialism, as colonized individuals internalize feelings of inferiority. Similarly, Bhabha (1994) introduces the concept of "hybridity," describing how diasporic individuals develop identities that are neither fully of the host culture nor entirely rooted in their native one, reinforcing a sense of in-betweenness. Al-Shraideh (2020) further asserts that Arab diasporic literature frequently engages with these theories to contextualize identity struggles within historical and sociopolitical frameworks.

Philosophically, alienation has been explored by Karl Marx, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus, who define it as isolation from the self, society, or others. In the context of Arab diasporic literature, this concept encompasses both emotional displacement and social marginalization (Hassan, 2011). Ultimately, alienation extends beyond physical migration, capturing the internal struggle of reconciling cultural identity with societal expectations. As a result, protagonists in these works often exist in a liminal space, belonging fully to neither their original home nor their new one.

As Bensmaïa (2015) suggests, this state of being “neither here nor there” is a defining characteristic of alienation in Arab diasporic literature.

Intergenerational Conflicts in Arab Diasporic Literature

Intergenerational conflicts are another key theme in Arab diasporic literature, as they frequently emerge when younger generations, born or raised in the diaspora, struggle to reconcile their parents' traditional values with their own aspirations for adaptation and integration. According to Ahmed (2018), such conflicts often arise due to differing perceptions of identity, where younger generations seek autonomy while their parents emphasize cultural preservation. As a result, tensions develop regarding cultural identity, values, and expectations. For instance, Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* explores the intergenerational conflict between a young Sudanese woman, Sammar, and her more traditional father. In this novel, Sammar, who has been educated in the West, adopts secular, modern values, which directly clash with her father's insistence on preserving traditional Islamic beliefs. As observed by Hassan and El-Ariss (2020), this generational divide is often intensified by political and religious contexts, making it a poignant depiction of the struggles faced by immigrants caught between their heritage and the pressures of assimilation.

Moreover, Aboulela's work highlights how younger generations in the diaspora often feel compelled to negotiate their identities, balancing personal autonomy with filial duty. As Said (2019) argues, diasporic narratives frequently depict young Arab protagonists grappling with dual identities, torn between Western individualism and familial expectations. In particular, Sammar's conflict takes on a spiritual dimension, as she must navigate the tension between her secular beliefs and her father's religious expectations. Similarly, Arab diasporic literature more broadly provides valuable insights into the psychological, emotional, and cultural challenges associated with displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflict. For example, writers like Tayeb Salih, Ahdaf Soueif, Mohja Kahf, Randa Jarrar, and Leila Aboulela illustrate the complexities of identity formation in a diasporic context. As noted by Al-Musawi (2021), their works explore how migration and displacement impact not only individuals but also their relationships with family and society. Thus, these narratives contribute to a broader understanding of the experiences of Arab migrants, emphasizing the tensions between home and belonging, as well as the generational struggles that arise from cultural negotiation.

Intergenerational conflict refers to the tensions and misunderstandings that arise between different generations of a family due to differences in attitudes, values, and cultural practices. As explored by Karmi (2017), these conflicts are often shaped by the interplay of tradition and modernity, with immigrant parents struggling to uphold cultural values in a foreign environment. In the case of the Arab diaspora, these conflicts are often shaped by the intersection of deeply rooted cultural traditions and the pressures of integrating into a new society. Specifically, immigrant parents tend to carry the cultural baggage of their homeland, which they seek to impose on their children as a means of preserving their heritage. Conversely, the younger generation frequently finds themselves caught between these inherited traditions and the desire to assimilate into the dominant culture of their host country. As noted by Mernissi (2016), this generational divide is often most apparent in disagreements over career choices, romantic relationships, religious practices, and cultural customs. On the one hand, the younger generation may feel alienated from their parents' values; on the other hand, the older generation often perceives this as a rejection of their cultural heritage. Ultimately, this tension fosters an environment of misunderstanding, frustration, and, in some cases, estrangement—issues that are vividly explored in Arab diasporic literature.

The selection of literary texts was essential for capturing diverse perspectives on displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflict in Arab diasporic experiences. Texts were chosen based on their focus on Arab diaspora themes, geographic and temporal diversity, and contributions by prominent authors like Tayeb Salih, Ahdaf Soueif, and Randa Jarrar. These works provided insights into the struggles of first- and second-generation immigrants in negotiating identity and belonging. The primary data consisted of novels written by the selected Arab diasporic authors. These texts were read closely, with key passages identified for further analysis. Each text is examined multiple times to ensure that all relevant themes and subtleties are captured.

Displacement is a central theme in Arab diasporic literature, reflecting the multifaceted experience of migration that goes beyond physical relocation to encompass emotional, psychological, and cultural dislocation. Drawing on postcolonial theory, particularly Edward Said's notion of “imaginative geography” (1978), the diaspora is often depicted as a space of simultaneous estrangement and longing. Characters grapple with the complexity of finding a sense of belonging both in their host countries and their countries of origin—a tension encapsulated in Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, where identity is shaped in the “third space” between conflicting cultural demands.

In *A Map of Home* by Randa Jarrar, the protagonist Nidali experiences a persistent longing for her ancestral home but cannot fully reconnect with it, nor does she feel at home in the United States. As she reflects on her situation, Jarrar writes, “I was caught between two worlds, and I didn't belong in either” (Jarrar, 2008, p. 108). Here, Jarrar's writing encapsulates the diasporic tension of liminality, where Nidali occupies a cultural “in-between” space that renders her identity unstable. The novel juxtaposes Nidali's youthful rebellion in America—where she cuts class, flirts, and writes poetry—with her father's authoritarian insistence on Palestinian pride and tradition. One telling scene is when Nidali's father forbids her from attending a school dance, saying, “We didn't survive war and exile for you to become an American girl” (Jarrar, 2008, p. 118). This moment is charged with more than parental control—it dramatizes the inherited trauma and the father's projection of cultural preservation onto his daughter's body and choices. Nidali's resistance becomes an assertion of selfhood against generational expectations. Hence, this sentiment captures the emotional and psychological fragmentation

experienced by the first generation of immigrants, as well as the divided identity of their children, who struggle to find a place of belonging in the diaspora.

Similarly, in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* by Mohja Kahf, Khadra's internal conflict illustrates the generational tension between her desire to embrace American values and her family's expectations of cultural preservation (Kahf, 2006, p. 132). Here, Kahf uses the recurring image of the hijab as a metaphor for Khadra's identity negotiation. In one scene, Khadra looks at herself in the mirror, imagining how she appears to Americans: "an alien in a scarf" symbolic of W.E.B. Du Bois's "double consciousness" (Kahf, 2006, p. 132). The mirror here functions as a literal and figurative device reflecting Khadra's double vision — the internalized gaze of both Arab-Muslim expectations and American stereotypes. Her decision to briefly remove the hijab during college became a radical symbolic act of resistance and self-definition, particularly in a post-9/11 American context. This action also reflects the acculturative stress described in John W. Berry's model, particularly the marginalization felt when neither full assimilation nor cultural preservation offers comfort (Berry, 1997). Her silence in response to her mother's plea—"Your scarf is your honor"—signals the generational rift between autonomy and cultural heritage, deepened by the psychological tension of bicultural identity.

In *The Map of Love* by Ahdaf Soueif, the theme of displacement is explored through characters who are not only physically displaced but also emotionally disconnected from both their homeland and their host society due to colonial histories and generational legacies. In Soueif's narrative, one character, Amal, reflects on her ancestral past and the challenges of reconciling it with the present: "I do not know where home is anymore" (Soueif, 1999, p. 210). This sentiment aligns with postcolonial disorientation, shaped by Egypt's colonial past. Through the motif of letters and archives, the novel enacts Bhabha's hybrid textual space—a site where identity is interpreted through fragments of memory and legacy (Bhabha, 1994). Amal's act of decoding Anna's journals becomes a metaphor for reconstructing a disjointed identity. Her emotional dislocation, intensified by colonial trauma, is further echoed in Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun*, which similarly explores national and gendered identities dislocated by imperial and familial forces.

Similarly, in *The Story of Zahra* by Hanan al-Shaykh, Zahra's displacement is more than a physical journey—it is an emotional and psychological one. Zahra's alienation stems from her inability to fit into both her homeland's traditional norms and the liberal, modern values she encounters in the West. As Zahra reflects, "I couldn't go back, and I didn't belong here" (al-Shaykh, 1986, p. 79), this follows traumatic experiences that underscore her fractured psyche. The disjointed narrative mirrors Zahra's internal disintegration, echoing Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, which views unspoken trauma as a rupture in identity (Caruth, 1996). Zahra's silence following sexual assault reflects not just fear, but psychic repression—a means of survival within the oppressive frameworks of both patriarchy and war. Her rebellion becomes a gendered assertion of voice within a space of systemic silencing.

Alienation emerges as a natural consequence of displacement. In Arab diasporic literature, alienation is both cultural and psychological. In *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Khadra's reflection—"I was caught between the culture of my family and the one I was learning at school" (Kahf, 2006, p. 215)—exemplifies Berry's (1997) integration struggle, where simultaneous cultural adaptation and preservation lead to identity conflict. This fragmentation is not unique to Khadra; it recurs across diasporic narratives as a recurring psychosocial crisis, a concept rooted in Erik Erikson's (1968) model of identity development, where adolescence and young adulthood become key sites of self-construction amid contradictory cultural pressures.

In *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih, Mustafa Sa'eed's journey between Sudan and Britain reveals a profound sense of psychological alienation. Mustafa finds himself an outsider in both cultures: "I am neither of here nor of there" (Salih, 1969, p. 90). This encapsulates the identity crisis that often accompanies migration, as individuals are torn between conflicting cultural expectations and are forced to redefine themselves in the face of both external and internal alienation. The theme of gendered alienation in Arab diasporic literature is significant, particularly in the context of women's struggles to maintain their autonomy in the face of traditional cultural expectations. In *A Map of Home*, Randa Jarrar explores Nidali's alienation not only from the larger society but from her family, especially as she seeks independence and rejects the traditional roles prescribed to her. "My mother wanted me to be the daughter she dreamed of, but I had my own dreams" (Jarrar, 2008, p. 157). Similarly, Zahra's struggles in *The Story of Zahra* reflect a rejection of the gendered expectations imposed by her family, as she seeks a life that balances both independence and respect for her heritage (al-Shaykh, 1986).

The concept of "double consciousness," as described by W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), resonates deeply with second generation characters in Arab diasporic literature. In *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Khadra embodies this experience, constantly negotiating her Arab identity in a predominantly Western society. As she struggles to find acceptance in both communities, she states, "I was both foreign and not foreign, both accepted and not accepted" (Kahf, 2006, p. 190). This internal conflict reflects the heightened awareness of "otherness" that many second-generation immigrants experience, leading to a pervasive sense of isolation and confusion about their place in the world.

Intergenerational conflict is another defining feature of Arab diasporic literature. These tensions are often rooted in differing degrees of acculturation and responses to host cultures. In *A Map of Home*, Nidali's yearning for freedom clashes with her family's desire for cultural preservation: "I wanted freedom to define myself, but my family wanted me to be the person they had imagined" (Jarrar, 2008, p. 202). Her parents' desire to reproduce homeland values in exile is part of what acculturation theory identifies as the separation strategy (Berry, 1997), while Nidali leans toward integration or even

assimilation. This mismatch creates emotional strain and identity instability, common among second-generation immigrants navigating conflicting cultural codes.

The expectation to maintain cultural traditions is a burden passed down to the second generation, creating emotional tension. In *The Story of Zahra*, Zahra's rebellion against her mother's insistence on preserving traditional values underscores the psychological weight of these expectations. As Zahra narrates, "Every time my mother spoke of tradition, I felt it pressing down on me" (al-Shaykh, 1986, p. 132). Similarly, in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Khadra's internal struggle between her parents' traditional values and the liberal American culture she encounters illustrates the emotional challenges of the second generation. As Khadra confides, "I couldn't choose between the two worlds, and that made me feel like I didn't belong to either" (Kahf, 2006, p. 245). This conflict leads to a profound sense of alienation and identity crisis, as second-generation immigrants attempt to navigate the complexities of cultural belonging in both their parents' and host societies.

III. CONCLUSION

The exploration of displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflict in Arab diasporic literature reveals the profound and complex challenges faced by characters navigating between two cultural worlds. Displacement is not only a physical movement but also an emotional and psychological upheaval that creates a deep sense of loss, longing, and detachment. Through the lens of psychological theory, particularly Freudian repression (Freud, 1915) and Cathy Caruth's (1996) trauma theory, we see how characters internalize trauma, leading to fractured identities and emotional silences that echo across generations. Alienation, in both cultural and psychological forms, stands as a critical aspect of the protagonists' experiences, as they find themselves estranged from both their homeland and their host society. This is further illuminated by Erik Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory, where identity crises emerge during key developmental stages, particularly for second-generation immigrants. The theme of intergenerational conflict sheds light on the generational divides within immigrant families, where differing expectations and cultural understandings lead to emotional tension between parents and children.

The application of acculturation theory, especially John Berry's (1997) model, enriches our understanding of how characters respond to cultural dislocation—some through integration, others through separation, marginalization, or assimilation. These strategies profoundly impact their psychological well-being and sense of belonging, as seen in the contrasting behaviors and attitudes across generations within the diaspora. The integration of postcolonial, psychological, and acculturation theories thus deepens the analysis of these themes, offering nuanced insights into the complexities of identity formation, belonging, and cultural preservation in the context of global migration. The characters in these works reflect the broader experiences of the Arab diaspora, demonstrating how intertwined themes of displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflict are with the lived realities of migration. Ultimately, this study highlights the essential role of literature in capturing the intricate emotional and psychological landscapes of the diaspora, providing valuable insight into the personal and collective struggles of Arab immigrants and their families. These narratives affirm that identity is not static but continually shaped by memory, history, trauma, and the ongoing negotiation between cultural origins and new worlds.

Future research should expand on the themes of displacement, alienation, and intergenerational conflict in Arab diasporic literature by incorporating a broader range of voices, including lesser-known authors and contemporary works. Moreover, a comparative approach that examines Arab diasporic experiences alongside other migrant communities could offer deeper insights into both shared and unique struggles. Additionally, exploring the role of digital media and globalization in shaping diasporic identities would enhance our understanding of modern migration dynamics. Furthermore, applying trauma studies and psychological frameworks could provide a deeper understanding of the long-term effects of displacement on individuals and families. Lastly, interdisciplinary collaboration with sociology, anthropology, and political science would offer a more comprehensive analysis of the sociocultural and historical contexts that shape Arab diasporic literature.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdelrazek, A. R. (2007). *Contemporary Arab American literature: Transnational reconfigurations of citizenship and belonging*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [2] Aboulela, L. (2005). *Minaret*. Grove Press.
- [3] Ahmed, L. (2018). Arab migration and identity transformation: A study of contemporary diasporic narratives. *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 54(2), 175–192.
- [4] Alghamdi, A. (2018). Cultural hybridity and identity crisis in Arab-American literature. *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 12(3), 45–62.
- [5] Al-Musawi, M. (2021). *Migration and identity in contemporary Arab fiction*. Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Al-Shaykh, H. (1986). *The story of Zahra*. Anchor Books.
- [7] Al-Shraideh, M. (2020). Postcolonial identity and alienation in Arab diasporic narratives. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 42(1), 78–95.
- [8] Alsultany, E. (2012). *Arabs and Muslims in the media: Race and representation after 9/11*. New York University Press.
- [9] Bensmaïa, R. (2015). *Experimental nations: Or, the invention of the Maghreb*. Princeton University Press.
- [10] Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- [11] Boudjedra, R. (1991). *The African equation*. Presses Universitaires de France.

- [12] Darraj, S. M. (2014). *Understanding the Arab immigrant experience through literature*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- [13] Douaihy, J. (2013). *The vagrant*. Interlink Publishing.
- [14] El-Ariss, T. (2013). *Trials of Arab modernity: Literary affects and the new political*. Fordham University Press.
- [15] Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Press.
- [16] Gana, N. (2008). Tayeb Salih's *Season of migration to the North*: Postcolonial text and identity crisis. *Research in African Literatures*, 39(3), 34–55.
- [17] Halim, H. (2006). Ahdaf Soueif and the politics of place. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 42(3), 257–269.
- [18] Hassan, W. (2011). *Immigrant narratives: Orientalism and cultural translation in Arab American and Arab British literature*. Oxford University Press.
- [19] Kanafani, G. (1962). *Men in the sun*. Saqi Books.
- [20] Karmi, G. (2017). *In search of identity: Generational tensions in Arab diasporic communities*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [21] Mahjoub, J. (2013). Exile and identity in *Season of migration to the North*. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 18(4), 387–402.
- [22] Marx, K. (1844). *Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844*. Progress Publishers.
- [23] Mernissi, F. (2016). *Tradition, modernity, and the generational gap in Arab societies*. Zed Books.
- [24] Moore, L. (2012). Imperial entanglements and postcolonial identity in *The map of love*. *Arab Studies Journal*, 20(1), 67–85.
- [25] Nair, M. B. S. (2009). Arab diasporic identity and the challenge of transnational belonging. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 18(2), 89–110.
- [26] Nouri, H. (2017). Identity and exile in contemporary Arab diasporic literature. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 53(2), 34–51.
- [27] Orfalea, G. (2014). *The Arab Americans: A history*. Olive Branch Press.
- [28] Said, E. (2019). *The struggle of identity in exile: A postcolonial perspective on Arab diasporic narratives*. Harvard University Press.
- [29] Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.
- [30] Selim, H. (2005). *Transculturalism and the Arab diaspora: The intergenerational conflict in diasporic literature*. Columbia University Press.
- [31] Weber, M. (1922). *Economy and society*. University of California Press.

Baraah Ibrahim AlGharaibeh was born in Ajloun, Jordan, in 1992. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature from Al-Balqa' Applied University, Ajloun, Jordan, in 2013. She completed her Master's degree in English Literature from Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan, in 2016. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in English Literature at the University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan, with expected completion in 2025.

She has been working as an English Language and Literature teacher at various international schools in both Jordan and Qatar since 2013, focusing on teaching literature, academic writing, and language skills at the secondary level. Her recent research includes *Displacement, Alienation, and Intergenerational Conflicts in Arab Diasporic Literature*. Her research interests include Arab diasporic literature, migration, identity formation, postcolonial studies, and cultural conflict.

Clause Structure and Topicalization in Nias Language: A Typological Analysis

Ida Basaria*

Indonesian Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Dardanila Dardanila

Indonesian Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Abstract—This study investigates the clause structure and topicalization strategies of Nias language (BN), an Austronesian language spoken in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research aims to portray and analyze syntactic and discourse phenomena in BN within their natural linguistic and cultural contexts. The data were collected through participant observation and naturalistic recording of spontaneous speech among native BN speakers, ensuring authenticity and contextual richness. The recordings were transcribed, translated, and analyzed to identify basic and derived clause patterns and the syntactic mechanisms used to mark topicality. Special attention was given to preverbal positioning, pronominal resumption, and left-dislocation, which reflect BN's alignment with topic-prominent languages. The findings reveal that BN, while maintaining a canonical SVO structure, frequently employs marked word orders and topic-fronting strategies to serve discourse functions. These strategies exhibit a disciplined syntactic patterning that supports flexible information structure. A typological-comparative analysis positions BN within the broader Austronesian language family, highlighting both shared features and distinctive innovations, such as possessive topicalization. The study contributes to theoretical models of clause architecture, typological profiling of Austronesian languages, and ongoing efforts in linguistic documentation and preservation of Indonesia's indigenous languages.

Index Terms—clause structure, indigenous language, Nias language, syntactic typology, topicalization

I. INTRODUCTION

The Nias language (Bahasa Nias, BN), an Austronesian language spoken predominantly on Nias Island off the western coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, exhibits distinctive linguistic features that set it apart from other languages within the Austronesian family. These unique characteristics are evident across various linguistic domains, including phonology, lexicon, morphology, and syntax (Gulö, 2014). Notably, BN demonstrates a range of uncommon morphosyntactic features, including marked absolutive alignment, complex predicate structures, and unique prefixation patterns (Brown, 2001; Crysmann, 2009; Telaumbanua & Harefa, 2023). This morphosyntactic alignment system, characterized by overtly marked absolutive case and flexible word order, contrasts with the more prevalent nominative-accusative or ergative-absolutive systems found in related languages (Crysmann, 2009). This linguistic distinctiveness makes BN a valuable subject for examining the diversity and evolution of Austronesian languages, providing insights into how languages adapt and diverge over time (Widayati, 2020).

BN is characterized by at least five major dialects: Gunung Sitoli, Northern, Central, Western, and Southern (Polili et al., 2018). Each dialect presents notable variations in pronunciation, lexicon, and syntactic structure. For instance, the expression “where are you going?” is realized as *heza möiö* in the Gunung Sitoli dialect, *haega gö möi ndra?ugo* in the Teluk Dalam dialect, and *heza möi?öwe* in the Northern dialect (Nazara, 2019). These differences are not just phonological but reflect deeper morphosyntactic distinctions, potentially influencing information structuring and discourse strategies (Hulu et al., 2023). This variation across dialects highlights the need for comprehensive analyses to understand how each variant contributes to the overall linguistic identity of BN and how these structures might relate to broader Austronesian patterns (Telaumbanua et al., 2022).

Previous linguistic studies have provided foundational insights into BN's syntactic structures. Brown (2001) offers an in-depth analysis of its morphosyntactic features, including verb-initial word order and the role of mutation in argument marking. Similarly, Gulö (2014) discusses BN's unique phonological and morphological traits, while Widayati (2020) explores the historical reconstruction of the language, emphasizing its distinctive morphological development. Recent studies have also examined specific syntactic phenomena, including causative constructions (Nazara et al., 2019), prefixation (Telaumbanua & Harefa, 2023), and comparative adjective forms (Gulo et al., 2023). Yohana and Mulyadi (2024) further examined BN's word order, emphasizing the complex interactions between syntax and information structure, a critical aspect for understanding the grammatical architecture of this language.

* Corresponding Author. Email: ida1@usu.ac.id

Despite these contributions, significant research gaps remain concerning the interaction between clause structure and information structuring mechanisms, such as topicalization and focus marking within BN. Although scholars like Brown (2001), Himmelmann (2005), and Crysmann (2009) have touched upon aspects of BN's syntax, comprehensive analyses focusing on how BN organizes and emphasizes information through syntactic means are scarce. This gap is particularly evident when considering the language's dialectal diversity and the potential variations in information structuring strategies across different dialects (Nazara, 2019; Yohana & Mulyadi, 2024). Moreover, the influence of sociolinguistic factors, such as language contact and the pressures of language shift, on the syntactic evolution of BN remains underexplored (Polili et al., 2018; Telaumbanua et al., 2022).

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a detailed analysis of clause structures and topicalization strategies across BN's major dialects. By examining how information is organized and emphasized syntactically, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of BN's linguistic architecture and its place within the broader context of Austronesian languages. Such an investigation not only enriches the descriptive linguistics of BN but also offers valuable insights into the typological diversity and syntactic phenomena present in Austronesian languages, potentially informing theories of linguistic change and variation in this major language family.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Linguistic Typology

The term 'typology' in linguistics refers to the systematic classification of languages based on their structural features and organizational principles (Artawa, 1998; Comrie, 1989; Kashyap, 2019). Linguistic typology aims to identify commonalities and differences among languages by examining their phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic structures. This approach contrasts with genetic classification, which groups languages based on historical and evolutionary relationships (Ersheidat & Tahir, 2020; Jufrizal, 2007; Mallinson & Blake, 1981). One of the earliest and most influential studies in this field is Joseph Greenberg's work on word order typology (Greenberg, 1963; Comrie, 1989). Greenberg's pioneering research on basic word order identified six primary sentence patterns based on the arrangement of subject (S), verb (V), and object (O) in declarative sentences: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV, and OVS. This categorization formed the foundation for much of the subsequent work in linguistic typology (Greenberg, 1963; Dryer, 2013).

Languages vary significantly in their preferred word order. For instance, English and Indonesian primarily follow an SVO structure, while Japanese and Korean typically use SOV, and Classical Arabic and Welsh often exhibit VSO as a dominant pattern (Dryer, 2013; Polili et al., 2018). Some languages, like Latin and Russian, exhibit more flexibility, allowing for multiple word orders depending on pragmatic or stylistic considerations (Comrie, 1989; Widayati, 2020). Greenberg's typological framework also included two additional criteria: the placement of adpositions (prepositions vs. postpositions) and the relative position of attributive adjectives and nouns. This multidimensional approach enabled a more comprehensive understanding of cross-linguistic structural variation (Greenberg, 1963; Crysmann, 2009).

B. Greenberg's Typology

Greenberg's work on linguistic typology extends beyond mere word order to include broader structural relationships within languages. His 'Basic Order Typology' (Greenberg, 1963) proposed that word order patterns are not random but reflect deeper, underlying grammatical principles. These principles include the relative positioning of subjects, verbs, and objects (SVO, SOV, VSO, etc.), the use of adpositions (prepositions versus postpositions), and the positioning of attributive adjectives relative to nouns. For example, in Latin, word order is highly flexible, as shown in the following translations of the sentence 'The father loves his son':

SVO: *Pater diligit filium suum*

SOV: *Pater filium suum diligit*

VSO: *Diligit pater filium suum*

VOS: *Diligit filium suum pater*

OSV: *Filium suum pater diligit*

OVS: *Filium suum diligit pater*

In contrast, languages like English and Indonesian have more rigid word order constraints, typically following SVO for declarative sentences and VSO for questions (Gulo, 2014; Yohana & Mulyadi, 2024). This fundamental difference reflects deeper typological divides related to grammatical marking, flexibility in constituent order, and information structure (Crysmann, 2009; Hulu et al., 2023).

C. Topic Structures in Typological Studies

In addition to word order, the concept of 'topic' plays a crucial role in understanding cross-linguistic variation. A topic is generally understood as the entity about which a statement is made, serving as the starting point for a clause (Li & Thompson, 1976). Li and Thompson's typological framework categorizes languages based on their preference for subject-prominent, topic-prominent, or a mixed system. For example, English and German are typically subject-prominent, while Chinese and Japanese are considered topic-prominent due to their frequent use of topic-comment structures (Li & Thompson, 1976; Jufrizal, 2007).

Languages like Tagalog and Balinese further illustrate the complexity of topic structures, as they allow for double subject constructions where a clause can contain both a topic and a subject, each serving distinct syntactic roles (Artawa, 1998; Gundel, 1988). For instance, in Balinese, left-dislocation often involves a noun phrase followed by a pronoun that agrees with it, forming a marked construction in topic-prominent languages (Artawa, 1998). This contrasts sharply with languages like English, where such constructions are less common and typically involve marked pragmatic effects (Gundel, 1988).

This literature review provides a foundational framework for analyzing the clause structures and topicalization strategies in the Nias language, which remains underexplored despite its unique syntactic properties (Gulö, 2014; Telaumbanua et al., 2022). The current study aims to address this gap by examining whether Nias aligns more closely with subject-prominent or topic-prominent languages, contributing to broader typological insights within the Austronesian family (Nazara, 2019; Telaumbanua & Harefa, 2023).

III. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach a descriptive design, adhering to the principles of qualitative descriptive research as outlined by Zaim (2014). Such an approach is particularly suitable for linguistic investigations aiming to portray, elucidate, and systematically analyze language phenomena within their natural contexts. It enabled the researchers to explore clause structures and topicalization strategies in the Nias language (BN) in a detailed and context-sensitive manner. The richness of the qualitative data provided in-depth insights into the syntactic organization and discourse functions of BN, contributing to the broader understanding of clause architecture and topic management in indigenous Indonesian languages.

The data for this study consisted of naturally occurring sentences produced by native BN speakers across various social and cultural settings. The primary objective of data collection was to identify and analyze the basic and derived clause structures in BN, with particular attention to topicalization mechanisms. This aligns with best practices in linguistic documentation, which emphasize the importance of collecting spontaneous speech data to capture authentic grammatical and discourse phenomena (Himmelman, 1998).

The data collection followed several structured steps. First, the researchers engaged in participant observation and naturalistic listening to spontaneous conversations (Swain & King, 2022; Tarigan et al., 2022) among native BN speakers. These interactions were audio-recorded with informed consent and subsequently transcribed in detail to preserve both syntactic and pragmatic features. Transcription practices were guided by recommendations from recent field linguistics literature, ensuring accurate representation of linguistic data. The transcriptions were then translated into English to facilitate syntactic comparison and analysis, with an emphasis on retaining the meaning and structural integrity of the original utterances.

Following transcription and translation, the data were subjected to syntactic analysis focusing on constituent order (e.g., VSO, SVO), clause types (e.g., declarative, interrogative, imperative), and formal markers used in topicalization. This included examining how information structure is expressed—specifically, how topics are introduced, maintained, or shifted within discourse. Topicalization strategies such as preverbal positioning, cleft constructions, and pronominal referencing were closely analyzed in line with frameworks proposed in recent discourse-syntax studies (Lambrecht, 1994; Zimmermann & Onea, 2011).

Throughout the analysis, the researcher employed a typological-comparative framework to determine how the clause structure and topicalization patterns of BN align with or diverge from those observed in other Austronesian and topic-prominent languages. This involved reference to contemporary syntactic typologies and cross-linguistic databases such as the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) (Dryer & Haspelmath, 2013). Such comparison enabled the researchers to situate BN within broader typological paradigms and contribute to ongoing discussions on clause structure variation in Austronesian languages.

By focusing on the interaction between clause structure and topicalization, this study offers a comprehensive account of how BN organizes syntactic constituents to reflect discourse priorities. The findings are expected to contribute not only to theoretical and typological linguistics but also to language documentation efforts aimed at preserving and describing lesser-studied languages of Indonesia.

IV. RESULTS

A. Clause Structures in Nias Language

The results reveal that Nias language (BN) predominantly follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order, aligning it with a significant portion of the world's languages, including English and Indonesian. However, BN's clause structures exhibit notable flexibility, allowing various word orders to accommodate different pragmatic and discourse functions. This flexibility reflects a broader linguistic phenomenon known as syntactic typology, which classifies languages based on their preferred clause structures and the degree to which they permit variation. This analysis will consider BN's core clause patterns through the lens of typological theory, including basic word order, constituent order variation, and information structure. The examples in (1) – (3) illustrate the SVO pattern in BN.

(1) *Ya'odo mombaso mbuku*

- 1SG read book
I read a book
(2) *Ya'ia manura zura*
3SG write letter
He wrote a letter
(3) *Ya'ira momaikö gitar*
3PL play guitar
They played a guitar

In each case in (1) – (3), the subject precedes the verb and the direct object follows, forming a syntactically and semantically transparent clause structure. This SVO configuration is widely attested cross-linguistically and is typically associated with efficient processing and clarity of interpretation. The subject functions as the agent or experiencer, the verb encodes the predicative action, and the object serves as the patient or theme—a division that aligns closely with the thematic role hierarchy and supports straightforward argument mapping. The linearity of the SVO structure facilitates incremental parsing, allowing listeners or readers to interpret the clause progressively, as information is received. This structure minimizes cognitive load by presenting constituents in a predictable and hierarchically coherent order. It is particularly effective in unmarked, declarative contexts, where the communicative goal is to relay factual information or describe events without special emphasis or topical restructuring.

Moreover, the preference for SVO word order in BN supports what syntactic typologists describe as a basic constituent order, forming the grammatical foundation upon which more complex or pragmatically marked structures (e.g., SVA, ASV, SVOA) may be constructed. As such, SVO serves not only as the default clause structure but also as a baseline against which marked syntactic variations can be analyzed in terms of discourse functions such as topicalization, focus, or foregrounding.

The second structure is Subject-Verb-Adjunct (SVA) pattern, which extends the basic SVO pattern by incorporating an adverbial element, typically expressing time, location, or manner. The adjunct, while not a core argument of the verb, provides essential circumstantial information that enhances the meaning of the utterance. This pattern reflects a common feature of SVO languages, which often allow for the flexible integration of non-core constituents without disturbing the core grammatical relations. The examples in (4) – (6) illustrate the SVA pattern in BN.

- (4) *Ya'ia mörö menewi.*
3SG sleep last night
He slept last night.
(5) *Ya'ia mohalöwö tolu ngaluo.*
3SG work three day
He has been working for three days.
(6) *Ama gu maoso sihulöwongi.*
father 1SG-POS get up morning
My father gets up in the morning.

This pattern maintains the primary S-V structure while introducing a temporal, locative, or manner adjunct, allowing for more nuanced meaning. In typological terms, this is a post-verbal adjunct placement, reflecting a preference for maintaining core argument structure (S and V) before adding peripheral information. This pattern aligns well with the principle of end-weight, where longer or more complex constituents follow simpler ones, enhancing sentence processing.

The third clause structure in BN is Adverbial-Subject-Verb (ASV). In this less common but highly expressive structure, the sentence begins with an adverbial element, shifting focus to the temporal or spatial context before introducing the main action. This is a hallmark of languages that permit preverbal adjuncts, often used to foreground contextual information, as shown in (7) – (9).

- (7) *Mege bazibongi ya'ia mörö ba lö fangifi.*
DEM night 3SG sleep PREP dream
Last night he slept soundly.
(8) *Mege sihulöwongi ya'ira mofanö.*
DEM morning 3PL depart
This morning they departed.
(9) *Ba harimbale ina gu mowöli.*
Prep market mother 1SG-POS shop
At the market my mother did shopping.

In each case in (7) – (9), the adverbial phrases (*mege bazibongi*, *mege sihulöwongi*, *ba harimbale*) are placed at the beginning of the sentence, setting the temporal or locational scene. This initial placement of non-core elements reflects a strategy of topicalization, wherein the speaker marks certain contextual elements as thematically prominent. Rather than simply modifying the verb, these adverbials anchor the listener in a particular time or place, guiding interpretation of the ensuing action.

This structure aligns with principles from information structure and thematic hierarchy, whereby known or contextually relevant information (e.g., time or setting) precedes new or more dynamic elements (such as the main event). By foregrounding these elements, the ASV construction enhances narrative coherence and facilitates cognitive processing by providing a framework within which the action is interpreted. Furthermore, the use of ASV in BN reflects a discourse-oriented syntax, where the ordering of constituents is sensitive to communicative goals. It is particularly suited to narrative and descriptive discourse, where the establishment of temporal and spatial settings is critical for coherence and listener engagement.

The fourth clause structure in BN is Subject-Verb-Object-Adjunct (SVOA). This pattern represents an expanded variant of the basic SVO structure, incorporating a final adverbial element—typically expressing location, time, or manner—to provide additional contextual information. Crucially, this expansion does not interfere with the sentence's core argument structure; rather, it enriches it by situating the action within a broader spatial or temporal frame. The examples in (10) – (12) demonstrate the SVOA construction in BN.

- (10) *Ya'ia mombaso mbuku ba naha mbuku.*

3SG read book PREP place book

He read a book in the library.

- (11) *Ya'ia mowöli diwo ba harimbale.*

3SG buy vegetable PREP market

She bought vegetables at the market.

- (12) *Ya'odo manura zura mege bazibongi.*

1SG write letter DEM night

I wrote a letter last night.

In each case in (10) – (12), the sentence begins with the core SVO elements—subject (*ya'ia*, *ya'odo*), verb (*mombaso*, *mowöli*, *manura*), and object (*mbuku*, *diwo*, *zura*)—followed by an adjunct that adds situational detail (*ba naha mbuku*, *ba harimbale*, *mege bazibongi*). This syntactic structure enables greater descriptive depth while maintaining clarity and cohesion. The SVOA structure exemplifies the syntactic flexibility of SVO-dominant languages like BN, allowing the integration of peripheral elements (adjuncts) without altering the core propositional content. This capacity for syntactic elaboration supports richer and more contextually grounded communication, making it particularly useful in both spoken and written discourse. It also reflects a broader linguistic tendency to present the main action first before elaborating on its circumstances—thus aiding in incremental information processing by the listener or reader.

The fifth clause structure in BN is Adjunct-Subject-Verb-Object (ASVO). While structurally similar to the ASV pattern, ASVO is comparatively less frequent but notably more expressive. This configuration foregrounds the adverbial or adjunct element—typically indicating time, place, or manner—by positioning it at the beginning of the sentence. This fronting serves to highlight the situational context before introducing the subject, verb, and object, thereby setting the stage for the subsequent action. The examples in (13) – (15) illustrate the ASVO pattern in BN.

- (13) *Menewi ya'ia mowöli mbuku.*

yesterday 3SG buy book

Yesterday he bought a book.

- (14) *Mahemolu ama gu mofanö ba gödo.*

tomorrow father 3SG-POS go PREP office

Tomorrow my father will go to the office.

- (15) *Mege sihulöwongi ya'ira famai bola.*

DEM morning 3PL play football

This morning they played football.

In these instances, the temporal adjuncts *menewi* ('yesterday'), *mahemolu* ('tomorrow'), and *mege sihulöwongi* ('this morning') are placed at the forefront, thereby emphasizing the temporal setting of the actions described. This syntactic choice is particularly salient in narrative discourse, where situating the event in time or space is essential to guiding the listener or reader's interpretation. By foregrounding the adjunct, this pattern de-centers the actor and temporarily diverts attention from the action itself, allowing the narrative setting to take precedence. This feature makes ASVO especially effective for storytelling and descriptive passages, where contextual grounding is crucial. It reflects the language's pragmatic sensitivity to discourse structure, prioritizing scene-setting as a means of enhancing coherence and listener engagement.

The final clause structure in BN is Verb-Subject (VS) pattern. Unlike the more canonical Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) patterns discussed earlier, the VS construction in BN exhibits an inverted constituent order, where the verb precedes the subject. This structure typically appears in intransitive clauses, particularly when no direct object is present. The VS pattern often serves stylistic or discourse-related functions, such as: (i) highlighting the action or event before identifying the actor; (ii) creating a more formal or literary tone, especially in written or narrative texts; and (iii) signaling a thematic shift or introducing new information into the discourse. The examples in (16) – (18) illustrate the VS pattern in BN.

- (16) *Fagohi ndaono da'ö.*

run child DEM

The child ran.

(17) *Mofanö ya'ia.*

go 3SG

He went.

(18) *Tohare dome.*

arrive guest

The guest arrived

The examples in (16) – (18) illustrate the Verb–Subject (VS) word order pattern in BN, which contrasts with the more common Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) structure found in basic declarative sentences. In these examples, the verb precedes the subject in intransitive clauses where no direct object is present. This inversion serves several discourse and pragmatic functions. By placing the verb first, the construction foregrounds the action or event, thereby emphasizing what is happening before identifying the actor. This can be especially effective in narrative contexts, where sequencing of events and highlighting actions play a central role. Additionally, the VS order often signals a thematic or informational shift, introducing new or less topical subjects after the verb to manage the flow of information strategically. Stylistically, this pattern may convey a more formal, literary, or poetic tone, commonly found in storytelling or ceremonial language. From a syntactic perspective, the VS construction maintains grammatical well-formedness despite deviating from the canonical SVO order. Such flexibility reflects BN's allowance for word order variation motivated by pragmatic needs, a phenomenon widely observed in many SVO languages. The VS pattern thus enriches the language's expressive capacity by enabling speakers to manipulate focus and information structure according to contextual demands.

B. Topicalization in Nias Language

Using Artawa's (1998) framework for analyzing left-dislocation, topicalization, and fronting in BN is intended to determine whether BN exhibits subject-prominence, topic-prominence, or an alternative syntactic alignment. The framework provides a systematic means of distinguishing between marked and unmarked clause structures based on pragmatic and syntactic features. Consider the examples of left-dislocation in BN in (19) – (21).

(19) *Gawe Loli, soia ba nomo.*

Grandmother loli 3SG PREP house

Grandmother Loli, she is at home.

(20) *Si Anggiat, ya'ia mowöli laza.*

ART anggiat 3SG buy field

Anggiat, he bought the field.

(21) *Manandösa ba gambe da'ö, ya'ia agaekhu tou ba danö.*

DEF DEM gambier DEM 3SG fall under PREP ground

About the gambier, it fell to the ground.

In these examples, the fronted noun phrases (NPs) are definite and referential, serving to establish or highlight a topical element at the beginning of the sentence. The fronted NP may appear as a bare noun (19), be introduced by the article *si* (20), or be part of a prepositional phrase marked by the pronoun *ya'ia* (21). Each of these initial NPs is followed by a complete clause in which the subject pronoun (*soia/yaia/ya'ia*) resumes reference to the fronted NP. This structure represents a classic case of left-dislocation, where a noun phrase is preposed to sentence-initial position and is co-referential with a pronominal subject in the clause. The function of this construction is largely pragmatic, serving to foreground or topicalize a referent that is subsequently elaborated within the clause. This type of structure also contributes to discourse cohesion by clarifying the referent early in the utterance, thereby guiding listener interpretation.

BN also allows left-dislocation to express a possessor–possessed (possessor–possessum) relationship between the dislocated NP and the subject of the subsequent clause. This is illustrated in examples (22) and (23).

(22) *Laza da'ö, oya wakhe nia.*

field DEM many rice 3SG-POS

The field, its rice is abundant.

(23) *Nomo da'ö, alawa nawu nia.*

house DEM high kitchen 3SG-POS

The house, its kitchen is high.

In these examples, the dislocated NPs (*laza da'ö* 'the field' and *nomo da'ö* 'the house') function as possessors, while the subjects of the following clauses (*oya wakhe* 'the rice' and *alawa nawu* 'the kitchen') represent the possessed items. The third-person possessive pronoun *nia* clearly establishes the possessive link between the fronted NP and the subject of the clause. Notably, although these are nonverbal clauses, the same structural pattern extends to verbal clauses, as demonstrated in examples (24) and (25).

(24) *Sibaya Dora, ono alawe khönia sinangea mangowalu.*

uncle dora child female 3SG-POS will marry

Uncle Dora, his daughter will get married.

(25) *Niha si kayo da'ö, ono nia mowöli honda.*

person ART rich DEM child 3SG-POS buy motorcycle

That rich man, his child bought a motorbike.

In (24), the clause is intransitive, with the verb *mangowalu* ('get married') describing the action of the possessed subject *ono alawe khönia* (his daughter). In (25), the clause is transitive, with the possessed subject (his child) performing the action of buying (*mowöli*) a motorbike. In both cases, the dislocated NP (*Sibaya Dora* and *Niha si kayo da'ö*) serves as the possessor, and the subject of the clause co-refers to a possessum marked by the possessive pronoun *khönia* and *nia*. These constructions demonstrate that BN left-dislocation is not limited to topic-fronting of core arguments, but also allows for the foregrounding of possessive relations, thus contributing to discourse cohesion and referential tracking. The recurrence of this pattern in both nonverbal and verbal clauses further attests to its syntactic productivity and pragmatic utility in BN.

Crucially, BN maintains a clear distinction between core arguments and oblique elements. Core arguments—such as subjects and objects—are syntactically unmarked and participate in topicalization. Oblique elements, on the other hand, are marked by prepositions and, although they may appear in the clause-initial position, their fronting does not constitute topicalization in the strict sense. Consider the examples in (26) and (27).

(26) *Mondino nagole ina ba nomo zibaya.*

meat cook mother PREP house uncle

Mother cooked meat at uncle's house.

(27) *Ba nomo zibaya mondino nagole ina.*

PREP house uncle meat cook mother

At uncle's house mother cooked meat.

In (27), the prepositional phrase *ba nomo zibaya* ('at uncle's house') is fronted, likely for reasons of emphasis, contrast, or information structuring. However, since it is an oblique element—marked by the preposition *ba* and not functioning as a core grammatical argument—its fronting does not qualify as topicalization in the strict syntactic sense. Rather, it represents a case of discourse-driven fronting, serving pragmatic rather than syntactic purposes. This analysis underscores the syntactic rigidity of topicalization in BN, i.e., only core arguments may undergo this process, whereas oblique constituents, despite their flexibility in word order, remain outside the domain of true topicalization.

True topicalization in BN involves the fronting of a core argument, typically the object or patient, to the clause-initial position for purposes of discourse prominence. This syntactic operation is illustrated in examples (28a–b) and (29a–b).

(28)a. *Mombaso zura ama.*

read letter father

Father read the letter

b. *Zura ama mombaso.*

letter father read

The letter father read.

(29)a. *Mananö nawugale ninalawe.*

plant pumpkin aunt

Aunt planted pumpkins

b. *Nawugale ninalawe mananö.*

pumpkin aunt plant

Pumpkins aunt planted

In the (b) examples of both sets, the object noun phrases (*zura* 'letter' and *nawugale* 'pumpkins') are fronted, signaling a topicalized construction. Notably, the nasal prefix on the verb (*mombaso*, *mananö*) is retained, indicating that the clause remains active and that topicalization does not alter the verb's morphology or the grammatical voice. Despite being grammatically well-formed, these topicalized constructions are considered marked, or non-basic, in BN. They deviate from the default subject–predicate word order and are typically employed for pragmatic functions such as focus, contrast, or discourse continuity. As such, topicalization in BN is a syntactically permissible but pragmatically motivated structure, reflecting the language's flexibility in managing information structure without compromising its core grammatical alignment.

V. DISCUSSION

The clause structure of BN exhibits a sophisticated interplay between syntactic configurations and discourse-driven motivations. While BN predominantly adheres to a Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) word order, as confirmed by numerous data analyzed in this study, the language also demonstrates considerable structural flexibility. This observation supports the typological claims made by Comrie (1989), Dryer (2013), and Assaiqeli et al. (2021), who argue that although SVO is among the most prevalent constituent orders globally, many languages—particularly within the Austronesian family—employ alternative orders to fulfill pragmatic functions.

BN's dominant SVO structure aligns it with typologically similar languages such as English, Indonesian, and Tagalog, which also prefer SVO in unmarked declarative constructions. This syntactic default appears to enhance processing efficiency, echoing findings in psycholinguistic research (Engelhardt et al., 2023; Hawkins, 2004), where SVO structures are noted to reduce cognitive load and facilitate faster parsing during comprehension. In BN, such constructions often encode straightforward assertions, making them optimal for default discourse contexts.

Beyond this unmarked pattern, BN permits extended clause structures such as SVA and SVOA, where adjuncts—typically denoting temporal or locational information—are placed after verbs. These patterns align with Cinque's (1999) adverbial hierarchy and reflect a broader typological tendency to observe the principle of end-weight, where longer or less central constituents are positioned later in the clause for ease of processing. Such post-verbal adjunct placement suggests that BN adheres not only to grammatical preferences but also to principles of communicative efficiency and cognitive accessibility.

Marked constructions such as ASV and ASVO reflect BN's strategic capacity to reorder constituents in response to contextual and pragmatic demands. These structures, wherein non-core elements like temporal or locative phrases are fronted, function to establish the thematic framework of an utterance. This aligns with Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) systemic functional theory of thematic structure, where initial positioning signals the speaker's intended point of departure. BN's use of these marked patterns also resonates with findings from Gundel (1988), Lambrecht (1994), and Bondarenko (2021), who argue that fronting mechanisms serve to foreground specific information, guide listener attention, and establish discourse coherence.

The presence of verb-subject (VS) constructions in BN is particularly noteworthy in narrative contexts. These inversions often occur with intransitive verbs and are employed to highlight the action or introduce new discourse referents, mirroring similar structures in Irish (Masia, 2024). Rizzi's (1997) framework on the left periphery of the clause provides further insight into this phenomenon, positing that such constructions can be motivated by focus-related operations. In BN, VS patterns appear to fulfill similar discourse functions, underscoring the language's flexible syntax in service of narrative salience and stylistic variation.

Topicalization in BN further demonstrates the language's pragmatic sophistication. Using Artawa's (1998) framework, the study reveals that BN, while predominantly subject-prominent, allows for left-dislocation to foreground topical elements. This strategy, wherein a definite referential noun phrase is fronted and then resumed via a co-referential pronoun, reflects a syntactically marked but pragmatically motivated structure. Such constructions are attested in typologically similar languages, including Balinese (Artawa, 1998), Minangkabau (Cumming, 1991; Jufrizal, 2007), and topic-prominent languages such as Japanese and Korean (Li & Thompson, 1976). BN thus joins a typological spectrum of languages that flexibly exploit constituent order to reflect discourse roles such as topic and focus.

In addition, BN employs left-dislocation to express possessor–possessum relations, a feature shared with other Austronesian languages like Tagalog and Chamorro (Kroeger, 1993). These constructions enhance referential continuity and discourse cohesion, particularly in extended narrative discourse. However, a crucial syntactic distinction arises: while core arguments can be both fronted and resumed pronominally, oblique elements—such as peripheral locatives or instrumentals—may be fronted but lack resumptive pronouns, signaling that such fronting is primarily discourse-driven rather than a product of syntactic topicalization (Cruschina, 2021).

Thus, these findings underscore BN's intricate balance between structural regularity and functional adaptability. While SVO serves as the unmarked default, the language accommodates a range of constituent order variations—such as ASV, SVOA, VS, and topicalized constructions—to manage information structure, highlight thematic elements, and enhance discourse flow. This syntactic flexibility situates BN within a typological continuum where pragmatic motivations interact dynamically with grammatical constraints. As such, BN exemplifies how Austronesian languages deploy constituent order not merely as a grammatical requirement, but as a communicative strategy responsive to narrative, thematic, and cognitive considerations.

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis of clause structure and topicalization in BN reveals a nuanced interaction between typological regularity and pragmatic adaptability. While BN predominantly adheres to the canonical Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order, it exhibits notable syntactic flexibility through marked constructions such as SVA, ASV, SVOA, ASVO, and VS. These alternative structures are not random deviations but pragmatically motivated strategies that reflect thematic emphasis, narrative framing, and discourse organization. Topicalization in BN, primarily realized through left-dislocation with pronominal resumption, underscores the language's alignment with topic-prominent systems while retaining a degree of syntactic constraint. This mechanism allows BN speakers to manage information flow effectively, foregrounding referential or thematic constituents without compromising grammatical coherence.

When viewed in a broader typological context, BN shares key structural features with related Austronesian languages such as Indonesian, Balinese, and Minangkabau, particularly in its basic word order and use of adjuncts. At the same time, it demonstrates distinct pragmatic elaborations, such as possessor topicalization and narrative inversion, that enhance referential cohesion and contextual framing. These findings not only refine the typological profile of BN but also contribute to our broader understanding of how Austronesian languages mediate between structural templates and functional demands.

The current study has highlighted the complex yet systematic nature of clause structure and topicalization strategies in Bahasa Nias, revealing a syntax that is both typologically grounded and pragmatically responsive. Future studies should incorporate a wider range of dialects within the Nias language, such as the South, Central, and North dialectal varieties. Given that dialectal variation can influence syntactic preferences and pragmatic strategies, comparative

analyses across dialects may uncover subtle but significant grammatical and discourse-level distinctions that are not captured in studies of a single variety. Given the close relationship between syntax, discourse, and prosody, further research could investigate how intonation and stress patterns interact with topicalization and focus marking in BN. A prosodic analysis would help determine whether certain marked structures are accompanied by prosodic cues that guide listener interpretation and highlight thematic elements.

REFERENCES

- [1] Artawa, I K. (1998). *Ergativity and Balinese syntax*. Volume 42–44 of NUSA. Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya.
- [2] Assaiqeli, A., Maniam, M., & Farrah, M. (2021). Inversion and word order in English: A functional perspective. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 8(2), 523-545. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v8i2.20217>
- [3] Bondarenko, A. (2021). *Verbless and zero-predicate sentences: An English and Russian contrastive corpus study* [Ph.D. thesis]. Université Paris Cité. Retrieved March 11, 2025, from <https://theses.hal.science/tel-03706573v1>
- [4] Brown, L. (2001). *A grammar of Nias Selatan* [Ph.D. thesis]. University of Sydney. Retrieved April 17, 2025, from <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/12669>
- [5] Cinque, G. (1999). *Adverbs and functional heads—A crosslinguistic perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- [6] Comrie, B. (1989). *Language universals and linguistic typology: Syntax and morphology* (2nd ed.). The University of Chicago Press.
- [7] Cruschina, S. (2021). Topicalization in the Romance languages. In M. Aronoff (Ed.), *Oxford research encyclopedia of linguistics* (pp. 1-23). Oxford University Press.
- [8] Crysmann, B. (2009). Deriving superficial ergativity in Nias. In S. Müller (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference on Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany* (pp. 68–88). CSLI Publications. <https://doi.org/10.21248/hpsg.2009.4>
- [9] Cumming, S. (1991). *Functional change: The case of Malay constituent order*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- [10] Dryer, M. S. (2013). On the six-way word order typology, again. *Studies in Language*, 37(2), 267-301. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sl.37.2.02dry>
- [11] Dryer, M. S., & Haspelmath, M. (Eds.). (2013). *The world atlas of language structures online*. Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13950591>
- [12] Engelhardt, P. E., Filipović, L., & Hawkins, J. A. (2023). Prediction in SVO and SOV languages: Processing and typological considerations. *Linguistics*, 62(2), 349-383. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2022-0055>
- [13] Ersheidat, G., & Tahir, H. (2020). Genetic relationship among languages: An overview. *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics*, 10(1), 17-27. <https://doi.org/10.15282/ijleal.v10.3320>
- [14] Greenberg, J. H. (1963). Some universals of grammar with particular reference to the order of meaningful elements. In J. H. Greenberg (Ed.), *Universals of language* (pp. 73-113). MIT Press.
- [15] Gulo, M. B., Ambarita, E., & Simamora, N. J. (2023). Comparative forms of adjectives in Nias language: Astudyon Johane's book in the Bible. *Metholague*, 8(2), 23-34. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://ejournal.methodist.ac.id/index.php/metholague/article/view/2461/1735>
- [16] Gulö, I. (2014). Unique characteristics of Nias language. *International Journal of English and Education*, 3(3), 26-32. Retrieved February 6, 2025, from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297289332>
- [17] Gundel, J. K. (1988). *The role of topic and comment in linguistic theory: Outstanding Dissertations in Linguistics*. Garland Publishing.
- [18] Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- [19] Hawkins, J. A. (2004). *Efficiency and complexity in grammars*. Oxford University Press.
- [20] Himmelmann, N. P. (2005). The Austronesian languages of Asia and Madagascar: Typological characteristics. In A. Adelaar & N. P. Himmelmann (Eds.), *The Austronesian languages of Asia and Madagascar* (pp. 110-181). Routledge.
- [21] Himmelmann, N. P. (1998). Documentary and descriptive linguistics. *Linguistics*, 36(1), 161-196. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.1998.36.1.161>
- [22] Hulu, F., Mbete, A. M., & Umiyati, M. (2023). Syntax category of existence ecollexicon ke-afo-an in Central Nias language. *ASSEHR*, 734, 322–336, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-014-5_29
- [23] Jufrizal. (2007). *Tipologi gramatikal bahasa Minangkabau: Tataran morfosintaksis* [Grammatical typology of Minangkabau language: Morphosyntactic level]. UNP Press.
- [24] Kashyap, A. K. (2019). Language typology. In G. Thompson, W. L. Bowcher, L. Fontaine, & D. Schönthal (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of systemic functional linguistics* (pp. 766-791). Cambridge University Press.
- [25] Kroeger, P. (1993). *Phrase structure and grammatical relations in Tagalog*. CSLI Publications.
- [26] Lambrecht, K. (1994). *Information structure and sentence form: Topic, focus, and the mental representations of discourse referents*. Cambridge University Press.
- [27] Li, C. N., & Thompson, S. A. (1976). Subject and topic: A new typology of language. In C. N. Li (Ed.), *Subject and topic* (pp. 457-489). Academic Press.
- [28] Mallinson, G., & Blake, B. J. (1981). *Language typology: Cross-linguistic studies in syntax*. North-Holland Publishing Company.
- [29] Masia, V. (2024). Irish autonomous verbs in a semantic-pragmatic interface: Some reflections on information structure-driven valency reduction. *Linguistik Online*, 127(3), 83-106. <https://doi.org/10.13092/lo.127.11089>
- [30] Nazara, W. (2019). A note on the form and use of the language of Nias. *Teknosastik*, 17(1), 15-22. <https://doi.org/10.33365/ts.v17i1.186>
- [31] Nazara, W., Sudipa, I N., Artawa, K., & Satyawati, M. S. (2019). Causative constructions in the language of Nias. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(2), 208-216. <https://doi.org/10.29332/ijssh.v3n2.316>

- [32] Polili, A. W., Sinar, T. S., Widayati, D., & Adisahputra, A. A. (2018). The status of Nias language. *Journal of Arts & Humanities*, 7(1), 8-22. <https://doi.org/10.18533/journal.v7i1.1123>
- [33] Rizzi, L. (1997). The fine structure of the left periphery. In L. Haegeman (Ed.), *Elements of grammar: A handbook of generative syntax* (pp. 281-337). Springer.
- [34] Swain, J., & King, B. (2022). Using informal conversations in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221085056>
- [35] Tarigan, B., Sofyan, R., Zein, T. T., & Rosa, R. N. (2022). Cultural values associated with the use of ecollexicon “bamboo” in Karonese proverbs. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(10), 2106-2116. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1210.18>
- [36] Telaumbanua, T. A. E., Nyoman Kardana, I., & Wayan Kasni, N. (2022). Grammatical alliance of South Nias dialect. *KnE Social Sciences*, 7(10), 204–214. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i10.11289>
- [37] Telaumbanua, K., & Harefa, A. (2023). *Prefixation in Nias language*, 5(4), 11246-11250. <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i4.2060>
- [38] Widayati, D. (2020). Reconstruction of Nias, Devayan, and Sigulai languages. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 421, 408-427. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200323.048>
- [39] Yohana, Y., & Mulyadi, M. (2024). Word order in the Nias language: A syntactic typological studies. *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, 7(2), 1-9. Retrieved February 17, 2025, from <https://ejournalugj.com/index.php/RILL/article/view/8965/4407>
- [40] Zaim, M. (2014). *Metode penelitian bahasa: Pendekatan structural* [Language research methods: Structural approach]. FBS UNP Press.
- [41] Zimmermann, M., & Onea, E. (2011). Focus marking and focus interpretation. *Lingua*, 121(11), 1651–1670. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2011.06.002>



Ida Basaria was born in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, on November 11th 1962. She earned her bachelor's degree in Indonesian Language in 1985 from the Faculty of Letter, Universitas Sumatera Utara. She went on to complete her master's degree in Linguistics in 2002 and her doctoral degree in Linguistics in 2011, both from Universitas Sumatera Utara.

She is a Senior Lecturer in Indonesian Language Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. She actively publishes her work in both nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals. Her research interests include linguistic typology, anthropolinguistics, and research methodology in language studies. In addition to her journal publications, she has authored several books that are widely used across Indonesia.

Dr. Ida Basaria, M.Hum. has participated in various academic training programs, including the Research Reviewer Training held in 2017. Furthermore, she is actively involved in community service initiatives.



Dardanila was born in Takengon, Aceh, Indonesia, on March 31st 1961. She earned her bachelor's degree in Indonesian Language in 1985 from the Faculty of Letter, Universitas Sumatera Utara. She went on to complete her master's degree in Linguistics in 2004 and her doctoral degree in Linguistics in 2016, both from Universitas Sumatera Utara.

She is a Professor in Linguistics in Indonesian Language Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. She actively publishes her articles in both nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals. In addition to her publications, she frequently presents her work at international conferences. Her research interests include linguistic typology, anthropolinguistics, and ecolinguistics. She has also authored several books that are widely used throughout Indonesia.

Prof. Dr. Dardanila, M.Hum. currently serves as an expert staff member to the Dean of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences at Universitas Sumatera Utara. Previously, from 2020 to 2022, she held the position of Head of the Quality Assurance Unit at the same faculty.

Exploring the Factors Influencing Novice Saudi EFL Teachers' Implementation of Educational Action Research as a Professional Development Tool

Musa A. Alghamdi

English Language Department, English Language and Preparatory Year Institute, Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, Yanbu, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This research investigates the readiness of novice Saudi EFL teachers to adopt Educational Action Research (EAR) as a professional development strategy in higher education institutions. Despite growing interest in using EAR to enhance teaching practices and continuous professional development (CPD), this area remains underexplored in Saudi EFL literature. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study utilizes face-to-face semi-structured interviews with ten novice Saudi higher education EFL instructors to examine their foundational knowledge of EAR, the factors influencing their engagement with EAR practices, and the motivators driving their willingness to adopt EAR strategies. The findings highlight three key factors influencing readiness: (1) prior exposure to EAR, (2) pre-service education and training, and (3) intrinsic motivation as part of their learning agility. However, the study also identifies significant barriers, including inadequate practice opportunities and insufficient training. Notably, high levels of self-motivation were found to help teachers prepare for EAR implementation. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, targeted training programs and curriculum integration are recommended to optimize the use of EAR for improved teaching outcomes.

Index Terms—pre-service teachers, ELT practices, novice educationists, knowledge-doing gap, teachers' intrinsic motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, introductory educator preparation programs have demonstrated interest in action research (AR) methodologies (Dassa & Nichols, 2020; Phillips & Carr, 2014). It has been suggested that participation in action research will familiarize instructors with a more thoughtful approach to the classroom (Beck & Kosnik, 2000), shape their forthcoming teaching performance (Laudonia et al., 2017), and motivate them to adopt an inquiry-based teaching style (Aras, 2020). In recent years, scholars in the domain of second/foreign language (L2) education for teachers have devoted specific focus to instructors' ideas regarding AR (e.g., Mehrani, 2015, 2017; Doqaruni, 2023). Taking Pardede's (2016) claims into consideration, he states that several studies show that AR is one of the most powerful tools teachers can use to overcome education challenges. It has been proven that action research enables educators to acquire and apply knowledge to enhance their teaching abilities through their techniques. From this point, this study explores the readiness of novice Saudi EFL teachers to implement educational action research to develop their skills as professionals in the field of TESOL.

Clark et al. (2020) maintain that people tackle the objective of action research through the perspective of a thoughtful and reflective instructor. Participating in action research prompts scrutiny and contemplation to identify and implement essential changes in practice for educators and institutions as a whole. Conducting action research helps instructors perform with better understanding and trust. Thus, AR strives to assist instructors in L2 classrooms in improving their practices by identifying gaps in them and aligning practical classroom methods to the ideas and philosophies that support the teaching and learning domain. Clark et al. (2020) point out that those working in education utilize AR to improve their personalities and practices via their actions.

Action research has been under consideration by several scholars who try to highlight its meaning in the field. For example, Susman and Evered (2023) posit that action research (AR) is a method of study that focuses on initiating activities and raising awareness about everyday experiences. Yasmeen (2008) states that "action research is a spiral process that includes problem investigation, taking action, and fact-finding about the result of action" (p. 1). Moreover, it plays a significant role in producing working knowledge that helps endeavor to achieve meaningful aims.

Furthermore, Coughlan and Coughlan (2023) state that action research is an investigation method that helps to achieve two primary goals: practical challenges and the development of theoretical philosophy. In the same way, action research (AR) is a distinctive approach that aims to solve practical problems while expanding scientific knowledge through deliberate intervention and collaboration with stakeholders (Aulianda et al., 2021). Furthermore, action research is a collaborative research method that combines theory and practice to tackle real-world issues and provide practical

knowledge. It encompasses iterative phases of planning, execution, and evaluation, involving stakeholders as co-investigators (Casey & Coghlan, 2021). The procedure generally encompasses determining the issue, data collecting, analysis, and execution of actions (Sharma, 2022). Action research involves planning, carrying out the plan, and then assessing the degree to which the work makes an impact. To determine his or her performance's strengths and shortcomings, the teacher plans and gathers data from the classroom. Then, based on the results, the teacher attempts to improve performance in the school, address issues, and reinforce strengths. Lastly, they test the adjustment to determine whether it is effective.

Gunbayi (2020) states that there are three categories of action research: Technical (scientific or cooperative), Participatory (Practitioner or Reconciliation), and Emancipatory/Developmental/Critical. Technical action research is a type of inquiry in which practitioners rely heavily on the researcher's ability to play a role as a guide, with the primary objective being enhancing performance. Participatory action research is driven by a desire to educate and illuminate practitioners, enabling them to act with greater caution and deliberation. The emphasis is placed on enhancing performance over an extended period. In such a scenario, the practitioner retains the authority to determine the investigated areas and the implemented modifications.

Action research (AR) has a group of principles that make it unique (O'Brien, 1998). Coughlan and Coghlan (2023) introduce a wide-ranging overview of important principles in that context. Among these principles is the reflective critique that helps individuals reflect on topics and processes and make straightforward elucidations, partialities, suppositions, and concerns that underpin adjudications. This practical explanation leads to theoretical respects. Another principle is the dialectical critique that plays a significant role in realizing the connections between the phenomenon, its context, and the elements that form the phenomenon. Some of these elements that form the phenomenon are unbalanced, or sometimes they oppose each other. Those elements are the ones that researchers need to focus on because they are the ones that lead to changes.

People who take part in action research are co-researchers. The collaborative resource concept assumes that every individual's thoughts used to develop the action plan are equally valuable. It aims to avoid the skewing of credibility caused by an idea's past standing. It is particularly beneficial for understanding inconsistencies across different points of view and within a sole point of view. Those who are in the field of action research have mental anxieties because they feel that the change process could jeopardize all currently accepted practices for doing activities. Among the most widespread concerns is that communicating openly about a person's thoughts, ideas, and opinions could hurt the person's self-image. Action research researchers can use this idea to soothe participants' concerns and encourage engagement by reminding them that they will go through the same experience and that learning will occur regardless of the results.

The nature of the research incorporates various perspectives, remarks, and criticisms, resulting in several alternative actions and perceptions. This plural inquiry structure necessitates an array of written material for submitting reports. This implies that many stories will be made clear, with commentary on their inconsistencies and a choice of action alternatives offered. As a result, a report serves as an aid for continuing dialogue among participants rather than as a definitive factual result.

Within the action research framework, theory informs practice, and practice informs theory continuously. Implicit beliefs, ideas, and hypotheses influence people's actions in every circumstance, and theoretical knowledge expands with every visible result. These two elements are intertwined in a single transformation process.

The past literature review has witnessed a wide range of research that explores and investigates action research. Some researchers in the field of action research have linked action research to employees' professional improvement (see, for example, Saeb et al., 2021; Ferencová et al., 2025).

A. Action Research in the Field of TESOL

TESOL is a branch of education that makes a significant effort to benefit from the use of action research in various ways. Moreover, the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) academic community enthusiastically accepted and encouraged action research in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Crookes, 1993).

Initially, in the field of TESOL, educators focused on instructors' beliefs about action research (e.g., Bashir, 2011; Mehrani, 2017). Action research is widely acknowledged as an essential instrument for the professional development of EFL educators and the enhancement of classroom practices. It augments educators' understanding of their responsibilities and students' requirements and fosters reflective thinking (Saeb et al., 2021). In the same vein, Farrell and Guz (2019) maintain that research has demonstrated that, generally, second language (L2) teachers' beliefs significantly impact their professional growth.

Concerning teachers' beliefs about action research, Rainey (2000) conducted the initial comprehensive investigation on the subject, examining the knowledge and practices of AR as well as the perspectives of L2 instructors. A third of the interviewed sample were unaware of augmented reality (AR), while the ones who were informed agreed that its sole purpose was to enhance their skills. In other words, instructors held traditional conceptions of AR and were unaware of its other possible uses.

B. Action Research Pre-Service Education

Pre-service teachers understand the complex action research methods within their teacher education program. This instructional approach enables the participants to practice the practical application of research methodology in educational

settings. They develop pertinent experiences in identifying and working on educational challenges, selecting programs, implementing them, and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data for action research tasks. The present practical experience also opens for them the skills of how to critically assess and develop their practices based on the findings of empirical research to better their teaching approaches and, in the process, foster in them reflectiveness and adaptiveness of teaching methodologies, which, if well harnessed, can positively impact their future teaching practices.

According to Price (2001), action research is considered to be purposeful, systematic, collaborative, and democratic. The work of understanding the practical consequences of action research raises critical questions concerning the acquisition and application of these principles by pre-service teachers in the process of their learning. This publication brings out the relationship between instructional design, research, and change and supports the requirement for aspiring teachers to understand the work of action research within education.

Kennedy-Clark et al. (2018) pointed out that the construction of circumstances that could teach various teaching skills to future teachers is considered valuable and useful for their teacher education careers before entering the labor market. About future teachers, several issues, such as scarcity of funds and rigidity of assessment, challenge the idea of enhancing the opportunities for future teachers to design and implement their research during their studies (Mitton-Kukner et al., 2015).

C. Action Research in the Saudi Education Context

Within the realm of English language instruction, action research (AR) has emerged as a vital methodology. It provides educators and researchers with a framework that can be adapted to solve actual difficulties that are encountered within classrooms. Education professionals in Saudi Arabia are working hard to satisfy the ever-changing requirements of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and as a result, the implementation of action research has gained pace in the country. When it comes to tackling the linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical complexities that are characteristic of English language learning in Saudi Arabia, this methodology is particularly useful. In the discipline of EFL in Saudi Arabia, the corpus of study on action research can be divided into two separate streams.

The first stream comprises works employing action research as a methodological approach. These works utilize action research systematically to examine and address issues in learning and instruction. These studies frequently include educators functioning as researchers, participating in recurrent cycles of preparation, implementation, observation, and reflection to improve classroom practices. Alkubaidi (2019) uses an action research design consisting of three phases—exploration, intervention, and reflection—to examine the obstacles encountered by Saudi learners while acquiring English writing proficiency and the contributing factors. In the same vein, Al-Roomy (2013) employed an action research methodology to implement and examine an intervention aimed at assessing the efficacy of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of Saudi medical students.

The second stream concentrates on analyzing the overarching impacts of action research as a mechanism for professional growth. These studies examine the impact of action research on instructors' professional development, educational efficacy, and techniques for reflection. They evaluate the influence of action research on student results, teacher cooperation, and the enhancement of institutional teaching methodologies. Alwafi and Alkubaidi (2024) investigate the knowledge, practices, and challenges of AR among EFL educators at two public colleges in Saudi Arabia. The study utilized a quantitative research approach using an online questionnaire to accomplish this objective. The data was gathered from 96 EFL instructors employed at English language institutions inside two public universities in Saudi Arabia. The study's findings indicated that the majority of EFL teachers possessed familiarity with AR, and knowledge of AR was prevalent among the participants. Conversely, the data indicated a lack in the implementation of AR among EFL educators. The results indicated that time constraints and insufficient training in AR were the primary barriers preventing EFL teachers from using it. Taken as a whole, these two lines of inquiry illuminate AR's dual role as an approach to solving pressing social problems and a revolutionary force in the Saudi Arabian educational and occupational landscapes.

Some studies in the Saudi context have taken into consideration the teachers' reflective practices. Alharthi and Althaqafi (2023) investigated Saudi EFL teachers' perspectives on reflective practices, finding them useful but hampered by insufficient training, organizational impediments, and severe workloads, with female instructors engaged more than males. Alzahrani (2020) identified weaknesses in the professional development of Saudi EFL teachers, including inadequate pre-service training, restricted access to effective professional development, and discontent with poor-quality courses. Educators highlighted the necessity for interactive, localized, and practical professional development approaches, such as conferences and peer mentoring, while advocating for increased participation in the design of professional development programs. Both studies support systemic reforms aimed at enhancing teacher development. Action research was excluded as a form of reflective practice.

D. Knowledge-Doing Gap

In education, the knowledge-doing gap refers to the difference between what educators know is the best practice to teach and what educators do in their classroom. However, it is still possible for many teachers and facilitators of learning to experience difficulties in applying most of the educational research and theory to real-life situations. The reasons for this difference may include, for example, a shortage of funds, a lack of preparation of workers, and organizational barriers to the application of new methods. This remaining gap has to be closed to boost educational outcomes. The application

of theory demonstrates that any approach can be effective when the learner's needs are met and learning is fostered as a continuous and lifelong process. Strategies that constitute good practice for closing this gap include ongoing professional development, professional learning communities, and action research, allowing teachers to try and improve their teaching processes. Such measures can help build the education system by using more efficient and less ambiguous pedagogy.

Recent years have shown that the data used by practitioners and that which occurs naturally from researchers are different. Scholars have particularly focused on the knowing-doing gap and suggested many strategies for addressing this issue (Mehrani, 2014). These initiatives include exploring practices other than journal articles in disseminating scientific knowledge, building partnerships, and supporting the use of participatory structures and approaches (Hulme, 2014).

Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) examine how companies apply knowledge. Moving from knowledge to practice is key, they say. Many businesses struggle to apply new ideas despite widespread information acquisition and sharing. The writers emphasize the importance of a practical and courageous strategy to overcome hurdles and improve organizational performance. They list resistance to change, complex decision-making processes, fear of failure, incentive misalignment, communication gaps, cultural hurdles, a predisposition toward talk over action, and dependence on past methods instead of critical thinking as knowledge implementation challenges. Businesses may bridge the knowledge gap and advance innovation by tackling these challenges.

E. Research Rationale

The rationale for research is that Educational Action Research (EAR) is acknowledged as a potent professional development instrument, facilitating instructors in the reflection and improvement of their classroom methodologies. Nonetheless, in Saudi Arabia, the preparedness of beginner EFL teachers to embrace EAR remains a mostly unexamined domain. Current studies underscore the difficulties encountered by Saudi EFL educators, such as insufficient pre-service training, institutional obstacles, and restricted reflective practices. Notwithstanding this research, EAR has been neglected as a reflective and professional development method, resulting in a significant gap in comprehending its potential to enhance teaching practices.

This study is notably important as it tackles three critical deficiencies: (1) the dearth of research on novice Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of EAR, (2) the scarcity of qualitative inquiries into teachers' lived experiences and challenges regarding EAR, and (3) the insufficient examination of contextual factors, including intrinsic motivation and institutional obstacles, that affect the implementation of EAR in Saudi higher education.

This research utilizes a qualitative methodology, specifically semi-structured interviews, to provide a comprehensive knowledge of rookie instructors' experiences, perceptions, and obstacles in applying EAR. In contrast to quantitative studies that typically emphasize overarching patterns, this approach elucidates the intricate and contextual reality of teachers' professional development experiences. The results will help to connect the theoretical comprehension of EAR with its actual implementation in Saudi schools.

This study is consistent with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which highlights the significance of teacher empowerment, innovative pedagogical approaches, and professional development to enhance educational outcomes. This research seeks to offer practical ideas for integrating EAR into pre-service education and continuous professional development programs, thereby enhancing the professional competencies of Saudi EFL teachers and improving the quality of language instruction in the region.

F. Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to assess novice EFL instructors' awareness of action research and to identify the elements that help or hinder them from incorporating action research as professional practice in their classroom lectures. The first is to identify the extent of knowledge that novice EFL teachers have on action research with the help of this quiz, which tests their understanding and awareness of this approach. The second one is designed to determine how various factors facilitate or constrain these teachers from adopting action research in their teaching practice. By examining these study inquiries, significant knowledge may be acquired to improve the professional growth and instructional methods of inexperienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors, finally leading to the advancement of English language education. Two main research questions have been formulated:

1. How do novice EFL teachers perceive and describe their knowledge and understanding of action research?
2. What factors encourage or prevent novice EFL teachers from applying action research in their classrooms as a professional tool?

II. METHODOLOGY

The study applies the qualitative paradigm to answer the research questions.

A. Research Design

Qualitative investigators strive to wholly comprehend how individuals act and the underlying factors that influence such actions (Jameel et al., 2018; Mistry, 2012). For that reason, qualitative researchers employ a diverse range of methodologies to cultivate profound insights into individuals' perceptions of their social surroundings and, consequently, what they do in the realm of society (Ennis, 2016; Beuving & Vries, 2015). The current study aims to investigate the

preparedness of newly appointed Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to utilize Educational Action Research (EAR) to enhance their professional growth. Using qualitative research, an exploratory approach was adopted to gain insight into the instructors' experiences, attitudes, and experiences with EAR. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main data collection technique because they offer flexibility to participants and ensure that the key concerns captured by the research objectives are not dismissed (Adams, 2015). Furthermore, the administration of semi-structured interviews provided both closed-ended questions and open-ended responses. The above method enabled one to develop a deeper understanding of the participant's perception of the EAR and their readiness to adopt it as a career enhancement.

B. The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher plays an essential part as the principal tool for data collection and interpretation (Wa-Mbaleka, 2019). In this study, the researcher thoroughly engaged with the participants to cultivate a nuanced comprehension of their experiences, perspectives, and challenges concerning Educational Action Research (EAR). The researcher was responsible for the study's layout, performing semi-structured interviews, ensuring ethical compliance, and maintaining a reflective approach throughout the research process.

(a). Positioning and Reflexivity

The researcher employed a reflective methodology to mitigate biases and guarantee openness throughout the study procedure. By contemplating his role as both observer and interpreter, the researcher acknowledged his impact on the data gathering and analysis stages. This reflexive technique was essential due to the study's exploratory design and dependence on in-depth interviews to obtain participants' viewpoints.

(b). Ethical Considerations

The researcher guaranteed that participants were thoroughly apprised of the study's aims, methodologies, and confidentiality protocols. Participants received a permission form outlining their rights, including the option to withdraw at any point. This ethical obligation not only protected participants' rights but also cultivated trust between the researcher and the participants, which is crucial in qualitative research.

(c). Facilitator and Listener

The researcher served as a facilitator during the interviews, fostering an open and supportive atmosphere that allowed participants to express their experiences openly. Active listening approaches were utilized to guarantee that participants were acknowledged and comprehended, hence enhancing the depth and quality of the data gathered.

C. Participants

Ten novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors participated in this qualitative study. All participants were employed at higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia and had recently begun their teaching careers. The study utilized purposive sampling based on criterion-based selection. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method that is employed to identify participants who are particularly informative in qualitative and quantitative research (Memon et al., 2024). Purposive sampling has numerous categories, including criterion type (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). The current research employed criterion type to identify individuals who met the following inclusion criteria:

1. Participants must have no more than two years of university-level teaching experience.
2. Participants must currently be employed as EFL instructors at universities in Saudi Arabia.

The researcher collaborated with the chairs of English departments and faculty coordinators at participating schools to find qualified teachers to take part in the study. Prospective participants were invited to participate in the study through an email that detailed its objectives, methods, confidentiality measures, and the fact that it was entirely voluntary (Appendix). Based on the selection criteria, individuals who indicated interest were evaluated to determine eligibility.

Through the use of semi-structured, in-person and online interviews, each participant was approached individually. There was no experimental manipulation or group assignment because the study used a qualitative approach. Participants were not divided into subgroups or given particular conditions to complete. To determine whether they were prepared to apply Educational Action Research (EAR), the researchers solicited the participants' individual perspectives. Six men and four women, all with one or two years' experience in the classroom, made up the final sample. Table 1 below summarizes the participant demographics.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE AND GENDER

	Name	Experience	Gender
1	Ms. Fatimah	1	F
2	Mr. Ali	1	M
3	Mr. Hassan	1	M
4	Ms. Noura	1	F
5	Mr. Waheeb	1	M
6	Ms. Nahala	1	F
7	Mr. Yousef	1	M
8	Mr. Dahesh	1	M
9	Mr. Mansour	1	M
10	Ms. Samah	1	F

D. Data Collection

This study utilizes semi-structured interviews that continued for two months. Every interview was conducted at a location that worked for the participants and lasted an average of twenty to forty minutes. Participants received information about the study's goal, assurances that their privacy would be protected, and the choice to withdraw from the research project at any moment to promote comfort and transparency. The interviews were performed in person or online utilizing the Zoom video-conferencing application.

Enhancing data precision and fortifying study outcomes in qualitative studies depends on rigorous methodology strategies. Essential strategies encompass the laborious design of the study, precise data collection, and suitable analytical methods (Mandasini, 2022; Ojoboh & Igben, 2024). It is essential to ensure validity and dependability using methods including audit trails, member checking, and triangulation (Coleman, 2022; Ahmed, 2024). The current study incorporated numerous precautions to guarantee the reliability of the research methodology. As observed by Ravitch and Carl (2016), dialogic engagement is a crucial collaborative and dialogue-oriented methodology that can improve the validity and reliability of qualitative research. Thus, at the outset of the analytical phase, the researchers participated in dialogic engagement. Furthermore, the researcher employed member checking with participants to confirm the precision of data collection and interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2018). When the researcher finished asking questions and interpreting the data, the participants were given chances to go over and assess the data and interpretations. These strategies guaranteed that the results accurately represented the participants' experiences and viewpoints while promoting a more transparent research approach.

E. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data. Although Braun and Clarke's (2012) six-phase thematic analysis model—which includes data familiarization, initial code generation, theme searching, theme review, theme definition and labeling, and report production—appears to be a systematic process, its practical application is rife with potential complexities and criticisms. Thematic analysis is considered a valuable tool for providing in-depth and nuanced accounts of complex phenomena, according to its advocates (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Likewise, Joffe (2012) posits that thematic analysis can facilitate the acquisition of a comprehensive understanding of the underlying meanings and experiences in data by emphasizing pattern identification and examination.

Nevertheless, thematic analysis is subject to critical scrutiny, despite its procedural framework. If not executed with precision, its celebrated adaptability may become a liability, potentially resulting in a lack of rigor and profundity (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Subjectivity in theme identification presents challenges in terms of consistency and bias (Torres et al., 2018). Additionally, its application may occasionally lead to superficial data summarization rather than in-depth analysis, and its diverse definitions can induce theoretical confusion (Morgan, 2022). As a result, the assertion of an inherent in-depth comprehension necessitates meticulous qualification and a rigorous application.

Thematic analysis of the interview data was undertaken via NVivo software to find the potential themes and sub-themes. The first phase was to select initial codes through interview transcripts to begin the coding process. The second step involved targeted coding, during which the researcher revised the early codes and organized them into coherent categories. The third step, which focused on building themes from the categorized codes, facilitated a greater understanding of the participants' perspectives.

The data were examined using a thematic approach. Methodically encoding the data allows for the identification, analysis, and representation of recurring themes that are present throughout the data. To categorize the data, the researchers made use of theme analysis, which allowed them to obtain insight into the perspectives and experiences of the participants.

III. RESULTS

The interviews with the participants revealed several subthemes. These subthemes can be classified under three main themes. These themes answer the research questions.

Q.1 How do novice EFL teachers perceive and describe their knowledge and understanding of action research?

Based on their answers, it is clear that participants' knowledge and grasp of action research concepts vary. Not all educators were equally knowledgeable or confident when asked to describe the methodology of action research; some seemed to have a basic grasp of the concept as a reflective problem-solving abilities approach.

A. Basic Understanding of Action Research

Ms. Fatimah, Mr. Ali, and Mr. Yousef, three of the participants in this study, explained action research as a methodical way to fix problems in the educational environment. For example, Mr. Ali described it as "solving specific problems in the classroom through a systematic approach," while Ms. Fatimah mentioned it involves "identifying a problem, planning a solution, implementing it, and reflecting on the results." Numerous educators, meanwhile, needed more knowledge of the particular procedures or frameworks of action research.

B. Limited Exposure

A significant number of participants (Mr. Hassan, Ms. Noura, Mr. Waheeb, and Mr. Dahesh) admitted to having minimal exposure to action research in their teacher training or professional development. For instance, Mr. Dahesh noted, "I haven't had much exposure to action research. My knowledge mostly comes from reading articles online".

C. Sources of Knowledge

Most participants reported learning about action research from teacher training programs, professional development workshops, or informal discussions with colleagues. However, several teachers, such as Mr. Mansour, expressed concerns about the lack of hands-on experience, stating, "I've read about different models but haven't applied any of them practically".

D. Perceived Benefits

Teachers perceived action research as a valuable tool for professional development and classroom improvement. Mr. Waheeb emphasized, "It's a great way to grow professionally and improve teaching strategies." Similarly, Mr. Yousef highlighted its potential to "make learning more effective and engaging" by involving students in the process.

Despite these positive perceptions, the findings reveal a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, with many participants expressing a need for more structured training and support to confidently implement action research.

Q.2 What factors encourage or prevent novice EFL teachers from applying action research in their classrooms as a professional tool?

A. Novice EFL Teachers' Prior Exposure

The novice EFL teachers' experience plays a vital role in the knowledge of new EFL teachers about action research. The interview revealed that novice EFL teachers did not go through the practice of action research before their teaching practices. Mr. Ali mentioned:

I have not read or heard about action research. I am not sure what technique I need to use to start action research.

I believe I need to find out more about action research to decide whether to use it or not.

The above extract reflects an individual's initial uncertainty and lack of knowledge about action research, as well as a recognition of the need to explore the topic further before deciding to apply AR in their classrooms. Moreover, this indicates a lack of familiarity with the concept, which is an important first step in the learning process—acknowledging the unknown and unclear about the practical steps or methodologies involved in action research. This reflects a potential barrier to engaging with the practice and suggests a need for guidance or foundational knowledge.

Ms. Nahala noted that:

Currently, I do not have any previous experience conducting action research in my classroom. However, I am eager to explore this approach and its potential impact on my teaching practice.

From the above scripts, an individual can infer that EFL teachers avoid applying action research in their EFL classroom because they lack the skills needed to carry out AR. This lack of skills springs from the absence of needed training and knowledge about action research practices. The above scripts shed light on two levels of knowledge. These levels are theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. This idea focuses on the difference between theoretical and practical knowledge, linked to the knowing-doing gap (Hulme, 2014; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000).

Furthermore, the transcript analysis reveals the respondent's initial lack of acquaintance with action research, emphasizing the need for more education to enhance decision-making. Nonetheless, a transition towards comprehension is apparent as the responder depicts action research as a methodical approach for enhancing pedagogical methods, indicating a growing recognition of its advantages. The respondent recognizes the significance of exploring action research and displays interest in possibly using it as a professional development instrument. Recommendations emphasize providing educational materials and training to improve the respondent's preparedness for the successful implementation of Educational Action Research. This advancement indicates a constructive move towards incorporating action research into the EFL teaching context.

B. Pre-Service Education

Some interviewees have raised the issue of the absence of the action research practice during pre-service education. When the interviewer asked questions about the factors that discourage EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia from applying AR, two teachers pointed to the lack of practice during their university courses.

Mr. Ali emphasized that:

There are several reasons that may discourage me from applying AR in the classroom. I do not exactly know how to start carrying out AR. I did not receive any practice, especially during my course at the university.

Ms. Nahala said:

I have faced a lot of difficulties when I tried to use AR in my classes. I believe that there are several reasons that created those problems. One of these difficulties is that I did not have any kind of training or courses focused on AR practices at the university or before I joined my workplace. I think that university programs need to focus on teaching their students how to apply AR and train them well.

The tape recordings highlighted a common concern of lack of preparation and backup relating to EAR in teaching and learning practice. Mr. Ali and Ms. Nahala explained their challenges in implementing EAR because they had no supervision or practical experience during their undergraduate studies. Again, the first respondent was not very clear about when they began implementing AR, which points to their lack of expertise, suggesting there is a need to develop structured training programs to equip the educators with requisite tools and methodologies. From the interview with one of the teachers, the following challenges that hinder the use of AR in courses are shown. The comment underlines the outcome of poor preparation and training involving mechanical challenges in using AR in the classroom. Lack of experience in practicing EAR before getting employed increases the necessity of incorporating intensive EAR classes into curricula to properly prepare future educators. Both transcripts emphasize the need for colleges to prioritize instructing students in the use of AR and to provide comprehensive training in EAR techniques. This indicates a need for institutions of education to augment their curriculum by including practical EAR elements to reconcile theory with application. Training programs designed for EAR practices may enable educators to do significant research, enhance instructional methods, and boost educational results.

C. Intrinsic Drive for Engaging in EAR

The data of the current study revealed a third theme, which highlights the motivation of novice Saudi EFL instructors to engage in educational action research. The following quotes from two participants show the reasons that encourage EFL teachers to implement educational action research in their classrooms. Mr. Yousef shared his views as follows:

What motivated me to engage in action research as a professional tool is the desire to continuously improve my teaching methods and enhance student engagement and achievement. I believe that action research can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different instructional strategies and help me tailor my approach to better meet the needs of my students.

In the same vein, Mr. Dahesh raised the same views about the motivating reasons that encouraged her to plan to apply EAR in her class:

I see action research as a valuable personal and professional development tool. In fact, by engaging in research and reflecting on my teaching, I can gain insights into my teaching practices, which will help me to develop a deeper understanding of my weaknesses and try to overcome all the challenges I may encounter in the classroom.

On the other hand, Ms. Samah raised some factors that may represent challenges and may decrease the level of motivation among EFL instructors to use EAR:

While I haven't conducted action research yet, I anticipate potential challenges such as time constraints, limited resources, and the need for technical skills in collecting and analyzing data. However, I am prepared to address these challenges by seeking support from colleagues, utilizing available resources, and enhancing my research skills through professional development opportunities.

A strong desire to continuously improve teaching techniques and student results motivated the volunteers to participate in action research. Problems with time and money and a lack of expertise in data collecting and analysis were among the anticipated obstacles. On the other hand, by reaching out to their coworkers for help and being open to possibilities for professional growth, participants showed initiative in improving their research abilities.

IV. DISCUSSION

This research identifies three primary topics concerning the awareness and determinants affecting the adoption of action research (AR) among novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The theme of novice EFL Teachers' Prior Exposure indicates that the majority of participants possess little theoretical and practical knowledge of action research. This disparity is seen in their ambivalence towards AR approaches and their reluctance to incorporate technology into educational settings. The comments emphasize the essential need for fundamental training and exposure to AR in the initial phases of professional growth. Participants recognized a knowing-doing gap, in which the lack of training and resources constrains the practical implementation of AR. Rectifying this deficiency through systematic instruction and fundamental education is essential for cultivating confidence and proficiency among EFL educators in using AR as a professional resource.

The second theme, Pre-service Education, highlights the insufficiency of university-level preparation in equipping EFL teachers for action research. The participants highlighted that their undergraduate programs lacked practical AR training, rendering them unprepared to implement these techniques in actual classroom environments. This deficiency in preparation not only impedes their capacity to deploy AR effectively but also engenders more hurdles, including mechanical issues and ambiguity in the application of AR technology. The results support the incorporation of extensive AR training into pre-service education programs. This may connect theoretical comprehension with practical

implementation, providing educators with the resources necessary to perform significant research, refine instructional methods, and elevate educational results.

The third component, the Intrinsic Drive for Engaging in EAR, underscores the inherent drive of educators to embrace AR for professional development and enhanced student outcomes. Participants articulated a robust aspiration to improve pedagogical methods and acquire knowledge regarding instructional efficacy. Notwithstanding this desire, they also foresaw obstacles, including time limitations, resource scarcity, and deficiencies in technical skills. Nonetheless, their proactive dispositions—exemplified by soliciting peer assistance and participating in professional development—exhibit a preparedness to surmount these challenges. This theme emphasizes the necessity of offering constant support, resources, and chances for skill development to maintain teachers' enthusiasm and empower them to utilize action research as a means for ongoing improvement. Collectively, these themes elucidate the complex obstacles and motivators affecting the adoption of AR, providing essential insights for educational policymakers and organizations seeking to enhance EFL instructors' research competencies.

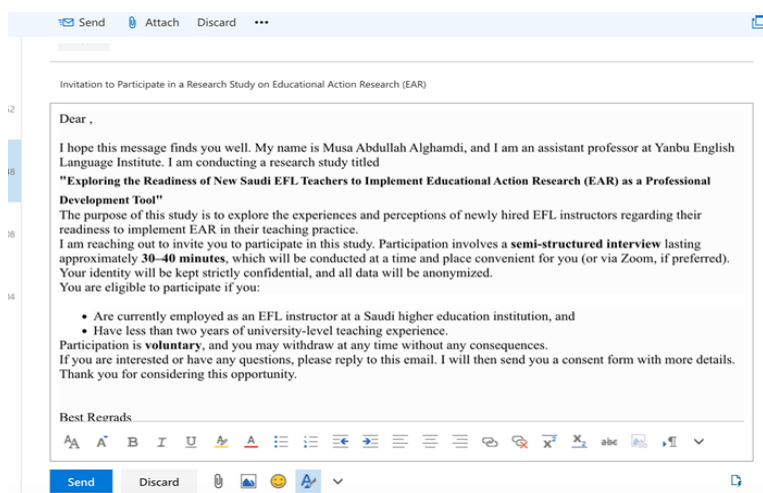


Figure 1. The Areas Underpin the Readiness of the Novice EFL Teachers to Implement Education Action Research (EAR)

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of the current study revealed three main areas that underpin the readiness of novice EFL teachers to implement educational action research (EAR) in their classrooms as a professional development technique that may improve their teaching performance. These three areas include the novice EFL teachers' prior exposure to EAR, the role of pre-service education and their motivation to engage in an action research task. These three areas play negative roles that make the EFL teachers hesitate to participate in EAR practices (i.e., their previous experience and pre-service education). The third area (i.e. their intrinsic drive) appears to be a positive area that may encourage them to implement EAR in their classroom. The current researcher recommends for future areas to find out the novice EFL teachers' training needs to employ EAR in the classroom. Furthermore, researchers need to investigate the actual application of EAR inside the classroom and the challenges that teachers may encounter after training.

APPENDIX



REFERENCES

- [1] Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. In Wholey, J. S., Harty, H. P., & Newcomer, K. E. (Eds.), *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (pp. 492-505). Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. Retrieved November 29, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386>.
- [2] Ahmed, S. K. (2024). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine Surgery and Public Health*, 2, 100051. Retrieved August 29, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051>
- [3] Alharthi, R. M., & Althaqafi, A. S. (2023). Exploring Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of using reflective practice as a tool for professional development. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 11(1), 127. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v11i1.20920>
- [4] Alkubaidi, M. (2019). An Action Research on EFL writing Dilemmas: A case of Saudi students and instructors. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(3), 151–164. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no3.10>
- [5] Al-Roomy, Muhammad. (2013). *An action research study of collaborative strategic reading in English with Saudi medical students*. University of Sussex. Thesis. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://hdl.handle.net/10779/uos.23399363.v1>
- [6] Alwafi, M. M., & Alkubaidi, M. (2024). Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of action research in two public universities in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 12(2), 1. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v12i2.21886>
- [7] Alzahrani, M. (2020). Saudi EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards Professional Development. *International Journal of Learning Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(11), 242–258. Retrieved August 3, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.11.14>
- [8] Aras, S. (2020). Action Research as an Inquiry-Based Teaching Practice Model for Teacher Education Programs. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*. Retrieved September 29, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11213-020-09526-9>
- [9] Aulianda, M., Djatmika, E. T., & Handayati, P. (2021). Critical review: action research. *INOVASI*, 17(4), 860–868. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.30872/jinv.v17i4.10427>
- [10] Bashir, I. (2011). Professionalize Sudanese teachers' conception of work through action research. *English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 121-124. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n2p12>
- [11] Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2000). Associate Teachers in Pre-service Education: Clarifying and enhancing their role. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 26(3), 207–224. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/713676888>
- [12] Beuving, J., & de Vries, G. (2015). *Doing Qualitative Research: The Craft of Naturalistic Inquiry*. Amsterdam University Press. Retrieved September 20, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt130h8g7>
- [13] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- [14] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57-71). American Psychological Association.
- [15] Casey, M., & Coughlan, D. (2021). Action research - for practitioners and researchers. In *Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks*. Retrieved September 22, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789904345.00010>
- [16] Clark, J. S., Porath, S., Thiele, J., & Jobe, M. (2020). *Action research*. New Prairie Press, Paris.
- [17] Coleman, Phil. (2022). Validity and Reliability within Qualitative Research for the Caring Sciences. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 14(3), 2041–2045.
- [18] Coughlan, P., & Coughlan, D. (2023). *Action research*. In *Research Methods for Operations and Supply Chain Management* (pp. 219-251). Routledge.
- [19] Crookes, G. (1992). Theory Format and SLA Theory. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 14(4), 425–449. doi:10.1017/S0272263100011219
- [20] Dassa, L., & Nichols, B. (2020). Making the Move: Empowering Student Teachers as Teacher Researchers. *The Teacher Educator*, 1–16. Retrieved December 11, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2020.1713948>
- [21] Doqaruni, V. R. (2023). The Effect of Educational Context on Teachers' Beliefs about Action Research in the Iranian EFL Educational System. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 20(3), 730-738.
- [22] Ennis, C. D. (Ed.). (2016). *Routledge handbook of physical education pedagogies*. Routledge.
- [23] Farrell, T. S. C., & Guz, M. (2019). 'If I wanted to survive I had to use it': The power of teacher beliefs on classroom practices. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 22(4), 1-17.
- [24] Ferencová, J., Pirohová, I., Šuťáková, V., & Miňová, M. (2025). Development of Teacher's Professional Competence through Action Research as a Form of Professional Development. *Acta Paedagogica Vilnensia*, 53, 128-143. <https://doi.org/10.15388/ActPaed.2024.53.9>
- [25] Gunbayi, I. (2020). Action research as a mixed methods research: Definition, philosophy, types, process, political and ethical issues and pros and cons. *Journal of Mixed Methods Studies*, Issue 2, 16-25.
- [26] Hulme, P. E. (2014). Bridging the knowing–doing gap: know-who, know-what, know-why, know-how and know-when. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 51(5), 1131-1136.
- [27] Jameel, B., Shaheen, S., & Majid, U. (2018). Introduction to qualitative research for novice investigators. *Undergraduate Research in Natural and Clinical Science and Technology (URNCTST) Journal*, 2(6), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.26685/urnctst.57>
- [28] Joffe, H. (2012). Thematic analysis. In D. Harper & A. R. Thompson (Eds.), *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 209-223). John Wiley & Sons.
- [29] Kennedy-Clark, S., Eddles-Hirsch, K., Francis, T., Cummins, G., Ferantino, L., Tichelaar, M., & Ruz, L. (2018). Developing Pre-Service Teacher Professional Capabilities through Action Research. *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(9), 39–58. Retrieved December 22, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n9.3>
- [30] Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical Teacher*, 42(8), 846–854.

- [31] Laudonia, I., Mamlok-Naaman, R., Abels, S., & Eilks, I. (2017). Action research in science education – an analytical review of the literature. *Educational Action Research*, 26(3), 480–495. Retrieved September 18, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2017.1358198>
- [32] Mandasini, A. A. (2022). Improving the Validity of Scientific Research Results through Research Methodology Management. *Kontigensi Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen*, 10(2), 439–447. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.56457/jimk.v10i2.389>
- [33] Mehrani, M. B. (2015). English teachers' research engagement: Level of engagement and motivation. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 3(1), 83–97. Retrieved January 10, 2025, from <https://arastirmax.com/en/publication/iranian-journal-language-teaching-research/3/1/83-97-english-teachers-research-engagement-level-engagement-and-motivation/arid/a8bf783e-182c-4be2-b5bc-ff0641aa646b>
- [34] Mehrani, Mehdi B. (2017). A Narrative Study of Iranian EFL Teachers' Experiences of Doing Action Research. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 5(1), 93–112. Retrieved January 11, 2025, from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1132489>
- [35] Mehrani, Mehdi B. (2014). Bridging the Gap between Research and Practice: Voice of Mediators. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 18(2), 21–38. Retrieved January 10, 2025, from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1051324>
- [36] Memon, M. A., Thurasamy, R., Ting, H., & Cheah, J. (2024). Purposive sampling: a review and guidelines for quantitative Research. *Journal of Applied Structural Equation Modeling*, 9(1), 1–23. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from [https://doi.org/10.47263/jasem.9\(1\)01](https://doi.org/10.47263/jasem.9(1)01)
- [37] Mistry, K. B. (2012). Research and Statistics: Qualitative research methods. *Pediatrics in Review*, 33(11), 521–523. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1542/pir.33-11-521>
- [38] Mitton-Kukner, J., Munroe, E., & Graham, D. (2015). The Challenge of Differing Perspectives Surrounding Grades in the Assessment Education of Pre-Service Teachers. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 45(4), 322-342.
- [39] Morgan, H. (2022). Understanding Thematic Analysis and the Debates Involving Its Use. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(10), 2079-2091. Retrieved September 27, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5912>
- [40] Nyimbili, F., & Nyimbili, L. (2024). Types of Purposive Sampling Techniques with Their Examples and Application in Qualitative Research Studies. *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*, 5(1), 90–99. Retrieved September 27, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0419>
- [41] O'Brien, R. (1998). An overview of the methodological approach of action research. *American Institute for Research*, 2(4), 1-14.
- [42] Ojoboh, T. M., & Igben, H. G. (2024). Impact of research methodology on data quality and research findings. *JPPUMA Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan Dan Sosial Politik Universitas Medan Area*, 12(1), 34–42. Retrieved October 19, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.31289/jppuma.v12i1.11793>
- [43] Pardede, P. (2016). Action Research in EFL Learning and Teaching. Paper presented in UKI's English Education Department Collegiate Forum held on Friday, December 9, 2016.
- [44] Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (2000). *The Knowing-Doing Gap: How Smart Companies Turn Knowledge into Action*. Harvard Business School Press, Brighton, MA.
- [45] Phillips, D. K., & Carr, K. (2014). *Becoming a teacher through action research: Process, context, and self-study*. Routledge.
- [46] Price, J. N. (2001). Action research, pedagogy and change: The transformative potential of action research in pre-service teacher education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 33(1), 43-74.
- [47] Rainey, I. (2000). Action research and the English as a foreign language practitioner: time to take stock. *Educational Action Research*, 8(1), 65–91. Retrieved August 29, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790000200112>
- [48] Saeb, F., Nejadansari, D., & Moinsadeh, A. (2021). The Impact of Action Research on Teacher Professional Development: Perspectives from Iranian EFL Teachers. *Teaching English Language (Online)*, 15(2), 265–297. Retrieved August 27, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2021.143114>
- [49] Sharma, L. R. (2022). Dealing with Crucial Aspects of Action Research. *International Research Journal of MMC*, 3(5), 59–74. Retrieved August 27, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.3126/irjmmc.v3i5.50739>
- [50] Susman, G. I., & Evered, R. D. (2023). An assessment of the scientific merits of action research. *Studi Organizzativi*, (2022/2).
- [51] Torres, A. A. L., Maculan, B. C., Da Consolação Dias, C., & Da Silva, G. R. (2018). Subjective aspects in the thematic representation of photographic images. *Collection and Curation*, 37(4), 151–157. Retrieved November 20, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/cc-03-2018-0005>
- [52] Wa-Mbaleka, S. (2019). The researcher as an instrument. In *Advances in intelligent systems and computing* (pp. 33–41). Retrieved February 1, 2025, from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-31787-4_3
- [53] Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing & health Sciences*, 15(3), 398-405.
- [54] Yasmeen, G. (2008). Action research: An approach for the teachers in higher education. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 7(4), 46–53.

Musa Abdullah Alghamdi was born in Mahayel Asser, Saudi Arabia, in 1973. He received the M.A. degree in TESOL and Applied Linguistics from Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K., in 2009, and the Ph.D. degree in Educational and Applied Linguistics from Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K., in 2019.

He has worked as an English Language instructor, lecturer, and assistant professor for over 27 years at Bisha Teachers' College, Jeddah Teachers' College, Yanbu Industrial College, and the Yanbu English Language and Preparatory Year Institute. He is currently an assistant professor at the Royal Commission Colleges & Institutes (RCYCI), Yanbu English Language and Preparatory Year Institute (YEL&PYI), Yanbu, Saudi Arabia. He has published a number of research papers. His recent publications include "The impact of COVID-19 on Educationists' Preparedness to encounter a future Pandemic," *Epidemic Preparedness and Control*, 2024; and "Online Learning during Corona Virus Epidemic in Saudi Arabia: Students' Attitudes and Complications," *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2021. His research interests include technology-enhanced language learning, teacher professional development, and evidence-based second language teaching practices.

An Optimality-Theoretic Account of Superheavy Syllables in Urban Irbid Dialect

Bilal Alsharif

Department of Applied English, Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Razan Khasawneh

Department of English Language and Translation, Amman Arab University, Amman, Jordan

Rula Abu-Elrob

Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—This study investigates the distribution of superheavy syllables in Urban Irbid dialect (UID), revealing their occurrence in both non-final and final word positions. We argue that word-final superheavy syllables are characterized by an extrametrical or weightless final consonant. This extrametricality is proposed as a mechanism to satisfy constraints against trimoraic syllables ($*3\mu$) and final consonants bearing weight ($*FINAL-\mu-C$), albeit at the cost of violating the Weight-to-Stress Principle (WBP). Drawing on Broselow's (1992) analysis, we suggest that the extrametrical final consonant can alternatively satisfy WBP by violating a constraint against non-syllabic segments ($NS\mu$). Furthermore, the analysis highlights that the absence of final CVCC syllables in UID stems from a violation of the Sonority Sequencing Principle. Finally, the paper notes the non-occurrence of certain non-final CVCC and CVCCC syllable types within the system, suggesting further constraints on syllable structure beyond those discussed.

Index Terms—Urban Irbid dialect, superheavy syllables, extrametricality, Weight-to-Stress Principle

I. INTRODUCTION

Previous works on Generative phonology have overlooked the role of syllables in the phonological theory to the extent that the term "syllable" was not mentioned in the index, as they claim that words are decomposed into sequences of vowels and consonants (Katamba, 1992; Spencer, 1996; Hannahs, 2011). Recent studies, however, have shown that syllables have become the locus of phonological theory, in which phonotactic constraints and distributional statements are best described in terms of syllables rather than words or morphemes (Hooper, 1972, 1975; Katamba, 1992; Spencer, 1996; Hannahs, 2011, Alsharif & Khasawneh, 2025). For example, in English, aspiration is sensitive to syllable structure, as in $[p^h]ea$ and $re[p^h]eat$. That is, the voiceless stop $[P]$ is aspirated when it occurs before any stressed vowel, whether it is word-initial or not (Hannahs, 2011). Another example is the case of emphasis in Cairene Arabic, wherein Broselow (1976) emphasized that the domain of emphasis (T, D, S, Z, L, R) is not the segment but the syllable, as illustrated in the following examples (1).

1. a. FASL / b. FAS. lu 'term, his term'
b. RAA. gil / b. RAG. leen 'man, two men'

Obviously, in examples (a) and (b), when suffixes are cliticized to the word, they fail to share the emphasis with the preceding syllable since, as mentioned above, emphasis only spreads to all segments within the same syllable.

II. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON SYLLABLE REPRESENTATION

Syllables have gained much attention in the last five decades, which has led to the emergence of a number of theories that are dedicated to accounting for the syllable structure in various languages and their dialects, such as the skeletal tier theory, X-slot theory, the templatic theory, and the moraic theory. For example, McCarthy (1979a) established the skeletal theory in which the skeleton is an empty frame into which units from the segmental tier are mapped, and the CV-tiers are designated by features $[\pm \text{consonantal}]$, as shown in (2).

2. a.

C	V
p	a

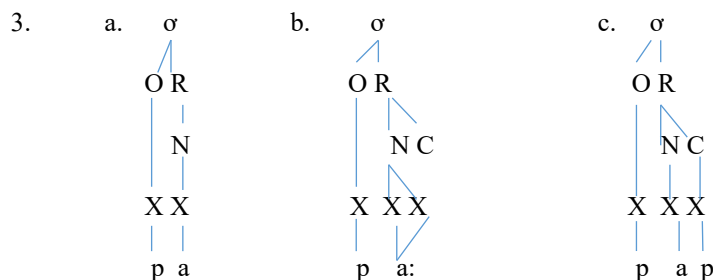
 b.

C	V	C
p	a	p

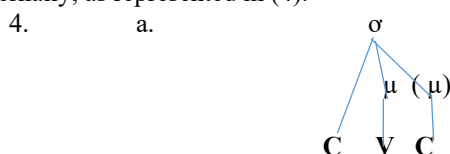
 c.

C	V	V
p	a	

However, this theory was replaced by X-slots (Levin, 1985), which reflect the number of units on the segmental tier. Besides, the distinction between consonantal and vocalic features is rendered unspecified, so either consonants or vowels can be associated, as illustrated in (3).



Subsequently, Hyman (2019) introduced the moraic theory, in which syllables are also categorized into two types: light and heavy. Accordingly, light syllables usually take the form of CV, which is considered to be one mora, while heavy ones are usually CVV or CVC. The long vowels or diphthongs in CVV weighed two moras, but the weight of a CVC syllable is language-specific, in which the coda C is sensitive to its position. This means that in some languages, including Arabic, if the coda C occurs in the absolute final position, it is weightless. However, it has one mora if it occurs word-internally, as represented in (4).

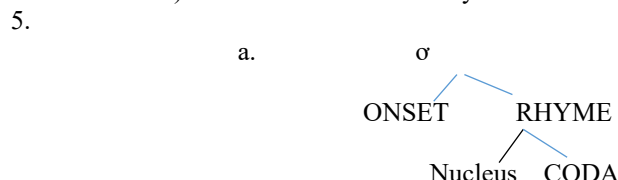


Due to its inability to capture generalizations for the variations among languages and dialects, there was a need for a new grammatical representation to accommodate such variations. Accordingly, Itô (2018) proposed the template theory by which syllable structures are built around directional template matching.

III. ARABIC SYLLABLE STRUCTURE

A. Basic Syllable Structure

Syllables consist of constituents that are hierarchically organized and represented in terms of branching tree diagrams. At the highest level, syllables are made up of onsets (the consonant or consonant at the beginning) and rimes (everything following the onset). Rime itself consists of a nucleus (the core of the syllable, usually a vowel) and a coda (the consonant or consonants at the end). The internal immediate syllable structure is schematized as in (5).



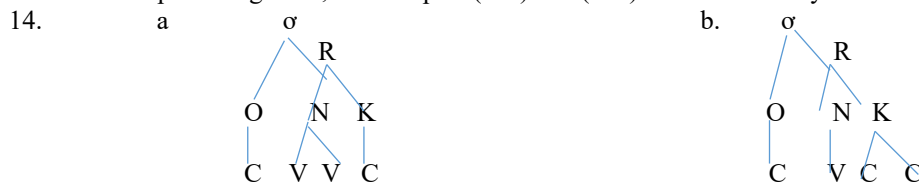
In Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) and other Arabic varieties, including Irbid Arabic (IA), a rural Jordanian Arabic sub-variety, it is widely acknowledged that syllables are divided into two categories: basic and derived syllables. Basic syllables are CV, CVC, and CVV, while derived ones are arguably CVCC, CVVC, and CVVCC (Broselow, 1979; McCarthy, 1979; Watson, 2002, 2007). It is argued that the latter syllable type does not appear phonetically, but it is analyzed as part of the underlying syllable inventory in many Arabic dialects. Consider the following examples (6), which show the syllable types (adapted from Abu Salim, 1982, p. 10):

6. a. CV Ka.tab 'he wrote'
 b. CVV raa.sal 'he corresponded'
 c. CVC mad.ra.se 'school'
 d. CVVC šaaf 'he saw'
 e. CVCC ? uxt 'sister'

It is clear from the examples mentioned above that Arabic does not allow a vowel-initial syllable. That is to say, onset is an obligatory constituent in Arabic syllable structure, while coda is optional, consisting of zero to two consonants at most. In addition, vowel length is phonemic, where short and long vowels are represented by nonbranching and branching nodes, respectively. However, although consonant clusters are highly restricted in distribution in Arabic, many Arabic dialects permit them to occur word-initially, only in phrase-initial position, as illustrated in the following examples (7) (adapted from Abu Salim, 1982, p. 13):

7. a. CCV sta.lam 'to receive'
 b. CCVV ktaa.bi 'my book'
 c. CCVC sta?.bal 'to welcome'
 d. CCVVC blaad.na 'our countries'

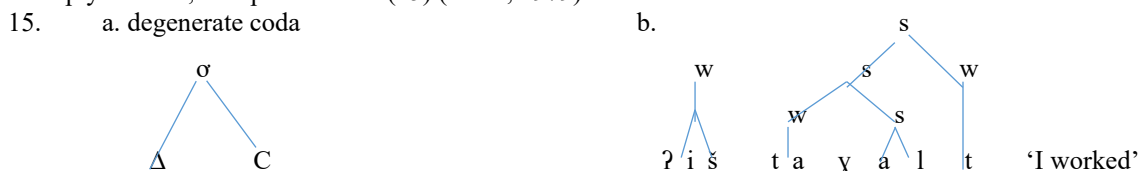
The validity of McCarthy's syllabification process of superheavy syllables has been questioned and undermined by Abu Salim. He offered an alternative proposal for syllabification in which the final consonant is to be sister-adjoin to the stranded consonant to the preceding node, so examples (14a) and (14b) can be shown by the following representation.



Abu Salim's analysis has been subject to heavy criticism in subsequent works. For example, Abu Mansour (1987) stated that the sister-adjoin analysis cannot be generalized to account for all varieties of Arabic. He added that Abu Salim formulated a template for Palestinian Arabic syllable structure in order to show the structural difference of the syllable types and to avoid deriving CVVCC phonetically; hence, it cannot be extended to account for the Meccan dialect.

(b). *The Degenerate Syllable Analysis*

This analysis was developed by Aoun (1979) and Selkirk (1981). Aoun proposed an alternative approach to handle the superheavy syllables. He claimed that CVCC and CVVC are decomposed into two syllables: heavy and degenerate. However, according to Selkirk, CVCC is only analyzed as degenerate. The degenerate syllable is an extra consonant with an empty nucleus, as represented in (15) (Aoun, 1979).



The idea of such analysis is to provide the language of syllable types that is empty but structurally present. However, the degenerate syllable analysis shares McCarthy's analysis that both can create the same metrical structure and can account for the stress assignment of superheavy syllables.

IV. OT ANALYSIS OF SUPERHEAVY SYLLABLES IN MSA

As mentioned earlier, MSA consists of two-syllable structures in terms of weight: light and heavy. Heavy syllables are referred to as bimoraic since they bear two moras, while a light syllable, which bears one mora, is monomoraic. As for superheavy syllables, they are restricted to the final position, and they are disallowed word-internally. In the final-utterance position, the constraint *FINAL-C μ is active, so the extra coda consonant in these kinds of structure is not assigned mora in order to retain conformity with the Bimoracity Constraint SYLLBIN, while superheavy syllables that occur word-internally are avoided by employing various strategies such as vowel shortening and epenthesis. In OT terms, *FINAL-C μ is expressed as the violable constraint WBP and *3 μ .

WBP: consonants in the coda position are moraic.

***FINAL-C μ :** the final consonant is weightless.

SYLLBIN: syllable weight should not exceed two moras.

***3 μ :** syllables are maximally bimoraic.

Moreover, we mentioned that CVC and CVV are equal in their weights, and this means the coda in CVC has a mora word internally. However, it is weightless when it occurs in the absolute final position because it violates the constraint *FINAL-C μ . This indicates that the constraint WBP is active in MSA, and it violates the DEP- μ -C. This is illustrated in the following Tableau (16).

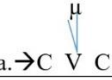
16. The following tableau illustrate how heavy and superheavy syllables are computed in OT.

	NS μ	WBP	DEP- μ -C
a. 			*
b. 	*!		
c. 		*!	

The ranking reveals that the three candidates equally violate one constraint. However, candidate (a) is optimal because it satisfies the high-ranked constraints in the Tableau NS μ and WBP, while candidate (b) and (c) are ruled out since they violate those two constraints, respectively.

Drawing on the data mentioned earlier, superheavy syllables in MSA occur only in the final position. The final consonant in CVVC and CVCC cannot be assigned mora due to the highly ranked constraint *3 μ , which prevents trimoraic syllables from surfacing. Accordingly, MSA often avoids these kinds of syllables by employing two strategies: vowel shortening and epenthesis, as shown in the following Tableau (17).

17.

	*FINAL-C μ	WBP	DEP- μ -C
a. 		*	
b. 	*!		*

MSA avoids CVCC and CVVC word-internally by employing three strategies: vowel shortening, Vowel epenthesis, and onset maximization.

V. OT ANALYSIS OF SUPERHEAVY SYLLABLES IN URBAN IRBID DIALECT

A. Introduction

Urban Irbid Dialect¹ (henceforth UID) is one of the sub-varieties (i.e., Ma'ani Arabic, Bani Hasan Arabic, Rural Arabic) spoken by city-dwellers in the north of Jordan. Several phonological differences are present between these sub-varieties. One of these differences lies in the structure of superheavy syllables *CVVC* and *CVCC*, which is the primary concern of the current study.

1) The distribution of basic syllable structure in UID

- a. CA syllable
 1. **ka.tab** 'he wrote'
 2. **na.sa** 'he forgot'
- b. CVV syllable
 1. **ja.saa.fir** 'he travels'
 2. **faa.šil** 'loser'
- c. CVC syllable
 1. **na.hil** 'bees'
 2. **mad.ra.sa** 'a school'

2) Restricted syllable types in UID

- a. Complex onsets
 1. **knaa.fih** 'dessert'
 2. **ktaab**
- b. Superheavy syllables
 1. CVVC → /daar/ 'house'
 2. CVCC → /šarh/ 'explanation by examples'

Possible syllable Types in UID

Light syllables	Heavy syllables	Superheavy syllables in final position	Superheavy syllable in non-final position
(C) CV	(C) CVC	(C) CVCC	CVVC.CV
	(C) CVV	(C) CVVC	CVCC.CV

An important point to note about the distribution of superheavy syllables in UID is that they occur freely word-internally and finally, as long as they do not violate the sonority profile.

B. Theoretical Background

Kiparsky (2003) suggested that Arabic dialects fall into three types: CV, VC, and C. The CV and C dialects allow the CC coda cluster to occur phrase-finally, while the VC dialects are also divided into two types. The first type allows the CC coda cluster to occur under the condition of sonority falling, while the other type prohibits the CC coda cluster from occurring in the final position. The following table exemplifies the treatment of the CC coda cluster in the three dialects (Kiparsky, 2003, p. 149).

CV dialects	C dialects	VC dialects Type (1)	VC dialects Type (2)
Allowed	Allowed	Falling SON only	Prohibited
1.katabt 'I wrote'	Ktbāt 'I wrote'	Katabit 'I wrote'	Katabit 'I wrote'
2.ʔakl 'food'		Kalb 'dog'	Kalbi 'dog'

As shown in the above table, both CV and C dialects allow CC coda clusters to occur without any restrictions. In the CV dialects, the first example *katabt* shows a sonority plateau /bt/, while the second one, *akl* represents a sonority rise. additionally, it can be noticed that in VC dialects of type (1), falling sonority is permitted, whereas in type (2), sonority plateau /bt/ is prohibited. UID obeys the Sonority Sequencing Principle (henceforth SSP) in a way that it is a member of the first type of VC dialects. In other words, UID allows a sonority profile for CC coda clusters where the first consonant is less sonorous than the other, as illustrated in the following examples (18a and b).

- 18 a. xalf 'behind'
b. habil~*habl 'rope'

Since complex coda clusters with a sonority falling are permitted, the constraint *COMP-COD is violated in JA.

Broselow (1992) examined many Arabic dialects (cf. Cairene, Iraqi, Sudanese, and Makkan) and deduced that almost all modern Arabic dialects are maximally bimoraic. In addition, she stated that superheavy syllables CVVC and CVVC are also bimoraic in which the final consonant is extrametrical. This is evident in the way these dialects avoid non-final trimoraic syllables, resulting from the concatenation of morphemes.

Watson (2007) proposed that the bimorality constraint is obligatory in most Arabic dialects, and trimoraic syllables are prohibited. Thus, the constraint *3μ was adopted in the analysis of UID data. Drawing on Broselow's (1992) analysis, the final consonant in superheavy syllables is extrametrical; therefore, the constraint *FINAL-C-μ is also inviolable and undominated in these dialects. Moreover, superheavy syllables might be affixed or concatenated to morphemes, and in this way, they become in a non-final position, which triggers the violation of the constraint *3μ. Previous studies have shown that Arabic dialects employ various strategies such as onset maximization, vowel epenthesis, vowel shortening, or metathesis to avoid superheavy syllables from occurring in a non-final position. Interestingly, UID tolerates the occurrence of superheavy syllables in non-final positions in some instances. However, it also inserts vowels in -CCC-coda clusters between the first and the second consonants in some cases or resyllabifies the third consonant to become the onset of a new syllable. That is to say, -CCC- coda cluster in JA triggers epenthesis to break up the cluster or utilize the resyllabification process, as represented in the following examples (19).

19. a. /bint-na/ [binit-na] 'our daughter' (CCC→CCVC)
b. /gult-l-u/ [gul-tlu] 'I told him' (CCC→C.CC)

According to Broselow (1992), CVVC is either avoided or tolerated in the non-final position. For example, the Meccan dialect avoids this kind of syllable to conform to the bimorality constraint by triggering vowel epenthesis or utilizing vowel shortening. In contrast, the ID (Irbid dialect) tolerates CVVC to appear in non-final position, as is shown in the following examples (20).

20. a. Non-final CVVC is allowed (ID)
/xaal-na/ [xaal.na] 'our uncle'
b. Non-final CVVC is avoided by epenthesis (MD)
/baab-na/ [baa.ba.na] 'our door'

Broselow (1992) suggested an Adjunction-to-mora rule to account for the dialects that tolerate non-final CVVC. Under the Adjunction-to-Mora analysis, non-final CVVC can be moraic by associating a mora to the last VC in a CVVC syllable. In OT terms, the application of the adjunction-to-mora rule can be translated into the constraint NOSHAREDMORA (NSμ).

NOSHAREDMORA: Moras should be linked to single segments

According to Watson (2007), NOSHAREDMORA is ranked high in the dialects that permit non-final CVVC, while it is ranked low in the dialects that avoid non-final CVVC by epenthesis or vowel shortening. Given this, the constraint NOSHAREDMORA is inviolable in UID, where, in some cases, JA resorts to epenthesis or vowel shortening to repair ungrammatical sequences. In other words, JA usually avoids non-final trimoraic syllables either by epenthesis, vowel shortening, or CC shared mora or VC shared mora. Another constraint that is related to non-final CVVC is MAX-μ-V, which disallows the vowel shortening process by preventing surface forms with fewer moras than the input forms.

C. Constraint Interaction

Following Hayes' (1989) analysis, codas are assigned moras by the constraint WBP. Other active constraints relevant to the discussion of superheavy syllables are the undominated constraints *3μ, which require superheavy syllables to be maximally bimoraic, the *FINAL-Cμ constraint, which also requires that the final consonant is moraic, and the faithfulness constraint DEP-μ-C. According to Watson (2007), NOSHAREDMORA is ranked high in the dialects that permit non-final CVVC, while it is ranked low in the dialects that avoid non-final CVVC by epenthesis or vowel shortening. Given this, the constraint NOSHAREDMORA is inviolable in JA; therefore, JA, in some cases, resorts to using epenthesis or vowel shortening to repair ungrammatical sequences. In other words, JA usually avoids non-final trimoraic syllables either by epenthesis, vowel shortening, or CC shared mora or VC shared mora. Another constraint that is related to non-final CVVC is MAX-μ-V, which disallows the vowel shortening process by preventing surface forms

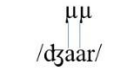
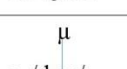
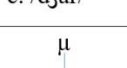
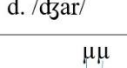
with fewer moras than the input forms. Regarding SSP, the constraint *COMP-COD, which requires codas to be simple, and *RISE-SON allows only coda clusters with a sonority fall.

1. Final CVVC and CVCC syllable structure

Accordingly, the possible ranking of constraints in ID is as follows:

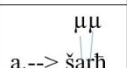
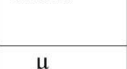
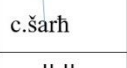
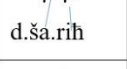
*FINAL-μ-C, *3μ, NSμ, MAX-μ-V, *RISE-SON], DEP-V >> WBP, *COMP-COD >> DEP-μ-C

21. /dʒaar/ [dʒaar] ‘neighbor’

 /dʒaar/	*FINAL-μ-C	*3μ	NSμ	MAX-μ-V	WBP	DEP-μ-C
a.  a. /dʒaar/	*!	*			*	*
b.  b. /dʒaar/			*!			*
c.  c. /dʒar/				*!	*	
d.  d. /dʒar/	*!			*		*
e.  e. →/dʒaar/					*!	

The winning candidate in this Tableau (21) is (e), which satisfies the undominated constraints *FINAL-μ-C, *3μ, NSμ, MAX-μ-V. Its closest rival is (c). Vowel shortening in candidate (c) results in excluding it because it violates the constraint MAX-μ-V. Candidate (a) is ruled out by the constraints *FINAL-μ-C and *3μ since it has an extrametrical consonant that has a mora. Candidates (b) and (d) are ruled out of the game due to a fatal violation of the higher ranked *FINAL-μ-C and NSμ, respectively.

22. /šarh/ [šarh] ‘explanation with examples’

 /šarh/	*FINAL-μ-C	*3μ	NSμ	DEP-V	*COMP-COD	WBP	DEP-μ-C
a.  a. --> šarh					*	*	
b.  b. šarh			*!				*
c.  c. šarh					*	**!	
d.  d. ša.rih				*!			
e.  e. šarh	*!	*					*

According to Tableau (22), Candidate (a) wins over (c) since the latter incurs two violations in the constraint WBP. Candidate (b) is eliminated by the constraint that bans NOSHARED MORAS. Candidate (d) is ruled out by the undominated constraint DEP-V. Candidate (e) fails the competition immediately for violating the constraints *FINAL-μ-C and *3μ.

2. Avoiding Final CVCC syllable structure

The following Tableau shows that UID utilized epenthesis to avoid sonority rising in the coda cluster.

23. /ħabl/ [ħa.bil] ‘rope’

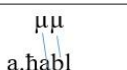
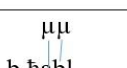
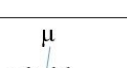
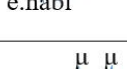
 /hɑbl/	*FINAL- μ-C	*3μ	NSμ	*RISE- SON]σ	DEP-V	*COMP- COD	WBP	DEP- μ-C
 a.hɑbl				*!				*
 b.hɑbl			*!	*				*
 c.hɑbl				*!				
 d.hɑ.bil	*!				*			*
 e.hɑbl	*!							
 f.--> hɑ.bil					*!		*	

Tableau (23) shows that final superheavy syllables are avoided through vowel epenthesis. The motivation behind the vowel epenthesis is the ban on sonority rising expressed through *RISE-SON]σ. Accordingly, candidate (f) wins the competition and emerges as the optimal output, as it violates DEP-V.

3. Non-Final CVVC and CVCC syllable structure

Accordingly, the possible ranking constraints for non-final CVVC and CVCC in UID are as follows: *COMP-ONS, *3μ, WBP, NSμ, DEP-V >> MAX-μ-V, *COMP-COD >> DEP-μ-C.

24. /suur-na/ [suur.na] ‘our wall’

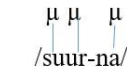
 /suur-na/	*COMP- ONS	*3μ	MAX-μ-V	WBP	NSμ	DEP-μ-C
 a. suur.na		*!				
 b. suu.rna	*!					
 c. suur.na					*!	
 d. sur.na			*!			
 e. suur.na				*!		

Tableau (24) shows that the optimal form is candidate (c), in which WBP occurs to avoid the trimoraic syllable word-internally. Candidates (a), (b), (d), and (e) violate the constraints *COMP-ONS, *3μ, MAX-μ-V, and WBP, respectively.

25. /šilthum/ [šilt.hum] ‘I removed them’

$\mu\mu\ \mu$ /šilt-hum/	*COMP-ONS	*3 μ	MAX- μ -V	WBP	NS μ	DEP-V	*COMP-COD	DEP- μ -C
$\mu\mu\mu\ \mu$ a. šilt-hum		*!					*	**
$\mu\mu\ \mu$ b. šil.thum	*!							*
$\mu\mu\ \mu$ c. šilt-hum					*!		*	*
$\mu\mu\ \mu$ d. šilt.hum				*!		*!	*	*
$\mu\ \mu\mu\ \mu$ e. ši.lit.hum			*!					*
$\mu\ \mu$ f. šilt-hum				**!			*	

In Tableau (25), candidate (c) surfaces as the optimal output, as it violates the constraint NS μ . Candidate (b) is immediately ruled out by the inviolable constraint *COMP-ONS. Candidates (a), (d), and (e) are eliminated for violating the inviolable constraints.

4. Avoiding Non-Final CVVC and CVCC syllable structure

UID employs two strategies to avoid non-final CVVC and CVCC. The first one is vowel shortening, which is used to prohibit CVVC from occurring word-internally in a non-final position. The other strategy is epenthesis, in which a vowel is inserted to disallow CVCC to occur in a non-final position. The following tableaux illustrate the two phonological processes.

26. /stašaarna/ [sta.šar.na] ‘we asked for consultation’

$\mu\ \mu\mu\ \mu$ /sta.šaar-na/	*COMP-ONS	*3 μ	NS μ	MAX- μ -V	*COMP-COD	DEP- μ -C
$\mu\ \mu\mu\mu\ \mu$ a. sta.šaar.na		*!			*	**
$\mu\ \mu\mu\ \mu$ b. sta.šaa.rna	*!					*
$\mu\ \mu\mu\ \mu$ c. sta.šaar.na			*!		*	*
$\mu\ \mu\mu\ \mu$ d. sta.šar.na				*!	*	*

Candidate (d) is selected as the optimal form in this Tableau (26). This non-final CVVC satisfies the bimoraicity constraint by utilizing the vowel-shortening repair strategy. The candidate (c) loses to (d) by violating the higher-ranked constraint NS μ . Candidates (a) and (b) are ruled out by violating the constraints *COMP-ONS and *3 μ .

27. /bintna/ [bi.nit.na] ‘our daughter’

$\mu\mu\ \mu$ /bint-na/	*COMP-ONS	*3 μ	NS μ	DEP-V	*COMP-COD	DEP- μ -C
$\mu\mu\mu\ \mu$ a. bint.na		*!			*	**
$\mu\mu\ \mu$ b. bin.tna	*!					*
$\mu\mu\ \mu$ c. bint.na			*!		*	*
$\mu\ \mu\mu\ \mu$ d. bi.nit.na				*!		*

The optimal candidate is (d). It uses vowel epenthesis to avoid the potential trimoraic syllable. Its closest rival loses due to a fatal violation of NS μ . Candidates (a) and (b) are ruled out for violating *COMP-ONS and *3 μ . MAX- μ -V is not mentioned in the Tableau as it is vacuously satisfied by the candidates.

VI. CONCLUSION

As can be noticed, superheavy syllables in UID can occur in the non-final position and the final position. When it occurs word-finally, the final consonant is extrametrical or weightless. This is because the extrametrical consonant satisfies the two constraints, *3 μ and *FINAL- μ -C, while it violates the constraint WBP. Broselow's (1992) approach is used to handle the extrametrical consonant in the final position, where it violates the requirement of the constraint NS μ while satisfying the constraint WBP. Other superheavy cases demonstrate that UDI disallows final CVCC from occurring, as it violates the sonority rising constraint. On the other hand, some cases of non-final CVCC and CVCC fail to appear. Accordingly, this research triggers further research to account for the causes of this variation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abu-Elrob, R. A., & Tawalbeh, A. I. (2025). Jordanian Facebookers' attitudes: A speech act analysis. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15(1), 47-58.
- [2] Alsharif, B., & Khasawneh, R. (2025). A Dialectal Acoustic Comparison of Vowels in Jordanian Arabic: Madani Dialect vs Fallahi Dialect. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies (TPLS)*, 15(6).
- [3] Alsharif, B. I., & Khasawneh, R. (2025). The Production of Laterals by Arabic-English Bilingual Children. *World Journal of English Language*, 15(5), 301-301.
- [4] Abushihab, I. (2010). Phonological contrastive analysis of Arabic, Turkish and English. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 4, 16-24.
- [5] Abu-Mansour, M. H. (1987). *A nonlinear analysis of Arabic syllabic phonology, with special reference to Makkan*. University of Florida.
- [6] Abu-Salim, I. M. (1982). *A reanalysis of some aspects of Arabic phonology: A metrical approach*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- [7] Aoun, Y. (1979). Is the Syllable or the Supersyllable a Constituent? In *Papers on Syllable Structure, Metrical Structure and Harmony Processes* (1 p. de ref. ht). *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics*, 1, 140-148.
- [8] Aoun, Y., & Borer, H. (Eds.). (1981). Theoretical issues in the grammar of Semitic languages. *MIT working papers in linguistics*, 3, pp. 209-232. Cambridge, MA: Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, MIT.
- [9] Broselow, E. I. (1976). *The phonology of Egyptian Arabic*. University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- [10] Broselow, E. (1992). Parametric variation in Arabic dialect phonology. *Perspectives on Arabic linguistics, IV*, 7-45.
- [11] Davenport, M., & Hannahs, S. J. (2020). *Introducing phonetics and phonology*. Routledge.
- [12] Hayes, B. (1989). Compensatory lengthening in moraic phonology. *Linguistic inquiry*, 20(2), 253-306.
- [13] Hyman, L. (2019). *A theory of phonological weight* (Vol. 19). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- [14] Hooper, J. B. (1972). The syllable in phonological theory. *Language*, 525-540.
- [15] Itô, J. (2018). *Syllable theory in prosodic phonology*. Routledge.
- [16] Katamba, F. (1989). *An introduction to phonology* (Vol. 48). London: Longman.
- [17] Kiparsky, P. (2003). Syllables and moras in Arabic. *The syllable in optimality theory*, 147, 182.
- [18] McCarthy, J. J. (2018). *Formal problems in Semitic phonology and morphology*. Routledge.
- [19] McCarthy, J. J. (1979). On stress and syllabification. *Linguistic inquiry*, 10(3), 443-465.
- [20] Mitchell, T. F. (1960). Prominence and Syllabication in Arabic1. *Bulletin of the school of Oriental and African studies*, 23(2), 369-389.

- [21] Prince, A., & Smolensky, P. (2004). Optimality Theory: Constraint interaction in generative grammar. *Optimality Theory in phonology: A reader*, 1-71.
- [22] Selkirk, E. (1981). Epenthesis and degenerate syllables in Cairene Arabic. In *Theoretical Issues in the Grammar of Semitic Languages. MIT Working Papers in Linguistics*, 3, 209-232. Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Cambridge, Mass.
- [23] Spencer, A. (1996). *Phonology: Theory and description*. Oxford & Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- [24] Watson, J. C. (2002). *The phonology and morphology of Arabic*. OUP Oxford.
- [25] Watson, J. C. (2007). Syllabification patterns in Arabic dialects: Long segments and mora sharing. *Phonology*, 24(2), 335-356.

Bilal I. Alsharif is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied English at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan. His research interests include Laboratory Phonology, Sociophonetics, Arabic dialectology, and Machine Translation.

Razan R. Khasawneh is an Assistant Professor in the department of English Language and Translation at Amman Arab University. Her research interests include Diachronic Translation, Literary Translation, Machine Translation and Phonetics and Phonology.

Rula A. Abu-Elrob is an Assistant Professor in the department of English Language and Literature at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan. Her research interests include Conversation Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Semantics and Applied Linguistics.

The Influence of Social Norms and Etiquette on the Behavior and Decision-Making of Characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Brezky Simare Mare

English Language Studies, Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Burhanuddin Arafah

English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Herawaty Abbas

English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Winnie Alisa Rano

English Language Studies, Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Ummul Hayat Almahdali

English Language Studies, Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Catleya Karenina Wicaksono

English Language Studies, Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Ririn Arnita Sari

English Language Studies, Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Nurroidah Fadhillah Malik

English Language Studies, Postgraduate Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract—This research aimed to examine the influence of social norms and etiquette on the behaviors and decisions of *Pride and Prejudice's* (1813) main characters. In this context, the influence of societal expectations on characters' actions, relationships, and identities was influenced by the sociology of literature during Regency-era England. Furthermore, the reflection of class distinctions, gender roles, and cultural values was investigated through adherence to social norms and etiquette drawing on the sociological theories of Erving Goffman, Norbert Elias, and Pierre Bourdieu. The results showed that societal norms and class expectations shaped marriage decisions during Regency-era England. Characters like Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins prioritized social standing and security, while Elizabeth challenged norms by valuing personal worth and respect over status. Additionally, the internal conflict of Mr. Darcy suggested the pressure of conforming to class expectations. The rejection of Elizabeth also showed the resistance to social hierarchy and insistence on personal worth. Austen critiqued the rigid social system and advocated for valuing personal character and emotional connection over societal constraints. The depiction of social norms and etiquette reported the broader social dynamics and the lasting impact on characters' decisions and relationships, emphasizing the role of constructs in shaping individual and collective lives.

Index Terms—social norms, etiquette, Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature comprises a broad spectrum of short stories, poems, novels, plays, and songs crafted by writers from diverse national and cultural backgrounds, using various forms of the English language (Arafah, 2018; Afiah et al., 2022). These

various genres of literature are differentiated by their content, intricacy, and symbols and are admired for their ability to alter the minds of individuals (Jusdalyana et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2025). Furthermore, literature represents written and oral narratives, such as texts and spoken language (Fadillah et al., 2022; Baa et al., 2023), providing a medium for individuals to convey thoughts through words, actions, and writing (Iksora et al., 2022; Ananda & Arafah, 2023). This mode of expression captivated readers by using powerful language in literary works (Sunardi et al., 2018; Asriyanti et al., 2022). Language contains styles enabling the incomprehensibility of the real meaning to make the readers more entertained (Asriyanti et al., 2022; Arafah et al., 2024; Kaharuddin et al., 2023). Therefore, literature is commonly understood as an important work of art (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019; Yulianti et al., 2022). The concept reflects the cultural values of a society (Mokoginta et al., 2021; Hasyim et al., 2023) and helps bridge existential gaps, connecting individuals (Moi, 2009; Arafah & Hasyim, 2023a; Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b).

Based on the description above, culture refers to various social life aspects (Arafah et al., 2023). To show these aspects, literary works are required from a social background of writers (Sunnyoto et al., 2022) to serve a societal purpose (Arafah et al., 2023; Arafah et al., 2025). These works show societal happenings and the typical features of the characters (Arafah et al., 2024). Furthermore, language as the main component in literature is a medium to convey cultural meaning associated with social values (Yudith et al., 2023) to obtain numerous benefits (Arifuddin et al., 2024; Arafah et al., 2025; Arnawa & Arafah, 2023). Literary works are provided on online media with multiple languages, granting easy access to individuals (Arafah et al., 2023; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023a). In this context, the provision of digital media with an international language pushes the readers to have language learning beneficial to improve skills (Karamoy et al., 2024; Kuswanti et al., 2023; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023b; Mardiana et al., 2023; Kaharuddin et al., 2024). The cultural aspect holds significant importance within digital literacy providing a framework for understanding the context of the user (Arafah et al., 2023).

The work of Jane Austen grants ordinary individuals a uniquely modern identity. The work excelled at using language to express ideas and often harsh truths of everyday life from an artistic perspective (Ramzan et al., 2023). Austen made the protagonist's flaws more relatable in a time when the ideal woman was expected to be quiet, kind, domestic, modest, and conservative (Chowdhury, 2023). Additionally, Elizabeth was portrayed as an intelligent, quick-witted, outspoken, yet tactful young woman with opinions and biases different from her older sister Jane, who embodied all the 'ideal' qualities of the era (Chowdhury, 2023). Instead of creating conflict between characters, the novel shows the beautiful harmony and bond between the sisters. Therefore, this research aimed to analyze various adaptations based on the discussed approach (Chowdhury, 2023).

Several influential studies examined the role of social norms and etiquette in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and provided important insights into Austen's critique of Regency-era society. Deborah Kaplan's *Jane Austen Among Women* (1992) examines the influence of societal expectations on women's behavior and roles, with particular emphasis on the constraints imposed by a patriarchal society. The analysis of the relationships among women characters shows the intricate social etiquette controlling interactions and the restrictions placed on autonomy. Similarly, Margaret C. Sullivan's *The Jane Austen Handbook* (2007) provides a practical overview of Regency-era social customs, courtship practices, and class structures, which are contextual elements to understanding Austen's critique of society. Sullivan's work further reports the extent to which characters in *Pride and Prejudice* conform to or challenge prevailing social conventions, deepening the novel's critique of societal norms.

Heaverly and Kasih (2020) explored the influence of the Industrial Revolution on the social systems portrayed in *Pride and Prejudice*, focusing on class distinctions and the inheritance system. The analysis, using Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism, shows the critique of prevailing social systems, particularly the extent to which economic pressures shaped the practice of arranged marriages. Furthermore, *the Literary and Sociological Approach to the Novel* by Abduxamidova (2023) reported the ongoing relevance of themes such as love, marriage, and gender roles in Austen's work, stressing its significance in today's society. Based on the description, this research emphasized Austen's portrayal of women's agency and individuality, reinforcing engagement with contemporary societal issues.

The significance of this research lies in the deep exploration of social structures, gender roles, and societal expectations shown in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Kaplan's *Jane Austen Among Women* (1992) provided a critical lens for examining the effects of women's relationships and societal norms on characters' actions, particularly within the constraints of a patriarchal society. The analysis shows Austen's critique of the limitations imposed on women and provides essential insights into feminist undertones. Margaret C. Sullivan's *The Jane Austen Handbook* (2007) built on Kaplan's work by offering a practical understanding of the social etiquette, courtship, marriage, and class divisions of Austen. Furthermore, Heaverly and Kasih (2020) added a sociological perspective, exploring the effects of the Industrial Revolution on social systems, particularly class distinctions and economic pressures affecting social mobility and marriage. The 2023 research from Abduxamidova reinforced the novel's contemporary relevance, emphasizing the enduring themes of love, marriage, gender roles, and women's agency. This research offered a comprehensive perspective of *Pride and Prejudice* as a reflection of the historical context and a critique of the societal systems governing personal and social relationships (Asri et al., 2023; Nurcahyadi et al., 2025).

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) continued to have a lasting impact, offering insights into social norms, class, gender, and marriage, themes that remain significant today. This research examined the effects of the novel's depiction of social expectations on current discussions about individual freedom and societal pressures. Johnson (2005) and Brown

(2015) emphasize that Austen's treatment of these issues accepts reflection on contemporary concerns, including social justice and personal autonomy. The relevance of the critique was explored in works such as *Austen and the Modern World* (Wilson, 2018) and *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* (Copeland & McMaster, 1997).

Previous research titled *The Influence of Social Norms and Etiquette on the Behavior and Decision-Making of Characters in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* provided the readers with a slightly different nuance from previous results. Therefore, this research was considered important and worthy of discussion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The sociological method of literary analysis had deep historical roots, grounded in the belief that literature is a social product inherently connected to society. This perspective allowed individuals to explore interaction and socialization within a community, stating the connection between a literary work and the social conditions created (Fadillah et al., 2022). Sociology of Literature describes reality and social fact by using language through imagination (Afiah et al., 2022). Furthermore, Glickberg and Goldmann (1975) in Endraswara (2013) supported the view, asserting that the most fantastical works were influenced by social concerns. The sociology of literature analyses the effects of social realities and imagination on literary creations. Literature is used to create an awareness concerning the life of individuals in a cultural society and to capture the environmental situation (Yudith et al., 2023; Arafah et al., 2021; Siwi et al., 2022; Jaelani et al., 2024). This method was valuable for understanding social issues embedded in literature as a fitting tool for social conditions shown in novels.

Culture and society are inseparable entities influencing human existence (Takwa et al., 2024; Takwa et al., 2025). A society maintains traditions, customs, and languages as parts of local wealth reflected in social norms (Takwa et al., 2024; Mofu et al., 2024). In this context, social norms are described as "patterns of behavior or values based on expectations concerning an action" (Constantino et al., 2022). Social norms, or "collectively agreed-upon guidelines for social behavior" were developed and upheld through interactions among members of social groups (Barta & Andalibi, 2021). The term was commonly used to refer to any norm regulating social behavior within groups or societies (Chung & Rimal, 2016; Xenitidou & Edmonds, 2014). Implementation of cultural values leads to the formation of behavioral patterns into habitual actions (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022; Takwa et al., 2022; Arafah et al., 2025). In seminal works, Bicchieri (2006) delineated social norms from customs, conventions, and moral norms. Social norms were specific behavioral rules that individuals adhered to, grounded in both empirical and normative expectations. This theoretical framework was widely acknowledged as a leading explanation of social norms (Wietmarschen, 2021). Goffman (1959) examined the guidance of behavior in social interactions using norms, while Asch (1951) reported the powerful influence of conformity on individual actions. Geertz (1973) stressed the need to understand norms within cultural contexts. Granovetter (1973) analyzed the spreading of norms through social networks. Merton (1968) contributed to the understanding of norms evolution in response to societal change. The pressure of the changes in society demands individuals to esteem social norms (Arifin et al., 2022; Suhadi et al., 2022). As the most intelligent creature, a human can perform appropriate or inappropriate actions (Manugeran et al., 2023). The term "etiquette" refers to the conventional guidelines for social behavior or professional conduct. These unwritten rules served as norms followed by all professionals working within a specific organization or department. In essence, etiquette includes behaving in a refined manner than expectation (Dash, 2022). The concept established a set of rules and conventions governing social and professional conduct (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

The Regency Era was remembered as a time of rich culture and literature, marked by significant achievements in art, architecture, and fashion. The political and historical period, defined by the Parliamentary Regency Act of 1811, began when George IV became Prince Regent. This occurred because "The Mad King George," was unable to fulfill the required duties because of mental health issues. The Regency period was often considered to extend from 1795 until the Victorian era, officially lasting from February 5, 1811, to January 29, 1820 (Arora, 2023). This period was known for the refinement and cultural focus, primarily among the elite social classes, while the masses suffered in poverty due to a rapid population increase. The era was characterized by an emphasis on style among the aristocracy, who lived in fashionable areas and were largely indifferent to the struggles of the poor in the slums. During this time, society upheld strict distinctions between social ranks, believing that a smooth-running, civilized world required these divisions. Relationships were expected to occur within defined societal niches, and deviation was considered scandalous, leading to the ostracism of individuals transgressing the boundaries (Arora, 2023). Regency England has continued to captivate generations, maintaining a lasting appeal through the literature, music, architecture, and the glamorous lifestyle of the upper class, marked by balls, parties, and gossip. The society of the Regency era was governed by strict rules and etiquette expected to be followed by all individuals. Social positions were well understood, and individuals who attempted to deviate were excluded from the more prestigious social circles (Martynková, 2022).

The sociological approach to literary analysis offered valuable insights into the reflection of literature by social conditions of the time. The powerful role of societal factors in influencing characters, behaviors, and narratives is understood by examining literary works through the lens of social norms, etiquette, and cultural expectations. The Regency Era served as a prime example of social norms and etiquette in the lives of individuals, particularly the upper classes. Despite the glamour and cultural refinement associated with the period, there were strict social divisions that defined individuals' roles and behaviors, with deviation from these norms leading to exclusion. This era's lasting influence

in literature, music, and architecture reflected the complex interplay between societal norms and individual actions, emphasizing the importance of social context in understanding human experience. Therefore, the sociology of literature provided an important framework for exploring the use of imagination to comment on and influence the social realities of time.

III. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methods were used to examine the portrayal of social norms and etiquette in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). In this context, this research aimed to enhance understanding of social behaviors within the novel. Sociological theories investigated the representation of etiquette and contributed to existing discussions on social norms. This approach enabled a deeper exploration of the role etiquette played in shaping characters and interactions.

The adopted data was collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary source was the first edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, published in 1813 by T. Egerton in London, which served as the main text for analyzing social norms and etiquette among characters. Meanwhile, secondary sources included scholarly articles, previous research, and theses related to *Pride and Prejudice*.

The process of data collection followed several steps. First, information was observed from all available sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding. Second, examples of social norms and etiquette were identified within the novel through the characters' interactions. The data were analyzed using the Library Research method to identify patterns and draw conclusions about the representation of social norms and etiquette in *Pride and Prejudice*. This research was concluded with insights based on the results, contributing to a broader understanding of the novel's portrayal of social structures in the early 19th century.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Jane Austen portrayed marriage as a complex institution influenced by societal expectations and personal emotions. Marriage during the early 19th century was often seen as a social and financial contract, specifically for women to secure futures and social standing. Characters such as Mrs. Bennet and Charlotte Lucas embodied the view that marriage was more about securing financial stability and social respectability. Mrs. Bennet's obsessive quest to marry off the daughters to wealthy suitors reflects societal pressure. In contrast, Charlotte pragmatically accepted a proposal from Mr. Collins for security, understanding that marriage was a necessity for women. Mr. Darcy viewed the concept through the lens of class and status but chose to marry Elizabeth Bennet for love, challenging the rigid social norms of the time. The union represented Austen's ideal of marriage based on mutual respect and affection, transcending societal constraints. Austen critiques the class-based system that governed marital choices, using characters such as Lady Catherine de Bourgh to exemplify the evolving relationship between elitist attitudes restricting marriage to social rank. In contrast, Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy suggest that love should transcend social class and rigid propriety. Through characters such as Mr. Collins, Austen exposes a form of marriage etiquette rooted in social obligation rather than in genuine affection. Conversely, Lydia Bennet's impulsive elopement with Mr. Wickham shows the consequences of disregarding social norms, leading to scandal and a damaged reputation. Austen presents marriage as an institution often shaped by social pressures and financial motivations but grounded in love, mutual respect, and personal compatibility. This critique serves as a reflection of the societal constraints of time and advocacy for more progressive views on marriage.

The following paragraph reflects Mrs. Bennet's preoccupation with securing advantageous marriages for the daughters. This is a central concern for women of social class during the time of Austen. The statement, "*When I can see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield, and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for,*" encapsulates the belief that a woman's primary objective was to marry well, ideally to a wealthy and socially prominent man. The phrase "*happily settled at Netherfield*" refers to Mr. Bingley, a prosperous suitor, and shows Mrs. Bennet's perspective of marriage as a method of achieving financial stability and social advancement, rather than a relationship founded on love or personal compatibility. The wish for the daughters to be "*equally well married*" supports the notion that securing wealthy husbands guaranteed a respectable future. This quote shows Mrs. Bennet's pragmatic and superficial perspective of marriage, where social standing and financial stability are prioritized over personal happiness.

Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and, to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love, and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

"If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield," said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, "and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for". (Austen, 1813, p. 10)

In this passage, Mr. Collins's proposal to Elizabeth Bennet shows the shaping of marriage in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by social expectations and conventions. This justified the desire to marry based on duty as a clergyman expected to set an example of marriage. Mr. Collins experienced personal happiness in fulfilling the role. Additionally, Lady Catherine de Bourgh also showed the effects of social hierarchy and respect for authority on decisions. In this context, marriage was viewed as a social obligation rather than a personal choice driven by love.

My reasons for marrying are, firstly, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced that it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly--which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness. (Austen, 1813, pp. 90-91)

Charlotte Lucas explained the reasons for accepting Mr. Collins' proposal, stating a pragmatic view of marriage. The admission of not being romantic reflects a prioritization of a comfortable home and financial security over romantic love. The decision reflected the expectation that marriage was used to secure financial stability and social respectability due to the social norms of the time, where women often had limited choices. The chance of happiness was good considering the position held in society by marrying Mr. Collins. The choice of Charlotte shows the influence of societal expectations in prioritizing security over personal affection.

"I see what you are feeling," replied Charlotte. "You must be surprised, very much surprised--so lately as Mr. Collins was wishing to marry you. But when you have had time to think it over, I hope you will be satisfied with what I have done. I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connection, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state". (Austen, 1813, p. 108)

In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Jane Austen stated the restrictive gender roles and societal expectations governing the lives of men and women in the early 19th century. For women, marriage was often seen as the only route to financial security and social respectability. Several women were preoccupied with securing wealthy and socially advantageous marriages for their daughters. In this environment, there were limited choices and prioritization of stability and status over personal happiness. Some women married for the security that came with an advantageous match. However, there were women in the story who challenged the norm, valuing love and mutual respect above societal expectations.

Men faced different types of pressures, where marriage was often connected to maintaining family legacy and social status. In this context, marriage could be influenced by duty, specifically, the need to marry within the social class. Some men refrained from proposing to women due to the belief that the matches failed to meet the expectations of social rank. These characters advocate for unions grounded in love, showing personal conflicts when societal duty clashes with genuine emotion. Therefore, Austen challenges the restrictive norms and reports the significance of personal choice and emotional connection in marriage.

The following quotation *"If I can see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield, and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for"* reflected social norms of 19th-century England, where a woman's future and status were largely defined by marriage. Mrs. Bennet's focus on securing advantageous marriages for the daughters shows emphasis on social rank, wealth, and financial security, rather than personal happiness or love.

Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and, to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love, and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

"If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield," said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, "and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for". (Austen, 1813, p. 10)

In this quotation, Lady Catherine de Bourgh's behavior reports the strict social norms and gender roles governing marriage during the Regency era. Marriage was viewed as a personal decision, a matter of family interest and social standing. Lady Catherine believed that Mr. Darcy should marry an individual of equal rank.

Women were often viewed as commodities in marriage, with value tied to family connections and social status. Lady Catherine's insistence on controlling Darcy's marriage exemplified the effect of societal expectations on individual desires. This showed the tension between personal happiness and the pressure of conforming to societal and family expectations.

Insincere YOU may choose to be, you shall not find ME so. My character has ever been celebrated for its sincerity and frankness, and in a cause of such moment as this, I shall certainly not depart from it. A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that not only your sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that you, that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterward united to my nephew, my nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I KNOW it must be a scandalous falsehood, though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you. (Austen, 1813, p. 294)

Mr. Darcy's declaration of love for Elizabeth shows the tension between personal feelings and social expectations. During the Regency period, men of higher social standing were expected to maintain a composed and controlled demeanor, concerning matters of romance. Showing emotional vulnerability in a woman-centered manner was not considered appropriate.

Mr. Darcy challenged the norms of the time by confessing love despite societal pressures. The decision to profess feelings to Elizabeth showed that love was a personal and emotional connection. This moment showed the shifting attitudes towards marriage, where love and affection were more important than social rank or family connections. The struggle of Darcy to repress feelings shows the level of values attached to Elizabeth.

He sat down for a few moments, and then getting up, walked about the room. Elizabeth was surprised but said

not a word. After a silence of several minutes, he came towards her in an agitated manner and thus began: "In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you". (Austen, 1813, p. 161)

In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Jane Austen painted a clear picture of the class divisions that defined 19th-century England. The rigid social hierarchy was evident in the characters' interactions and relationships, where social standing had a significant influence on marriage prospects and behavior. For example, Mr. Darcy came from a wealthy, aristocratic background, while Elizabeth Bennet belonged to a lower social class. This difference in status created tension between the characters, specifically when Darcy initially struggled to reconcile feelings for Elizabeth with the perceived social inferiority.

Austen shows the significant influence of social class on characters' decisions and actions, particularly in matters concerning marriage throughout the novel. Mr. Darcy's initial reluctance to propose to Elizabeth is from the perception of failing to meet the social standards expected of a suitable match, despite the intelligence and strength of character. Conversely, characters such as Mrs. Bennet and Lady Catherine de Bourgh regard marriage primarily as a vehicle for securing or enhancing social status. Mrs. Bennet is preoccupied with finding affluent suitors for the daughters, viewing marriage as the sole method of achieving financial stability and upward mobility. Similarly, Lady Catherine advocates for a union between the daughter and Mr. Darcy to maintain the social standing of the family. Meanwhile, Austen offers a critique of the class-conscious mentality of the era, suggesting that societal expectations are restrictive and inherently unjust.

Austen did not portray class as an obstacle to love and personal happiness but used Elizabeth Bennet's character to challenge norms. Elizabeth refused to marry for financial security or societal approval, prioritizing love, mutual respect, and personal connection. The relationship with Darcy evolved from social tension to emotional depth since personal qualities should outweigh class distinctions. *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) questioned the value placed on social status, advocating for a world where love and individual merit are more important than birthright and wealth.

In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), the quotation *"She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me"* was spoken by Mr. Darcy in the early chapters of the novel when introduced at the Meryton ball. This line shows the character of Mr. Darcy and is also indicative of social norms and class stratification influencing behavior and decisions.

At this point in the novel, Mr. Darcy is portrayed as a man deeply entrenched in social hierarchy. The remark about Elizabeth Bennet reflected the initial disdain because the standards of beauty or social status were unmet. In the context of the early 19th-century Regency period, social class played a significant role in determining relationships, and Darcy was expected to marry within social rank. Individuals from lower classes were viewed with disdain, specifically in terms of romantic interest. The comment *"handsome enough"* suggested concerns about appearance and social standing. This statement exemplified social norms of the time, where class distinctions governed the context of marriage and personal connections were often secondary to financial and social considerations. The behavior of Darcy reflected the aristocratic mindset that the worth of an individual was tied to family background, wealth, and social status. Therefore, Darcy did not form an attachment to the lower social class, even though the individuals were capable of intelligence, wit, and personal qualities.

"Which do you mean?" and turning round he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said: "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me". (Austen, 1813, p. 13)

The following quotation from *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) was obtained from Mr. Darcy's proposal to Elizabeth Bennet, where enduring feelings were expressed despite societal barriers being insurmountable. In the context of class stratification, this moment showed the tension between personal affection and social expectations, a central theme in the novel.

Marriage was deeply influenced by class distinctions, and was rare for individuals to marry outside social circles without facing criticism (Tang et al., 2025). Mr. Darcy, as a wealthy gentleman, was aware that his feelings for Elizabeth from a less privileged family went against the norms of class stratification. In the novel, the reluctance of Darcy to openly pursue Elizabeth is due to social standing.

The line, *"You are too generous to trifle with me,"* reflected Darcy's recognition of Elizabeth's integrity and the unwillingness to entertain a proposal out of social convenience. Furthermore, the plea *"tell me so at once"* showed respect for the judgment and willingness to leave the matter, without forcing a decision based on social pressures. This moment marked a significant departure when the behavior of Darcy was shaped by class, particularly condescending attitudes toward individuals viewed as socially inferior.

Elizabeth was too much embarrassed to say a word. After a short pause, her companion added, "You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. MY affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject forever". (Austen, 1813, p. 306)

In the quotation, Elizabeth Bennet responded to the proposal of Mr. Darcy with firm rejection. This is because the manner of proposing reflected arrogance and a sense of superiority. The narrative shows the extent to which social norms and class stratification shape interpersonal interactions. Mr. Darcy's initial proposal is marked by condescension,

reflecting a belief in superiority due to wealth and social status, and an assumption that Elizabeth should feel honored. However, Elizabeth refuses to be influenced by social standing and rejects the proposal, asserting that the response might have been more conflicted when approached with respect and humility rather than arrogance.

Social etiquette plays a significant role in shaping individual behavior. Mr. Darcy's conduct is shown by the adherence to class distinctions and societal status, while the response of Elizabeth reflects a rejection of prevailing norms. The decision shows a commitment to personal integrity and mutual respect valued over the advantages associated with social position. In this context, the novel offers a critique of class stratification and rigid social expectations since genuine relationships should be founded on equality and respect rather than wealth or status.

Elizabeth felt herself growing more angry every moment, yet she tried to the utmost to speak with composure when she said:

"You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way than as it spared the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner". (Austen, 1813, p. 166)

Pride and Prejudice (1813) by Jane Austen offers a critical examination of the influence of class stratification on personal relationships and decision-making in 19th-century England. The novel explores the effects of prevailing social norms and expectations on individual behavior, concerning marriage. The initial hesitation of Mr. Darcy in proposing to Elizabeth Bennet based on lower social standing reflects the deep belief in the primacy of class. Therefore, societal expectations often place greater value on wealth and status than on personal virtue and emotional connection. Elizabeth challenges these class-based conventions by rejecting the proposal of Darcy due to arrogance and failure to acknowledge intrinsic worth. The response affirms the importance of mutual respect and personal merit over social hierarchy. Austen critiques the rigidity of the class system through character interactions, advocating for a more egalitarian view where individuals are judged by character rather than social position. Generally, the novel promotes the idea that genuine love and respect can transcend class boundaries and personal integrity should prevail over societal expectations.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Jane Austen critiqued the societal norms and gender expectations of the Regency era, concerning the impact on marriage decisions. The novel showed that women were often compelled to prioritize financial security and social status over personal happiness and romantic fulfillment. Austen emphasizes the societal pressure to marry for stability rather than affection through characters such as Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Collins, and Charlotte Lucas. In contrast, the development of the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy challenged conventional expectations by advocating for marriages founded on mutual respect, emotional connection, and individual worth. The narrative also critiqued the rigid class system, as reflected in the initial hesitation of Darcy to marry Elizabeth due to a lower social standing. This exposed the restrictive gender roles limiting the opportunities of women where marriage was frequently regarded as the only viable path to financial security. In this context, Austen promoted a shift toward a more egalitarian view of relationships, where love, respect, and personal agency were prioritized over social obligation, class hierarchy, and economic advantage.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abduxamidova, M. (2023). *Literary and Sociological Approach to the Novel 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austin*. London: British View 8.8.
- [2] Ananda, M. R. M., & Arafah, B. (2023). Hedonism in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. *Journal of Innovation Research and Knowledge*, 3(1), 4947-4954.
- [3] Afiah, N., Arafah, B., & Abbas, H. (2022). Burmese Women Portrait under the British Imperialism in Orwell's *Burmese Days*. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13(1), 213-219.
- [4] Arafah, B. (2018). Incorporating the Use of Literature as an Innovate Technique for Teaching English. *The 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature, KnE Social Sciences*, 2018, 24-36.
- [5] Arafah, B., Abbas, H., & Hikmah, N. (2021). Saving the Environmental Lessons in Colin Thiele's *February Dragon*. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(6), 935-941.
- [6] Arafah, B., Asri, D., Hanafiah, W., Ruslin, Ilmi, N., Pratiwi, A., & Astiantih, S. (2024). Female Existentialism in *Monkey Grip* by Helen Garner. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(4), 1238-1246.
- [7] Arafah, B., & Hasyim, M. (2023a). Digital Literacy: The Right Solution to Overcome the Various Problems of Meaning and Communication on Social Media. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 11(4), 19-30.
- [8] Arafah, B., & Hasyim, M. (2023b). Digital Literacy on Current Issues in Social Media: Social Media as a Source of Information. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology*, 101(10), 3943-3951.
- [9] Arafah, B., Hasyim, M., Khaerana, A. S. A., Soraya, A. I., Ramadhani, R., Ismail, A., & Takwa. (2023). The Digital Culture Literacy of Generation Z Netizens as Readers, Producers and Publishers of Text on Social Media. *International Journal of Intelligent Systems and Applications in Engineering*, 11(3), 112-123.
- [10] Arafah, B., & Kaharuddin, A. (2019). The Representation of Complaints in English and Indonesian Discourses. *Opción*, 35, 501-517.
- [11] Arafah, B., Kaharuddin, Hasjim, M., Arafah, A. N. B., Takwa, & Karimuddin. (2023). Cultural Relations among Speakers of South Halmahera Languages. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(1), 168-174.

- [12] Arafah, B., Rofikah, U., Kaharuddin, A., Room, F., Takwa, & Purwarno, P. (2023). Evaluating the Suitability of Printed Materials in the Context of Online Learning. *XLinguae*, 16(2), 16-32.
- [13] Arafah, B., Rofikah, U., Kaharuddin, Nursidah, Ahmad, D., Mardiana, Syarif, A. R., & Taqdir. (2025). Using the IDOL Model to Develop Literature Integrated CALL Materials. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(3), 947-959.
- [14] Arafah, B., Room, F., Suryadi, R., Hamid, L. O. M. I., Juniardi, Y., & Takwa. (2024). Character Education Values in Pullman's *The Golden Compass*. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(1), 246-254.
- [15] Arafah, B., Hasyim, M., & Abbas, H. (2025). Netizens as Readers, Producers, and Publishers: Communication Ethics and Challenges in Social Media. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, 16(4), 197-208.
- [16] Arafah, B., Sirajuddin, J., Thayyib, M., Room, F., Takwa, & Anayati, W. (2023). Emotional Management of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*'s Main Character. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(5), 1414-1421.
- [17] Arafah, B., Hasyim, M., Abbas, H., Khaerana, A. S. A., & Takwa, T. (2025). The Values of Leadership in the Local Wisdom of the Bugis People. *WSEAS Transactions on Environment and Development*, 21, 784-762.
- [18] Arifin, M. B., Arafah, B., & Kuncara, S. D. (2022). Dayak's Sociocultural Situation through Locality in Lumholtz's Through Central Borneo Travel Writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(12), 2695-2703.
- [19] Arifuddin, A., Arafah, B., Abbas, H., Lestari, W., Jusdalyana, Tang, M. A., & Malik, A. N. M. (2024). Racial Injustice against Blacks in American Society as Represented in Wright's *Native Son*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(12), 3938-3946.
- [20] Arnawa, I. G. N. E. V., & Arafah, B. (2023). Students' Self-Regulated Strategies in Approaching Second Language Writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(3), 690-696.
- [21] Arora, V. (2023). Regency England through the Realistic Lens of Jane Austen. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 11(1), 230-234.
- [22] Asch, S. E. (1951). Effects of Group Pressure upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgments. In H. Guetzkow (Ed.), *Groups, leadership and men* (pp. 177-190). Pennsylvania: Carnegie Press.
- [23] Asri, D., Arafah, B., Sahib, H., & Abbas, H. (2023). Male domination in Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(7), 1651-1658.
- [24] Asriyanti, S., Arafah, B., & Abbas, H. (2022). The Conscious Desire on Man Shown by the Main Characters in Little Women's Novel: The Overview of Cinderella Complex Disorder in Literature. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 7(1), 119-124.
- [25] Asriyanti, S., Arafah, B., & Abbas, H. (2022). The Representation of Women's Dependence on Men in *Little Women*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(4), 790-796.
- [26] Austen, J. (1813). *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Egerton.
- [27] Baa, S., Wardani, S. B., Iskandar, Weda, S., & Arafah, B. (2023). Lexical Metaphors in Westlife's Selected Song Lyrics. *XLinguae*, 16(1), 132-154.
- [28] Barta, K., & Andalibi, N. (2021). Constructing Authenticity on TikTok: Social Norms and Social Support on the "Fun" Platform. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 5(CSCW2), 1-29.
- [29] Bicchieri, C. (2006). *The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [30] Brown, S. (2015). *The Enduring Legacy of Jane Austen*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [31] Chowdhury, S. (2023). *Pride and Prejudice Adaptations: A Comparative Study*. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 8(3), 439-443.
- [32] Chung, A., & Rimal, R. N. (2016). Social norms: A Review. *Review of Communication Research*, 4, 1-28.
- [33] Constantino, S. M., Sparkman, G., Kraft-Todd, G. T., Bicchieri, C., Centola, D., Shell-Duncan, B., & Weber, E. U. (2022). Scaling up change: A Critical Review and Practical Guide to Harnessing Social Norms for Climate Action. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 23(2), 50-97.
- [34] Copeland, E., & McMaster, J. (Eds.). (2011). *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [35] Dash, B. B. (2022). The Importance of Etiquette and Useful Expressions in English: A Critical Analysis. *Literary Horizon: An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal*, 2(3), 74-91.
- [36] Dwivedi, A., Lavania, P., & Modi, A. (2023). EtiCor: Corpus for Analyzing LLMs for Etiquettes. In *Proceedings of the 2023 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, pp. 6921-6931, Singapore. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- [37] Endraswara, S. (2013). *Cultural Studies: Teori, Metode, dan Aplikasi* [Cultural Studies: Theory, Method, and Application]. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- [38] Fadillah, N., Arafah, B., & Abbas, H. (2022). The Act of Slavery in the 20th Century as Reflected in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13(1), 66-72.
- [39] Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- [40] Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre.
- [41] Granovetter, M. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
- [42] Hasyim, M., & Arafah, B. (2023a). Semiotic Multimodality Communication in the Age of New Media. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 11(1), 96-103.
- [43] Hasyim M., & Arafah, B. (2023b). Social Media Text Meaning: Cultural Information Consumption. *Wseas Transactions on Information Science and Applications*, 20(2023), 220-227.
- [44] Hasyim, M., Arafah, B., Kuswarini, P., Masdiana, Saleh, F., Lisani, N., & Sukmal, A. F. (2023). Humane coffee: Meaning symbolic interaction of a cup of coffee. *Migration Letters*, 20(S5), 1095-1105.
- [45] Heavenly, A., & Kasih, E. N. E. W. (2020). Jane Austen's View on the Industrial Revolution in *Pride and Prejudice*. *Linguistics and Literature Journal*, 1(1), 1-6.

- [46] Iksora, Arafah, B., Syafruddin, S., Muchtar, J., & Lestari, P.A. (2022). Typos' Effects on Web-Based Programming Code Output: A Computational Linguistics Study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(11), 2460-2469.
- [47] Jaelani, A., Arafah, B., Abbas, H., & Yudith, M. (2024). Environmental Themes in Michael Punke's *The Revenant*: An Ecocritical Analysis of Human-Nature Interaction. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies (TPLS)*, 14(10), 3312-3319.
- [48] Johnson, C. L. (2005). *A Companion to Jane Austen*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- [49] JUSDALYANA, Arafah, B., Abbas, H., Lestari, W., Arifuddin, A., Tang, M. A., & Malik, A. N. M. (2024). Representation of Patriarchal Ideology and Its Negative Effect on the Characters in Naomi Alderman's *The Power*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(9), 2880-2888.
- [50] Kaharuddin, Arafah, B., Nurpahmi, S., Sukmawaty, S., Rahman, I. F., & Juniardi, Y. (2023). Exploring How Reading Aloud and Vocabulary Enrichment Shape English Speaking Skills Among Indonesian Learners of English. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(8), 436-445.
- [51] Kaharuddin, Ahmad, D., Mardiana., Latif, I., Arafah, B., & Suryadi, R. (2024). Defining the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Improving English Writing Skills among Indonesian Students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(2), 568-6.
- [52] Kaplan, D. (1992). *Jane Austen among Women*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- [53] Karamoy, G. F., Usman, S., Arafah, B., Supit, D., Mofu, H., Septiwharti, D., & Nadjamuddin, L. (2024). The Relationship between Language Learning Aptitude Beliefs and English Achievement in Students of SMA Advent Unklab Airmadidi Manado. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(9), 2940-2948.
- [54] Kuswanti, W. H., Arafah, B., Budiman, A. N. A., Ali, T., Fatsah, H., & Room, F. (2023). Students' Perception of Explicit and Implicit Methods in Learning Tenses in SMP DDI Mangkoso. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(6), 1473-1482.
- [55] Lestari, W., Arafah, B., Abbas, H., JUSDALYANA, Arifuddin, A., Tang, M. A., & Malik, A. N. M. (2025). Gender Representation in Baker's *Princess Between Worlds*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(1), 55-63.
- [56] Manugeran, M., Arafah, B., Purwarno, P., Siwi, P., Ekalestari, S., & Wulan, S. (2023). An Ecoliterature Approach to Environmental Conservation: Take Four Selected Literary Works as Examples. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(5), 1318-1327.
- [57] Mardiana, Arafah, B., Ahmad, D., Kaharuddin, Room, F., & Barus, E. (2023). Time Allocation Effect on Test Scores for Academic Writing of Indonesian English Learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(6), 1628-1636.
- [58] Martynková, H. (2022). *The Rules of Regency Society in Jane Austen's Novels* [Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis]. Olomouc: Palacký University Olomouc.
- [59] Merton, R. K. (1986). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press.
- [60] Moi, T. (2009). What Can Literature Do? Simone de Beauvoir as a Literary Theorist. *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 124(1), 189-198.
- [61] Mofu, H., Arafah, B., & Malawat, I. (2024). Ethnolinguistic Study of Marine Fishes' Characters of the Biak Tribe, Papua. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(8), 2532-2542.
- [62] Mokoginta, K., & Arafah, B. (2022). Negotiation in Indonesian Culture: A Cultural Linguistic Analysis of Bahasa Indonesia Textbooks. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(4), 691-701.
- [63] Mokoginta, K., Arafah, B., Rahman, F., & Abbas, H. (2021). Indonesian Women as Reflected in an English Textbook Used in Indonesia. *International Journal of Arts and Social Science (IJASS)*, 4(6), 323-337.
- [64] Nurcahyadi, I., Arafah, B., Abbas, H., Renold, Ilmi, N., Suparti, Elya, & Syahid, A. (2025). The Reflection of Humanity in Lee's *to Kill a Mockingbird*: From the Perspective of New Historicism. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(6), 1766-1774.
- [65] Ramzan, M., Khan, M. A., & Sarwar, M. (2023). Style shift: A Comparative Cultural Analysis of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Unmarriageable*. *University of Chitral Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 7(II), 22-29.
- [66] Siwi, P., Arafah, B., Wulan, S., Purwarno, P., Ekalestari, S., & Arafah, A. N. B. (2022). Treatment of Nature: An Ecocriticism Approach in 'Komat Kamit' of Tejo and Kamba's Tuhan Maha Asik. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(7), 1278-1285.
- [67] Suhadi, J., Arafah, B., Makatita, F. P., Abbas, H., & Arafah, A. N. B. (2022). Science and Society: The Impact of Science Abuse on Social Life in Well's *The Invisible Man*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(6), 1214-1219.
- [68] Sunardi, Akil, M., Arafah, B., & Salija, K. (2018). Looking at the Shared Conception of Teaching Literature in an Indonesian ELT Setting. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(2), 316-327.
- [69] Sullivan, M. C. (2007). *The Jane Austen Handbook: A Sensible Yet Elegant Guide to Her World*. Philadelphia: Quirk Books.
- [70] Sunyoto, F. G., Arafah, B., Yudith, M., Mokodompit, G. P., & Asnawi, A. E. F. (2022). The Native American Father's Parenting Style in John Ernst Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(12), 2551-2558.
- [71] Takwa, Arafah, B., Hasyim, M., & Akhmar, A. M. (2024). Cultural Imagery of Tolaki Mekongga Community of Kolaka in Mowindahako Ritual. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(3), 763-770.
- [72] Takwa, Arafah, B., Hasyim, M., Akhmar, A. M., Taqfiah, S. J., & Sarmadan. (2024). Symbolic Meanings in the Mowindahako Ritual of the Tolaki Mekongga Kolaka Ethnic. *International Conference on Medical Imaging, Electronic Imaging, Information Technologies, and Sensors (MIEITS 2024)*, 13188(1318801), 1-5.
- [73] Takwa, Arafah, B., Kaharuddin, Putra, E., Masrur, & Arafah, A. N. B. (2022). The Shift of Lexicon in Traditional Technology System in Tolaki Community at Konawe District of Southeast Sulawesi. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(5), 980-989.
- [74] Takwa, Arafah, B., Sopiandy, D., Taqfiah, S. J., & Arafah, A. N. B. (2022). Humanistic Values in Metaphoric Expressions of Traditional Marriage in Tolaki Mekongga Kolaka. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(8), 1602-1608.
- [75] Takwa, Arafah, B., Hasyim, M., Akhmar, A. M., & Taqdir. (2025). Cultural Value in Mowindahako Ritual Speeches of Tolaki Mekongga Ethnic Group in Kolaka, Indonesia. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(6), 1857-1866.
- [76] Tang, M. A., Arafah, B., Abbas, H., JUSDALYANA, Lestari, W., Arifuddin, A., & Malik, A. N. M. (2025). Social Criticism in *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens: From the Perspective of Genetic Structuralism. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(5), 1682-1688.
- [77] Wietmarschen, H. V. (2021). Attitudinal Social Norms. *Analysis*, 81(1), 71-79.

- [78] Wilson, R. (2018). *Austen and the Modern World*. Cambridge University Press.
- [79] Xenitidou, M., & Edmonds, B. (2014). The Conundrum of Social Norms. In *The Complexity of Social Norms* (pp. 1-8). New York: Springer.
- [80] Yudith, M., Arafah, B., Sunyoto, F. G., Fitriani, Rostan, R. B., & Nurdin, F. E. (2023). The Representation of Animalism Issue in Sewell's *Black Beauty*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(1), 108-116.
- [81] Yulianti, S., Arafah, B., Rofikah, U., Idris, A. M. S., Samsur, N., & Arafah, A. N. B. (2022). Conversational Implicatures on Saturday Night Live Talk Show. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13(1), 189-197.



Brezky Simare Mare obtained his Bachelor's degree from the Cokroaminoto University of Palopo (UNCP) and completed his Bachelor's in English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, UNCP, in 2022. His Scholarly interests include education, lessons, and learning issues. His Master's study focuses on the influence of social norms and etiquette in the novel. Currently, he is doing his Master's degree in English Literature, in the English Study Program, Postgraduate Program at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences. Hasanuddin University (UNHAS).



Burhanuddin Arafah obtained his PhD in English (Australian) literature at the University of Newcastle, Australia, in 2003. He earned his Master's degree in American literature at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) Yogyakarta of Indonesia in 1995 and his Bachelor's degree in English literature at Hasanuddin University (UNHAS) in 1988. He is currently a full professor of English literature at the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences of UNHAS, Indonesia. He has published eight books in the English language and literature and more than 60 research articles ranked in international reputed journals published in the English language. He also has received 32 Intellectual Property Right Certificates from The Indonesian government. His areas of interest are English literature, language education, and cultural studies. He is actively involved at the National Accreditation Board-Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of

Indonesia in his position as Assessor.



Herawaty Abbas obtained her Ph. D. at the University of Newcastle, Australia, in 2013, and her Master's degrees from Gadjah Mada University (UGM) Yogyakarta of Indonesia in 1997 and Saint Mary's University Canada in 2001. She is an Associate Professor at the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences of Hasanuddin University Indonesia. Her doctorate thesis examines the potential dialogue between Australian and Buginese cultures regarding feminism. Her research interests are feminist, children's, and Indigenous literature. She has published some articles in reputable international journals. Professor Abbas is currently a member of the Indonesian Literature Scholar Association and the Indonesian Linguistics Society Association.



Winnie Alisa Rano earned her Bachelor's degree in Economics and Social Sciences Faculty from Fajar University of Makassar. Her research interests are the psychology of literature and the sociology of literature. Currently, she is doing her Master's degree in English Literature, in the English Study Program, Postgraduate Program at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences. Hasanuddin University (UNHAS).



Ummul Hayat Almahdali obtained her Bachelor's degree in English Literature at the Faculty of Letters, UMI, in 2020. Her Scholarly interests include literature, social and environmental issues. Currently, she is doing her Master's degree in English Literature, in the English Study Program, Postgraduate Program at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences. Hasanuddin University (UNHAS), focuses on ecocriticism in literature.



Catleya Karenina Wicaksono obtained her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Hasanuddin University (UNHAS) in 2024. Her scholarly interests include literature, social justice, and personal development. She is currently pursuing her Master's degree in English Literature at Hasanuddin University (UNHAS) and plans to complete it by early 2026. Her thesis focuses on social justice themes in literature, titled "Social Justice in Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*: A Marxist Perspective".



Ririn Arnita Sari earned her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) in 2018. Her scholarly interests include the psychology of literature and psycholinguistics. Currently, she is pursuing her Master's degree in the English Language Studies Program at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University (UNHAS).



Nurroidah Fadhilah Malik earned her Bachelor's degree in Language and Literature faculty from Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) in 2024. Her area of interest is in the sociological aspects of literature, whereas phenomena that occur in real life are reflected in literary works. Currently, she is continuing her study in the English Language Studies Program, majoring in English Literature at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University (UNHAS).

A BLEU-Based Evaluation of ChatGPT's Chinese-to-English Translation

Linli He

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

Mozhgan Ghassemiazghandi*

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

Abstract—Political text translation presents unique challenges requiring precise ideological expression, cultural sensitivity, and terminological consistency—aspects that extend beyond conventional linguistic accuracy. While ChatGPT demonstrates growing capabilities in machine translation tasks, its performance in specialized political discourse remains underexplored. This study evaluates ChatGPT's Chinese-to-English translation quality using the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report, employing both BLEU metrics and human assessment across three criteria: syntax and grammar, cultural and ideological accuracy, and fluency and coherence. Three experienced translators evaluated ChatGPT's translations using a 6-point scale, while BLEU scores provided automated evaluation. Results reveal a significant contradiction: while BLEU scores remained low (0.31-0.37), human evaluation showed moderate performance with notable variations across criteria. ChatGPT achieved the highest scores in fluency and coherence (5.53 average) but struggled significantly with cultural and ideological accuracy (4.43 average), particularly in preserving political terminology precision and contextual appropriateness. Critical issues include generic translations of politically specific terms and inadequate handling of culturally embedded expressions. The study's key finding demonstrates that BLEU evaluation alone is fundamentally insufficient for assessing political text translation quality due to single-reference constraints and inability to capture ideological nuances. Our findings highlight the limitations of BLEU in evaluating politically nuanced texts and underscore the necessity of human evaluation for meaningful assessment of specialized domain translation. This research contributes to understanding AI translation capabilities in political discourse and provides evidence-based recommendations for developing more appropriate evaluation frameworks for specialized translation domains.

Index Terms—BLEU, ChatGPT, machine translation, machine translation evaluation

I. INTRODUCTION

ChatGPT, a conversational Large Language Model (LLM), has demonstrated remarkable capabilities in machine translation (MT) tasks despite not being specifically designed for translation purposes (Jiao et al., 2023). While empirical evidence indicates that LLMs can achieve translation quality comparable to or surpassing dedicated systems such as Google Translate and DeepL (Lee et al., 2023), significant research gaps remain in understanding their performance across specialized domains.

Currently, most MT research focuses on assessing English-to-Chinese translation (Liu & Zhu, 2023), with limited systematic examination of ChatGPT's translation quality in the reverse direction. More critically, there exists a notable scarcity of research comprehensively analyzing translation quality for Chinese-English political document translations (Liu & Zhu, 2023; Wu, 2023). This research gap is particularly significant because political texts present unique challenges that extend beyond linguistic accuracy to encompass ideological precision, cultural sensitivity, and terminological consistency (Du, 2025). Political documents, such as Government Work Reports, contain specialized terminology, complex syntactic structures, and culturally embedded expressions that test the boundaries of AI translation capabilities. Understanding how conversational AI models handle such texts is crucial for both theoretical advancement in MT research and practical applications in cross-cultural political communication.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the performance characteristics, strengths, and limitations of ChatGPT in translating Chinese political texts to English?

RQ2: What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of BLEU evaluation versus human assessment in evaluating ChatGPT's translations of politically nuanced documents?

This study employs a dual evaluation approach combining BLEU metrics with human assessment, particularly suited for political domain translation evaluation. BLEU provides quantitative, replicable measurements essential for systematic comparison and benchmarking in MT research (Papineni et al., 2002). However, political texts demand evaluation beyond surface-level lexical similarity. The political domain requires precise ideological expression, cultural appropriateness, and

* Corresponding Author.

contextual accuracy—aspects that automated metrics cannot adequately capture. Human evaluation becomes indispensable for assessing semantic nuances, pragmatic coherence, and cultural sensitivity inherent in political discourse (Jiang et al., 2024). By comparing the insights provided by both methodologies, this study examines their respective capabilities and limitations in political text translation evaluation, rather than relying solely on either approach.

Taking the translation of the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report (CGWR) as a case study, this research evaluates ChatGPT's translation quality in political texts through this integrated assessment approach. The study's significance lies in advancing our understanding of AI translation capabilities in specialized domains and informing the development of more effective human-AI collaboration in translation processes.

The rest of the manuscript is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a comprehensive literature review examining ChatGPT's capabilities, BLEU evaluation metrics, and existing research on ChatGPT's translation performance. Section 3 provides the proposed methodology by taking into consideration the factors of automatic evaluation and human evaluation. Section 4 discusses the obtained results and their implications for both research questions, with a detailed analysis of ChatGPT's performance across different evaluation criteria. Finally, section 5 presents conclusions and highlights the future work perspective.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. ChatGPT Overview

AI adeptly manipulates electromagnetism's characteristics for text processing, achieving remarkable success and frequently yielding results that closely resemble those achievable by human beings (Floridi, 2023). This observation highlights the potential of AI models such as ChatGPT to generate translations that closely resemble those produced by humans. However, the question remains whether this general linguistic capability translates effectively to specialized domains, particularly politically nuanced texts. The AI chatbot application ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, an American AI laboratory, has ignited extensive scholarly discourse. While preceding Large Language Models (LLMs) demonstrated proficiency in diverse NLP tasks, ChatGPT distinguishes itself from those models by functioning as an AI chatbot designed explicitly for dialog, exhibiting notable competence in engaging human interlocutors through conversation emulation (De Angelis et al., 2023). This conversational foundation raises important questions about its suitability for formal translation tasks, particularly in contexts requiring precision and cultural sensitivity.

According to Mattas (2023), as an AI conversational model, ChatGPT, distinguished by its substantial and expansive advantages, constitutes a notable milestone in AI language processing. Nonetheless, these advancements prompt significant inquiries concerning ChatGPT's ability to address domain-specific complexities, particularly those inherent in Chinese Government Work Reports (CGWRs). ChatGPT has solidified its position as a preeminent language model on a global scale because of its noteworthy proficiency across diverse language-related tasks and benchmark assessments (Chen et al., 2021). ChatGPT employs a transformer-driven design, enabling it to grasp various languages' nuances and grammatical frameworks. This architectural foundation provides the basis for its translation capabilities, yet also reveals potential limitations when processing specialized political discourse.

The significance of ChatGPT extends beyond technical capabilities. Zhu and Wang (2023) point out that ChatGPT represents the third revolutionary product to humanity, following the internet and smartphones, potentially initiating a "Cognitive Revolution" that could reshape various industries. In contrast to conventional rule-based approaches, ChatGPT can acquire knowledge from an extensive collection of textual sources such as books, articles, and websites, producing contextually appropriate results and adhering to grammatical rules (Zhu, 2023). ChatGPT has demonstrated versatility across various domains, including education, medicine, and customer support, underscoring its broad applicability in NLP tasks (Alawida et al., 2023; Antaki et al., 2023; Ray, 2023). Despite its impressive capabilities, it is imperative to acknowledge that ChatGPT remains fundamentally an AI tool, with inherent limitations that necessitate human intervention and revision (Evans, 2023; Khoshafah, 2023).

B. BLEU in Machine Translation Evaluation

The performance of MT systems has conventionally been evaluated using quantitative metrics, with the BLEU (Bilingual Evaluation Understudy) metric being one of the most widely utilized. Proposed by Papineni et al. (2002), BLEU assesses translation quality by measuring the degree of n-gram overlap between candidate translations and reference translations, while incorporating a brevity penalty to address the issue of excessively concise outputs. The BLEU metric evaluates adequacy by assessing word-level precision and fluency through the calculation of n-gram precision for $n = 1, 2, 3, 4$ (Lavie, 2011). According to Marie et al. (2021), BLEU scores were reported in 98.8% of MT studies, with 74.3% of these studies relying exclusively on BLEU as the sole evaluation metric for assessing MT system performance. Its replicability and simplicity have solidified its position as a benchmark in the field. However, BLEU exhibits significant limitations, primarily due to its emphasis on surface-level lexical similarity while overlooking deeper syntactic and semantic subtleties (Lee et al., 2023), which necessitates the integration of human evaluation approaches.

BLEU is categorized as a reference-based n-gram metric, similar to NIST (Doddington, 2002) and METEOR (Banerjee & Lavie, 2005), all of which emphasize surface-level lexical similarity. Although these metrics are efficient and widely used, their dependence on exact word or phrase matching limits their ability to capture deeper syntactic and semantic features in translation (Han & Lu, 2025). The implications of these limitations are particularly significant for politically

and culturally sensitive texts, where translation quality extends beyond lexical accuracy to encompass contextual appropriateness, ideological precision, and cultural sensitivity. In such contexts, context, tone, and implicit meaning are critical that surface-level metrics cannot adequately assess. To address this, Human evaluations offer essential insights into contextual and semantic accuracy, pragmatic coherence, and stylistic appropriateness, serving as a valuable complement to the quantitative analysis provided by BLEU metrics. This integrated methodology facilitates a more nuanced analysis, especially in the context of politically sensitive texts, where reliance solely on lexical alignment proves inadequate.

C. ChatGPT's Performance in Translation

In the field of language translation, ChatGPT can accurately translate one language into another in real time, enabling seamless communication and exchange between different languages (Kalla & Smith, 2023). Users can input the text or voice they need to translate, and ChatGPT, a general NLP model, can automatically translate it into another language (Larroyed, 2023). This capability is particularly noteworthy given that ChatGPT was not specifically designed as a translation tool, raising important questions about the transferability of general linguistic competence to specialized translation tasks.

Empirical studies have documented particularly strong performance in several key areas. Khoshafah (2023) demonstrated that GPT-4 significantly improved ChatGPT's translation performance, rivaling commercial tools even for distant languages. ChatGPT has excelled in translation in specific fields, especially Chinese-English translation of technical, economic, and medical texts (Feng, 2024). Compared to Google Translate, ChatGPT generally produces more accurate Arabic-English translations with fewer revisions (AlAfnan, 2025). According to Rizki and Masykuroh (2024), ChatGPT's translation of Harry Potter uses a variety of translation strategies and shows high accuracy, especially in the use of related words for paraphrasing (62%). This study demonstrates the potential of ChatGPT in handling complex literary translation tasks. A comparative study by Jiang and Zhang (2024) showed that ChatGPT received a positive rating from human evaluators in Chinese diplomatic text translation when presented with contextual cues.

However, significant challenges emerge when examining ChatGPT's limitations across different contexts and domains. Jiao et al. (2023) assert that while GPT models can generate natural language, their performance in MT remains underexplored. Park and Eunsil (2023) indicate that ChatGPT possesses a greater comprehension and interpretation of the source text's meaning and purpose than current MT, despite achieving a different level of completeness than human translations. In conversational domains, ChatGPT excels by producing spoken language that is more natural and diverse (Hendy et al., 2023; Jiao et al., 2023), yet its performance in translating politically nuanced texts has not been sufficiently investigated.

The limitations of ChatGPT become particularly evident when examined systematically. While ChatGPT can correct errors, it often displays overconfidence in inaccurate outputs, excessive verbosity, and sensitivity to input phrasing (Azaria, 2022; OpenAI, 2022). Although effective for high-resource languages, performance declines for distant language pairs (Peng et al., 2023) and in specialized domains such as biomedical and ICT terminology (Zhao et al., 2023). Araújo and Aguiar (2023) insist that while ChatGPT demonstrates potential as a resource for conducting individual translation assessments, its appropriateness for extensive and rigorous evaluations may be limited. They agree that prudence is advisable when considering ChatGPT as the sole basis for translation appraisals within formal contexts. Research conducted on Vietnamese translation, ChatGPT shows no clear advantage and struggles with specialized terminology and grammatical understanding (Yang et al., 2023). Puppel (2025) evaluated ChatGPT's translation of creative texts from English to German and found that, despite high overall quality, notable errors in style and fluency remained, necessitating human post-editing. Karabayeva and Kalizhanova (2024) identified that although ChatGPT demonstrated acceptable accuracy when processing relatively straightforward textual segments, significant shortcomings were observed in its handling of translating metaphors, similes, rhymes, and segmented sentences. GPT models demonstrate a high level of translation quality in languages with abundant linguistic resources, whereas their proficiency substantially diminishes when confronted with languages characterized by a dearth of linguistic resources (Hendy et al., 2023).

Despite extensive research on ChatGPT's general translation capabilities, several critical gaps remain. First, a systematic investigation of its performance with politically nuanced texts is insufficient, as such texts demand not only linguistic accuracy but also retention of tone, intent, and contextual meaning. Second, how conversational AI models perform in formal, specialized domain translation, particularly high-stakes government documents, remains unexplored. Third, existing studies focus primarily on general-purpose translation, with limited attention to political discourse challenges, including ideological precision and cultural sensitivity.

Assessing ChatGPT's translation capabilities and limitations comprehensively is of paramount importance and necessity. This is not only an unparalleled challenge that the translation industry has to confront (Cheng et al., 2023), but also a reality that many translation students and language professionals need to be aware of. Feng (2024) points out that the translations generated by ChatGPT may reflect certain ideological biases, particularly a bias towards left-wing economic views, which challenge the objectivity of translations in politically sensitive contexts. This study investigates ChatGPT's translation performance on CGWRs through a dual evaluation approach combining BLEU metrics and human assessment. Rather than seeking correlation between these approaches, this study examines their respective capabilities and limitations in evaluating political text translation quality, providing insights into the adequacy of current evaluation methodologies for specialized translation domains.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Corpus Selection and Data Collection

The CGWR is an official document of the state administrative organ of the government of the People's Republic of China. As an authoritative governmental normative document, the CGWR provides a comprehensive summary of the endeavors undertaken in the past year, spanning various facets, including politics, economy, and culture. It represents a non-literary and paradigmatic political document. The English translation of the CGWR is integral to China's external propaganda efforts, serving as a vital medium for the international community to understand the country's policy directives and economic development, highlighting the utmost importance of translation credibility and fidelity (Du, 2023). Selecting the 2023 CGWR as a case study to evaluate the translation performance of ChatGPT strengthens the analysis by enhancing its representational and authoritative qualities. The CGWR presents inherent peculiarities, such as specialized political language and specific governmental terminology. Whether undertaken by ChatGPT or through manual translation, the process entails specific difficulties and challenges.

This study selects 100 passages from the 2023 CGWR as translation materials for ChatGPT. These passages were retrieved from the official bilingual document repository of the People's Republic of China (<http://www.china.org.cn/>), which provides both Chinese and English versions. As shown in Table 1, we selected the first paragraph, which outlines the entire CGWR, as a representative sample for Chinese-English translation material. Due to the unique nature of the selected material, which constitutes a portion of the CGWR, only a singular official English reference is available.

TABLE 1
SOURCE TEXT & REFERENCE
Adapted from http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/2023-07/27/content_85189666.htm

Chinese Source Text	2022年是党和国家历史上极为重要的一年。党的二十大胜利召开，描绘了全面建设社会主义现代化国家的宏伟蓝图。面对风高浪急的国际环境和艰巨繁重的国内改革发展稳定任务，以习近平同志为核心的党中央团结带领全国各族人民迎难而上，全面落实疫情要防住、经济要稳住、发展要安全的要求，加大宏观调控力度，实现了经济平稳运行、发展质量稳步提升、社会大局保持稳定，我国发展取得来之极为不易的新成就。
English Reference	The year 2022 was a year of great importance in the history of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and our country. The Party successfully convened its 20th National Congress, during which it drew up an inspiring blueprint for building China into a modern socialist country in all respects. In the face of high winds and choppy waters in the international environment and challenging tasks in promoting reform, development, and stability at home, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core brought together the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and led them in meeting difficulties head-on. We acted on the requirements of responding effectively to Covid-19, maintaining economic stability, and ensuring security in development, and intensified macro regulation. As a result, we stabilized the economy, steadily enhanced development quality, and maintained overall social stability, securing new and hard-won achievements in China's development.

To ensure representativeness and methodological rigor, a stratified sampling strategy was applied in selecting 100 passages from the 2023 CGWR. The number was determined as an optimal balance: fewer passages would risk insufficient thematic coverage, while substantially more passages would impose impractical demands on human evaluation without proportionally enhancing insight. Thus, 100 passages provide sufficient statistical robustness for BLEU analysis while remaining manageable for detailed human assessment. These passages were chosen based on their thematic diversity, linguistic complexity, and political significance as illustrated in Table 2. Among them, the opening paragraph was selected as a representative example for in-depth analysis. This paragraph offers a succinct overview of the report's key themes, thereby serving as an optimal context for illustrating both the translation challenges and strengths of ChatGPT. Although the analysis focuses on a single paragraph, the systematic selection of 100 passages ensures that the findings reflect a broad spectrum of the report's content and translation challenges.

TABLE 2
PASSAGES SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection Criteria	Description
Thematic Diversity	Passages covering various aspects, such as political directives, economic policies, and social achievements, are included to ensure broad content representation.
Linguistic Complexity	Passages with sophisticated sentence structures, specialized terminology, and idiomatic expressions characteristic of official discourse.
Political Significance	Passages related to significant initiatives, strategic goals, or political events, highlighting critical information.

B. Translation and Evaluation Protocol

In the assessment of MT quality, particularly in the context of ChatGPT, predominant research primarily relies on the utilization of automated evaluation metrics, such as BLEU (Jiao et al., 2023; Papineni et al., 2002), which is a standard quality evaluation index for MT (Wang & Mao, 2023). The validity of BLEU was confirmed through empirical evidence, demonstrating a correlation with human assessments of translation quality in natural language texts (Evtikhiev et al., 2023). Rafaei (2021) also proves that BLEU was among the initial metrics to assert a strong correlation with human

assessments of quality, and it continues to be one of the most widely used automated and cost-effective metrics. The selection of BLEU as the automatic evaluation metric for this study is attributed to its ease of comprehension, efficiency, and comparability with other results. While acknowledging the merits of BLEU, it is imperative to integrate human evaluation into the translation quality assessment. Human evaluation can yield feedback of elevated quality by leveraging the evaluators' professional expertise, particularly in the context of divergent terminologies or cultural nuances. In contrast to human evaluation, which is costly and demands substantial human effort, automatic evaluation, while relatively lower in quality, proves cost-effective and convenient for comparing multiple systems (Chen & Cherry, 2014). Human evaluation and automatic evaluation mutually complement one another. We combine automatic evaluation and human evaluation in our study, as illustrated in Figure 1.

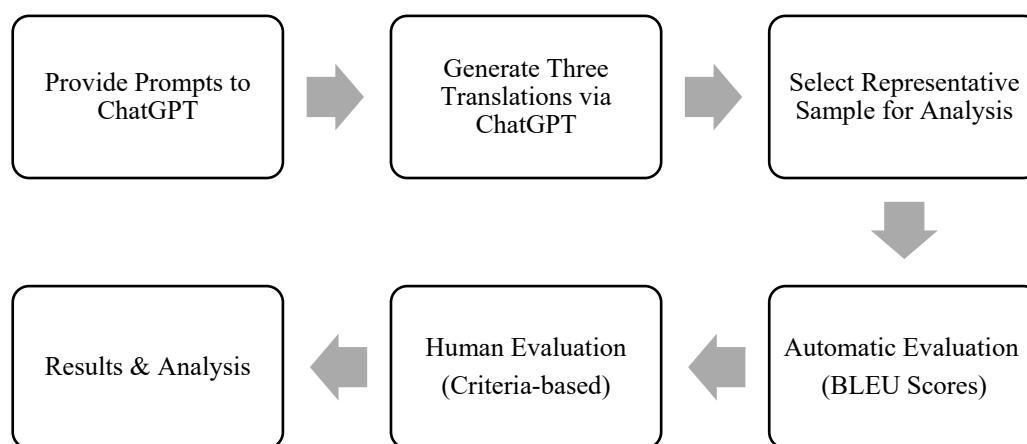


Figure 1. Translation Evaluation Methods Flow

The choice of prompts significantly shapes ChatGPT's responses. To ensure that the responses from ChatGPT remain unaffected by variations in prompts, we maintain consistency by employing identical prompts for translation tasks. We selected three translations generated by ChatGPT at different times to serve as case samples for our analysis. For human evaluation, building on the framework proposed by Araújo and Aguiar (2023), we developed a domain-specific evaluation rubric that addresses the unique requirements of political text translation, as summarized in Table 3. These criteria include syntax and grammar, cultural and ideological accuracy, fluency and coherence with scores ranging from 1 (poor) to 6 (excellent).

TABLE 3
HUMAN EVALUATION CRITERIA
Adapted from Araújo and Aguiar (2023)

Evaluation Criteria		Scores (1-6)
Syntax & Grammar	Whether there are grammatical errors in the translation, and whether the sentence structure of the translation is reasonable.	A score of 1 indicates a severe grammar error. A score of 6 means no grammatical errors.
Cultural & Ideological Accuracy	Whether the translation fully and accurately conveys the source information while preserving politically charged terminology, ideological nuance, and culturally embedded expressions.	A score of 1 indicates that political or cultural meaning is severely distorted, with key ideological terms mistranslated or omitted. A score of 6 means full accuracy: the translation is precise, politically appropriate, and culturally faithful to the source text.
Fluency & Coherence	Whether the translated sentence is fluent and coherent.	A score of 1 indicates very poor fluency and discontinuity. A score of 6 indicates excellent fluency and coherence.

This study represents an exploratory investigation into ChatGPT's performance in specialized domain translation. While broader generalizability would benefit from expanded sampling across multiple domains and language pairs, the focused approach allows for in-depth analysis of political text translation challenges.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

A. BLEU Evaluation

To commence, the initial step in conducting this study involves providing prompts to ChatGPT, allowing it to acquire a preliminary general understanding of its translation tasks. The researcher input prompts, providing ChatGPT with explicit cues and stipulated directives, delineating its prescribed tasks. This approach serves a dual purpose: first, to observe ChatGPT's learning capabilities by examining its ability to accurately comprehend input prompts and standards and apply them to subsequent translations; second, to establish a controlled environment that facilitates a more favorable context for its task performance. In order to make ChatGPT get better translation results and have a general understanding

of its translation task, the context of the report is provided in detail in Table 4.

TABLE 4
PROMPTS FOR CHATGPT

Prompts	The following Chinese part is the Chinese government's report on the background to the Party's 20th Congress in 2022. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) is a national congress held once every ten years to summarize the work of the previous stage and plan for future development. At the Party's 20th National Congress in 2022, the CPC Central Committee outlined a grand blueprint for comprehensively building a modern socialist country. The report sets out the main expected goals of social and economic development in 2023 and the work priorities for the current year; the report also mentions the challenges of the international environment and the importance of domestic reform, development, and stability tasks. Please translate the following Chinese sentences into English to better understand the content and context of the report.

For the automatic evaluation of the translation of ChatGPT, we adopt the BLEU metric to compute sentence-level BLEU scores. BLEU scores are reported in normalized forms ranging from 0 to 1, with a higher proximity to 1 indicating a superior quality of the hypothesis. The BLEU scores were obtained by the use of the *sentence_bleu* function (Papineni et al., 2002) with smoothing method 7 (Chen & Cherry, 2014) from the NLTK (Natural Language Toolkit, <https://www.nltk.org/>) library in Python. Tokenization was performed using *nltk.word_tokenize* to ensure proper segmentation of words and punctuation. The default 4-gram setting was used without explicit modification. Specifically, we imported *sentence_bleu* from *nltk.translate.bleu_score* and applied it to hypothetical translations (ChatGPT's translations) against reference sentences to obtain sentence-level BLEU scores. The BLEU scores for the three translations of ChatGPT are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5
BLEU SCORES

T1	0.313
T2	0.343
T3	0.372

Analyzing the BLEU scores, it is evident that T3 achieves the highest score at 0.372, followed by T2 with a score of 0.343, while T1 attains the lowest score at 0.313. The BLEU scores, ranging from 0 to 1, show that even T3's highest score of 0.372 falls significantly below the upper limit, representing relatively low values by conventional MT evaluation standards. However, these scores primarily reflect the limitations of BLEU evaluation when applied to political discourse translation rather than indicating poor translation quality. It should be noted that BLEU in this study relies on a single reference translation, which may underestimate translation adequacy, especially in political discourse. Human assessment is integrated to establish a more comprehensive evaluation framework. Therefore, the primary evaluation focuses shifts to human assessment, with BLEU serving as a supplementary reference point while acknowledging its limitations in this specialized domain.

B. Human Evaluation

In this section, three evaluators (experienced translators with expertise in political discourse) systematically assessed each of the three translations generated by ChatGPT based on the three predetermined criteria. Each passage was independently scored by all three evaluators on a 6-point scale, with final scores calculated as the average across evaluators. Inter-rater reliability was maintained through consistent application of the evaluation rubric. However, formal statistical analysis of inter-rater agreement was not conducted, representing a limitation of this study. Concurrently, a meticulous record is maintained for each translation, documenting scores obtained under each evaluation criterion, and the respective average scores for each criterion are computed. The scores are displayed below in Table 6.

TABLE 6
HUMAN EVALUATION SCORES

Criteria	Syntax & Grammar	Cultural & Ideological Accuracy	Fluency & Coherence	Average
T1	4.67	4.3	5.33	4.767
T2	5.33	4.33	5.67	5.11
T3	5.67	4.67	5.6	5.313
Average	5.223	4.433	5.533	

Based on the outcomes of human assessment, it is evident that the results align with the BLEU score. T3 achieved the highest score among the three translations, with T2 following at 5.11. T1 attained the lowest score at 4.767. Additionally, an examination of the performance of each translation under distinct evaluation criteria reveals that the fluency and coherence criterion attained the highest score at 5.533. In contrast, the cultural and ideological accuracy criterion scored the lowest at 4.433, indicating this as the most challenging aspect for ChatGPT in political text translation. For syntax and grammar, the score amounted to 5.223.

(a). Syntax and Grammar

In the domain of syntax and grammar, an examination of the translation "2022年是党和国家历史上极为重要的一年" reveals a discrepancy in the tense employed among the translations. Both translations, T2 and T3, employ the past tense, while T1 utilizes the present tense. Given that the Government Work Report serves as a retrospective review and summarization of the government in the previous year, the usage of the past tense in T2 and T3 aligns with grammatical appropriateness. The use of the present tense in T1 is, however, misleading and has the potential to confuse the reader, as it inaccurately conveys events from the preceding year as if they are ongoing or current. It is inconsistent with the retrospective nature of the report. This issue underscores the difficulty faced by ChatGPT in accurately identifying and applying contextual temporal markers. When translating "面对风高浪急的国际环境和艰巨繁重的国内改革发展稳定任务，以习近平同志为核心的党中央团结带领全国各族人民迎难而上", T3 translated as "Confronted with a challenging international environment and the arduous tasks of domestic reform, development, and stability in the face of turbulent waters, the Party Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, united and led the people of all ethnic groups across the nation to overcome difficulties", from which "in the face of turbulent waters" lacks a logically coherent syntactic relationship with the sentence body. The phrase incorporates an idiomatic expression; however, it lacks a clear grammatical connection to the subsequent clause, resulting in structural ambiguity. This issue exemplifies ChatGPT's difficulty in achieving syntactic alignment when processing complex metaphorical expressions that require precise logical integration.

(b). Cultural and Ideological Accuracy

Certainly, based on human evaluation, it is evident that the scores for the criterion of cultural and ideological accuracy for each of the three translations are notably low, with the average score ultimately reaching the lowest at only 4.433. Upon analyzing the three translations, it was discerned that politically charged terminology and ideological nuances were not always adequately preserved. For instance, in the translation of "2022年是党和国家历史上极为重要的一年", the term "党" should be translated as "the Communist Party of China (CPC)" rather than simply "the party". Given that it is the opening statement and initial mention in the political report, the complete appellation of the party should be mentioned. In the context of Chinese political discourse, the term "党" is uniquely associated with the Communist Party of China, whose identity holds a central role in the narrative of the Government Work Report. A generic translation, such as "the party", diminishes this specificity, potentially resulting in misinterpretations among target audiences lacking familiarity with the political nuances embedded in the source text. This issue underscores ChatGPT's limitations in handling politically charged terminology in the absence of explicit contextual training. Similarly, although the translations "epidemic" or "pandemic" for the term "疫情" are not linguistically wrong, their lack of explicit reference to "Covid-19" undermines the historical and political accuracy of the report. In the specific context of 2022, "疫情" refers explicitly to "Covid-19", which had profound political, social, and economic consequences worldwide. These examples highlight ChatGPT's limitations in handling politically sensitive texts, where cultural and ideological accuracy is as crucial as grammatical correctness or semantic fidelity.

(c). Fluency and Coherence

Fluency and coherence earn the highest score among the three criteria. However, the challenge also remains. The representative one is the translation of "面对风高浪急的国际环境和艰巨繁重的国内改革发展稳定任务，以习近平同志为核心的党中央团结带领全国各族人民迎难而上" which rendered as "Confronted with a challenging international environment and the arduous tasks of domestic reform, development, and stability in the face of turbulent waters, the Party Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, united and led the people of all ethnic groups across the nation to overcome difficulties". "In the face of turbulent waters" exhibits a potential impact on the fluency and coherence of the entire sentence, with a lack of clarity in logical expression. This underscores the challenges encountered by ChatGPT in achieving a balance between fluency and logical coherence, especially in translations that demand the seamless integration of figurative expressions with precise contextual meaning.

In the analysis of the translation quality of ChatGPT, an observed phenomenon is the propensity for the translations generated by ChatGPT to show a degree of solidification in their outputs. The translations exhibit a marked degree of similarity. Consistencies are observed in sentence structures and vocabulary across all three translations, indicating minimal variance. Solidification refers to the phenomenon where ChatGPT exhibits a high level of repetition in its translations when tasked with repeatedly translating the exact source text. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fundamental architecture of GPT models, which are designed to prioritize the generation of fluent and statistically probable sequences grounded in patterns observed during pre-training. Although this consistency contributes to grammatical accuracy and terminological coherence, it simultaneously underscores the models' limited capacity to accommodate contextual subtleties and adapt to discourse-specific nuances. As Hendy et al. (2023) explain, despite both NMT systems and GPT models being grounded in the transformer architecture, key distinctions exist between them. GPT models showcase exceptional proficiency in natural language generation. A decoder-only architecture characterizes GPT models, whereas NMT adopts the encoder-decoder framework. GPT models primarily undergo training on monolingual

data, while NMT models depend on extensive, meticulously curated parallel datasets. These architectural and training differences help explain why GPT models tend to produce solidified outputs, often lacking the flexibility needed to reflect pragmatic or contextual variations—an issue particularly critical in the translation of politically nuanced texts.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of ChatGPT's performance in Chinese-English political text translation, revealing both notable capabilities and significant limitations. While ChatGPT demonstrates reasonable fluency and grammatical accuracy, it struggles with political terminology precision and the preservation of cultural-ideological nuances essential for accurate political discourse translation. Human evaluation results indicate that ChatGPT performs reasonably well in syntax and grammar and in fluency and coherence, but falls short in accurately conveying political and cultural specificity. BLEU evaluation alone was found to be insufficient for assessing translation quality, as moderate scores primarily reflect the metric's limitations, including single-reference constraints, inability to assess ideological accuracy, and emphasis on surface-level lexical matching. The study also identifies ChatGPT's tendency toward output solidification, producing highly similar translations across attempts, which limits adaptability to contextual and pragmatic variations.

The findings highlight several avenues for future research, including the adoption of multi-reference BLEU evaluations and alternative metrics such as COMET and METEOR to better capture semantic and contextual accuracy. Enhancing human evaluation reliability through inter-rater consistency analysis and structured evaluator training is also recommended. Further studies should explore ChatGPT's performance across diverse political text genres and multiple language pairs, as well as domain-specific fine-tuning and prompt engineering strategies to improve political and cultural accuracy. Overall, this research underscores the value of a human-AI collaborative approach in political translation, where AI provides fluent initial translations that require human oversight, and calls for the development of specialized evaluation frameworks capable of addressing the unique demands of political discourse translation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first author gratefully acknowledges her PhD supervisor, Mozghan, for invaluable guidance throughout this research, and her family for their unwavering support.

REFERENCES

- [1] AlAfnan, M. A. (2025). Large Language Models as Computational Linguistics Tools: A Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT and Google Machine Translations. *Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Technology*, 5, 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.37965/jait.2024.0549>
- [2] Alawida, M., Mejri, S., Mehmood, A., Chikhaoui, B., & Isaac Abiodun, O. (2023). A Comprehensive Study of ChatGPT: Advancements, Limitations, and Ethical Considerations in Natural Language Processing and Cybersecurity. *Information*, 14(8), Article 8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/info14080462>
- [3] Antaki, F., Touma, S., Milad, D., El-Khoury, J., & Duval, R. (2023). Evaluating the Performance of ChatGPT in Ophthalmology: An Analysis of Its Successes and Shortcomings. *Ophthalmology Science*, 3(4), 100324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xops.2023.100324>
- [4] Araújo, S., & Aguiar, M. (2023). Comparing ChatGPT's and Human Evaluation of Scientific Texts' Translations from English to Portuguese Using Popular Automated Translators. *Notebook for the SimpleText Lab at CLEF 2023*. CEUR Workshop Proceedings.
- [5] Azaria, A. (2022). *ChatGPT Usage and Limitations*. <https://hal.science/hal-03913837>
- [6] Banerjee, S., & Lavie, A. (2005). METEOR: An Automatic Metric for MT Evaluation with Improved Correlation with Human Judgments. In J. Goldstein, A. Lavie, C.-Y. Lin, & C. Voss (Eds), *Proceedings of the ACL Workshop on Intrinsic and Extrinsic Evaluation Measures for Machine Translation and/or Summarization* (pp. 65–72). Association for Computational Linguistics. <https://aclanthology.org/W05-0909>
- [7] Chen, B., & Cherry, C. (2014). A Systematic Comparison of Smoothing Techniques for Sentence-Level BLEU. In O. Bojar, C. Buck, C. Federmann, B. Haddow, P. Koehn, C. Monz, M. Post, & L. Specia (Eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth Workshop on Statistical Machine Translation* (pp. 362–367). Association for Computational Linguistics. <https://doi.org/10.3115/v1/W14-3346>
- [8] Chen, M., Tworek, J., Jun, H., Yuan, Q., Pinto, H. P. de O., Kaplan, J., Edwards, H., Burda, Y., Joseph, N., Brockman, G., Ray, A., Puri, R., Krueger, G., Petrov, M., Khlaaf, H., Sastry, G., Mishkin, P., Chan, B., Gray, S., & Zaremba, W. (2021). *Evaluating Large Language Models Trained on Code* [Preprint]. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2107.03374>
- [9] Cheng, Y., Wang, R., Chen, J., Chao, Y., Maimaitili, A., & Zhang, H. (2023). Context-Based AI Translation From a Globalization Perspective: A Case Study of ChatGPT. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 20(9). <https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8072/2023.09.005>
- [10] De Angelis, L., Baglivo, F., Arzilli, G., Privitera, G. P., Ferragina, P., Tozzi, A. E., & Rizzo, C. (2023). ChatGPT and the rise of large language models: The new AI-driven infodemic threat in public health. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1166120>
- [11] Doddington, G. (2002). Automatic evaluation of machine translation quality using n-gram co-occurrence statistics. *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Human Language Technology Research*, 138–145.
- [12] Du, H. (2023). A Corpus-Based Study on the Linguistic Features of the English Translation of the Report on the Work of the Government. *Modern Linguistics*, 11, 2630. <https://doi.org/10.12677/ML.2023.116356>
- [13] Du, L. (2025). *Chinese Political Discourse in Translation: A Corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003544456>

- [14] Evans, D. (2023, January 27). *I asked ChatGPT why human intervention is so necessary and why we shouldn't be scared of progress*. LinkedIn. Retrieved July 6, 2024, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/i-asked-chat-gpt-why-human-intervention-so-necessary-we-darren-evans/>
- [15] Evtikhiev, M., Bogomolov, E., Sokolov, Y., & Bryksin, T. (2023). Out of the BLEU: How should we assess quality of the Code Generation models? *Journal of Systems and Software*, 203, 111741. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jss.2023.111741>
- [16] Feng, J. (2024). An Analysis of the Translation Output and Value Dissemination of ChatGPT. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 35(1), 212–218. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/35/20232108>
- [17] Floridi, L. (2023). AI as Agency Without Intelligence: On ChatGPT, Large Language Models, and Other Generative Models. *Philosophy & Technology*, 36(1), 15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-023-00621-y>
- [18] Han, C., & Lu, X. (2025). Beyond BLEU: Repurposing neural-based metrics to assess interlingual interpreting in tertiary-level language learning settings. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 100184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2025.100184>
- [19] Hendy, A., Abdelrehim, M., Sharaf, A., Raunak, V., Gabr, M., Matsushita, H., Kim, Y. J., Afify, M., & Awadalla, H. H. (2023). *How Good Are GPT Models at Machine Translation? A Comprehensive Evaluation* [Preprint]. arXiv. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2302.09210>
- [20] Jiang, Z., Lv, Q., Zhang, Z., & Lei, L. (2024). *Convergences and Divergences between Automatic Assessment and Human Evaluation: Insights from Comparing ChatGPT-Generated Translation and Neural Machine Translation* [Preprint]. arXiv.Org. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2401.05176v3>
- [21] Jiang, Z., & Zhang, Z. (2024). *Can ChatGPT Rival Neural Machine Translation? A Comparative Study* [Preprint]. arXiv. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2401.05176>
- [22] Jiao, W., Wang, W., Huang, J., Wang, X., & Tu, Z. (2023). *Is ChatGPT a Good Translator? Yes With GPT-4 As The Engine* [Preprint]. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2301.08745>
- [23] Kalla, D., & Smith, N. (2023). Study and Analysis of Chat GPT and its Impact on Different Fields of Study. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 8(3). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4402499>
- [24] Karabayeva, I., & Kalizhanova, A. (2024). Evaluating machine translation of literature through rhetorical analysis. *Journal of Translation and Language Studies*, 5(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.48185/jtls.v5i1.962>
- [25] Khoshafah, Faten. (2023, April 17). *ChatGPT for Arabic-English Translation: Evaluating the Accuracy* [Preprint]. Research Square. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2814154/v2>
- [26] Larroyed, A. (2023). Redefining Patent Translation: The Influence of ChatGPT and the Urgency to Align Patent Language Regimes in Europe with Progress in Translation Technology. *GRUR International*, 72(11), 1009–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1093/grurint/ikad099>
- [27] Lavie, A. (2011, September 19). Evaluating the Output of Machine Translation Systems. *Proceedings of Machine Translation Summit XIII: Tutorial Abstracts*. <https://aclanthology.org/2011.mtsummit-tutorials.3>
- [28] Lee, S., Lee, J., Moon, H., Park, C., Seo, J., Eo, S., Koo, S., & Lim, H. (2023). A Survey on Evaluation Metrics for Machine Translation. *Mathematics*, 11(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.3390/math11041006>
- [29] Liu, S., & Zhu, W. (2023). An Analysis of the Evaluation of the Translation Quality of Neural Machine Translation Application Systems. *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, 37(1), 2214460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08839514.2023.2214460>
- [30] Marie, B., Fujita, A., & Rubino, R. (2021). *Scientific Credibility of Machine Translation Research: A Meta-Evaluation of 769 Papers* [Preprint]. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2106.15195>
- [31] Mattas, P. (2023). ChatGPT: A Study of AI Language Processing and its Implications. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4, 435–440. <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.2023.4218>
- [32] OpenAI. (2022, November 30). *Introducing ChatGPT*. Retrieved June 5, 2025, from <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt>.
- [33] Papineni, K., Roukos, S., Ward, T., & Zhu, W.-J. (2002). Bleu: A Method for Automatic Evaluation of Machine Translation. In P. Isabelle, E. Charniak, & D. Lin (Eds), *Proceedings of the 40th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics* (pp. 311–318). Association for Computational Linguistics. <https://doi.org/10.3115/1073083.1073135>
- [34] Park, S., & Eunsil, C. (2023). A Study of Translatability of Irony in ChatGPT. *The Journal of Translation Studies*, 24(2), 131–160. <https://doi.org/10.15749/jts.2023.24.2.005>
- [35] Peng, K., Ding, L., Zhong, Q., Shen, L., Liu, X., Zhang, M., Ouyang, Y., & Tao, D. (2023). *Towards Making the Most of ChatGPT for Machine Translation* [Preprint]. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2303.13780>
- [36] Puppel, M., & Borg, C. (2025). Evaluating ChatGPT's Performance in Creative Text Translation for Communication: A Case Study from English into German. *Media and Intercultural Communication: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.22034/mic.2024.480506.1023>
- [37] Rafaeli, O., Abend, O., Choshen, L., & Nikolaev, D. (2021). *Part of Speech and Universal Dependency effects on English Arabic Machine Translation* [Preprint]. arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2106.00745>
- [38] Ray, P. P. (2023). ChatGPT: A comprehensive review on background, applications, key challenges, bias, ethics, limitations and future scope. *Internet of Things and Cyber-Physical Systems*, 3, 121–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iotcps.2023.04.003>
- [39] Rizki, K. A. M., & Masykuroh, Q. (2024). Evaluating ChatGPT's Translation of Harry Potter: A Qualitative Study of Translation Techniques, Accuracy, and Acceptability. *JELITA*, 6(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.56185/jelita.v6i1.902>
- [40] Wang, Z., & Mao, C. (2023). ChatGPT yiwen zhiliang de pinggu yu tisheng — yi taoci lei wenben hanying fanyi wei li [Evaluation and Enhancement of ChatGPT Translation Quality: A Case Study of Chinese-English Translation in Ceramic Texts]. *Shandong Ceramics*, 46(4), 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1005-0639.2023.04.003>
- [41] Wu, J. (2023). A Comparative Analysis of Chinese-English Translation Quality Based on ChatGPT: A Case Study of Chinese Characteristic Words. *Journal of Social Science Humanities and Literature*, 6(5), Article 5. [https://doi.org/10.53469/jsshl.2023.06\(05\).08](https://doi.org/10.53469/jsshl.2023.06(05).08)
- [42] Yang, Y., Liu, R., Qian, X., & Ni, J. (2023). Performance and perception: Machine translation post-editing in Chinese-English news translation by novice translators. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02285-7>
- [43] Zhao, Y., Zhang, J., & Zong, C. (2023). Transformer: A General Framework from Machine Translation to Others. *Machine*

Intelligence Research, 20(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11633-022-1393-5>

- [44] Zhu, G., & Wang, X. (2023). ChatGPT de yunxing moshi, guanjian jishu ji weilai tujing [ChatGPT: Operation Mode, Key Technology and Future Prospects]. *Xinjiang Normal University Journal (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 44(4), 113–122. <https://doi.org/10.14100/j.cnki.65-1039/g4.20230217.001>
- [45] Zhu, P. (2023). Translation of Personal Pronouns in Government Work Report from the Perspective of Explication. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 9(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.54097/ijeh.v9i2.9911>

Linli He is a PhD candidate at the School of Languages, Literacies, and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research interests include machine translation and machine translation evaluation.

Mozhgan Ghassemiazghandi, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Languages, Literacies, and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research interests include translation technology, machine translation, and audiovisual translation.

Language and Terrorism: A Pragmatic and Semiotic Analysis of the Girls' Transformation in *Four Daughters* (2023)

Fuad Khasawneh

Department of Design and Visual Communication, School of Arts and Design, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Qasem Abdelkarim Shukran

Department of Visual Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Abdullah Hussein Obeidat

Department of Visual Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Mahmoud Nayel Taani

Department of Design and Visual Communication, School of Arts and Design, University of Jordan, Jordan

Amer Fathi AL-gharaibeh

Drama Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, Jordan

BILAL Mohammad Aldiabat

Drama Division, Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, Jordan

Mowafaq Alsaggar

Visual Art Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Abstract—The research investigates "Four Daughters" (2023) by Kaouther Ben Hania through pragmatic and semiotic analysis to study how extremist discourse transforms the linguistic and identity aspects of the girls. The research proposes that the transition from maternal openness to ideological closure occurs through intricate processes of symbolic and linguistic breakdown. Specific film sequences are examined to demonstrate how silence, body language, and spoken words function in creating this identity transformation. The analysis shows how ideological discourse transforms identity by removing doubt and openness to create absolute certainty and finality. The research incorporates Austin and Searle's speech act theory, Barthes' semiotics of imagery, and Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power in language. It demonstrates that the film presents more than just a documentation of personal crises, as it reveals a general symbolic breakdown that cinema uses to expose the discursive fractures resulting in radicalization.

Index Terms—visual semiotics, hybrid documentary, multimodal discourse, visual-linguistic naturalization, Kaouther Ben Hania

I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Arab cinema has undergone a significant shift in its examination of identity, violence, and extremism. The combination of documentary and fictional elements in hybrid films creates complex, critical analyses of socio-political phenomena. One of the most compelling examples is "Four Daughters" (2023) by Tunisian director Kaouther Ben Hania (see Figure 1). The film showcases a profound dramatic analysis where language meets memory and identity confronts violence. Multiple cinematic layers challenge the relationship between factual and artistic representation. The film tells the true story of Tunisian mother Olfa, who lost two of her daughters, Rahma and Ghofran, to ISIS terrorism. In doing so, it transforms personal grief into a social and cultural issue.

This film's documentary-style hybrid approach enables real people to share scenes with professional actresses, creating multiple storylines that blend authentic materials with scripted content. This method allows the audience to interpret identity, representation, and loss on different levels. The film portrays extremism as a process that unfolds through linguistic and mental changes, creating divisions between personal identity, family ties, social connections, and native speech. This study will examine these changes by applying pragmatic discourse analysis, speech act theory, and multimodal semiotics to demonstrate how language, gestures, imagery, and silence create meaning within the cinematic

text. This analysis connects with modern research on extremist discourse and ideological recruitment, revealing how doctrinal speech functions at both linguistic and symbolic levels. This study adds value by providing a pragmatic and semiotic analysis of "Four Daughters," examining sensitive issues such as extremism, familial breakdown, and symbolic violence through its hybrid cinematic structure, which combines factual and fictional elements. This study enhances existing critical approaches to modern Arabic cinematic discourse by showing how language, embodied performance, and visual elements affect or challenge social connections. This research is significant because the ideological recruitment of Arab youth continues to grow, necessitating an examination of the linguistic and symbolic processes that lead to this transformation, particularly within family settings, where language evolves from personal to divisive.

This study examines how hybrid films create ideological discourses and depict their connections to familial and social structures using detached linguistic and cognitive methods. A fundamental opposition between maternal intimacy and ideological rigidity emerges throughout the movie, as displayed by the characters. This transformation occurs through a slow process of discursive and imaginative development that requires detailed analytical methods to understand its narrative and pragmatic dimensions. This study also examines how "Four Daughters" combines cinematic elements to create a multifaceted narrative about identity, violence, and extremism. Speech act theory and pragmatic analysis are applied to study the transition from family dialogue to ideological language. Multimodal semiotics examines the integration of spoken language with visual elements, body language, and auditory silences. This study aims to contribute to Arab critical scholarship on cinematic meaning-making processes by demonstrating how visual-dramatic discourse reveals identity transformation and belonging fragmentation in contemporary cultural environments.



Figure 1. Maternal Authority and Fractured Identity in the Official Poster of *Four Daughters*. From https://www.imdb.com/title/tt27502426/mediaindex/?ref_=mv_close

II. LANGUAGE, THE BODY, AND THE IMAGE: A PRAGMATIC AND SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSES OF EXTREMISM AND REPRESENTATION IN *FOUR DAUGHTERS* (2023)

The dramatic changes in contemporary Arab cinema provide a fitting context for exploring identity, violence, and extremism through films such as "Four Daughters" (2023), directed by Tunisian filmmaker Kaouther Ben Hania. Discourse consists of more than just language; it is also composed of various symbolic systems, including graphic, typographic, gestural, spatial, and sonic systems. Together, these systems constitute a kind of visual grammar similar to linguistic grammar. These systems are used to analyze visual and multimedia texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020; Bateman, 2014).

"Four Daughters" uses dialogue, body language, direct eye contact, and the positioning of characters within a room to communicate. The characters are portrayed in depth, not merely as a backdrop to the action. Their body posture and the lighting during their confrontations with Olfa provide clues to their state of mind. According to Jewitt (2021), scholars must explore the interaction between modes to understand how symbolic power systems are constructed for resistance or accommodation. Gunther Kress argues that visual and linguistic elements are combined through "semiotic weaving" to create meaning. In this theory, silence is a visually expressive sign with communicative significance, and image

composition is the visual equivalent of lexicogrammatical options in verbal language (O'Halloran, 2004). Even if one overlooks the visual dimension of the girls' radicalization, visual images can interpretively complement or surpass the content.

This study is grounded in speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1975), which is a linguistic theory that posits language not only conveys factual information but also shapes and transforms social life. According to this theory, language enables confessions, denials, and apologies, doing more than merely conveying information. The theory identifies three types of speech acts: locutionary acts, which produce meaningful sounds; illocutionary acts, which are intentional actions performed through utterances; and perlocutionary acts, which describe the impact of utterances on listeners. Two contrasting styles of speech are presented in "Four Daughters." The mother uses guilt as the basis for her stance on birth control, while the daughters use a rigid, illogical approach to create recruitment materials for a doctrine. Through her words, "I chose the path of truth," the daughter-actress performs an illocutionary speech act, transforming her identity through new linguistic-ideological structures while severing her emotional connection to her family. The mother lacks the ability to produce meaningful speech acts. Statements such as "I should have been closer" and "I'm not enough of a mother" fall into the category of "unhappy speech acts," as defined by Austin. This demonstrates a loss of linguistic power. According to Austin and Searle, context determines the effectiveness of an utterance. The same sentence could function as a prayer, an incitement, or a threat, depending on the context. The language of extremism operates through doctrinal strictness, transforming every statement into an absolute command or truth and blocking any form of doubt or diversity.

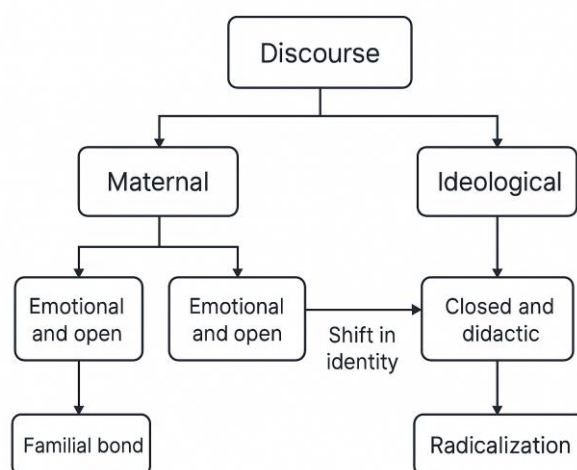


Figure 2.

The process of developing extremist discourse involves experiencing trauma and isolation before adopting a new discourse, which leads to radical changes in language and identity (Figure 2). Analyzing "Four Daughters" requires a method that combines pragmatics, semiotics, and discourse analysis. A visual diagram accompanies the film, illustrating how maternal emotional discourse transforms into ideological, dogmatic discourse through various layers. The initial "Discourse" box branches off into two separate categories: maternal and ideological discourse. Visual elements in the film reveal the core concept by contrasting the mother's emotional dialogue with extremist religious terminology. The mother uses emotional discourse to express her feelings and empathetic approach. She admits to not being "enough of a mother." This emotional discourse initially creates strong family bonds that later break down. The mother undergoes a complete transformation, shifting from being "emotional and open" to "closed and didactic." She makes the pivotal choice to abandon her family and join an extremist organization. She shifts from speaking freely to following strict ideological language, abandoning her personal identity in the process.

The ideological discourse functions as a powerful instructional framework. This is evident when the daughter says, "I chose the path of truth." The discourse presents itself as absolute truth, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty. This framework can lead to radicalization, causing family members to completely disconnect from their community through linguistic, symbolic, and physical means. The visual design reinforces this idea by initially presenting both discourses in symmetrical positions. Then, a horizontal displacement creates an imbalance that illustrates divergence. The path toward extremism is presented as an inevitable process rather than a personal decision, signifying a structural transition into ideology. Figure 2's analysis of "Four Daughters" demonstrates how family disputes evolve into a symbolic conflict between personal and authoritarian communication methods, representing emotional and ideological language systems. According to Austin and Searle (1962, 1975), Barthes (1972), and Baudrillard (1983), the discursive change in the film illustrates identity transformation through discourse. The visual image provides a powerful method for studying the fundamental structure of extremism based on human experiences. Through semiological analysis, the female body in "Four Daughters" (2023) functions as an ideological battleground, representing the power struggle between family,

religious, and societal forces. This study's analytical framework integrates Barthes's (1972) body-as-cultural-sign theory and Baudrillard's (1983) representation-as-simulation theory.

In "Mythologies" (2020), Barthes explains that culture applies symbolic meanings to bodies, transforming them into cultural signs that people can interpret. A body's appearance on screen causes it to lose its purity because the social and political environment assigns symbolic meanings to it. Throughout the film "Four Daughters", the girls face different levels of bodily restriction:

- The mother exercises physical and moral control through her authority.
- The external religious authority requires complete body concealment through black clothing and veils.

These bodies derive their meanings from the social order within which they are expressed (see Table 1). According to patriarchal and ideological systems, the adolescent female body is a dangerous entity that requires disciplinary action or purification. Baudrillard (1983) explains how reality disappears when simulations replicate it instead of showing reality, obscuring the truth in the process. He names this phenomenon "simulacrum".

In the film, two young actresses represent the two lost daughters through their performances. This depiction provides a symbolic version of reality rather than authentic facts. The screen presents the director's interpretation of the girl rather than her actual self. In this way, the female body becomes a simulacrum, losing its personal power and conveying only external messages representing purity, extremism, nostalgia, and guilt.

TABLE 1

Agent	Mode of Control	Visual Symbols
Mother / Family	Emotion, guilt, protection	Touch, gaze, prayers
State / Society	Neglect, restriction, control	Absence of security, travel ban
Extremist Group	Recruitment, ideology	Blackness, purity, erasure

The body serves as a physical space in which ideological representations occur. The girl expresses her lack of ownership over her body when she says, "I didn't feel like my body was mine. It felt like everyone else's".

The Semiology of Violence Analysis reveals:

- In the film, the female body acts as a symbolic system that highlights power struggles between patriarchy, ideology, and family.
- According to Bourdieu (2001), clothing, veiling, the gaze, and silence function as -visual systems that serve as tools of symbolic violence.
- The girls lose their agency and become "ideologized symbols," forced to exist within discourses they did not create but must endure.

III. DECODING THE SYMBOLS OF SILENCE, LANGUAGE, AND THE BODY IN *FOUR DAUGHTERS*: A SEMIOTIC AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO REPRESENTATIONS OF RUPTURE, AFFILIATION, AND SYMBOLIC COLLAPSE

The silent confrontation between Olfa and her actress daughter marks the beginning of a tense, emotionally charged scene in the film. As they exchange glances and subtle movements, every word becomes nonexistent, creating a thick silence that holds significant power (see Table 2). This absence of dialogue becomes an advanced discursive method, as described by John Searle. Searle explains that speech acts can exist beyond spoken words through the deliberate withholding of speech (Searle, 1975).

Bodily performance represents a failure of communication, replacing traditional linguistic dialogue with visual tension. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2020), the visual composition of a frame can convey meaning equivalent to verbal communication. Olfa's central position on screen symbolizes the heavy burden of guilt and the fundamental importance of motherhood; however, the actress displays emotional distance through her sideways lean. The visual grammar of this shot uses composition, orientation, and spacing to create meaning.

This scene exemplifies Roland Barthes's concept of connotation, in which meaning emerges from the emotional and cultural significance of visual elements rather than their direct appearance. Every gesture, including broken eye contact, an out-of-reach hand, and irregular breathing, serves as a "saturated sign" conveying grief, loss, and blame.

Butler (2005) would analyze this silence as a form of implicit resistance to dominant discourse. It could function as a symbolic withdrawal or refusal of recognition or as an internalized scream within the frame. Butler (2005) observes that language exists beyond spoken words, encompassing unspoken expressions and suppressed communication. A fixed camera angle allows the audience to immerse themselves in the silent atmosphere of the scene. According to Machin (2016), image stillness is an artistic choice that creates heavy or confusing effects, contrasting with the resolving qualities of moving camera shots.

TABLE 2
TECHNICAL BREAKDOWN OF THE SILENT SCENE

Visual Element	Possible Connotation
Fixed shot	Temporal closure, suspended action
Olfa centered in frame	Centrality of motherhood / guilt
Actress leaning sideways	Role fracture / emotional distance
Dim lighting	Sadness, silence, emotional disconnection
Absence of music	Emphasis on the moment's harshness

The "joining moment" scene in *Four Daughters* represents a symbolic turning point that marks the final stage of transitioning from personal understanding to complete absorption in absolute discourse (see Table 3). This scene provides a visual representation of what Baudrillard (1983) calls a "hallucination of presence": the body is physically present but lacks semantic meaning and exists only to convey ideology.

The scene begins with a slow-motion sequence in which the girls move toward an invisible point on the horizon. This symbolizes their permanent departure from freedom and loss of direction in life. The slow-motion view from behind creates a ritualistic atmosphere, rather than depicting a simple escape or travel experience. Visual studies indicate that back framing creates psychological distance between the viewer and the character, abstracting the body (Machin, 2016).

The black clothing removes natural meanings from the body, transforming it into an extremist, religious, puritanical entity. According to Barthes (1972), the body functions as a sign that sociocultural systems transform into new collective meanings by removing its individual characteristics. Black is a universal symbol representing purity, mourning, dissolution, and disappearance. The minimal audio environment, with sounds restricted to their most intense levels and punctuated by silence, creates a sensory emptiness resembling the "empty room" in ritual theater (Schechner, 2002).

Butler (2005) refers to this shift as a "loss of discourse" because the girls now communicate through the ideological language of others rather than through their own voices. In this depiction, the female body exists as an expressionless object, transforming from a vocal subject into a discursive object.

TABLE 3
VISUAL AND SYMBOLIC ANALYSIS

Element	Symbolic Interpretation
Slow walking	Rite of passage, no return, decision solidified
Filming from behind	Loss of subjectivity, marginalization of identity
Black clothing	Erasure of the female body, religious recoding
Homogeneous background	Dissolution of environment, world reduced to one path
Absence of dialogue	Disconnection from self-language, dominance of ideological discourse

Throughout the film, the sudden shift in the girls' speech from maternal warmth to ideological stiffness serves visual and linguistic purposes, depicting their identity transformation. According to Pierre Bourdieu, the "linguistic market" is an exchange system through which linguistic styles gain authority (Bourdieu, 2001).

Olfa's maternal communication style contains emotional elements, pleading speech patterns, repeated statements, and fragmented emotions. These statements aim to establish understanding and acceptance above all else. Expressions such as:

"I don't understand what happened."

"I should have been closer."

These statements demonstrate the characteristics of weak representational speech acts, as defined by John Searle, because they express emotions without producing any effect. After adopting an ideological stance, the daughters speak with absolute conviction through assertive slogans. During her monologue, the actress playing the daughter states:

"I chose the path of truth."

"You are drowning in misguidance."

Language transforms into an ideological instrument that produces absolute rhetoric and blocks open discussion. Fowler (1991) defines this type of language as "overregulated language," which people use to establish dominance through symbolic power rather than achieve mutual understanding. According to van Dijk's (1998) "ideological knowledge model," ideology creates a unified yet restrictive linguistic framework that resists different interpretations. Ideological language establishes a discursive identity that functions through binary oppositions, such as Us versus Them, Truth versus Falsehood, and Purity versus Deviation. Olfa is met with dismissive silence and an intense stare before an ideological declaration cuts off any potential conversation. The visual structure of the scene reflects the new discursive authority as the lighting dims and the camera angle lowers.

During the scene in which photos are destroyed, one actress performs an action that invites viewers to analyze the collapse of traditional family symbols. This action represents more than mere anger; it symbolically cuts ties with a declining value system. The female body exists between two conflicting linguistic frameworks: the maternal language she can use and the ideological language that demands absolute certainty. According to Barthes (1972), family photos function as cultural signs that extend beyond their representations. Destroying or damaging these images challenges their symbolic power.

Olfa's weak maternal language when attempting to win back her daughters reveals a language crisis that produces ineffective speech acts, according to Austin (1962) and Searle (1975). Her repeated declarations, "I'm not enough of a mother" and "I couldn't protect them," symbolize her powerlessness, transforming language from a means of presence and containment into a declaration of failure. During the confrontation with the actress in this scene, silence functions as a "silent speech act" to indicate the failure of symbolic communication (Machin, 2016).

The daughters use ideological language when they say, "I chose the path of truth" (see Figure 3) to express their identity through a discursive system controlled by ideological principles. Baudrillard (1983) explains how simulations replace reality by becoming more believable than the authentic thing; meanwhile, signs function to hide rather than reveal

authentic meaning. The new affiliation is more appealing because it provides a unified symbolic framework, unlike the fragmented patterns found in familial discourse.



Figure 3. A Symbolic Moment of Ideological Transformation: The Disappearance of Subjectivity Behind Doctrinal Ecstasy. From <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x95bkzq>

IV. DECONSTRUCTING DISCOURSE AND REPRESENTING THE BODY BETWEEN MOTHERHOOD AND EXTREMISM IN *FOUR DAUGHTERS*

A semiotic and pragmatic analysis of selected scenes from "Four Daughters" (2023) by Kaouther Ben Hania reveals how language, body language, imagery, and silence come together to transform the discourse on violence and extremism within a fragile and fractured family. During the silent confrontation between Olfa and her actress daughter, for example, the absence of words becomes a powerful means of expression. According to Speech Act Theory (Searle, 1975), failing to speak when words are expected creates a significant communicative action. In this context, the inability to discuss loss results in a profound breakdown of symbolic communication within the family. According to Butler (2005), the politics of silence indicate that what remains unspoken conveys much more than words do; visual suppression proves to be more powerful than spoken words.

The sequence showing the daughters joining an extremist organization reveals how the female body loses independence and becomes a mere object under complete discursive control. Visual indicators of self-erasure include slow back-framing camera movements, dark tones, black clothing, and walking toward an undefined horizon. These transform the body into ideological messages. According to Baudrillard (1983), this represents a "hallucination of presence," displaying a body that exists visually yet lacks semantic value, transforming from a self-determining subject into a passive container of external meanings.

The film demonstrates an essential evolution in language, shifting from emotional maternal discourse with fragmented speech to rigid ideological speech employing slogans and absolute declarations. According to Austin (1962), Olfa's repeated statements, such as "I don't understand what happened" and "I wasn't enough of a mother," illustrate failed performative acts since language has lost its ability to act. The daughter's lines, such as "I chose the path of truth," demonstrate rigid ideological statements that construct reality through binary oppositions. In this transition, language evolves from dialogue to monologue and from communication to declaration. This evolution follows the model described by van Dijk (1998), which shows language operating within a hegemonic, exclusionary framework.

One of the actresses breaks away from conventional symbolic traditions by destroying a family photo. The photograph represents more than a historical record. As Barthes (1972) explains, it contains multiple cultural meanings that express familial ties, emotional relationships, and a sense of belonging. The destructive act goes beyond anger because it demonstrates the transformation of identity that occurs when new ideological structures replace the original self. Bourdieu (2001) shows how language value emerges through its social context within the symbolic language market. Maternal language becomes obsolete in an ideological, language-controlled space, resulting in family conflicts that exemplify the clash between competing discourse systems.

The disruption is evident through dim lighting and a downward camera angle, which symbolize defeat or collapse in the visual arrangement. According to Machin (2016), camera placement in film functions as "semiotic framing," which automatically generates emotional meaning. Through presentation methods of visual and spoken content, ideological discourse develops discursive tools that generate a stronger impact than verbal statements alone.

The film illustrates how family symbols and emotional language gradually disappear as ideological speech gains dominance. This study examines what occurs when personal identities merge with common beliefs and traditional symbolic systems lose their ability to prevent this process. The film examines family communication approaches, nonverbal expressions, and visual ideological content to study their roles in semantic changes during this period.

V. CONCLUSION

This article explores the role of body language and imagery as symbolic and semiotic components in the multimodal cinematic discourse of the film "Four Daughters." Through these elements, the film delves into social and existential themes such as extremism, family breakdown, and identity crises. This documentary/fiction hybrid offers an interpretive framework that combines language, body language, maternal doctrine, visual composition, and verbal communication.

In a scene where Olfa burns a family photo during her time with extremists, three significant yet quiet exchanges take place between her and her daughter. These exchanges demonstrate how the dynamics of human embodiment can be conveyed through silence. Bodily expressions merge with verbal language, and visual forms intersect with affective and cognitive disruption. The film exposes the deceptive nature of silence by utilizing Searle's (1975) concept of "silent speech acts." Through visual storytelling, Olfa communicates silently with her gaze as her daughter observes. This unique form of communication involves reflective movement and the arrangement of visuals (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020). The visual grammar of the film functions like spoken language, offering an interpretive framework.

As the film progresses, the daughters' speech undergoes a significant transformation in linguistic features and structure. Initially resembling their mother's, they eventually adopt rigid ideological speech patterns. They enter a symbolic order shaped by power relations, as theorized by Bourdieu (2001). The mother's language shifts between active dialogue and witness testimony about a family system crumbling under pressure. During a scene where the women's bodies are observed, Baudrillard's (1983) analysis of women as symbols without identity or voice becomes evident. The daughters become part of an organization when they don black attire, move slowly, and maintain silence, undergoing a ritualistic transformation.

A visual-semiotic analysis of "Four Daughters" reveals how the film's discursive and visual structures illustrate the dual nature of language: it can either assist or resist traditional representation. The film hides content beneath the images and uses silence as a powerful tool to express the "symbolic collapse" that leads to violent separation. This study highlights the importance of multimodal discourse analysis in examining visual and written texts to understand how professional readers recognize power structures and resistance mechanisms. Pragmatic and semiotic analyses allow researchers to explore structural aspects of films that translational narrative analyses overlook. The study uncovers how the female body serves as a significant semantic component of resistance or unbecoming. It also demonstrates the relationship between symbolic violence and gender in the film's narration and visual structure. "Four Daughters" is a metaphorical piece that exposes the breakdown of family organization under an ideological government, the limitations of language in capturing loss, how images serve as political statements that go beyond verbal authority, and the profound impact of silence.

REFERENCES

- [1] Al-Abbas, M. B. M., Al-Atoum, M. S., Alsaggar, M. A., & Abu-Hammad, R. M. (2024). Aesthetics and semiotics of communication in visual language: A multimodal criticism on the short film of Ismail. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(2), 434–440. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1402.16>
- [2] Al-Mazwari, S. (2024, February 24). "Four Daughters": Representation and embodiment generate ideas to reveal the subject. *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from https://www.alaraby.co.uk/entertainment_media/أفكاراً-بنات-ألفه-تمثيلٌ-وتمثيلٌ-يولدان-أفكاراً-لكشف-الموضوع
- [3] Alsaggar, M. (2013). *Darstellung von Geschichten durch Digital Storytelling*. Logos Verlag.
- [4] Alsaggar, M., & Al-Atoum, M. (2021). The dialectic of the instrumental and the aesthetic mind in the philosophy of Theodore Adorno and its representations in contemporary art. *A/Z ITU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, 18(1), 253–267. <https://doi.org/10.5505/ituja.2021.57216>
- [5] Alsaggar, M., & Alrewely, S. (2023). The role of caricature art in countering terrorism in contemporary societies. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 50(2), 378–392. <https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v50i2.4949>
- [6] Associated Press. (2024, February 24). "Benat Olfa". A true story of the joining of Tunisian girls to "Daesh" that reached the Oscars. *Irfaa Sawtak*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://www.irfaasawtak.com/varieties/2024/02/24/-بنات-ألفه-قصة-حقيقية-لأنضمام-فتيات-تونسيات-لداesh-وصلت-للأوسكار>
- [7] Austin, J. L. (2020). *How to Do Things with Words*. Harvard University Press.
- [8] Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. Hill and Wang.
- [9] Barthes, R. (2020). *Mythologies* (New Annotated Edition). Hill and Wang.
- [10] Bateman, J. A. (2022). *Multimodality and Genre: A Foundation for the Systematic Analysis of Multimodal Documents*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [11] Baudrillard, J. (1983). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Semiotext(e).
- [12] Baudrillard, J. (2021). *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Verso Books.
- [13] Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Language and Symbolic Power* (J. B. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- [14] Butler, J. (2005). *Giving an Account of Oneself*. Fordham University Press.
- [15] Butler, J. (2022). *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge.
- [16] Euronews. (2024, February 25). "Four Daughters": A true story of a Tunisian mother whose two daughters fell into the grip of "Daesh," nominated for the 2024 Oscars. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://arabic.euronews.com/culture/2024/02/25/tunisia-olfa-girls-four-daughters-two-daughters-join-islamic-state-years-later-familys-s>
- [17] Habechian, H. (2024, January 29). "Four Daughters": The Tunisian film nominated for the "Oscar" between fiction and reality. *Independent Arabia*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://www.independentarabia.com/node/542756/-ثقافة-سينما-بنات-ألفه-التونسي-المرشح-لأوسكار-بين-الأكاديمية-والحقيقة>

- [18] Haj Abdi, I. (2024, March 6). "Benat Olfa" narrates the era of "Daesh" from the perspective of oppressed femininity. *Al Majalla*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://www.majalla.com/node/312311/ثقافة-ومجتمع/بنات-الفقير-وحقبة-داش-من-زاوية-الأنوثة-المضطهدة>
- [19] Jewitt, C. (2021). *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- [20] Khasawneh, F. E., & Alatoom, Y. H. (2025). The historical heritage in the sculptures of Omani artist Ali Al-Jabri. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 52(2), 409–422.
- [21] Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2020). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- [22] Machin, D. (2016). *Visual Communication*. De Gruyter Mouton.
- [23] Mulvey, L. (2021). *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [24] Nasrallah, N. (2023, May 19). Director Kaouther Ben Hania reveals details of the film "Four Daughters" participating in *Al-Watan*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/6583733>
- [25] Nichols, B. (2020). *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd ed.). Indiana University Press.
- [26] O'Halloran, K. L., Tan, S., & Wignell, P. (2023). *The Discourse of Extremist Ideologies: A Multimodal Approach*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [27] Renov, M. (2022). *The Subject of Documentary*. University of Minnesota Press.
- [28] Sbisà, M. (2022). *Speech Acts in Context: Language as Action*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [29] Schechner, R. (2002). *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Routledge.
- [30] Searle, J. R. (1975a). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge University Press.
- [31] Searle, J. R. (1975b). Indirect Speech Acts. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics: Speech Acts* (Vol. 3, pp. 59–82). Academic Press.
- [32] Searle, J. R. (2021). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press.
- [33] Shawky, A. (2023, May 24). "Four Daughters": The duality of character and actor on screen. *FilFan*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://www.filfan.com/news/160173>
- [34] van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. SAGE Publications.
- [35] Wodak, R. (2021). *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- [36] Youssef, A. (2023). Multimodal Language and Trauma Narratives in "Four Daughters". *Journal of Arab Visual Studies*, 12(2), 117–138.
- [37] Zaghoug, H. (2024). Hybrid Cinema and the Representation of Loss: An Analysis of "Four Daughters". *Tunisian Journal of Cinema Studies*, 9(1), 55–78.

Fuad Khasawneh: Assistant professor specializing in graphic design and multimedia, holding a PhD in the curriculum and instruction of multimedia design. His research interests include graphic design, identity design, animation design, as well as structural design in sculpture and ceramics. He has published numerous peer-reviewed studies in his specific field of expertise and possesses extensive experience in quality, development, rankings, and global accreditations in the fields of arts and design.

Qasem Shukran is a Professor of Fine Arts specializing in Photography at the Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan. He holds a Ph.D. in Communication from MU, Turkey (1996), a master's degree (1991), and a bachelor's degree (1988) in Photography from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSGSU), Turkey. Dr. Shukran served as Head of the Department of Fine Arts at Yarmouk University from 2013 to 2018. He currently holds the position of Editor-in-Chief of the Jordan Journal of the Arts and is also a member of the Editorial Board of *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*. His academic work focuses on photography, fine arts, and visual culture. He has published more than 30 peer-reviewed research papers in these fields and actively contributes to the academic and artistic communities in the Arab world and beyond. Dr. Shukran is fluent in Arabic (native), English, and Turkish.

Abdullah H. Obeidat is a professor of art history at Yarmouk University / Faculty of Fine Arts. He holds a Ph. D degree in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Granada – Spain specializing in contemporary arts (2013), a master's degree (1997) in contemporary art and bachelor's degree (1995) in plastic art. He has published many research papers in the fields of modern and contemporary art history, philosophy of art, comparative studies, anthropology of art, art and language. He has supervised and discussed dozens of university theses internally and externally. He has many participations, technical workshops, and local and international conferences. He is a reviewer in a number of local and international peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Mahmoud Al-Taani is a distinguished academic and researcher in the field of graphic and typography design, with a particular focus on the role of inspiration as a fundamental element in the creative process. He began his career in 2008 as a director and graphic designer at the University of Jordan Press. Over the years, Dr. Al-Taani has made significant contributions to the field of design. In 2022, he was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Design and Visual Communication at the College of Arts and Design, University of Jordan. Dr. Al-Taani continues to inspire students and professionals through his commitment to conveying effective visual messages through graphic design.

Amer F. Al-Gharaibeh is a Jordanian film director, university professor, and drama critic/film developer with a PhD in fiction and documentary film (Honors, 2021). His career includes directing TV programs, documentaries, and live broadcasts for major events, along with managing Roya TV's northern Jordan office. Currently, he serves as Head of the Digital Arts Department at Yarmouk University while teaching as an adjunct professor at other institutions. Dr. Al-Gharaibeh has supervised Master's theses, published five

Scopus-indexed research papers, and guided student film projects. His expertise covers film analysis, scriptwriting, and digital production tools. He has also participated as a jury member in international film festivals.

BILAL. M. AI - DIABAT is a Professor of Drama at Yarmouk University, holding a Ph.D. in Drama Education. He has served as Vice Dean and Head of the Drama Department. His academic focus includes educational theatre, drama in education, and digital simulation in arts. He has directed numerous theatrical productions and led national workshops on drama, art therapy, and curriculum dramatization. Dr. Al-Dhiabat has published widely in peer-reviewed journals on creative drama and educational technology. He has participated in international conferences in the U.S., Turkey, and the Arab world. He is an editorial board member of the Jordanian Journal of Arts and has served on various academic committees. He is a member of the Jordanian Artists Association since 2000.

Mowafaq Alsaggar is a prominent Jordanian academic, art critic, and visual artist, who currently serves as a Professor in the Department of Visual Arts and as the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Yarmouk University. His distinguished academic career is marked by receiving his PhD in Philosophy of Art in 2011 and his master's degree in 2007 from the prestigious Freie Universität Berlin in Germany, after obtaining his bachelor's degree from Yarmouk University in 1998. His diverse expertise includes being a researcher with numerous works and studies published in peer-reviewed international journals, an exhibiting visual artist with multiple artistic participations, and a contributor to the translation of significant intellectual works. His research interests focus on contemporary, interdisciplinary fields, including the philosophy of art, art criticism, the role of the arts in confronting societal issues, multimodal analysis, and digital storytelling. As such, Dr. Alsaggar is considered an influential academic and artistic figure who combines philosophical theory, creative practice, and rigorous scientific research in Jordan and the Arab world.

Semantic Extension of HEAD in Korean and Thai: A Contrastive Perspective

Seongha Rhee

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Salaya, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand;
ELLT Department, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea

Aphiwit Liang-Itsara

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Salaya, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

Kultida Khammee *

Department of English, School of Liberal Arts, University of Phayao, Phayao, Thailand

Abstract—Modern linguistic traditions have witnessed increasing attention to embodied cognition, culture, and typology. Embodiment is responsible for the universalities of human experience as reflected in language, due to similarities in human cognitive processes such as metaphor and metonymy. Many crosslinguistic studies corroborate the claims of similar cognitive mechanisms operating behind ontological divisions, conceptual networks, construal of events, semantico-functional change of lexemes, among others. Closer scrutiny, however, reveals an array of differences in their operations, largely attributable to culture-specific idiosyncrasies and/or typological dissimilarities, hence the significance of crosslinguistic and comparative investigations. Based on the established cognitive-linguistic theoretical frameworks, this research analyzes the semantic extension of a conceptually prominent body-part term HEAD in Korean (*meli* and *taykali*) and in Thai (*hǎa*) from a comparative perspective. HEAD is among the most perceptually-prominent and functionally-essential body parts, and thus it constitutes a convenient and effective reference point for analyzing embodiment. A comparative investigation reveals commonalities and differences in the conceptualization of HEAD and its semantic extension scenarios, which merit the attention of researchers of cognitive linguistics, linguistic typology, and comparative/contrastive linguistics. This study shows that, most notably, Korean favors contour-based conceptualizations (HEAD is ROUND; HEAD is UNIT), whereas Thai favors horizontal-axis-based conceptualizations (HEAD is FRONT; HEAD is BEGINNING). Furthermore, Korean has multiple lexemes with specialized meanings, including one for animal heads, a reflection of the monosemy strategy of lexicalization, which is in contrast with the polysemy structure in Thai. The multiplicity of HEAD lexemes in Korean is partly responsible for the emergence of pejorative meanings.

Index Terms—semantic extension, metaphor, Korean, Thai, HEAD

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the ‘second cognitive revolution’ in linguistics in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2007, p. 7), modern linguistic traditions have witnessed increasing attention to embodied cognition, culture, and typology. Embodiment is responsible for the universalities of human experience as reflected in language (Johnson, 2007), due to similarities in human cognitive processes, such as metaphor and metonymy. Indeed, many crosslinguistic studies corroborate the claims of similar cognitive mechanisms that operate behind ontological divisions, conceptual networks, construal of events, semantico-functional change of lexemes, among others. However, closer scrutiny often reveals an abundance of differences in their operations (Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987; Kövecses, 2005; Yu, 2008; Khammee & Rhee, 2022, among many others), as reflected in lexicalization and grammaticalization, largely due to culture-specific idiosyncrasies and/or typological differences, hence the significance of crosslinguistic investigations (De Busser & LaPolla, 2015 and works therein; Khammee & Rhee, 2021, 2025).

HEAD is among the most perceptually-prominent and functionally-essential body parts, and thus constitutes a convenient and effective reference point for analyzing embodiment as reflected in language (Heine, 1997). Creation of new meanings, i.e., polysemization, depends on how the object, whether tangible or intangible, is conceptualized (Khammee et al., *forthc.*). For instance, a human ‘head’ may be conceptualized as the ‘top’ part of the body, and by extension a top-end part of any vertical object may be called the ‘head’, e.g., tree-head for the ‘tree top’, mountain-head for the ‘mountain top’, etc. If a human ‘head’ is conceptualized as the ‘controller’ of the human body, the conceptualization thus enables semantic extension to an organization, e.g., school-head for the ‘principal’, head of state for ‘leader of a nation’, etc. Considering the similarities of human experiences, the cognitive operations of conceptualization may be expected to be similar, if not identical. However, a meticulous comparative investigation into

* Corresponding Author. Email: kultida.kh@up.ac.th

Korean and Thai reveals both differences and commonalities in the conceptualization of HEAD and its semantic extension scenarios.

The objectives of this paper are to elaborate the lexicalization patterns of HEAD in Korean and Thai, to analyze their relevance to cognitive processes such as metaphor and metonymy, and to highlight the commonalities and differences manifested in the semantic extension of HEAD in both Korean (*meli* and *taykali*) and Thai (*hǔa*).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The semantic structure of HEAD lexemes in Korean has been researched by Hong (1986), Woo (1988), Bae (2001, 2002), and Koo (2009), among others. In particular, Koo (2009) investigated the historical change of *meli/mali* ‘head’ in Korean, addressing both the lexical divergence of the two variants (*meli* and *mali*) into two separate lexemes and the grammaticalization of the latter into a classifier (CLS) for non-human animals. Most extant studies, however, address the HEAD lexeme in conjunction with other body-part terms. On the other hand, the Thai HEAD lexeme *hǔa* has been regrettably understudied, with the only earnest study being that by Lu and Park (2019), although its visibility is somewhat limited for being published in Korean. Lu and Park analyzed the semantic extension of *hǔa* ‘head’ in terms of the ‘idealized cognitive model’ (ICM) proposed by Lakoff (1987), and metonymic transfer as detailed in Heine (1997). While Korean and Thai have many distinctive characteristics (see section III for more) in their lexicalization and grammaticalization strategies (Rhee & Khammee, 2024; Khammee & Rhee, 2025), the HEAD lexemes in these two languages have not been investigated in a contrastive way, hence the rationale of the present study.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical framework for this study is cognitive linguistics, with special focus on metaphor and polysemy. The theory of metaphor and metonymy was pioneered by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and further expounded by many later researchers (Johnson, 1987; Kövecses, 2002; Fauconnier & Turner, 2008; Gibbs, 2008; among others). Regarding the theory of polysemy, Sweetser’s (1990) seminal work, as created by diverse pragmatic and cognitive operations, prompted polysemy studies in the historical and pragmatic dimensions, and was followed by a substantive body of research, notably Geeraerts (1993), Nerlich and Clarke (2001), Vanhove (2008), Glynn and Robinson (2014), Vicente and Falkum (2015), Carston (2021), among others. Metaphor and polysemy are closely related since the prominent mechanism for creating a new meaning for a linguistic form (i.e., polysemy) is metaphorical extension.

The target languages of the present study, Korean and Thai, are distinct in a number of ways, namely geographical distance (based in Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, respectively), genealogical unrelatedness (Altaic and Kra-Dai, respectively), and typological distinction (an agglutinating-synthetic language and an isolating-analytic language, respectively). These distinct features place the two languages among the ideal target language pairs for comparison of diverse aspects of lexicon and grammar, as demonstrated in Park (2011), Park and Rhee (2018), Khammee and Rhee (2022, 2025), and Rhee and Khammee (2024), among others.

The present research is a conceptual, descriptive analysis of linguistic data, involving no experimentation. Relevant data in the two languages have been collected from a number of dictionaries, lexica, and corpora, and their semantic designations have been rearranged for expedient comparison. The researchers have consulted two authoritative dictionaries: *Wulimalsaym*, an online searchable Korean dictionary of more than 1 million headwords by the National Institute of Korean Language, and the *Thai Royal Dictionary* of 43,000 headwords by the Thai Royal Institute. To ensure comprehensiveness of the semantic designations, two corpora, i.e., the Korean Drama and Movies Corpus (KDMC) and the Thai National Corpus (TNC), were searched. The KDMC is an off-line 24-million-word contemporary corpus based on a collection of 7,454 scenarios in dramas and movies dating from 1992 through 2015, compiled by Min Li, and the TNC is an online-searchable, 33.4-million-word corpus developed by Chulalongkorn University. The corpus texts are mostly dated from 1988 through 2017. For Korean data search, UNICONC, a concordance program developed by Jinho Park, was used¹.

The semantic designations were collected from dictionaries and lexica, and the data collected from the corpora were hand-screened to confirm the inventories of meanings. Based on these meanings, cognitive mechanisms and their reference frames in the form of conceptualization patterns enabling the semantic extension were catalogued, and accordingly individual instances were classified and analyzed.

IV. RESULTS: HEAD IN KOREAN AND THAI

A. HEAD in Korean

The two major HEAD lexemes in contemporary Korean, *meli* and *taykali*, both denote ‘head’ but with different specializations. In addition to these two primary terms, *Wulimalsaym* lists other synonyms including certain pejorative (PEJ) terms (*kolthong* ‘head, (lit.) brain box’, *kolthongi* ‘head, (lit.) one with a brain box’, *taykalthong* ‘head, (lit.) head box’, *pak* ‘head, (probably from) gourd’), a potentially pejorative term (*melithong* ‘head, (lit.) head box’), an honorific term (*twusang* ‘head, (lit.) head top’), and anatomical terms (*twupwu* ‘(lit.) head part’, *twunoy* ‘(lit.) head brain’). The

¹ Special thanks go to the developers of these corpora and search programs for generously granting their use for research.

multiplicity of near-synonymous forms, all basically denoting ‘head’, reflects the ‘monosemy’ strategy of lexicalization (Khammee & Rhee, 2022; Rhee, 2022). Of these dozen HEAD words, only *meli* (and its former variant and later lexical-split *mali*) and *taykali* are given focus in the present study largely because other forms are genre- and register-specific and thus occur at low frequencies.

A historical development of the HEAD terms shows an intriguing state of affairs. In the Late Middle Korean (15th ~ 16th centuries) texts, *meli* and *mali* occurred as lexical variants that were used interchangeably. Incidentally, Korean has a number of ablaut-based doublets or variants. Koo (2009, pp. 5-6, partly following Lee, 1992; Hong, 2003) observes that *mali* tended to be used in the 15th century to refer to the head of a person with the inherent semantic feature [+honorable] (e.g., Buddha), and thus its occurrence was far less frequent than *meli*, which carried no such semantic feature. By around the 17th century, the semantic distinction involving the [±honorific] feature seems to have been neutralized, and further, *mali* began to be used as a noun referring to either the head of a non-human animal or the whole animal, and as a classifier for quantifying such animals (e.g., two ‘heads’ of fish, three ‘heads’ of chicken, etc.). On the other hand, another lexeme used in Late Middle Korean is *taykol*, denoting ‘head’, ‘skull’, ‘brain’, with a number of variant forms with pejorative meanings, such as *taykal* (pejorative), *taykali* (pejorative, involving the nominalizer *-i*), *taykoli* (pejorative, involving the nominalizer *-i*), *taykangi* (pejorative, involving the diminutive *-angi*), *taykali* (pejorative, involving the nominalizer *-i*), *tuykwuli* (pejorative, involving the nominalizer *-i*), among others (Park & Lee, 2018). Some of these forms survived in dialects and idiolects but the form used with some degree of lexical strength is *taykali*. There is still another lexeme *kkokci* ‘head, stem, knob’ used as a slang term referring to the head in Modern Korean.

In Modern Korean (20th ~ 21st centuries), the two primary HEAD lexemes are *meli* ‘head’ (which, as a noun, has the [±honorific] feature but, as a derivational suffix, has the [-honorific] feature, i.e., the pejorative meaning), and *taykali* ‘head’ (which, as a noun, has the [±honorific] feature for non-human objects but the [-honorific] feature as a noun for humans or as a derivational suffix) (Koo, 2009, p. 14; Koo & Rhee, 2016, p. 304). Due to increasing semantic derogation of *taykali*, even animal heads are referred to by *meli* with increasing frequency in Modern Korean. The former HEAD lexeme *mali*, once a variant of *meli*, is now used exclusively for non-human animals either as a classifier (e.g., two ‘heads’ of cows) or a dependent nominal denoting quantities of animals (e.g., ‘a few counts’ of fish), the latter use rapidly falling into obsolescence in contemporary Korean. *Wulimalsaym* lists the following meanings of *meli* and *taykali* (translated and modified):

(1) *meli*

a. human (and animal) head	(body-part)
b. mental faculty	(function)
c. hair	(body-part)
d. top-radical in Chinese characters	(‘hat-head’, ‘plant-head’)
e. leader of an organization	(‘head of the department’)
f. frontal part of an object	(‘head of a boat, bow’, ‘head of a road’)
g. top-end part of an object	(‘hammer head’)
h. beginning part of an event	(‘head of a task’)
i. beginning of time	(‘head of sunset’, ‘head of spring’)
j. a corner of a space or an object	(‘head of a table’, ‘head of a rice-paddy’)
k. a turn or round of an event	(‘head of a typhoon’)
l. the round part of music-note	(‘note-head’)
m. a unitized quantity	(‘head of donation’)
n. a sum of money	(‘head of money’)

(2) *taykali*

a. head of an animal	(‘a pig head’, ‘a fish head’)
b. head of a person (pejorative)	(‘the head of the fellow’)
c. the frontal part of a long object	(‘the head of the train’)
d. the top part of a long object	(‘the head of a bean sprout’)
e. (suffix for) pejoration	(‘head of taste’, ‘head of style’)

In addition to the meanings listed in (1) and (2), *meli* and *taykali* add diverse related meanings when they form a compound with other nominals. Some such instances taken from *Wulimalsaym* and Koo (2009) are shown below.

(3) *meli* & *taykali* compounds

a. <i>meli kkoktayki</i>	[head top]	‘thorough understanding of someone’s intentions’
b. <i>meli kulca</i>	[head character]	‘the first character of a word’
c. <i>meli kisa</i>	[head article]	‘headline news’
d. <i>meli tol</i>	[head stone]	‘cornerstone’
e. <i>meli mal</i>	[head word]	‘preface’
f. <i>kay meli</i>	[dog head]	‘rifle butt’
g. <i>kays meli</i>	[stream head]	‘estuary’
h. <i>can meli</i>	[small head]	‘petty trickery’
i. <i>tungsim meli</i>	[sirloin head]	‘a lump of sirloin’

- j. *tol taykali* [stone head] 'stupid'
 k. *talk taykali* [chicken head] 'stupid'

Following the premises of semantic primitives suggested by Heine et al. (1991) and Heine (1997), among others, which place HUMAN as the most basic ontological category, a reflection of ubiquitous anthropocentrism, we can hypothesize that 'human head' is the primary meaning of *meli* and *taykali* (in their earliest forms), and that attributing this label to an animal, which often occurs instantaneously through personification, is based on similarities in shape and function of animal and human heads. We can further hypothesize that all other meanings in the HEAD polysemy have been derived from it through a few conceptual motivations, based on the image schema of a human head by itself or in relation to the entire human body, as listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
 CONCEPTUAL MOTIVATIONS FOR SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF HEAD IN KOREAN

Conceptualization	Example	Source Structure	Meaning
a. HEAD is TOP	<i>san meli</i>	[mountain head]	'mountain top'
b. HEAD is FRONT	<i>pay meli</i>	[boat head]	'bow'
c. HEAD is BEGINNING	<i>kil meli</i>	[road head]	'beginning part of a road'
d. HEAD is LUMP	<i>tungsim meli</i>	[sirloin head]	'a lump of beef sirloin'
e. HEAD is SPATIAL UNIT	<i>chayksang meli</i>	[desk head]	'corner of a table'
f. HEAD is CIRCLE	<i>umphyo taykali</i>	[note head]	'round part of musical notes'
g. HEAD is SPHERE	<i>khongnamwul taykali</i>	[bean-sprout head]	'round part of bean-sprout'
h. HEAD is CONTROLLER	<i>wus-taykali</i>	[top head]	'one in charge'
i. HEAD is IMPORTANCE	<i>meli tol</i>	[head stone]	'cornerstone'
j. HEAD is INTELLIGENCE	<i>tol taykali</i>	[stone head]	'be stupid'
k. HEAD is WHOLE ANIMAL	<i>so han mali</i>	[cow one head]	'one cow' (CLS)
l. HEAD is HAIR	<i>kemun meli</i>	[black head]	'black hair'
m. HEAD is CONTEMPTIBLE	<i>kocip meli</i>	[obstinacy head]	'obstinacy' (PEJ)
n. HEAD is INFERIOR	<i>mas taykali</i>	[taste head]	'(unpalatable) taste' (PEJ)

The list of conceptualization patterns in Table 1 shows a few different conceptual bases. For instance, (a) is based on the relative position in a vertical configuration of the human body, (b) is based on either the 'zoomorphic model' (Heine, 1997, pp. 40-41), i.e., the head being FRONT and UP relative to the rest of the animal body, or on the anthropomorphic model according to which human head is interpreted as being located above and in front of other parts (Heine, 1997, pp. 46-47). The pattern in (c) is an extension from (b) in that FRONT is at the boundary and thus can mean the beginning. The patterns in (d) and (e) are based on the shape of the head relative to the rest of the body, i.e., forming an object or a space with a delineable boundary. The patterns in (f) and (g) are based on the shape of the head by itself, either being round in two dimensions or globular in three dimensions. The pattern in (h) is somewhat complex as it combines the pattern (a) of vertical configuration with the 'orientational metaphor' of HAVING CONTROL or FORCE is UP (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 15) as well as the biological function of the head. The patterns in (i) and (j) imply functional basis insofar as the head encases the brain, the command center for all human activities. Since this conceptualization involves the contiguity relations from head to brain to function, these patterns are instances of metonymy. The patterns in (k) and (l) also have metonymic basis, with (k) being an instance of synecdoche (i.e., the part for the whole), and (l) being an instance of contiguity (i.e., hair attached to the head). The patterns in (m) and (n) involve conceptualization leading to pejoration, (m) by way of absorbing the negative meanings from the lexeme with which HEAD is forming a compound (cf. 'absorption', Bybee et al., 1994), and (n) by virtue of animals' inherent inferiority (note that *taykali* is for animal heads) in contrast with *meli* (note that *meli* is primarily for, though not restricted to, human heads). Some of these conceptualization patterns are further elaborated in Section V.

B. HEAD in Thai

The primary lexeme of HEAD in Thai is *hŭa* 'head', which has numerous meanings related to the human body-part head. In addition to *hŭa*, other closely-related lexemes are *sŭisà* 'head' and *sŭan* 'head'. The former is a borrowing from Pali and Sanskrit and is used in highly formal registers to refer to a human head. The latter is also a borrowing from Pali and Sanskrit and is used to refer to the head of Buddha, either the person or an image, and of the king (note that Thai possesses a strong convention of diglossic language use in which the king is treated as a divine being in contrast with humans). Due to these limiting factors, *sŭisà* and *sŭan* occur at extremely low frequencies, and only *hŭa* is regarded as a 'regular' HEAD lexeme for Thai speakers. This starkly contrasts Korean, which has nearly a dozen words denoting 'head'. This contrast has been noted in Khammee and Rhee (2022, 2025) and characterized with the notions of monosemy strategies for Korean and polysemy strategies for Thai. The *Thai Royal Dictionary* has the following list of semantic designations for *hŭa* (translated and modified):

(4) *hŭa*

- the top part of the body of a human or animal
- the part of a plant (e.g., bulb, tuber, root) which is underground, such as an onion or turnip
- the circle part (beginning) of a letter
- the part that is in front, before, or at the beginning of something
- the beginning of time, such as the beginning of the year, day, hour, etc.

- f. the top part of the object, such as the top end of a boil on skin or pimple
- g. the side of the coin with the image of the head
- h. the essence of a substance or main ingredient, such as that of medicine or liquor
- i. intelligence, talent, or originality (e.g., ‘music head’ = musical talent)
- j. someone who has knowledge or is disposed to think in one way or another (e.g., ‘law head’ = legal mind)
- k. wisdom, thought (e.g., ‘good-headed’ = wise; ‘quick-headed’ = intelligent)
- l. (verb) laugh (old-fashioned term) (cf. modern *hũa-rố* ‘laugh’)
- m. classifier for humans (limited usage)

In addition to the semantic designations listed in (4), *hũa* adds diverse related meanings when it forms a compound with other nominals. Some such instances taken from the *Thai Royal Dictionary* are shown in (5) below.

(5) *hũa*-compounds

a. <i>hũa kâawnâa</i>	[head progress]	‘progressive’
b. <i>hũa kàw</i>	[head old]	‘old-fashioned, conservative’
c. <i>hũa khếj</i>	[head strong]	‘obstinate’
d. <i>hũa rân</i>	[head resist]	‘obstinate’
e. <i>hũa dũu</i>	[head stubborn]	‘obstinate’
f. <i>hũa ญู</i>	[head snake]	‘womanizer’
g. <i>hũa ร้อน</i>	[head hot]	‘easily-angered’
h. <i>hũa sía</i>	[head bad]	‘furious’
i. <i>hũa runrēj</i>	[head severe]	‘aggressive, extreme’
j. <i>hũa sũuj</i>	[head high]	‘arrogant, snobbish’
k. <i>hũa rew</i>	[head fast]	‘smart, brilliant’
l. <i>hũa dii</i>	[head good]	‘smart, wise’
m. <i>hũa mốw</i>	[head expert/doctor]	‘wise, crafty’
n. <i>hũa lếem</i>	[head sharp]	‘quick-witted, smart’
o. <i>hũa sãy</i>	[head transparent]	‘shrewd, bright’
p. <i>hũa hòt</i>	[head shrink]	‘fearful’
q. <i>hũa ่อน</i>	[head soft]	‘mild, obedient’

From the previous analysis of the Korean HEAD lexemes, we can hypothesize that in Thai the human head is the primary denotation of *hũa* and animal head is the secondary denotation, and, further, that all other meanings have been derived from the primary (and secondary) meanings through conceptual motivations. The conceptualization patterns based on the diverse meanings of *hũa* are listed in Table 2².

TABLE 2
CONCEPTUAL MOTIVATIONS FOR SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF HEAD IN THAI

Conceptualization	Example	Source Structure	Meaning
a. HEAD is FRONT	<i>hũa rua</i>	[head boat]	‘bow’
b. HEAD is BEGINNING	<i>hũa thanốn</i>	[head road]	‘beginning part of a road’
c. HEAD is LUMP	<i>hũa khốon</i>	[head hammer]	‘hammer head’
d. HEAD is SPATIAL UNIT	<i>hũa mum tó</i>	[head corner table]	‘corner of a table’
e. HEAD is CIRCLE	<i>hũa nốot</i>	[head note]	‘round part of musical notes’
f. HEAD is SPHERE	<i>hũa phắkkàat</i>	[head turnip]	‘round part of a turnip’
g. HEAD is CONTROLLER	<i>hũa cook</i>	[head leader]	‘gang lord’
h. HEAD is DOMINANCE	<i>hũa yaa</i>	[head drug]	‘main ingredient of medicine’
i. HEAD is INTELLIGENCE	<i>hũa rew</i>	[head fast]	‘intelligent’
j. HEAD is EMOTION	<i>hũa sía</i>	[head bad]	‘furious’
k. HEAD is CONATION	<i>hũa rân</i>	[head resist]	‘obstinate’
l. HEAD is ATTITUDE	<i>hũa sũuj</i>	[head high]	‘arrogant’
m. HEAD is MINDSET	<i>hũa kâawnâa</i>	[head progress]	‘progressive’
n. HEAD is SKILL	<i>hũa ญู</i>	[head snake]	‘womanizer, skillful in alluring’
o. HEAD is WHOLE PERSON	<i>hũa hũa</i>	[five person head]	‘five persons’ (CLS)
p. HEAD is IMAGED SIDE	<i>hũa rian</i>	[head coin]	‘imaged side of a coin’
q. HEAD is LAUGH (archaic)	<i>hũa-rố</i>	[head utter]	‘laugh’

The list of conceptualization patterns for Thai listed in Table 2 shows both notable similarities and differences as compared to those for Korean listed in Table 1 (see section V for more). The conceptualization patterns are based on horizontal configuration (as in (a) and (b)), or the shape of the head itself (as in (c), (d), (e), and (f)). The patterns in (g) through (n) relate to the diverse aspects of mental faculty, obviously from the function of the brain. The pattern in (o) is an instance of synecdoche for humans, and the pattern in (p) is the part-whole metonymy whereby the image of a head represents the entire side of the coin. The pattern in (q) is puzzling because the connection between ‘head’ and ‘laugh’ is not immediately clear. If one is inclined to think that laughter originates from the ‘head’ physiologically, and thus ‘head’ can mean ‘laugh’ (note that Thai is a language of high transcategoriality and parts of speech are more fluid), this may

² It is to be noted that *hũa* is also used with the pattern ‘HEAD is REPRESENTATIVE’ (as in ‘head of the department’, ‘head of the institute’, etc.), but this usage requires *nâa* ‘face’, which is primarily responsible for the creation of the representation meaning (see Khammee & Rhee, 2022).

qualify as an instance of metonymy. This type of metonymy, however, seems to be rather rare or non-existent crosslinguistically, the only head-laugh(ter) connection commonly observed is the English expression *to laugh one's head off*, meaning 'laugh uncontrollably or heartily', suggesting that the head is affected by laughing. Although, it remains a puzzle as to how exactly HEAD can denote LAUGH. Incidentally, *hũa* in this usage is being, or has been, replaced by a new yet related lexeme *hũa-ró* in Modern Thai, in which the compound-forming verb *ró* denotes 'utter, make sound', thus prompting the reinterpretation of 'sound (coming from the) head', i.e., to 'laugh'.

V. DISCUSSION: LEXICALIZATION PATTERNS

Based on the semantic extension patterns of HEAD in Korean and Thai as elaborated in the foregoing exposition, we will now discuss commonalities and differences in lexicalization patterns. All the patterns observed in the two languages can be summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3
CONCEPTUAL MOTIVATIONS FOR SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF HEAD IN KOREAN AND THAI

Conceptualization	Example	Korean	Thai
a. human head	'head (of a person)'	√	√
b. animal head	'head (of a dog, fish, insect)'	√	√
c. HEAD is TOP	'mountain top'	√	N
d. HEAD is FRONT	'bow (of a boat), beginning of events'	√	√
e. HEAD is BEGINNING	'beginning part of a season, road, bridge'	√ (season, road); N (*bridge)	√ (season, road, bridge)
f. HEAD is LUMP	'hammer head'	√	√
g. HEAD is UNIT IN SPACE	'corner of a table'	√	√
h. HEAD is UNIT OF EVENT	'incident of typhoon'	√	N
i. HEAD is UNIT OF QUANTITY	'sum of money'	√	N
j. HEAD is CIRCLE	'round part of music notes, script'	√ (note); N (*script)	√ (note, script)
k. HEAD is SPHERE	'round part of a bean-sprout, turnip'	√ (sprout); N (*turnip)	√ (sprout, turnip)
l. HEAD is CONTROLLER	'head of state'	√	√
m. HEAD is IMPORTANCE	'cornerstone'	√	N
n. HEAD is DOMINANCE	'main ingredient of medicine'	N	√
o. HEAD is INTELLIGENCE	'intelligent'	√	√
p. HEAD is EMOTION	'furious'	N	√
q. HEAD is CONATION	'obstinate'	N	√
r. HEAD is ATTITUDE	'arrogant'	N	√
s. HEAD is MINDSET	'progressive'	N	√
t. HEAD is SKILL	'womanizer, skillful in seducing'	N	√
u. HEAD is WHOLE PERSON	'five persons' (CLS)	N	√
v. HEAD is WHOLE ANIMAL	'five cows' (CLS)	√	N
w. HEAD is HAIR	'black hair'	√	N
x. HEAD is CONTEMPTIBLE	'obstinacy' (PEJ)	√	N
y. HEAD is INFERIOR	'(unpleasant) taste' (PEJ)	√	N
z. HEAD is IMAGED SIDE	'imaged side of a coin'	N	√
aa. HEAD is LAUGH	'v. laugh'	N	√

A. Commonalities

Table 3 shows that in both Korean and Thai the primary use of HEAD is to refer to human and animal heads, and that a few other categories of conceptualization patterns are found in both languages, which drive semantic extension. It is noteworthy that some common conceptualization patterns may have different degrees of application, as indicated by "N" for specific instances.

Those that show complete overlap are (d) FRONT, (f) LUMP, (g) UNIT IN SPACE, (l) CONTROLLER, and (o) INTELLIGENCE. Obviously, these are the most basic image schemas, as partly elaborated in IV-A above, i.e., FRONT, by virtue of the human head being in the front relative to other body-parts (especially when a human body is in motion) or of animal bodies. The LUMP conceptualization is by virtue of the human head having a noticeably protruding, lump-like mass (thus resembling an appendage extended from the torso), and SPATIAL UNIT, by virtue of the human head having a clearly delineable contour. These are straightforward instances of metaphorization involving cross-domain transfer from the human domain to non-human domains based on the similarity of the relative location or the shape.

The remaining two patterns, CONTROLLER and INTELLIGENCE, are clearly related to the human brain, which is the organ responsible for mental faculty including intelligent thought and all bodily activities. Thus, these extensions constitute the shift based on contiguity, i.e., from HEAD to BRAIN to MENTAL FACULTY, an extension pattern also found in many languages, e.g., English, Chinese, Swahili, Polish, French, and others (Kraska-Szlenk, 2019).

B. Differences

There are notable differences in the conceptualization patterns of HEAD in Korean and Thai, marked in Table 3 by shading in the cell. First of all, as alluded to briefly above, there are instances when the global conceptualization patterns are identical but the scopes of their applications show differences, e.g., (e) BEGINNING, (j) CIRCLE, (k) SPHERE, in the lightly shaded cells. BEGINNING is a concept directly derivable from 'front', expressing the first part of a season,

road, and bridge by means of HEAD in Thai, whereas in Korean HEAD cannot be applied to structures such as a bridge. This is possibly due to the fact that bridges are symmetrical and do not have an inherent ‘beginning’ point, whereas in Thai the ‘beginning’ or ‘front’ is interpreted with reference to the location of the conceptualizer, i.e., the side closest to the speaker, a situation reminiscent of the ‘face-to-face’ model of object orientation (Heine, 1997, p. 12). As for CIRCLE, the round part of music notes and circles in scripts are HEAD in Thai, whereas in Korean circles in scripts are not HEADs but simply circles (*tongkulami* or *wen*). This likely arises from the fact that the circular part of Thai letters of the alphabet is the ‘beginning’ of writing the letter (note that 42 of 44 consonants in the Thai alphabet contain the ‘head’ and are written beginning with it). In Korean, there are only two alphabetical characters among 14 consonants, and their position is not pre-determined in the syllabic characters. Regarding SPHERE, the globular part of bean-sprouts and the round edible part of a turnip are both HEADs in Thai, whereas in Korean the HEAD of a plant is the top (i.e., greens or leaves) over the ground, and the underground bulb, tuber, or root is simply ‘root’ (*ppwuli*). The Thai conceptualization pattern may be partly due to the fact that the globular shape of bulbs is more tightly associated with the shape of the human head, whereas in Korean *meli* ‘head’ can also refer to ‘hair’, and thus the leafy part of some vegetables can be more easily referred to as ‘head/hair’, further aided by the HEAD is TOP conceptualization that is prominent in Korean but absent in Thai (see below).

Table 3 also shows a number of conceptualization patterns found only in one language and not in the other, noted in the dark-shaded cells. Those only in Korean are: (c) TOP, (h) UNIT OF EVENT, (i) UNIT OF QUANTITY, (m) IMPORTANCE, (v) WHOLE ANIMAL, (w) HAIR, (x) CONTEMPTIBLE, and (y) INFERIOR; and those only in Thai are: (n) DOMINANCE, (p) EMOTION, (q) CONATION, (r) ATTITUDE, (s) MINDSET, (t) SKILL, (u) WHOLE PERSON, (z) IMAGED SIDE of a coin, and (aa) LAUGH. These are explored in more detail in the following paragraphs.

First of all, considering that (c) TOP is among the most immediately derivable conceptualizations of HEAD and is among the most widely attested in corporeal orientation from HEAD across languages (Heine, 1997; Kuteva et al., 2019), the fact that Thai does not use this schema for semantic extension of HEAD makes Thai an exceptional language. In this context, it is noteworthy that the top end of a staff or a scepter is called the ‘head’ in Thai (e.g., *hǔa khatha* [head staff] ‘head of staff’), as is the top part of a wooden club used as a weapon by hooligans (e.g., *nakleng hǔa mai* [gangster head wood] ‘gangster’s wooden-club head’). These instances of semantic extension, however, seem to be based on the LUMP conceptualization (see V-A above), considering that for a walking-stick without a visible lumpy part, the end point is not called a ‘head’, nor is the top part of a bottle in an upright position, a state of affairs strongly suggesting that the LUMP conceptualization is in operation, rather than the TOP conceptualization. The Thai situation stands out as a special case, but, at the same time, it points to the fact that languages often have different conceptualization patterns that are favored as part of their idiosyncratic characteristics. For humans, the vertical and horizontal axes are the two major references in the planar dimension, and Thai seems to favor conceptualization along the horizontal axis (e.g., FRONT and BEGINNING), whereas Korean favors conceptualization along the vertical axis (e.g., TOP). For example, a pencil, whose prototypical configuration is vertical while in use, is said to have a ‘head’ in Thai, which is the sharpened end, in contrast with Korean, in which the ‘head’ is the top end where the eraser is attached.

The second group concerns the conceptualizations of (g) UNIT IN SPACE, (h) UNIT OF EVENT, and (i) UNIT OF QUANTITY, which are all based on the overarching conceptualization of HEAD as an object with a clearly marked boundary or contour that separates it from the rest of the body. This contour-based conceptualization is more extensively employed in Korean than in Thai. Therefore, in Korean, a sum of money given as a donation can be said to be ‘money head’ and one episode of a series of typhoons is a ‘typhoon head’, etc., which is not acceptable in Thai.

The third group concerns the pejoratives, i.e., (x) CONTEMPTIBLE and (y) INFERIOR, found in Korean only. The notion of pejoration originates from two sources. One is related to the fact that Korean HEAD lexemes indicate the split between human and non-human heads, e.g., *meli* and *taykali* (see IV-A, above), and that animals are regarded as being inferior to humans. Thus, most compounds with *taykali* (animal head) strongly signal a pejorative attitude of the speaker, e.g., *mas-taykali* [taste-head] ‘(bad) taste’, *kep-taykali* [fear-head] ‘(lack of) prudence’, etc. The other source is the context of compounding. For instance, the expressions *pelucang-meli* [manner-head] ‘(bad) manners’, *kocip-meli* [obstinacy-head] ‘extreme stubbornness’, *cwupyen-meli* [sensitivity-head] ‘(lack of) minimum tactfulness’, *hayngsil-meli* [conduct-head] ‘(bad) behavior’, etc. all involve the nominals with negative evaluation. It is likely that *meli* contributes the notion of protrusion (i.e., prominent quality) to the negative meaning of the host noun, hence the distastefulness.

The fourth group concerns the classifiers, i.e., (u) WHOLE PERSON and (v) WHOLE ANIMAL. HEAD is a well-known source of classifiers across languages, including Mandarin Chinese (Li & Thompson, 1981; Erbaugh, 1986, p. 400), Mundurukú (Mithun, 1986, p. 390), Tai (DeLancey, 1986, p. 451), and some Austroasiatic languages (Adams, 1986, p. 248). It is unclear why the HEAD-based classifiers indicate different human-animal splits in Korean and Thai. It is possible that honorification and politeness in Korean human reference terms (Rhee, 2019) served as the inhibiting factor of using a body-part term to denote the whole person. A relevant historical fact is that the lexeme *swu* ‘hand’ was once used to create compounds denoting a person, typically in working-class occupations, e.g., *wuncen-swu* [operation-hand] ‘driver’, *ko-swu* [drum-hand] ‘drummer’, *sek-swu* [stone-head] ‘stone-mason’, etc., but these compounds later semantically deteriorated and were either replaced with terms carrying more connotations of prestige or were entirely avoided. Another possibility is that in Korean there have been multiple, well-established person classifiers with plain-honorific distinction. The presence of these classifiers could have been the deterrent factor for the development of HEAD

into another person classifier. On the other hand, the development of the Thai *hua* into a person classifier, though relatively infrequent in Modern Thai, is a scenario observed in other languages such as Burmese (Becker, 1975, pp. 115-116; as cited in Kilarski, 2013, p. 280).

The fifth group concerns the conceptualizations based on mental faculty: (p) EMOTION, (q) CONATION, (r) ATTITUDE, (s) MINDSET, and (t) SKILL, all used in Thai only. The only conceptualization used in Korean based on mental faculty is INTELLIGENCE, although the conceptualization (m) IMPORTANCE may be related to it. The Thai conceptualizations suggest that Thai has a strong tendency to associate HEAD with its inherent mental faculty, an instance of metonymization, which, notably, is characteristic of Thai's well-known use of body-part terms to create diverse lexemes denoting emotion, conation, attitude, etc., particularly in the instance of *jai* (*cay* (IPA)) 'heart' (Moore, 2006; Bovonwiwat & Rhee, 2023). Despite such a strong tendency in Thai, it is not clear why such patterns are favored in one language while, in another language, they are far less prominent or even nonexistent.

The remaining cases of (w) HAIR in Korean, (z) IMAGED SIDE (as of a coin), and (aa) LAUGH in Thai seem to be incidental. The lexical convergence of ‘head’ and ‘hair’ is peculiar, and not reported in any other language to date. Since Korean has another term for ‘hair’, i.e., *melikhalak* (< *meli* ‘head’ + *kalak* ‘long, thin object’), *meli* as a lexeme for ‘hair’ is likely a contraction of *melikhalak*. If *meli* ‘hair’ is a contraction *meli-kalak* ‘head-hair’, this polysemy is a result of incidental lexical convergence, which must have occurred before Late Middle Korean since *meli* ‘hair’ is already attested in the 15th century data. As for coins, Korean uses ‘front side’ and ‘back side’, while the Thai convention of using HEAD for the imaged side may indicate influence from English, because coins were first introduced by the British in the mid-nineteenth century when Britain gifted Thailand with a coin mint machine (during King Rama IV’s reign). The peculiarity of the HEAD-LAUGH association has been briefly mentioned in Section IV-B. All these cases point to the fact that, despite the regularity frequently observed across languages, many aspects of language development are arbitrary, not deterministic, and subject to diverse influences.

From the foregoing exposition of the HEAD polysemization in Korean and Thai, conceptualizations, their conceptual networks, and metaphorical-metonymic links can be diagrammatically presented in Figure 1.

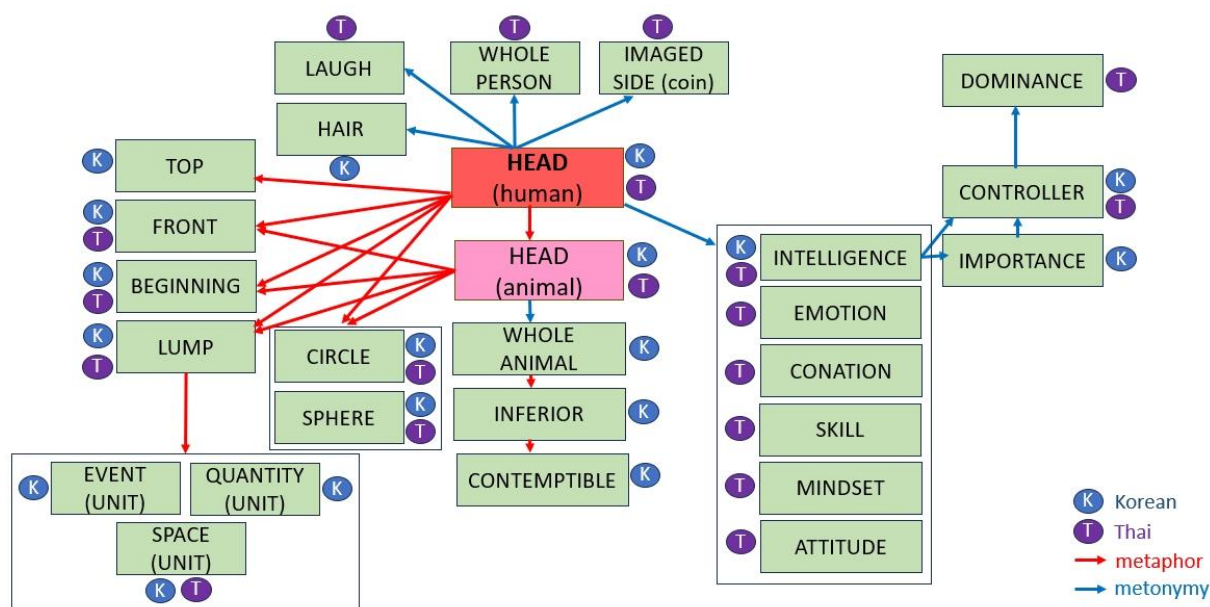


Figure 1. Networks of HEAD Conceptualizations in Korean and Thai

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have addressed lexicalization and semantic extension patterns of HEAD in Korean and Thai. Korean has approximately one dozen HEAD lexemes, in contrast to Thai, which has only one ‘regular’ word for HEAD. This state of affairs aligns with observations in extant literature comparing Korean and Thai, particularly that Korean tends to create new lexemes to encode semantic differences whereas Thai tends to use a single word for a wide range of related meanings. The finer semantic compartmentalization in Korean has been labeled an instance of monosemy strategies, whereas the coarse-grained looser semantic compartmentalization in Thai is an instance of polysemy strategies (Khammee & Rhee, 2022, 2025).

Semantic extensions from HEAD abound in both Korean and Thai, and often indicate similarities, such as conceptualizing HEAD as FRONT, LUMP, UNIT IN SPACE, CONTROLLER, and INTELLIGENCE. These are based on different factors, such as the anthropomorphic model of object conceptualization, the distinctive configuration of a human head, or the function of mental faculty by virtue of the HEAD encasing the brain. However, clear differences in

conceptualization patterns do exist. Certain patterns, such as HEAD as BEGINNING, CIRCLE, and SPHERE, are attested in both languages but their scopes of application differ. More importantly, certain patterns, such as TOP, UNIT OF EVENT, UNIT OF QUANTITY, IMPORTANCE, WHOLE ANIMAL, WHOLE PERSON, HAIR, CONTEMPTIBLE, INFERIOR, DOMINANCE, EMOTION, CONATION, ATTITUDE, MINDSET, SKILL, and IMAGED SIDE OF COIN, are attested in only one of the two languages. The presence and absence of certain patterns and differential scopes of pattern application may be due to diverse factors, including language-specific idiosyncrasy of favoring particular patterns, the history of the lexemes, and even borrowing. In particular, Korean seems to favor the vertical configuration, contour-based unit-formation, and pejoration from lexical contrasts between human head and animal head, while Thai, on the other hand, seems to favor the horizontal conceptualization and diverse aspects related to mental faculty. Certain aspects may only be reflecting the arbitrary nature of human language, and remain unexplained at the current level of understanding.

Drawing upon extensive data from dictionaries, lexica, and corpus data, this paper has analyzed conceptual extension patterns of HEAD in Korean and Thai, and postulates a number of cognitive-linguistic implications. However, the meanings associated with any lexeme are of different lexical strength, and some may even be becoming obsolete. In further research, a quantitative analysis, preferably involving survey questionnaires, is expected to clarify the current state of affairs more dynamically.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 23rd Biennial Meeting of the International Circle of Korean Linguistics (ICKL-2023), Palacký University Olomouc, The Czech Republic, June 28-30, 2023. This research was supported by various benefactors: the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University for Fiscal Year 2023 (Integrated Research Type), Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, the School of Liberal Arts, University of Phayao, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea, the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2023S1A5A2A01081160), and the Major Project of the National Social Science Foundation of China: The Construction of the Lexicon for Discourse Markers in Historical Chinese and Relevant Theoretical Studies (No. 24&ZD250) (PI: Haiping Long). Our special thanks go to Professor Edgar C. Gordyn for proofreading earlier versions and improving style and content.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adams, K. (1986). Numeral classifiers in Austroasiatic. In C. Craig (Ed.), *Noun classes and categorization* (pp. 241-262). John Benjamins.
- [2] Bae, D.-Y. (2001). *Wulimal sincheyeuy uymi hwakcang yenkwu* [A study of semantic extension of Korean body-part terms]. Ph.D. dissertation, Pusan National University, Korea.
- [3] Bae, D.-Y. (2002). Wulimal 'meli'-uy uymi hwakcang yenkwu [A study of semantic extension of Korean *meli*]. *Kwukehak*, 40, 269-304.
- [4] Becker, A. K. (1975). A linguistic image of nature: The Burmese numerative classifier system. *Linguistics*, 165, 109-121.
- [5] Bovonwivat, W., & Rhee, S. (2023). Heart metaphors: A lexicalization perspective. Paper presented at the 23rd Biennial Meeting of the International Circle of Korean Linguistics (ICKL-2023), Palacký University Olomouc. *The Czech Republic*, June 28-30, 2023.
- [6] Carston, R. (2021). *Polysemy: Pragmatics and sense conventions*. Wiley Online Library.
- [7] De Busser, R., & LaPolla, R. (2015). The influence of social, cultural, and natural factors on language structure: An overview. In R. De Busser & R. LaPolla (Eds.), *Language structure and environment* (pp. 1-28). John Benjamins.
- [8] DeLancey, S. (1986). Toward a history of Tai classifier systems. In C. Craig (Ed.), *Noun classes and categorization* (pp. 437-452). John Benjamins.
- [9] Erbaugh, M. S. (1986). Taking stock: The development of Chinese noun classifiers historically and in young children. In C. Craig (Ed.), *Noun classes and categorization* (pp. 399-436). John Benjamins.
- [10] Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (2008). Rethinking metaphor. In R. W. Gibbs, Jr. (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought* (pp. 53-66). Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Geeraerts, D. (1993). Vagueness's puzzles, polysemy's vagaries. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 4, 223-272.
- [12] Geeraerts, D., & Cuyckens, H. (2007). Introducing cognitive linguistics. In D. Geeraerts & H. Cuyckens (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of cognitive linguistics* (pp. 3-21). Oxford University Press.
- [13] Gibbs, Raymond W., Jr. (2008). Metaphor and thought: The state of the art. In R. W. Gibbs, Jr. (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought* (pp. 3-13). Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Glynn, D., & Robinson, J. A. (Eds.). (2014). *Corpus methods for semantics: Quantitative studies in polysemy and synonymy*. John Benjamins.
- [15] Heine, B. (1997). *Cognitive foundations of grammar*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- [16] Heine, B., Claudi, U., & Hünnemeyer, F. (1991). *Grammaticalization: A conceptual framework*. The University of Chicago Press.
- [17] Hong, S.-M. (1986). Sincheyeuy tauykwuco pwunsek (II): Meliuy uymi [An analysis of polysemy structure of body-part terms (II): The meaning of *meli*]. *Festschrift of Professor Kim Min-Soo: Kwukehak sinyenkwu* (pp. 180-196). Tower Press.
- [18] Hong, S.-M. (2003). *Kwuke Ehwiuymiuy sacek pyenchen - Yuiyeyu uymi kiswul* [Historical change of lexical meanings in Korean: Semantic description of synonymy]. Hankook Publisher.
- [19] Johnson, M. (1987). *The body in the mind*. The University of Chicago Press.
- [20] Johnson, M. (2007). *The meaning of the body: Aesthetics of human understanding*. The University of Chicago Press.

- [21] Khammee, K., & Rhee, S. (2021). *Small and cute? Small and bad?: Semantic network of diminutives in Thai and Korean*. Paper presented at the 54th Societas Linguistica Europaea Conference, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, August 31 – September 3, 2021.
- [22] Khammee, K., & Rhee, S. (2022). Same and different ways of seeing faces: The cases of Korean and Thai. *The Journal of Linguistic Science*, 103, 361-381. <https://doi.org/10.21296/jls.2022.12.103.361>
- [23] Khammee, K., & Rhee, S. (2025). The goal-over-source asymmetry in Thai and Korean. *Language and Cognition*, 17, e27, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/langcog.2024.70>
- [24] Kilarski, M. (2013). *Nominal classification: A history of its study from the classical period to the present*. John Benjamins.
- [25] Koo, H. J. (2009). Body in the language: A case with Korean body-part term 'head'. *Language and Linguistics*, 46, 1-28.
- [26] Koo, H. J., & Rhee, S. (2016). Pejoratives in Korean. In R. Finkbeiner, J. Meibauer, & H. Wiese (Eds.), *Pejoration* (pp. 301-323). John Benjamins.
- [27] Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- [28] Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture: Universality and variation*. Cambridge University Press.
- [29] Kraska-Szlenk, I. (2019). Metonymic extensions of the body part 'head' in mental and social domains. In I. Kraska-Szlenk (Ed.), *Embodiment in cross-linguistic studies: The 'head'* (pp. 136-154). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004392410_009
- [30] Kuteva, T., Heine, B., Hong, B., Long, H., Narrog, H., & Rhee, S. (2019). *World lexicon of grammaticalization* (2nd edition). Cambridge University Press.
- [31] Lakoff, G. (1987). Cognitive models and prototype theory. In U. Neisser (Ed.), *Concepts and conceptual development: Ecological and intellectual factors in categorization* (pp. 63-100). Cambridge University Press.
- [32] Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. The University of Chicago Press.
- [33] Lakoff, G., & Kövecses, Z. (1987). The cognitive model of anger inherent in American English. In D. Holland & N. Quinn (Eds.), *Cultural models in language and thought* (pp. 195-221). Cambridge University Press.
- [34] Lee, K. H. (1992). *Kwuke yuuey thongsicek yenkwu* [A diachronic study of Korean near-synonyms]. Ph.D. dissertation, Kyungpook National University, Korea.
- [35] Li, C. N., & Thompson, S. A. (1981). *Mandarin Chinese: A functional reference grammar*. University of California Press.
- [36] Lu, X.-H., & Park, K. (2019). A cognitive linguistic study on polysemy of body part term /hua/ ('head') in Thai. *Southeast Asia Journal*, 28(3), 71-121. <http://dx-doi-org.sproxy.hufs.ac.kr/10.21485/hufsea.2019.28.3.003> (in Korean)
- [37] Mithun, M. (1986). The convergence of noun classification systems. In C. Craig (Ed.), *Noun classes and categorization* (pp. 379-398). John Benjamins.
- [38] Moore, C. G. (2006). *Heart talk: Say what you feel in Thai*. Heaven Lake Press.
- [39] Nerlich, B., & Clarke, D. D. (2001). Ambiguities we live by: Towards a pragmatics of polysemy. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33, 1-20.
- [40] Park, J. Y., & Lee, H. H. (2018). *Koetaysacen* [A pre-modern Korean dictionary]. Sunmoon University Press.
- [41] Park, K. (2011). *A polysemy of /gada/ in Korean in comparison to /paj/ in Thai: A cognitive linguistic approach*. Ph.D. dissertation, Thammasat University, Thailand. (in Thai)
- [42] Park, K., & Rhee, S. (2018). A comparative study on the grammaticalization of Korean and Thai adpositions from macroscopic and typological perspectives. *The Journal of Linguistic Science*, 86, 69-95. <https://doi.org/10.21296/jls.2018.09.86.69> (in Korean)
- [43] Rhee, S. (2019). Politeness pressure on grammar: The case of first and second person pronouns and address terms in Korean. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 23(4), 950-974. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9182-2019-23-4-950-974>
- [44] Rhee, S. (2022). Where to go at the end: Polylexicalization and polygrammaticalization of *kaz* 'edge' in Korean. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 26(3), 571-595. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-30616>
- [45] Rhee, S., & Khammee, K. (2024). Grammaticalization of future-time reference markers in Korean and Thai. *GEMA: Online Journal of Language Studies*, 24.3: 1-19.
- [46] *Royal Thai Dictionary, The*. (n.d.). Available at <https://dictionary.orst.go.th/>. Accessed May 2025.
- [47] Sweetser, E. (1990). *From etymology to pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- [48] *Thai National Corpus, The*. (n.d.). Available online at <https://www.arts.chula.ac.th/ling/tnc3/>. Accessed March-June 2025.
- [49] Vanhove, M. (2008). Semantic associations between sensory modalities, prehension and mental perceptions: A cross-linguistic perspective. In M. Vanhove (Ed.), *Towards a typology of semantic associations* (pp. 341-370). Mouton de Gruyter.
- [50] Vicente, A., & Falkum, I. L. (2015). Polysemy: Current perspectives and approaches. *Lingua*, 157, 1-16.
- [51] Woo, H.-S. (1988). *Sincheyeuy uymilon: Ehwiuymiloncek pwunsek sito* [Semantics of body-part terms: An exploration of lexical semantics]. *Yonsei Emwunhak*, 21, 291-319.
- [52] *Wulimalsaym* [Online Korean dictionary]. (n.d.). Available at <https://opendict.korean.go.kr/>. Accessed March-June 2025.
- [53] Yu, N. (2008). The relationship between metaphor, body, and culture. In R. M. Frank, R. Dirven, T. Ziemke, & E. Bernárdez (Eds.), *Body, language, and mind (vol. 2): Sociocultural situatedness* (pp. 387-407). Mouton de Gruyter.



Seongha Rhee is Global Talent Initiative Professor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Thailand and Professor Emeritus of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea. He received his Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Texas, Austin in 1996. He served both the International Circle of Korean Linguistics (president, 2019-2021) and the Linguistic Society of Korea (president, 2013-2014). His publications include *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization* (2019, CUP, co-author); book chapters in *Grammaticalization Scenarios* (2020, Mouton), *The Cambridge Handbook of Korean Linguistics* (2021, CUP), *The Oxford Handbook of Grammaticalization* (2011, OUP), etc.; and research articles in *Nature* (co-author), *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Language Sciences*, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, and *Lingua*, among others. His primary research interest is identifying cognitive mechanisms of grammaticalization from crosslinguistic, typological perspectives.

(Email: srhee@hufs.ac.kr)



Aphiwit Liang-Itsara is the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Thailand. He earned his Ph.D. in Instruction and Learning in Applied Linguistics from The University of Pittsburgh in 2013 and is currently serving on a number of editorial boards of international journals. His publications include *English for Physiotherapists* (2016, co-author), as well as articles in *Journal of Pragmatics*, *World Journal of English Language*, *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, *English Language Teaching*, *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, and *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, among others. His primary research interests are writing and academic discourse, reading and literacy development, foundations of foreign language teaching, psychological aspects of language teaching and learning, comparative language studies, and other topics in applied linguistics. (Email: aphiwit.lia@mahidol.edu)



Kultida Khammee earned her Ph.D. in applied linguistics at Mahidol University, Thailand in 2024. She has been teaching in the School of Liberal Arts, University of Phayao, Thailand as a full-time lecturer since 2012. She also taught at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University as a lecturer (2011~2012). Her publications include articles in *Language and Cognition*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, *GEMA*, *World Journal of English Language*, *Journal of Linguistic Science*, among others, and a book chapter in *Culture-Bound Syndromes in Popular Culture* (2024, Routledge). Her primary research interests include developing teaching methodology and materials in TESOL, research methods, text analysis, cultural studies, cognitive linguistics, language change, and grammaticalization from cross-linguistic and typological perspectives. (Email: kultida.kh@up.ac.th)

Memoir as Resistance: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Patrisse Khan-Cullors' *When They Call You a Terrorist*

Aishwarya Mary Thomas

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India

Mohamed Sahul Hameed M. A*

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India

Abstract—In the contemporary United States, African Americans continue to confront systemic injustice and marginalisation despite significant advances in civil rights. These inequities are definitive outcomes of a racialized history marked by slavery, colonisation and structural inequality. This study examines the multifaceted nature of racial oppression by analysing Patrisse Khan-Cullors's poignant memoir, *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* (2018), as both a personal testimony and a sociological critique of modern-day Black oppression in the United States. Grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT), the analysis foregrounds key constructs such as the social construction of race as a tool of power, intersectionality as a framework for understanding overlapping oppressions, the cumulative impact of microaggressions, the transformative power of counter-storytelling, and the entrenched character of structural racism. By treating memoirs as a lived archive, this research demonstrates how CRT provides an effective analytical lens for understanding race as a fundamental organizing principle that normalises systemic inequality and exclusion. Thus, the paper ultimately argues for comprehensive systemic reform, asserting that addressing broader patterns of racial injustice requires not only the dismantling of oppressive structures, but also the establishment of new frameworks that foster genuine inclusion and liberation. Furthermore, the research employs an auto-ethnographic approach to centre marginalised voices and challenges the oppressive structures and dominant narratives while advocating for an emancipatory change.

Index Terms—racial oppression, systemic injustice, counter-storytelling, auto-ethnography

I. INTRODUCTION

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (United Nations, 1948, p. 2).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms the inherent freedom and equality of all individuals, yet societal structures routinely violate these principles and contradict this ethos (United Nations, 1948). As Mann (1998) contends, institutional frameworks often exacerbate systemic inequities rather than safeguard universal rights, undermining UDHR's foundational ethos. This dissonance is starkly visible in the ongoing struggles of African diaspora communities, which confront systemic violence, racialized hierarchies, and the enduring legacies of colonial subjugation. Their fight for liberation underscores the gap between legal proclamations of equality and the realities of structural oppression. According to Hoffman, "'Race' has been defined as a biological feature; a local geographic population; a group linked by common descent or origin; a population connected by a shared history, nationality, or geographic distribution; a 'subspecies'; and a social and political construct" (p. 1096). Hoffman (2004) dismantles the myth of race as a biological fact, reframing it as a socially constructed tool of domination engineered to reinforce systemic hierarchies. This construct classified Europeans as superior, historically justifying slavery, land dispossession, and cultural genocide against the African people. Hoffman's analysis reveals how racialization functions as a tool of power, embedding prejudice within institutions to perpetuate inequity. Echoing this, Davis et al. (2022) argue that true racial justice necessitates dismantling oppressive systems, not merely integrating marginalized groups into inherently unjust frameworks. These scholars collectively expose how structural racism persists through institutionalized violence and epistemic erasure. In this context, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, the co-founder of Black Lives Matter (BLM) and a pivotal voice in contemporary Black activism, interrogates these systems in her memoir *When They Call You a Terrorist* (2018). Blending personal narrative with critical race praxis, Khan-Cullors exposes carceral violence, state surveillance, and the criminalization of blackness while centring marginalized resistance. This study analyses her memoir through Critical Race Theory (CRT). This framework traces how race, as a social construct, reinforces exclusion across intersections of caste, class, and gender. By examining Khan-Cullors' lived experiences, this study illuminates the symbiotic relationship

* Corresponding Author. Email: mamohamedsahulhameed@vit.ac.in

between personal trauma and structural violence. Her memoir acts as both a testimony and critique, illustrating how systemic racism infiltrates the education, housing, economic policies, and everyday life of African American communities. Simultaneously, her activism models resistance, showcasing CRT's transformative potential to confront oppression and to exert agency. Khan-Cullors' work not only indicts institutionalized racism but also reimagines justice through community-based solidarity a radical reclamation of the UDHR's betrayed promise.

African diaspora populations continue to struggle with liberation and equity within contemporary societies, confronting systemic violence, racialized social constructions, and the enduring legacies of colonial subjugation imposed on people of African descent. Patrisse Khan-Cullors is a contemporary figure in social justice movements and has emerged as a pivotal leader in the modern civil rights movement through her co-founding of Black Lives Matter in 2013. Her writing style critically engages in visceral violence, institutional accountability, and community-based resistance. Her memoir *When They Call You a Terrorist* (2018) synthesizes autoethnographic reflection and critical race praxis, interrogating racialized state violence while centering subaltern narratives. This study examines Patrisse Khan-Cullors' memoir *When They Call You a Terrorist* (2018) as a critical intervention in discourses of marginalization, employing Critical Race Theory (CRT) to interrogate systemic oppression. Through the framework of Critical Race Theory, Patrisse Khan-Cullors' memoir reveals how race is constructed and used as a tool to uphold systemic oppression. Her personal narrative turns into a radical act of resistance, using counter-storytelling to expose structural racism, highlighting intersectional identities, and challenging the dominant narratives that dehumanize Black lives. This study addresses the problem of how systemic racism, as evidenced by carceral violence, state surveillance, and the criminalization of blackness, undermines the promise of universal human rights. Khan-Cullors' narrative rooted in her activism, exposes institutionalized violence and carceral racism as tools of racial segregation. Through counter-storytelling, she challenges and dismantles the dominant discourses that identify black identity with criminality. The analysis reveals how her memoir functions dually as a personal testimony and structural critique of contemporary American society. This paper draws on Patrisse Khan-Cullors' lived experiences with racism as a lens to expose systemic mechanisms of racialized control, from policing to poverty, and the intersecting hierarchies that enforce social marginalization. Her story reveals how personal trauma mirrors structural violence, while her activism models resistance to pervasive, oppressive systems. Despite significant progress in civil rights legislation and social attitudes, African Americans still confront barriers to full participation and equal opportunities in many aspects of their lives. By examining these issues, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on racial equality and social justice in the United States.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically a critical textual analysis framework, to examine Patrisse Khan-Cullors' memoir *When They Call You a Terrorist*. The analysis is grounded in the Critical Race Theory approach, which provides a lens through which to explore the intersections of race, identity, and systemic injustice, as articulated in Khan-Cullors' narrative. The study examines how Khan-Cullors' memoir employs counter-storytelling and personal narrative to challenge systemic racism and advocate for black liberation. This study draws upon the foundational principles of CRT, including the significance of counter-storytelling, the intersectionality of race with other forms of oppression, and the importance of personal narrative in advocating social justice. Critical Race Theory emerged in the late 1970s and the early 1980s from Critical Legal Studies, a movement that critiqued the legal system for perpetuating social and economic inequalities. Dissatisfied with the limitations of the traditional civil rights discourse, legal scholars such as Derrick Bell, Kimberle' Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Angela Harris, Patricia Williams and Jean Stefancic sought to develop a new framework to understand and address racial injustice. These scholars argued that racism is not merely a matter of individual prejudice but is deeply embedded in legal structures and institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). CRT draws on various intellectual traditions, including Marxism-oriented critical theory, feminism and post-structuralism. Its interdisciplinary nature allows it to incorporate insights from fields such as sociology, history, literature, and ethnic studies. Building on its foundation in Critical Legal Studies, CRT has developed several core principles that guide its analysis of race and power.

Memoirs as a genre are valuable to CRT because they serve as a form of resistance through counter-storytelling, allowing marginalized individuals to challenge dominant narratives and reclaim their agency by sharing their lived experiences. According to Camacho (2023), counter-storytelling provides a platform for marginalized voices to challenge dominant narratives and eradicate prevalent stereotypes that often misrepresent or erase their experiences. By sharing their personal stories, individuals can disrupt prevailing narratives and offer alternative perspectives rooted in their lived realities. Memoirs allow marginalized individuals to speak for themselves, on their own terms, rather than being spoken for or about by others reinstating their lost agency. Memoirs can illuminate the systemic injustices and inequalities faced by marginalized communities. By detailing personal encounters with discrimination, oppression, and violence, authors can expose the ways in which institutions and social structures perpetuate harm against marginalized communities. Memoirs can create a sense of connection and solidarity among marginalized individuals. By sharing their stories, authors can demonstrate that others are not alone in their struggles, fostering a sense of shared experience and collective identity. Memoirs can be a tool for healing and empowerment, for both the author and readers. Writing and sharing one's story can be a cathartic process, while reading about the experiences of others can inspire hope and resilience.

III. RACIALIZATION OF AFRICANS IN *WHEN THEY CALL YOU A TERRORIST: A BLACK LIVES MATTER MEMOIR*

The racialization of Africans in “When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir” by Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele explores the systemic and pervasive nature of racial discrimination against black individuals in the United States. The memoir delves into how African Americans are often stereotyped, criminalized, and dehumanized based on their skin colour, leading to unjust treatment by law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and society. Khan-Cullors’ personal experiences and observations highlight the ways in which Black people are routinely subjected to racial profiling, police brutality, and unequal opportunities in education, employment, and housing.

The text further examines how this racialization process perpetuates the cycle of poverty, trauma, and continuing marginalization within black communities. This illustrates how negative stereotypes and biases toward African Americans are deeply ingrained in societal structures and institutions, making it challenging for individuals to overcome systemic barriers. The authors argue that this racialization not only affects the daily lives of Black people, but also shapes their collective identity and experiences, ultimately leading to the formation of movements such as Black Lives Matter as a response to ongoing racial injustice and oppression.

In her book, *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*, Khan-Cullors (2018) shares personal experiences that motivated her to advocate for Black communities. This journey towards political activism led to her collaboration of her book with Asha Bandele.

In this memoir, Cullors shares her journey from facing everyday injustices to becoming an activist and co-founding the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. While the book is about Cullors’ life, her experiences are far from being uncommon. Her narrative reflects the shared Black experience.

Cullors connect anti-Black policies to their impacts on Black people by combining the story of BLM with her own. Cullors’ activism is imbued with a sense of inevitability through the inclusion of personal experiences of loss, anguish, injustice, and righteous anger. By thoughtfully presenting her life and work, Cullors challenges the stereotype of an angry Black woman and suggests that those who are not outraged may not fully grasp the gravity of the situation.

Cullors opened the memoir with a description of the conditions of her childhood neighbourhood, Van Nuys, in California. She described it as a deprived area with limited opportunities and social mobility, where her family was heavily policed and subjected to racial profiling and random arrest (Khan-Cullors & Bandele, 2018, p. 14). From a very early age, African Americans have reduced access to public resources and amenities. Their impoverished neighbourhood is isolated from white affluent areas as part of redlining districts reinforcing spatial segregation. CRT helps contextualize her family’s constant vulnerability to manifestations of systemic racial injustice and economic barriers, exposing how racial inequity is perpetuated and sustained through institutional machineries.

Cullors’ early encounters with state surveillance profoundly shaped her perspective. She writes, ‘I carry the memory of living under that terror the terror of knowing that I, or any member of my family, could be killed with impunity in my blood, in my bones, in every step I take’ (Khan-Cullors & Bandele, 2018, p. 8). As young Black males, her brothers were especially affected. They were frequently targets of law enforcement officers, who harassed them for participating in ordinary activities, like hanging out with friends outdoors. In her account, Cullors recounts the incarcerations of her brother Monte and her biological father Gabriel to depict the harsh realities of prison, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system. Through their experience, Cullors powerfully exposed the profound inadequacies and cruelties of these institutions in serving Black Americans. She attributes these outcomes as natural consequences of the American tradition of devaluing and regulating black bodies, one that has been widely recognized by both authors and scholars (Coates, 2015; Douglas, 2017).

Through a combination of personal storytelling and insightful analysis, Cullors recounted how her lived realities converged with a powerful calling for activism. Driven by a desire to mobilize community support and channel-shared frustrations, Cullors spearheaded the creation of an activist network that would eventually address the multifaceted challenges confronting black individuals both nationally and internationally. Her memoir underscores the importance of collective action and solidarity in challenging systemic racism and creating a more just and equitable society for all (Nickerson, 2024).

Interwoven throughout the memoir is the narrative of Monte, who develops schizoaffective disorder during his young adult years. He was diagnosed by the jail psychiatrist prompted by his erratic behaviour and mood swings (p. 59). This situation intensifies the formidable challenges posed by poverty and constant police surveillance. Mirroring the experiences of numerous Americans grappling with severe mental illness, Monte’s encounters with law enforcement during his teenage years lead to his incarceration. Rather than receiving treatment for his condition at a psychiatric facility, he joins the roughly 350,000 adults with severe mental illness in American prisons and jails. These mentally ill individuals are held in jail under very poor circumstances (Bloom, 2010, p. 730).

Throughout the book, Cullors examines how structural and systemic mechanisms deny poor and working-class Black communities’ access to the resources and care necessary to heal from the compounded effects of trauma. She emphasizes that trauma cannot be addressed in isolation but must be understood within the context of broader societal forces.

While incarcerated, Monte suffered from blatant neglect of his basic physical and medical needs. Upon release, his condition remained unstable (p. 63). Over time, Cullors gained a deeper understanding of the inhumane treatment Monte endured in jail, as well as the systemic torture prevalent within the L.A. County system (p. 160). These revelations served

as the catalyst for the establishment of Dignity and Power Now, an organization dedicated to advocating civilian oversight of county prisons and sheriff's departments (p. 165).

Cullors' memoirs also touch on her relationship with her birth father Gabriel, who struggled with drug addiction and was subsequently incarcerated for drug-related offenses. While acknowledging this part of his life, Cullors focused on presenting a more complete picture of Gabriel as a person. She emphasized his vibrant personality, ability to connect with others, and capacity for deep affection, suggesting that his worth extends beyond his struggles. Cullors' depiction of close family members like Monte and Gabriel challenges dominant punitive narratives by affirming that even those who have caused harm are deserving of care and recognition of their inherent dignity. She situates their action within a broader context of structural violence, highlighting how their criminal records shaped by systemic racism and targeted abuse of Black communities through discriminatory policing and mass incarceration, led to job loss, eviction, expulsion from educational institutions and social abandonment.

Cullors (2018) critiques the "War on Drugs," viewing it as a calculated strategy to marginalize Black and Brown communities. Furthermore, she challenges "personal responsibility" narratives, which attribute the problems of Black communities to their own actions, while ignoring the destructive impact of drug proliferation, mass incarceration, and systemic anti-Black biases (p. 124). According to US National Survey, reported drug selling activity was more common among White youths than among African American youths, yet racial disparities persist in the number of arrests.

Through her poignant depiction of her father's life and passing, Cullors elucidates the profound human toll exacted by rhetoric, which relentlessly oppresses those who are already unfairly disadvantaged. Cullors (2018) suggest that her father was a casualty of unseen battles waged against his "thin brown body," ultimately succumbing to a broken heart, a consequence of "the cumulative effects of hatred, racism, and indignity" (p. 107). By attributing death to these intangibles yet potent forces, Cullors underscores the systemic barriers and burdens disproportionately shouldered by Black and Brown individuals, asserting that these obstacles were deliberately erected to impede Black Americans' progress, despite the illusion of legal equality.

Cullors reflect on the profound consequences of enduring years of degrading strip searches and the realization of crushing, from childhood, that one's aspirations are dismissed and devalued by a nation that deems them expendable. She asks, what is the toll of such systemic devaluation? How can one quantify the immeasurable loss of potential unrealized? Cullors suggest that her father's generation of Black men was perpetually denied the fulfilment of their hopes and dreams to the point where such deprivation became normalized. This passage exemplifies Cullors' powerful use of personal narratives to expose the dehumanizing effects of anti-black violence.

In the latter part of her memoir, Cullors transitions to discussing Black Lives Matter, the most recent phase of her activism. Drawing upon her personal experiences and expertise in community organizing, she collaborates with two other women to protest police brutality (p. 180). Fuelled by the tragic killing of Trayvon Martin and the subsequent acquittal of his murderer, Cullors played a pivotal role in launching the Movement for Black Lives, which rapidly gained widespread momentum. She has become a leading voice in the fight against racial injustice.

While BLM has gained encouraging support, Cullors emphasizes that much work remains. The United States still has a long way to go before Black and Brown Americans can fully enjoy their promised freedom. Cullors see the fight for these rights as a continuous effort for each generation, one that people of colour must not abandon. At the conclusion of her memoir, Cullors issues a call to action that echoes Audre Lorde's assertion, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare" (Lorde, 1988, p. 131). By foregrounding healing, self-care and community support, she reframes these practices as radical acts of resistance against systemic oppression.

The emergence and rapid expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement signifies a contemporary iteration of the enduring struggle for Black liberation and self-determination in the United States, building upon the historical foundations laid by previous generations who fought against the institution of slavery and for the attainment of civil rights (Ruffin, 2020).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis was conducted using a critical textual analysis approach. Through their narrative, the authors challenged the notion that racism is merely an individual bias or prejudice. Instead, they argue that structural racism is deeply embedded in societal institutions and shapes the lived experiences of Black individuals. This understanding compels readers to confront broader societal structures that uphold racial inequities, encouraging a critical examination of policies and practices that contribute to systemic oppression.

A. Social Construction of Race

When They Call You a Terrorist (2018) powerfully illustrates the social construction of race and its profound impact on Black lives by highlighting how American society devalues and criminalizes Blackness to maintain power hierarchies (Motley, 2021). This devaluation is not based on inherent characteristics, but on societal biases and stereotypes that have been historically constructed and perpetuated (Cobbina-Dungy & Jones-Brown, 2021).

The memoir reveals this through several key aspects. It recounts Cullors' and her brothers' frequent targeting by law enforcement (Motley, 2021), demonstrating how race influences perceptions and treatment within the criminal justice system. Black individuals are often subject to suspicion and police-initiated contact, even when they appear in spaces that

are not commonly believed to be their realm. Secondly, Cullors critiques the “War on Drugs” as a calculated strategy to marginalize the Black and Brown communities. This shows how policies can be designed and implemented to disproportionately affect certain racial groups, thus reinforcing the social construction of race.

The memoir also explores internalized racism, reflecting on the consequences of enduring years of degrading strip searches and the realization that her aspirations are dismissed and devalued by a nation that deems them expendable. This demonstrates how the social construction of race can lead to internalized feelings of inferiority.

The use of the word “terrorist” in the title is a racial trope. The title itself speaks to how certain groups are labelled and treated as threats based on racial stereotypes (Abu-Bakare, 2020). Furthermore, the memoir highlights the impact of “years of strip searches” and the sense that one’s dreams are not taken seriously (Motley, 2021), illustrating the dehumanizing effects of systemic racism. Cullors challenge the notion that race is a fixed or natural category (Zack, 2018). She uses her personal narrative to expose how race as a social construct is used to justify discrimination, oppression, and violence against Black communities (Williams, 2016). This aligns with the CRT tenet, emphasizing that racism is not merely individual prejudice, but is deeply embedded in legal structures and institutions. Here are some instances from the text. Patrisse writes, “Blackness is criminalized. Blackness is synonymous with suspicion. We are not allowed to walk, to drive, to gather, to protest, to exist without the looming threat of death.” (p. 56) There is a deliberate misrepresentation of everyday activities as criminal behaviour. “In America, Blackness is a crime. And when you are a criminal, you are no longer human. You are a problem to be solved. A thing to be discarded” (p. 87). This shows how society dismisses black identity. Through counter narratives Patrisse exposes the hidden structural racism in society and redefines the blackness as an identity.

B. Structural Racism

Structural racism is a critical theme that permeates the memoir, as it underscores the systemic nature of racial oppression. Structural racism is a form of racism that is embedded in the very fabric of society’s structures and institutions, perpetuating racial inequalities and injustices through its policies, practices, and norms. The memoir by Khan-Cullors and Bandele exposes how various institutions systematically perpetuate racial inequalities through personal accounts and reflections on systemic violence.

Khan-Cullors and Bandele vividly illustrate how institutions such as, the criminal justice system, housing system, education, and healthcare perpetuate racial inequalities. The authors recount their personal encounters with systemic violence, revealing how policies and practices are designed to maintain racial hierarchies. For instance, Khan-Cullors’ reflections on her brother’s incarceration highlight the ways in which the criminal justice system disproportionately targets Black individuals, perpetuating cycles of poverty and disenfranchisement. Structural racism is deeply ingrained in the social, political, and economic structures of society. This method allows for a comprehensive exploration of the text, focusing on the ways in which authors use their personal narrative to challenge dominant societal narratives and advocate for social change.

Khan-Cullors and Bandele (2018) elaborate on the existing structural racism through the following statements “They called him a criminal. They called him a monster. But he was my brother. My brother who loved to dance, who loved to laugh, who loved his family” (p. 23). This juxtaposition of author’s brother Monte’s humanity against the state’s demonization exposes how systemic racism reduces Black individuals to racialized tropes. She critiques the myth of Black criminality: “Blackness is criminalized. Blackness is synonymous with suspicion” (p. 56). This study shows that there is racial profiling of Black individuals based on their appearance and ethnocentric stereotypes. This involves making assumptions about someone’s character or behaviour just because of their racial identity, which is a form of discrimination. This leads to unwarranted suspicion, reduced opportunities, and even physical danger for Black individuals. The perpetuation of these practices reinforces and propagates harmful stereotypes about Black people, creating a cycle of prejudice that is difficult to break.

Another instance that points to structural racism in the protagonist’s childhood is encapsulated in this statement “Our schools didn’t have books. Our streets didn’t have lights. But the police? They had tanks” (p. 45). The authors’ childhood experiences in Van Nuys demonstrate systemic neglect and misallocation of resources. This stark contrast denotes how structural racism manifests in underfunded education and over-policing of Black communities.

Khan-Cullors and Bandele (2018) elucidate that during the 1990s, Black and Mexican youth were subjected to criminalization merely for their presence in public spaces. The phenomena of gang and drug wars served as covert mechanisms to target and apprehend young boys of colour. Deprived of educational opportunities and sufficient nutrition, many of these youths were channelled into cycles of detention and incarceration, effectively preparing them for prison labour, which is described as “an apprenticeship” commencing in childhood (p. 54). The conditions for African Americans were predominantly perilous. They were often stigmatized as threats and perceived as criminals engaged in substance abuse. There was a lack of inquiry into the factors contributing to this situation, and no initiatives were implemented for their rehabilitation or to address issues of hunger and poverty within the community. Educational and upliftment programs were conspicuously absent. Instead, there was a widespread incarceration of young individuals, public humiliation, forced labour in prisons for corporate benefit, and a systematic erosion of hope for the future, with no advocates to protect or defend their rights. There was an absence of voices affirming the significance of their lives and aspirations. The criminal justice system played a significant role in perpetuating these inequalities. Young African Americans were disproportionately targeted for arrest and incarceration, often for minor offenses. Once in the prison system, they were

subjected to forced labour, benefiting corporations while receiving little to no compensation or opportunities for skill development. This practice not only exploited incarcerated individuals but also perpetuated a modern form of slavery. The lack of advocacy and support for their rights, coupled with public humiliation and societal stigma, created an environment of hopelessness and despair. The absence of positive representation and affirmation of their worth and potential further reinforced the narrative of their perceived inferiority, making it increasingly difficult for African Americans to envision and work towards a better future.

The theories presented in the study by Shannon et al. (2024) address the profound need for Black men to cultivate meaning in environments that often seek to diminish their humanity. This research underscores the critical importance of understanding the unique challenges faced by Black men, who are frequently subjected to dehumanizing experiences rooted in systemic racism and societal biases (Vereen et al., 2020). The research paper highlights the strength and coping methods that Black men use to deal with unfriendly environments. It also emphasizes the value of cultural support systems and resources in creating a healing space. The study advocates for a societal shift in perceptions and interactions with Black masculinity, calling for more understanding and sensitive approaches in areas such as education, healthcare, and social policies to promote an equitable and inclusive society. The paper also explores the overlapping elements that contribute to compound marginalization.

C. Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality as articulated by Kimberle' Crenshaw (1991), is integral to this analysis for revealing the cumulative impact of being marginalised. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals experience multiple, overlapping identities that shape their experiences of oppression and privilege. Carbado et al. (2013) posited that in the seminal 1989 essay, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," Crenshaw introduced the concept of 'intersectionality' to address the marginalization of Black women not only within antidiscrimination law but also within feminist and antiracist theory and politics. This study examines how Khan-Cullors navigates her identity as a black woman within the context of systemic racism, gender inequality, and socioeconomic disparities. By analysing the intersections of these identities, the research illuminates the complexities of her narrative and the broader implications for understanding systemic injustice. Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding how multiple forms of discrimination and oppression can intersect and compound, creating unique challenges for individuals with overlapping marginalized identities. In Khan-Cullors' case, her experiences as a Black woman living in a low-income community offer insights into how race, gender, and class intersect to shape her lived experiences and activism.

Cullors recounts two significant events from the lives of her grandmother and mother that portrays the silenced family history of racial and gendered trauma that continues to shape successive generations. She writes, "A white man got her; my father tells me once when I ask why Auntie Lisa and Auntie Barbara always seem so angry. A white man got Grandma Vina, and she was very young, he says. She couldn't raise them girls. That's all I know, he says, and we never speak of it again. No one does. These pieces of family history and harm that never heal that pass on generation to generation" (Khan-Cullors & Bande, 2018, p. 36).

Patrisse characterizes her grandmother Vina as an elderly and sophisticated woman who frequently uses profane language. Many African American women continue to bear the psychological scars of intergenerational trauma, conditioned by systemic forces such as the detention of their fathers, the disappearance of partners, the loss of sons, fractured childhoods and enduring accounts of sexual exploitation including children conceived through rape. These atrocities committed against African American women, and their families often sanctioned or neglected by the state, frequently remain unaddressed, obscured by the silence, stigma and shame that ensues.

Khan-Cullors (2018) illustrates how her mother's early pregnancy is linked to religious disapproval and class marginalization. Her mother's family belonged to the middle class, but their financial difficulties were largely due to her mother's early pregnancy, which went against the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, particularly the prohibition of premarital sex. Consequently, she experienced exclusion and spent years attempting to regain acceptance within the community. Although she eventually achieved some degree of acceptance, it was insufficient to restore the stability associated with middle-class status (p. 36). Unwed single motherhood is a prevalent phenomenon within the Black community, reflecting the dual marginalization that women face due to both gender and race. The challenges and moral judgement women encounter, even within their own communities and cultures, are exemplified by the experience of Patrisse's young mother. Although she comes from a middle-class background, she was ostracized by both her church community and family for being an unwed mother and was compelled to independently support her children by undertaking multiple odd jobs to provide sustenance and secure housing for her children. These layers of trauma emerge at the intersection of racism, patriarchy and economic disenfranchisement, illustrating how overlapping systems of oppression uniquely burden black women. By examining Khan-Cullors' narrative through an intersectional lens, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of how systemic injustices manifest in complex and interconnected ways. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of the multifaceted nature of oppression and the necessity of addressing these intersecting forms of discrimination to achieve meaningful social change.

D. Microaggressions

Microaggressions, defined as subtle, often unintentional, discriminatory comments or everyday offensive conversations or behaviours, are another focal point in the memoir. Microaggressions are small acts of discrimination that reinforce societal biases. They are often unintentional, but they can still greatly affect the person who experiences them. Khan-Cullors and Bandele articulate their experiences with microaggressions, illuminating how these seemingly minor incidents accumulate to create a hostile environment for Black individuals. The authors recount instances of being questioned about their intelligence, professionalism, and worthiness, all of which serve to undermine their identities and reinforce societal stereotypes.

Khan-Cullors (2018) articulates an incident in her school recalling how, unlike her white peers she was singled out for using drugs in school, publicly handcuffed and humiliated in front of her everyone despite having no drugs in her possession. She says, “At Millikan it is a daily occurrence for kids to show up to class high, to light up in the bathroom, to smoke on the campus lawn. No one gets in trouble. Nowhere is there police. Millikan is the middle school where the gifted kids go. But in my neighbourhood school things are totally different and someone must have said something about me and my weed—two girls had come into the bathroom when I’d been in there because two days later a police officer comes to my class. I remember my stomach dropping the way it does on one of those monster roller-coaster rides at Six Flags. I can just *feel* that they are coming for me and I am right. The cop tells me to come to the front of the room, where he handcuffs me in front of everyone and takes me to the dean’s office, where my bag is searched, where I am searched, pockets turned out, shoes checked, just like my brothers in the alleyway when I was nine years old. I have no weed on me, but I am made to call my mother at work and tell her what happened, which I do through tears” (Khan-Cullors & Bandele, 2018, p. 19). This incident reflects the racialised microaggressions and unequal discriminatory practices in schools that criminalize Black youth from an early age.

Khan-Cullors describes several instances where her intelligence and capabilities were questioned, reflecting a common microaggression experienced by Black individuals in both professional and academic settings. These instances often involve subtle comments or assumptions that undermine their competence and reinforce negative stereotypes. The implementation of zero-tolerance policies in schools, along with the presence of school resource officers, often resulted in Black students being sent to juvenile detention or criminal court system based on mere suspicion (Irby, 2017, p. 1). Black and brown children are over punished in schools due to their racial status. There is a legacy of criminalization of Black boys and men. The systemic marginalization and dehumanization experienced by these children deeply shape their psyche, cultivating profound feelings of shame and inadequacy. They live in constant trepidation of the dominant white society, even when entirely innocent, solely due to their racial identity. This creates a perpetual state of hyper-vigilance and anxiety, eroding their sense of safety and belonging. There is a constant fear of being arrested, betrayed and being humiliated in public. Black students were treated as easily disposable, punishable and unwanted by the educational institutions.

Khan-Cullors and Bandele (2018) describe how Black boys, like her brothers, were criminalised merely for “breathing while Black,” as heightened police surveillance in their neighbourhoods conveyed that their lives were expendable. They were construed as criminals even for ordinary behaviours such as socialising in public spaces. Despite not engaging in more drug use than white youth, the drug war was aimed at labelling the Black youth as “super predators” to maim them and subject them to constant monitoring. This served as an everyday microaggression that reinforced their devaluation and stigmatisation (pp. 25-26). The experiences of Cullors’ brothers, who were frequently harassed by law enforcement for simply being young Black men in public, illustrate the impact of everyday microaggressions in immobilising Blacks and constraining their communities (Motley, 2021). These encounters highlight how seemingly innocuous actions, such as gathering with friends, can be perceived as threatening or suspicious when associated with Black individuals. The administrative system perceived them as a threat and hardened criminals. They were consistently targeted by law enforcement in the pretext of the drug war, while white drug dealers often remained unnoticed and unpoliced. Individuals of African descent were subjected to constant scrutiny and surveillance and were labelled as “super predators” by virtue of their birth.

The memoir effectively illustrates the psychological toll these microaggressions can have on individuals, contributing to feelings of alienation and self-doubt. By sharing their experiences, Khan-Cullors and Bandele not only validate the lived realities of many Black individuals but also challenge readers to recognize and address their own biases. Microaggressions are frequently regarded as trivial or harmless, yet they can play a role in perpetuating the broader systemic oppression and discrimination experienced by marginalized groups. This aspect of the memoir serves as a call to action, urging individuals to engage in critical self-reflection and to confront the subtle ways in which racism manifests in everyday interactions.

E. Counter-Storytelling

Counter-storytelling emerges as a powerful narrative strategy employed by the authors to resist misconceptions and challenge dominant narratives surrounding race and identity. Counter-storytelling is a method used to examine existing dominant narratives and amplify the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities. A cornerstone of CRT, counter storytelling posits as a crucial tool for marginalized voices to reclaim agency and assert their experiences against dominant narratives of the privileged. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) argue that counter-storytelling serves as a form of resistance and “a tool for exposing, analysing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege” (p. 32). According to critics

of CRT, by giving voice to the marginalized, counter stories legitimate their experiences and offer them as effective tools to challenge and subvert the dominant accounts held by the ruling elite.

In “When They Call You a Terrorist”, Khan-Cullors and Bandele (2018) utilize their personal stories to disrupt the prevailing narratives that often portray Black individuals as criminals or victims. By sharing their lived experiences, they humanize the struggle for racial justice and invite readers to empathize with their realities. Khan-Cullors and Bandele (2018) challenges the dominant narratives through their writing, “When they call you a terrorist, you have to ask: Who is the real terrorist? The one fighting for justice or the one denying it?” (p. 201). In another instance she writes, “Our stories are not about crime. They are about survival. They are about love” (p. 87).

Counter-stories allow people of colour to: (a) build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice; (b) challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s centre by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems; (c) open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position; and (d) teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 36).

In addition, Counter-storytelling also serves to illuminate the resilience and strength of Black communities in the face of adversity. By narrating her own story, the protagonist reclaims her agency and voice within a society that has sought to suppress both her and her community. The authors recount moments of solidarity, joy, and resistance, emphasizing that the narrative of Blackness is not solely defined by suffering. This reclamation of narrative power is essential for challenging societal stereotypes and fostering a more nuanced understanding of Black identity. Moreover, the memoir’s emphasis on counter-storytelling aligns with the broader goals of the Black Lives Matter movement, which seeks to amplify marginalized voices and advocate for systemic change. By centring their experiences, Khan-Cullors and Bandele contribute to a collective narrative that resists erasure and demands recognition of the systemic injustices faced by Black individuals.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has critically examined Patrisse Khan-Cullors’ memoir, *When They Call You a Terrorist* (2018) through the lens of Critical Race Theory. By employing a CRT framework, this analysis illuminates the power of counter-storytelling as a potent tool for challenging systemic racism and advocating for Black liberation. Khan-Cullors’ narrative provides a compelling example of how personal narratives can disrupt dominant narratives and offer alternative perspectives rooted in lived realities.

The analysis revealed several key themes within the memoir, each contributing to a deeper understanding of the struggle for racial justice. First, the memoir exposes the social construction of race, dismantling the notion of race as a biological reality and highlighting its function as a social and political construct. Second, it underscores the intersectionality of oppression, demonstrating how race intersects with other forms of marginalization, such as gender and sexuality, to create unique experiences of injustice. Finally, the memoir bears witness to the ongoing struggle for racial justice in the face of systemic dehumanization.

Khan-Cullors’ work is particularly significant as it interweaves her personal experiences with the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, offering a unique perspective on the ongoing struggle for Black liberation and self-determination. Her story combats stereotypes and invites readers to share the restorative pathways she blazes. By centring the lived experiences and voices of marginalized communities, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted challenges confronting Black individuals and the transformative potential of personal narratives in the fight for equity and social change.

This critical engagement with Khan-Cullors’ memoir underscores the continued relevance of CRT in analysing and disrupting racial injustice in contemporary society. As scholars and activists continue to grapple with the legacies of racism and ongoing struggles for racial equity, the insights gleaned from this memoir are invaluable. They highlight the necessity of amplifying marginalized voices and confronting the structural systems that perpetuate inequality. Ultimately, *When They Call You a Terrorist* (2018) serves as both a personal testament and a call to action, urging readers to engage critically with their own biases and participate in the ongoing fight for justice and equity in a world shaped by racial dynamics. As both a testimony and an indictment, “When They Call You a Terrorist” portrays how personal narratives can reclaim power, reframe justice, and resist cultural erasure. In an era marked by escalating racial tensions, such memoirs compel us to not only listen but also act.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abu-Bakare, A. (2020). Counterterrorism and race. *International Politics Reviews*, 8(1), 79-99.
- [2] Bloom, J. D. (2010). “The incarceration revolution”: the abandonment of the seriously mentally ill to our jails and prisons. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 38(4), 727-734. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-720X.2010.00526.x>
- [3] Camacho, J. (2023, May). *The Hate U Give as counternarrative: A rhetorical site of competing frames & the disruption of dominant narratives through counter-storytelling & homing* [Master’s thesis, California State University, San Bernardino]. CSUSB Scholar Works. Retrieved June 4, 2025, from <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1707>

- [4] Carbado, D. W., Crenshaw, K. W., Mays, V. M., & Tomlinson, B. (2013). Intersectionality: Mapping the movements of a theory. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), 303–312. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X13000349>
- [5] Cobbina-Dungy, J. E., & Jones-Brown, D. (2023). Too much policing: Why calls are made to defund the police. *Punishment & society*, 25(1), 3–20.
- [6] Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (Vol. 87). NyU press.
- [7] Hammond, J. H., Massey, A. K., & Garza, M. A. (2020). *African American inequality in the United States*. Harvard business school.
- [8] Hoffman, S. (2004). Is there a place for race as a legal concept? *Arizona State Law Journal*, 36(4), 1093–1158.
- [9] Hurwitz, J., & Peffley, M. (2005). Explaining the great racial divide: Perceptions of fairness in the US criminal justice system. *The journal of politics*, 67(3), 762–783.
- [10] Irby, D. J. (2017). The indignities on which the school-to-prison pipeline is built: Life stories of two formerly incarcerated black male school-leavers. In *The school to prison pipeline: The role of culture and discipline in school* (pp. 15–39). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- [11] Kakade, M., Duarte, C. S., Liu, X., Fuller, C. J., Drucker, E., Hoven, C. W., & Wu, P. (2012). Adolescent substance use and other illegal behaviors and racial disparities in criminal justice system involvement: Findings from a US national survey. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102(7), 1307–1310.
- [12] Khan-Cullors, P., & Bandele, A. (2018). *When they call you a terrorist: A Black Lives Matter memoir*. St. Martin's Griffin.
- [13] Lafreniere, B., Audet, É. C., Kachanoff, F., Christophe, N. K., Holding, A. C., Janusauskas, L., & Koestner, R. (2023). Gender differences in perceived racism threat and activism during the Black Lives Matter social justice movement for Black young adults. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 51(7), 2741–2757.
- [14] Levy-Pounds, N. (2013). Going up in smoke: The impacts of the drug war on young Black men. *Albany Government Law Review*, 6(2), 561–585.
- [15] Lorde, A. (1988). *A burst of light: And other essays*. Firebrand Books.
- [16] Mann, J. (1998). Dignity and health: The UDHR's revolutionary first article. *Health and human rights*, 30–38.
- [17] Motley, H. (2021). Review of Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele's *When They Call You a Terrorist: The Power of Black Communities and Righteous Anger*. *Global Africana Review*, 5(1), 58–60.
- [18] Nickerson, B. (2024). *Dear Mama: An exploration of trauma and Black feminist healing practices through letter writing* [Master's project, University at Albany, SUNY]. Scholar's Archive. Retrieved April 19, 2025, from <https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/wgss-masters-finalprojects/4/>
- [19] Partners for Justice. (2023, April). *Gang documentation and gang injunctions harm communities*. Partners for Justice. Retrieved May 4, 2025, from <https://www.partnersforjustice.org/evidence/gang-documentation-and-gang-injunctions-harm-communities>
- [20] Pérez Huber, L., & Solorzano, D. G. (2015). Racial microaggressions as a tool for critical race research. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 18(3), 297–320.
- [21] Prilleltensky, I. (2003). Understanding, resisting, and overcoming oppression: Toward psychopolitical validity. *American journal of community psychology*, 31(1–2), 195–201.
- [22] Salter, P., & Adams, G. (2013). Toward a critical race psychology. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 7(11), 781–793.
- [23] Sampson, R. J., & Lauritsen, J. L. (1997). Racial and ethnic disparities in crime and criminal justice in the United States. *Crime and justice*, 21, 311–374.
- [24] Shannon, J., Shell, E. M., Loury, J., & Bayne, H. B. (2024). Four theories to empower black men's existence: Meaning making in dehumanizing contexts. *The Journal of Humanistic Counseling*, 63(2), 89–105.
- [25] Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 8(1), 23–44.
- [26] Still, C. D. (2020). Walking Tall: A Narrative Critical Family History of a Grandmother's Fight for New Normals. *Genealogy*, 4(2), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy4020058>
- [27] United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. United Nations. Retrieved May 3, 2025, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- [28] Vereen, L. G., Giovannetti, M. R., & Bohecker, L. (2020). A paradigm shift: Supporting the multidimensional identities of Black male youth. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 45(2), 99–112.
- [29] Williams, D. R. (2016). Race as a social construct and the impact on health. *The American Journal of Public Health*, 106(5), 868–869.

Aishwarya Mary Thomas is a full-time research scholar in the Department of English, School of Social Science and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India. She completed her undergraduate from Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara and her postgraduate from Pondicherry Central University, Puducherry.

She is currently pursuing her doctoral research in English literature. Her area of interest is Diasporic Literature and Gender Studies. She likes to write articles on humanitarian issues and women centric problems. Her research area focuses on women of colour.

M. A. Mohamed Sahul Hameed is currently an English professor at the School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Vellore, India. He completed his PhD at VIT, Vellore, India. His main area of specialization are English Language and Teaching (ELT), Literature and Indian Writing in English.

He has published numerous papers in Scopus, Non-Scopus and as book chapters. He has also conducted several training programs and delivered lectures on diverse topics. He is also an author of several books, and his reviews and articles are published in several newspapers and magazines. He can be reached at mamohamedsahulhameed@vit.ac.in His ORCID iD is <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8911-6610>.

English Subtitling Strategies for Mythological Names and Titles in Beijing Opera Film: A Case Study of *Havoc in Heaven*

Yang Qiuling

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Pingdingshan University, Pingdingshan 467000, China;
Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Syed Nurulakla bin Syed Abdullah*

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Pabiyah HajiMaming @ Pabiyah Toklubok

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Yi Liu

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia;

School of Foreign Studies, Guangdong Baiyun University, Guangzhou 510450, China

Abstract—This paper examines the English subtitling strategies employed for mythological names and titles in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*, using Gottlieb's subtitling strategies as the theoretical framework. The study adopts a qualitative research design and employs a case study approach to identify and categorise mythological names and titles into four groups: names of people, names of objects, names of places, and official titles. The study's analysis reveals that the most frequently used subtitling strategy is transfer (37%), followed by expansion (22%), condensation (17%), paraphrase (13%), and transcription (11%). The predominant use of transfer indicates a high preference for direct translations that preserve the original meaning and form, ensuring both cultural and narrative fidelity. The notable application of both expansion and paraphrase strategies highlights the effort to bridge cultural gaps and improve international audiences' comprehension. Condensation ensures readability and accessibility within the constraints of subtitle formatting; Meanwhile, transcription preserves the phonetic integrity of the original names. This balanced approach not only allows the film to be appreciated globally, but it also provides insights into Chinese mythology and culture while still maintaining the original essence of the overall narrative. The findings enhance understanding of subtitling strategies for culturally rich content and inform audiovisual translation practice. They also advance research on mythological name translation and the subtitling of culturally embedded Chinese opera films.

Index Terms—subtitling strategies, mythological names and titles, Beijing opera film

I. INTRODUCTION

Subtitling has become a crucial element of audiovisual translation, especially for films that cross cultural and linguistic boundaries (Cintas & Remael, 2007; Gottlieb, 1992; Pedersen, 2011). The challenge of subtitling is further complicated when dealing with content that is heavily saturated with cultural references, such as mythological names and titles. *Havoc in Heaven* is a prominent Beijing Opera film and the only mythological adaptation among the 21 productions in the Beijing Opera Film Project. It also includes the most extensive use of mythological names found in Chinese opera films to date. It offers a unique case study for examining the subtitling strategies used to translate mythological names and titles, which are deeply embedded in Chinese cultural and historical contexts.

The Chinese opera film (*xìqǔpiàn*, meaning "traditional opera film") is one of the most unique forms in world cinema (Gao, 2005; Teo, 2013). It is the combination of traditional Chinese opera and modern cinematography, rich in cultural connotations, which poses a significant challenge for English subtitling. In this paper, *Havoc in Heaven* is part of the Beijing Opera Film Project, which aims to preserve and promote traditional Beijing opera by adapting it into films (Han

* Corresponding Author. Email: syedakla@upm.edu.my

& Tong, 2018). Beijing opera (Peking opera), known as the national opera of China, is the most influential and representative opera in the country (Gao, 2005). *Havoc in Heaven* has been nominated for the Best Opera Film Award at the 33rd China Golden Rooster Awards and won the 'Art Contribution Award' at the Chinese Film Week of the 33rd Tokyo International Film Festival (Shen, 2020). *Havoc in Heaven* is a prominent feature of Chinese opera, embodying a plethora of mythical names and titles with deep cultural significance. Striving for accessibility and comprehension by a global audience, while still being faithful to the source material, is a major challenge that subtitling must face. *Havoc in Heaven* is based on a segment of the first classic Chinese mythological novel, *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng'en, which tells the story of Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, who rebels and clashes against the Jade Emperor in heaven (Cai, 2006). This narrative is central to Chinese culture and has been translated into many languages and adapted into a wide range of media, including cartoons, books, opera, and films around the world.

This article investigates the subtitling strategies used for the mythological names and titles found in *Havoc in Heaven*. Drawing on the contributions of scholars such as Newmark (1988), Hermans (1988), Gottlieb (1992), Coates-Stephens (1992), Pedersen (2011, 2018), and House (1997), this study both identifies and categorises mythological names and titles into four main types: names of people, names of places, names of objects, and official titles. Given both the cultural specificity and symbolic significance of the names within the source text, each type showcases new and unique hurdles for translators to overcome.

This analysis adopts Gottlieb's (1992) typology of subtitling strategies as its theoretical framework, offering a comprehensive lens through which to examine the linguistic and cultural constraints inherent in subtitle translation. The typology includes ten distinct strategies: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation. These strategies offer a structured method for analysing how mythological names and titles are handled in subtitles; this ensures that the cultural and narrative integrity of the original film is maintained as much as possible.

By applying Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies to the case study of *Havoc in Heaven*, a Beijing opera film, this paper aims to reveal the effectiveness of various subtitling strategies for translating culturally rooted mythological names and titles. This analysis offers insights into the complexities of audiovisual translation and highlights the careful balance required to convey the rich cultural heritage embedded in mythological references to a global audience.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews key research on subtitling strategies for mythological names and titles in Beijing opera films. The literature review begins by outlining the key constraints in Audiovisual Translation (AVT) to establish the context for this study. It then presents Gottlieb's typology of subtitling strategies, which addresses the practical challenges inherent in AVT. The review further examines the translation of proper names and titles, as well as mythological names and titles, and concludes by identifying gaps in the existing literature.

A. Constraints in Audiovisual Translation (AVT)

Subtitling is a fundamental component of AVT that involves transcribing spoken dialogue, musical lyrics, and other auditory information into written text displayed on screen (Díaz-Cintas, 2018; Gottlieb, 1992; Gambier, 2003). As a specialised field within AVT, subtitling faces unique challenges due to strict space and time constraints (Han, 2019; Tian, 2023). These constraints necessitate a balance between text condensation, synchronisation with audiovisual elements, and cultural adaptation, while maintaining readability for the audience.

One of the primary challenges in subtitling is the constraint on the number of characters that can appear on screen at any given time. Subtitles typically permit a maximum of 35 to 45 characters per line, with most subtitles consisting of no more than two lines (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, 2021; Gottlieb, 1994; Karamitroglou, 1998). This restricts the amount of information conveyed, often requiring subtitlers to condense the spoken dialogue. As noted by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007), one of the main difficulties in subtitling lies in the need to condense the text. Subtitlers must distil dialogue to its essence, omitting or paraphrasing parts without losing the original meaning. This process involves complex decision-making, as subtitlers must prioritise certain elements of the message, which may influence the viewer's comprehension.

Moreover, subtitles are also constrained by time. The dialogue must synchronise with on-screen action, and each subtitle must remain on screen long enough to be read comfortably, but not so long that it disrupts audiovisual rhythm (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2018). Typically, subtitles are displayed for 1 to 2 seconds per line, with speed dependent on dialogue pace (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998). As Gottlieb (1992) points out, subtitles need to be synchronized with the timing of the spoken dialogue on screen, but in fast-paced scenes, subtitlers must prioritise essential information, sometimes omitting less critical dialogue. This constraint becomes particularly challenging during overlapping speech or rapid exchanges, where brevity and clarity are paramount.

Furthermore, synchronisation and readability are closely interdependent challenges in subtitling. Subtitle text must align with dialogue and match the rhythm of the on-screen action. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) observe that effective timing is closely linked to the readability of subtitles. As poor timing can lead to rushed reading or narrative disruption. The ideal reading speed for subtitles is around 13 to 15 characters per second (Ferriol, 2004), ensuring viewers absorb

information without strain. However, this pace must be carefully calibrated, especially in scenes with rapid or complex dialogue, to ensure viewers can follow the plot.

In addition, subtitles contend with cultural adaptation, particularly when source material contains culturally specific references, idiomatic expressions, or humour that may not translate directly into the target language. Abdelaal (2019) contends that subtitling culturally specific content involves finding a balance between staying true to the source and ensuring it is understandable for the target audience. Similarly, Liu et al. (2024) highlight the necessity of free translation, substitution, and omission for culture-loaded words in opera. Subtitlers must decide whether to retain, adapt, or omit culturally specific elements, decisions that significantly influence how the target audience interprets the message. For official titles deeply ingrained in culture, cultural substitution is commonly employed, as exemplified by terms such as *chéng xiàng* (“prime minister”) and *fù mǎ* (“King’s son-in-law”) (Liu et al., 2025). Both cultural adaptation and substitution assist subtitlers in navigating cultural divergence.

In conclusion, subtitling within AVT is a specialised and challenging task that requires balancing space and time limitations, synchronisation, readability, and cultural accuracy. Subtitlers must condense dialogues effectively while maintaining the integrity of the original message and considering technical constraints. They must also navigate cultural adaptation, adding further layers of interpretative decision-making. These challenges underscore the complexity of emphasising the crucial role of both technological tools and human oversight in producing high-quality translations. Translators must produce concise yet accurate translations that convey the original meaning while maintaining cultural context (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, 2018, 2021; Pedersen, 2011).

B. Gottlieb’s Typology of Subtitling Strategies

A range of strategies has been developed to address the constraints of subtitling, with Gottlieb’s (1992) typology offering a comprehensive framework for effectively managing these challenges. These strategies, outlined in Table 1, help ensure that subtitles are accurate and culturally appropriate, enhancing the accessibility of the translated content. Translators must carefully balance brevity with meaning, cultural relevance, and narrative integrity.

TABLE 1
GOTTLIEB’S TYPOLOGY OF SUBTITLING STRATEGIES

Strategy	Description
Expansion	Adding information to clarify the meaning for the target audience.
Paraphrase	Rephrasing the original text to fit the subtitle constraints.
Transfer	Directly translating the source text while maintaining content and form.
Imitation	Retaining the original form of names and cultural references.
Transcription	Capturing the phonetic or stylistic aspects of the original text.
Dislocation	Adapting the text to make it culturally relevant for the target audience.
Condensation	Reducing the length of the text while retaining the essential meaning.
Decimation	Omitting less important parts for subtitle conciseness.
Deletion	Removing non-essential sections entirely.
Resignation	Omitting sections that cannot be satisfactorily translated.

Gottlieb’s (1992) typology of subtitling strategies is particularly well-suited to this study, as it effectively addresses the core challenges of space, time, synchronisation, and cultural adaptation inherent in subtitling. His framework provides practical techniques for managing text condensation, ensuring subtitles remain concise yet meaningful, an essential consideration given the strict space limitations discussed earlier. Additionally, his strategies, such as reduction and paraphrase, are directly applicable to time constraints, ensuring that subtitles fit within the brief window of display time while maintaining the core message (Gottlieb, 1992).

Furthermore, Gottlieb’s focus on synchronisation between subtitles and the audiovisual content aligns with the study’s emphasis on maintaining the rhythm and timing of the dialogue (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). His strategies also offer solutions for cultural adaptation, assisting subtitlers in effectively navigating the challenge of translating cultural references effectively, as noted by Abdelaal (2019). In sum, Gottlieb’s approach provides a balanced and flexible framework that efficiently addresses both the technical and linguistic complexities of subtitling, rendering it an ideal model for this study.

C. Translating Proper Names and Titles

Another significant aspect of subtitling involves the translation of proper names, such as personal names, geographical locations, and titles, which present unique challenges. These elements often carry deep cultural, historical, and contextual significance, requiring careful attention in translation. Scholars like Newmark (1988) and Hermans (1988) emphasise the importance of cultural considerations in translating names. Newmark (1988) identifies transference—the retention of the original name—as a prominent strategy that ensures the preservation of cultural or historical connotations. For instance, the name *Shakespeare* is typically retained in translation, preserving its cultural and literary significance. Functional equivalence, another strategy, involves preserving the role or status conveyed by a name, even if its form is altered. For example, translating “Duke” may require selecting culturally analogous terms such as *Príncipe* or *Comte*, depending on the target culture and context.

Thus, Hermans (1988) adopts a narrative-oriented approach, emphasising that the translation of proper names can shape readers’ perceptions of characters and settings. He identifies strategies such as copying, transcription, substitution,

and translation. Such decisions influence the narrative's ideological framework and affect how audiences engage with the text (Nyangeri & Wangari, 2019). Hermans highlights that names function as powerful cultural symbols, and their translation demands a careful balance between linguistic precision and narrative coherence.

Building on this, Coates-Stephens (1992) delves into translating proper names within literary and mythological contexts, noting their symbolic and historical layers. For instance, mythological names such as *Apollo* carry connotations that transcend language, symbolising cultural archetypes and shared historical narratives. Translators must consider cultural adaptation or explanation to preserve these connotations. Similarly, Pedersen (2011) extends Gottlieb's strategies to AVT, highlighting how space and time constraints affect the translation of names. Strategies such as transference, cultural substitution, and simplification assist subtitlers in maintaining accuracy while adapting names to fit subtitle limitations.

Proper names in AVT function as dynamic cultural elements. The choice to retain, adapt, or omit a name depends on its cultural and narrative significance. Pedersen (2011) emphasises the importance of preserving narrative coherence while respecting AVT's technical constraints. Translating proper names requires subtitlers to navigate between maintaining cultural authenticity and ensuring accessibility for audiences.

D. Translating Mythological Names and Titles

Subtitling mythological names and titles presents particular challenges due to their deep-rooted cultural and symbolic meanings. These references often embody national identity, history, and values, compelling translators to preserve their essence while ensuring accessibility for international audiences.

In Chinese mythology, names such as the Monkey King (*Sūn Wù Kōng*) and the Jade Emperor (*Yù Dì*) carry profound cultural symbolism. Translators must decide whether to maintain these names in their original forms, adapt them, or provide explanations. Huang (2011) emphasises that mythological names are not merely linguistic markers but are also culturally and philosophically laden symbols. Translators must integrate philosophical traditions such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism to ensure translations resonate with target audiences. For example, the name "Jade Emperor" (*Yù Dì*) must convey its Taoist spiritual significance while remaining accessible to non-Chinese audiences.

Thus, the subtitles of *Havoc in Heaven's* Palace reveal that subtitling mythological names requires careful attention to ethical translation principles (OpenSubtitles.org, n.d.). For instance, "Yáo Chí" (瑶池) is often translated as "the Jade Pool," but this may mislead audiences into associating it solely with jade, whereas it more accurately symbolises nobility and the fairyland. To preserve cultural accuracy, translators might opt for alternatives such as "Yao Pond" or include contextual information.

Greek mythology offers a contrasting example, with names like *Zeus* and *Medusa* retaining their original forms in Western cinema. These names are often well-known, allowing translators to preserve their mythological significance without the need for additional explanation. However, when cultural frameworks differ, subtitlers must balance literal translation with contextual adaptation to ensure audience comprehension. For example, Kovalyov (2024) discusses how films like *Clash of the Titans* adapt mythological figures to modern audiences while retaining their cultural significance.

A proposed translation pattern for mythological names involves combining Cantonese Pinyin, liberal English translation, and background information (Wang et al., 2022). This approach ensures both linguistic fidelity and cultural resonance. Similarly, Du (2019) and Zhong (2019) argue that semiotic analysis is essential for translating mythological names. Mythological names function as cultural signifiers, carrying symbolic and historical layers. Translators must decode these layers and identify equivalents that evoke comparable associations in the target language. This ensures that mythological references retain their narrative and cultural impact. Contrastingly, Xie and Zhao (2023) explore naturalisation and alienation strategies in translating mythological names in audiovisual materials. Naturalisation modifies cultural references to better suit the target audience, enhancing accessibility, while alienation retains the foreignness of the source culture. The authors caution that overemphasising either strategy risks diminishing cultural authenticity or confusing audiences. A balanced approach ensures mythological names maintain their symbolic power while remaining comprehensible.

E. Gaps in the Literature

Despite extensive research on subtitling strategies and the translation of mythological names, studies focusing specifically on Beijing opera films remain limited. The unique challenges posed by this genre, such as its rich cultural symbolism, complex narratives, and technical constraints, remain underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by analysing subtitling strategies for mythological names in *Havoc in Heaven*, offering insights into approaches that preserve both the cultural and narrative integrity in Beijing opera films.

III. METHODOLOGY

Drawing on Gottlieb's (1992) typology of subtitling strategies as the theoretical framework, the research methodology is designed to systematically analyse the subtitling techniques employed in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*. This section outlines the research design, data collection, and analytical procedures used in the study.

A. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design employing a case study approach, deemed particularly appropriate for an in-depth examination of the complex subtitling strategies applied to mythological names and titles. Qualitative research emphasises the understanding of phenomena within their specific contexts, making it ideal for examining culturally rich and context-dependent elements such as mythological names (Creswell, 2013). The case study method, in particular, facilitates a detailed and holistic examination of a single instance or bounded system (Yin, 2014), such as the subtitling of mythological names in *Havoc in Heaven*. This allows for a thorough examination of the subtitling process and the cultural considerations involved in translating mythological names and titles in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*.

B. Data Collection

The data for this study comprises the subtitles from the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*, which is the sole film addressing mythology within the Beijing Opera Film Project and contains the greatest number of mythological names among the Chinese opera films to date. The film was selected due to its rich use of mythological names and titles, which are integral to its narrative and cultural identity. The following steps were taken to collect the data:

(1). *Selection of the film*: *Havoc in Heaven* is a renowned Beijing Opera film and the only mythological adaptation among the 21 films in the Beijing Opera Film Project. It also contains the highest number of mythological names in the Chinese opera films to date. As such, it serves as a valuable case study for analysing the subtitling strategies employed to translate mythological names and titles that are deeply rooted in Chinese cultural and historical contexts.

(2). *Subtitle extraction*: The subtitles were extracted from the film using the subtitle extraction software *Subtitle Edit*. Both the original Chinese subtitles and their corresponding English translations were collected for analysis.

(3). *Identification of mythological names and titles*: The subtitles were systematically reviewed to identify instances of names and titles with mythological significance. These were subsequently categorised into four types: names of people, names of places, names of objects, and official titles.

C. Analytical Procedures

The analysis employs a detailed examination of the subtitling strategies used to translate mythological references, such as names and titles, using Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies framework as the analytical foundation. The following procedures were employed:

(1). *Categorisation of subtitling strategies*: Each identified instance of a mythological name or title within the subtitles was categorised according to Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation.

(2). *Contextual analysis*: The context in which each name or title appeared was examined to interpret its cultural and narrative significance. This contextual analysis informed the evaluation of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the subtitling strategy used.

(3). *Comparative analysis*: The original Chinese names and titles were compared with their English translations to evaluate how effectively the subtitling strategies preserved their cultural and symbolic meanings.

By systematically analysing the subtitling strategies used within *Havoc in Heaven*, this study aims to shed light on the complexities involved in translating mythologically rooted names and titles within audiovisual media. These findings aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of how subtitling can effectively convey culturally embedded references to a global audience.

IV. RESULTS

This study identified a total of 54 instances related to mythological names and titles, comprising eight examples of names of people, nine examples of objects, nine examples of places, and 28 examples of official titles. The subtitling strategies were manually counted and are presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Each table highlights the frequency and corresponding percentage of each strategy applied in Gottlieb's subtitling strategies of mythological names and titles in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*. Firstly, Table 2 presents the distribution of strategies used for translating mythological names of people. Table 3 illustrates the percentage of these strategies applied to mythological names of objects. Subsequently, Table 4 demonstrates the proportion of subtitling strategies used for mythological names of places, and Table 5 focuses on official titles with mythological significance. Finally, Table 6 provides a comprehensive overview of the overall distribution of Gottlieb's subtitling strategies across all categories. The subsequent sections will examine these findings in greater detail.

A. The Result of the Mythological Names of People

Table 2 presents the distribution of Gottlieb's subtitling strategies used for mythological names of people in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*. The table highlights the frequency and corresponding percentage of each strategy applied. Transcription emerges as the most frequently used strategy, with 5 occurrences, accounting for 62.5% of the total. Condensation, paraphrase, and transfer each occur once, representing 12.5% of the total, respectively. Overall, transcription is the predominant strategy in the subtitling of mythological names of people, with the other three strategies utilised to a significantly lesser extent.

TABLE 2
THE PERCENTAGE OF GOTTLIEB'S SUBTITLING STRATEGIES USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES OF PEOPLE

Subtitling strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Transcription	5	62.5
condensation	1	12.5
Paraphrase	1	12.5
Transfer	1	12.5

B. The Result of the Mythological Names of Objects

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of Gottlieb's subtitling strategies employed for mythological names of objects in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*. The table displays the frequency and corresponding percentage of each utilised strategy. Expansion and paraphrase are the most frequently employed strategies, each occurring three times and representing 33.33% of the total. Transfer is used twice, accounting for 22.22%, while condensation appears once, constituting 11.12% of the total. Overall, expansion and paraphrase are the prominent strategies for subtitling mythological names of objects, utilised equally often. Transfer and condensation are also applied, albeit less frequently.

TABLE 3
THE PERCENTAGE OF GOTTLIEB'S SUBTITLING STRATEGIES USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES OF OBJECTS

Subtitling strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Expansion	3	33.33
Paraphrase	3	33.33
Transfer	2	22.22
Condensation	1	11.12

C. The Result of the Mythological Names of Places

Table 4 displays the distribution of Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies used for mythological names of places in *Havoc in Heaven*. It highlights the frequency and corresponding percentage of each strategy applied. Transfer is the most frequently used strategy, occurring five times and representing 55.56% of the total. Expansion and condensation are each used twice, accounting for 22.22% respectively. In summary, transfer is the predominant strategy for subtitling the mythological names of places, followed equally by expansion and condensation, both of which are employed to a lesser extent.

TABLE 4
THE PERCENTAGE OF GOTTLIEB'S SUBTITLING STRATEGIES USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES OF PLACES

Subtitling strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Transfer	5	55.56
Expansion	2	22.22
Condensation	2	22.22

D. The Result of the Mythological Official Titles

Table 5 presents the distribution of Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies applied to the official titles found in *Havoc in Heaven*. The table shows the frequency and corresponding percentage of each strategy used. Transfer is the most frequently used strategy, with 12 occurrences representing 42.86% of the total. Expansion appears seven times, accounting for 25%, while condensation is used five times, comprising 17.86%. Paraphrase is employed three times (10.71%), and transcription is the least used, occurring once (3.57%). Overall, transfer is the predominant strategy for subtitling official titles, followed by expansion and condensation. Paraphrase and transcription are used less frequently.

TABLE 5
THE PERCENTAGE OF GOTTLIEB'S SUBTITLING STRATEGIES USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL OFFICIAL TITLES

Subtitling strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Transfer	12	42.86
Expansion	7	25
Condensation	5	17.86
Paraphrasing	3	10.71
Transcription	1	3.57

E. The Results of the Mythological Names and Titles in the Beijing Opera Film *Havoc in Heaven*

Table 6 summarises the overall distribution of Gottlieb's subtitling strategies applied to mythological names and titles in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*. The table details the frequency and percentage of each strategy used. Transfer is the most frequently employed strategy, with 20 occurrences, representing 37% of the total. Expansion appears 12 times, accounting for 22%, while condensation is used 9 times, making up 17%. Paraphrase is employed 7 times, constituting 13%, and transcription occurs 6 times, representing 11%. Overall, transfer is the predominant

strategy for subtitling mythological names and titles in the film, followed by expansion and condensation. Paraphrasing and transcription are used less frequently.

TABLE 6
THE PERCENTAGE OF GOTTLIEB'S SUBTITLING STRATEGIES USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES AND TITLES

Subtitling strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Transfer	20	37
Expansion	12	22
condensation	9	17
Paraphrase	7	13
Transcription	6	11

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the percentage of Gottlieb's typology of subtitling strategies applied to mythological names of people, names of objects, names of places, and official titles, the following discussion examines the implications of each strategy's usage and its impact on the accessibility and cultural conveyance of the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven*. In each of the following tables, representative examples from each category are selected for analysis. The categories are presented in order of the proportion of subtitling strategies used, ranked from highest to lowest across the four classifications.

A. Transfer

Gottlieb (1992) describes transfer as the complete conveyance and appropriate translation of meaning. The analysis indicates that transfer is the most frequently used subtitling strategy in *Havoc in Heaven*, comprising 37% of all subtitles for mythological names and titles (see Table 6). Within their respective subsets, it dominates official titles (42.9 %) and place-names (55.6 %), but is less common with objects (22.2 %) and personal names (12.5 %) (Tables 2–5).

Transfer maintains both the content and form of the source text, thereby ensuring a high degree of fidelity in subtitling (Gottlieb, 1992; Díaz-Cintas, 2003). This is particularly important for mythological terms that hold deep cultural significance. For instance, subtitles such as the Jade Emperor (玉帝), the Great Sage Equaling Heaven (齐天大圣), and Gods of Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning (风、雨、雷、电) retain their original structure, thereby facilitating comprehension for the target audience (see Table 7). Similarly, Cave of Water Curtains in the Mountain of Flowers and Fruits (水帘洞) is translated literally, preserving its descriptive accuracy and effectively conveying the mythological grandeur embedded in these references.

TABLE 7
TRANSFER USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES AND TITLES

Category	Chinese Subtitle	English Subtitle	Time
Place	今有 花果山水帘洞	Sun Wukong, the demon monkey of <i>the Cave of Water Curtains in the Mountain</i>	00:08:05,500 --> 00:08:07,999
Object	神针化作 金箍棒 得金盆金甲	The Pillar is transformed into <i>the Golden-hooped Rod</i> . Gold armors and a gold helmet are presented.	00:05:51,708 --> 00:05:57,624
Official Title	我奉 玉帝 圣旨	By the order of <i>the Jade Emperor</i>	00:10:47,833 --> 00:10:50,457
	那妖猴自立 齐天大圣	The demon monkey has proclaimed himself <i>the Great Sage Equaling Heaven</i> .	00:34:25,250 --> 00:34:27,874
	风雨雷电	<i>Gods of Wind, Rain, Thunder and Lightning</i> .	01:13:12,958 --> 01:13:16,749

As Chaume (2004) notes, the transfer strategy, essentially a form-preserving literal translation that grounds the target text firmly in its source culture, enabling audiences to visualise the mythological setting while minimising semantic loss. Transfer therefore complements more adaptive techniques by anchoring the subtitles in cultural authenticity and giving viewers an unambiguous point of reference.

B. Expansion

Expansion is a prominent subtitling strategy in *Havoc in Heaven*, accounting for 22% of the subtitles related to mythological names and titles (see Table 6). It is most frequently used for mythological objects (33.33%, see Table 3) and is also evident in official titles (25%) and place names (22.22%) (see Tables 5 and 4, respectively). However, expansion is notably absent in the subtitling of mythological names of people, indicating that these require less contextual elaboration.

TABLE 8
EXPANSION USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES AND TITLES

Category	Chinese Subtitle	English Subtitle	Time
Objects	盗金丹, 八卦炉内炼就火眼金睛	steals <i>the Pills of Immortality</i> and, after being burned in <i>the Eight-Trigram Furnace</i> , gets a pair of piercing eyes	00:03:01,375 --> 00:03:04,874
	抢走定海神针	and took away <i>the Pillar that Pacifies the Oceans</i> .	00:08:11,875 --> 00:08:14,874
Official title	就封他为弼马温与陛下养马	Why not make him <i>Protector of the Horses</i> and let him raise horses for you?	00:09:30,500 --> 00:09:37,999
	请的是西天如来佛南海观世音	<i>Gautama Buddha of the West Heaven, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva of the South Sea</i>	00:46:20,791 --> 00:46:28,124
Places	龙宫借宝得金箍棒	magical staff Jingu Bang from <i>the Dragon King's palace</i> .	00:02:37,000 --> 00:02:39,540

Expansion clarifies culturally specific terms for international audiences (Díaz-Cintas, 2003; Ivarsson, 1992; Remael, 2003) by incorporating explanatory elements (Gottlieb, 1992). For instance, “金丹” (jīn dān), literally “golden elixir,” is rendered as “Pills of Immortality” to convey its Taoist significance. Similarly, “八卦炉” (bā guà lú) is translated as “Eight-Trigram Furnace,” preserving its religious connotations. Likewise, “定海神针” (dìng hǎi shén zhēn), meaning “Needle of the Sea Stabilizer,” becomes “Pillar that Pacifies the Oceans,” emphasising its mythological role and narrative significance (see Table 8). Such expansions preserve cosmological connotations while remaining intelligible to non-Chinese viewers (Pederson, 2011; Gambier, 2010). Translating 西天如来佛 as “Gautama Buddha of the Western Heaven” and 南海观世音 as “Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva of the Southern Sea,” for example, anchors the deities geographically and theologically, ensuring the film’s mythological integrity (Orero, 2004).

C. Condensation

Condensation, identified by Gottlieb (1992), is used in 17.86% of subtitles for mythological names and titles in *Havoc in Heaven* (see Table 6). This strategy accommodates space and time constraints, promoting readability while preserving essential meaning (Díaz-Cintas, 2003; Remael, 2003). It is particularly relevant for subtitling mythological official titles, names of places, objects, and people (see Tables 2-5).

TABLE 9
CONDENSATION USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES AND TITLES

Category	Chinese Subtitle	English Subtitle	Time
Official title	带领红鸾天禧月孛子九曜星君	Lead <i>the red phoenix, Tianxi, Yuebo, the Lords of Nine Luminaries</i> .	01:13:04,916 → 01:13:12,957
	带领青龙白虎罗喉计都南北星斗	Lead <i>the Azure Dragon, the White Tiger, Rahu and Ketu and star lords of the South and North</i> .	01:12:03,000 → 01:12:11,874
	带领金吒木吒天罡地煞六丁六甲	<i>Jinzha, Muzha, the Heavenly Dippers and Earthly Fiends, and Six Dings and Six Jias</i> .	01:14:13,708 → 01:14:23,582
Object	且饱餐赤麟麟龙肝凤脑	to be able to <i>feast on all these rarest foods</i> .	00:49:45,458 → 00:49:49,957
People	还有那骍骝紫燕绿耳飞黄赤兔嘶骏	Besides, sire, there are <i>tens of thousands of celestial horses</i> .	00:13:52,625 → 00:13:56,499

Condensation simplifies complex terms while maintaining narrative coherence. For example, “红鸾天禧月孛子九曜星君” (hóng luán tiān xǐ yuè bèi xiān zǐ jiǔ yào xīng jūn) is condensed to “the red phoenix, Tianxi, Yuebo, the Lords of Nine Luminaries,” retaining key elements. Similarly, celestial horse names such as 骍骝 (huá liú), 紫燕 (zǐ yàn), and 绿耳 (lǜ ěr), are summarised as “tens of thousands of celestial horses” to preserve their mythological grandeur (Gambier, 2003; Orero, 2004). Another example is “all these rarest foods” for “赤麟蹄龙肝凤脑” (chì lín tí lóng gān fèng nǎo). Such condensations align with viewers’ reading speeds (Ivarsson, 1992) and safeguard cultural resonance while ensuring subtitle economy (Chaume, 2004; Orero, 2004).

D. Paraphrase

Paraphrase, as defined by Gottlieb (1992), is used in 13% of subtitles for mythological names and titles in *Havoc in Heaven* (see Table 6). This strategy rephrases content to fit subtitle constraints while preserving meaning, particularly when direct translation lacks clarity (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Ivarsson, 1992). It is applied in mythological names of objects (33.33%, see Table 3), official titles (10.71%, see Table 5), and people (12.5%, see Table 2), but not to the names of places.

Paraphrase enhances clarity by using culturally familiar terms. For example, “三昧真火” (sān wèi zhēn huǒ), literally “Three-Flavored True Fire,” becomes “the Supreme Flames,” making it more accessible. “火眼金睛” (huǒ yǎn jīn jīng), meaning “fiery eyes with golden pupils”, is rendered as “a pair of piercing eyes”, emphasising sharp vision. “瘟神” (wēn shén), directly translated as “plague god,” is paraphrased as “evil gods” to convey malevolence (see Table 10).

Such choices improve readability and semantic accuracy (Chaume, 2004; Orero, 2004) and meet the brevity rule of modern subtitling. Ultimately, paraphrase bridges cultural gaps and maintains narrative integrity (Gambier, 2003; Ranzato & Zanotti, 2018).

TABLE 10
PARAPHRASE USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES AND TITLES

Category	Chinese Subtitle	English Subtitle	Time
Object	盗金丹，八卦炉内炼就 火眼金睛	steals the Pills of Immortality and, after being burned in the Eight-Trigram Furnace, gets <i>a pair of piercing eyes</i> .	00:03:01,375 → 00:03:04,874
	待我用起 三昧真火 定将猴头化为灰爆	I shall incinerate the monkey with <i>the Supreme Flames</i> .	01:05:28,833 → 01:05:35,624
Official title	败 瘟神	We defeat <i>evil gods</i> .	00:38:26,958 → 00:38:30,249
People	所以 太白星君 让我等是多磕头少讲话	So <i>the Great White Golden Star</i> asked us to yes him always and keep our mouth shut.	00:17:03,541 → 00:17:12,374

E. Transcription

Transcription is the least used subtitling strategy in *Havoc in Heaven*, accounting for 11% of subtitles for mythological names and titles (see Table 6). Within the subset of person-names, however, it accounts for 62.5 % of cases (Table 2), faithfully conveying figures such as 孙悟空 Sun Wukong and 哪吒 Nezha (Table 11). According to Gottlieb (1992), transcription retains the original sound, enabling audiences to experience the authentic auditory elements of the source text. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) further emphasise its role in preserving cultural authenticity and recognisability.

TABLE 11
TRANSCRIPTION USED FOR MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES AND TITLES

Category	Chinese Subtitle	English Subtitle	Time
People	孙悟空	<i>Sun Wu Kong</i>	00:08:21,500 → 00:08:26,249
	敖广 为何如此狼狈	<i>Ao Guang</i> . Why do you look so miserable?	00:08:00,041 → 00:08:03,790
	我不是奸细我是天上的 李长庚	I am no spy, but <i>Li Changgeng</i> from Heaven.	00:10:01,958 → 00:10:06,749
	命 二郎神 带领 六丁六甲 埋伏凌霄左右	Ask <i>Erlang Shen</i> and the <i>Six Dings and Six Ji</i> as to set up an ambush by the Hall above Clouds	00:35:32,208 → 00:35:38,624

Beyond phonetics, transcription ensures cultural specificity. Names such as "Sun Wukong" and "Erlang Shen" are deeply embedded in Chinese mythology, and their retention maintains historical and literary significance (Díaz-Cintas, 2003). This approach prevents misinterpretation; for instance, translating "Sun Wukong" as "Monkey King" would alter the character's cultural connotations. As Remael (2004) and Gambier (2003) note, keeping the source form aids global recognisability without distorting meaning.

Overall, the strategic use of transcription in *Havoc in Heaven* complements other subtitling methods such as condensation, paraphrase, and expansion, transcription helps balance accessibility with cultural fidelity for international audiences (Chaume, 2004; Pedersen, 2011).

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis of subtitling strategies used for mythological names and titles in the Beijing opera film *Havoc in Heaven* offers a comprehensive understanding of how Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies can be effectively applied to culturally laden content. By systematically categorising mythological nomenclature into four groups—names of people, names of objects, names of places, and official titles—this study reveals distinct patterns in the use of these subtitling strategies.

The predominant use of transfer (37%) underscores a clear preference for direct translations that preserve both the original meaning and form, thus maintaining the cultural and narrative integrity of the source text. This approach ensures that the audience receives an authentic representation of the mythological elements. Additionally, the considerable use of the strategies: expansion (22%) and paraphrase (13%) reflects a concerted effort to provide additional context and clarity, thereby facilitating cross-cultural understanding. These strategies enrich comprehension by elaborating on culturally specific terms and rephrasing complex concepts.

The use of condensation (17%) further highlights the necessity of adapting lengthy or intricate terms into concise and readable subtitles that conform to the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling, while still preserving essential meaning. Additionally, the application of transcription (11%) preserves the phonetic authenticity of the original names, allowing viewers to experience the distinctive sounds and stylistic nuances of the Chinese language.

In a word, the balanced application of these subtitling strategies enables *Havoc in Heaven* to be appreciated by a wider international audience. These strategies contribute to a deeper understanding of Chinese mythology and culture while simultaneously retaining the original spirit of the narrative. This study not only advances our understanding of effective subtitling strategies for mythologically rich content but also offers practical implications for audiovisual translation in similar contexts. Nonetheless, the focus on a single opera film may limit the generalisability of the findings. Future research could further explore the impact of these strategies on audience reception, as well as their applicability in the subtitling of other culturally significant films and operas.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdelaal, N. M. (2019). Subtitling of culture-bound terms: strategies and quality assessment. *Heliyon*, 5(4), e01411. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e01411>
- [2] Cai, T. Y. (2006). “da nao tian gong” huoshui youyuan ——shunchang “qi tian dasheng” zhi wo jian [“Havoc in Heaven” living water has a source - Shunchang “Qitian Da Sheng” of my opinion]. *Xuehai*, 01, 172–176. <https://doi.org/10.16091/j.cnki.cn32-1308/c.2006.01.027>.
- [3] Chaume, F. (2004). Film Studies and Translation Studies: Two Disciplines at Stake in Audiovisual Translation. *Meta*, 49(1), 12–24. <https://doi.org/10.7202/009016ar>
- [4] Coates-Stephens, S. (1992). The analysis and acquisition of proper names for the understanding of free text. *Computers and the Humanities*, 22, 441–456.
- [5] Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- [6] Díaz Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2021). *Subtitling: Concepts and Practices* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- [7] Díaz-Cintas, J. (2018). *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. Taylor & Francis.
- [8] Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2007). *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. Routledge.
- [9] Díaz-Cintas, J. (2003). Audiovisual translation in the third millennium. In G. Anderman & M. Rogers (Eds.), *Translation Today. Trends and Perspectives* (pp. 192–204). Multilingual Matters.
- [10] Du, P. (2019). “xi you ji” zhong shenhua renwu xingxiang chengwei de yingyi yanjiu [An English translation study of the appellations of mythological characters in *Journey to the West*]. *Xichang Xueyuan Xuebao (Shehui Kexue Ban)*, 31(02), 105–110+124. <https://doi.org/10.16104/j.issn.16731883.2019.02.023>.
- [11] Ferriol, J. L. M. (2004). Subtitle reading speed: A new tool for its estimation. *Babel Revue Internationale de La Traduction / International Journal of Translation*, 59(4), 406–420. <https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.59.4.02mar>
- [12] Gambier, Y. (2003). Screen Transadaptation: Perception and Reception. *The Translator*, 9(2), 171–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2003.10799152>
- [13] Gambier, Y. (2010). Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling. Target. *International Journal of Translation Studies*, 22(2), 369–375. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.22.2.16gam>
- [14] Gao, X. J. (2005). *zhongguo xiqu dianying shi* [History of Chinese Opera Film] (p. 35). wenhua yishu chubanshe.
- [15] Gottlieb, H. (1992). Subtitling: A New University Discipline. In C. Dollerup, & A. Loddegaard (Eds.), *Teaching Translation and Interpreting* (pp. 161–170). John Benjamins.
- [16] Gottlieb, H. (1994). Subtitling: Diagonal translation. *Perspectives*, 2(1), 101–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676x.1994.9961227>
- [17] Han, J. (2019). Constraints and challenges in subtitling Chinese films into English. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press*, 2, 14–27. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://hdl.handle.net/1959.7/uws:57016>
- [18] Han, L., & Tong, J. (2018). “jingju dianying gongcheng” xilie yingpian gongyi zhanying zai gu tu qidong [The “Beijing Opera Film Project” series of public service screenings was launched at the State Library of China]. *Photo.china.com.cn*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from http://photo.china.com.cn/2018-04/23/content_50955158.htm
- [19] Hermans, T. (1988). *On translating proper names, with reference to De Witte and Max Havelaar*. Athlone Press.
- [20] House, J. (1997). *A model for translation quality assessment*. Tbl-Verlag Narr.
- [21] Hramova, T. (2016). “Poetry in the Raw”: Defining and Translating Proper Names in Literature. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 231, 159–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.09.086>
- [22] Huang, M. (2011). Ru dao shi wenhua yu “xi you ji” zhong de chenwei ciyu ying yi [Confucian, Taoist and Scholarly Cultures and the English Translation of Appellative Terms in *Journey to the West*]. *Pu Tian Xue Yuan Xue Bao*, 18(01), 63–67.
- [23] Ivarsson, J. (1992). *Subtitling for the media: a handbook of an art*. Transedit.
- [24] Ivarsson, J., & Carroll, M. (1998). *Subtitling*. Transedit.
- [25] Jorge Díaz Cintas. (2008). *The didactics of audiovisual translation*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [26] Jorge Díaz Cintas, & Remael, A. (2021). *Subtitling*. Routledge.
- [27] Karamitoglou, F. (1998). A Proposed Set of Subtitling Standards in Europe. *Translation Journal*, 2(2). <http://translationjournal.net/journal/04stndrd.htm>
- [28] Kovalyov, S. (2024). The Allure of the Mythical: How Greek Legends Shape Literary Aesthetics - Greek Mythology. *Greek Mythology*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://greek.mythologyworldwide.com/the-allure-of-the-mythical-how-greek-legends-shape-literary-aesthetics/>
- [29] Liu, L., & Jia, H. (2019). An Analysis of Demons and Monsters’ Translation in Jenner’s English Version of *Journey to the West*. *OALib*, 06(07), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1105533>
- [30] Liu, Y., Abdullah, M. A. R., & Syed Abdullah, S. N. (2024). Navigating Cross-Cultural Boundaries: Translation Strategies for Culture-Loaded Words in Chinese Yu Opera. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(7), 121–139. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v14-i7/21902>
- [31] Liu, Y., Alif Redzuan bin Abdullah, M., & Bin Syed Abdullah, S. N. (2025). English Subtitling of Culture-Loaded Words in Chinese Yu Opera: Strategies and Quality Assessment. *World Journal of English Language*, 15(2), 31–42. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v15n2p31>

- [32] Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of Translation*. Prentice-Hall International.
- [33] OpenSubtitles.org. (n.d.). The Monkey King: Havoc in Heaven's Palace [Subtitle file]. *OpenSubtitles*. Retrieved July 11, 2025, from <https://www.opensubtitles.org/en/subtitles/6800025/the-monkey-king-havoc-in-heaven-s-palace-en>
- [34] Nyangeri, N. A., & Wangari, R. (2019). Proper Names in Translation: Should They be Translated or Not? *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, 5(3-4), 347–365. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23277408.2019.1680914>
- [35] Orero, P. (2004). Audiovisual translation: A new dynamic umbrella. In P. Orero (Ed.), *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* (pp. vii–xiii). John Benjamins.
- [36] Pedersen, J. (2018). Transcultural Images Subtitling Culture-Specific Audiovisual Metaphors. In *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation*. Routledge.
- [37] Pedersen, J. (2011). *Subtitling norms for television: an exploration focussing on extralinguistic cultural references*. John Benjamins Pub. Co.
- [38] Ranzato, I., & Zanotti, S. (2018). *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation*. Routledge.
- [39] Rémel, A. (2003). Mainstream narrative film dialogue and subtitling: A case study of Mike Leigh's "Secrets & Lies" (1996). *The Translator*, 9(2), 225–247.
- [40] Shen, D. R. (2020). *Jingju dianying "da nao tian gong": "xiao jindou" heyi fanchu "da shijie"* [Beijing Opera film "Havoc in Heaven": "small somersaults" how to turn out the "big world"]. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1683476858456130723&wfr=spider&for=pc>
- [41] Teo, S. (2013). The opera film in Chinese cinema: cultural nationalism and cinematic form. In *Oxford University Press eBooks*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199765607.013.0012>
- [42] Tian, L. (2023). Applying machine translation to Chinese–English subtitling: Constraints and challenges. *Linguistica Antverpiensia New Series - Themes in Translation Studies*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.52034/lans-tts.v22i.752>
- [43] Wang, X., Zhao, X., & Wang, H. (2022). A Study of the Translation Patterns of Mythical Images of Chinese Mythology. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(10), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2022.1010001>
- [44] Xie, Z. P., & Zhao, Q. (2023). Guihua he yihua de shijiao xia dianshiju "xi you ji" renwu chenwei de fanyi (Eds.) [Translation of Character Titles in the TV Series *Journey to the West* from the Perspective of Naturalisation and Alienation] (Eds.). *Wenxue Yu Wenhua Fazhan Yantao Hui Lunwen Ji. Nanning Shifan Daxue Waiguoyu Xueyuan*, 43–44. <https://doi.org/10.26914/c.cnkihy.2023.029472>
- [45] Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study research: Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Sage.
- [46] Zhong, W. J. (2019). Molisi fuhao xue shijiao xia "xi you ji" zhong renwu mingchen yingyi [English Translation of Character Names in *Journey to the West* from Morris Semiotics Perspective]. *Jiangxi Dianli Zhiye Jishu Xueyuan Xuebao*, 32(04), 146–147+149.

Qiuling Yang is currently a Ph.D candidate in Translation and Interpretation at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Meanwhile, she is also an English teacher in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Pingdingshan University, China. Her academic interest lies in Audio-Visual Translation, Translation and Dissemination of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage. Email: qiulingyang666@gmail.com

Syed Nurulakla bin Syed Abdullah, Assistant Professor at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. He earned a Ph.D. from the University of Malaya in 2015, specializing in Translation, Modern and Classical texts (Arabic-English-Malay), and Literary Translation. Email: syedakla@upm.edu.my

Pabiyah HajiMaming @ Pabiyah Toklubok is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. She received her Ph.D degree in IIU. Her research areas include Comparative Literature (Arabic-Malay); Islamic Literature; Teaching of Arabic as a Second Language. Email: pabiyah@upm.edu.my

Yi Liu is currently a Ph.D candidate in Translation and Interpretation at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Meanwhile, he is also an English teacher in the School of Foreign Studies, Guangdong Baiyun University, China. His academic interest lies in Audio-Visual Translation, Translation and Dissemination of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage, TCM Translation, Language Policy, and Area Studies. Email: liuyi9456@gmail.com

Minority Language Maintenance: A Case Study of Mandarin Language in Kampung Mandar Village, Banyuwangi

Agus Sariono*

Faculty of Humanity, Jember University, Indonesia

Bambang Wibisono

Faculty of Humanity, Jember University, Indonesia

Hairus Salikin

Faculty of Humanity, Jember University, Indonesia

Akhmad Haryono

Faculty of Humanity, Jember University, Indonesia

Muta'allim

Togo Ambarsari College of Islamic Education, Bondowoso, Indonesia

Abstract—This study focuses on the maintenance of Mandarin as a minority language used by the Mandar community in Kampung Mandar Village, Banyuwangi. The primary objective of this research is to identify the factors influencing the sustainability of Mandarin as well as the strategies employed by the community to maintain its use amid the dominance of the majority language. This study employs a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The findings reveal that the process of maintaining Mandarin involves several key aspects. First, language choice patterns across various domains of life, such as family, social environment, workplace, education, social media, and in customary practices and traditions. Second, the language attitudes of the Mandar ethnic community towards the use of Mandarin. Third, the degree of language maintenance determined by language choice, language attitudes, the role of rituals and traditions, and the intensity of language use. Fourth, determining factors affecting the maintenance of Mandarin include the language's social status, its speakers' distribution, and institutional support. Furthermore, the discussion addresses strategic themes such as language maintenance and revitalization, language attitudes about cultural identity, language choice dynamics within mixed families, the influence of language contact on language shift, the role of economic factors, and the contribution of rituals and traditions in sustaining the existence of Mandarin within a multilingual society.

Index Terms—language maintenance, minority language, Mandarin language, ritual, tradition

I. INTRODUCTION

The Mandar community in Kampung Mandar Village, Banyuwangi, is a minority ethnic group living alongside the Osing, Javanese, and Madurese ethnic groups. Although residing close to one another, social interaction between these ethnic groups tends to be limited. Since the Dutch colonial era, the Mandar people have settled in an area now known as Kampung Mandar Village. The majority of Mandar residents work as fishermen, so their social interactions while at sea almost exclusively occur among fellow Mandar. Interaction with other ethnic groups typically happens in trade contexts, such as selling fresh seafood catches or seafood-based culinary products at food stalls around the Kampung Mandar beach. Additionally, interethnic contact also takes place in governmental activities, cultural rituals such as Petik Laut—which has become part of the official festival of the Banyuwangi Regency Government—cultural tourism activities, as well as other activities outside the village, such as shopping and attending social events.

Kampung Mandar is located in Banyuwangi Subdistrict, Banyuwangi Regency, covering an area of approximately 91 hectares. This area is divided into two subvillages, Krajan and Krobokan. According to demographic data, Kampung Mandar Village is inhabited by 3,757 people, consisting of 1,844 males and 1,913 females (Central Bureau of Statistics, Banyuwangi Regency, 2017, p. 8). The majority of the population works as fishermen. Various factors play a role in maintaining the existence of a language. Giles (in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) identifies three main factors determining a language's sustainability: (1) social, economic, and historical status; (2) the geographic distribution and territorial concentration of its speakers; and (3) support from institutions or organizations. Based on initial observations, these three factors also serve as key determinants in the maintenance of Mandarin.

In Banyuwangi Regency, traditional leaders from the Mandar ethnic group are striving to revitalize their language and culture. The culture involved includes life-cycle rituals—such as pregnancy, birth, circumcision, marriage, and death—as well as enduring social traditions, one of which is the Petik Laut ceremony. This tradition has even been adopted by the Banyuwangi Regency Government as part of a cultural festival aimed at developing the local tourism sector (Sukatman, 2016). Against this backdrop of community conditions, culture, and language, this study aims to address the following questions: (1) What are the patterns of language use within the Mandar community? (2) What are the attitudes of the Mandar people toward the Mandaran language? (3) To what extent is the Mandaran language being maintained? and (4) What factors influence the level of language maintenance?

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The term social dialectology is indeed not as widely recognized as sociolinguistics or dialectology. This is due to its interdisciplinary nature, combining two main fields of study: sociolinguistics and dialectology. When a study emphasizes the relationship between language and social aspects of a community, it falls within the realm of sociolinguistics (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015; Holmes, 2013). Meanwhile, if the focus lies on language variation influenced by geographical factors, it is part of dialectology (Chambers & Trudgill, 2004). However, when the three elements—linguistics, sociology, and geography—are studied simultaneously, the field is referred to as social dialectology (Chambers & Trudgill, 2004; Trudgill, 2000; Holmes, 2013; Gumperz, 1982; Fishman, 1991; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). The study of language maintenance is influenced by factors of residential concentration, maintenance of rituals and traditions, economic independence of the community, social aspects of language choice, and language attitudes, which together constitute the field of study of social dialectology.

In bilingual societies, language dominance is not evenly distributed. Official state languages such as Indonesian tend to dominate formal domains like government and education (Wani et al., 2023; Scassa & Singh, 2015; Martín-Salas, 2022). Conversely, ethnic languages are more frequently used in domestic domains such as within the family (Sariono, 2000; Rochiyati et al., 2022). Thus, social dialectology not only offers a more comprehensive interdisciplinary approach but also provides sharper analytical tools to understand language dynamics in plural societies.

Language choice in bilingual communities is influenced not only by domains of use but is also closely related to speech components, as proposed by Hymes (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015; see also Zipagan et al., 2022). Official state languages, such as Indonesian, tend to dominate in formal speech situations—specifically when the speaker and interlocutor do not share a close social relationship, come from different ethnic backgrounds, and discuss official or institutional matters (Rochiyati et al., 2022; Tuah et al., 2021; Mis & Situl, 2022). In this context, language maintenance is strongly linked to the language choices made by speakers (Suharyo & Nurhayati, 2020; Kadir, 2021; Nguyen & Hamid, 2021).

A language is said to be maintained if it continues to be chosen and used across various domains of life, both formal and informal, by speakers from the same or different ethnic backgrounds. The presence of bilingualism and the process of language choice also shape and develop community language attitudes towards the languages they speak (Fitriati & Wardani, 2020; Ge, 2023). Language attitude is an internal condition arising from certain stimuli and serves as an intermediary for an individual's language behavior (Fasold, 1991, p. 147). Because it is internal, language attitude cannot be observed directly; therefore, its study must be conducted by observing the relationship between stimuli and the responses that arise. According to Baker (1992, p. 13) and Garrett (2010), attitudes consist of three main components: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive component relates to an individual's beliefs or perceptions about an object; the affective component involves feelings or emotions toward the object; and the conative component refers to the tendency or readiness to act toward the attitude object.

Language attitude directly influences the sustainability of a language, although the correlation is not always straightforward. In some cases, a language with a low level of maintenance still receives positive attitudes from its speakers, especially when the language continues to be used in certain domains or is still regarded as a symbol of cultural identity by a particular social or ethnic group.

Language maintenance refers to efforts to preserve the use of a language, especially minority languages, to ensure that it remains alive and functional within its speaker community (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Minority languages generally face various pressures from social, economic, cultural, and political factors, which lead to a gradual decline in their usage and, in some cases, abandonment by native speakers over time.

The success of language maintenance is strongly influenced by several factors (Giles in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 83). First, is the status factor, which includes the economic, social, and historical status of the language within the community. Second, the territorial distribution and demographic concentration of its speakers, such as the absolute number of speakers, birth rates, marriage patterns, and population mobility. Third, institutional support, both formal—such as the presence of the language in mass media, the education system, and public services—and informal, including use in workplaces, religious activities, cultural practices, and social environments. Various studies have highlighted the importance of these factors.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to address four main research questions, each requiring specific types of data and analytical methods. The first research question concerns the level of Mandarin language use. Data were collected regarding language use in various social activities within the domains of family, neighborhood, work, education, social interaction, customs, and traditions. Data collection techniques involved direct observation and interviews, both participatory and non-participatory, as explained by Miles and Huberman (2014). Analysis was conducted using language choice theory, where a broader scope of Mandarin language use, a greater variety of social activities involving the language, and fuller participation across generations indicate a higher level of Mandarin language usage. Data obtained from observations and interviews, aided by questionnaires, were tabulated and converted into numerical data in nominal and percentage forms, then used to determine the level of language choice across different domains. Interview data were also analyzed using language maintenance theory, and the results of both analyses were combined to describe the level of Mandarin language maintenance within the Mandar community in Banyuwangi.

The second research question concerns the language attitudes of the Mandar ethnic group toward the languages used in Kampung Mandar. Data were obtained through questionnaires designed to measure three aspects of language attitude: cognitive, affective, and conative. Interviews were conducted with 30 informants aged 30 years and above, who are members of the Mandar ethnic group. Each respondent's answers were calculated, tabulated, and analyzed to determine the strength or weakness of their language attitudes, particularly toward the Mandarin language. The third research question focuses on determining the level of Mandarin language maintenance. This issue was analyzed based on the results of the first and second research questions. The higher the level of Mandarin language use and the stronger the positive attitudes of the Mandar community toward the language, the higher the level of language maintenance.

The fourth research question examines the factors influencing the level of Mandarin language maintenance. Data were gathered from various sources regarding social, cultural, historical, settlement patterns, and economic conditions believed to affect the use of Mandarin language in various life domains. Data sources included informants from the first and second research questions as well as community and traditional leaders familiar with the linguistic conditions of the community. All data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods as outlined by Miles and Huberman (2014), concerning language choice and language maintenance theories. The final result is a comprehensive description of the factors determining the level of Mandarin language maintenance within the Mandar ethnic community in Banyuwangi.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Language Choice in the Mandar Community

(a). Language Choice Within the Family Domain

The nuclear families of the Mandar ethnic group in Banyuwangi are divided into two types: native families and mixed families. Native families consist of couples where both husband and wife originate from the Mandar ethnic group, whereas mixed families involve marriages between Mandar individuals and those from other ethnic groups such as Javanese, Madurese, or Osing. In native families, Mandarin is used as the primary means of communication between husband and wife. Generally, both partners have a good command of Mandarin, allowing smooth and uninterrupted communication. Mandarin is used in nearly all routine household activities, such as cooking, doing laundry, eating together, and everyday conversations. The use of Mandarin is also consistently applied by parents when interacting with their children, especially school-aged children. In this context, Mandarin is used to give commands, offer advice, provide information, or ask questions of the children. For example, when children take leave to go to school, parents deliver messages or advice—such as to be careful on the road, study diligently, obey teachers, and maintain good relationships with friends—all communicated in Mandarin. The entire daily life cycle within native families, both between parents and children and between husband and wife, takes place using the Mandarin language.

In mixed families, the family language used is also Mandarin. Non-Mandar family members generally adopt the use of Mandarin in daily life. This is due to two main factors. First, they live in a predominantly Mandar community, so socially and practically they are "forced" to adapt to the local language. Intensive interaction with the Mandar community in everyday life makes them a linguistic minority who must adjust. Second, the similarity between Mandarin and Indonesian facilitates linguistic adaptation. This transition happens naturally and without pressure, as they do not feel burdened learning Mandarin. Even before having children, couples in mixed families generally already speak Mandarin fluently. When children are born, the use of Mandarin in the family has become an established habit, making their language practice indistinguishable from that of native Mandar families.

Within the extended family environment in Kampung Mandar, Mandarin is used consistently as the family language by both native and mixed families. This is possible because all members of the extended family, including non-Mandar members, share proficiency in Mandarin. The language is used in all family interactions, formal or informal. When younger family members visit their parents' homes, communication is conducted in Mandarin. Because Kampung Mandar is relatively small, visits and meetings among extended families occur almost daily, making conversations in Mandarin part of the everyday routine and strengthening family cohesion. However, the situation differs when interactions involve extended family members living outside Kampung Mandar, particularly from the spouse's side belonging to other ethnic groups such as Javanese, Madurese, or Osing. Such interactions are occasional and irregular. Due to differences in mother

tongue backgrounds and lack of mutual language proficiency, communication in these contexts generally occurs in Indonesian. In some cases, Indonesian is interspersed with code-mixing involving Javanese, which may be better known by the non-Mandar parties.

(b). Language Choice in the Neighborhood Domain

The community in Kampung Mandar Village can be categorized as a bilingual society, mastering two languages: Mandaran and Indonesian. However, in daily practice, all residents—whether of Mandar ethnicity or not—generally use Mandaran as the primary language in interactions among neighbors. The choice of Mandaran in informal communication, especially in neighborly contexts, has become an established social norm. When residents meet on the street or in front of their houses, they greet each other in Mandaran. Often, such greetings are accompanied by exchanging news or light conversations about daily matters. Longer conversations usually occur in more relaxed and familiar situations, such as visiting neighbors' homes, gathering at prayer rooms (surau), security posts, local shops, or other communal places.

The use of Mandaran also remains dominant in various semi-formal and formal gatherings involving the local community. For example, in activities like neighborhood women's groups (dasa wisma), ritual committees' meetings, extended family gatherings for cultural ceremonies such as weddings (saulak), pregnancy celebrations, circumcisions, or youth organization events like karang taruna, Mandaran serves as the main language of communication among participants. However, language choice dynamics may differ in interethnic individual interactions. In interactions between Mandar husbands or wives and neighbors from other ethnic groups such as Javanese, Madurese, or Osing, the language choice typically adjusts to the interlocutor's background. In such cases, Indonesian becomes the primary language, often interspersed with code-switching or code-mixing with Javanese. Similar phenomena occur in children's interactions. Mandar children tend to use Mandaran when playing with peers of the same ethnicity but switch to Indonesian when interacting with friends from other ethnic groups.

(c). Language Choice in the Workplace Domain

In the workplace domain, the choice of language among the Mandar ethnic community is strongly influenced by the ethnic background of the interlocutor. In the fishermen's work environment, communication among workers generally takes place in the Mandar language. This is because Mandar fishermen tend to work in groups with fellow Mandar ethnic members, so Mandar remains the primary medium in fishing activities and other work-related tasks. Meanwhile, in the selling process of the fish catch, usually carried out by the fishermen's wives, language choice is adjusted according to the buyer's ethnic identity. If the buyer is from the Javanese, Madurese, or Osing ethnic groups, Indonesian is used, often interspersed with code-switching or code-mixing with Javanese. In situations where the buyer's ethnic identity is not known, Indonesian remains the primary choice as a neutral and inclusive means of communication.

A similar language choice phenomenon also occurs in other trade sectors, such as food stalls owned by Mandar community members along the coastline of Kampung Mandar Village. Traders tend to use Indonesian when serving customers from different ethnic backgrounds, while Mandar is still used in internal interactions among Mandar community members. This shows that in the work context, the Mandar community employs an adaptive communication strategy, taking into account the effectiveness of communication as well as the social and cultural backgrounds of their interlocutors.

(d). Language Choice in the Educational Domain

Mandar ethnic children use Indonesian in the classroom during learning activities, in line with its function as the official language of instruction in education. Indonesian serves as the primary medium of communication between students and teachers throughout the teaching and learning process. Outside the classroom, language choice becomes more varied and situational, depending on the social context and the ethnic background of the interlocutor. There are three common language choices used: Indonesian, Javanese, and Mandar. When speaking with teachers outside the classroom, children tend to use Indonesian, although in practice code-switching to Javanese or code-mixing between Indonesian and Javanese often occurs, especially if the teacher is of Javanese ethnicity or accustomed to using Javanese.

In interactions with peers outside class, language choice is determined by the ethnic identity of the interlocutor. If the friend belongs to the Mandar ethnic group, children usually use Mandar or Indonesian. Conversely, if their friends are from Javanese, Osing, or Madurese ethnic groups, they tend to use Indonesian interspersed with code-switching to Javanese or code-mixing between Indonesian and Javanese. This phenomenon shows that Mandar children have flexible linguistic competence and can adjust their language choices based on social context and the identity of their interlocutors, reflecting the dynamics of bilingualism and multiculturalism that develop in their school life.

(e). Language Choice in the Domain of Customs and Traditions

The Mandar language plays an important role as a medium for passing down traditions and ethnic identity to the younger generation. The Mandar community continues to firmly uphold the implementation of customs and traditions related to life cycles, such as pregnancy ceremonies (saulak kehamilan), birth ceremonies (saulak kelahiran), ground-breaking rituals (tradisi turun tanah), circumcision ceremonies (saulak khitanan) for boys, wedding ceremonies (saulak pernikahan), as well as death rituals. Particularly in the wedding custom (saulak pernikahan), the Mandar people strongly

believe that this tradition must be carried out. They hold the belief that if the saulak pernikahan ceremony is not performed, a calamity will befall the family, potentially even resulting in the death of family members.

B. Language Attitudes of Mandar Ethnic Community

The language attitudes of the Mandar ethnic group were studied using a quantitative method. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of eight questions: three questions addressing the cognitive aspect, three questions addressing the affective aspect, and two questions addressing the conative aspect. The sample consisted of 30 Mandar ethnic residents aged 30 years and above.

TABLE 1
RECAPITULATION OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SCORES OF THE MANDAR ETHNIC GROUP (IN %)

No.	Attitude Aspect	Mandaran	Madurese	Javanese	Indonesian
1.	Cognitive	93.3	57.2	59.4	82.2
2.	Affective	87.7	54.1	61.7	78.3
3.	Conative	84.3	50.9	61.7	83.3
	Average	88.4	54.1	60.9	81.3

Note: Data was obtained with permission from Kartikasari (2024).

Table 1 shows that the language attitudes of the Mandar ethnic group towards the Mandaran language and Indonesian language are very positive, whereas their attitudes towards Javanese and Madurese languages tend to be closer to negative.

C. Level of Mandaran Language Maintenance

(a). Language Choice

The aspect of language choice shows that Mandaran language still strongly dominates social and cultural interactions in Kampung Mandar. Mandaran has strong vitality as a medium of social, cultural, and ritual communication. In the workplace, Mandaran remains highly dominant, especially when the interlocutor is from the same Mandar ethnic group. However, in the field of education, Indonesian is more dominantly used compared to Mandaran.

(b). Language Attitudes

The language attitude of Kampung Mandar residents towards Mandaran is very positive. Conversely, the Mandar ethnic group's attitudes toward Javanese and Madurese tend to be negative. Their attitude toward Indonesians almost matches the positive attitude toward Mandaran. This is because Indonesian is the national and state language, providing broader access opportunities in education and employment.

(c). Rituals and Traditions in the Mandar Community

The Mandar community in Kampung Mandar continues to uphold customs, rituals, and traditions passed down through generations. The implementation of these customs and rituals involves all generations, from the elderly to the youth. Mandaran language is used as the main medium in carrying out all these customs, rituals, and traditions, making the language play an important role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Mandar ethnic group.

(d). Level of Mandaran Language Maintenance

Based on the three main aspects previously discussed—namely language choice, language attitude, and the use of language in customs and traditions—it can be concluded that the Mandaran language is still used by all generations of the Mandar community in most of their daily activities, especially in intra-ethnic interactions. This intra-ethnic category also includes individuals from other ethnic groups who have become family members of the Mandar community and reside permanently in Kampung Mandar. Considering these three aspects, the level of Mandaran language maintenance in Kampung Mandar can be categorized as "safe" according to UNESCO's classification (Moseley, 2010).

D. Factors Determining the Maintenance of the Mandaran Language

Language maintenance is influenced by several factors as stated by Giles (in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). These factors include: (1) language status, which encompasses economic, social, and historical aspects; (2) territorial distribution and concentration as well as the demographic conditions of the speaker community, such as population size, birth rates, marriage patterns, and population mobility; and (3) institutional support, both formal—such as mass media, education, and government services—and informal, such as the use of language in religious, social, and cultural activities.

(a). History, Social, and Economic Aspects of the Kampung Mandar Community

The arrival of the Mandar ethnic group in Kampung Mandar, Banyuwangi, began following the fall of the Gowa Kingdom in Sulawesi, which was taken over by the VOC in 1670 (https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kesultanan_Gowa). After this event, the people of the Gowa Kingdom, including the Mandar ethnic group, spread to various regions. The Mandar people arrived in Banyuwangi at the end of the 18th century. According to documents stored at the Mandar Museum in Kampung Mandar, Banyuwangi, the Mandar community in this area has been led by Datuk Puang Daeng Kapitan Galak since 1845. This leadership has been passed down through generations and is currently held by Puang Faisal Rizal Daeng Galak.

Economically, the Mandar people are known as skilled sailors whose main livelihood is fishing. They possess high expertise in catching fish and processing marine products, which serve as their primary source of livelihood. This economic self-reliance is reflected in their ability to conduct the annual "petik laut" ritual, an expression of gratitude to God for abundant marine harvests. During this ritual, offerings in the form of a buffalo's head are cast into the sea. Since the 1970s, fish processing businesses have grown significantly. Initiatives by the village head along with the community to organize what was once a slum area have transformed Kampung Mandar into a well-arranged and productive environment. The area has subsequently been developed into a culinary tourism, educational tourism, and cultural tourism destination. This economic development success has made the Mandar community in Kampung Mandar increasingly independent and prosperous.

(b). Residential Concentration

In the early 20th century, specifically in the 1900s, the Dutch colonial government implemented a settlement policy that required communities to reside according to their ethnic groups. This policy led the Mandar ethnic group—along with other ethnic groups such as Arabs, Mandar, and Malays—to inhabit a designated area that later became known as Kampung Mandar. This residential pattern has been preserved to this day. Kampung Mandar Village covers an area of approximately 0.91 km² with a population of 3,757 people (Central Bureau of Statistics, Banyuwangi Regency, 2017, p. 8). Although the area is relatively small, it is adequate as a residential settlement. Kampung Mandar lacks agricultural land; therefore, the majority of residents rely on the fishing industry and the trade of processed marine products for their livelihood.

Despite the high residential density, the area allows for the free flow of social, economic, and cultural activities. The community enjoys fairly adequate social facilities. There is one primary school and a well-known English language course institution in Banyuwangi. Places of worship include a mosque and several prayer rooms (musala). Health services are provided by one public health center (puskesmas) and several integrated health posts (posyandu). Local governance is centered in a representative sub-district (kelurahan) office. Along the coastline, a row of culinary stalls and a pier serve as hubs for the local fishermen's activities. Demographically, the majority of Kampung Mandar's residents are of Mandar ethnicity. Minority ethnic groups such as Javanese, Osing, and Madurese also live in the area. In social and cultural practices, these minority groups have fully adapted to the social norms, cultural practices, and language of the Mandar community.

(c). Institutional Support

One of the main focuses of the Banyuwangi Regency Government that has had a direct impact on the social, economic, and cultural development of Kampung Mandar is the tourism sector. Banyuwangi Regency is widely known as the "Festival Regency" due to its consistent organization of more than 40 cultural festivals each year. One of the Mandar community's cultural traditions that has been incorporated into the official regional festival agenda is the Petik Laut (Sea Harvest) ritual. This tradition has been passed down through generations since the Mandar people first arrived in the area and is now part of the Banyuwangi Cultural Festival, especially since the leadership of Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas. Tourism development has also had a positive impact on the local economy. Culinary stalls managed by the Kampung Mandar community have received support from the regional government through various infrastructure improvement programs, such as the construction and renovation of access roads, the building of fishing piers, and the arrangement of residential areas. All these efforts have contributed to the economic growth and welfare of the Kampung Mandar community.

(d). Rituals and Traditions in Mandar Society

In addition to the three main factors influencing language maintenance—namely social status, territorial distribution and demography, and institutional support—the Mandaran language is also preserved through the strength of customs, rituals, and traditions that have been passed down through generations within the Mandar ethnic community in Banyuwangi. Under the leadership of traditional figures, the Mandar people continue to uphold various customary norms and cultural rituals that play a vital role in reinforcing their collective identity. Two major rituals that are still solemnly practiced today are the Saulak and Petik Laut ceremonies. Both are regarded as mystical and sacred events, requiring specific preparations and procedures that can only be arranged by designated traditional leaders, whose knowledge is passed down through lineage.

According to Puang Faisal Rizal Daeng Galak, the Traditional Leader of the Mandar ethnic group in Kampung Mandar, the Saulak ritual includes three types: Saulak before marriage, Saulak before circumcision, and Saulak before childbirth (a seven-month pregnancy ritual). Particularly in the context of marriage, Saulak is considered mandatory and sacred. There is a collective belief that neglecting this ritual may bring disaster upon the family—even death of a family member (see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW0gnBrnTyU>, minute 5:35). Meanwhile, Petik Laut is an annual ritual expressing gratitude and seeking protection from God and ancestral spirits for the bounty of the sea. In this ceremony, a boat is specially decorated to carry offerings to the open sea. Prayers are recited in the Mandaran language before the offerings—including a buffalo head—are set adrift as sacred tributes.

The implementation of these two rituals reflects the spiritual, cultural, and social strength embedded within the Mandar ethnic community. They are not merely ceremonial acts, but also serve as vital mediums for passing down values and

symbols of cultural identity that strengthen intergenerational ties. The consistent use of the Mandarin language throughout every stage of these rituals stands as evidence that the language retains a high degree of vitality and remains a living, integral part of the Mandar people's cultural life in Banyuwangi.

E. Discussion

In the context of Mandarin language maintenance as discussed in this article, the discussion can be expanded by comparing existing findings with several international studies on minority language maintenance, language attitudes, and revitalization. The following are some relevant comparisons.

(a). Language Maintenance and Revitalization

Hornberger (2012; see also Zabrodskaia & Ivanova, 2021a) emphasizes that minority language maintenance strongly depends on robust institutional support, including educational programs, government policies, and active community participation. In the case of Kampung Mandar, forms of institutional support are evident in the involvement of local government in strengthening local culture, such as through the Petik Laut ritual festival. However, unlike Hornberger's view that highlights the importance of formal structures in sustaining language maintenance programs, in Kampung Mandar, cultural festivals have already been institutionalized internally within the Mandar ethnic community itself. Thus, the role of the local government is more as a reinforcer of already established sociocultural structures rather than as the primary initiator.

(b). Language Attitudes and Cultural Identity

The findings presented in this article reveal that the Mandar community holds a very positive attitude toward the Mandarin language, which serves as a key factor in the high level of language maintenance observed. This result is consistent with several similar studies. Fitriati and Wardani (2020), for instance, in their study conducted in Yogyakarta, found that a positive community attitude toward the Javanese language significantly contributed to its maintenance, especially within the family domain. Similarly, Mendieta (2024) reported that the Latino community in Northwest Indiana exhibited positive attitudes toward local varieties of Spanish, which strengthened the continued use of the language despite the dominance of English in their environment. Research by Zemmour and Alghazo (2023) also showed that Kabyle immigrants in France maintain their mother tongue due to a strong positive attitude within the diaspora community. Meanwhile, Ukam (2023) noted that despite facing pressure from dominant languages like English and Igbo, Erei-speaking youth in Nigeria continue to express a positive attitude that supports efforts to preserve their language.

(c). Language Choice Dynamics in Mixed Families

Kadir (2021) studied language maintenance in mixed-ethnicity families and found that in urban contexts, the majority language tends to dominate family interactions. However, a different situation is observed in Kampung Mandar, where Mandarin remains the primary language of communication, even in mixed families. The sustained use of Mandarin in this region is supported by a socially cohesive environment and structural similarities between Mandarin and Indonesian, which facilitate linguistic adaptation. These findings highlight the importance of territorial concentration as a crucial factor in maintaining the vitality of minority languages.

(d). Language Contact and Language Shift

Zabrodskaia and Ivanova (2021b) explain that interlingual contact has the potential to drive language shift in bilingual communities. However, despite the Mandar people's intensive interactions with the Javanese, Osing, and Madurese ethnic groups, the Mandarin language continues to show strong resilience. This resilience can be attributed to the dominant use of Mandarin in the domains of family life, and neighborhood interactions, as well as in the practice of deeply rooted rituals, customs, and traditions. These practices indirectly limit the infiltration of external linguistic influences into the community.

(e). Economic Factors and Language Maintenance

Diskin (2020) emphasizes that economic self-sufficiency can be a significant supporting factor in the maintenance of minority languages. This finding is relevant to the situation in Kampung Mandar, where the Mandar community has successfully developed a culture-based economy, including the culinary and tourism sectors. These initiatives not only reinforce ethnic identity but also increase the prospects for preserving the Mandarin language. Language attitudes within the community are generally shaped by a combination of social, cultural, and economic factors, all of which contribute to language sustainability. Gribauskiene (2024), for instance, in her research on the Lithuanian diaspora communities in Ireland and Norway, found that the maintenance of the Lithuanian language is heavily influenced by the degree to which individuals identify with their ethnic community. Meanwhile, Mat Awal et al. (2014) revealed that language choice in the Malaysia–Thailand border region is influenced not only by individual attitudes but also by ethnicity and local economic conditions.

(f). The Role of Ritual and Tradition in Language Maintenance

Another crucial factor contributing to the maintenance of the Mandarin language is the strong commitment of the Mandar community to preserving and practicing local rituals and traditions. The Saulak and Petik Laut rituals, passed

down through generations, hold deep spiritual and social significance for the community. In the performance of these rituals, Mandaran is used exclusively, making it the primary medium for transmitting cultural values and reinforcing ethnic identity. The use of language in such ritual contexts illustrates how tradition and customary practices play a direct role in sustaining language vitality.

This finding aligns with research from various other communities. Abbasi and David (2024) reported that although the Hindko-speaking community regularly uses Urdu and English in daily life, they continue to maintain the Hindko language during religious rituals, sermons, and prayers. Language use in religious contexts acts as a critical safeguard against the pressures of dominant languages. In another study, Abbasi et al. (2021) found that while younger generations of Sindhi speakers tend to use Urdu and English for daily communication, cultural practices such as Sindhi Topi Day, the wearing of *ajrak* (a traditional Sindhi shawl), and the consumption of traditional Sindhi foods serve as effective means of language maintenance through meaningful cultural engagement. Music and songs in the Sindhi language, performed at community events, further reinforce young people's exposure to their mother tongue.

Meanwhile, Kamau and Motanya (2024) observed that the Shona community in Kenya consistently uses the Shona language during religious and traditional ceremonies, including weddings, births, and funerals. Children and youth are actively involved in these events, and cultural values as well as the language are transmitted orally by elders through folklore, community gatherings, and informal education. In addition, annual festivals conducted in the Shona language serve as key moments for strengthening collective identity and language resilience against the influence of Swahili and English.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the language vitality criteria formulated by UNESCO, the Mandaran language in Kampung Mandar is categorized as "Safe," the highest level on the scale of language sustainability. This classification is evident in the consistent use of Mandaran as the primary means of communication across all generations, from children to the elderly, especially within family interactions, neighborhood conversations, and semi-formal gatherings. Furthermore, Mandaran serves as the main language in traditional rituals such as *Saulak* and *Petik Laut*, which carry profound spiritual significance for the Mandar community. The continuity of the Mandaran language is strongly supported by the community's highly positive attitude toward their mother tongue and several key factors.

Historically, socially, and economically, the Mandar community in Kampung Mandar comprises a complete social structure that includes nobles, traditional leaders, and ordinary citizens. Economically, they are relatively self-reliant, with fishing as their primary occupation and a growing culinary sector based on seafood products that attract visitors due to the natural beauty of the Bali Strait. Residentially, the high concentration of Mandar ethnic residents ensures that everyday interactions occur almost entirely in Mandaran, even among non-Mandar individuals who have married into the community and adopted its social and linguistic norms. Institutionally, the community benefits from local government support, which plays a significant role in preserving customs and culture, thereby reinforcing the maintenance of the Mandaran language. Community efforts to preserve the language include informal language teaching within families, the intergenerational transmission of historical and ethnic values, the maintenance of local customs and rituals, and the development of cultural tourism. These strategies collectively support the sustainability of Mandaran, maintaining its vitality and ensuring its continued use by UNESCO's criteria for a safe language.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abbasi, M. H., & David, M. K. (2024). I am a Young Hindko Speaker, and I Want to Speak My Language: Language Shift or Maintenance in a Multilingual City. *Journal of English Language, Literature, and Education*, 6(4), 236. DOI: 10.54692/jelle.2024.0604236.
- [2] Abbasi, M. H., David, M. K., & Ali, H. M. (2021). Cultural maintenance in the face of language shift: Young Sindhi Muslims in Karachi, Pakistan. *University of Chitral Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 5(2). [https://doi.org/10.33195/jll.v5i1l.283​contentReference\[oaicite:1\]{index=1}](https://doi.org/10.33195/jll.v5i1l.283​contentReference[oaicite:1]{index=1}).
- [3] Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Banyuwangi [Central Bureau of Statistics Banyuwangi Regency]. (2017). *Kecamatan Banyuwangi dalam Angka 2017* [Banyuwangi District in Figures 2017]. Banyuwangi: BPS Banyuwangi.
- [4] Baker, C. (1992). *Attitude and Language*. Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.
- [5] Chambers, J. K., & Trudgill, P. (2004). *Dialectology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Diskin, C. (2020). Economic Independence and Language Maintenance in Minority Communities. *Frontiers in Education*, 4(3), 45-60.
- [7] Fasold, R. (1991). *The Sociolinguistics of Society*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- [8] Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Fitriati, A., & Wardani, M. M. S. (2020). Language Attitudes and Language Choice among Students in Yogyakarta: A Case Study at Universitas Sanata Dharma. *International Journal of Humanity Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, March 2020, pp. 239-250.
- [10] Garrett, P. (2010). *Attitude to Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Ge, S. (2023). Language Code Choice, Language Ability, and Language Attitude Status of the Elderly Aged 60 or Above in Hefei City, China. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 7(3), 12-14.

- [12] Gribauskiene, S. (2024). Migrant Identity Maintenance of Lithuanianess: Language Attitudes and Language Policy. *Sustainable Multilingualism*, 25. <https://doi.org/10.2478/sm-2024-0011>
- [13] Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Language and Social Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [14] Holmes, J. (2013). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. New York: Routledge.
- [15] Hornberger, N. H. (2012). Language Shift and Language Revitalization. *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics* (2nd ed.), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195384253.013.0028>
- [16] https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kesultanan_Gowa (Retrieved on July 14, 2025).
- [17] Kadir, R. (2021). Language maintenance in an interracial marriage: The case of Indonesian females' language choice in Canada. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(1), 146–156.
- [18] Kamau, S. N., & Motanya, M. M. (2024). Culture preservation through language maintenance among linguistic minority groups: A case study of the Shona speakers of Kenya. *Journal of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO*, 5(1). [https://doi.org/10.62049/jkncu.v5i1.204​:contentReference\[oaicite:2\]{index=2}](https://doi.org/10.62049/jkncu.v5i1.204​:contentReference[oaicite:2]{index=2}).
- [19] Kartikasari, P. W. (2024). *Sikap Bahasa Masyarakat Etnik Mandar di Kampung Mandar Kabupaten Banyuwangi: Kajian Sociolinguistik* [Language Attitudes of the Mandar Ethnic Community in Mandar Village, Banyuwangi Regency: A Sociolinguistic Study] [Thesis]. Jember: Universitas Jember.
- [20] Martín-Salas, M. D. P. M. (2022). Co-official languages in the classroom, and their use within the educational system. *Revista de Derecho Politico*, (114), 47–87.
- [21] Mat Awal, M., Jaafar, M. F., Mis, M. A., & Lateh, H. (2014). Maintenance of Mother Tongue: Patterns of Language Choice at the Malaysian-Thai Border. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 118, 282–287.
- [22] Mendieta, E. (2024). Language Attitudes in a Historic Latino Community: The Case of Spanish in Northwest Indiana. *Languages*, 9(263). <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9080263>
- [23] Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Analisis Data Kualitatif* [Qualitative Data Analysis]. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press.
- [24] Mis dan Situl. (2022). Pemilihan Bahasa dalam Situasi Resmi di Pejabat Kerajaan [Language Choice in Formal Situation in Government Office]. *Gema Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 22(3), 213–235.
- [25] Moseley, C. (2010). *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. Paris: Unesco Publishing.
- [26] Nguyen, T. T. T., & Hamid, M. O. (2021). Language Maintenance in Multilingual Contexts: Implications for Community Interventions. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 15(4), 317–331.
- [27] Nguyen, T. T. T., & Hamid, M. O. (2021). Language choice of Vietnamese ethnic minority students in family and community interactions: implications for minority language maintenance. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 15(4), 317–331.
- [28] Rochiyati, A. E. S., Sariono, A., Kusnadi, & Suyanto, B. (2022). *Sikap Bahasa dan Identitas Etnik Madura: Fokus Kajian di Kota Jember* [Language Attitudes and Madurese Ethnic Identity: Focus of Study in Jember City]. Malang: Jagad Litera.
- [29] Sariono, A. (2000). *Pemilihan Bahasa dalam Masyarakat Using* [Language Choice in Using Society]. Yogyakarta: Grandia Publisher.
- [30] Scassa, T., & Singh, N. (2015). Open Data and Official Language Regimes: An Examination of the Canadian Experience. *EJournal of EDemocracy and Open Government*, 7(1), 117–133.
- [31] Suharyo, S., & Nurhayati, N. (2020). Pemilihan dan Pemertahanan Bahasa Jawa pada Kaum Perempuan Pesisir Rembang [Choice and Maintenance of Javanese Language among Coastal Women in Rembang]. *Litera*, 19(3), 397–413.
- [32] Sukatman. (2016). *Blambangan: Rekonstruksi Identitas Kebangsaan dan Pengembangan Industri Wisata*. Penerbit: Ombak, Yogyakarta: pp. 322–339. Retrieved from https://repository.unej.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/76816/Sukatman_ProSIDing_ISBN%20978-602-258-382-0_Blambangan%20Rekonstruksi%20Identitas_%28FKIP%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- [33] Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.
- [34] Tuah, D., Shin, C., Gedat, R., & Mis, M. A. (2021). Pilihan Bahasa dalam Kalangan Etnik Minoriti Kedayan di Bekenu, Sarawak: Satu Penelitian Awal [Language Choices among the Kedayan Ethnic Minority in Bekenu, Sarawak: A Preliminary Study]. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 21(2), 177–194.
- [35] Ukam, E. I. (2023). Language Maintenance: A Study of the Attitude of Erei Teenage Speakers. *International Journal of Arts, Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies*, 12(5), 1–13. Retrieved from <https://jolls.com.ng/v2/index.php/jolls/article/view/115>
- [36] Wani, N. H., Nisa, S., & Prathikantam, N. R. (2023). Language Use and Claimed Proficiency of Saudi Students at Undergraduate Level Spoken in Asir Region of Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 6(4), 101–109. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2023.6.4.13>
- [37] Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2015). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- [38] Zabrodskaia, A., & Ivanova, O. (2021b). The Russian Language Maintenance and Language Contacts. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 25(4), 828–854.
- [39] Zabrodskaia, A., & Ivanova, O. (2021a). Language Vitality and Revitalization: Russian Language Maintenance in Minority Communities. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 25(4), 828–854.
- [40] Zemmour, S., & Alghazo, S. (2023). The Role of Language Attitudes in Language Maintenance: The Case of Kabyle Immigrants in France. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 50(4), 387–398. <https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v50i4.5649>
- [41] Zipagan, M. N., Tak, J. Y., & Kwak, E. J. (2022). A Diachronic Study of Code-Switching Patterns in the Language of a Third Culture Filipino Kid in Korea. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 22(3), 24–42. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2022-2203-02>.

Agus Sariono was born in Blitar, East Java Province, Indonesia. He graduated from the Indonesian Literature Study Program from the University of Jember (East Java, Indonesia) in 1984 with a doctoral degree (Drs.). In 1994 he graduated from the Indonesian/Javanese Language Study Program from Gadjahmada University (UGM), Yogyakarta, with a Master of Humanities

(M.Hum.). He once received a scholarship to participate in a two-month Short Term Fellowship at Goethe Universitat, Frankfurt to complete his master's thesis under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Bernd Nothofer in May-June 1993. In 2007 he graduated from the Postgraduate School of Gadjahmada University (UGM), Yogyakarta, with a doctoral degree (Dr.). He has been a lecturer in the Indonesian Literature Study Program at the University of Jember since 1986 until now. His works have been published in national and international seminar forums, published in national and international journals, and published several textbooks. His research interests are mainly in the fields of sociolinguistics, social dialectology, communication ethnography, dialectology, forensic linguistics, and landscape linguistics. Dr. Agus Sariono, M.Hum. is a member of the Indonesian Linguistics Society (MLI), and the Indonesian Literature Scholars Association (HISKI). (Correspondence author e-mail: agussariono.fib@unej.ac.id)

Bambang Wibisono was born in Blitar, Indonesia, on April 9, 1960. He completed his bachelor's degree in Linguistics from the Faculty of Letters, University of Jember, Jember, Indonesia, in 1983. He obtained his Master's degree in Language Education from IKIP Malang, Indonesia, in 1991. He received his Doctorate in Language Education from the State University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia, in 2005. Since 1985, he has worked as a lecturer in the Indonesian Literature study program and in the Master of Linguistics study program at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember, Indonesia, until now (2025). Since July 1, 2009, he has been appointed as a professor. His works have been published in national and international seminar forums and published in national and international journals. He also has published several books. His research interests are mainly in the fields of applied and interdisciplinary linguistics. Prof. Dr. Bambang Wibisono, M.Pd. is the Chair of the Research Group of the Center of Linguistics Interdisciplinary Studies, which examines interdisciplinary and applied linguistics issues. He is a member of the Indonesian Linguistic Society (MLI) and the Indonesian Literature Scholars Association (HISKI).

Hairus Salikin was born in Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia. He completed his under grade (Drs) in the English Literature Program from the University of Jember (East Java, Indonesia) in 1987. His master degree in English Education (M.Ed.) was completed 1995 at University of South Australia, Australia. His further study (Dr) on English Education was obtained from State University of Malang in 2009. He has been a lecturer in the English Literature Program at the University of Jember since 1989 until now. His works have been published in national and international seminar forums, published in national and international journals, and published several textbooks. His research interests are mainly in the fields of sociolinguistics, language and media, and landscape linguistics and intercultural communication. He is a member of the Indonesian Linguistics Society (MLI), the Indonesian Literature Scholars Association (HISKI). Since 2019 he has been appointed as a professor in applied linguistics.

Akhmad Haryono was born in Jember on October 3, 1967. He earned his Ph.D. in Humanities in 2013 from the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, with a concentration in Sociolinguistics and Ethnography of Communication. Since 1998, he has been serving as a lecturer at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Jember. His research interests lie in the field of social humanities, particularly in the study of language and ethnic cultures, with a focus on the Madurese and Osing communities. To enhance his academic and professional development, he has authored several articles published in nationally accredited and international journals. In addition to his publications, he actively presents papers at national and international seminars on topics related to language, ethnic identity, and language education. In recognition of his contributions to the field, he was awarded the title of Professor in Sociolinguistics (Ethnography of Communication) in 2020.

Muta'allim, S.S., M.Li. is an academic born in Sumenep, East Java, Indonesia. He completed his undergraduate studies in the English Literature Program at Abdurrachman Saleh University, Situbondo, in 2016. In 2019, he earned a Master of Linguistics (M.Li.) degree from Jember University. He is actively involved in various academic activities at both national and international levels. In 2015, he was selected as one of the top 10 nominees in the Santri Scientific Writing Competition (KTIS). In 2022, he received an award as the best presenter at a national conference held at the State Islamic University of Palangka Raya. From 2022 to 2025, he successfully obtained several research grants from various institutions, both internal and external to his campus. In 2023, he was honored with the "Outstanding Lecturer" award at STITTA Bondowoso. In 2024, he received a Litapdimas grant from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to support the writing of scientific articles. His research interests span various branches of linguistics, including sociolinguistics, pragmatics, linguistic anthropology, forensic linguistics, morphology, ethnography of communication, historical-comparative linguistics, critical discourse analysis, and translation studies.

AI Tools and Saudi University English Translation Students: A Mixed-Methods Study Based on TAM

Muneer H. Alqahtani*

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

Arif A. Al-Ahdal

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Humanities, Qassim University, Buraydah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—The study aims to explore the acceptance and utilization of AI tools in translation courses by English language learners in Saudi Arabia using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to enhance their professional translation skills. For data collection purpose, the study employed a mixed-methods design, combining a survey of 114 bachelor's and master's translation students with in-depth interviews of 10 participants. This approach explored students' perceptions, usage patterns, and barriers to AI tool adoption. The inclusion of diverse academic levels enriched the findings and enhanced the study's relevance to broader translation education context. The study investigates three research questions that focus on Saudi EFL students' adoption rate of AI tools for translation, their participation with these tools, and their perceptions regarding the integration of AI in translation practice. The study revealed that the majority of Saudi Arabian translation students learning English as a foreign language found AI tools useful. However, they expressed concern about the potential negative impact of overuse on their translation skills. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need to integrate AI tools into university curricula to better prepare students for the demands of today's translation industry. The results indicate that translation courses at universities need to include the integration of AI tools to train students effectively for the evolving industrial requirements and technological landscape. This research contributes to the growing body of studies on using AI tools in language education and advocates for including AI literacy education within language programs to enhance translation and academic writing achievements.

Index Terms—AI in education, artificial intelligence, EFL, translation studies, technology acceptance model

I. INTRODUCTION

AI revolutionized animation and robotics before transforming into an essential tool for humanity (Navon, 2021) by developing neural machine translation (NMT), computer-assisted translation tools (CAT) and AI-powered terminology databases (Drugan, 2013; Doherty, 2016). The implementation of AI tools in translation courses has noticeably improved the translation abilities of translation students and their proficiencies (Deng & Yu, 2022). These technologies enable translation workflows to become more efficient and consistent while providing better accessibility. AI tools are expected to enhance translation students' skills further due to their innovative implementation in teaching which adjusts to the changing language learning parameters (Li et al., 2023). The contemporary era sees widespread adoption of AI tools in translation software which continues to expand its usage. Educational institutions need to assess how students view AI tools and their usage patterns to create timely curriculum adjustments which prepare future translators for the industry requirements. The adoption of AI tools in software development demonstrates the necessity to transform educational methods for creating software that meets community needs (Chimbunde & Jakachira, 2024; Mohammed, 2023). Therefore, the implementation of AI tools into EFL translation curricula follows the global demand in educational innovation.

However, the pace of AI tools integration in Saudi Arabia's educational institutes seems slower compared to other international peers even though the adoption of AI tools in education receives high priority and remains a continuous process in the country (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a theoretical structure to evaluate new technology adoption by users based on perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) to encourage translation students to innovate through practical competency development. The TAM model shows broad application in educational technology research (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Scherer et al., 2019) but few studies have evaluated its applicability to translation training that includes the implementation of AI tools among Saudi EFL students. Therefore, the need to teach students how to use AI tools in these courses continues to exist, alongside studying how AI and computer-aided translation (CAT) practices shift toward more advanced AI-powered tools, which are gaining

* Corresponding Author.

popularity (Massey, 2021). As a result, the rising use of AI tools in professional translation (Bowker, 2020) demands researching students' acceptance and utilization to establish alignment between academic education and professional requirements.

The classroom instruction becomes more effective and relevant through Contextualized Educational Approach (CEA) combined with equitable evaluation methods. The application of AI tools in translation faces substantial obstacles because of its functional constraints together with ethical problems and digital access barriers. Therefore, this study bases its findings on survey data from 114 students along with qualitative data stemmed from focus-group interviews with 10 students studying translation to explore the experiences of Saudi students studying translation courses with AI tools. The study produces important findings that provide important recommendations that could help in the development of educational policy together with curriculum design and pedagogical methods. Meeting these goals is particularly pivotal for ensuring that translation programmes match the fast progression of technology, adhere to the changing requirements in the labour market, and preparing translation students to adapt to these changes.

A. Significance of the Study

The integration of AI tools into the teaching of translation has become essential because of the technological advancement that reached most sectors, including businesses, academia and communication. The use of AI tools has expanded because of its extensiveness, where technology now performs tasks that were used to be done manually, and because of their intensiveness, where they continue to receive constant development. Therefore, the educational system in Saudi Arabia needs to implement technology in order to bring essential and promising changes to its English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student programmes. This is particularly important because Saudi Arabia is on the path of establishing itself as a leading international exchange centre that combines cultural and economic activities. The need for accurate language translation that understands technical details, cultural elements and complex aspects has become essential during this present era. Thus, this study fills an important research gap through an examination of translation student interactions with and perceptions of AI translation tools in Saudi Arabia. It is hoped that the research findings about the students' usage of AI tool in translation will drive improvements in their technical capabilities and prepare them for the increasing translator needs in Saudi Arabia's expanding professional sectors. It is also hoped that the research findings will be useful for educational institutions to detect both the advantages and disadvantages of implementing translation AI tools, which would result in a better integration of these technologies into teaching their programmes and curricula.

B. Curriculum Design

The results of this study will help decision-makers in Saudi educational institutions such as the Ministry of Education together with universities to redesign their translation education programmes to improve them. In order to do so, this research examines a group of bachelor's and master's students' experiences with AI tools for translation work to identify their unique difficulties. Educators can create better translation education programmes by using this information to integrate AI tools properly while teaching students the essential technical competencies along with critical thinking abilities needed for current translation industry work. This research will also demonstrate to students how to deal with moral dilemmas that result from using AI translation tools, while upholding high standards of accuracy and quality in their work.

C. Language Education

The result of this research is expected to impact language education by demonstrating how AI tools are implemented in the teaching of translation, especially in higher education in Saudi Arabia. In doing so, this study evaluates the ways of which AI tools enhance student language abilities, their cultural knowledge as well as the precision of their translation skills to provide practical methods for using these tools alongside conventional teaching practices. This research demonstrates how AI technologies build interactive educational spaces that help students acquire language abilities while developing the necessary skills of using modern technological platforms. As Saudi Arabia is modernising its educational system, it should include AI language tools training because this will help graduates to meet global translation industry requirements with both linguistic expertise and technological competencies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent research has focused on the impact of AI tools on the teaching of translation through organised educational programmes at university and institutional levels (Karataş et al., 2024). The focus has been on measuring the influence of AI tools on educational approaches and the learning process of the students and their translation skills, cementing its value in the modern globalised world (Massey, 2021; Suh, 2020). For example, individuals—including teenagers—seem to prefer online learning because of its accessibility via mobile devices and its easy access through online platforms. This trend has become even more common since the breakout of COVID-19 pandemic in 2019. Many professions transitioned toward becoming sedentary and, therefore, there has been a need for using modern computer features found in mobile phones that drove up the demand for quick and precise real-time operations. Although digitalisation has become in almost every human life, education remains unaffected by this trend even though AI-powered translation functions as an essential

educational and professional translation practice (Moneus & Sahari, 2024). Therefore, educators and students may need to start thinking about accepting the fact that AI translation and interpretation tools are most likely staying permanently in their field.

There are several studies that have tackled the idea of introducing AI tools in education and translation. For example, Heh et al. (2020) assert that AI tools should be adjusted according to specific circumstances which are most appropriate for translation tasks. The selection of appropriate contexts and document types and genre types requires specific guidelines and principles. Heh et al. (2020) further explain that all papers cannot receive equal treatment since different texts need either human translation, AI tools assistance, or a combination of both methods for reliable results. Therefore, these aspects lead to the requirement for teaching future translators to master AI capabilities and distinguish between tasks that require AI tools and those that require manual or combined approaches while maintaining reliability and accuracy.

Furthermore, educational institutions need to produce AI-enabled professionals who could meet learner and occupational needs. Therefore, training students for translation requires teachers to maintain technical expertise, professional experience, cultural understanding, and cross-cultural communication abilities. Teachers are also required to have expertise in teaching translation that include emotional intelligence for complex texts as well as practical experience with CAT and MT tools (Cheng et al., 2022). Moreover, some surveys show that technically expert translators with experience in CAT and MT tools are in high demand by the market. The market demand for translators with machine translation expertise demonstrated a projected 7.1% annual growth rate from 2022 through 2027. Nevertheless, educational institutions face challenges to incorporate AI-powered resources into their programmes, which forces them to transform their teaching methods to prepare students for the changing professional demands (Tavares et al., 2023).

Therefore, many studies show that—alongside language proficiency, cultural sensitivity and writing abilities—potential translators need solid grounds in technical training (Almugharbil, 2021). In this case, human translators take on the task of filling the cultural and contextual knowledge gap—which these technologies lack—so their services remain essential for improving AI-generated translations and creating language connections (Popel et al., 2020). Thus, AI software works alongside human translators through a relationship where AI tools handle the technical aspects, while human translators deal with other issues such as cultural sensitivity and ethical challenges that exceed AI capabilities. For these reasons, academics and administrators should work to establish that technology does not decrease translation quality or accuracy standards (Farhad et al., 2021). Instead, they are valuable assets for achieving more timely and reliable translations. They should also continue to discuss this issue extensively while debating the ethical implications of AI tools in translation. Therefore, more research on translation is needed to show the most effective methods for integrating AI tools into education programmes so that students could excel in technology-based translation careers.

Theorising About Technology Acceptance Model of the Study

The field of translation has undergone a major transformation because of the introduction of AI tools in language translation operations. Since its introduction by Davis in 1989 (Getchell et al., 2022), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) serves as an essential framework to study the acceptance of new technologies on both individual and organizational levels. It examines two essential components which determine the adoption of technology: (i) perceived usefulness and (ii) perceived ease of use. These two essential elements determine the extent of which AI tools are adopted by both professionals and students studying translation courses in their work.

AI tools users rate the technology as highly useful because of their belief that it will greatly boost their work quality. The translation community views AI tools as dependable assistants through machine translation (MT) systems and computer-assisted translation (CAT) software since these tools show promising potential to improve both the efficiency and speed of translation while enhancing its accuracy at the same time (Moneus & Sahari, 2024). Moreover, research shows that AI tools decrease both time and human labour required for translation work, especially when processing long or recurring content. Buitrago Ciro and Bowker (2020) report that when a group of professional translators used AI tools such as DeepL and Google Translate, they achieved better efficiency in processing large texts compared to those who did not. Despite their efficiency and accuracy in providing benefits for translation work, their use was limited in some translation assignments, especially when it comes to translating cultural expressions and idiomatic language (Shih, 2021), which led to questioning their accuracy by translators. As a result, their reliability became a point of concern when translating contextualised content, which resulted in limiting their adoption.

AI tools continue to advance with new innovations. Those who lack technology expertise or find AI tool interfaces challenging to use may struggle to incorporate these tools into their work processes. Therefore, it is reasonably expected of traditional translators who perform their work manually to feel uncertain about adopting AI tools in their work. For this reason, every effort should be made to facilitate their acceptance of using AI tools in translation. Achieving this objective requires extensive training combined with support to reach two essential goals: (a) simplifying AI tool usage, and (b) boosting the industry's acceptance of AI tools for its fast and accurate results.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Participants

In order to gather the data necessary for addressing the research questions of this study and achieving its objectives, a survey was used as the main instrument and was distributed to students studying translation courses at a Saudi university. Moreover, focus-group interviews were conducted with some of the participants in order to have deeper insights from the participants. The main goal of combining both qualitative and quantitative methods was to have a better understanding of the students' responses to both the qualitative and quantitative questions. The study includes two distinct groups of students studying translation courses; the first group of students were pursuing their bachelor's degrees whilst the other group were doing their master's degrees. The reason behind establishing these two groups is to achieve diverse academic perspectives. The total number of the research participants was 114.

B. Data Collection Tools

The research design combined surveys with semi-structured focus group discussions to achieve comprehensive understanding of the topic in discussion. The first step involved creating an online questionnaire to assess the students' experiences using AI tools for translation. The research examined the students' behaviour regarding AI tool usage, its frequency, their satisfaction level, and the effectiveness of these tools. The students evaluated their perceptions and practical experience through a five-point Likert scale. In order to analyse the data, this study employed SPSS software, which produces percentages and mean values for AI usage and user satisfaction and perceived usefulness.

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

		N	%
Gender	males	99	86.8%
	females	15	13.2%
Level of education	Bachelor	23	20.2%
	Master	91	79.8%

The survey distributed to students was accompanied by two focus-group interviews which aimed to deepen understanding of student perspectives regarding AI tool usage in translation. All participants received the chance to express their thoughts about the subject during the interviews. The interviews served to expand knowledge about student opinions regarding the benefits and drawbacks of AI tools used for translation work. In doing so, the participants were encouraged to give their insights freely. The discussions were recorded and transcribed to allow for further analysis and to draw more conclusive results from the survey responses. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods—through data analysis and interviews/discussions provided an opportunity for data triangulation.

Throughout the study, ethical considerations were of high priority as participants were well informed about the study objectives and were required to give their verbal consent before taking part in the discussion. They were also informed of their right to withdraw at any point of time during the study. Moreover, the participants were assigned numbers instead of using their real names in order to keep their real identities and information confidential.

C. Research Question

To address all of the points discussed earlier, this study poses the following research questions:

1. What is the Saudi EFL students' degree of acceptance of AI tools usage in translation?
2. What is the Saudi EFL students' level of utilization of the AI tools in translation?
3. What are the experiences and perceptions of the Saudi EFL students using AI tools in translation?

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study aims to present a clear and measurable picture of how university students studying translation courses are employing AI tools in their translation tasks. In doing so, mean scores were calculated, and statistical analysis was carried out to see if there was any relationship between the responses. Further, the qualitative data analysis that was driven from the focus-group interviews provided a better understanding of the students' personal experiences with AI tools in translation. The survey analysis was based on the percentages and the means values for each dimension, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
THE USAGE OF AI

No.	Statement	Strongly disagreed	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Std. deviation	Mean
1	I only use AI to check the meaning of unfamiliar words.	6.1%	10.5%	10.5%	53.5%	19.3%	3.69	1.09
2	I use AI for translating long paragraphs.	9.6%	19.3%	11.4%	37.7%	21.9%	3.43	1.29
3	I use AI to translate essays from English into Arabic to help me understand its meaning.	14.0%	29.8%	18.4%	33.3%	4.4%	2.84	1.16
4	I use AI to translate essays, articles or papers from Arabic into English to submit them to the instructor.	14.0%	29.8%	23.7%	27.2%	5.3%	2.80	1.15
5	I do my homework and write my assignments in Arabic then translate them into English using AI.	8.8%	21.1%	15.8%	43.0%	11.4%	3.27	1.18
6	It is easy for me to read English texts, so I use AI.	10.5%	17.5%	21.1%	33.3%	17.5%	3.30	1.25
7	I find writing in English challenging, so I tend to use AI.	11.4%	28.9%	21.1%	27.2%	11.4%	2.98	1.22
8	I do not feel confident reading in English, so I ask AI for assistance.	1.8%	8.8%	22.8%	55.3%	11.4%	3.66	0.86

Table 2 shows that students utilise AI tools to support their translation, particularly in academic writing. The findings reflect both reliance on AI tools for specific language challenges and varying degrees of confidence in English proficiency. The highest mean score was found in the item “I only use AI to check the meaning of unfamiliar words” (3.69), suggesting that a large number of the students use AI tools for basic vocabulary assistance. Therefore, the students mainly use AI tools for vocabulary support and reading comprehension. This is particularly evident in the context of translation tasks, where students use AI tools for short-form translations and full essay translations. However, there is a level of reluctance or decreased confidence in AI tools for translating longer or more complex academic texts due to concerns over accuracy or authenticity. It was observed that the students often write assignments or papers in Arabic and translate them into English using AI. This means that while some students feel confident enough to engage with English texts, they still depend on AI tools for assistance. Perceived weakness in language skills and dependence on AI tools are also significant factors. The students use AI as an assistant tool rather than a complete solution, especially when it comes to the writing skill. The findings also show that while AI tools play a useful role in language learning for easier tasks such as translating words and paragraphs, students are careful of not to overly rely on it for more challenging tasks such as academic writing and long texts translation. This finding suggests that there is a need for establishing a guidance on how to integrate AI tools effectively into language learning practices.

TABLE 3
USER SATISFACTION

No	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Std. deviation	Mean
1	AI is convenient for translating English into Arabic.	3.5%	13.2%	33.3%	42.1%	7.9%	3.38	0.93
2	AI is convenient for translating Arabic into English.	5.3%	21.9%	28.9%	36.0%	7.9%	3.19	1.04
3	AI is convenient for translating documents related to my field.	0.9%	7.9%	26.3%	48.2%	16.7%	3.72	0.87
4	The advantages of AI outnumber the disadvantages.	2.6%	0.9%	14.9%	57.0%	24.6%	4.00	0.82
5	AI saves time.	8.8%	24.6%	31.6%	31.6%	3.5%	2.96	1.03
6	AI's translation is acceptable in terms of the assignment that I deliver to my instructor.	0.0%	0.9%	5.3%	38.6%	55.3%	4.48	0.64
7	The translation produced by AI must be edited and proofread by English language professionals to amend the flaws of AI.	10.5%	19.3%	39.5%	27.2%	3.5%	2.94	1.02
8	I am satisfied with the outcome of the AI.	5.3%	16.7%	19.3%	44.7%	14.0%	3.46	1.09
9	I use AI to improve my English language by translating different types of texts.	1.8%	16.7%	37.7%	29.8%	14.0%	3.38	0.98

The students in the study exhibit positive attitudes toward AI tools because they find them useful for their educational tasks. Nevertheless, the students have some doubts about AI tools accuracy and the need for editing and general reliability. Item 6 from the survey received the highest mean score of 4.48 with a small standard deviation of 0.64 which shows strong agreement among the students. A large number of participants (88.6%) accept or strongly accept this statement. They probably feel this way because AI tools have become more effective during the past few years while students gain advantages from time efficiency and convenience. The item “The advantages of AI outnumber the disadvantages”

received a score of 4.00 from the respondents. The large proportion of the students who agree (57%) or strongly agree (24.6%) indicates broad approval of AI tools in language support roles, especially in terms of convenience and utility.

The academic use of AI tools received strong endorsement from the students because they felt confident about using these technologies for assignment submissions. The students have positive attitudes about the practical applications of AI tools and its advantages when dealing with subject-specific materials. They rate AI translation tools more positively when translating from English into Arabic while showing average satisfaction with the overall translation performance. The users recognise the accuracy constraints of AI tools as well as their performance limitations, which led to a moderate confidence in AI translation systems. Further, the students view AI tools as a language assistance system rather than just a translation tool because they use it to enhance their English skills. The research findings indicate that the students understand the advantages of AI systems, and yet keep a safe distance from its application in critical academic responsibilities. Therefore, language instruction programmes should integrate AI literacy education to help students effectively use these technological tools. The students generally have positive experiences with AI output which reaches a mean score of 3.46 while they utilise AI to enhance their English skills.

TABLE 4
PERCEIVED USEFULNESS

No	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Std. deviation	Mean
1	Learning how to use AI is simple for me.	1.8%	14.9%	28.9%	36.8%	17.5%	1.01	3.54
2	Logging in and out of AI is fast and simple.	3.5%	13.2%	21.1%	43.9%	18.4%	1.04	3.61
3	It is simple to handle materials using AI.	12.3%	30.7%	18.4%	28.9%	9.6%	1.22	2.93
4	Overall, I think that AI is simple to use.	15.8%	40.4%	22.8%	15.8%	5.3%	1.10	2.54

Table 4 shows the students' opinions on AI tools' usability and helpfulness for academic purposes. The student population expresses dual opinions about AI tools because they show ease with AI basics yet express substantial doubts about its usability and integration in their academic work. The statement 'Logging in and out of AI is fast and simple' achieved the highest mean rating of 3.61 indicating that the students find the technical process of accessing AI systems straightforward. The statement 'Learning to use AI is simple for me' obtained a mean score of 3.54 while more than half of the students agreed or strongly agreed with this idea. Student digital literacy appears strong since they demonstrate comfort in basic AI interface operation and navigation.

However, the students have also provided negative feedback about the practical effectiveness of AI tools during the study. The statement 'It is simple to handle materials using AI' received a low mean score of 2.93 along with standard deviations of 1.22 while 43% of students strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. The students demonstrate the capability to access AI tools yet experience difficulties in understanding and utilising the output content these systems produce. The substantial standard deviation shows that student experiences differ because of factors including language abilities and academic proficiency and the quality of AI-generated content. The lowest mean score belonged to the statement 'Overall, I think that AI is simple to use' with a rating of 2.54. The respondents indicated their lack of confidence regarding AI's comprehensive ease of use through their disagreement or strong disagreement with this statement (56.2%). Students maintained positive views toward specific tasks like logging in and learning AI usage, yet they face major obstacles when integrating AI into academic work. The separation between students and AI functionality could result from two factors: AI systems generating outputs that do not match academic requirements or the absence of effective educational guidance for AI tool implementation in educational environments.

TABLE 5
EFFECT OF GENDER ON THE DIMENSIONS

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
The use of AI	male	99	3.264	0.866	0.525
	female	15	3.133	0.706	
Satisfaction	male	99	3.527	0.513	0.062
	female	15	3.326	0.345	
Perceived usefulness	male	99	3.167	0.693	0.466
	female	15	3.067	0.448	

The analysis of male and female student responses on AI usage appears in Table 5 for actual AI use satisfaction levels and perceived usefulness. The analysis includes mean scores and standard deviations and significance (Sig.) values which show if gender affects the dimensions. Male students scored slightly higher than females on the use of AI with 3.264 compared to 3.133. The Sig. value was 0.525 which indicates that this difference is not statistically significant. The results show that gender does not strongly affect how students employ AI tools according to the gender variable.

The study assessed student satisfaction with AI tools and produced a moderate satisfaction rating which showed that males scored 3.527 compared to females with 3.326. The Sig. value showed low statistical significance at 0.062. The results indicate that males tend to be more satisfied with AI tools, yet this trend does not reach the conventional significance level. Male students demonstrated higher mean scores of 3.167 compared to females who scored 3.067 on the 'Perceived Usefulness of AI.' The Sig. value at 0.466 indicated no significant difference in how both genders viewed the usefulness of AI.

TABLE 6
EFFECT OF LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON THE THREE DIMENSIONS

Level of education		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
Use of AI	Bachelor	23	3.321	0.715	0.641
	Master	91	3.228	0.878	
Satisfaction	Bachelor	23	3.589	0.440	0.342
	Master	91	3.479	0.511	
Perceived usefulness	Bachelor	23	3.261	0.633	0.375
	Master	91	3.126	0.673	

Table 6 presents a summary of how participant education level influences the three dimensions. The difference between bachelor's and master's students was not significant as their mean scores of 3.321 and 3.228 showed a Sig. value exceeding 0.05. The data revealed bachelor's degree holders demonstrated higher satisfaction through their mean score of 3.589 whereas master's degree holders achieved a score of 3.479. The comparison between these two groups proved insignificant because the p-value reached 0.342 which exceeds the statistical significance threshold.

Students holding a bachelor's Degree reported higher perceptions of the usefulness of AI tools with a score of 3.261 whereas master's students achieved a lower score of 3.126. The Sig. value of 0.375 indicated no statistical difference between these two groups. The students mentioned during the analysis that AI tools achieve the best performance when processing simple literal sentences particularly for translating standard vocabulary and grammatical patterns. The student population demonstrates awareness about AI's basic translation capabilities which matches research findings about AI tools performing best with straightforward language inputs. Many students repeatedly pointed out that AI tools fail to understand context and experience difficulties with idiomatic expressions while producing unnatural or incorrect academic language. Multiple students emphasized that students should always revise their AI-generated output before submitting their work. The students whose assigned numbers are 1, 4, 6 stated that AI tools proved effective for generating fast translations when they had limited time available. Students 1, 2, 5 used AI translation analysis to discover new vocabulary and sentence structures. The two main issues students reported about AI tools involved their failure to detect subtleties and its habit of producing word-for-word translations. Students 1, 3, 4 expressed concerns that their heavy reliance on AI tools would negatively impact their translation work. The majority of participants treated AI tool as aiding factors which proved beneficial, yet they did not consider it as a substitute for dictionaries, teachers or human translators.

Multiple research studies reveal various student attitudes toward AI tools in translation work (Mahdy et al., 2020; Alsubhi, 2024). The study reveals comprehensive information about student perspectives regarding AI tools especially when used in academic translation and writing tasks. Students mainly apply AI tools for basic language functions to confirm unknown word meanings according to Litman (2024). The findings indicate that students prefer to utilise AI for vocabulary support rather than for writing advanced academic material. The results match Meroua and Noudjoud (2024) who observed that students use AI tools exclusively for vocabulary identification. Students' AI dependency emerges from their self-assessed English skills because they depend on AI tools for instant clarification of unknown vocabulary, which makes AI tools easily accessible in their views. EFL learners in general use MT tools to understand difficult words and phrases in real time according to Sujarwo (2020). Students perceive AI tools as assistants beyond dictionary functions, which enables them to comprehend academic text meanings according to Dziri and Hassani (2024). The participants utilised AI tools to translate both short passages and entire essays, which indicates their heavy dependence on these technologies as a language connection, yet having possible doubts about writing English at an academic level. The study by Kruk and Kałużna (2025) observed that students use AI tools to draft assignments or finalise them since they believe their language skills are insufficient. They employ AI tools to translate their native language text into English due to its ease of use and time efficiency although this practice diminishes their work's precision and writing style. Their careful treatment of the usage of AI tools for complex writing tasks demonstrates their realistic understanding of AI systems' current translation (in)capabilities in academic writing.

Moreover, the student responses indicate positive attitudes toward the usefulness of AI tools in their studies according to the research findings. They express strong confidence that AI tools will fulfil institutional requirements during times of urgency and when dealing with difficult linguistic work, but, at the same time, they maintain a negative view regarding the system's operational boundaries. In addition, the students find AI tools easy to use based on their perception and experience major difficulties when using AI-generated content in academic assignments, even though they find basic operations such as logging in and AI usage straightforward. The problems students encounter stem from poor language accuracy and weak structural organisation along with inadequate training about using AI tools effectively. Students who lack proper AI literacy education must handle tool constraints independently which results in academic frustration and inappropriate usage of the AI tools.

The main result from this study reveals no significant statistical differences in AI usage or satisfaction or perceived utility among students based on gender or educational background. All dimensions showed slightly higher scores from male students and bachelor's degree holders according to Jo (2022), while demographic factors failed to impact AI usage satisfaction or perceived utility.

The interview data shows that many students find AI tools helpful for translating simple or literal sentences as well as common vocabulary and grammatical structures. They express concerns about AI tools misinterpreting context as well as facing difficulties with idiomatic expressions, which may result in generating awkward or inaccurate academic

language. Students modify AI-generated content before submitting their work while simultaneously learning new words and sentence patterns from AI evaluations. Most students see AI tools as an additional resource which does not replace human instructors or dictionaries or translators.

These results demonstrate how students view AI tools as a helpful resource for their academic needs while they remain cognizant of its restrictions. The research supports educational institutions to establish AI literacy training programmes in language classes to enable students to understand the limitations of AI tools and to use them responsibly, while maintaining ethical practices to enhance their academic performance.

V. CONCLUSION

The research presents significant findings about a group of Saudi EFL translation students' perceptions as well as their practice of AI tools in academic work. The study demonstrates that students from advanced levels show positive AI adoption behaviours, yet many students remain concerned about maintaining their fundamental translation abilities and working with cultural content. The research findings have significant implications for educational programmes that involve translation courses operating in Saudi Arabia and other similar contexts. Educational institutions should establish formal training sessions that teach AI methods and help students analyse AI tools while teaching responsible machine translation practices.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Several practical recommendations for translation education programmes emerge from the study's findings. First, academic institutions should develop dedicated AI training modules that systematically introduce students to machine translation tools while emphasising critical evaluation skills. Secondly, the modules should teach students how to use AI tools responsibly through technical training along with discussions of ethical considerations and post-editing techniques, which preserve their translation competencies. Moreover, the implementation of faculty development programmes should also teach instructors how to teach AI-based courses effectively and make them proficient in both pedagogical methods and technological tools. The partnership development between universities and translation industry professionals would also improve curriculum relevance through real-world AI tools knowledge sharing. Longitudinal research that follows students through their translation skill progression and their adoption of AI tools would generate essential data on long-term effects. Research comparing technology acceptance in translation education across different cultural and linguistic environments would reveal the effects of local elements on technological acceptance behaviours. More research is required to create standardised evaluation methods which analyse both the impact of AI tools on translation output quality and operational workflow effectiveness. The pedagogical implications of emerging tools such as generative AI and multimodal translation systems require continuous investigation because of the continues evolution of AI technology. The study of faculty member perspectives on curriculum adaptation challenges would be a good next step for furthering our understanding of institutional readiness for technological change.

The combination of recommendations and research directions demonstrates the necessity to implement the integration of AI tools through balanced critical engagement that leverages technology benefits while, at the same time, safeguarding the human decision-making process and cultural understanding needed for high-quality translation work. The research findings would help the field to create sophisticated approaches for training translation specialists who work in an AI-enhanced language services environment. Future studies should continue to study how technological tools boost human translation capabilities instead of replacing them while focusing on specialised domains that need cultural understanding and creative problem-solving skills.

VII. LIMITATIONS

This mixed-methods study provides comprehensive knowledge on the adoption of AI tools in translation among a group of university students studying translation courses. Yet, there are some research constraints and limitations that need to be addressed. First, the study employed only 10 participants to generate qualitative data. This number may not be sufficient for drawing more concrete conclusions of the participants' views on the discussed topic. Therefore, although the findings provide valuable insights, they do not represent, and therefore cannot be, applied to the wider student population. Secondly, self-reported data within the survey may have produced response biases. This limitation could be resolved in future research by diversifying the studied samples.

Finally, future studies should build upon these research findings to study how the use of AI tools impacts translation quality over time and to examine successful institutional approaches for the implementation of technology. It is hoped that this research could help to expand our knowledge on technological adoption in language learning and lays groundwork for developing flexible translation teaching programmes suitable for the AI age. This research also addresses both positive and negative aspects found in this study to enable educators in creating better programmes for teaching translation skills in an evolving professional environment, while maintaining essential human elements of linguistic and cultural mediation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [Project No. KFU252012].

REFERENCES

- [1] Alhaisoni, M., & Alhaysony, M. (2017). An investigation of Saudi EFL university students' attitudes towards the use of Google Translate. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 5(1), 72-82. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijelev.v5i1.10696>
- [2] Almugharbil, S. M. (2021). *Producing the translators of tomorrow: Designing a student-centered and competence-based translation curriculum for Saudi universities*. University of Wolverhampton.
- [3] Alsubhi, W. O. (2024). Attitudes of translation agencies and professional translators in Saudi Arabia towards translation management systems. *Saudi Journal of Language Studies*, 4(1), 11-27.
- [4] Bowker, L. (2020). *Machine translation and global research: Towards improved multilingual communication in academia*. Emerald Publishing.
- [5] Buitrago Ciro, J., & Bowker, L. (2020). Investigating academic library responses to predatory publishing in the United States, Canada and Spanish-speaking Latin America. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 72(4), 625-652. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-03-2020-0089>
- [6] Cheng, S. (2022). Exploring the role of translators' emotion regulation and critical thinking ability in translation performance. *Front Psychol*, 2022, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1037829>.
- [7] Chimbunde, P., & Jakachira, G. (2024). Threading through the needle of digital education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding the concerns of university lecturers. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2024.2335479>
- [8] Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319-340. <https://doi.org/10.2307/249008>
- [9] Deng, X., & Yu, Z. (2022). A systematic review of machine-translation-assisted language learning for sustainable education. *Sustainability*, 14(13), 7598. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14137598>
- [10] Doherty, S. (2016). The impact of translation technologies on the process and product of translation. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 947-969.
- [11] Drugan, J. (2013). *Quality in professional translation: Assessment and improvement*. Bloomsbury.
- [12] Dziri, K., & Hassani, M. F. (2024). *Improving English as Foreign Language Students' Translation Quality Using Artificial Intelligence* [Doctoral dissertation]. ibn Khaldoun University-Tiaret.
- [13] Farhad, A., Arkady, A., Magdalena, B., Ondřej, B., Rajen, C., Vishrav, C., & Marcos, Z. (2021). Findings of the 2021 conference on machine translation (WMT21). In *Proceedings of the Sixth Conference on Machine Translation* (pp. 1-88). Association for Computational Linguistics.
- [14] Getchell, K. M., Carradini, S., Cardon, P. W., Fleischmann, C., Ma, H., Aritz, J., & Stapp, J. (2022). Artificial intelligence in business communication: The changing landscape of research and teaching. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 85(1), 7-33.
- [15] Heh, W., Rivers, B., Lank, S., & Walsh, C. (2020). Bringing translation and interpreting to the world language curriculum. In *2020 MLA Annual Convention*. MLA.
- [16] Jo, H. (2022). Continuance intention to use artificial intelligence personal assistant: type, gender, and use experience. *Heliyon*, 8(9). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10662>
- [17] Karataş, F., Abedi, F. Y., Ozek Gunyel, F., Karadeniz, D., & Kuzgun, Y. (2024). Incorporating AI in foreign language education: An investigation into ChatGPT's effect on foreign language learners. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12574-6>
- [18] Kruk, M., & Kałużna, A. (2025). Investigating the role of AI tools in enhancing translation skills, emotional experiences, and motivation in L2 learning. *European Journal of Education*, 60(1), e12859. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12859>
- [19] Li, P., Ning, Y., & Fang, H. (2023). Artificial intelligence translation under the influence of multimedia teaching to study English learning mode. *International Journal of Electrical Engineering & Education*, 60(2_suppl), 325-338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020720920983528>
- [20] Litman, T. (2024). *Using AI for Writing Instruction for English Learners* [Unpublished Master thesis]. University of Wisconsin-River Falls.
- [21] Mahdy, O. S. M. M. S., Samad, S. S., & Mahdi, H. S. (2020). The attitudes of professional translators and translation students towards computer-assisted translation tools in Yemen. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16(2), 1084-1095.
- [22] Massey, G. (2021). Re-framing conceptual metaphor translation research in the age of neural machine translation: Investigating translators' added value with products and processes. *Training, Language and Culture*, 5(1), 37-56.
- [23] Meroua, A., & Noudjoud, H. (2024). *Investigating the Usefulness of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Improving Students' Academic Writing* [Doctoral dissertation]. University Center of Abdalhafid boussouf-MILA.
- [24] Mohammed, O. S. M. (2023). Yemeni Students Utilization of Google Translate for Learning English Language: Use, Advantages, and Disadvantages. *Journal of Social Studies*, 29(4), 136-156. <https://doi.org/10.20428/jss.v29i4.2242>
- [25] Moneus A. M., & Sahari, Y. (2024). Artificial intelligence and human translation: A contrastive study based on legal texts. *Heliyon*, 10(6), e28106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e28106>.
- [26] Navon, M. (2021). The virtuous servant owner—A paradigm whose time has come (again). *Frontiers in Robotics and AI*, 8, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frobt.2021.715849>
- [27] Popel, M., Tomkova, M., Tomek, J., Kaiser, Ł., Uszkoreit, J., Bojar, O., & Žabokrtský, Z. (2020). Transforming machine translation: A deep learning system reaches news translation quality comparable to human professionals. *Nature Communications*, 11(1), 1-15.

- [28] Scherer, R., Siddiq, F., & Tondeur, J. (2019). The technology acceptance model (TAM): A meta-analytic structural equation modeling approach to explaining teachers' adoption of digital technology in education. *Computers & Education*, 128, 13-35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.09.009>
- [29] Shih, C. L. (2021). Re-looking into machine translation errors and post-editing strategies in a changing high-tech context. *Compilation & Translation Review*, 14(2), 125-166.
- [30] Suh, E. K. (2020). Lost in translation: a taxonomic analysis of generation 1 learner and faculty expectations. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 50(2), 94-112.
- [31] Sujarwo, S. (2020). Students' perceptions of using machine translation tools in the EFL classroom. *Al-Lisan: Jurnal Bahasa (e-Journal)*, 5(2), 230-241.
- [32] Tavares, C., Tallone, L., Oliveira, L., & Ribeiro, S. (2023). The challenges of teaching and assessing technical translation in an era of neural machine translation. *Education Sciences*, 13(6), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13060541>
- [33] Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2), 186-204. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.46.2.186.11926>



Alqahtani is an Associate Professor at the College of Education, the Director of the Translation, Authorship and Publication Centre at King Faisal University, and the Director of the English Language Programme, one of the Optimum Utilisation of Teaching Staff Programmes, at the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. He earned his PhD from the University of Durham, United Kingdom in 2016. His major research centres on the fields of intercultural communication and language, English as an international language, and the influence of individuals' religious, linguistic, national, and social identities on their intercultural interaction with others. More recently, he has been researching the impact of the pandemic on English language schoolteachers, online English learning in the higher education, and the post-pandemic era of language learning. Dr. Alqahtani is a member of several societies such as the Intercultural Community for Researchers and Educators (Cultnet), the

International Association for Languages and Intercultural Communication (IALIC), and a Life Member of St Mary's College, the University of Durham. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5676-2221>



Arif Ahmed Al-Ahdal is a Professor of Applied Linguistics in the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Humanities, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. Though his vocation is teaching, Dr. Al-Ahdal is an established poet and writer. He has to his credit two bi-lingual poetry collections, *To Yemen with Love* and *Joys and Sorrows*, published in Yemen in 2010 and a reference book, *Preparing EFL Teachers for Tomorrow: Opening New Vistas in Teacher Development with INSET*, published in Germany in 2015. He is also credited with nearly 65 research papers published in internationally indexed journals. Apart from this contribution to research, he has examined many PhD theses for many American, Malaysian, Indian, Saudi and Yemeni Universities, and is presently writing two books on Literary Translation and Applied Linguistics. With a vast cross-cultural teaching experience and diverse exposure gained across three countries:

Yemen, India and Saudi Arabia, he is now Editor-in-Chief of both, *Journal of Translation and Language Studies*, Kuwait, and *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, Italy; Monograph Editor, Sage Open Journals, America; Distinguished and Honoured Advisor, *Asian EFL and Asian ESP Journals*, UK, and *TESOL International Journal*, Philippines; Board Member of *ELT Journal*, Canada; *Arab World English Journal*, Malaysia; *International Journal of English and Literary Studies*, Australia; *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics*, India, among others. He is also a freelance language trainer and an IELTS Examiner, certified by Cambridge University, UK. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6747-0897>

The Kindness of Nature in Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*: An Ecocritical Reading

Majd M. Alkayid*

Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Salt, Jordan

Raed A. Alqassas

Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Salt, Jordan

Murad Al Kayed

Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Salt, Jordan

Mais N. Al-Shara'h

The School of Foreign Languages, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Malik N. Alkhawaldeh

Department of English Language and Translation, Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—This paper aims at studying Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies* through an ecocritical lens. The study investigates how environmental and postcolonial themes intersect in the novel, emphasizing the destructive colonial effect on the environment and on personal and cultural identities. The study also highlights how nature shapes the personal and collective identities of indigenous people. It shows how colonial exploitation of the land and the people leads to the destruction of the environment and the marginalization of people. Nature also is portrayed as a space for resistance and a means of healing.

Index Terms—diaspora, nature, ecocriticism, identity, Aboulela

I. INTRODUCTION

The study applies ecocriticism as a theoretical framework to analyze Leila Aboulela's novel *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015). The novel provides vivid depictions of nature, landscapes and the symbolic significance of the environment. The study aims to analyze the novel through an ecocritical lens to highlight the cultural, political and socioeconomic meanings.

Ecocriticism is relatively a new critical study that focuses on the relationship between the environment and literature. In fact, the term ecocriticism is coined for the first time by Rueckert (1978) in his study "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". Rueckert (1978) explains that ecocriticism is "applying ecological concepts to the reading, teaching, and writing about literature" (p. 107). In other words, ecocriticism is a critical approach that analyzes literary texts in relation to nature and its symbolic meanings. In addition, ecocriticism explores the interconnectedness between nature and human activities and behavior. In *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*, Kerridge and Sammells (1998) discuss how Ecocriticism is a means "to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis" (p. 5). Thus, the aim of ecocriticism is to emphasize the importance of the environment and address any problems or threats that may negatively affect it.

This study analyzes Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015) as a text that is embedded with postcolonial and ecocritical symbols, images and themes. It explores the symbolic and thematic implications of nature in connection with colonialism. By navigating different landscapes like Sudan, Scotland and Dagestan, and different historical periods including the 19th century and 21st century, the novel accurately depicts environmental issues not only in a specific location, but on a global scale, emphasizing how environmental concerns affect all humans across the world. In addition, the novel focuses on portraying the Russian colonization and its devastating impact on both people and the environment. This study also shows the deep connection between indigenous people and their land. They value it, and try to defend it facing all the military and technological powers of the colonizers. In the novel, colonizers believe that having political and military power gives them the right to conquer lands and destroy them and everything that lives there including humans, animals and plants. This research explores how Aboulela depicts nature and its interconnectedness with colonialism, cultural identity, racism, spirituality, and language.

A. The Author

* Corresponding Author.

The author Aboulela (1964) is a novelist and a playwright of Sudanese origins. She grew up in Sudan and in 1990 she moved with her family to Scotland where she began writing literary works. She has written many collections of short stories and novels such as *The Translator* (1999), *Minaret* (2005), *Lyrics Alley* (2005), *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015), *Bird Summons* (2019), and *River Spirit* (2023). Her work focuses on the Arab diasporic experience, highlighting the hardships and challenges of migration, and how immigrants navigate issues like identity, belonging and cultural struggle.

B. The Novel

The novel *The Kindness of Enemies* (2015) narrates two parallel stories of two different places and two different historical periods. The first story begins in 2010, and centers on the protagonist, Natasha, who is born to a Sudanese father and a Scottish mother. The Second story is set in the 19th-century Dagestan and focuses on Imam Shamil, the leader of the anti-Russian resistance who fought to defend his land. These stories are connected through the protagonist, Natasha, a history professor conducting research on Imam Shamil. As a result, the narrative shifts between the two storylines, portraying two different places, two different historical periods and two different characters. To clarify these settings, each chapter in the novel is titled with the location and year in which the events take place.

The first story portrays Natasha's relationship with one of her students; Osama—also known as Oz—who is a descendent of Imam Shamil and the owner of Shamil's sword. Natasha visits Osama and befriends his mother. The three of them frequently discuss many issues related to Islam, migration and cultural identity. During one of Natasha's visits, a snowstorm forces Natasha to stay at their house for an extra day. That day, Oz is arrested for conducting research on Islam and Jihad. Natasha and Oz's mother are informed that Oz is accused of planning a terrorist act. The narrative then focuses on demonstrating Shamil's strength and loyalty to his country in resisting Russian occupation. However, the Russian forces are very powerful as they kill people and animals, destroy the land and plants, and imprison many Dagestani people including Jamaliden; Shamil's son. In response, Shamil's men capture the Russian leader's wife; Anna, along with her children and their governess, in an attempt to exchange them for Jamaledin. In these two stories, nature is intricately woven into the fabric of the story, highlighting themes of racism, cultural identity, and the role of nature as both a spiritual haven and a means of symbolic linguistic expression.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Kindness of Enemies has been widely studied for its discussion of multiple themes, such as diaspora, migration, cultural identity, hybridity, and religion. For example, in "Dislocating Narrativity: Hybridity, Culture and Identity in Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*," Aladylah (2018) investigates the themes of cultural identity and hybridity, emphasizing that the novel "discusses the process of establishing a bridge of coexistence and tolerance amid cultural and religious differences" (p. 478). Aladaylah examines the cultural conflict Natasha experiences in her search for identity and sense of belonging. In "From Inadequacy to Becoming in Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*," Benlahcene et al. (2025) argue that the protagonist Natasha goes through a process of change and "becoming" as she moves "from a state of insecurity to an enlightened understanding of her authentic self" (p. 208). Similarly, in "Of Hideous 'half-and-halves': Reading the Grotesque in Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*," Doosti and Nojournian (2019) study the novel through the lens of grotesque theory, drawing on theoretical works by Bakhtin, Foucault, Bhabha and Kristeva. They argue that "the Bakhtinian grotesque is exemplarily revitalized in Natasha's abject body at different strata, which turns her body mass from a definite individual figure to a becoming political body in a network of sociocultural and religious forces" (Doosti & Nojournian, 2019, p. 116). This suggests that Natasha undergoes a transformation from an individual identity to a more politically conscious entity shaped by social, political and cultural experiences.

Moreover, in "Islamophobia, Othering and the Sense of Loss: Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*," Alkodimi (2021) focuses on the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and their impact on the image of Islam and Muslims. Alkodimi argues that "Aboulela wisely related Islamophobia, racism and the distorted image of Muslims in the west ... to the terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda members and other militant groups" (2021, p. 154). In other words, the novel addresses Islam and the widespread misrepresentations of both the religion and its followers. Alkodimi notes that Aboulela "indirectly puts it that these are mere terrorist acts and have nothing to do with Islam and Muslims. On the contrary, it affected Muslims across the world and had negatively impacted Muslims in general and Muslim immigrants, in particular" (Alkodimi, 2021, p. 154). Thus, the novel emphasizes that such acts of terrorism are unrelated to the core of Islam. Moreover, in "Ensoulng Agential Praxis in A Secular World: A Sufi Spiritual Turn in Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*," Chaoui (2023) explores how the female characters in the novel turn to Sufism to overcome feelings of alienation and marginalization. Chaoui argues that "Aboulela's novel maps out a turn toward spiritual traditions of Islam as transformative and liberating forces which endows her characters with a spiritual spatial horizon" (2023, p. 1). A more environmentally focused study is conducted by Al-Khayyat and Abu Amrieh (2023), who investigate weather conditions and their interconnectedness with the formation of cultural identity. They emphasize that Natasha "ends up accepting her Islamic half and identifying with weather conditions towards the end of her spiritual journey" (Al-Khayyat & Abu Amrieh, 2023, p. 12). In other words, Natasha's increasing awareness of her identity parallels her increasing awareness of weather conditions.

The above discussed studies do not directly investigate the novel through an ecocritical lens as they mainly focus on themes related to identity, migration, and religion. Therefore, this study attempts to examine the functions of nature and its political, cultural and socioeconomic implications. The study also highlights how war causes numerous environmental problems such as the destruction of crops, the killing of livestock, the murder of people, and air and water pollution. In addition, the study explores the relationship between nature, culture and racism, exploring how nature is considered by the characters as a safe haven, a source of healing, and a spiritual space. Additionally, the study demonstrates how some characters use nature as a form of language to express their emotions and thoughts, and communicate with each other.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative approach, applying ecocriticism as its theoretical framework to analyze Leila Aboulela's novel *The Kindness of Enemies*. It offers close textual analysis and examination of selected excerpts that depict nature, the human-nature interconnection, imagery and symbolism of natural elements. The study draws on the works of several key ecocritics including Loretta Johnson, Cheryll Glotfelty, Harold Fromm, Arthur Boughey, Ian McHarg and William Rueckert.

Ecocriticism is a literary theory that examines the relationship between humans and the natural environment. This literary study first emerged as a field of study in the United States and the United Kingdom during the 1980s. Johnson (2009) argues that "Ecocriticism has emerged as a field of literary study that addresses how humans relate to nonhuman nature or environment in literature" (p. 623). Over time, the field expanded to Asia and Africa and eventually to a global scale. In their study, Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) argue that ecocriticism "has been predominantly a white movement" (p. xxv), and emphasize that scholars from all regions and backgrounds should engage with it, as the relationship between humans and nature is a universal concern. Glotfelty and Fromm describe ecocriticism as "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (p. xx) and assert that "a diversity of voices is encouraged to contribute to the discussion" (1996, p. xix).

Glotfelty and Fromm also emphasize that "human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it" (1996, p. xix). They add that ecocriticism explores "interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature" (p. xix). Therefore, ecocriticism is concerned with nature and its interconnections with identity, language, literature and culture. These critics argue that literature is a powerful tool for raising human awareness of nature and the actions needed to protect it. They argue that "literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, and ideas interact" (p. xix).

Moreover, Boughey (1975) argues that "there is no population, community, or ecosystem left on earth completely independent of the effects of human cultural behavior, now influence has begun to spread beyond the globe to the rest of our planetary system and even to the universe itself" (p. 5). In other words, humans have a profound impact on the ecological system and must be aware of the consequences of any activity that may harm the environment. Boughey believes that each individual plays a pivotal role in saving the planet and correcting destructive environmental behavior. Similarly, McHarg (1969) demonstrates that "each individual has a responsibility for the entire biosphere and is required to engage in creative and cooperative activities" (p. 114). All these scholars highlight the shared responsibility of protecting nature, which both affects and is affected by human activity.

Literary texts have long addressed environmental issues and raised awareness about the importance of taking action to stop or modify harmful human practices affecting the ecological system. Rueckert (1978) states that "every poem which comes from a finally developed and refined ecological conscience and consciousness.... enacts a whole program of ecological action" (p. 116). He also argues that individuals should "find ways of keeping the human community from destroying the natural community, and with it human community" (p. 107). He adds that people should "find the grounds upon which the two communities- the human, the natural- can coexist, cooperate and flourish in the biosphere" (p. 107). Rueckert believes that nature "should be protected by human laws, that trees (dolphins and whales, hawks and whooping cranes) should have lawyers to articulate and defend their rights" (p. 108). In this context, literary writers alongside ecologists, serve as the metaphorical lawyers who articulate and defend the rights of the environment.

Ecocriticism, in essence, is concerned with human practices that both affect and are affected by the ecological system. Among the most harmful and destructive practices to nature is colonization. Postcolonial ecocriticism, therefore, investigates the interconnectedness of colonization, war, imperialism and the environment. Rueckert notes that "postcolonial Ecocritics have pointed to the ecological implications of settler colonialism and the negative impacts of industries" (p. 113). In colonized regions, colonizers often seize land, steal natural resources, destroy ecosystems, subjugate and kill indigenous populations, and erase their cultures. In addition, Mukherjee (2006) states that environmental studies should also consider the social and cultural aspects of the land. He explains, "any field purporting to attach interpretative importance to environment (let us call it eco/environmental studies) must be able to trace the social, historical and material co-ordinates of categories such as forests, rivers, bio-regions and species" (Mukherjee, 2006, p. 144).

The study, therefore, highlights how the novel portrays the relationship between the natural landscape and human activities such as war, deforestation, pollution and the killing of animals. It also explores the interconnection between

nature and culture, particularly in relation to hybridity, identity and race. Nature emerges as a powerful force in shaping people's identities, choices and sense of belonging.

IV. DISCUSSION

Postcolonial ecocritics emphasize that colonialization affects the ecological system by polluting and destroying natural elements such as water, soil, plants, animals and habitats. In "Surfing the second waves: Amitav Ghosh's *Tide Country*", Mukherjee (2006) argues that postcolonial studies "cannot but consider the complex interplay of environmental categories such as water, land, energy, habitat, migration with political or cultural categories such as state, society, conflict, literature, theatre, visual arts" (p. 144). Accordingly, nature, politics and culture affect and are affected by one another and are inseparable. Using military and political power, colonizers force indigenous people to leave their homeland, leading to problems of exile, displacement and cultural conflict. Alternatively, they allow them to remain but after destroying the natural environment and erasing their cultural identity.

Many literary writers have explored the effects of colonialism on nature and indigenous people. For example, Chinua Achebe examines the colonizers' destruction of the environment in his novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), where the narrator observes how "the crazy men actually began to clear a part of the forest and to build their houses" (Achebe, 1958, p. 141). Thus, colonizers cleared vast areas of land to construct colonial institutions. The imposition of colonial power over the Nigerian people in general, and the Igbo people in particular, resulted in serious environmental degradation including deforestation, the hunting of wild animals, the loss of the wilderness and the erasure of cultural identity.

In *Ecocritical Postcolonial Studies on Humans, land and Animals*, Afzal (2017) emphasizes that "when any region is colonized, it means the whole environment is colonized. The environment begins to be manipulated by the dominant power" (Afzal, 2017, p. 2). Afzal further explains that postcolonialism opposes "economic and physical exploitation of native people and their lands and resources" (p. 2). In other words, postcolonial ecocriticism raises awareness of the need to preserve both human and natural environments and stresses the urgency of stopping or modifying actions that threaten their existence.

Edward Said, a prominent postcolonial theorist, demonstrates how imperialism transforms the ecological system of colonized lands. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1994) explains that "Europeans immediately began to change the local habitat; their conscious aim was to transform territories into images of what they had left behind" (p. 225). Said argues that this process takes a long time and it "was never-ending, as a huge number of plants, animals, and crops as well as building methods gradually turned the colony into a new place, complete with new diseases, environmental imbalances, and traumatic dislocations for the overpowered natives" (p. 225). He concludes that "a changed ecology also introduced a changed political system" (p. 225). In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, Huggan and Tiffin (2015) also demonstrate how Western colonizers have exploited the environment and destroyed human lives. They argue that "Western exploitation, both past and present, has resulted in the murder, displacement and impoverishment of people, animals and their environment; and it has also generated apparently 'either/or' situations in contexts of land and resource scarcity or degradation" (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015, p. 154). Similarly, Junejo and Shaikh (2022) explain that "much of the human and ecological degradation is a result of imperial colonizing efforts" (p. 67).

Aboulela's novel *The Kindness of Enemies* portrays colonial practices that lead to environmental destruction, displacement and the murder of indigenous people. An ecocritical approach is thus applied to examine nature in connection with themes such as displacement, racism, cultural identity and spirituality. The novel emphasizes the interconnection between the human and natural environments to highlight the devastation caused by colonial regimes. For instance, when the Russians invaded Dagestan, they "set aouls ablaze and destroyed crops; they were even destroying the forests in order to build their military roads" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 32). The colonizers show no regard for environmental destruction, focusing only on seizing the land and extracting by any means. At times, they even pollute the water and "foul the wells" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 33) in order to subdue the people.

Although Shamil and his people resist Russian colonization, the Russians succeed in destroying the land and murdering its inhabitants. The people suffer from starvation after being besieged by their enemies. Many people are murdered and death is everywhere; "death below them and with them – carrion birds circled above" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 30). The destruction caused by the Russians leads to severe air pollution, as "there was a bad smell, the stench of war, of fire" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 31). Dead bodies lie scattered across the land, unburied, as their relatives fear being killed by Russian forces. These corpses "lay in piles, decomposing and starting to smell, shameful under the morning sun" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 35). The Russians reduce Akhulgo to a site of death and ruin, creating "the stench of the corpses, the wailing of children, houses and stables turned to rubble" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 39). Shamil compares the Russian colonizers to poisonous creatures, describing them "as poisonous as the snakes that crawled in the steppes" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 38). In her effort to rebuild the destroyed Dagestan, Shamil's wife, Zeidat, demands that the Russians pay fifty thousand roubles in ransom for the kidnapped Russians, declaring that they "need to build our villages again, the ones you burnt down, the trees you cut down, the crops you destroyed, the pastures you razed, the cattle ... you shot down for no reason other than that you are evil Russians" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 146).

All these violent and oppressive acts of polluting water, burning houses, cutting down trees, destroying crops and killing cattle are done to erase both the natural environment and the indigenous population. The destruction of nature

forces people to leave their land and undergo an overwhelming experience of displacement, racism, marginalization and cultural loss. Russian colonizers destroy, kill and erase anything that stands in their way to seize the land. The destruction of nature reflects the destruction of cultural identity. Colonialism displaces and marginalizes people, creating spiritual and emotional conflicts. These displaced individuals are forced to face and endure alienation, loss of culture, and racism. This paper thoroughly analyzes these themes in connection with nature and its political and cultural implications.

A. Nature, Cultural Identity and Racism

The environment plays an important role in shaping personal and communal identities. The novel portrays the 19th-century Caucasus resistance to the Russian invasion and the devastation that results from this struggle. Within this context, characters and nature interact, affect and are affected by one another. The novel portrays Dagestan's landscape and its deep connection to people's lifestyle and culture. For example, the Caucasus's mountains, valleys and rivers represent the cultural identities and lifestyles of its inhabitants. The Caucasus region, which Shamil and his people defend, is naturally fortified by its mountains and cliffs, therefore, the Russians find it extremely difficult to reach. This area "was a natural fortress, high on one of the peaks of the Caucasus, six hundred feet above the river Andi-Koisu... only horses trained for such a twisted, vertical ascent could reach Shamil's aoul" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 25). The people and animals of Dagestan have adapted to life in these high and dangerous mountains. Their horses are trained to navigate the cliffs and swim across rivers, capabilities that Russian horses lack. One of the Dagestani fighters tells a Russian lady that the river is "too deep for your horses. But ours are trained... the horses were indeed swimming even though they were weighed down with their riders and the cattle were pulling" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 93). The mountains serve as a fortress, protecting the locals from Russian attacks: "any soldier only needed to lose his balance once. By nightfall three-hundred and fifty Russians were killed" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 28). Nature itself seems to defend the land and reject the Russian invasion by inflicting the Russians with diseases, as "typhoid swept through the Russian forces" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 30). Thus, defense and resistance come not only from Dagestani people, but also from the environment, whose harsh conditions act as a barrier to Russian invasion.

The protagonist, Natasha, struggles with her hybrid identity as her father is Sudanese (African) and her mother Scottish (European). Navigating the vastly different landscapes of Sudan and Scotland intensifies her feelings of loss, displacement and homelessness. The stark environmental contrast between these two regions heightens Natasha's sense of isolation and estrangement. In Khartoum, Sudan, the weather is too hot and the city was under "the supreme heat of the sun hanging down like a low ceiling" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 245). Natasha states that "I started to sweat and lost focus. My thighs rubbed against each other; gritty sand entered my sandals and chafed against my skin" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 245). Natasha also comments on the city's unclean environment as she explains, "rubbish piled on the side of a street; broken chairs stacked on top of each other" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 245). Natasha feels that this city is different from urban Scotland. Therefore, she distances herself from the city of Khartoum as she declares that "I stopped, like a tourist, took a picture of it with my phone" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 245). In contrast, when Natasha returns to Scotland, she finds an urban and modern city, but this too adds to her internal conflict. Being in Scotland intensifies her struggle between the Islamic heritage inherited from her father and the secular lifestyle from her mother.

Natasha states, "I was a failed hybrid, made up of unalloyed selves. My Russian mother who regretted marrying my Sudanese father. My African father who came to hate his white wife" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 46). Natasha feels that she is a hybrid because of her parents' different races and cultures. She feels that "my atheist mother who blotted out my Muslim heritage. My Arab father who gave me up to Europe without a fight" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 46). Being split between two different worlds complicates her sense of identity. She is torn between her Western and Arab identities. She likens herself to a snow-covered branch, saying she can see herself "in the black-white contrast of a winter branch that was covered on one side with snow" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 46).

Natasha's feelings of homelessness, fragmented identity and lack of belonging are crystalized in a dream in which she sees herself as half human and half reptile. She explains, "from top of my head all the way down in one straight swoop, I split in two, half human and half reptile" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 80). This sense of alienation is rooted in her memories of her mother, who regretted marrying a Sudanese man. From the moment she arrived Sudan as a bride, Natasha's mother felt out of place and rejected both the land and culture. The mother "hated the henna, the sandalwood and the gold" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 136). In Sudanese culture, brides traditionally use henna; a dye made from the leaves of a plant, to adorn their hands and hair. By rejecting the henna and sandalwood, Natasha's mother not only rejects her husband, but also rejects Sudanese culture as well.

After her long journey to understand and accept her identity, she finds out that she is "not an isolated member of a species but simply one who had wandered far from the flock and still managed to survive, for better or for worse, in a different habitat" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 303). In this way, Natasha compares herself to a bird that has strayed from its flock but still manages to return, belong and survive. By using this image of a natural behavior among birds, Natasha expresses her feelings and thoughts about cultural hybridity.

Another character who suffers from an identity crisis is Jamaleldin, Shamil's son, who is kidnapped by the Russians, lives with them for many years, and eventually becomes like them. Jamaleldin conveys his feelings through using images drawn from nature. He compares himself to a crab because it moves backwards. When he sees a picture of a crab, it irritates him because "no living thing should walk backwards. It was unnatural and gloomy" (Aboulela, 2015, p.

219). He knows that he will soon return to his people after many years in Russia. He still possesses “the mountain spirit” of his people and remembers their lifestyle activities like “leaping over boulders, sitting on the ground to eat, wrapping his head in a turban” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 219). Therefore, he feels that “like a crab, he was edging backwards to them (his people)” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 219). Loneliness, loss and split identity make Jamaleldin feel that he belongs neither to Russia nor to the Caucasus. This feeling is unnatural and gloomy like the crab’s backward movement.

Moreover, the novel exposes how colonizers use natural imagery to assert racial hierarchies in order to legitimize the occupation and exploitation of the land and its inhabitants. In fact, Postcolonialism discusses how colonizers maintain their superiority and hegemony over the colonized by asserting the latter’s inferiority and weakness. Colonizers often dehumanize subjugated peoples by portraying them as “savages”, “barbarians”, “monsters”, and “animals”. They use natural (particularly animal) imagery to dehumanize the colonized people and reinforce racial hierarchies, thus justifying exploitation and violence.

In *The Kindness of Enemies*, Aboulela compares the Caucasians to Native Americans, as both groups are portrayed as barbaric, savage and monstrous to justify colonization. Aboulela demonstrates that “the Caucasus represented as Russia’s wild west, Shamil the noble savage, as magnificent and inscrutable as a Native American Chief” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 20). Thus, the Caucasus is described as a “wild” land inhabited by “savages” who supposedly need the Russians to “civilize” them. In addition, the novel demonstrates how colonizers depict the colonized as cannibals or monsters who must be subdued or killed to save humanity. For instance, a Russian lady claims, “they say Shamil is a monster who eats Russian flesh” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 54). This falsehood reflects how the colonized are demonized to justify violence and the so-called civilizing mission. By asserting their superiority as enlightened, educated and civilized, colonizers legitimize their colonial policies. The West, thus, stereotypes other cultures as weak, backward and uncivilized; a process Edward Said refers to as “othering”, which relies on binary oppositions that place the colonized and the colonizer at opposite poles. These stereotypes are lies and fabricated tools of oppression and control. In the novel, Jamaleldin notes that his people, “were wild not because he remembered them as such but because Russia and Europe said they were” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 219). In other words, the Russian imperial discourse dehumanizes the colonized to justify their domination.

The themes of environment, cultural identity and racism are intricately woven into the fabric of the novel. The portrayed landscapes shape and redefine the characters’ sense of self and belonging. Geographical, environmental, and historical forces influence people’s lives. Both Natasha and Jamaleldin navigate different landscapes that affect their personal and communal identities. Their painful experiences of displacement and cultural identity challenge and redefine their identities. For Natasha, the contrast between her Arab-African roots and the modern landscape of Scotland highlights the difficulty of having a unified identity. Similarly, Jamaleldin is torn between two cultures; the Caucasus culture into which he was born and the Russian culture in which he was raised. Therefore, the novel depicts the tensions and struggles that individuals face in reconciling their personal and cultural identities. The novel also exposes the political and linguistic tools employed by colonial powers, particularly and the use of animalistic imagery, to justify violence and oppression.

B. Nature as a Cure, Haven and Spiritual Space

In “The Sacralization of Nature and the ‘Naturalization’ of the Sacred”, Carvalho and Steil (2008) argue that there are “common imaginative horizons between ecology and spirituality, which we will call practices of self-cultivation, as the path to health and the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing” (p. 1). In other words, nature provides physical, mental, and spiritual healing powers. It offers shelter, peace, harmony and tranquility in human lives. In *The Kindness of Enemies*, nature is portrayed as a space capable of healing people not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually. For example, when suffering from tuberculosis; a deadly disease during the 19th century, Jamaleldin surrounds himself with roses to “overpower the smell of illness” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 267). These roses offer Jamaleldin physical and spiritual strength. He seeks comfort and solace by keeping these roses close, using them as a form of resistance against death. Despite their small size, roses serve as a reminder that even in a world full of violence, war, death and destruction, humans can still find small but significant sources of happiness and hope in nature.

Nature is also portrayed as both a literal and symbolic refuge for the colonized. For example, after being pursued by Russian soldiers, Shamil and his people seek safety and concealment in the mountains. The narrator explains how “steadily they reached the summits and sandstones of Chechnya, crossing for days the looped river; wading, climbing and clinging to the cliffs” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 40). These mountains and cliffs serve as strategic sites that help the Caucasians to defend their land and also resist the Russian invasion. These mountains and cliffs also provide refuge for Shamil and his people. The narrator explains that “the mountains closed in against them and, looking above, the sky was a jagged strip between two cliffs, but these moss-covered boulders were their refuge too” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 40).

The river, too, serves as a natural space that provides shelter and protection for the colonized. The novel portrays the sexual violence of the Russian soldiers against Dagestani women who, in desperation, throw themselves into the river. Aboulela demonstrates that “young women, fearing rape, covered their faces with their veils and jumped into the river” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 39). The river provides women two dangerous choices; either to hide in the water until the soldiers leave, or drown themselves in the river to protect themselves from the humiliation of rape. In either case, the river becomes a savior and a means of protection or a desperate act of preserving dignity and honor.

In the novel, natural resources are used as tools of defense and protection and this mirrors the Daghestani people's resistance to Russian invasion. For example, when Daghestani men leave to fight the Russians, women and children are left behind to depend on themselves in protecting themselves, their families and their homes. In their desperate situation, these women and children turn to the earth itself, taking its stones and using them as weapons to fight back the Russian soldiers. The narrator clarifies how "in every trench, in every stone hut and cavern, women and children fought desperately with stones" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 40). Despite the simplicity of these stones, they become important symbols of resistance and national pride. Within this context of violent struggle, many women and children are brutally killed. A tragic scene of this violent struggle is portrayed when a mother "picked up the dead body of her son as if it were a weapon and heaved it at the soldiers" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 40). This scene highlights the brutality of war and how it makes a mother defend herself with the body of her dead child. Therefore, the novel emphasizes that war has devastating impact on humanity.

For Muslim Daghestanis, nature holds deep spiritual and religious meanings. In the Holy Quran, nature is always described as testament to God's greatness and power. The Quran invites readers to reflect on God's greatness, power and wisdom in creating the earth, the sky, the stars, the moon, the sun, animals, plants, water and the interconnectedness of all creation. More particularly, Islam emphasizes the purification of the soul by connecting it with the cleansing of the body. Wudu, an Islamic practice of washing main parts of the body before performing prayers, reflects the spirituality and reverence of nature. Therefore, wudu and water are not merely physical elements; they also symbolize cleansing, purity and spirituality. Water and wudu play a sacred role, reminding Muslims of the importance of both physical and spiritual cleansing and purity. In the novel, Shamil and his men perform their religious duties; wudu and prayers, even amid the military struggle. The narrator explains that they are "making wudu in the river, the truncated prayers of the traveler, and inland through dry brushwood" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 40). This act of performing wudu and prayers highlights their physical and spiritual connection to nature and honest commitment to faith even in times of hardships.

In these examples, nature provides shelter and spirituality to the Caucasians. Nature is not a passive space but an active force of resistance and spirituality. Mountains, rivers and stones symbolize the oppressed people's determination to defend their dignity, culture and honor. Additionally, the novel shows that the destruction of nature through colonization reflects the brutality and violence of the colonizers, who seek to control the land regardless of the environmental and human cost. In short, the novel highlights nature's role as a source of solace, peace, and spiritual purity.

C. *Nature and Language*

Environmental linguists and ecolinguists recognize "the mutual relationship between cultural and ecological diversity, documenting linguistic structures and verbal practices by which speakers conceptualize, encode, and transmit knowledge about the natural world" (Harrison, 2023, p. 113). In his study "Environmental Linguistics", Harrison (2023) argues that "speakers of many indigenous languages ... perceive a deep unity and interdependency between their land and their language. The two are mutually constituting and reciprocally shaped" (p. 113). Harrison emphasizes the deep connection between a language spoken by the indigenous people and their natural environment, highlighting that "biophysical features such as caves, mountain passes, streams, trees, and rock formations possess spiritual significance and are worshiped through linguistic and ritual praxis on the land" (Harrison, 2023, p. 113). These people use imagery, symbols and expressions derived from their environment to communicate and pass on knowledge.

In *The Kindness of Enemies*, Aboulela highlights the deep connection of nature and language. The indigenous characters frequently express their thoughts and feelings through linguistic expressions rich in imagery, symbols and metaphors related to the environment. For example, Shamil tells the kidnapped princess, Anna, that if the Russians pay the ransom and his demands are met, he will take her back to her people "as pure as the lilies, sheltered from all eyes like the gazelles of the desert" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 126). In this linguistic expression, Shamil draws from his natural environment to express his intentions of protecting the hostages. The images of "lilies" and "gazelles" reflect sensory and emotional connotations that signify the physical and emotional state of the hostages; protected and safe, if his demands are fulfilled. In addition, natural expressions often convey wisdom, proverbs or moral advice. For example, Shamil frequently repeats the proverb, "the world is a carcass and the one who goes after it is a dog" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 130). This proverb implies that life is short and ultimately ends in death and that people who pursue material desires are compared to a dog scavenging after a corpse. This metaphor of an element of nature; dogs, emphasizes the importance of spiritual awareness and warns against the greedy pursuit of material objects and desires.

After his prayers, Shamil teaches and encourages his people to control their instincts and desires using images and symbols drawn from the environment. For instance, he tells his people, "Our ego is a wild horse. It is never satisfied. It wants more and more. Tame your ego and ride it. Don't let it ride you" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 214). In these lines, Shamil uses compares the ego to a wild horse which can be destructive and dangerous. He uses this metaphor of the wild horse to warn his people against the dangers of pursuing their ego and materialistic desires. The advice signifies that people should find a balance by controlling their ego, rather than being controlled and dominated by it.

In another scene, the Daghestani people are tired of war and start to wonder, "when will blood stop flowing on the mountains?" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 155), and the response is "when the sugarcane grows in snow" (Aboulela, 2015, p. 155). This dialogue highlights the increasing violence and bloodshed caused by Russian occupation. Moreover, the

image of blood flowing on the mountains reflects the huge number of people being killed in this military struggle. This question also reflects how the Caucasians feel of despair and frustration because they think that stopping the war is impossible. The answer to the question is given in the metaphor of sugarcane growing on mountains. This means that if sugarcane grows on mountains, war will end, but this is a biological impossibility that signifies the futility of hoping for peace.

Natural expressions are also used to describe people. For example, Shamil and his people are described through natural imagery. For instance, a Russian soldier describes Shamil and his people saying, “they are as stubborn as mules, as hard-headed as the rocks they live on” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 264). This environmental metaphor connects people to their harsh landscape, emphasizing how the land impacts their personal and cultural identity. Therefore, the Russians stereotype the Dagestanis as stubborn by comparing them to their mules and as hard-headed by comparing them to the rocks they live on. Therefore, nature affects and forms people’s personal and cultural identities. Similarly, Russians use environmental expressions to communicate, convey wisdom and give advice. For example, the Russian proverb, “keep the company of wolves and you must learn how to howl” (Aboulela, 2015, p. 215) illustrates the idea that individuals are affected and shaped by their surroundings and social environment. This saying suggests that personal and cultural identity is shaped by its surroundings because people imitate the group that they belong to. In other words, if a person is surrounded by strong people, s/he will imitate them and consequently will become strong. Likewise, if surrounded by weak people, s/he will become weak.

V. CONCLUSION

Aboulela’s *The Kindness of Enemies* is a rich text that explores the interconnectedness of the environment, spirituality, colonialism, cultural identity and linguistic expression. Through the lens of ecocriticism, this study analyzes the various functions of nature in the novel. First, it highlights the interconnectedness of nature, cultural identity and racism. Characters and the environment affect and are affected by one another. Nature shapes and reshapes personal and cultural identities. The novel also explores how colonialism exploits indigenous people, their land and their natural resources. Russian colonial practices against nature in the Caucasus, such as killing people, polluting rivers, burning villages, and deforesting the wilderness, illustrate the environmental destruction that affects both humans and the environment.

Second, the study demonstrates how nature functions as a source of healing, refuge and spirituality. Natural elements, like roses, mountains and rivers offer healing powers to the characters. For Jamaleldin, roses help and empower him physically and spiritually in his illness. The river is also portrayed as a safe haven for Dagestani women who escape from rape by the Russian soldiers. In addition, the river becomes a site of cleansing and purification as the Dagestanis use its water to do wudu before performing their prayers. Thus, the river becomes a physical and spiritual space that people use to purify and cleanse their souls.

Third, the study explores the environmental expressions that form a significant part of the language of indigenous people. In the novel, the characters express their feelings and thoughts through using natural images, symbols and metaphors. By using these environmental expressions, characters transmit knowledge and offer guidance. For example, Shamil advises his men to focus on the afterlife rather than material pursuits by comparing worldly desires to a carcass, and those who chase them to dogs. In these examples, language is constructed of natural images and symbols.

Ultimately, *The Kindness of Enemies* intricately weaves together the various functions of nature to explore themes such as cultural identity, displacement, spirituality, and environmental expression. Aboulela highlights that colonial practices not only exploit, dehumanize, and oppress people but also devastate the environment. Thus, the novel calls for the preservation of both humanity and nature, suggesting that protecting one necessitates protecting the other.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aboulela, L. (2015). *The Kindness of Enemies*. New York: Grove Press.
- [2] Achebe, C. (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann.
- [3] Afzal, A. (2017). *Ecocritical Postcolonial Studies on Humans, Land and Animals*. University of Northern Iowa.
- [4] Aladylah, M. (2018). Dislocating narrativity: hybridity, culture and identity in Leila Aboulela’s *The Kindness of Enemies*. *Annals of the Faculty of Arts*, 46, 478-485.
- [5] Al-Khayyat, A., & Abu Amrieh, Y. (2023). Islamic identity and weather conditions in Leila Aboulela’s *The Translator* and *The Kindness of Enemies*. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1), 1-13.
- [6] Alkodimi, K. (2021). Islamophobia, othering and the sense of loss: Leila Aboulela’s *The Kindness of Enemies*. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 5(1), 144-158.
- [7] Benlahcene, M., Henni, I., Hellalet, S., & Alfino, J. (2025). From Inadequacy to Becoming in Leila Aboulela’s *The Kindness of Enemies*. *Journal of Languages and Translation*, 5(1), 208-217.
- [8] Boughey, A. S. (1975). *Man and the Environment: An Introduction to Human Ecology and Evolution* (2nd ed.). New York: Macmillan.
- [9] Carvalho, I., & Steil, C. (2008). The Sacralization of Nature and the ‘Naturalization’ of the Sacred: theoretical contributions for the comprehension of the intercrossing between health, ecology and spirituality. *Ambient*, 4, 1-22.
- [10] Chaoui, S. (2023). Ensoulng Agential Praxis in A Secular World: A Sufi Spiritual Turn in Leila Aboulela’s *The Kindness of Enemies*. *Critique Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 65(1), 1-13.

- [11] Doosti, F., & Nojournian, A. A. (2019). Of Hideous 'half-and-halves': reading the grotesque in Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*. *Language Horizons, Alzahra University*, 3(1), 115-137.
- [12] Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (1996). *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.
- [13] Harrison, K. D. (2023). Environmental Linguistics. *The Annual Review of Linguistics*, 9, 113-134.
- [14] Huggan, G., & Tiffin, H. (2015). *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. New York: Routledge.
- [15] Johnson, L. (2009). Greening the Library: The Fundamentals and Future of Ecocriticism. *Choice Reviews Online*, 47, 623–631.
- [16] Junejo, M., & Shaikh, T. S. (2022). Land Deterioration and Environmental Damage: A Postcolonial Eco-Critical Study of How Beautiful We Were. *Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 6(1), 67-88.
- [17] Kerridge, R., & Sammel, N. (1998). *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*. USA: Zed Books Ltd.
- [18] McHarg, I. (1969). *Design with Nature*. New York: Doubleday.
- [19] Mukherjee, P. (2006). Surfing the Second Waves: Amitav Ghosh's Tide Country. *New Formations*, (59), 144-57.
- [20] Rueckert, W. (1978). Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism. In C. Glotfelty (Ed.), *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (pp. 105-123). Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.
- [21] Said, E. (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Majd M. Alkayid holds a PhD in English Language and Literature at The University of Jordan, Jordan in 2019. She worked as a part-time lecturer at The University of Jordan, in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Al-Balqa Applied University, Ajloun University College, Jordan from 2024 until the present. She is interested in comparative studies, cultural studies, poetry analysis, literary criticism and language acquisition.

Raed A. Alqassas is an assistant professor of English Literature at Al-Balqa Applied University/ Ajloun University College. He previously taught at Taibah University for six years and Ajloun National University for one year. He has instructed courses in British and American literature, Shakespearean Drama, Literary Theory, and Translation.

Murad M. Al Kayed holds his PhD in Linguistics. He is an associate professor at Al-Balqa Applied University/ Ajloun University College. He taught many courses in linguistics, such as introduction to linguistics, semantics, pragmatics, and psycholinguistics.

Mais N. Al-Shara'h holds a Ph.D in English Literature and Criticism at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is an associate professor at The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan. Her research interests are English Renaissance, Early Modern English Literature, Canon Studies.

Mallik N. Alkhawaldeh holds a PhD in English literature from Sunderland University/ United Kingdom. He is an assistant professor at Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan. His research interests are ecocriticism, world literature, comparative literature and literary criticism.

Discursive-Integrative Politeness Meanings in Digital Spaces: A Third-Wave Pragmatic Analysis of Face-Threatening Acts in Online Communication

R. Kunjana Rahardi*

Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Yuliana Setyaningsih

Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Roni Sulistiyono

Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Seli Tria Febriani

Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract—This study investigates the discursive-integrative meanings of politeness in online communication by applying a third-wave pragmatics framework, with a particular focus on the management of face-threatening acts (FTAs). Employing discourse analysis, the research explores how participants in digital interactions strategically manage FTAs, not only through linguistic and contextual strategies but also by navigating sociocultural norms that emerge within specific online communities. The findings reveal eight distinct pragmatic meanings associated with acts of politeness in these contexts: (1) negative politeness aimed at avoiding direct confrontation, (2) negative politeness involving dismissive humor, (3) positive politeness intended to prevent prolonged conflict, (4) positive politeness used to assert credibility, (5) negative politeness employed to assert authority, (6) negative politeness expressed through emotional outbursts, (7) negative politeness manifested in direct criticism, and (8) negative politeness signaling relational closeness. These findings underscore the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of politeness in online environments. By emphasizing the discursive and integrative dimensions of pragmatic behavior, this study extends the theoretical scope of third-wave pragmatics and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how individuals navigate FTAs in digital communication. The research offers critical insights into the evolving norms of politeness in virtual discourse and highlights the complex interplay between language, identity, and social interaction in mediated settings.

Index Terms—discursive-integrative politeness, online communication, face-threatening acts, third-wave pragmatics

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, the domain of human communication has witnessed a paradigmatic shift, catalyzed by the exponential growth of digital communication technologies. Online media have not only diversified the channels through which individuals interact but have also reconfigured the pragmatic dimensions of interpersonal discourse (Jaszczolt, 2018). From a linguistic pragmatics perspective, this transformation necessitates a re-examination of how meaning is negotiated, social roles are enacted, and relational work is accomplished in technologically mediated contexts. One of the most salient implications of this shift pertains to the evolving conceptualization and realization of politeness. Traditionally viewed through the lens of face management, politeness has been central to mitigating potential threats to interlocutors' self-image and preserving social harmony in interaction (Haugh, 2018; O'Driscoll, 2011).

However, in digital environments—where interactions are often asynchronous, multimodal, and partially disembodied—the enactment of politeness cannot be fully understood through conventional frameworks rooted in face-to-face communication. The absence of immediate contextual cues such as intonation, gesture, and eye contact requires interlocutors to rely more heavily on linguistic and paralinguistic resources to index stance, emotion, and social intent. Moreover, the communicative affordances of digital media fundamentally alter the contextual parameters that underpin pragmatic interpretation. Politeness, in this sense, becomes a fluid and adaptive practice, co-constructed by users in response to platform-specific norms, audience design, and intercultural variability (Arundale, 2013). Scholars in digital

* Corresponding Author.

pragmatics have thus emphasized the need to expand the analytical lens to include emerging phenomena such as politeness through performative memes, strategic ambiguity in online conflict mitigation, and meta-pragmatic commentary in thread-based interactions. Therefore, in contemporary digital discourse, politeness must be theorized not as a static set of universal strategies, but as a dynamic and context-sensitive practice shaped by technological, sociocultural, and discursive factors. This reconceptualization challenges the boundaries of traditional politeness theory and opens new avenues for interdisciplinary inquiry at the intersection of linguistic pragmatics and digital communication studies (Barton & Lee, 2013; Wang & Tucker, 2016).

The classical politeness framework, particularly as articulated by Brown and Levinson, has long been regarded as a seminal contribution to the field of linguistic pragmatics. Anchored in the notion of "face" derived from Goffman, their theory conceptualizes politeness as a set of strategic moves that interlocutors employ to mitigate face-threatening acts within interaction. Central to this model are the universalist assumptions that posit the existence of two fundamental types of face—positive and negative—and the speaker's rational capacity to select from a predefined range of politeness strategies based on assessments of power, distance, and imposition (Levinson, 2013). This approach has been widely adopted and applied across languages and cultures, thereby cementing its status as a dominant paradigm within early politeness research. Nevertheless, the Brown and Levinson model has also been subject to substantial critique, particularly from scholars advocating for more context-sensitive and socially embedded accounts of language use. Among the most significant criticisms are its individualistic and cognitive bias, its detachment from power dynamics and broader social structures, and its reliance on a rationalist calculus that often underrepresents the complexity and variability of real-world interaction (Cummings, 2013). Furthermore, the model's claim to universality has been challenged by empirical studies demonstrating that politeness is culturally contingent, locally realized, and often co-constructed rather than pre-selected or strategically deployed in a vacuum. These critiques have catalyzed a shift in the field toward alternative theoretical orientations that privilege emergent, interactional, and ideological dimensions of politeness.

In response, the field has witnessed the rise of what is now referred to as the "third wave" of politeness research, which builds on and significantly departs from both the classical and postmodern critiques. Third-wave politeness theorists conceptualize politeness not as an *a priori* property of utterances or speaker intentions, but as a discursively co-constructed phenomenon that emerges through interaction. This approach is grounded in a relational view of communication, whereby politeness is understood as one dimension of "relational work" the broader process through which social relationships are continuously negotiated, contested, and redefined through language (O'Driscoll, 2011; Topic, 2020). Central to this paradigm is an emphasis on the contextual embeddedness of politeness: it is shaped by institutional settings, cultural norms, historical discourse practices, and the interlocutors' identities and orientations.

Additionally, third-wave politeness research foregrounds the role of evaluative practices and meta-pragmatic awareness in politeness perception, arguing that what counts as polite or impolite is not intrinsic to particular forms or strategies, but is the outcome of socially situated interpretations and judgments. This theoretical shift aligns closely with broader movements in pragmatics toward interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, and discursive psychology, thereby enabling a more nuanced and empirically grounded account of politeness as a lived, contested, and ideologically loaded practice (Li & Wang, 2016; Terkourafi & Bezuidenhout, 2021). In sum, the evolution from classical to third-wave politeness theories marks a crucial theoretical reorientation in pragmatics—from strategic, speaker-centered models to ward interactional, context-sensitive, and socially reflexive frameworks. This reorientation not only addresses the limitations of earlier models but also opens up new avenues for investigating politeness in diverse communicative ecologies, including digital, institutional, and intercultural contexts (Rahardi, 2022; Rahardi & Budhiono, 2024).

In this view, politeness is not a property of discrete linguistic forms nor solely a product of speaker intention, but rather arises dynamically within the unfolding structure of discourse. Politeness is treated as a contingent accomplishment that participants negotiate through their interpretive alignments, meta-pragmatic evaluations, and strategic responses to contextually salient norms. This shift reflects a broader move in pragmatics toward relational, discursive, and ethnographically informed approaches that foreground how meaning is collaboratively shaped in situated communicative practices. A central contribution of this third-wave orientation is its attention to what may be termed discursive-integrative politeness strategies—that is, the embedding of politeness within larger rhetorical, ideological, and relational structures that extend beyond the sentence or turn level (Haugh, 2015; Haugh, 2006). These strategies involve thematic continuity, identity positioning, narrative framing, and the management of intertextual resources across genres and modalities.

Rather than viewing politeness as local and bounded, third-wave approaches recognize that it often functions across temporal and textual scales, contributing to the ongoing construction of social roles, group belonging, and moral positioning. Such discursive-integrative practices may include, for example, aligning oneself with communal values, mitigating disalignment through humor or irony, or enacting solidarity via culturally salient speech registers. Despite a marked increase in scholarly attention to politeness in digital contexts, much of the existing literature remains theoretically tethered to the assumptions of first- and second-wave politeness models (Haugh, 2018; Haugh, 2006). Predominantly, these studies adopt a form-function approach, privileging the identification and classification of surface-level politeness markers or the strategic deployment of conventionalized speech acts. While such analyses offer valuable insights into the linguistic encoding of politeness, they often fall short of accounting for the interactional complexity and sociopragmatic fluidity characteristic of digital communication. In particular, the nuanced ways in which politeness operates discursively and integratively remain underexplored, especially through the lens of third-wave pragmatics (Li & Wang, 2016).

This gap is not merely methodological but epistemological: it constrains our understanding of politeness as a contextually situated, socially consequential, and morally evaluable practice. Digital media environments, with their unique affordances—such as multimodal expression, algorithmic amplification, temporal asynchronicity, and networked publics—require a reconceptualization of politeness as more than just mitigation of face threats. Rather, they invite us to examine how politeness is enacted, interpreted, and contested in relation to the shifting parameters of visibility, virality, and value within platformed interaction. Without such reconceptualization, politeness risks being reduced to a static inventory of forms, stripped of its discursive, ideological, and relational force (Franch & Conejos, 2003). To address this critical gap, the present study investigates the pragmatic workings of discursive-integrative politeness in digital media, with a particular focus on how users deploy such strategies to navigate, negotiate, and mitigate face-threatening acts in complex communicative ecologies. Anchored in the third-wave pragmatics paradigm, this study views politeness as an emergent and reflexive process of relational work—a form of pragmatic action that is dynamically constituted through the interplay of linguistic choice, sequential positioning, multimodal signaling, and contextual interpretation.

These research questions are as follows: What are the types of strategies employed by speakers to manage face-threatening acts and what role do identity, stance, and social relations play in shaping the meaning and interpretation of politeness in digital interactions? The research objectives are to describe the types of strategies employed by speakers to manage face-threatening acts and what role do identity, stance, and social relations play in shaping the meaning and interpretation of politeness in digital interactions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of politeness developed by Brown and Levinson remains one of the most influential frameworks in the study of social interaction. At its core, the model posits that politeness strategies function as mechanisms for mitigating face-threatening acts, thus protecting the face of participants in an interaction. Brown and Levinson's model is predicated on the assumption that politeness is primarily an individual endeavor, with speakers choosing specific strategies to preserve their own and others' social identities, usually in the context of conflicting social demands or potential threats to one's face. In this view, strategies such as mitigation, hedging, and indirectness are tools used to reduce social friction and maintain harmonious relations (Kulka, 2003; Myers, 1989).

However, despite its foundational status in pragmatics, Brown and Levinson's model has faced considerable scrutiny for its individualistic and normative assumptions. Scholars like Eelen and Watts have highlighted the limitations of the framework, particularly its emphasis on universal, context-independent strategies for face management. One of the primary critiques revolves around its reductionist view of politeness, which assumes that individuals operate as rational agents who, in a largely neutral, face-to-face interaction, engage in the negotiation of face according to a fixed set of strategies (Haugh, 2018; Silva et al., 2020). This simplification overlooks the complex, dynamic, and relational nature of politeness, particularly in real-world contexts where communication is shaped by social structures, cultural values, and power asymmetries.

As noted by Eelen, politeness is not a universal, cross-cultural phenomenon but rather a socially constructed practice that varies widely across different social settings, cultures, and historical periods. The Brown and Levinson model's universalism therefore fails to account for the diversity of politeness norms that exist in various communities, both geographically and socially. For example, strategies that may be deemed polite in one cultural context could be seen as impolite or overly deferential in another. This is especially important in contemporary communication, where multiculturalism and transnationalism complicate the application of a one-size-fits-all model of politeness. The emphasis on individual agency in Brown and Levinson's model also neglects the influence of collective social dynamics and power relations, both of which profoundly shape the enactment of politeness in discourse (Zienkowski, 2014; Blitvich & Sifianou, 2019). Politeness, as a socially situated phenomenon, must be analyzed not only at the individual level but also in terms of its role in maintaining or challenging existing power structures, such as those related to gender, class, or authority.

Moreover, theoretical critiques of the model often point to its narrow focus on verbal communication and its disregard for non-verbal cues that play an essential role in face-to-face interactions. As scholars in the field of nonverbal communication have demonstrated, features such as gestures, posture, gaze, and intonation are vital in conveying politeness and mitigating FTAs. These non-verbal elements help to shape the meaning and interpretation of polite acts, facilitating or hindering the successful management of face needs (Wharton, 2009; Zuckerman et al., 1981). By omitting the multimodal aspects of communication, Brown and Levinson's model overlooks how politeness is constructed through the integration of verbal and non-verbal resources, particularly in contexts where face-to-face interaction is mediated or absent.

In light of these criticisms, recent advancements in pragmatics have sought to address the gaps in Brown and Levinson's model by adopting more context-sensitive and relational approaches to politeness. A third-wave pragmatics perspective, for example, reconceptualizes politeness as a socially negotiated and contextually situated process. This framework emphasizes the interactive co-construction of meaning, where politeness emerges not solely from individual strategic choices but from ongoing, mutually negotiated social interactions that unfold across time, space, and modality (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018; Bezemer, 2021). Furthermore, digital communication has brought new complexities to the study of politeness, as online spaces often involve asynchronous interaction, anonymity, and multimodal resources, which require a rethinking of how politeness functions in the digital age.

Ultimately, while Brown and Levinson's model has undoubtedly shaped the field of politeness research, it is essential to recognize its limitations in accounting for the relational, cultural, and multimodal nature of politeness. The move toward a more discursive-integrative approach offers a more holistic and flexible framework for understanding how politeness is not simply an individual strategy for face management but a dynamic and socially negotiated phenomenon that adapts to the changing needs and conditions of communication (Tekourafi & Bezuidenhout, 2021).

In response to the limitations of Brown and Levinson's framework, third-wave pragmatics has emerged as a significant paradigm shift in the study of politeness, offering a contextually sensitive, socially embedded, and relationally oriented approach to understanding how politeness functions in discourse. This approach marks a departure from earlier models by rejecting the notion that politeness can be reduced to a fixed repertoire of strategies designed to avoid face-threatening acts (Chiappini, 2003; Oatey & Ruhi, 2007). Instead, third-wave pragmatics positions politeness as a dynamic and collaborative process that emerges through the co-construction of meaning between interlocutors during interaction. This shift is a significant theoretical advancement, as it allows for a more nuanced understanding of how politeness is negotiated in real-time, across different social contexts, and in relation to the identities, stances, and power dynamics of the participants involved.

Central to this paradigm is the view that politeness is not simply a means of mitigating conflict or preserving face in the traditional sense, but a socially situated phenomenon that is continually shaped and reshaped by the unfolding interaction. In third-wave pragmatics, politeness is conceptualized as an ongoing process of negotiation wherein interlocutors continually adjust their language, behaviors, and stances in response to the evolving dynamics of social relationships and cultural expectations (Rahardi, 2019; Ramírez, 2020). This interactive construction of politeness challenges the notion of politeness as an individual, strategic undertaking and instead highlights the relational and cooperative dimensions of communicative behavior.

Moreover, third-wave pragmatics places a strong emphasis on the social contexts within which politeness is enacted, arguing that politeness is inherently embedded in the larger sociocultural and institutional contexts in which discourse occurs. Rather than assuming that politeness is universally governed by a static set of principles, this perspective underscores that politeness is always contingent upon the specific social and cultural contexts, as well as the asymmetries of power and status between the participants. Politeness, therefore, becomes a negotiated resource through which speakers not only manage face but also address issues of power, solidarity, and moral order in interaction (Franch & Conejos, 2003; Leech, 2007).

Importantly, the relational nature of politeness in third-wave pragmatics means that it cannot be understood solely through the lens of face management. While face preservation remains a key concern, the scope of politeness in this framework expands beyond individual strategies to encompass a broader set of social actions and interactional goals. This includes the management of interpersonal relationships, the performance of social identities, and the enactment of collective norms and values within a given community (Widdowson, 1998; Mungmachon, 2012). The interactive and relational dynamics of politeness are thus viewed as a central site for the performance and negotiation of social roles and group membership, and not merely a technique for averting confrontation or potential social conflict.

This reconceptualization of politeness as a socially situated and relationally negotiated practice is especially relevant in the context of digital communication. In online environments, the negotiation of politeness is often further complicated by factors such as anonymity, visibility, and asynchronous interaction, as well as the affordances of multimodal (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018; Stockl, 2019). These features challenge traditional conceptions of politeness, emphasizing the need for a discursive-integrative approach that accounts for the multilayered nature of social interaction in the digital age. Here, the co-construction of meaning occurs not only through verbal exchanges but also through visual, textual, and digital cues that reflect the complex ways in which speakers negotiate their social identities, emotional stances, and relationships in these mediated spaces.

Thus, third-wave pragmatics offers a more holistic framework for understanding politeness as a contextually contingent, socially negotiated, and interactionally situated phenomenon. This approach is essential for capturing the multidimensional nature of politeness in contemporary communication, particularly in online settings, where traditional face-to-face strategies may be less applicable or evolve into new forms of digital interaction (Wang & Tucker, 2016; Van Eck, 2006).

With the advent of online media, communication has undergone a profound transformation, as digital platforms now serve as dynamic and interactive spaces where users engage in multifaceted forms of discourse. These platforms offer a rich array of communicative modalities, including text, images, videos, and other multimodal resources, which interact to construct meaning in increasingly complex ways. In this context, politeness strategies are no longer confined to linguistic expressions. Instead, they have evolved into multimodal practices that integrate visual, textual, and gestural cues, reflecting the hybrid nature of online communication. Such strategies now extend beyond simple speech acts, encompassing a broader communicative framework where politeness is dynamically constructed through multiple channels, including but not limited to emojis, gifs, and video content (Swidler, 1986; Sykes & Cohen, 2018; Mulyana, 2021).

While the study of politeness in digital contexts has gained significant momentum in recent years, much of the existing literature remains focused on surface-level politeness markers or isolated instances of speech acts, such as greetings, requests, and apologies. These studies often fail to consider the broader discursive processes that underpin online

interactions. In particular, they tend to overlook how politeness is integrated into the flow of communication, often focusing only on individual strategies or one-off acts without situating them within the larger social context in which they occur. Moreover, the predominant reliance on classical models of politeness, such as those put forth by Brown and Levinson, continues to dominate the field. These models, however, offer limited insight into the nuanced ways that politeness is socially negotiated, especially in multimodal and asynchronous online environments (Hombach & Thom, 2019; Rowsell, 2013).

This reliance on outdated paradigms overlooks the potential for a more context-sensitive approach to politeness, which can account for the interactive, fluid, and negotiated nature of online discourse. Third-wave pragmatics offers a promising alternative by reconceptualizing politeness not as a fixed set of strategies for mitigating face-threatening acts, but as a collaborative, dynamic process that is co-constructed through social interaction. Third-wave pragmatics places emphasis on how politeness practices are shaped by the social relationships, identities, and power dynamics between interlocutors, highlighting the contextual and socially embedded nature of politeness (Unger, 2011; Sperber & Wilson, 2012). These frameworks provide a richer lens through which to explore how individuals in online spaces not only use politeness to manage FTAs but also continuously negotiate social roles, group memberships, and identity positions.

This gap in existing research presents a compelling opportunity for further investigation. By applying the third-wave pragmatics approach, future research can explore how discursive-integrative politeness functions in complex digital contexts. Specifically, it can examine how individuals strategically navigate FTAs in these multimodal, multifaceted, and rapidly evolving online spaces (Rahardi et al., 2023, 2024). The increasing use of social media, instant messaging, and video-based communication further complicates the study of politeness, demanding a more holistic understanding of how language, identity, and social norms interact in the digital age. Thus, this line of inquiry not only challenges existing paradigms of politeness but also contributes to a broader understanding of how digital interaction reshapes communicative practices, highlighting the need for theoretical innovations that reflect the increasingly complex nature of politeness in the online world.

Despite increasing attention to politeness in online communication, much of the research still adheres to first- and second-wave paradigms that treat politeness as a set of individual strategies or static features of speech. These studies fail to account for the social negotiation of politeness in real-time, digitally mediated communication. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research that applies third-wave pragmatics to explore how discursive-integrative politeness operates in digital media to navigate face-threatening acts (Li & Wang, 2016; Haugh, 2003). This research aims to fill this gap by investigating how politeness strategies are employed discursively in online interactions to mitigate FTAs and how these strategies are influenced by social, cultural, and identity-related factors.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, specifically using pragmatic discourse analysis as the primary method of data analysis. This approach is particularly suited for exploring how meaning is constructed in social interactions and allows for an in-depth examination of how politeness is negotiated in online discourse (Johnson, 2001; Harper, 2011). By focusing on the dynamic and situated nature of politeness, this methodology aligns with the goals of third-wave pragmatics, which emphasizes the contextual, social, and interactive dimensions of communication.

Data for this study will be collected from the comment sections of posts on the popular online platform. The comments selected will be those that reflect interactive discourse involving negotiations of politeness, identity, and face-management in response to posted content (Smith et al., 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Data Collection Procedure are as follows: (1) Data Identification: The first step involves selecting the appropriate timeframe and posts that are likely to generate interactive discourse involving users' opinions and responses; (2) Data Collection: The researcher will systematically collect comments from selected posts, focusing on those that contain clear instances of politeness strategies or face-threatening acts; (3) Data Selection: Only comments that are relevant to the research focus will be selected for analysis. This ensures the data set is focused and manageable.

The collected data will be analyzed through pragmatic discourse analysis. The steps of analysis will include: (1) Identifying Politeness Strategies: Politeness strategies will be identified in the data by examining how speakers mitigate FTAs and maintain face during interactions. This includes identifying direct linguistic strategies as well as multimodal strategies; (2) Contextual Analysis: A careful analysis of the social, cultural, and interactional context in which the politeness strategies are employed will be conducted. This includes examining the relationship between participants, their social identities, and how these factors influence the use of politeness strategies; (3) Interpretative Analysis: The final step will involve interpreting how politeness is co-constructed in digital interactions. This will include examining the relational functions of politeness strategies and how they help interlocutors avoid or mitigate FTAs in ways that are sensitive to the dynamic and contextual nature of online media (Bown, 2009; Krippendorff, 2010).

Finally, to ensure the reliability and validity of the analysis, several strategies will be employed: (1) The study will cross-check findings from different data sources and analytical methods to ensure consistency and robustness; (2) Feedback from a sample of participants will be solicited to ensure that the interpretations of the data are accurate and reflective of the participants' intentions (Dong, 2018).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research has produced five types of politeness and the pragmatic meanings carried by these types of politeness. The five findings of this research are briefly mentioned below: (1) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of avoiding direct confrontation, (2) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of involving dismissive humor, (3) Positive politeness with the pragmatic meaning of avoiding prolonged conflict, (4) Positive politeness with the pragmatic meaning of credibility assertion, (5) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of asserting authority, (6) negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of emotional outburst, (7) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of delivering direct criticism, (8) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of expressing relational closeness. This section outlines the research findings and offers a critical discussion of the ways in which politeness meanings are discursively and integratively realized in online communication.

A. Negative Politeness With the Pragmatic Meaning of Avoiding Direct Confrontation

Data 1



Data source:
https://www.instagram.com/p/DHimxZHNxQ5/?img_index=1&igsh=MXY3eGx2Y2t1ZHI3NA==

The speech in question originates from an Instagram post by the account suaradotcom, which features a statement by Arif Maulana, the Deputy Chair of Advocacy at YLBHI. In the post, Maulana voices serious concern over the recurrence of terror experienced by Tempo, marked most recently by the delivery of six mutilated rat carcasses to its editorial office—an act that follows a prior incident involving the sending of a pig’s head. These acts of intimidation are suspected to be linked to Tempo’s investigative reporting on the TNI Bill, a topic currently under intense public scrutiny. In response, YLBHI has called on law enforcement to swiftly investigate the matter and to guarantee the safety of Tempo’s journalists. They emphasize the importance of determining whether this intimidation is connected to Tempo’s journalistic activities, particularly given the pattern of such incidents occurring after the publication of sensitive investigative reports.

TABLE 1
NEGATIVE POLITENESS WITH THE PRAGMATIC MEANING OF AVOIDING DIRECT CONFRONTATION

Data Code	Form of Politeness	Markers & Meanings of Language Politeness	Using Mitigation & Formality	Avoiding Direct Confrontation	Delivering Criticism Diplomatically
Data 1	Negative Politeness	Markers of politeness	"YLBHI sees that"	"The repeated terror received by Tempo is a serious threat to the journalist profession."	"A serious threat to the journalist profession."
		Pragmatic meaning of language politeness	Use neutral and objective expressions to maintain the formality and credibility of the statement.	It does not directly accuse of criticize a particular party, but expresses concerns in a diplomatic way.	Criticism of the terror against Tempo was delivered as a rational statement, not as an aggressive accusation.

The statement delivered by YLBHI, as featured in the Instagram post by suaradotcom, exemplifies the use of negative politeness strategies as conceptualized by Brown and Levinson. This politeness strategy is reflected in the use of mitigating expressions aimed at minimizing imposition and avoiding direct confrontation. For instance, the phrase "seeing that" functions as a cautious preamble to critique, softening the delivery and signaling deference to the interlocutor. Furthermore, the assertion that "the repeated terror experienced by Tempo constitutes a serious threat to the journalism profession" employs formal, measured language, thereby reinforcing the credibility of the message while refraining from overtly targeting specific actors. The lexical choices made in the statement indicate that the critique is grounded in rational analysis rather than emotional reaction. Through the application of negative politeness, YLBHI is able to express disapproval of the intimidation faced by Tempo while maintaining an indirect stance, thus framing the issue as a broader concern for press freedom. This strategic use of language not only underscores YLBHI’s role as an advocacy organization committed to journalist protection, but also enhances the persuasive appeal of the statement by projecting professionalism and neutrality—qualities likely to elicit a more responsive stance from state authorities such as the police.

B. Negative Politeness With the Pragmatic Meaning of Involving Dismissive Humor

Data 2



Data source:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DHfgyUcCdDP/?igsh=MW16NWgxZGUyNXhmOQ==>

The speech referenced originates from a post on the official Instagram account of KompasTV, which features a statement by Hasan Nasbi, Head of the Presidential Communications Office. In this post, Nasbi addresses questions posed by journalists concerning the recent acts of intimidation directed at Tempo journalists—most notably, the delivery of a pig's head to the media outlet's editorial office. This act, following a previous incident involving the sending of a dead rat, is widely regarded as a serious threat to press freedom. In response to these concerns, Nasbi made a lighthearted remark, stating, "Just cook it, if it's a pig's head, just cook it," during a casual media interaction at the Presidential Palace Complex in Central Jakarta on Friday, March 21, 2025. The threatening package, reportedly addressed to "Cica," a journalist and host of Tempo's Bocor Alus program, was sent by an unknown individual. While Nasbi later affirmed that the government does not impose restrictions on journalistic activity, he also noted that the government's role is limited to correcting misinformation or inaccuracies in media reporting.

TABLE 2
NEGATIVE POLITENESS WITH THE PRAGMATIC MEANING OF DISMISSIVE HUMOR

Data code	Form of politeness	Markers & Meanings of Language Politeness	Non-formal Expressions and
Data 2	Positive Politeness	Politeness marker	"Just cook it, if it's a pig's head, just cook it."
		Pragmatic meaning of language politeness	Presenting humor in response to journalists' questions. However, in a broader context, this statement could be seen as trivializing the serious issue of press freedom and threats to journalists.

The statement "It's already cooked, if it's a pig's head, just cook it." exemplifies a positive politeness strategy, as defined by Brown and Levinson, where the speaker employs humor to foster familiarity and reduce potential tension in communication. However, within a broader context, this remark has the potential to provoke controversy, particularly as it was made in response to a sensitive issue—the threat to press freedom linked to the intimidation experienced by Tempo journalists. The use of informal language and humor to address serious matters may inadvertently suggest a lack of sensitivity to the gravity of the situation, especially when it concerns the safety of journalists and the protection of press freedom. Furthermore, humor in political discourse is often used as a tool to deflect or minimize attention on difficult or uncomfortable topics. In this case, Hasan Nasbi's comment could be interpreted as an attempt to downplay the significance of the threats faced by the press without offering a substantive response or solution. While positive politeness strategies aim to maintain harmonious relations with interlocutors, their application can backfire in certain situations, such as this one, where the humor might be perceived as dismissive or indicative of a lack of seriousness regarding critical issues. Consequently, the use of humor in official communications, particularly in political contexts involving public safety and sensitive matters, must be approached with greater caution to prevent misunderstandings or the cultivation of negative perceptions.

C. Positive Politeness With the Pragmatic Meaning of Avoiding Prolonged Conflict

Data 3



Data source:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DG2AFRNzQ1j/?igsh=ZW41NzI5Ynk5dWJy>

The statement in question originates from a post on the Instagram account *mediagossip.kuy*, which features a quote from Nissa Sabyan during an interview with reporters. In the interview, Nissa Sabyan was asked about the label of "pelakor" (homewrecker) that has been associated with her, a label that persists to this day. This term emerged because her current husband was previously married to another woman before divorcing and subsequently marrying Nissa. In response to the question, Nissa Sabyan remarked, "Whether you like it or not, that's a risk," and further explained that she was simply moving forward with her life in the face of these circumstances. This statement reflects an attitude of acceptance and a desire to avoid further prolonging the public debate surrounding the controversy involving her.

TABLE 3
POSITIVE POLITENESS WITH THE PRAGMATIC MEANING OF AVOIDING PROLONGED CONFLICT

Data Code	Form of Politeness	Markers & Meanings of Language Politeness	Expressing acceptance and avoiding
Data 3	Positive Politeness	Markers of politeness Pragmatic meaning of language politeness	"Whether you want it or not is a risk." Avoiding further conflict and not prolonging the debate by indicating that he/she will not argue or defend himself/herself further.

The statement "Hau tak mau itu peluang" (willing or unwilling, it's a risk) uttered by Nissa Sabyan exemplifies a negative politeness strategy, as defined by Brown and Levinson. The negative politeness in this utterance is demonstrated through the use of language that avoids direct confrontation, reflecting a resigned acceptance of the situation. By framing the consequences she faced as an inherent part of the risks involved, Nissa does not engage in a defensive argument or attempt to justify herself, but instead chooses to accept the label imposed upon her without extending the debate. This approach reflects a communication strategy that seeks to maintain a respectful distance from the interlocutor, avoiding the provocation of further discussion or emotional responses. Furthermore, this utterance illustrates how individuals can strategically use language to circumvent conflict in contentious circumstances. Rather than adopting a defensive stance or assigning blame, Nissa opts for a neutral response that minimizes the potential for further contention. This can also be seen as an attempt to manage her public image, maintaining control over the narrative while avoiding overt signs of discomfort. In pragmatic terms, such a strategy is often employed by public figures dealing with controversy, enabling them to stabilize their image and prevent the escalation of a larger public dispute.

D. Positive Politeness With the Pragmatic Meaning of Credibility Assertion

Data 4



Data source:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DHIGPv9zgXL/?igsh=MWttano1Z2VuZW9pNQ==>

The statement in question originates from a post on the Instagram account *idntimes*, which features a quote from Rosan Roeslani, the Head of the Danantara Executive Agency, regarding the announcement of the complete organizational structure of the Daya Anagata Nusantara (Danantara) Investment Management Agency (BPI) on Monday, March 24, 2025. During a press conference held at Graha CIMB Niaga in South Jakarta, Rosan emphasized that no names had been "deposited" in the selection of Danantara's management. He specifically noted that even President Prabowo Subianto had not submitted any nominations. When reporters inquired about the possibility of political influence, Rosan firmly responded, "We do not entertain any form of deposits. Even the President did not submit any names." He further clarified that no individuals from political parties were included in the Danantara management, as all selected candidates had been chosen based on professional assessments conducted by three global headhunting firms. This statement was intended to assure the public that the selection process for Danantara officials was conducted in a transparent and independent manner, free from political interference.

TABLE 4
POSITIVE POLITENESS WITH THE PRAGMATIC MEANING OF CREDIBILITY ASSERTION

Data Code	Form of Politeness	Marker & Meanings of Language Politeness	Assertion Phrases
Data 4	Positive Politeness	Politeness marker	"Even Mr. President doesn't give any names".
		Pragmatic meaning of language politeness	Inviting the audience to agree and believe that there is no entrustment in the appointment of Danantara officials. By mentioning the President as an example, the speaker emphasizes the credibility of the decisions made.

The utterance "Wong Bapak Presiden saja tidak ada tibpan nama" reflects a positive politeness strategy as outlined by Brown and Levinson. This strategy is employed to foster a sense of rapport with the audience and to encourage alignment with the speaker's message. The use of the term "wong", which carries an informal tone, signifies an attempt by the speaker to establish familiarity and solidarity with the listener. Additionally, referencing "Mr. President" as an example enhances the credibility of the statement and serves as a persuasive tactic, making it easier for the audience to accept the argument being presented. From a pragmatic perspective, this statement seeks to reassure the public that the process of selecting Danantara management was conducted in a professional manner, free from political influence. By emphasizing that even the President did not submit any names, the speaker aims to dispel any concerns about potential conflicts of interest in the organizational structure. Moreover, this statement works to bolster the image of transparency and independence of the institution in question. Through the use of a positive politeness strategy, the speaker endeavors to build trust by employing inclusive language that resonates with the public. The casual, locally nuanced style of communication helps cultivate a closer relationship between the speaker and the audience, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the message in achieving its communicative objectives.

E. Negative Politeness With the Pragmatic Meaning of Asserting Authority

Data 5



Data source:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DHSUYSLXFC/?igsh=MTY2eXpnYTRmNmJheQ==>

The statement in question is sourced from an Instagram post by idntimes, which features a comment by Bahlil Lahadalia, the General Chairperson of the Golkar Party, regarding rumors about Finance Minister Sri Mulyani's potential resignation from the Red and White Cabinet. Speaking at the Golkar Party DPP Office in Jakarta on Sunday, March 16, 2025, Bahlil Lahadalia emphasized that changes in the ministerial composition of the cabinet are solely within the prerogative of President Prabowo Subianto. When questioned by reporters about the possibility of a cabinet reshuffle or Sri Mulyani's resignation, Bahlil refrained from further comment, asserting: "Let's not always think that it exceeds the president's authority. It's not allowed because ministerial affairs are absolute matters, the president's prerogative." Additionally, he reminded ministers in the Red and White Cabinet not to overstep their authority, particularly with regard to cabinet appointments. The limited meeting held by President Prabowo in Hambalang that same day, according to Bahlil, focused solely on downstreaming policy and did not address the issue of a cabinet reshuffle. This statement serves to reiterate that the president alone has the authority to determine the composition of the cabinet, and there is no external influence in this process.

TABLE 5
NEGATIVE POLITENESS WITH THE PRAGMATIC MEANING OF ASSERTING AUTHORITY

Data Code	Form of Politeness	Markers & Meanings of Language Politeness	Maintaining the Hierarchy of Power
Data 5	Negative Politeness	Politeness marker	"The minister is an absolute matter, the prerogative of the president."
		Pragmatic meaning of language politeness	Avoid violating the limits of the President's authority. By emphasizing that this decision is the President's prerogative, the speaker emphasizes respect for authority and avoids appearing to interfere.

The statement "The minister is an absolute matter, the president's prerogative" exemplifies the use of negative politeness as defined by Brown and Levinson. This approach is employed to uphold the established power hierarchy by asserting that decisions regarding the appointment of ministers fall solely within the President's jurisdiction, thus preventing any external interference. The terms "absolute" and "prerogative" serve to underscore the exclusivity of this decision, emphasizing that it is beyond dispute or challenge. In the context of political discourse, this negative politeness strategy operates to acknowledge and respect the President's authority, while simultaneously avoiding any ambiguity or public speculation concerning the involvement of other parties in cabinet formation. Furthermore, the statement acts as a means to maintain clear boundaries between the roles and responsibilities of different governmental entities, ensuring that no one exceeds their designated authority. Therefore, this utterance not only affirms the speaker's neutral position regarding potential ministerial changes but also functions as a clarifying remark intended to mitigate public controversy and reduce unnecessary polemics.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has systematically identified and categorized five distinct politeness strategies, each embodying specific pragmatic functions. The findings which contribute to the broader discourse on linguistic politeness are concisely delineated in the subsequent items: (1) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of avoiding direct confrontation, (2) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of involving dismissive humor, (3) Positive politeness with the pragmatic meaning of avoiding prolonged conflict, (4) Positive politeness with the pragmatic meaning of credibility assertion, (5) Negative politeness with the pragmatic meaning of asserting authority. Nevertheless, this study encounters methodological constraints, particularly regarding the limited availability of established theoretical frameworks within third-wave pragmatics that adopt a discursive-integrative approach. This constraint inevitably influences the scope and granularity of pragmatic meaning analysis, which constitutes the study's primary focus. Future research should address these gaps to advance the field. We encourage scholars with shared interests in discursive-integrative politeness to pursue complementary investigations, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Such efforts would significantly enhance pragmatic pedagogy across tertiary education levels.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this study express their sincere gratitude to the Directorate of Research and Community Service, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology. This article is the research funded by the Ministry under the "Hibah Penelitian Fundamental Reguler 2025" research grant.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arundale, R. B. (2013). Face as a research focus in interpersonal pragmatics: Relational and emic perspectives. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 58(108-120). doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.05.013.
- [2] Bargiela-Chiappini, F. (2003). Face and politeness: New (insights) for old (concepts). *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35(10-11), 1453-1469. doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00173-X.
- [3] Barton, D., & Lee, C. (2013). *Language Online: Investigating Digital Texts and Practices* (1st ed.). Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9780203552308.
- [4] Bezemer, J. (2021). Multimodality: A guide for linguists. Manuscript to appear in L. Litosseliti (ed.), *Research Methods in Linguistics* (2nd ed.). Continuum. doi.org/10.5040/9781350043466.ch-012.
- [5] Bezemer, J., & Jewitt, C. (2018). Multimodality: A guide for linguists. *Research Methods in Linguistics* (2nd ed.). Continuum.
- [6] Blitvich, P. G. C., & Sifianou, M. (2019). Im/politeness and discursive pragmatics. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 145, 91-101. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.03.015.
- [7] Blum-Kulka, S. (1987). Indirectness and politeness in requests: Same or different? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11(2), 131-146. doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(87)90192-5.
- [8] Bou-Franch, P., & Garcés-Conejos, P. (2003). Teaching linguistic politeness: A methodological proposal. *IRAL - International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 41(1), 1-22. doi.org/10.1515/iral.2003.001.
- [9] Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027.
- [10] Cummings, L. (2013). *Pragmatics: A multidisciplinary perspective* (1st ed.). Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9781315045580.
- [11] Dong, G. Z. (2018). Improvement validity of modern Chinese reading teaching based on pragmatics. *Kuram Ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri*, 18(6), 3354-3360. doi.org/10.12738/estp.2018.6.240.
- [12] Harper, D. (2011). Choosing a Qualitative Research Method. In *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*. Thompson. doi.org/10.1002/9781119973249.ch7.
- [13] Haugh, M. (2003). Japanese and Non-Japanese Perceptions of Japanese Communication. *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 5(1), 156-177.
- [14] Haugh, M. (2006). Emic Perspectives on the Positive-Negative Politeness Distinction. *Culture, Language and Representation*, 3(October). http://hdl.handle.net/10072/13702
- [15] Haugh, M. (2008). Intention in pragmatics. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 5(2), 99-110. doi.org/10.1515/ip.2008.006.
- [16] Haugh, M. (2015). Impoliteness and taking offence in initial interactions. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 86, 36-42. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2015.05.018.

- [17] Haugh, M. (2018). Disentangling face, facework and im/politeness. *Pragmática Sociocultural / Sociocultural Pragmatics*, 1(1). doi.org/10.1515/soprag-2012-0005.
- [18] Jaszczołt, K. M. (2018). Pragmatics and philosophy: In search of a paradigm. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 15(2). doi.org/10.1515/ip-2018-0002.
- [19] Johnson, E. (2001). *Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press. doi.org/10.1177/00754240122005503.
- [20] Krippendorff, K. (2010). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (2nd ed.). Organ Research Methods. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- [21] Leech, G. (2007). Politeness: Is there an East-West divide? *Journal of Politeness Research Language Behaviour Culture*, 3(2). doi.org/10.1515/PR.2007.009.
- [22] Levinson, S. C. (2013). Recursion in Pragmatics. *Language* (Baltim), 89(1), 149-162. doi.org/10.1353/lan.2013.0005.
- [23] Li, H., & Wang, M. (2016). Culpeper, Jonathan & Haugh, Michael: Pragmatics and the English language. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 13(4), 595-601. doi.org/10.1515/ip-2016-0026.
- [24] Mulyana, N. (2021). Politeness Strategies on Instagram: A Cyberpragmatics Perspective. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Linguistik dan Sastra (SEMNALISA)*, 6, 561-565.
- [25] Mungmachon, M. R. (2012). Knowledge and Local Wisdom: Community Treasure. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(13), 174-181. doi.org/10.5194/nhess-15-1785-2015.
- [26] Murray, N. (2009). Pragmatics, awareness raising, and the cooperative principle. *ELT Journal*, 64(3), 293-301. doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccp056.
- [27] Myers, G. (1989). The pragmatics of politeness in scientific articles. *Applied Linguistics*, 10(1), 1-31. doi.org/10.1093/applin/10.1.1.
- [28] O'Driscoll, J. (2011). Face, communication and social interaction (Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini & Michael Haugh, Eds.). *Journal of Politeness Research. Language, Behaviour, Culture*, 7(1), 153-157. doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2011.008.
- [29] Onwuegbuzie, A., & Leech, N. (2005). On becoming a pragmatic researcher: The importance of combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice*, 8(5), 375-387. doi.org/10.1080/13645570500402447.
- [30] Rahardi, R. K. (2019). Integrating Social, Societal, Cultural, and Situational Context to Develop Pragmatics Course Learning Materials: Preliminary Study. *Jurnal Gramatika: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 5(2), 169-178. http://dx.doi.org/10.22202/jg.2019.v5i2.3572
- [31] Rahardi, R. K. (2022). Triadicities of Indonesian Phatic Functions. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(12), 2641-2650. doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1212.22.
- [32] Rahardi, R. K. (2024). *Pidato Pengukuhan Guru Besar dalam Bidang Ilmu Bahasa, Teroka Paradigma Linguistik, Perspektif Studi Linguistik, dan Konteks Siberteks dalam Cyberpragmatics* [Inauguration Speech for Professor in the Field of Linguistics, "Exploring Linguistic Paradigms, Linguistic Study Perspectives, and Cybertext Contexts in Cyberpragmatics]. Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta.
- [33] Rahardi, R. K., & Budhiono, R. H. (2024). Information Layers of Ostentive Communication of Hoaxes in the Perspective of Relevance Theory of Sperber & Wilson. *Suar Betang*, 19(2), 207-218. doi.org/10.26499/sorbet v19i2.23484.
- [34] Rahardi, R. K., Rahmat, W., & Kurniawan, Y. (2023). Pseudo-Directive Speech Act in the Javanese Language: Culture-Specific Pragmatic Perspective. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 66, 1-12. doi.org/10.1044/2023_JSLHR-23-00223.
- [35] Rahardi, R. K., Setyaningsih, Y., Rahmat, W., & Lateh, N. H. M. (2024). A Stylistic Pragmatics Perspective on Metaphors of Emotive Words in Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(8), 2417-2425. doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1408.14.
- [36] Ramirez, A. (2020). The case for Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Pedagogy: Bilingual Reading to learn for Spanish-Speaking immigrant mothers. *System*, 95, 102379. doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102379.
- [37] Rowsell, J. (2013). *Working with multimodality: Rethinking literacy in a digital age*. Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9780203071953.
- [38] Sachs-Hombach, K., & Thon, J. N. (2019). Introduction: Multimodal media. *Poetics Today*, 40(2), 183-187. doi.org/10.1215/03335372-7298494.
- [39] Silva, V. M., Holler, J., Ozyurek, A., & Roberts, S. G. (2020). Multimodality and the origin of a novel communication system in face-to-face interaction. *R Soc Open Sci*, 7(1), 182056. doi.org/10.1098/rsos.182056.
- [40] Smith, J., Bekker, H., & Cheater, F. (2011). Theoretical versus pragmatic design in qualitative research. *Nurse Research*, 18(2), 39-5. doi.org/10.7748/nr2011.01.18.2.39.c8283.
- [41] Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (2012). Pragmatics, modularity and mindreading. *Meaning and Relevance*, (17), 3-23. doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139028370.016.
- [42] Spencer-Oatey, H., & Ruhi, Ş. (2007). Identity, face and (im)politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 635-786. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2006.12.003.
- [43] Stöckl, H. (2019). Linguistic multimodality - multimodal linguistics: A state-of-the-art sketch. *Multimodality: Disciplinary Thoughts and the Challenge of Diversity*. De Gruyter. doi.org/10.1515/9783110608694-002.
- [44] Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2), 273-286. doi.org/10.2307/2095521.
- [45] Sykes, J. M., & Cohen, A. D. (2018). Strategies and interlanguage pragmatics: Explicit and comprehensive. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(2 Special Issue), 381-402. doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.2.9.
- [46] Terkourafi, M., & Bezuidenhout, A. (2021). Special issue: (Im)politeness, humour, and the role of intentions: Essays presented to Michael Haugh: Guest editors' introduction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 179(1), 1-3. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2021.05.015.
- [47] Topić, M. (2020). Fluffy PR and 'comms girls': banter, social interactions and the office culture in public relations in England. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 29(5), 1321-1336. doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-09-2020-2423.
- [48] Unger, C. (2012). Cognitive Pragmatics. The Mental Processes of Communication. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44(3), 332-334. doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.12.001.

- [49] Van Eck, R. (2006). Digital Game-Based Learning: It's Not Just the Digital Natives Who Are Restless. *Educause Review*, 41(2), 16-30. doi.org/10.1145/950566.950596.
- [50] Wang, V., & Tucker, J. V. (2016). Phatic systems in digital society. *Technology in Society*, 46, 140-148. doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2016.06.002.
- [51] Wharton, T. (2009). *Pragmatics and non-verbal communication*. Cambridge University Press. doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511635649.
- [52] Widdowson, H. G. (1998). Communication and community: The pragmatics of ESP. *English for Specific Purposes*, 17, 3-14. doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(97)00028-8.
- [53] Zienkowski, J. (2014). *Discursive pragmatics*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. doi.org/10.1075/hoph.8.01zie.
- [54] Zuckerman, M., Depaulo, B. M., & Rosenthal, R. (1981). Verbal and nonverbal communication of deception. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 14, 1-59. doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60369-X.



R. Kunjana Rahardi, M.Hum., is a linguist and pragmatics expert who earned his doctorate from Gadjah Mada University in 1999 and became a professor of linguistics at Sanata Dharma University in 2023. His expertise includes pragmatics, cyberpragmatics, sociolinguistics, politeness strategies, and digital communication. He also explores multimodality, cybertextuality, and ecolinguistics in the digital age. His influential book *Pragmatics: Politeness Strategies in Indonesian Imperatives* analyzes the interplay between language, social norms, and politeness. Later works such as *The Phenomenon of Impoliteness*, *Introduction to Pragmatics*, and *Sociolinguistic Studies* expand on these themes and examine language variation in multilingual societies. He has authored over 40 academic books and published more than 70 journal articles. Recent notable publications include “Unraveling the Psychological Impact of Spatial Cybertext Environments” (*AILA Review*), “The Role of Multimodal Visual Cybertext Context” (*Linguistik Indonesia*), and “A Stylistic Pragmatics Perspective on Metaphors” (*TPLS*). His research also addresses everyday humor in digital spaces, as seen in “Javanese Silly Gags on Social Media” (*Arbitrer*). Prof. Kunjana is recognized as a key figure in modern Indonesian linguistics, combining theory, empirical research, and contextual analysis to address the evolving challenges of language and communication in contemporary society.



Yuliana Setyaningsih, M.Pd., is a permanent lecturer at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta. She earned her doctoral degree in Indonesian Language Education from the Indonesia University of Education, Bandung, in 2008. Since 2009, she has taught Indonesian Phonology, and her teaching experience in this field is reflected in the book *Fonologi Bahasa Indonesia: Mengkaji Tata Bunyi dalam Perspektif Edukasi*, co-authored with her colleague specializing in linguistics, giving the work a distinctive educational and linguistic perspective. Her published works include edited volumes such as *Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajaran dalam Teropong Kekiniannya* (2013) and *Butir-butir Gagasan Sastra dan Pengajarannya* (2013), as well as authored titles like *Menulis Artikel Jurnal: Panduan Mencipta Karya Ilmiah Bermutu dengan Pengembangan Argumentasi Berperspektif Stephen Toulmin* (2018) and *Morfologi Kontekstual Berbasis Multimodalitas untuk Mahasiswa Program Sarjana Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia* (2022, with Jasmine Belinda Budijanto).



Roni Sulistiyono, M.Pd., is a permanent lecturer and the Head of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program (PBSI) at Ahmad Dahlan University (UAD), Yogyakarta. He was reappointed as program head for the 2023–2026 term, reflecting strong trust in his leadership and dedication to academic development. Under his guidance, the PBSI program actively works on curriculum innovation to align with contemporary needs and the job market, including a new curriculum planned for implementation in 2025. Beyond internal improvements, he also initiates strategic collaborations, such as with the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) association, APPBIPA DIY Branch, to broaden student perspectives in language teaching. He once provided material on Differentiation in Learning Indonesian Language and Literature to students and lecturers who are members of the PBSI LPTK PTMA association. Known for his innovative and communicative approach, Roni consistently strives to elevate the quality of Indonesian language and literature education.

Through various initiatives and strategic partnerships, he is committed to positioning PBSI UAD as a leading and competitive program both nationally and internationally.



Seli Tria Febriani was born on February 5, 2004, in Singkut District, Sarolangun Regency, Jambi Province. She began her formal education at SD Negeri 61 Bukit Murau and graduated in 2016. She then continued her studies at SMP Negeri 5 Sarolangun, graduating in 2019, followed by vocational education at SMK Negeri 9 Sarolangun, from which she graduated in 2022. Currently, she is pursuing a degree in Indonesian Language and Literature at Sanata Dharma University.

Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills: The Impact of Improv Cards in Role-Playing Technique

Rabaa Said Mohamed Aljngawi

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia;
College of Arts, Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Elmergib University, Alkoms, Libya

Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh*

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia

Wedad A Abdelgawad Abdella

College of Languages, Department of English Language, English Language Centre Benghazi University, Libya;
School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia

Abstract—Despite advancements in instructional methods, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners, particularly in contexts such as Libya. This study investigates the effect of integrating Improv Cards into role-playing activities on the speaking performance of Libyan undergraduate EFL students. Using a quasi-experimental design, 70 participants were divided into an experimental group ($n = 36$) and a control group ($n = 34$). The experimental group engaged in role-plays using Improv Cards, while the control group participated in conventional role-play activities. Pre- and post-intervention speaking tests assessed five key dimensions of speaking proficiency: fluency, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension. The results of the study indicated that the experimental group demonstrated significant improvement across all five components of speaking proficiency, with the smallest relative gain observed in fluency. These findings highlight the potential of improv-based role-play as an innovative, engaging pedagogical strategy for enhancing communicative competence in EFL learners. The study provides practical implications for language educators and curriculum designers seeking to implement interactive, learner-centered approaches in similar educational contexts.

Index Terms—role-play technique, speaking skills, Improv Cards, EFL learners

I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are a crucial aspect of language proficiency, especially for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Aizawa et al., 2023). Effective oral communication is vital for academic success, career advancement, and social integration in today's interconnected world. However, many EFL learners continue to struggle with developing their speaking abilities, facing challenges such as grammatical errors, limited comprehension, and a lack of fluency (Alkhaddashi & Abuojaylah, 2023). These challenges are often the result of insufficient exposure to English in real-life contexts, inadequate teaching practices, and a lack of confidence in using the language spontaneously. For Libyan EFL learners specifically, mastering speaking skills is vital not only for academic success (Al-Arifi, 2020) but also for enhancing career prospects and fostering intercultural understanding (Akhter et al., 2020). Despite these needs, Libyan EFL learners often continue to struggle with speaking proficiency due to systemic and contextual obstacles (Alkhaddashi & Abuojaylah, 2023).

Various instructional methods have been proposed to address these issues, ranging from traditional approaches such as the grammar-translation method to more contemporary frameworks such as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Nonetheless, speaking-related challenges persist. Research suggests that many learners still lack communicative competence, which impedes fluency and confidence development (Rohmiyati et al., 2025; Alkhaddashi & Abuojaylah, 2023). This ongoing struggle points to the gap between theoretical advancements and practical implementation, often hindered by pedagogical limitations, learner-related factors, and contextual constraints.

Traditional methods are frequently critiqued for their teacher-centred orientation, which tends to emphasize rote memorization and structural accuracy at the expense of meaningful communication and critical thinking. In contrast, modern approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching, and technology-enhanced learning prioritize learner interaction, real-world application, and engagement (Zairjanovich et al., 2025). These methods aim to balance fluency and accuracy by encouraging students to use English in authentic contexts. However, their effectiveness is often limited by practical challenges, such as the need for well-trained instructors and

* Corresponding Author.

adequate resources—conditions that may not be readily available in many Libyan EFL settings (Boughoulid, 2022).

Although technological advancements in language teaching offer promising possibilities, they remain largely unfeasible in EFL contexts such as Libyan classrooms due to inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and unreliable internet access (Al-Atrash, 2023). The absence of digital tools and technical support renders the implementation of technology-based methods impractical, making their integration more aspirational than realistic in such environments.

Among non-technological approaches, role-playing has long been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool in language education, particularly since the rise of CLT (Idham et al., 2022). Role-playing provides learners with a dynamic and interactive platform to practise speaking in real-life contexts, thereby fostering communicative competence. By adopting various roles and participating in simulated dialogues, students engage in meaningful language use that mirrors authentic interactions (Pisciotta & Taddei, 2023).

However, like other instructional strategies, role-playing is not without its limitations. Milarisa (2018) argues that role-play activities can become repetitive and time-consuming, often demanding considerable preparation that may detract from coverage of other curriculum components. Additionally, Flora and Sukirlan (2021) note that fear of embarrassment may inhibit student participation, especially among those with lower confidence in their speaking abilities. To counter these challenges, they recommend integrating Improv Cards into role-playing tasks to increase engagement and spontaneity. Yet, their study was conducted in an online environment, raising questions about the effectiveness and adaptability of this approach in traditional face-to-face classrooms. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate how the integration of Improv Cards into the role-playing technique affects the speaking skills of Libyan EFL undergraduates compared to the traditional role-playing technique.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Role-Playing as a Transformative EFL Strategy*

The exploration of pedagogical approaches in English language education has identified a variety of strategies aimed at improving students' speaking skills. Among these, the role-playing technique—an integral component of CLT—has proven effective in addressing the challenges associated with developing spoken English proficiency (Haliwanda, 2021). The core premise of this technique is that assuming different roles within specific contexts can significantly enhance language use. This idea was initially introduced by Ladousse (1995) and later expanded upon by Flora and Sukirlan (2021).

An analysis of the instructional principles underlying role-play reveals that it extends beyond basic language drills. By adopting various roles, students are not only required to express themselves in English but also to view situations from new perspectives and engage in dialogues that may differ from their personal experiences. This immersive interaction creates a dynamic and creative learning environment where students feel more comfortable experimenting with language. As Ladousse (1995) observes, such an atmosphere lowers the fear of making mistakes and fosters risk-taking, contributing to a more supportive and enjoyable classroom experience.

Moreover, role-playing serves two key functions: it enables learners to articulate their thoughts and helps them demonstrate their understanding of language use across diverse social contexts (Siahaan, 2022). Simulated interactions—from casual conversations to formal professional exchanges—expose students to the social and cultural nuances of English. This not only broadens their vocabulary and communicative range but also enhances their cultural awareness (Siahaan, 2022). Regarding this, Harmer (2003) emphasizes that the benefits of role-play extend beyond linguistic development to include personal growth. When implemented effectively, role-playing provides opportunities for learners to reflect on their emotions and experiences, fostering emotional intelligence and empathy alongside communicative competence. In line with these perspectives, Ladousse (1995) and Moosa et al. (2024) argue that role-playing bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. By simulating authentic situations, students are encouraged to use English meaningfully and interactively. Such practice promotes fluency and confidence as learners collaborate, negotiate, and communicate within their assigned roles.

B. *Effectiveness and Challenges of Role-Playing in EFL Instruction*

Role-playing has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical technique for enhancing speaking skills in EFL contexts. Numerous studies have confirmed its positive impact on students' conversational abilities and its alignment with the principles of CLT (Al-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019; Neupane, 2019). Through role-play, learners can improve fluency, build confidence, and overcome common challenges associated with spoken English. This approach has been extensively examined across diverse EFL settings, with various studies consistently supporting its effectiveness in developing learners' speaking competence (e.g., Alzboun et al., 2017; Arham, 2016; Basit, 2019; Bhatti, 2021; Krebt, 2017; Negara, 2021; Nasihah, 2019; Pinatih, 2021; Togimin & Jaafar, 2020). However, despite these benefits, several studies have identified limitations that may hinder the successful implementation of role-playing activities. Time constraints, student boredom, and inconsistent levels of engagement are among the key challenges reported in previous research (e.g., Benabadji, 2007; Flora & Sukirlan, 2021; Milarisa, 2018). These issues can diminish classroom interaction and reduce learning opportunities. For instance, when only a few students actively participate, the dynamic and collaborative nature of role-play may be compromised, preventing the full realization of learning

objectives. Additional concerns include difficulties in designing engaging scenarios, encouraging voluntary participation, and sustaining audience interest during performances (Altun, 2015; Flora & Sukirlan, 2021). Collectively, these factors can present some practical barriers to the effective use of role-playing in EFL classrooms.

C. Improv Cards in Role-Play

Speaking skills are essential for EFL learners but remain challenging due to limited opportunities for authentic communication. Role-playing, a key CLT technique, helps improve fluency and confidence. Recently, incorporating improvisational (Improv) Cards into role-play has shown promise in boosting engagement and spontaneity. This study explores the impact of this approach on Libyan undergraduate EFL students' speaking performance.

Building on the foundational research of Huang and Shan (2008), Flora and Sukirlan (2021) have recently introduced an innovative adaptation of the role-playing technique by incorporating improvisational (Improv) Cards to enhance active participation and turn-taking among learners. Improv Cards, as defined by Halpern et al. (1994), present prompts or scenarios designed to elicit spontaneous, imaginative speech, offering learners opportunities to practice language in a creative and dynamic way. Their integration into English language teaching represents a strategic approach that can foster greater learner autonomy and confidence in speaking. Through improvisation, students can improve vocabulary, fluency, and communicative competence within an engaging and supportive learning environment (Sowden et al., 2015). In a recent study, Flora and Sukirlan (2021) divided 28 participants into experimental and control groups to investigate the effects of Improv-card-based role play on speaking proficiency. Using pre- and post-tests assessing various speaking dimensions—including comprehensibility, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency—they found a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group. After just three intervention sessions, this group outperformed the control group, with a mean post-test score of 24.571 compared to 20.143.

Unlike traditional role-play activities, which often rely on pre-written scripts, improvisational techniques require learners to respond extemporaneously, closely mirroring the spontaneity of real-life conversations. This unpredictability is central to developing the ability to generate contextually appropriate responses on the spot. Fauzan (2012) emphasizes that regular exposure to improvisational practice can help learners become increasingly proficient and comfortable with spontaneous speech. The use of time-limited improvisational tasks further encourages creative expression among learner, prompting them to manage the flow of dialogue and maintain narrative coherence effectively. This approach aligns with key principles of Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory of learning, which emphasises the vital role of social interaction in cognitive development. Role-playing with Improv Cards provides a meaningful context for learners to co-construct knowledge, negotiate meaning, and engage in authentic communicative exchanges. Moreover, this method supports learners' progression within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through peer and teacher scaffolding, thereby enhancing both linguistic competence and communicative abilities.

Despite these promising results, the application of this method in Arab EFL contexts—particularly among Libyan EFL learners—remains underexplored. The current study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effects of role-playing with Improv Cards on the speaking skills of undergraduate Libyan EFL students. This focus responds to the persistent challenges Libyan learners face in acquiring spoken English, which hinder their social and professional advancement (Diaab, 2016). Given that opportunities for authentic spoken interaction are often limited in Libyan educational settings, incorporating improv-card-based role play may offer a practical and effective strategy for improving speaking proficiency.

In contrast to Flora and Sukirlan's (2021) virtual implementation and lack of initial placement testing, the current study employed a placement test prior to the intervention to assess students' English proficiency. This step was crucial for tailoring the intervention to learners' linguistic abilities, ensuring it was accessible and effective across different proficiency levels. Moreover, the intervention was conducted in a face-to-face classroom setting, allowing for real-time interaction and immediate feedback. This context also facilitated differentiated instruction, enabling the instructor to better address challenges related to the use of Improv Cards.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Design of the Study

The current study employed a quasi-experimental design to collect data from the participants to answer the research question. The study adopted non-random sampling techniques for the selection of participants, consistent with a quasi-experimental research design framework. After a previous contact with the university's administration, the researchers were informed that 120 students are currently studying in the civil engineering department for the second academic year at Bani Waleed University. The researchers have gained consent from 70 male and female students to participate in the study. These participants were subsequently divided into two groups: an experimental group, consisting of 36 randomly selected individuals, and a control group, comprising the remaining 34 participants.

B. Data Collection

The data collection process consisted of three main stages: a pre-test, an intervention phase (treatment), and a post-test. Prior to the intervention, a pre-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups to establish baseline oral proficiency levels. The pre-test required students to discuss and describe a given topic, with test items

adapted from Flora and Sukirlan (2021) and modified to align with the English syllabus at Bani Walid University. Students' oral performance was evaluated using a rubric adapted from Harris (1977), assessing five key components of speaking: fluency, grammatical range, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Following the pre-test, the experimental group underwent a structured role-playing intervention over a three-month period, comprising ten sessions of 120 minutes each. The sessions employed a progressive framework, beginning with familiar topics and gradually incorporating more complex, real-life scenarios. The role-play activities were carefully designed to correspond with the university's English syllabus and targeted improvements in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy. Initial sessions featured scripted role-plays to allow students to gain confidence through practising structured dialogues. As the intervention progressed, students participated in improvised role-plays using Improv Cards, which introduced unforeseen elements to promote spontaneous conversational skills. Topics covered included daily routines, greetings, job interviews, shopping, travel planning, and social interactions. Activities were conducted in pairs or small groups to maximize active participation.

Each session followed a structured format: students were first introduced to the scenario, then assigned roles and given preparation time. During role-play activities, the instructor monitored students' performances, providing immediate corrective feedback. Peer feedback was also integrated to encourage self-reflection on strengths and areas needing improvement. The intervention concluded with group discussions and reflections designed to consolidate learning outcomes. The stages of the role-playing instructional process are detailed in Table 1. This structured and scaffolded approach facilitated the gradual development of students' confidence and communicative competence, reinforcing language acquisition in an interactive and engaging manner.

TABLE 1
ROLE-PLAYING INSTRUCTIONAL STAGES

Stage	Instruction
Preparation	- The teacher introduces the role-play topic and explains the objectives. - Students receive Improv Cards or scripted dialogues, depending on the session. - The teacher demonstrates an example scenario. - Students discuss and brainstorm relevant vocabulary and expressions.
Role Assignment	- Students are assigned roles and work in pairs or small groups. - The teacher provides guidance on sentence structures and key expressions. - Students practice their assigned roles before performing.
Acting Out	- Students perform the role-play in front of the class or in small groups. - The teacher introduces Improv Cards to encourage spontaneity. - The teacher observes and provides corrective feedback when necessary.
Feedback & Reflection	- The teacher gives feedback on pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary. - Students provide peer feedback, discussing strengths and areas for improvement. - Students reflect on their performance and suggest ways to enhance their speaking skills.

C. Data Analysis

This study employed quantitative data analysis using SPSS 25.0 to examine students' performance before and after the intervention. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values, were used to summarise the data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test assessed the normality of the dataset to verify the suitability of parametric tests. A paired-sample t-test compared pre-test and post-test scores to determine whether the role-play intervention significantly improved students' speaking skills. Additionally, a MANCOVA was conducted to analyse differences across speaking components—fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension—between the experimental and control groups. These analyses provided comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of the role-playing technique in enhancing oral proficiency.

IV. RESULTS

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of role-playing techniques using Improv Cards in enhancing English-speaking skills. Descriptive statistics were first presented, including means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for the speaking skill pre-test scores of both the experimental and control groups. An independent samples t-test was then conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between the two groups based on their pre-test speaking abilities. This test assesses whether observed differences are statistically significant, with a p-value below the conventional threshold of 0.05 indicating that the differences are unlikely due to chance.

The pre-test speaking scores were evaluated across five key criteria: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Scores ranged from 1 (indicating significant difficulties) to 5 (indicating moderate challenges), reflecting generally low English-speaking proficiency among participants. Both the control and experimental groups demonstrated similar scores across all criteria, mostly between 1 and 3, highlighting widespread challenges in these fundamental language skills. This consistency in pre-test scores confirms that both groups began at comparable proficiency levels, ensuring that any improvements observed post-intervention can be attributed to the role-playing

technique with Improv Cards rather than pre-existing differences. Table 2 presents the overall descriptive statistics for both groups.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS OF THE PRE-TEST OF BOTH GROUPS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pronunciation	70	1	3	1.83	.742
Grammar	70	1	3	1.97	.761
Vocabulary	70	1	3	1.91	.756
Fluency	70	1	3	1.90	.764
Comprehension	70	1	3	1.76	.669
Valid N (listwise)	70				

The descriptive statistics for the five key assessment areas—pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—summarize the performance of all 70 participants. The mean scores were as follows: pronunciation, 1.83 (SD = 0.742); grammar, 1.97 (SD = 0.761); vocabulary, 1.91 (SD = 0.756); fluency, 1.90 (SD = 0.764); and comprehension, which had the lowest mean of 1.76 (SD = 0.669). These results indicate moderate variability across the areas, with comprehension showing slightly lower average performance and less dispersion compared to the others. Detailed pre-test results for both groups are available in the supplementary file.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the overall pre-test scores between the two groups. Group 1 (n = 36) had a mean score of 9.19 (SD = 1.009), and Group 2 (n = 34) had a mean of 9.56 (SD = 0.860). The t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between the groups, with p-values of 0.055 (equal variances assumed) and 0.054 (equal variances not assumed), both slightly above the 0.05 threshold. The 95% confidence intervals for the mean difference ranged from approximately -0.813 to 0.084 (equal variances assumed) and -0.811 to 0.082 (equal variances not assumed), encompassing zero and confirming the lack of significant difference. Table 3 presents the detailed t-test results, while Table 4 shows additional analyses of score differences between groups.

TABLE 3
T-TEST RESULTS OF THE PRE-TEST

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
experimental	36	9.19	1.009	.168
Control	34	9.56	.860	.147

TABLE 4
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST FOR THE PRE-TEST

Assumption	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error	95% CI (Lower, Upper)
Equal variances assumed	-1.622	68	.109	-0.364	0.225	-0.813, 0.084
Equal variances not assumed	-1.629	67.30	.108	-0.364	0.224	-0.811, 0.082

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances yielded a p-value of 0.255, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances between the groups was met. Therefore, the t-test results assuming equal variances were reported. The t-test produced a t-value of -1.622 with 68 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed p-value of 0.055, indicating a marginally non-significant difference between the groups. When the assumption of equal variances was not applied, the t-value was -1.629 with 67.304 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed p-value of 0.054. In both cases, the p-values were slightly above the conventional alpha level of 0.05, suggesting that the difference in pre-test scores between the groups was not statistically significant.

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS OF THE POST TEST OF BOTH GROUPS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pronunciation	70	1	5	3.17	.964
Grammar	70	2	5	2.99	.876
Vocabulary	70	2	5	3.31	.860
Fluency	70	2	5	3.21	.815
Comprehension	70	1	5	3.00	.885
score	70	10.00	25.00	15.68	4.400
Valid N (listwise)	70				

As shown in Table 5, the post-test results demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention, providing valuable insights into the potential of innovative teaching methods to transform language education and enhance learning experiences. These positive outcomes emphasize the importance of incorporating interactive and creative approaches into language instruction, facilitating improved language acquisition and fostering positive learner attitudes. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for the post-test scores of both groups.

Descriptive statistics for the assessed variables are presented below. For pronunciation (N = 70), scores ranged from 1 to 5, with a mean of 3.17 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.964. Grammar scores ranged from 2 to 5, with a mean of 2.99 (SD = 0.876). Vocabulary scores also ranged from 2 to 5, with a mean of 3.31 (SD = 0.860). Fluency scores varied from 2 to 5, yielding a mean of 3.21 (SD = 0.815). Comprehension scores ranged from 1 to 5, with a mean of 3.00 (SD

= 0.885). The post-test results revealed a significant difference in speaking performance between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, which received the role-playing intervention using Improv Cards, demonstrated substantially better outcomes. The control group (N = 34) had a mean score of 17.14 (SD = 4.03, standard error [SE] = 0.67), whereas the experimental group (N = 36) achieved a notably higher mean score of 28.56 (SD = 9.55, SE = 1.64). These findings indicate that the experimental group not only outperformed the control group but also exhibited greater score variability (see Table 6).

TABLE 6
T-TEST RESULTS FOR THE POST-TEST

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	34	17.1389	4.02955	.67159
Experimental	36	28.5588	9.55428	1.63855

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether post-test speaking scores differed significantly between the experimental and control groups. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances revealed a violation of the homogeneity assumption ($F = 27.94$, $p < .001$), requiring the reporting of results under both equal and unequal variance conditions. Assuming equal variances, the t-test showed a highly significant difference between groups, $t(68) = -6.581$, $p < .001$, with a mean difference of -11.42 (SE = 1.74) and a 95% confidence interval ranging from -14.88 to -7.96. When equal variances were not assumed, the results remained significant, $t(43.85) = -6.449$, $p < .001$, with a 95% confidence interval of -14.99 to -7.85. These findings confirm that the experimental group, which received the Improv Card-based role-play intervention, outperformed the control group in post-test speaking scores, demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing oral proficiency.

TABLE 7
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR THE POST TEST

Assumption	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error	95% CI (Lower, Upper)
Equal variances assumed	-6.581	68	< .001	-11.42	1.74	-14.88, -7.96
Equal variances not assumed	-6.449	43.85	< .001	-11.42	1.77	-14.99, -7.85

Given the violation of the homogeneity of variances assumption, the t-test results assuming unequal variances are more appropriate for interpretation. Under this condition, the t-test yielded a value of -6.449 with approximately 43.85 degrees of freedom, while the equal variances assumption produced a t-value of -6.581 with 68 degrees of freedom. In both cases, the p-values were less than 0.001, indicating a highly significant difference between the groups. The mean difference was -11.42 (SE = 1.74), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -14.89 to -7.85, confirming that the experimental group (Group 2) performed significantly better than the control group (Group 1) in post-test speaking scores.

Further analysis using tests of between-subjects effects revealed significant group differences across several components of speaking skills. For pronunciation, group membership had a significant impact ($F = 73.182$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 51.8% of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.511$). Grammar was similarly affected ($F = 23.866$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 26.0% of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.249$). Vocabulary also showed a significant group effect ($F = 21.643$, $p < 0.001$), with 24.1% of the variance explained (adjusted $R^2 = 0.230$).

In contrast, fluency did not show a statistically significant difference between groups ($F = 2.459$, $p = 0.122$), with group membership accounting for only 3.5% of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.021$). However, comprehension was significantly influenced by group membership ($F = 17.813$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 20.8% of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.196$). Overall, these findings suggest that the role-playing intervention with Improv Cards significantly improved pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension, though it did not yield a statistically significant improvement in fluency.

TABLE 8
RESULTS OF THE TESTS BETWEEN SUBJECTS FOR POST-TEST BETWEEN GROUPS

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Pronunciation	3550.693 ^a	1	3550.693	73.182	<.001
	Grammar	13.765 ^b	1	13.765	23.866	<.001
	Vocabulary	12.334 ^c	1	12.334	21.643	<.001
	Fluency	1.598 ^d	1	1.598	2.459	.122
	Comprehension	11.209 ^e	1	11.209	17.813	<.001
Intercept	Pronunciation	7528.693	1	7528.693	155.172	<.001
	Grammar	618.222	1	618.222	1071.863	<.001
	Vocabulary	762.734	1	762.734	1338.419	<.001
	Fluency	720.684	1	720.684	1109.047	<.001
	Comprehension	624.695	1	624.695	992.718	<.001
Group	Pronunciation	3550.693	1	3550.693	73.182	<.001
	Grammar	13.765	1	13.765	23.866	<.001
	Vocabulary	12.334	1	12.334	21.643	<.001
	Fluency	1.598	1	1.598	2.459	.122
	Comprehension	11.209	1	11.209	17.813	<.001
Error	Pronunciation	3299.250	68	48.518		
	Grammar	39.221	68	.577		
	Vocabulary	38.752	68	.570		
	Fluency	44.188	68	.650		
	Comprehension	42.791	68	.629		
Total	Pronunciation	14092.000	70			
	Grammar	677.000	70			
	Vocabulary	820.000	70			
	Fluency	769.000	70			
	Comprehension	684.000	70			

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the significant benefits of incorporating Improv Cards into role-playing activities to enhance various aspects of EFL learners' speaking skills. Pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension all showed substantial improvement, while gains in fluency were comparatively modest. These outcomes align with existing research that underscores the value of interactive and spontaneous learning environments in effective language acquisition. The marked improvement in pronunciation supports previous findings (e.g., Alzboun et al., 2017; Arham, 2016; Krebt, 2017; Nasihah, 2019), which highlight that interactive speaking tasks enhance phonological accuracy. The spontaneous use of Improv Cards prompted learners to articulate clearly in real time. This reinforces Huang and Shan's (2008) claim that immediate verbal output contributes to improved pronunciation.

Significant gains in grammar and vocabulary align with findings reported by Flora and Sukirlan (2021), who noted that role-playing activities promote syntactic awareness and lexical development. The improvisational format encouraged students to use a wider range of vocabulary and grammatical structures without relying on scripted dialogue. This supports findings reported by earlier studies (e.g., Alzboun et al., 2017; Basit, 2019; Krebt, 2017), which suggest that spontaneous speech fosters linguistic flexibility and accuracy. Comprehension also improved notably, likely due to the necessity of processing unpredictable conversational turns. This finding echoes the work of Arham et al. (2016) and Nasihah (2019), highlighting how real-time interaction enhances listening and contextual understanding. It also reinforces Huang and Shan's (2008) assertion that active listening is central to developing language proficiency. However, gains in fluency were comparatively modest. While Flora and Sukirlan (2021) and Pinatih (2021) highlight the potential of improvisational techniques to improve fluency, the present study suggests that the cognitive demands of spontaneous interaction may hinder speech flow. This is consistent with Altun (2015), who observed that EFL learners often experience hesitation and self-correction during unscripted speaking tasks, which can temporarily disrupt fluency.

These findings strongly support Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of the ZPD. The use of Improv Cards fostered socially interactive, scaffolded learning environments where learners co-constructed meaning, negotiated language use, and internalized new forms. Operating at the edge of their linguistic competence with support from peers and instructors, students gradually developed autonomy and confidence in spoken English.

The integration of Improv Cards into role-playing significantly improved learners' pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension, with more modest gains in fluency. These findings suggest that using spontaneous, interactive, fun, and playful cards-based activities embedded within role-plays offers a great context for learning, leveraging communicative language teaching and social constructivist theory principles. The approach enables language use in real time with peers, thereby incorporating communicative competence features and the zone of proximal development. A practical option for low-resource EFL contexts, the approach promotes learner engagement, creativity, and confidence. Overall, improv-based role-play offers a flexible, impactful strategy for improving speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the positive impact of integrating Improv Cards into role-play techniques on EFL learners' speaking skills. Significant improvements were observed in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension, while fluency showed more modest gains. These results align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning and the ZPD, as learners engaged in scaffolded, collaborative interactions that supported real-time linguistic development. The unpredictability of Improv Cards stimulated cognitive engagement and encouraged spontaneous language use.

This study offers practical implications for EFL educators seeking to enrich speaking instruction. Improv Cards serve as a dynamic alternative to traditional role-play, fostering spontaneous communication and increasing student motivation. A balanced integration of structured practice and improvisational tasks can promote comprehensive skill development and create a more engaging classroom environment that supports oral proficiency. Contributing to the field of second language acquisition, this research provides empirical support for the use of improvisational techniques and extends the application of social constructivist and engagement theories by emphasizing learner interaction, motivation, and responsiveness. However, the study has some limitations. The context-specific sample may affect generalizability, and the less pronounced improvement in fluency suggests a need for additional strategies to enhance real-time speech production. The focus on short-term outcomes also leaves the long-term effects of Improv Card use unexplored.

Future research should include longitudinal studies to assess sustained impact, explore effects across varying proficiency levels and cultural settings, and investigate the integration of digital tools—such as AI-driven speaking platforms—to complement improv-based methods. Additionally, examining individual differences in learner responsiveness could offer valuable insights for tailoring instruction to diverse learner needs.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aizawa, I., Rose, H., Thompson, G., & Curle, S. (2023). Beyond the threshold: Exploring English language proficiency, linguistic challenges, and academic language skills of Japanese students in an English medium instruction programme. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(4), 837–861. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820965510>
- [2] Akhter, S., Haidov, R., Rana, A. M., & Qureshi, A. H. (2020). Exploring the significance of speaking skill for EFL learners. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 17(9), 6019–6030. Retrieved February 21, 2025, from <https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/5149/5068>
- [3] Al-Arifi, R. S. (2020). Difficulties facing teaching English language at the primary level from the point of view of teachers and the proposed solutions for them in Al-Quwaiyah Governorate. *Reading and Knowledge Journal*, 117–148.
- [4] Al-Atrash, A. B. (2023). Challenges and difficulties of using e-learning in Libyan universities. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 11. Retrieved December 21, 2024, from <https://educational-sciences-journal.lacts.org.ly/esj/index.php/esj/article/view/411>
- [5] Al-Garni, S. A., & Almuhammadi, A. H. (2019). The effect of using communicative language teaching activities on EFL students' speaking skills at the University of Jeddah. *English Language Teaching*, 12(6), 72–86. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n6p72>
- [6] Alkhaddashi, A., & Abuojaylah, O. (2023). *Exploring Libyan EFL university students' and teachers' attitudes towards using oral presentations in developing speaking skills* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Zawia.
- [7] Altun, M. (2015). Using role-play activities to develop speaking skills: A case study in the language classroom. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 1(4), 27–33. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://ijsses.tiu.edu.iq/index.php/ijsses/article/view/646>
- [8] Alzboun, B. K., Smadi, O. M., & Baniabdelrahman, A. (2017). The effect of role play strategy on Jordanian EFL tenth grade students' speaking skill. *Arab World English Journal*, 8(4), 121–136. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no4.8>
- [9] Arham, R., Yassi, A. H., & Arafah, B. (2016). The use of role play to improve teaching speaking. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 6(3). Retrieved February 11, 2025, from <https://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0316/ijsrp-p5141.pdf>
- [10] Basit, A. A. (2019). Improving English speaking by using role play to seventh grade of SMPN 8 Cimahi in academic year 2016/2017. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 1(2), 57–62. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v1i2.p57-62>
- [11] Benabadji, M. (2007). *Improving students' fluency through role-playing* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Oran.
- [12] Bhatti, M. S. (2021). Teaching speaking skills through role play at elementary level: An analysis. *Jurnal Arbitrer*, 8(1), 93–100.
- [13] Boughoulid, M. (2022). The building of a new language learning model based on the Chomskyan concept. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 9(8). <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4477-3318>
- [14] Diaab, S. (2016). Role of faulty instructional methods in Libyan EFL learners' speaking difficulties. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 338–345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.032>
- [15] Fauzan, U. (2012). Improvisations technique in the teaching of speaking. *Media Akademika*, 27(2), 145–165.
- [16] Flora, F., & Sukirlan, M. (2021). Investigating EFL learners' speaking achievement taught by modified role play at English speaking class. *AKSARA: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 22(1), 85–104. Retrieved December 21, 2024, from <http://jurnal.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/aksara>
- [17] Haliwanda, U. (2021). The effect of using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in teaching speaking. *Elite: English and Literature Journal*, 8(2), 40–53. <https://doi.org/10.24252/10.24252/elite.v8i2a4>
- [18] Halpern, C., Close, D., & Johnson, K. (1994). *Truth in comedy: The manual of improvisation* (p. 150). Meriwether Publishing.
- [19] Harmer, J. (2003). *The practice of English language teaching* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.
- [20] Harris, D. (1977). *Testing English as a second language*. McGraw-Hill.

- [21] Huang, I. Y., & Shan, J. (2008). Role play for ESL/EFL children in the English classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 14(2), 1–10. Retrieved October 18, 2024, from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Huang-RolePlay.html>
- [22] Idham, S. Y., Subramaniam, I., Khan, A., & Mugair, S. K. (2022). The effect of role-playing techniques on the speaking skills of students at university. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(8), 1622–1629. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1208.19>
- [23] Krebt, D. M. (2017). The effectiveness of role-play techniques in teaching speaking for EFL college students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(5), 863–870. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0805.04>
- [24] Ladousse, G. P. (1995). *Role play: Resources book for the teacher series*. Oxford University Press.
- [25] Milarisa, S. (2018). The effect of using role-play technique among accounting students' speaking achievement at STIE Muhammadiyah Berau. *English Community Journal*, 2(1), 183–193. <https://doi.org/10.32502/ecj.v2i1.1008>
- [26] Mohamed, J. G. (2014). Use of translation in the classroom by EFL teachers in Libya (A descriptive study). *Arab World English Journal*, 27–40. Retrieved October 18, 2024, from <https://awej.org/images/AllIssues/SpecialIssues/Translation3/3.pdf>
- [27] Moosa, S., Shareefa, M., & Hammad, A. (2024). Boosting fluency and confidence: The impact of role-play activities on speaking skills of ESL learners. *The International Journal of Literacies*, 32(1), 21–34. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-0136/CGP/v32i01/21-34>
- [28] Nasihah, M. (2019). The use of role-play technique to improve students' English oral communication. *Journal of English for Academic and Specific Purposes*, 2(1), 10–17.
- [29] Negara, I. M. (2021). Literature review: Why use role-play method in teaching speaking? *Journal Ilmiah STBA*, 7(1). Retrieved October 18, 2024, from <http://journal.stbapontianak.ac.id/index.php/spectral/article/view/71>
- [30] Neupane, B. (2019). Effectiveness of role-play in improving speaking skills. *Journal of NELTA Gandaki*, 1, 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jong.v1i0.24454>
- [31] Pinatih, I. G. A. D. P. (2021). Improving students' speaking skills through role-play technique in the 21st century. *Journal of Educational Study*, 1(2), 95–100. Retrieved October 18, 2024, from <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/75859>
- [32] Pisciotta, A., & Taddei, L. (2023). The researcher's role: Teaching social research methods with participatory theater and role-playing techniques. *Sociological Teaching*, 1(2), 5–14. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10478995>
- [33] Rohmiyati, Y., Imron, A., & Asiah, N. (2025). Enhancing English speaking proficiency through video assignments: Addressing linguistic and psychological challenges among Indonesian EFL students. *JETLEE: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, 5(1), 121–134.
- [34] Siahaan, D. G. (2022). Improving students' speaking ability by using role-play: A study of second-year students at SMP Negeri Satap Nian in the academic year 2021/2022. *LEAD (Language, Education and Development)*, 2(1), 48–66. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.lead.2022.2.1.7447>
- [35] Sowden, P. T., Clements, L., Redlich, C., & Lewis, C. (2015). Improvisation facilitates divergent thinking and creativity: Realizing a benefit of primary school arts education. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 9(2), 128–138.
- [36] Togimin, N., & Jaafar, H. (2020). Role-play activities: An innovative approach to teaching speaking skills in an ESL classroom. *LSP International Journal*, 7(2), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v7.16310>
- [37] Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (Vol. 86). Harvard University Press.
- [38] Zairjanovich, Y. S., Anatolievna, T. M., & Botirovich, T. B. (2025). Modern methods used for English language teaching in Uzbek public institutes. *Shokh Library*. Retrieved October 25, 2024, from <http://www.wosjournals.com/index.php/shokh/article/view/903/1160>

Rabaa Said Mohamed Aljangawi is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). Her research interests focus on Applied Linguistics, Language Education, Speaking Skills, and integration of technology in teaching and learning. ORCID iD: 0009-00042287-1146

Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh (Ph.D) is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). His research interests focus on Second Language Writing, EAP, Applied Linguistics, Discourse Studies, and Second Language Acquisition. Dr. Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh teaches courses in applied linguistics, EAP, ESP and second language acquisition. ORCID iD: 0000-0003-1316-9211

Wedad Abadella Abadgawd Elismariy is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). She is also a senior lecturer at Benghazi University, Libya. Her research interests focus on Applied Linguistics, Language Teacher Education, and Second Language Acquisition. ORCID iD: 0009-004-5970-9270

The Correlation Between the Use of AI Translation Tools in Foreign Language Learning and the Positive Performance of Foreign Language Students

Nabil Al-Awawdeh
Yarmouk University, Jordan

Mahmud Mohammad Kaddum
Department of Translation Studies / Arabic, Faculty of Literature, Bartın University, Turkey

Dorine Nasr
Department of Arabic language and Literature, University of Balamand, Lebanon;
Institute of Oriental Literature, Saint Joseph University in Beirut, Lebanon

Nermine Merhye
USJ Beirut, Lebanon

Maria Nasr
Department of Languages and Translation, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of Balamand, Lebanon

Abstract—This study explores the practical correlation between the use of AI-driven translation tools and the positive performance of foreign language (FL) undergraduates. The aim is to determine how these tools help FL learners improve different aspects of their performance. The study adopted a quantitative approach with a survey design. A sample of 949 FL undergraduates from different universities was engaged in the study through a digitally designed questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using relevant statistical measures, including hypothesis testing. The results indicated that Google Translate and DeepL are the AI translation technologies that are most often used, with utilisation rates of 82.51% and 92.83%, respectively. Additionally, over 88% of the study population affirm that these tools have the potential to significantly enhance their proficiency in FL. The result further indicated that 76% of the study sample accepted that AI tools had impacted their writing abilities. This result emphasises that learners are dependent on these tools for understanding and use them to improve their ability to produce language. The data presented reveals that 90% affirmed that the use of these tools enhanced their comprehension of FL phrases. With a mean score of 3.8 and a statistically significant t-value of 1.92 ($p = 0.001$), respondents have a positive impression of the ability of these tools to expand their lexical and grammatical repertoires. The mean value of 4.1 and the statistically significant t-value of 2.34 ($p = 0.002$) provide scientific evidence in support of the hypothesis that the use of these tools is associated with enhanced academic performance among FL learners.

Index Terms—AI-driven translation tools, foreign language (FL) learning, academic performance, language proficiency, language enhancement

I. INTRODUCTION

A series of studies have been conducted to investigate how students utilise translation tools as an additive strategy for enhancing their understanding of foreign language (FL) vocabulary, particularly in terms of vocabulary acquisition. As evidenced by Maimone (2022), vocabulary learning is one of the areas in which AI translation technologies have been proven to be valid (Al-Amri & Abdul Raufeh, 2016). These tools give learners easy access to accurate translation, smoothening the process of understanding definitions of new terms. As Crossley (2018) stated, the application of this system, which opts for prompt feedback, allows for accelerated progress in gaining vocabulary knowledge and simultaneously contributes to learners' increased sense of confidence, thus helping them engage more actively with the language being learnt. Translation can then be viewed as a process of thought that allows students to gain words and phrases unknown in the target language, thus facilitating effective communication with other people. The grammatical problem remains one of the most obstinate in FL learning (Burkhard, 2022). However, AI translation tools have achieved some significant progress in this field. The software applications offer suggestions for grammar, which relates to context and thus help in eliminating syntactic errors. Korošec (2013) asserted that providing personalised support through these

technologies not only improves the quality of written and spoken language but also enables learners to understand grammatical structures.

The advent of AI technologies in translation has revolutionised how languages are evaluated as a concept (Kessler, 2018). Educators have the ability to develop individualised quizzes and assessments that can accurately measure students' language proficiency skills. The implementation of multiple evaluation approaches ensures that students receive appropriate feedback, helping teachers identify gaps in their pedagogical practices.

A need to conduct this research arises from the necessity of critically exploring the overall impact produced by AI translation tools on FL understanding (Muñoz-Basols et al., 2023). Given the growing spread of these technologies in higher learning institutions and among language learners, it is critical to analyse what makes them more dominant than other alternatives and how their impact on students' academic performance varies by an appreciable degree. The purpose of this study is to provide valuable information for language specialist educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders as they try to elaborate on the complicated relationship in question.

Following the established impacts of AI-powered translation tools on FL education, it is crucial to further investigate the correlation between the positive performance of FL students and the use of these tools in FL learning. These objectives are thus posed to guide the direction of the study:

1. To analyse the frequency of usage of AI-powered translation tools in FL learning.
2. To explore the manner in which AI-powered translation tools enhance the learning of FLs.
3. To establish the correlation between the use of AI-powered translation tools and the positive performance of FL students.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. *Using Translation to Enhance FL Learning; Review of Debates*

The role of translation in FL learning as a method has often been neglected or dismissed due to its perceived 'disutility' in developing communicative fluency. However, one can ask why translation cannot be used as a tool to support the FL learning process. The application of translation activities in language class has been a controversial topic and something that many scholars have written about for years. Significantly, some studies have discredited the use of translation as a pedagogical tool for FL learning. Some of the reasons for the criticism include deviation from basic language skills, the time it takes to use, and its ability to disrupt learners' cognitive processes in FL instructions. Translation activities never seem to be able to accurately measure the level of proficiency as a tool for instruction (Cook & Seidel, 2016). However, despite their long exclusion from language teaching for several decades, translation is gradually regaining its place as an attractive and feasible modality in the classroom (Darancik, 2016). There has been a significant shift in perceptions shown by increases in the number of studies and recognition that translation may bring to learners (Cook et al., 2013).

A translation activity that can be observed in FL learning is the use of contrastive analysis. This method permits the identification of places where interference occurs in terms of grammar between the native language and the target language (Lee, 2023). Talavan (2019) observed that translation could act as a foreign language teaching tool to counter inter-lingual interference through the use of various types of translation activities, including text analysis. A significant piece of evidence in favour of translation being a learning tool derives from the contribution it makes toward acquiring vocabulary. As Alharbi (2023) suggested, AI translation technologies have a vast multilingual database that allows learners to receive accurate word translations, mainly for them to enrich their vocabulary. This particular approach, which is sometimes referred to as 'translation-based vocabulary learning,' relies on a pre-existent knowledge of and familiarity with one's native language for doing away with foreign words or expressions. According to Károly (2014), this tool helps learners understand word meanings better and facilitates the process of more accurate expression of thoughts.

Additionally, translation can become a powerful tool for promoting international competence and linguistic vitality. Interpreting culturally ingrained phrases and idioms enables learners to gain a deeper understanding of language use, as reported by Carré et al. (2022). This practice not only enhances understanding of the culture being studied but also encourages learners to manage cultural differences with greater empathy and competence. The process of translation serves as a tool to conduct intercultural research and actively involves people in the social aspect of language (Floros & Tsagari, 2013).

However, criticism surrounds the use of translation in learning a foreign language. White and Heidrich (2013) stated that there is a claim by some scholars who argue excessive dependence on translation in the process of language learning would not allow learners to acquire authentic communicative competence. It is asserted by Kelly and Bruen (2015) that the consequent tendency to frequently translate from the native language into the FL by learners can, therefore, lead to a shun shaped in awkward phrases, which serves as an obstacle for spontaneous phrase coining.

Despite these criticisms, the current scholarship on this topic reveals that when used with caution and in conjunction with other means of learning a foreign language, translation may enhance the acquisition of a foreign language (Klimova et al., 2023; Maimone, 2022; Burkhard, 2022; Munoz-Basol et al., 2023). The very essence lies in finding an appropriate balance between methods that rely heavily on translation practices and those focusing on the successful conveyance of information.

B. *Impacts of Translation Tools in FL Learning; Review of Findings of Previous Studies*

To clarify the actual role of translation tools in FL learning as a whole, it is important to examine previous studies. The benefits of these quick translation and grammatical correction features in the process of intended content production by students include improving their writing skills as well as boosting self-confidence towards effective language communication. This observation is consistent with the study by Lee (2023), who showed that translation as an effective pedagogical strategy helps learners write, improve their comprehension abilities of texts, and better understand how they think in another language and develop motivation to participate more actively in FL learning. Considering this outlook, Schmitt and Strasser (2022) observed that adopting a retrieval strategy involving the use of keyword mnemonics to remember the meaning associated with FL idioms or words could help students recall those words into made-to-order knowledge in their first language.

Muñoz-Basols et al. (2023) conducted research that assesses the potential use of applied translation as a language learning tool, particularly in using AI technology. The study's results show that incorporating technical translation can have a positive impact on engagement with authentic language resources. This form of involvement promotes the understanding process and encourages critical thinking skills in those learning a language. Pham et al. (2022) studied the differences between high and low achievers in the use of translation as a learning method. The results of the study showed that contrary to their beliefs, high achievers believed that L1 use had negative effects on learners' English proficiency achievements.

The fact that students use dictionaries, notes, electronic translation machines, and so on is a lot of aid to the study process. Pokrivcakova (2019) notes that the use of Internet technology in language classrooms is an inevitable progression and evidence of a shift from behaviourist learning theory towards constructivism. This transition suggests that the best way of learning a language is through each other's interactions and in an authentic environment. Furthermore, the Internet provides an opportunity for authentic interaction whereby students can engage in viewing, analysis, and questioning activities as they develop proficiency in a second language. However, the study by Lee (2023) showed that those who introduced machine translation tools into their language learning had numerous improvements in their command of languages as compared to subjects working without applying these sources.

C. AI-Powered Translation Tools in FL Learning

Numerous AI-based translation tools can be employed for FL education. Al-Awawdeh and Al-Shaboul (2025) insisted that the new technology changed the translation pedagogy. For example, one of them is Google Translate – an AI-based tool for translations. This tool is very dynamic in the sense that it offers translations for over 100 different languages while at the same time providing speech recognition and voice output. This gives it the quality of being flexible to ensure anyone learning a language can benefit from this resource. For instance, the easy access to Google Translate, both its browser format and mobile application, enables students to have easy access to use the tool for several purposes like developing vocabulary, words practising, pronunciation, or quick translation needs. Furthermore, recent developments in neural machine translation have led to improved quality translations, which also offer additional advantages for those seeking language development. Another AI translation app – Duolingo, has considerably changed the world of FL learning. The language learning website Duolingo incorporates AI-tuned translation tasks into its instruction structure. Additionally, the Duolingo user interface employs gamification strategies, such as point-based interactions, to encourage users in sentence and text translation activities, thereby relying on points to achieve target language mastery.

DeepL Translator, an AI-enabled translating tool, is famous for its high accuracy. Alonso-Pérez and Sanchez-Requena (2018) have pointed out that the accuracy of this application in translation is simply incredible. This technology has been praised for its effectiveness in developing translations that are quite similar to human-created content using a neural network-based approach. It provides a solid foundation for language students who aim to become fluent in the correct way. DeepL Translator may not offer the interactive language-learning approach that Duolingo does, but its capabilities demonstrate how AI technologies can aid in learning new languages and understanding complex texts.

Lastly, Microsoft Translator is an AI-based translation tool that comes with numerous features. Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez (2011) discovered that this technology was versatile enough to work for many purposes of language learning, including text translation, voice translations as well as real-time conversations. Since the software is readily compatible with different devices and operating systems, students will continuously benefit from its features. Secondly, Microsoft Translator offers a considerable amount of language and dialect support that is crucial for students learning rarely taught languages. This tool can enhance the way secondary language is learnt in different classrooms since it has a variety of features and flexibility.

Overall, from the above, it is evident that AI-driven translation tools have become very useful resources for students and even people aiming to improve their FL skills. The flexibility of Google Translate, the game-based approach of Duolingo, the high-quality translation accuracy of DeepL, and Babbel's individualized language training all cater to different needs in language learning, while Microsoft Translator provides numerous capabilities. The tools mentioned above, as supported by the referenced study, can be considered to represent some of how AI technology might revolutionise FL learning. They allow learners to actively engage in language learning through innovative and creative means.

III. STUDY METHODOLOGY

A. Approach

This study is quantitative research on the correlation between the use of AI-powered translation tools in FL learning and the positive performance of students. The study gathered numerical data through a survey based on the study research questions.

B. Study Questions

The following research questions, derived from the study objectives, are developed to guide the data collection and analysis:

- To what extent do FL students use AI-powered translation tools in enhancing their FL learning?
- How do AI-powered translation tools impact and enhance the learning of FL?
- How does the use of AI-powered translation tools in learning FL correlate with the positive performance of undergraduates?

C. Hypothesis

Based on the study topic and second research question, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Null Hypothesis: There is no correlation between the use of AI-powered translation tools in FL learning and the positive performance of undergraduates in FL.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a correlation between the use of AI-powered translation tools in FL learning and the positive performance of undergraduates in FL.

D. Study Community

The study community consists of FL undergraduates drawn across different universities. The participants were picked randomly from a pool of students majoring in FLs who had chosen translation as their minor specialisation. The researchers estimated the participants' FL competence level, which was determined to be upper intermediate. This estimation was based on many factors, including the participants' results in essay writing, their cumulative grade point average (GPA) in FL courses, and the views of their lecturers. While students have the autonomy to choose the topic of their essays, a well-crafted essay must include a thesis statement that succinctly captures the primary argument and the corroborating evidence for the ideas that bolster such assertion. Furthermore, adherence to the fundamental principles of format and grammar has been ensured since the presence of sentence fragments, misspellings, and poor punctuation indicates a work that has been produced casually.

E. Study Sampling

A total of 949 FL undergraduate students participated in the survey. The study participants were selected using simple randomized sampling strategies. The only criterion for participation in the study is to be an undergraduate of FL. The samples were selected using an online survey after a thorough pilot study for evaluation of the validity and reliability of the research questions and questionnaire items. They include 693 (73.02%) female and 256 (26.98%) male undergraduates who are currently studying different FLs across different universities. The complete data on demographic variables from the students are summarised in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Variables	Categories	Repetition	Percentage
Gender	Male	N=256	26.98%
	Female	N=693	73.02%
Academic Level	Penultimate year	N=376	39.58%
	Final year	N=573	60.42%
Age Range	20-24 years	N=624	65.75%
	25-29 years	N=249	25.92%
	30 years and above	N=76	8.33%
FL proficiency	Intermediate	N=118	12.43%
	Upper-Intermediate	N=712	75.03%
	Proficient	N=119	12.54%

The demographic characteristics included in the table provide a full overview of the people involved in the research. In relation to the distribution of gender, a notable number of the participants consisted of females (73.02%), while males constituted a lesser still significant share (26.98%). The survey included students in their penultimate year (39.58%) as well as those in their final year (60.42%), ultimately capturing a wide array of educational backgrounds. The analysis of age distribution indicated that a significant proportion of the participants belonged to the 20-24 years age group, comprising around 65.75% of the total sample. A smaller but still noteworthy segment of the participants, accounting for 25.92%, fell within the 25-29 years age range. In contrast, those aged 30 years and beyond were a minority, representing only 8.33% of the participants. The sample consisted of participants at various proficiency levels, including 12.43% at the intermediate level, a substantial majority of 75.03% at the upper-intermediate level, and a lesser proportion at the

proficient level (12.54%). The collection of these demographic data provides a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the participants in the research, providing a basis for examining the influence of AI translation technologies on FL learning across diverse student profiles.

F. Study Tools

Online questionnaires (created using Google Forms) were used to conduct the study of students' perceptions. The questionnaire was segmented into three main parts. The first is the demographic data, and the second section is composed of 10 questions, most of which are polar questions; these questions were designed to elicit specific information on the students' perspectives on the use of AI-powered translation tools in the study of FLs, based on the first research question. The collected data can be broken down into six sections, which are as follows: students' dispositions and expectations regarding the length of the course; students' experiences with translation assignments; students' perceptions of the significance of English language topics in translation; students' perceptions of the utility of translation skills; the most popular translation ways and materials; translation learning methods; and students' perceptions of the length of the course. The third part of the questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale of accept and reject based on the second research question.

G. Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis is conducted using relevant statistical measures, including the calculation of the percentile values of the responses of the participants. Other statistical measures include the mean and the standard deviations of the values. Also, regression analysis was used in testing the hypothesis proposed in the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results

It is important to reiterate that two main research questions anchor the data collection and analysis in this paper. The findings derived from the collected data are further submitted in different sections.

a. Results of the Frequency of Usage of AI-Powered Translation Tools in FL Learning

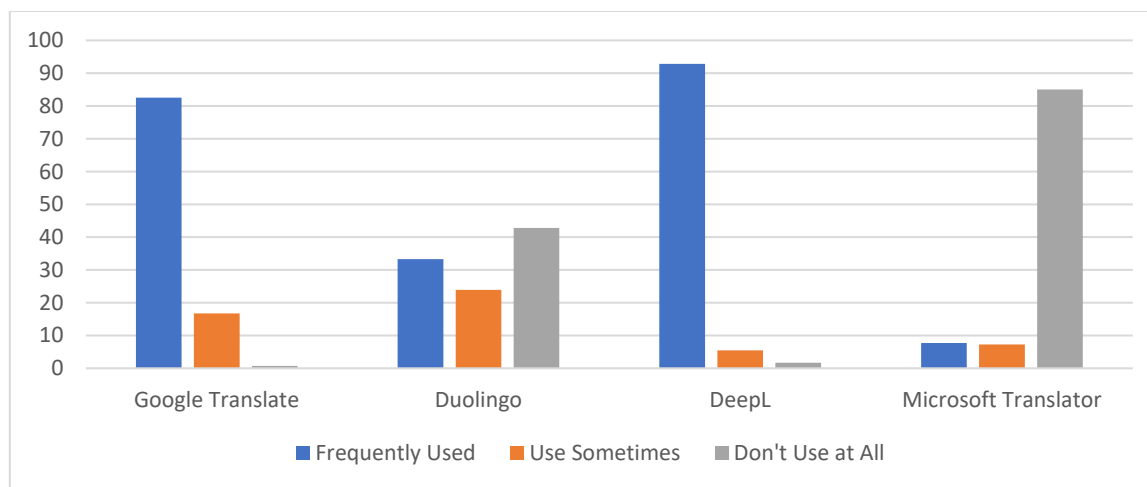


Figure 1. Summary of Findings on the Frequent Use of AI Translation Tools

From the findings presented in Figure 1 above, the results show critical and interesting outcomes regarding the frequency values in the usage of different AI-powered translation tools for enhancing the foreign language learning experience. The understanding of the results of the data is significant to explore the integration of these tools in foreign language learning activities, including the understanding of the implications of using them in FL learning. The abovementioned findings in the chart shed much light on the evolving role of technology in FL learning, therefore encouraging further research and scientific studies into this lively field.

b. Results of the Impacts of AI Translation Tools on Enhancing FL Learning

In order to analyse the relationship between AI translation tools and FL learning, it is important that one gets feedback from students on how these tools have changed their approaches to studying an FL. Table 2 below highlights the derived polar questions for some insights.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF THE IMPACTS OF AI TRANSLATION TOOLS ON FL LEARNING

Question Items	Yes N	Yes %	No N	No %	Mean	Std. Dev
When studying a Foreign Language, have you ever employed translation tools driven by artificial intelligence?	763	80.5%	186	19.5%	4.05	0.15
Do you think that using AI-powered translation tools can help you expand your vocabulary in a Foreign Language?	832	87.7%	117	12.3%	4.77	0.14
Have AI-powered translation tools influenced your FL writing skills?	718	75.7%	231	24.3%	4.757	0.18
Do you think that using translation tools driven by artificial intelligence improves your ability to understand expressions in the FL?	856	90.2%	93	9.8%	4.92	0.12
Has your ability in speaking a Foreign Language grown as a result of AI translation tools?	792	83.7%	157	16.3%	4.83	0.16
Do artificial intelligence translation technologies aid in your comprehension of intricate Foreign Language grammatical rules?	684	72.1%	265	27.9%	4.72	0.19
Have artificial intelligence (AI)-driven translation technologies improved your ability to interact with real-world FL information, like headline stories or books?	826	87.0%	123	13.0%	4.87	0.14
In studying a Foreign Language, do you depend on AI translation technologies for rapid translations?	803	84.7%	146	15.3%	4.84	0.15
Has your proficiency in speaking a Foreign Language increased as a result of AI-powered translation tools?	785	82.9%	164	17.1%	4.82	0.17
After using AI-powered translation tools yourself, would you advise other language learners to do the same?	845	89.1%	104	10.9%	4.89	0.13

The table above shows in detail how AI-based translation tools are affecting the FL learners' competence acquisition process. These outcomes are of great importance in understanding a wide range of roles played by technology, its influence on learning strategies, and students' results. The statistical information presented in the table reveals general tendencies in FL learning under the condition of modern technology. The advanced and widespread implementation of AI-supported translation tools, along with the observations about positive task meditation impacts on vocabulary acquisition learning, writing skill practice comprehension, idioms, pronunciation ability, and grammatical interpretation, shows a significant impact technology has in language education. This observation presents considerable challenges to teachers and institutions in terms of how the instructional methods should be designed so that AI technologies would deliver benefits while a firm foundation for acquiring FLs is laid.

c. Results of the Correlation between Using AI translation Tools in FL and the Positive Performance of FL Learners

The second research question also aims to determine how the use of AI translation tools is associated with improved performance in FL learners. The table below presents a general overview of the collected data results using a Correlational Table.

TABLE 3
CORRELATION TABLE OF THE TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Question Items	Mean	Std. Dev	T-value	Std Er	P-value
Employing translation tools driven by AI improves the ability to learn FLs.	4.2	0.9	2.68	0.29	0.001
Using AI translation tools has improved my vocabulary and word choice in FLs.	3.8	1.2	1.92	0.42	0.001
Using AI-powered translation tools has improved my ability to write in FLs.	4.1	0.8	2.34	0.34	0.002
My understanding of intricate grammatical principles in FLs has improved through the use of AI-driven translation tools.	3.6	1.0	1.74	0.48	0.001

The data depicted in the table offer helpful findings on the hypothesis concerning how learning corrective translation technologies for FL shapes better academic performance among undergraduate students. Table 3 presents useful and detailed perspectives on how using AI-driven correctional tools for alternate languages leads to improved achievements by university student learners when compared directly with approaching similar issues based solely on FL specificities. While there are pieces of data confirming this concept in terms of better language learning, vocabulary enhancement, and improved writing skills, correlations with grammar or linguistic knowledge appear to be more complicated. This means that the impact of AI tools on various aspects of language performance may vary, suggesting a need for further research to better understand this complex relationship.

B. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the presented data is to facilitate an answer to the research questions, test hypotheses, and provide practical field insight concerning a major focal point of the study. The results are explored in various parts. For the first research question, the results are presented in Figure 1 and Table 2. Based on the statistics, it is observed that among the respondents, Google Translate and DeepL are the most frequently used AI translation applications, with usage rates of 82.51% and 92.83%, respectively. The popularity of these platforms can be attributed to various features, including interface user-friendliness, cross-device compatibility, and a variety of language support systems (Jin & Deifell, 2013). The widespread use of Google Translate is in line with its definition as a tool that one can easily get and provides an

excellent solution that meets the need for speedy translations. However, the abundance of DeepL usage implies that a higher level of translation quality is required and corresponds to its application using neural network technology, referred to as one that provides more accurate text while being linguists friendly (Alonso-Pérez & Sanchez-Requena, 2018).

The patterns of Duolingo usage reveal a unique case, demonstrating that almost half (42.79%) of the users do not use the system to enhance their FL learning. While Duolingo is mainly a language learning tool, it does include AI-powered translation features that are built into the educational platform. A considerable proportion of the participants do not use it at all, which can mean their preference for some other language learning tools or approaches. This result highlights the importance of understanding differentiated preferences and needs among language learners, particularly when considering the incorporation of AI-based technologies into instruction (Condinho Bravo, 2008).

Based on the information gathered, it can be observed that Microsoft Translator has a low utilisation rate among respondents, as 85.03% of them did not use this tool at all. This limited acceptance can perhaps be attributed to the fact that there are other established and widely accepted translation tools available, such as Google Translate and DeepL (Stewart, 2008). Additionally, Muñoz-Basols et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of tool recognition and reputation in shaping learners' choice regarding AI translation tools for learning a foreign language.

As analysed by Kessler (2018), the advent of AI translation tools marks a new trend among learners to incorporate technology elements into their language-learning activities. These solutions empower the users with ease and quick access to their translation needs and enable them to interact with real language content. However, it is clear from the variety of use patterns that a generalisable one does not exist. Thus, educators should consider the specific preferences and needs of students when incorporating these tools into their curricula (Floros & Tsagari, 2013). The ongoing line of work in teaching foreign languages over the trade-off between translation quantity and quality is demonstrated by a very notable difference in use patterns observed between Google Translate and DeepL (Korošec, 2013). While Google Translate is popular due to its convenience, the higher adoption of DeepL by the respondents suggests a need for more accurate translations. The aforementioned outcome emphasizes the importance of ensuring both ease and quality when using AI translation technologies for language teaching (Lee, 2023).

The results, however, imply an important potential for the implementation of new teaching methodologies in or among AI-driven translator tools under the FL environment (Pokrivcakova, 2019). Educators could make some accommodations to create opportunities for both regular technology users and non-users by modifying their teaching strategies. The essence of the issue is the proper use of AI translation technologies alongside with all-around content-based language learning process that provides awareness in every facet of foreign language education.

The high prevalence of technology in today's FL classrooms is illustrated by the wide use of AI-powered translation tools, with a rate of 80% among participants, as shown in Table 2. This statistic on language highlights the universal application of these tools while learning foreign languages. This general acceptance should correlate with the growing tendency to incorporate digital resources into language learning methodologies, which emphasises the ease and accessibility made available by such tools (Kessler, 2018). The use of AI-driven translation tools among learners as critical resources that assist in the process of FL learning is becoming a trend nowadays. The inclusion of digital technologies calls for changes in the teaching approaches that educators use and can help them incorporate these resources effectively (Lee, 2023).

In addition, the data suggests that most of the participants, approximately 88%, believe AI-assisted translation systems can increase their skill level in FL. The above positive outlook signifies an attempt to recognise the value of these tools for building skills in foreign languages (Jiménez-Crespo, 2017). The application of these technologies provides the learners with time-efficient vocabulary gauging under a contextual situation, promoting their development in diction. This observation aligns with other researchers who describe technology as a potential means of promoting language learning by providing access to vast amounts of linguistic resources (Carré et al., 2021). However, FL instructors have the chance to capitalise on this positive rosy view by incorporating vocabulary-based AI tasks into their teaching methods.

Secondly, over 76% of the participants confirmed that their ability to write in FL had been affected by AI-based translation tools. It accentuates that learners rely not only on such tools to understand the course material but also implement them to improve their language production. AI technologies are very helpful in supporting anyone who wants to improve their writing abilities by giving sensible advice for grammar and style recommendations. According to this observation, these instructors must reflect on the evolving role of technology in language sharing and teach people how to effectively integrate AI tools within writing exercises (Muñoz-Basols et al., 2023).

Lastly, the statistics demonstrate that about 72% of respondents believe that translation technologies driven by artificial intelligence help them better understand challenging grammatical constructs in foreign languages. AI technologies are regarded by Crossley (2018) as beneficial tools that not only help navigate grammar highlights in FLs but also make the task effective.

The second research question that was based on the hypothesis investigated whether there is a relationship between FL students' performance and AI translation tool use/adoption. The first entry in the result table examines whether AI-driven translation tools are used to enhance foreign language (FL) proficiency. As the results clearly show, respondents' opinions concerning the advantages of these tools for language learning are positive (mean = 4.2; t-value = 2.680). This is compatible with the alternative hypothesis, which corresponds to a relationship between AI utilisation and favourable results. The findings of the present study reveal a positive relationship between FL learning results and AI-supported

translation tools, thereby supporting observations that technology serves as an enhancer rather than a substitute in language teaching (Kessler, 2018). While the effect may not be as strong in this result, it provides further support for a hypothesis suggesting that there is some relationship between AI tool use and better skills in language learning. As indicated by Jiménez-Crespo (2017), the productivity of AI technologies is implied for vocabulary learning, which is a core aspect of language ability.

The third item involves the development of writing competency through artificial intelligence-powered translation technologies. The achieved mean score of 4.1, combined with a significant t-value recorded at 2.34 ($p = 0.002$), offers empirical support for the hypothesis that the use of such tools enhances writing skills. This result gives validity to the alternative hypothesis, which states that the use of artificial intelligence technologies increases writing FL proficiency. The fourth item discusses the influence of AI-based translation technologies on understanding complex grammar concepts. The average score of 3.6 indicates that the participants perceive these tools as relatively beneficial in this context. Nevertheless, the statistically significant t-value of 1.74 ($p = 0.001$) indicates that the effects might not be as strong as initially expected. Although the participants acknowledge that AI technologies help in understanding language, this finding suggests AI's association with performance may not be as relevant. This specific aspect of the prompted data on the hypothesis generates questions, implying that AI tools may not affect learning grammatical complexities in a linear relationship.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In the course of this study, we have scrutinised several findings related to artificial intelligence-driven translation tools and their impact on positive student achievement in undergraduate education, specifically in foreign language learning. The findings provided valuable insights into the evolving nature of language acquisition in an increasingly digital world. Overwhelming use of AI translation tools was revealed among learners, as evidenced by more than 80% of respondents admitting the application in FL learning. The findings demonstrate the growing relevance of technology in L2, accentuating their positive nature and approachability. There is an increasing conviction among learners that AI-based translation systems are vital tools that help them in their FL learning process. Educators and institutions should be obliged to revisit their teaching techniques by being aware of how important technology has become over the years.

In addition, learners have a positive attitude towards AI tools, as they believe that AI-powered translation devices help enhance their language learning process at various levels. The respondents expressed firm confidence in the significant role of such tools as enhancers, developing vocabulary consciousness, and writing tools, along with general knowledge enhancement about language. This is in agreement with the idea that technology can be used as a means for improving vocabulary learning (Jiménez-Crespo, 2017) and supporting language products by providing hints on grammar and style (Muñoz-Basols et al., 2023). These views emphasise how AI may lead to dramatic shifts in language instruction and leave teachers to consider the adoption of such technologies into their teaching methods.

In conclusion, this study represents a detailed analysis of the role that AI-powered translation tools play in FL learning. The widely accepted and well-used nature of these tools, coupled with positive attitudes from the learner population, goes a long way in proving that such tools have great capacity to improve several aspects associated with language learning. The results of the hypothesis confirm that these tools can positively affect language acquisition, vocabulary learning, and writing skills. However, the relationship between grammatical understanding and the previously mentioned link appears to be more complex. This study highlights the importance of ongoing research aimed at comprehensively understanding the dynamic relationships between AI tools and language proficiency. Finally, this study will give vital directions to educators and institutions on how they can help improve language learning with technology.

REFERENCES

- [1] Al-Amri, W. B., & Abdul-Raof, H. (2016). Translation in teaching and learning a FL: A methodological approach. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies (IJHCS)* ISSN 2356-5926, 1(2), 24-42.
- [2] Al-Awawdeh, N., & Al-Shaboul, I. A. (2025). Did Covid-19 change translation pedagogy? An assessment of the impacts of technological trends in shaping translation studies after the pandemic. *Humanities*, 6(1).
- [3] Alharbi, W. (2023). AI in the FL Classroom: A Pedagogical Overview of Automated Writing Assistance Tools. *Education Research International*, 2023.
- [4] Alonso-Pérez, R., & Sanchez-Requena, A. (2018). Teaching FLs through audiovisual translation resources: teachers' perspectives. *Applied Language Learning*, 28(2), 1-24.
- [5] Burkhard, M. (2022). *Student Perceptions of AI-Powered Writing Tools: Towards Individualized Teaching Strategies*. International Association for Development of the Information Society.
- [6] Carreres A., N. M. (2011). Translation in language teaching: Insights from professional translator training. *The Language Learning Journal*, 39, 281-297.
- [7] Carré, A., Kenny, D., Rossi, C., Sánchez-Gijón, P., & Torres-Hostench, O. (2022). Machine translation for language learners. *Machine translation for everyone: Empowering users in the age of artificial intelligence*, 18, 187-204.
- [8] Chang, C. K., & Hsu, C. K. (2011). A mobile-assisted synchronously collaborative translation-annotation system for English as a FL (EFL) reading comprehension. *Computer assisted language learning*, 24(2), 155-180.
- [9] Condinho Bravo, M. D. C. (2008). *Putting the reader in the picture. Screen translation and foreign-language learning*. Universitat Rovira i Virgili.

- [10] Cook, G. (2013). Translation in language teaching. In Byram M. & Hu A. (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning* (2nd ed., pp. 737–740). New York/London: Routledge
- [11] Crossley, S. A. (2018). Technological disruption in FL teaching: The rise of simultaneous machine translation. *Language Teaching*, 51(4), 541-552.
- [12] Darancik, Y. (2016). The Effect of Data-Based Translation Program Used in FL Education on the Correct Use of Language. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology-TOJET*, 15(4), 88-106.
- [13] De Lurdes Martins, M. (2015). How to effectively integrate technology in the FL classroom for learning and collaboration. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 77-84.
- [14] Fernández-Parra, M. (2016). Integrating computer-assisted translation tools into language learning. *New perspectives on teaching and working with languages in the digital era*, 385-396. Dublin, Ireland: Research-publishing.net.
- [15] Floros, G., & Tsigari, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Translation in language teaching and assessment*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- [16] Ismatullayeva, N. R. (2022). Teaching Translation Methodology in the FL Classes. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 5(12), 448-452.
- [17] Jiménez-Crespo, M. A. (2017). The role of translation technologies in Spanish language learning. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*, 4(2), 181-193.
- [18] Jin, L., & Deifell, E. (2013). FL learners' use and perception of online dictionaries: A survey study. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 9(4), 515-533.
- [19] Jolley, J. R., & Maimone, L. (2022). Thirty years of machine translation in language teaching and learning: A review of the literature. *L2 Journal*, 14(1), 26–44.
- [20] Károly, A. (2014). Translation in FL teaching: A case study from a functional perspective. *Linguistics and Education*, 25, 90-107.
- [21] Kelly, N., & Bruen, J. (2015). Translation as a pedagogical tool in the FL classroom: A qualitative study of attitudes and behaviours. *Language teaching research*, 19(2), 150-168.
- [22] Kessler, G. (2018). Technology and the future of language teaching. *FL annals*, 51(1), 205-218.
- [23] Klimova, B., Pikhart, M., Benites, A. D., Lehr, C., & Sanchez-Stockhammer, C. (2023). Neural machine translation in FL teaching and learning: a systematic review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(1), 663-682.
- [24] Korošec, M. K. (2013). Translation in FL teaching. *New horizons in translation research and education*, 1, 61-74.
- [25] Laviosa, S. (2014). *Translation and language education: Pedagogic approaches explored*. Routledge.
- [26] Lee, S. M. (2023). The effectiveness of machine translation in FL education: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 36(1-2), 103-125.
- [27] Lertola, J. (2019). *Audiovisual translation in the FL classroom: applications in the teaching of English and other FLs*. Research-publishing.net. Retrieved July 11, 2025.
- [28] Liashuk, X. (2018). Translation and FL teaching: analytical review of recent research. *Four insights into FL pedagogy research*, 66-93.
- [29] Muñoz-Basols, J., Neville, C., Lafford, B. A., & Godev, C. (2023). Potentialities of Applied Translation for Language Learning in the Era of Artificial Intelligence. *Hispania*, 106(2), 171-194.
- [30] Naimushin, B. (2002). Translation in FL Teaching: The Fifth Skill. *Modern English Teacher*, 11(4), 46-49.
- [31] Niño, A. (2009). Machine translation in FL learning: Language learners' and tutors' perceptions of its advantages and disadvantages. *ReCALL*, 21(2), 241-258.
- [32] Niño, A. (2008). Evaluating the use of machine translation post-editing in the FL class. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 21(1), 29-49.
- [33] Pham, A. T., Nguyen, L. T. D., & Pham, V. T. T. (2022). English language students' perspectives on the difficulties in translation: Implications for language education. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(1), 180-189.
- [34] Pokrivcakova, S. (2019). Preparing teachers for the application of AI-powered technologies in FL education. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 7(3), 135-153.
- [35] Samardali, M. F. S., & Ismael, A. M. H. (2017). Translation as a tool for teaching English as a second language. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 40, 64-69.
- [36] Schmidt, T. O. R. B. E. N., & Strasser, T. H. O. M. A. S. (2022). Artificial intelligence in FL learning and teaching: a CALL for intelligent practice. *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies*, 33(1), 165-184.
- [37] Stevenson, M. P., & Liu, M. (2010). Learning a language with Web 2.0: Exploring the use of social networking features of FL learning websites. *CALICO journal*, 27(2), 233-259.
- [38] Stewart, D. (2008). Vocational translation training into a FL. *Intralinea on Line Translation Journal*, 10, 1-17.
- [39] Sujarwo, S. (2020). Students' perceptions of using machine translation tools in the EFL classroom. *Al-Lisan: Jurnal Bahasa (e-Journal)*, 5(2), 230-241.
- [40] Talaván, N. (2019). Creative audiovisual translation applied to FL education: A preliminary approach. *Journal of audiovisual translation*, 2(1), 53-74.
- [41] Urlaub, P., & Dessein, E. (2022). Machine translation and FL education. *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence*, 5, 936111, 1-5.
- [42] Widdowson, H. G. (2014). The role of translation in language learning and teaching. In *Translation: A multidisciplinary approach* (pp. 222-240). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- [43] White, K. D., & Heidrich, E. (2013). Our policies, their text: German language students' strategies with and beliefs about web-based machine translation. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, 46(2), 230-250.

Nabil Al-Awawdeh earned his master's degree from the University of Potsdam, Germany, in foreign languages and linguistics and his doctoral degree from the University of Missouri, Columbia, USA, in 2018 in romance languages (translation). He is currently working as an assistant professor at Yarmouk University in Jordan. His areas of specialization are linguistics and translation. He

developed various courses for his students, including phonetics, translation, and linguistics. He is a reviewer and part of the editorial board of several journals, such as the Register Journal, the Journal of Applied Social Science (JASS), and Cogent Humanities. He is also a translator of several languages, including Arabic, German, French, and English. He published several articles on translation studies and linguistics in various journals.

Mahmud Kaddum is an Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Bartın/Turkey, and Head of the Arabic Language and Translation Department at the same university since 2020. He got my BA and Master's degrees in linguistics from Hashemite University/Jordan with an excellent score (4/4). He graduated in 2009 and got the first rank in the Faculty of Arts. In addition, He obtained my PhD in 2014 in Linguistics and Grammar from Jordan University with an excellent score (4/4). Before joining Bartın University in Turkey in 2014, He worked at Al-Balqa Applied University from 2008 until 2011, then he worked in the Center of Languages at Jordan University from 2012-2014. During his career path, he has published several studies and books related to my specialization and interests. Besides this, He has (co-)organized and taken part in a Number of conferences and scholarly events. Furthermore, He is an active member of the Arabic Language International Council and in several refereed scientific journals. He is also the editor of the Arabic language project in Turkey with the King Salman Global Academy for the Arabic Language, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Dorine Nabil Nasr is a distinguished academic, critic, poet, researcher, and writer from Lebanon. Born in Qalhat-Koura, she holds a PhD in Arabic Language and Literature from the Oriental Institute at Saint Joseph University. Dr. Nasr teaches a range of subjects including literature, language, criticism, and rhetoric at both undergraduate and master's levels at the University of Balamand – Koura and Saint Joseph University (Beirut and North). She also supervises and examines numerous academic theses. Currently, she is the Director of Research Development in Arabic Language and Literature at the Louis Pouzet Center within the Oriental Institute in Beirut. Additionally, she presides over the Cultural Association of the Arab Union in Lebanon. Memberships and Committees of several prominent committees. Beyond academia, she is an administrative member of the Lebanese Red Cross (Koura branch) and a founding member of Beit El Koll Association (Tripoli), the Cultural Association in Koura, and the Lebanese Development Association in Tripoli. She also serves as a short story arbitration member at various conferences and is a regular contributor and member of Room 19 in San Diego, California. In addition, Dr. Nasr has published numerous research papers and critical studies in leading peer-reviewed Arab and international journals and has participated in dozens of conferences and lectures worldwide.

Nermine Merhye holds a PhD in Arabic Literature from Saint Joseph University and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Infection Control Disease Management at Jinan University. She has a strong interdisciplinary background, combining over a decade of healthcare experience with academic and literary expertise. Nermine has served in key roles with international organizations such as IMC and ICRC, specializing in healthcare quality, reproductive health monitoring, and training. Her academic work includes lecturing in phonetics and contributing to literary critique forums such as Qaf and Al-Azm. She has authored critical papers, led infection control workshops, and published evaluations on healthcare delivery and language. Fluent in Arabic and proficient in English and French, Nermine merges her dual expertise in healthcare and humanities to offer innovative, patient-centered approaches and critical literary insights.

Maria Nasr earned her master's degree from the University of Lyon II Lumière, France, in Terminology and Translation and her doctoral degree from the University of Paris III, la Sorbonne Nouvelle, France, in 2010, in translation studies. She is currently working as an assistant professor at the University of Balamand, Lebanon. She is the chairperson of the Department of Languages and Translation at the University of Balamand, Lebanon. Her areas of specialization are translation, translation studies, terminology and linguistics. She is the head of the curriculum committee at the Faculty of arts and sciences at the University of Balamand. She is the supervisor of master thesis and also a translator. She published several articles on translation studies and translation.

The Reflection of the Local Cultural Value of Javanese Literature in an Ethno-Pedagogy Context

Octo Dendy Andriyanto

Javanese Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Darni

Javanese Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Heny Subandiyah

Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Sukarman

Javanese Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Yohan Susilo

Javanese Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Latif Nur Hasan

Javanese Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Meilita Hardika

German Literature, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Bahar

English Literature, Universitas Fajar, Makassar, Indonesia

Pensri Panich

School of Political Science and Public Administration, Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand

Abstract—This study sought to examine the local Javanese culture and its noble values by examining the literary works of *Serat Piwulang Becik*. The study concentrated on character education, local wisdom values, and how these relate to teaching Javanese in schools. As a means of preserving local identity in the face of globalization, the findings emphasize the importance of teaching local languages and cultural knowledge. The research also highlighted the importance of character education relevant to the globalization of this century. Interviews were conducted with experienced teachers of Javanese literature, and the data analysis followed a thematic model. Reflecting the Javanese cultural values of *Serat Piwulang Becik*, the findings revealed the importance of teacher-student collaboration in fostering a conducive learning environment. The research contributes to formulating educational policies to preserve the Javanese language, literature, and culture. It highlights the importance of exploring local treasures and maximizing the exploration of local wisdom to strengthen local and national identities. The preservation of local cultural values, such as diligence and tenacity, is essential to forming the character and cultural identity of the Javanese people, especially in education and teaching.

Index Terms—reflecting, local culture, value, language literature, pedagogy

I. INTRODUCTION

There have only been a few scholars who have researched the local values of Javanese culture that are reflected in Javanese literature. One of these scholars is Ismawati (2020), whose study focused on describing tribes of the nation, and she cited Javanese literature as her primary source. This study outlines tribes with many inner cultures described in *Sumarah* and *Tirakat*. She explained that the *Sumarah* and *Tirakat* culture is a philosophy found in Javanese society. This philosophy is reflected in Indonesian literature that discusses the culture of the Javanese people. However, this literature only focuses on describing Javanese society, which generally reflects cultural values. Moreover, as a means to

strengthen local wisdom as a cultural value, Istiana et al. (2021) focused on local wisdom to describe and explain the folklore of Ajisaka and *Naga Linglung*, its figures, and its relationships.

Nonetheless, neither of these studies explains how the value of the local Javanese culture contained in Javanese literature reflects on the learning that occurs in the classroom. Komariah et al. (2019) conducted a similar study on local wisdom that has deep meaning in the lives of the Javanese community itself. It is here that Sawitri et al. (2021) emphasized that the value of culture must be held as firmly as a handle on the lives and identity of the Javanese community itself, especially in education as a form of implementing the heritage of the nation's cultural values. However, some studies suggest that Javanese literature's cultural values have not been fully applied in life, especially in education and higher education. This is a primary reason for researchers to explore and integrate important local values of Javanese culture into literature teaching in the classroom. In his research, Ismail (2018) conveyed the same tone, stating that local cultural values can be applied to self-identity through education.

Social values in Javanese local culture are derived from the reality of a community's social environment. When the community forms a harmonious social life, they support one another in kindness and serve as a reminder that relationships with others are also a key factor in determining one's level of happiness. The Javanese culture of assistance fulfills several crucial requirements. The purpose of culture is to regulate human life, particularly behavior, because social norms and other norms are part of Javanese culture (Darmadi, 2018). This standard guides the behavior of the Javanese people. Therefore, positive cultural values must be able to be reflected formally and non-formally in education. This culture can be used as a philosophy of life in society.

An area or nation will grow if its cultural values are deeply ingrained in the joints of people's lives. This is especially true of the Java region, where culture plays a fundamental and vital role as the main basis in the order of life in society, nation, and state (Retnawati et al., 2018). It is one of the guidelines for human behavior in Javanese society in general, serving as a driving factor for the emergence of thinking patterns in modern society. Moreover, it is also one of the sources of how one should behave to keep order, as in, for example, customary laws and customs, rules regarding manners, including teachings of religiosity, respect for others, patience and sincerity, affection, diligence and tenacity, cooperation, wisdom in seeking peace (*Serat Piwulang Becik*, 1911), ethics when chatting (*Serat Subasita*, 1914), educating children, staying away from worldly things, and wisdom in seeking knowledge (*Serat Madubasa*, 1912). Thus, this is the primary foundation of cultural values that are reflected in the teaching context through the learning process in the classroom as follows.

1. What kinds of local culture value messages of *Serat Piwulang Becik* are reflected in teaching literature?
2. To what extent do the local culture's value messages of *Serat Piwulang Becik* reflect on the teaching and learning of literature in a classroom context?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Javanese language is challenging to understand due to its complicated grammar, extensive vocabulary, and rich cultural background. The Javanese region is home to a wide range of indigenous beliefs and practices that benefit Indonesian people. It is so difficult to understand because it is packed with etiquette and mutual respect for other people. The moral value messages contained in *Serat Piwulang Becik*, *Serat Subasita*, and *Serat Madubasa* are for the Javanese people to follow in their day-to-day lives and include a system of decency. Azimovna (2020) stated that moral values in education are obligated to be implemented in social life.

Javanese cultural locality is widespread in various elements of daily life, including language, literature, art, and cultural activities. The content of Javanese local wisdom is rooted in the strong intelligence of the community, both individually and collectively. In the context of language, for example, Javanese's *undha usuk* (level of speech) represents cognitive intelligence, even effective, because the language contains respect for others. Regarding culture, locality manifests itself in collective activities carried out together, tolerantly and sincerely, through traditional ceremonies routinely carried out in certain events. From a literary point of view, the author contributed to the development of morals and character through teachings and ethical advice that are relevant today. Indeed, culture is a significant element of human life since it implies meanings from various aspects of human existence and is deeply related to values, beliefs, ways of thinking, ways of life, and worldviews adopted by members of society at any given time (Eko & Putranto, 2019).

Education is a center of excellence that prepares students to face the global era by building superior character and encouraging them to do so (Rokhman et al., 2014). The same tone conveyed by Tyas et al. (2020) contended that building character for superior students, starting from the family as the smallest unit of society, will have a significant impact on the future as adults and living in society by equipping children from an early age with the character of honesty, discipline, and noble morals or universal moral values that must be taught to students, and this is part of the local cultural customs or values adopted by the Javanese people, which are the pillars of life and society. Therefore, the local cultural values contained in the teachings of *Serat Piwulang Becik* are the main pillars in the lives of Javanese people in general. Integrity is one of the core values of life that is reflected in Indonesian literary works (Dwijatmoko, 2018). The moral values conveyed in *Serat Piwulang Becik* are conveyed to educate humans in all aspects of their lives so that humans can regulate their behavior to become good humans. Hariyanti and Sudjito (2018) stated that building character through local cultural values is crucial in classroom teaching, so students have virtuous character and behavior.

The history and culture of a community are portrayed accurately in literary works because they represent reality (Kurnia, 2021). Javanese literature is one of the forms of Indonesian writing that conveys important lessons about life. Compared to Indonesian literature in general, Javanese literature is said to possess a quality that sets it apart from other forms of Indonesian literature. In most cases, Javanese is employed as the language of composition for works of Javanese literature (Margono, 2021). Some ancient Javanese literary works that contain a lot of ethics, local wisdom, and character education are those written by Ki Padmasusastra, namely *Serat Piwulang Becik* (1911), *Serat Subasita* (1914), and *Serat Madubasa* (1912). *Piwulang Becik* means good advice or teaching; *Subasita* means courtesy or ethics, while *Madubasa* means the essence of language. Most manuscripts published between 1911 and 1914 contain educational values, ethics, insights, local knowledge, intelligence, outlooks on life, and mindsets based on the style of language applied. Therefore, the choice of diction cannot be separated from the strong character education in the literary work. Ki Padmasusastra often uses *Pasemon* language, which requires interpretation but still has aesthetic values that reflect the characteristics of Javanese society.

The content of Javanese literary works is strongly influenced by and cannot be separated from the values, norms, ideologies, and conventions of Javanese people who use the language. As Arniati (2020) posits, the norm of politeness is a norm that comes from society. Norms of politeness themselves are the values that society holds in real situations. This proves that language style plays an important role in Javanese literature. In communicating, language media becomes the most important aspect of culture (Nurdiyantoro, 2015). The language content in Javanese literary works in particular has ethnopedagogical content that is important in shaping the character of the younger generation. In Javanese literary works, respect, good ethics, high religiosity, a sense of harmony, and nobility of character in maintaining social and environmental harmony can be taught through language.

The content of social norms in literary works can positively impact people's lives, both through formal and non-formal education. Social institutions contain cultural values that shape the social norms of society, and these social norms are divided into folkways and moral rules. Folkways have a binding nature. Those who leave or violate it will be subject to social sanctions. Some examples of folkways are politeness, manners of speaking, dressing, visiting, and eating. In comparison, morals are considered the best behavior for meeting human needs (Hadiatmaja, 2009).

Character education is closely related to the community's local wisdom, which strengthens social life, especially in building a strong identity. As collective wealth, local wisdom starts from ideas and knowledge systematized until actualized in cultural activities. The cultural knowledge system in *Serat Piwulang Becik*, *Serat Subasita*, and *Serat Madubasa* is dominated by Javanese knowledge and way of life. The content of meaning in these works is considered good and has benefits for the lives of Javanese people. What is expressed in this literary work is quite dynamic, ranging from social life (worldly)—clothing, food, feelings, creatures around humans, respect, and obedience—to those related to religion (in this case, Islam) as a way of life.

In line with this, the current research aims to reveal the treasures of local Javanese culture, which is full of noble values contained in the three literary works mentioned above. The problems studied focused on the content of local wisdom values and character education and their relevance to Javanese language education in schools. This is important to express because the Indonesian government is obliged to teach character education through local language learning.

In the era of globalization, local identity, including language, is strongly influenced by tourism, immigration, global markets, and global culture, thus creating urgent challenges for society to maintain it (Jamshidian & Pourgiv, 2019). Learning local languages and cultural knowledge is one of the efforts to preserve local languages (Noorashid & McLellan, 2018). Language and literature teaching in the global era is in the form of cognitive transfer and intercultural interaction (Dewi, 2018). Teaching language and literature can be used as a basis for pedagogic strategies and philosophical foundations. The content of character education needs to be given and relevant to the global development of this century (Dewi, 2018). The results of this research are expected to contribute to formulating policies for preserving the Javanese language, literature, and culture through education.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used an interview design; the researchers recruited two teachers teaching Javanese Literature in the local language at Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia. The teachers were selected based on their prior experiences. Approximately ten years were spent teaching Javanese as a local language. This study is concerned with identifying the kinds of local culture's value messages of *Serat Piwulang Becik* reflected in teaching literature and how local culture's value messages reflect the teaching and learning of literature in the classroom context. Participants' identities were concealed before data collection, and informed consent was obtained. The participants were then assigned the respective codes T1 and T2. The data collection method was an unstructured interview conducted in the native language of the participants (Indonesian), and about 45 to 60 minutes were allotted for each interview.

This method ensured that participants provided unrestricted responses regarding local culture's value messages of *Serat Piwulang Becik*. As a result, follow-up questions were included in the interview sessions. Participants' responses were captured audibly and transcribed word-for-word. Our interview questions began with a general inquiry regarding what prevents the participants from using artificial intelligence. Creswell et al. (2017) used a thematic model to analyze most of our data. Before incorporating them into an emerging theme, we read each transcript and meticulously analyzed similar responses. We evaluated the responses of seven participants. Typically, this analysis method is employed to

identify recurrent themes within an interview study. To determine the level of data saturation, we performed member-checking by soliciting participant feedback on the transcripts and analyses.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In teaching literature, *Serat Piwulang Becik*'s types of the local culture's value messages are reflected, such as those below:

A. Religion

The message of cultural values embraced by the Javanese people, such as obedient attitudes and behaviors in carrying out the teachings of the religion adhered to, tolerance of the implementation of worship of other religions, and coexistence with adherents of other religions, characterizes religion as one of the values in character education (Chowdhury, 2018). The same tone was conveyed by informants as follows:

In my opinion, sir, teachers need to provide religious understanding to students when teaching in class so that these cultural values can be used as guidelines for students' virtuous character. Students should be encouraged to tell the truth, obey worship, and improve their behavior to be polite children to teachers in class. (T1)

The data above showed that the message contained in the teachings of *Serat Piwulang Becik* is needed in everyday life because the message contains noble values that, in essence, we believe in God and surrender and ask for his help. This is in line with the message conveyed by Padmasusastra (1911, p. 6) that "*Gusti Allah nitahake urip mung didhawuhi istiyar...*" ("God prescribes life only to be tried...") and "*Dingandêl marang pitulunging Allah, amarga pitulunganmu marang awakmu dhewe ora kêna diandêl.*" ("...trust in God's help, for your help to yourself cannot be trusted"). Believing in God and all His power is also part of one's religiosity (Gall et al., 2011). This belief certainly comes from a person's heart. Religiosity is part of the character that one should fortify oneself with against all things that deviate from one's beliefs or even carry out what one believes. The religious character deserves to be possessed by students, the younger generation, who should have a basis and guidelines for properly managing their lives. Previous studies, such as Ismawati (2020), only focused on describing tribes of the nation. She cited Javanese literature as her primary source, such as *sumarah* and *tirakat*, which are related to strictness in worship. However, she did not explore the relationship in a teaching context. At the same time, this study was concerned with identifying the value of local culture, which *Serat Piwulang Becik* taught in a teaching context. The messages of *Serat Piwulang Becik* contain a lot of meaning pertinent to moral education, which directs students to behave well; there are customs, which refer to steady behavior, and examples, which refer to character qualities. Thus, moral values contained in *Serat Piwulang Becik* cannot be ignored in life, especially in the context of classroom learning. The quality of moral values is a pillar for the younger generation to shape the character of education (Darmadi, 2018).

B. Respecting Other People

Respect is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, such as between teachers and students, that requires us to treat others as we want to be treated. It is about respecting the opinions, beliefs, and emotions of others, even if we disagree with them (Robertson, 2018). In teaching, teachers should not show intimidation when students cannot answer a question in class, but teachers should respect students' opinions even if they are not quite right. When we respect others, we foster an environment of trust and mutual understanding conducive to developing healthy relationships. Respect can take many forms, including considering others' time, listening actively when teachers speak, and refraining from judgment or criticism (Hargreaves, 2017). It is an essential element of effective communication and helps to build strong connections between people, like that which the teachers who participated in this study expressed:

As educators, we must teach students how to behave well, respect parents and teachers, and not underestimate others. (T1)

Teachers must be able to build harmonious relationships with students in class to be peaceful and tolerant, work together, be independent, and build a good relationship with the creator. (T2)

The data above showed that respect is important because it promotes positive interactions between individuals and groups, such as teachers and students, leading to greater understanding and cooperation. When one shows respect to others, they are more likely to reciprocate, creating a cycle of mutual respect and consideration. Furthermore, respect is crucial for building healthy relationships, whether in personal or professional contexts. Without respect, conflicts can arise, and misunderstandings can occur, leading to damaged relationships and adverse outcomes (Dutton & Ragins, 2017). This is the important point conveyed in local value *Serat Piwulang Becik*: "*Aja sok dhêmên ngrèmèhake wong, mundhak gênti dirèmèhake*" (Do not underestimate other people) (Padmasusastra, 1911, p. 9). In a previous study, Komariah et al. (2019) conducted research on local values and found that local wisdom has a deep meaning in the lives of Javanese people that must be upheld in life but did not explain how the moral values contained in the Javanese literature *Serat Piwulang Becik* are reflected in classroom teaching. This is a primary point in this study.

C. Patience and Sincerity

Patience and sincerity are two essential qualities that every teacher must possess to be effective in their role. These two qualities go hand in hand and are crucial in creating a positive and productive learning environment for students

(Bastemeijer et al., 2017). This is part of the meaning of *Serat Piwulang Becik* implied in the teachings of local Javanese culture, which is a pillar for the life of the Javanese people and is used as a foundation in teaching in class, as conveyed by the participant as follows:

Yes, teachers have to be patient with students who have different personalities. Sometimes, they are naughty and like to be late for class. These are all challenges for teachers to be able to provide guidance so that students become disciplined. (T1)

From the data above, it is clear that a teacher's patience in dealing with students' attitudes and behaviors is very important. If teachers do not have patience, the goals of learning and teaching activities will not be achieved properly. Elttayef and Hussein (2017) stated that teachers should have patience when teaching in the classroom and know what students need so that the students can build positive emotions with the teachers.

The same tone is conveyed by another participant:

As a Javanese, I understand that the local cultural values of patience and sincerity are applied in everyday life, especially when teaching. Teachers should protect students by showing empathy instead of excessive power in class. (T2)

The data above demonstrates that teachers need to be patient and sincere so that the students they teach feel comfortable learning. This makes it easier for students to understand the lessons delivered by the teacher and will give them a deep impression so that they have the motivation to learn both independently and in groups.

This is an important point in the local cultural values of Javanese people who, as figureheads and educators, must have patience and sincerely guide their students on how the messages conveyed by *Serat Piwulang Becik* can be applied not only in daily life but also in teaching, especially Javanese literature as a local language. Hidayati et al. (2020) emphasize that local cultural values must be preserved by the community or teachers when teaching. In previous studies, Ismail (2018) focused on local cultural values, but the results of his research showed that local culture is an identity in an area. This research is not only about identity but also about how the implementation of local cultural values can contribute to learning in the classroom.

D. Diligent and Tenacious

Teachers are required to have tenacity and top-notch performance to improve the quality of teaching. Teacher performance is one of the main factors determining the success of the educational process on campus (Ali & Ahmad, 2011). Increasing teacher competence in carrying out their work as teachers is part of the teaching of *Serat Piwulang Becik*, which states that teachers must be diligent and tenacious in carrying out their duties as educators who encourage students to instill character as their identity. This idea is conveyed by the following participant:

I think as an educator who is diligent and tenacious, educative-informative in the learning process by always conveying the values of Javanese language, literature, and cultural philosophy. This is important for cultivating student character in line with the community's social institutions. Cultural values in literature can guide students in developing their identity by not leaving their cultural treasures. (T1)

The same tone was conveyed by another informant:

From this point of view, exploring the local treasures of the past Javanese people can be done by revealing the wisdom of the Javanese language and literature through education. Optimizing local wisdom exploration can be done with the carrying capacity of various parties, none other than strengthening the identity of local and national communities. (T2)

The data above shows that the local cultural value of *Serat Piwulang Becik*, which has a diligent and tenacious meaning, needs to be preserved in life, especially in the field of education and teaching, because moral messages can shape the character that becomes the cultural identity of the Javanese people themselves. Prahmana and Istiandaru (2021) stated that local values need to be kept, and it was implemented in the teaching and learning process. The same tone was conveyed by Padmasusastra (1911) in his teachings on working, especially in teaching, saying it is necessary to be persevering and sincere, which is the cultural identity of the Javanese, which is reflected in the teaching and learning process.

E. Mutual Cooperation

Creating a pleasant atmosphere in the teaching and learning process at school requires the cooperation of all parties, both teachers and students. Placing students as the subject of the learning process is expected to lead students to a more adaptive way of thinking; not only that, but also teachers must be polite and respectful to their students (Dörnyei & Muir, 2019). Students are allowed to explore their ability to solve a problem, as conveyed by the informant as follows:

I think teachers should be able to create a conducive learning atmosphere with good cooperation with students in the classroom. Teachers prioritize polite attitudes and behaviors toward students so that they feel comfortable. The polite attitude of the teacher reflects Javanese cultural values called *Serat Piwulang Becik*. (T1)

Informant T2 conveys the same tone: teachers and students need to have a reciprocal relationship to achieve learning objectives.

In my opinion, the main requirement for the teaching and learning process is that the teacher establish a reciprocal relationship with students. Success in teaching and learning activities can be seen from the results, but the process must still be considered. (T2)

Thus, good cooperation between teachers and students in the classroom during the learning process reflects local culture, especially Javanese people, who need to persevere in life. When students give opinions, they must be given appreciation and motivation without discrimination; this cooperation usually occurs during discussions, and students are allowed to talk more without being limited by the teacher. Therefore, teachers as facilitators in the classroom must be able to direct and realize a sense of solidarity, which reflects local culture (*Serat Piwulang Becik*).

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study, which are presented through the literary work of *Serat Piwulang Becik*, seek to investigate the indigenous Javanese culture and the high values that it upholds. The significance of the content of local wisdom values, character education, and their relationship to the teaching of Javanese in schools is the primary focus of the research being conducted. The findings emphasize the importance of teaching local languages and cultural knowledge to preserve local identity in the face of globalization. This can be accomplished by teaching local languages and cultural knowledge. The study sheds light on the significance of character education in this century's globalization context. These findings, which reflect the Javanese cultural values of *Serat Piwulang Becik*, highlight the significance of collaboration between teachers and students in creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. The findings of this research also provide input for the development of educational policies that support the maintenance of the Javanese language, literature, and culture. This demonstrates the significance of discovering local wealth and making the most of opportunities to discover local wisdom to fortify local and national identities. It is essential to form the character and cultural identity of the Javanese people, especially in education and teaching, so that local cultural values, such as perseverance and tenacity, are preserved for future generations to learn and practice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors also thank the Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) and Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, for supporting the research.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ali, A., & Ahmad, I. (2011). Key factors for determining student satisfaction in distance learning courses: A study of Allama Iqbal Open University. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 2(2), 118–134.
- [2] Arniati, I. A. K. (2020). Moral and religious values in the Geguritan Dharma Prawerti song in Bali. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 12(1), 432–446.
- [3] Azimovna, F. M. (2020). Formation of spiritual and moral values of pupils in physical education lessons. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research (AJMR)*, 9(11), 99–103.
- [4] Bastemeijer, C. M., Voogt, L., van Ewijk, J. P., & Hazelzet, J. A. (2017). What do patient values and preferences mean? A taxonomy based on a systematic review of qualitative papers. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 100(5), 871–881.
- [5] Creswell, C., Violato, M., Fairbanks, H., White, E., Parkinson, M., Abitabile, G., & Cooper, P. J. (2017). Clinical outcomes and cost-effectiveness of brief guided parent-delivered cognitive behavioral therapy and solution-focused brief therapy for treatment of childhood anxiety disorders: A randomised controlled trial. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 4, 529–539.
- [6] Chowdhury, M. (2018). Emphasizing morals, values, ethics, and character education in science education and science teaching. *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(2), 1–16.
- [7] Darmadi, H. (2018). Educational management based on local wisdom (descriptive-analytical studies of the culture of local wisdom in west Kalimantan). *Journal of Education, Teaching and Learning*, 3(1), 135–145.
- [8] Dewi, W. S. et al. (2018). Pengaruh tingkat adopsi budidaya padi organik terhadap keberlanjutan budidaya padi organik di Kabupaten Boyolali. *Caraka Tani: Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, 33(2), 153–168.
- [9] Dörnyei, Z., & Muir, C. (2019). Creating a motivating classroom environment. In *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 719–736). Springer.
- [10] Dutton, J. E., & Ragins, B. R. (Eds.). (2017). *Exploring positive relationships at work: Building a theoretical and research foundation*. Psychology Press.
- [11] Dwijatmoko, Benedictus Bherman. (2018). Honesty in Indonesian Literature: Its Social and Cultural Factors. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 18(4), 95–105. <http://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2018-1804-07>
- [12] Eko, B. S., & Putranto, H. (2019). The role of intercultural competence and local wisdom in building intercultural and inter-religious tolerance. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 48(4), 341–369.
- [13] Elttayef, A. I., & Hussein, N. O. (2017). Arab learners' problems in learning English language: A teacher perspective. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 40, 1–6.
- [14] Gall, T. L., Malette, J., & Guirguis-Younger, M. (2011). Spirituality and religiousness: A diversity of definitions. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 13(3), 158–181.
- [15] Hargreaves, D. H. (2017). *Interpersonal relations and education*. Routledge.
- [16] Hariyanti, T., & Sudjito, S. (2018). Sustained character building through literature for college students in Indonesia. *Jurnal Dinamika Hukum*, 18(1), 109–122.

- [17] Hidayati, N. A., Waluyo, H. J., & Winarni, R. (2020). Exploring the Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Character Education among Indonesian Higher Education Students. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(2), 179-198.
- [18] Istiana, R. N., Rakhmawati, A., & Wardani, N. E. (2021, December). Strengthening Local Wisdom Through Stories Ajisaka and Naga Linglung's Odyssey in Java. In *The 2nd International Conference of Linguistics and Culture (ICLC-2)* (pp. 44-48). Atlantis Press.
- [19] Ismail, I. (2018). Parental Involvement in Fostering the Character of Children's Discipline at Elementary School. *Jurnal Pendidikan progresif*, 8(2), 53-67.
- [20] Ismawati, E. (2020). The culture sumarah and tirakat in Indonesian literature of local color of Java: Ethnography study. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 41(3), 507-512.
- [21] Jamshidian, S., & Pourgiv, F. (2019). Local Heritage/Global Forces: Hybrid Identities in Le Guin's The Telling. *Gema Online Journal of Language Studies*, 19(4), 96-110.
- [22] Komariah, S., & Asyahidda, F. N. (2019, June). Local Wisdom as Educational Tourism: A Study from Kampong Dukuh West Java Indonesia. In *3rd International Seminar on Tourism (ISOT 2018)* (pp. 288-292). Atlantis Press.
- [23] Kurnia, Nandy I. (2021). The Othering of Majority and Minority Groups in Lessing and Ajidarma's Literary Works: A Postcolonial Analysis. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 21(1), 76-88. <http://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2101-05>
- [24] Margono-Slamet, Y. B. (2021). Socio-Political Engagement of Contemporary Javanese Literature. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 21(3), 215-230. <http://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2103-12>
- [25] Noorashid, N., & McLellan, J. (2018). Teaching and Learning an Ethnic Minority Language at University Level: The Case of Dusun in Brunei. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 18(1), 217-233.
- [26] Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. (2015). Stilistika Kultural. *Widyaparwa*, 43(1), 1-13.
- [27] Padmasusastra. (2021). *The novel in Javanese* (Vol. 148). Brill.
- [28] Prahmana, R. C. I., & Istiandaru, A. (2021). Learning sets theory using shadow puppet: A study of Javanese ethnomathematics. *Mathematics*, 9(22), 1-16.
- [29] Retnawati, H., Arlinwibowo, J., & Apino, E. (2018). Strategy and implementation of character education in senior and vocational high schools. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(3), 370-397.
- [30] Robertson, R. (2018). Social theory, cultural relativity, and the problem of globality. In *Sociology of Globalization* (pp. 61-67). Routledge.
- [31] Rokhman, Fathur, Syaifudin, Ahmad, & Yuliati. (2014). Character Education for Golden Generation 2045 (National Character Building for Indonesian Golden Years). *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 141(2014), 1161-1165.
- [32] Sawitri, S., Rahayu, N. T., Fatmawati, E., Zaelani, M., Elihami, E., & Arif, M. (2021). Implementation of Java cultural education in elementary school in Yogyakarta. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S3), 1285-1298.
- [33] Tyas, E. H., Sunarto, S., & Naibaho, L. (2020). Building superior human resources through character education. *TEST Engineering & Management*, 83, 11864-11873.

Octo Dendy Andriyanto is a lecture of Javanese Language and Literature Education at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Darni is a professor of Javanese Language and Literature Education at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Heny Subandiyah is a lecture of Indonesian Language and Literature Education at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia.

Sukarman is a lecture of Javanese Language and Literature Education at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Yohan Susilo is a lecture of Javanese Language and Literature Education at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Latif Nur Hasan is a lecture of Javanese Language and Literature Education at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Meilita Hardika is a lecture of German Literature at the Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Bahar is a lecture of English Literature at Universitas Fajar in Makassar, Indonesia.

Pensri Panich is a lecture at the School of Political Science and Public Administration, Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand.

Navigating and Surpassing the Survival Works: The Relationship Between Occupations and Identity Construction in Hijra Life Writings

Sakthi Brinda D

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

Gayathri N

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract—This paper argues that survival occupations function as a primary, yet paradoxical, site for identity construction in contemporary hijra life narratives. Moving beyond traditional ethnographic accounts, this study conducts a qualitative textual analysis of six key life writings, treating them not as mere chronicles of survival but as political interventions that document a conscious project of emancipation. The analysis first explores the “sacred stigma” of traditional roles, such as *bhadai*, demonstrating how the community’s ritually sanctioned authority is a fragile and geographically contingent status that simultaneously confers reverence and enforces marginalisation. It then examines how begging and sex work are navigated as performative acts of survival in hostile public spaces. The narratives reveal how hijras must strategically deploy stereotypes to secure their livelihoods, a process that exposes them to systemic violence from both society and the state. Employing a framework that combines gender performativity and labelling theory, the analysis demonstrates how hijra identity is performed through labour, contested through resistance to debilitating social labels, and ultimately reimagined through the dual forces of professional achievement and political activism. The study concludes that the life writings themselves function as a form of emancipatory labour, seizing narrative control to articulate a new, rights-bearing trans woman identity rooted in professional aspiration and modern citizenship. This articulated shift from survival to self-determination demands affirmative state policies, such as reservations in education and employment, which move beyond mere legal recognition to enable tangible economic empowerment.

Index Terms—hijra, identity construction, life writing, occupation, resistance

I. INTRODUCTION

The hijra community is socially marginalised, economically deprived, and politically underrepresented in India (Sopna, 2017; Saria, 2021). Among transgender individuals, hijras constitute a unique social group in South Asia, embedded with ritual significance and cultural practices. They are markedly distinct from other LGBT groups in many respects, ranging from outward appearances, such as highly feminine gestures, effeminate dressing, and characteristic clapping, to implicit factors including conjugal family setup, community arrangement, and observance of various rituals (Nanda, 1999; Reddy, 2010).

Rao (2015, p. 99) defined hijras as a distinct group of trans women, one of the most visible sexual minorities deeply rooted in the social, political, and cultural history of South Asia. The word “hijra” signifies being a eunuch, with its etymological root stemming from the Arabic word “Hijrah,” which means “flight” or “departure” (Rao, 2015, p. 100). Presently, people identifying themselves as hijras are also known by other names, such as *thirunangais*, *aravanis*, *kojjas*, *jogappas*, *kusras*, *kinnars*, *napunsakas*, and *kothis*, in various parts of India (Brinda & Gayathri, 2023; Jayaprakash, 2022, p. 22). Hijras are interchangeably referred to as trans women in this paper because they invariably identify as such in their writings.

As Reddy (2010) established through her extensive ethnographic study, hijra identity encompasses aspects beyond gender and sexuality, including socio-religious practices, hierarchies of respect, kinship patterns, and class positions within and outside the community. Nanda (1999), Reddy (2010), and Sutradhar (2022) highlight that a significant aspect of hijra culture is the mythical founding of their revered position, as described in Hindu epics and Puranas, and the numerous references to their alternative sexuality in ancient treatises such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Literature on the hijra community and various other gender non-conforming identities in South Asia has established that these identities are intensely culture-specific and do not fall within the Western definitions of non-binary sexualities (Sanyal & Dhall, 2021; Hossain, 2012; Reddy, 2010; Nanda, 1999). Therefore, hijra identity involves various sociocultural and economic factors, of which occupations are arguably the most significant.

Survival occupations such as *bhadai* or ritual blessing, begging, and sex work carried out by hijras play a vital role in the formation of social perceptions of them, which are more often than not negative and stereotypical. Nevertheless,

existing historical records suggest that hijras were appointed to prestigious political, royal, and military positions in the history of the Muslim empires in South Asia, especially in the Mughal Empire (Sarwar & Pervaiz, 2023; Reddy, 2018). Hinchy (2020) highlights the steady marginalisation of hijras in terms of their occupation and social status, as well as the decline of their traditional importance during the colonial era. She illustrates that British officials, judges, and Indian elites of the late nineteenth century formed strong negative perceptions of the hijra community, terming them social outlaws, kidnappers of children, and a criminal group characterised by sexual promiscuity.

Hijras occupy a liminal position within the society and culture of both colonial and postcolonial India due to their revered status in Indian culture juxtaposed with the stigmatisation of their professions (Hinchy, 2020, p. 21). With the dwindling of professional venues as well as the criminalisation of their very existence, hijras find their means of survival amidst abject poverty, denial of access to employment opportunities, and lack of support from their natal or biological families. Existing literature has documented the occupations and economic conditions of hijras. Nevertheless, there is a significant gap in analysing how hijras represent their occupational challenges and experiential problems, and construct their identity by contesting stigma and stereotyping.

Against this backdrop, this paper conducts an in-depth analysis of the relationship between occupations and identity construction in contemporary India, as inferred from the life writings of hijras. It reveals how hijra life narrators navigate survival occupations to manifest resilience, assert their selfhood, and expose the inevitable circumstances that lead to their involvement in these endeavours. It also explores the formation of new, positive identities in relation to professions and career options, to which hijras have gained entry in recent years. The analysis also encompasses recent developments brought about by the legislation of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (TPPR Act), trans activism, and persisting challenges as a continuation of the identity construction process articulated in hijra life writings.

We conceptualise identity construction as an ongoing process through which individuals create an assertive selfhood that incorporates self-acceptance, social positioning, futuristic aspirations, and positive development at the individual and community levels. The focus of our analysis is to reveal the complex role of hijra occupations in identity construction, as evinced through their life narratives. We employ symbolic interactionism, labelling, and gender performativity theories to examine the process of identity construction, from internalised stigma to the assertion of trans subjectivity, through the agencies of life writing, activism, and new careers. As Butler (1993) posits, gender identity is shaped by a series of cultural and corporeal performances. Hijra occupations are inherently cultural navigations coupled with physical labour and gender performance. By analysing this interrelation, this paper illuminates the positionality of transgender identity foregrounded through hijra life narratives in the context of their occupations.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the intricate relationship between hijra occupations and the pursuit of a positive identity in contemporary India. It aims to decipher recent developments in constructing a new identity for hijras, overcoming the occupation-based stigma to which they are subjected. This paper argues that hijra life narratives function as critical sites of resistance, where authors navigate the stigma of traditional occupations to construct an assertive trans woman identity rooted in the modern language of emancipatory politics, civil rights, and professional aspirations. It further discusses the role of transgender activists in protecting hijra occupations and their advocacy efforts in promoting social awareness of hijra occupations, along with the tangible progress achieved so far in their pursuit. It also examines the challenges faced by hijras in securing their livelihood options, despite the introduction of India's first-ever transgender legislation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly understanding of hijra identity and occupation in India is built upon foundational ethnographic work. Seminal studies by Nanda (1999) and Reddy (2010) introduced the complexities of hijra kinship, ritual practices, and social organisation to global academic audiences. These ethnographies expertly documented the community's liminal position, caught between sacredness and stigma, and detailed the economic life revolving around traditional occupations, such as *bhadaï* (ritual blessing), begging, and sex work. While indispensable, this early scholarship primarily presented an external anthropological perspective on the community.

A significant shift has occurred with the emergence of hijra life writing as a powerful subgenre of subaltern literature. Inspired by the precedent of Dalit autobiographies, narratives by authors such as Revathi (2010), Tripathi (2015), and Vidya (2013) provided an unmediated, insider perspective on hijra life. This shift towards autotheory and personal testimony enabled a more nuanced exploration of identity. As life writing theorists Smith and Watson (2010) argue, autobiographies by marginalised subjects often function as “autobiographical manifestos” — not just personal stories, but political interventions designed to “talk back” to dominant, often pathologising discourses. Scholarship on these texts has analysed themes of cultural violence (Tanupriya & Pannikot, 2022) and the reclamation of cultural memory (Joseph & Gayathri, 2024), establishing them as vital sites of resistance.

The contemporary landscape of hijra life has been profoundly shaped by legal and political developments, most notably, the Supreme Court's *NALSA* judgment (2014) and the subsequent passage of the TPPR Act in 2019. While the TPPR Act was a landmark piece of legislation, it has been met with significant criticism from scholars and activists. Researchers such as Bhattacharya et al. (2022) have argued that the Act falls short of the progressive vision of the *NALSA* judgment by retaining medicalised, pathologising definitions of transgender identity and failing to adequately provide for reservations in employment and education. Further critiques highlight the Act's inadequacy in addressing systemic police

violence and its contradictions with the principle of self-determination (Kaur & Garg, 2024). This body of legal and social critique is essential for understanding the complex reality in which contemporary hijra identity is being negotiated: the reality of new rights on paper coexisting with persistent institutional barriers.

Recent studies on hijra livelihoods reflect this complex reality. Saria's (2021) ethnographic work, *Hijras, Lovers, Brothers*, moves the focus to rural India, powerfully illustrating how poverty, intimacy, and caste intersect to shape the economic survival of hijras outside major urban centres. Other scholars have begun to explore the role of digital media in shaping new forms of livelihood and activism. The use of social media platforms for community building, crowdfunding, and advocacy represents a new, digital occupation that allows for the construction of trans identities outside the confines of traditional work (Chinnappan, 2021; Vivienne, 2016).

While this rich body of literature has expertly analysed the ethnographic realities, legal frameworks, and emerging digital practices shaping hijra life, a specific gap remains to be addressed. Less scholarly attention has been paid to how the complex interplay of legal rights, persistent stigma, and new professional aspirations is articulated within the literary space of the life narratives themselves. This study fills this gap by conducting a close textual analysis of how hijra life writings navigate the failures and promises of the contemporary moment, using the narrative form to resist occupational stigma and construct a modern identity rooted in the language of rights, activism, and professional dignity.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design centred on an in-depth textual analysis of published hijra life narratives. The methodology is designed to be rigorous and transparent, comprising four key components: the research approach, selection criteria for the primary corpus, the analytical framework, and a statement on researcher positionality.

A. Research Approach and Analytical Procedure

The core method of this study was qualitative textual analysis. The main focus was on a close reading of the primary sources. The researchers conducted the textual analysis manually. A manual approach was deliberately chosen over qualitative data analysis software to establish deep, interpretive engagement with the literary and narrative nuances of the texts. This method allows for a close reading that is sensitive to thematic complexity, emotional tone, and authors' stylistic choices in constructing their identities.

The analytical procedure involved multiple readings for each narrative. The initial reading focused on identifying all segments related to occupation, work, and economic survival. Subsequent readings involved a process of thematic coding, where these segments were categorised based on recurring concepts, such as stigma, violence, community, resistance, and professional aspiration. These manually derived codes formed the basis for the thematic structure presented in the "Results and Discussion" section.

B. Primary Corpus and Selection Criteria

The study analyses the following six life narratives by prominent trans activists who self-identify as hijras: A. Revathi's *The Truth about Me* (2010), collection of hijra life narratives *Our Words, Our Lives: Telling Aravani Life Stories* (Revathi, 2012), Living Smile Vidya's *I am Vidya* (2013), Laxmi Narayan Tripathi's *Me Laxmi, Me Hijra* (2015), Revathi's second life narrative *A Life in Trans Activism* (2016), and Manobi Bandopadhyay's *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* (2017). These narratives were selected for their detailed accounts of occupational experiences and identity construction by hijra-trans women in contemporary India. The period of their publication, between 2010 and 2017, also marks the height of trans activism and the demand for new legislation to protect their civil and political rights.

There are several advantages to using life narratives as source material. Hijra life narratives, like those of other marginalised communities, offer an unmediated representation of occupations and their sense of self (Vivienne, 2016; Mondal, 2014). This temporal narration of subjective experience provides a more insightful understanding of the identity-construction process, taking into account intersectional nuances, regional specificities, and occupational realities. Furthermore, as Smith and Watson (2010) posit, life narratives provide the liberty of choice to represent selective episodes of their lives, thereby becoming one of the most effective manifestations of their hijra identity. A close reading of hijra life narratives through sociological theories provides deeper insights into occupational experiences, offering emotional depth that may not be captured in quantitative studies.

C. Theoretical Framework

We developed a multilayered theoretical framework to analyse the complex relationship between occupation and identity in hijra life narratives. It includes three important sociological and gender studies theories that are significant for understanding the hijra identity construction process: symbolic interactionism, labelling theory, and gender performativity. These theories provide an effective working framework for understanding how identity is constructed, negotiated, and contested through the lived experiences of hijra occupations.

(a). Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a micro-sociological theory developed from Mead's foundational ideas (1934). This theory focuses on how individuals create and interpret the meanings of social symbols through face-to-face interactions (Blumer, 1969). In this paper, we apply this theory, along with Goffman's (1959) ideas of social performance and his (1963) seminal

concept of stigma, to analyse the daily interactions that are part of hijra occupations. For instance, the characteristic clap, specific styles of dress, and ritualised language of bhadaï are not merely actions; they are deeper symbolic acts for navigating identity within occupations carried out for survival. This theoretical concept enables us to examine how these symbols are used to construct a shared hijra identity, negotiate power in public spaces such as streets and markets, and create a sense of community and belonging, as depicted in life narratives.

(b). *Labelling Theory*

Labelling theory, most famously articulated by Becker (1963), posits that an individual's identity and behaviour can be shaped or influenced by the terms (labels) used to describe them. It is largely influenced by symbolic interactionism and is particularly useful for understanding deviance and stigma (Lemert, 1967). This paper uses labelling theory to analyse how external societal labels—such as “beggar”, “sex worker”, or “criminal”—are applied to the hijra community and the profound consequences of this labelling. We use this theory to infer how the authors depict their struggles against these stigmatising labels, the impact on their self-perception, and their efforts to resist a “master status” of deviance by asserting a more complex identity.

(c). *Gender Performativity*

Butler's (1993) theory of gender performativity argues that gender is not an internal essence or a stable identity, but rather a series of repeated, stylised, and socially compelled performances. This framework is central to our analysis as hijra occupations are inherently performative. We analyse bhadaï (ritual blessing), begging, and even sex work not just as labour but as corporeal performances that produce and solidify a public hijra gender identity. This theory allows us to move beyond seeing these occupations as simple expressions of a pre-existing identity and instead analyse them as the very acts that constitute what it means to be a hijra in the social world.

D. *Researcher Positionality*

Given the sensitive nature of this topic, we acknowledge its importance. We are aware that we conducted this research as cisgender academic researchers, and our nature of engagement in this field is observational and not representative. This positionality affords a degree of analytical distance but also necessitates a conscious and critical approach to interpreting the lived experiences of hijra trans women. We are not members of the hijra community and approach these narratives with a commitment to centring the authors' voices and perspectives without appropriation.

Therefore, our analysis is grounded in a deep respect for the authority of the narratives themselves. We seek to amplify the authors' articulations of their own lives without imposing external interpretations. Hence, we clarify that this study is an act of scholarly engagement, not an attempt to speak on behalf of the hijra community.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Paradox of Sacred Stigma: Ritual, Reverence, and Marginalisation*

The life narratives reveal that bhadaï—the ritualistic performance of singing, dancing, and blessing at births and weddings—is not merely an occupation, but a foundational performative act that constructs the central paradox of hijra identity: a sacred status that simultaneously enforces marginalisation. This occupation is consistently framed as the most traditional and sanctified work, rightfully designated to hijras (Revathi, 2010; Vidya, 2013; Tripathi, 2015). Viewed through Butler's theoretical lens, these collective acts in specific social contexts become fundamental to hijra gender categorisation as trans women. The social sanction for these performative acts is anchored in mythological and historical references that legitimise the hijras' unique spiritual authority. Two primary mythological foundations are consistently cited from Hinduism in support of this sacred identity:

1. According to a prevalent narrative, when Lord Rama was banished, he ordered all “men and women” to return home. The hijras, being “neither men nor women,” remained steadfastly at the forest entrance. Moved by their devotion upon his return, Rama granted them divine power to make their pronouncements—blessings or curses—come true (Vidya, 2013; Pattanaik, 2014; Michelraj, 2015).

2. Another account traces Krishna's transformation into Mohini, affirming that people embodying this liminal form would exist and that their words would hold divine power (Revathi, 2010; Tiwari, 2014).

Crucially, this sacred status is not inherent but is a carefully policed social category, demonstrating how hijra communities use internal regulations to protect their most valued source of izzat (respect). Occupation, through its association with Hindu religious myths, serves as a primary source of sacred identity, particularly in North India (Nanda, 1999; Reddy, 2010). To protect this positive label and restrict access, the community enforces strict rules. Revathi's (2010) narrative details the mechanics of “doli-badaai,” framing it as a professional service rather than begging:

Hijras find out where there's been a birth and send word to the family, saying that they would arrive on such-and-such a day to bless the newborn and they must be given badaai. And so they go to these homes and sing songs teasing the child's parents, thus making them happy. (Revathi, 2010, p. 47)

This performance obligates families to offer gifts and money in return for the benevolence of the blessings. To maintain this system, some gharanas (hijra houses) have created a monopoly. For instance, in Delhi, a hijra must become the chela (disciple) of gharanas already established in this profession to participate in bhadaï. Revathi (2010) notes, “In my guru's

family they don't go for badaai... If I or anyone wanted to go for badaai, then we would have to become chelas to these Hindi-speaking hijras and go and live with them" (p. 48).

Viewed through the lens of symbolic interactionism and labelling theory, internal gatekeeping is a deliberate act of self-categorisation designed to create a hierarchy of purity within the hijra community itself. Certain gharanas distinguish themselves by claiming sacred status nurtured through differentiated engagement with society. This often involves creating a moral boundary between the "pure" work of bhadaï and the "impure" work of sex. As Revathi (2010) states, "Generally speaking, those who went for badaai did not get involved in sex work" (p. 61). This distinction allows one group to resort to labels of moral superiority, reinforcing their exclusive right to perform sacred rituals. However, this claim of a sublime social identity is fragile and geographically contingent, revealing the limits of its power. The practice is almost entirely absent in South India, a prominent regional variation noted in the narratives (Revathi, 2010; Vidya, 2013), proving that this sacred identity is not a universal hijra trait, but a localised construction specific to North Indian regions (Saria, 2021).

Furthermore, the narratives suggest that the socio-economic foundation of bhadaï is eroding in post-independence India, intensifying the paradox of an identity built on precarious practice. Although the ritual maintains its symbolic significance, its economic viability has declined with urbanisation and shifting social attitudes (Revathi, 2010; Reddy, 2010; Tripathi, 2015). All claims of sacredness notwithstanding, hijra families involved in the bhadaï struggle to earn a decent living from it due to its seasonal nature and dwindling social support. This places hijra trans women in a precarious position, caught between a revered tradition and harsh economic reality.

This complex interplay of revered performance, internal policing, and economic precarity culminates in a paradoxical social identity that traps the hijras in a state of liminality. While granting ritualistic respect, the sacred status simultaneously positions hijras outside the norms of society. Their reverence rests on shaky beliefs, with stigmatisation often occurring immediately after the ritual is complete. As Reddy (2010) and Sutradhar (2022) observe, hijras occupy a liminal position in which their perceived power to bless others with fertility is predicated on their infertility, making them conduits of social reproduction rather than full participants within it. Significantly, the absence of detailed, personal accounts of performing bhadaï in the analysed narratives suggests that bhadaï may function more as a powerful, collective myth of origin and a symbolic role than as a fulfilling individual occupation in the contemporary era.

B. Performing Identity in Public Space: Survival, Violence, and Resistance

Beyond the sanctified space of bhadaï, life narratives reveal that the public sphere—streets, shops, and trains—becomes the primary stage where hijra identity is performed, contested, and negotiated. This multifarious navigation is affected by the fraught occupations of begging and sex work. In these secular spaces, hijra trans women must leverage their unique cultural status to ensure their daily survival. This process exposes them to perpetual violence while fostering powerful resistance strategies. Although often categorised separately, begging (dhanda) and sex work function as two sides of the same coin. Both occupations remain the prime survival economies for the hijra community, dictated by their social exclusion (Saria, 2021).

The practice of dhanda-begging is presented not as a simple plea for charity, but as a complex performance rooted in the same mythical authority as bhadaï. As Revathi (2010) explains, the belief that a hijra's blessing brings prosperity obligates shopkeepers to give alms (p. 45). This interaction is a direct extension of the Ramayana and Krishna-Mohini myths into the marketplace, where the characteristic clap and verbal blessing transform into performative acts designed to command respect and payment. However, this performance was enacted on a stage historically tainted by the influence of colonial powers. Hinchy (2020) documents how British administrators criminalised hijra mobility and alms-collection, reframing traditional practices as evidence of criminality (p. 28). This colonial labelling endures, transforming a ritually sanctioned act into one that is perpetually contested and stigmatised in public perception.

This collision between sacred claims and social stigma creates a profound internal conflict for the individual, a core theme analysed through the lens of symbolic interactionism. The theory posits that identity is shaped through social interactions and the perception of how others see us. For educated individuals such as Vidya, the transition to begging precipitates an identity crisis. Despite joining the community to live authentically and save for gender-affirmation surgery, she regrets her plight of having plummeted to the level of a street-based beggar (Vidya, 2013, p. 110). This shock to her self-esteem illustrates the painful dissonance between her internal self-concept and the stigmatised "beggar" label imposed on her by society. Both Revathi (2010) and Vidya (2013) narrate this initial perplexity, highlighting the universal struggle to reconcile a positive in-group identity with a negative public identity.

Hijra life writings exemplify the sophisticated and agentic performance strategies developed by their communities to navigate this hostile environment. The act of begging performed by hijras is not a passive supplication but an active, skilled negotiation of public space. Vidya (2013) details learning the "tricks of the trade," becoming an expert who knew "who gave, who did not, who the difficult customers were, who was likely to get into a fight with you, where you had to be tactful and where you had to be a bully" (pp. 86-87). This demonstrates a conscious manipulation of their stereotypical image, using intimidation and fear as tools of resistance to secure their livelihood. The performance is a double-edged sword: it ensures survival, but also reinforces the stereotypes of aggression and otherness that marginalise them.

The rigidity of this social labelling is powerfully illustrated when hijras attempt to step outside their prescribed occupational role. In a telling experiment, Vidya (2013) attempted to sell goods on trains only to face an utter failure. She notes,

people were not interested in buying anything from us—even those who used to give us alms would turn the other way when we passed them with our products and pitches. The gentlemen who exhorted us to work hard for a living whenever we begged were suddenly oddly absent. (p. 109)

This incident is a stark demonstration of labelling theory in action. Society does not merely criticise hijras for begging; it actively polices their economic roles and resists any attempt to engage in mainstream professions. They are trapped by a label that is condemned and enforced simultaneously.

This negotiation between survival, stigma, and violence intensifies dramatically in the context of sex work (Rushdie, 2008). The narratives frame entry into sex work not as a choice, but as a consequence of systemic exclusion from all other viable employment. As Aruna, one of Revathi's informants, admits, "I realized that for hijras there was not much of an option" (Revathi, 2012, p. 43). Here, identity performance is fraught with the highest degree of physical peril. The body itself becomes the site of extreme violence, often contingent on conformity with client expectations. Those who have not undergone gender-affirmation surgery (nirvana) face a brutal assault if their male genitalia are discovered (Revathi, 2012, p. 44). This reality underscores how violence is used as a tool of social punishment for gender nonconformity.

The state, far from being a protector, is depicted as the primary perpetrator of this violence. Revathi's (2010) harrowing account of custodial torture reveals the institutionalised nature of this abuse. She concludes grimly, "from our perspective there was no difference between a police and a rowdy. They both behaved in a similar way" (p. 210). This illustrates a key intersectional challenge: hijra sex workers are targeted not just as sex workers but as transgender individuals whose existence is criminalised by proxy. Their vulnerability is compounded by the intersection of their gender identity, occupation, and often their caste.

In response to this systemic violence, resistance has evolved from individual survival tactics to organised, collective action. The narratives document a crucial shift over the last two decades driven by NGO interventions and activist movements (Semmalar, 2014). Organisations like Sangama provided much-needed respite from police brutality, media stereotyping, and public apathy (Revathi & Murali, 2016). This collective endeavour focused on legal reform, particularly the decriminalisation of Section 377, and reframing sex work within the discourse of rights and dignity (Tripathi, 2015; Chakrapani et al., 2018). These sustained efforts, culminating in legal victories such as the NALSA judgment (2014) and the TPPR Act, represent a conscious struggle to negate negative stereotypes and assert a new, emancipated identity (Brinda & Gayathri, 2021). However, the narratives also suggest that this is an ongoing battle against defects in new legislation and persistent social apathy, highlighting that legal recognition alone cannot erase deeply entrenched stigma.

C. Economic Precarity and the Ambivalence of the Guru-Chela System

Life narratives argue that the hijra community structure, or the gharana system, is a deeply ambivalent institution born from necessity. It functions as an essential sanctuary from societal hostility but simultaneously replicates exploitative economic hierarchies that trap its members. This system arises as a direct response to the socio-economic vacuum created by mainstream society. Most hijras are forced to leave their biological families at a young age because of their gender identity, which cuts them off from education and conventional employment opportunities (Aasaavari et al., 2016). In this context, the gharana becomes the sole provider of shelter, community, and access to traditional occupations that ensure their survival.

However, this sanctuary comes at the cost of individual autonomy, operating on the logic of economic extraction that the narratives critique with striking clarity. The relationship between a guru (master) and a chela (disciple) is not merely a mentorship, but is fundamentally an economic contract. Revathi (2010) specifies the rigid rule of sharing earnings: "If I had earned 500 rupees, I'd take half and she would take the other half" (p. 134). This system effectively places the chela in a state of indentured servitude, where leaving begging or sex work is not an individual choice, but a decision controlled by the guru's economic interests. Revathi and Murali (2016) offer a powerful analysis of this dynamic, comparing exploitative gurus to politicians who view their initial support for a chela as an investment to be recouped with profit: "It's like politicians spending money for elections, in the hope that they can recover and more than make up for what they have spent themselves!" (p. 38).

Viewed through this lens, the gharana system, while providing a crucial buffer against external violence, is itself a site of structural inequality. Young hijras remain at the bottom of this internal hierarchy, and their economic dependence reinforces their vulnerability. The narratives thus frame the ultimate act of agency not as reforming the system from within but as escaping it entirely. Revathi (2010) and Vidya (2013) describe the thrilling moments of their escape from their respective hijra families. This act is not merely a personal departure, but a profound form of resistance against an oppressive internal economy, highlighting the central paradox of a community that offers survival but often at the price of freedom.

D. From Survival to Emancipation: Activism, Agency, and the New Hijra Identity

The final argument emerging from life narratives is one of transformation, detailing a conscious and collective project to construct a new, emancipated hijra identity. This project moves beyond traditional economies of survival, built on two interconnected pillars: the assertion of individual agency through professional achievement and the mobilisation of collective power through political activism. This represents a direct challenge to the historically imposed labels of "beggar" and "sex worker".

First, narratives champion the power of individual visibility as a tool for social change. By entering and excelling in mainstream professions, a new generation of transgender women is actively rewriting the cultural script of what it means to be hijra (Bandopadhyay, 2017). Revathi and Murali (2016) provide a powerful catalogue of these pioneers, listing individuals who have distinguished themselves in fields as diverse as classical dance (Narthaki Nataraj), engineering (Grace Banu), media (Padmini Prakash), and literature (Priya Babu, Living Smile Vidya) (p. 128). Furthermore, Manobi has reinvented herself as an indispensable voice in Bengali literary circles (Bandopadhyay, 2017), whereas Revathi and Vidya have become revered contributors to South Asian literature and theatre.

The act of transforming a life story into a public performance is a conscious political strategy, which Revathi describes as using art 'to move hearts and spark a change' (Srinivasaraghavan, 2025). This visibility has earned her international recognition, including from institutions such as Columbia University. She notes that her work is now studied in hundreds of university courses (Fausett, 2024). Each of these individuals functions as a symbolic counter-narrative, and their professional success serves as tangible proof of potential beyond the confines of traditional occupations. Their visibility creates new role models and forces a reevaluation of public perception, one career at a time.

This assertion of individual agency is amplified and fortified by the parallel movement toward collective political activism. Life narratives document a strategic shift towards demanding rights, rather than begging for alms. This movement has achieved a series of landmark legal victories that have begun to dismantle the structures of discrimination, including the NALSA judgment of 2014, decriminalisation of Section 377 in 2018, and the TPPR Act of 2019. These legal milestones are not abstract political gains; they are pragmatic tools that provide the foundation for a new rights-bearing identity (Brinda & Gayathri, 2021). As Tripathi (2015) noted, even in states where traditional occupations persist, improved access to medical, legal, and employment opportunities signifies a tangible shift in the state's relationship with its community.

Ultimately, life writings are presented as a central form of this new activism. By authoring their own stories and creating powerful artistic expressions, individuals such as Revathi, Laxmi, Vidya, and Manobi transform personal experiences into powerful political testimony (Srinivasaraghavan, 2025). The act of writing becomes an act of emancipation, allowing them to seize control of their narrative and emerge as "strong voices for the community" (Revathi & Murali, 2016, p. 128). While the struggle against social apathy and legislative defects continues, these combined efforts signify a fundamental reshaping of hijra identity—a deliberate and ongoing movement from marginalised status defined by survival to empowered status defined by citizenship, professionalism, and self-determination.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study argues that hijra life narratives function as critical political documents, wherein authors strategically navigate the stigma associated with their survival occupations to construct a resilient and forward-looking trans woman identity. The analysis reveals that occupations are not merely a backdrop to hijra life, but are the very stage upon which identity is performed, contested, and ultimately reimaged. Our close reading traced this process from the foundational paradox of *bhadaï*, where sacred status reinforces marginalisation, through agentic yet perilous performances of begging and sex work in the public sphere, to the critique of the ambivalent sanctuary offered by the *gharana* system.

Through the combined theoretical lenses of performativity, symbolic interactionism, and labelling theory, this study demonstrated that hijra identity construction is a dynamic process of negotiation rather than a static state. Life writings show how hijras actively use the symbolic power of their traditional roles while simultaneously exposing the violence and social apathy that make these roles an inevitability. The shift towards new careers, celebrated in the narratives, is thus portrayed not just as individual success but as a collective, political act of resisting the debilitating labels that have historically been forced upon the community. The act of writing thus emerges as a paramount form of this new emancipatory labour, marking a significant discursive shift.

These findings have significant policy implications, underscoring the urgent necessity for the state to move beyond mere legal recognition towards robust affirmative action that ensures equitable access to education and employment. Affirmative measures, such as reservations and targeted welfare schemes, are not merely economic interventions; they are crucial mechanisms for dismantling the very occupational labels that this study has shown to be so confining. Furthermore, our analysis calls for an inclusive mindset among private employers and the corporate sector to create genuine opportunities for hijras as employees and entrepreneurs. Such transformative gestures are essential for fulfilling the mandate of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities) and translating the aspirations articulated in life narratives into lived reality.

While this study has centred on the unparalleled value of life narratives in understanding the subjective experience of identity construction, its textual focus necessitates future research. Ethnographic fieldwork employing methodologies from social work and anthropology is required to validate and compare the realities articulated in these narratives—published largely over the last decade—with the contemporary, on-the-ground experiences of hijras today. Such research could explore how recent legal and social changes are impacting occupational choices and identities in real time, thereby building upon the foundational insights provided by these powerful life writings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Vellore, for the institutional support provided for the writing of this research article.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aasaavari, A., Mohapatra, S., & Sharma, A. (2016). Families they choose: Examining the hijra family and relations. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 77(4), 459-478.
- [2] Bandopadhyay, M., & Pandey, J. M. (2017). *A gift of goddess Lakshmi*. Penguin Random House India.
- [3] Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. The Free Press.
- [4] Bhattacharya, S., Ghosh, D., & Purkayastha, B. (2022). 'Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act' of India: An analysis of substantive access to rights of a transgender community. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 14(2), 676-697. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huac004>
- [5] Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Prentice-Hall.
- [6] Brinda, D. S., & Gayathri, N. (2023). Performing (trans)woman identity through nirvana: A study of hijra life narratives. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(8), 532-542. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p532>
- [7] Brinda, D. S., & Gayathri, N. (2021). Towards becoming truly rights-bearing citizens: Twenty years of trans activism in India. *Psychology and Education Journal*, 58(5), Article 5. Retrieved July 17, 2025, from <http://psychologyandeducation.net/pae/index.php/pae/article/view/6272>
- [8] Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. Routledge.
- [9] Chakrapani, V., Newman, P. A., & Noronha, E. (2018). Hijras/transwomen and sex work in India: From marginalization to social protection. In A. Gupta & V. Merchant (Eds.), *Transgender sex work and society* (pp. 97-114). Routledge.
- [10] Chinnappan, D. (2021). *Digital media and hijra identity: Understanding community-building and self-representations among hijra community-based organisations in India*. PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology.
- [11] Fausett, G. (2024, June 11). A. Revathi: A life in trans activism: A hijra life story. Alturi. Retrieved June 29, 2025, from https://www.alturi.org/feature_items/a-revathi-a-life-in-trans-activism-a-hijra-life-story/
- [12] Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Anchor Books.
- [13] Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Prentice-Hall.
- [14] Hinchy, J. (2020). *Governing gender and sexuality in colonial India: The hijra, c. 1850-1900*. Cambridge University Press.
- [15] Hossain, A. (2012). Beyond emasculation: Being Muslim and becoming hijra in South Asia. *Asian Studies Review*, 36(4), 495-513. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2012.739994>
- [16] Jayaprakash, S. (2022). Rewriting the subject and the self: A study of hijra life writings. In D. A. Vakoch (Ed.), *Transgender India: Understanding Third Gender Identities and Experiences* (pp. 19-35). Springer.
- [17] Joseph, J., & Gayathri, N. (2024). Tracing hijra ethnicity in Indian transgender autobiographies: Revisiting the erased hijra legacy through trans self-memory. *World Journal of English Language*, 14(1), 440-447. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n1p440>
- [18] Kaur, S., & Garg, M. (2024). An analysis of the rights of transgender persons under Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019: Gaps and challenges. *Punjab University Law Review*, 62(2). Retrieved July 17, 2025, from <https://pulr.puchd.ac.in/index.php/pulr/article/view/195>
- [19] Lemert, E. M. (1967). *Human deviance, social problems, and social control*. Prentice-Hall.
- [20] Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. University of Chicago Press.
- [21] Michelraj, M. (2015). Historical evolution of transgender community in India. *Asian Review of Social Sciences*, 4(1), 17-19. Retrieved June 19, 2025, from <https://www.arseam.com/content/2-arsoc/36-v4-i1-january-2015/340-historical-evolution-of-transgender-community-in-india>
- [22] Mondal, M. (2014). Gender geometry: A study of A. Revathi's autobiography *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*. *Lapis Lazuli-An International Literary Journal*, 4(1), 125-131. Retrieved May 21, 2025, from <https://pintersociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Mousim-Mondal-11.pdf>
- [23] Nanda, S. (1999). *Neither man nor woman: The hijras of India*. Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc.
- [24] Pattanaik, D. (2014). *Shikhandi*. Penguin Books India.
- [25] Rao, R. (2015). Hijra. In G. Dharampal-Frick, M. Kiroloskar-Steinbach, R. Dwyer, & J. Phalkey (Eds.), *Key concepts in modern Indian studies* (pp. 99-101). ABC-CLIO.
- [26] Reddy, G. (2010). *With respect to sex: Negotiating hijra identity in South India*. University of Chicago Press.
- [27] Reddy, G. (2018). Paradigms of thirdness: Analyzing the past, present, and potential futures of gender and sexual meaning in India. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, 5(3), 48-60. Retrieved July 17, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.14321/qed.5.3.0048>
- [28] Revathi, A. (2010). *The truth about me: A hijra life story* (V. Geetha, Trans.). Penguin India.
- [29] Revathi, A. (2012). *Our lives our words: Telling aravani life stories*. Yoda Press.
- [30] Revathi, A., & Murali, N. (2016). *A life in trans activism*. Zubaan.
- [31] Rushdie, S. (2008). Half-woman god. In N. Akhavi (Ed.), *AIDS Sutra: Untold Stories from India* (pp. 175-186). Anchor Books.
- [32] Sanyal, D., & Dhall, P. (2021). Beyond rhetoric: Transgender persons and socio-economic inclusion. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 48(3/4), 281-295. Retrieved May 29, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27281617>
- [33] Saria, V. (2021). *Hijras, lovers, brothers: Surviving sex and poverty in rural India*. Fordham University Press.
- [34] Sarwar, W., & Pervaiz, H. (2023). The unlikely elite: Eunuchs as power players in medieval India. *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, 36(1), 61-75. Retrieved April 28, 2025, from https://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/HistoryPStudies/PDF_Files/05-v36_1_2023.pdf
- [35] Semmalar, G. I. (2014). Unpacking solidarities of the oppressed: Notes on trans struggles in India. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 42(3/4), 286-291. Retrieved June 15, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24365012>

- [36] Smith, S., & Watson, J. (2010). *Reading autobiography: A guide for interpreting life narratives*. University of Minnesota Press.
- [37] Sopna, A. M. (2017). *A voiced cry of transgenders*. Educreation Publishing.
- [38] Srinivasaraghavan, N. C. (2025, June 13). How trans woman activist A. Revathi uses art as a tool of protest and change. *The Hindu*. Retrieved April 17, 2025, from <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/theatre/trans-woman-activist-a-revathi-talks-about-her-life-and-significance-of-pride-month/article69677410.ece>
- [39] Sutradhar, R. (2022). Contradiction and concurrence of castration and the fertile phallus: A transgender reading of ancient Indian literature and contemporary hijra experience. In D. A. Vakoch (Ed.), *Transgender India: Understanding Third Gender Identities and Experiences* (pp. 65-76). Springer.
- [40] Tanupriya, & Pannikot, D. (2022). Cultural violence, violent gendering, and abjection: Discourses on sites of violence through trans women's narratives from India. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 24(6), Article 8. Retrieved June 3, 2025, from <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol24/iss6/8>
- [41] Tiwari, E. (2014). Distortion of "tritya prakriti" (Third nature) by colonial ideology in India. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*, 2, 19-24. Retrieved July 17, 2025, from <https://www.airitilibrary.com/Article/Detail?DocID=P20150611006-201411-201508050018-201508050018-19-24>
- [42] Tripathi, L. N. (2015). *Me Laxmi, me hijra* (R. R. Rao & P. G. Joshi, Trans.). Oxford University Press.
- [43] Vidya, L. S. (2013). *I am Vidya: A transgender's journey*. Rupa Publications India.
- [44] Vivienne, S. (2016). *Digital identity and everyday activism: Sharing transgender stories through social media*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Sakthi Brinda D is a research scholar at the Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Vellore. She completed her BA in English at Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu; her MA in English and Comparative Literature at Pondicherry University, Puducherry; and her MPhil at Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. She is currently pursuing her doctoral research in English literary studies. Her areas of interest include transgender studies, life writing, literary theory, drama, and translation. She has published three articles in acclaimed journals, five papers in conference proceedings, and has contributed chapters in two edited books in the areas of her research interest. She can be reached at sakthibrinda.d2017@vitstudent.ac.in

Gayathri N is an Assistant Professor (Senior Grade 2) at the Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Vellore. She completed her doctoral research in emotional intelligence. Her areas of specialisation include emotional intelligence, *the Mahabharata*, Indian literature and literary theory, and English language teaching. She has published more than ten research articles and several book chapters, and has authored three books, including two General English textbooks for colleges affiliated to the University of Madras. She has also completed a consultancy project in Communicative English for B&B Builders, Vellore. Dr. Gayathri N has held various academic and administrative responsibilities at VIT University. She has received several awards in recognition of her contributions to teaching and research. She can be reached at ngayathri@vit.ac.in

The Puzzle of Words: Discovering Semantic Change in Malay–Sanskrit Loanwords Shared With Thai

Kowit Pimpuang

Department of Thai Language, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Thailand

Abstract—The objectives of research were 1) to examine the historical background and influence of Sanskrit in both Malaysia and Thailand; 2) to investigate the semantic changes in Malay words of Sanskrit origin that also appear as loanwords in Thai; and 3) to explore the effectiveness of using a crossword puzzle game as a tool for learning Thai vocabulary of Sanskrit origin derived from Malay. The sample group consisted of nine master's degree students enrolled in the course 01361513 Foreign Languages in Relation to the Thai Language at Kasetsart University during 2024. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed for analysis. The findings revealed that Sanskrit, Malay and Thai belong to distinct language families: Sanskrit is part of the Indo-European family, Malay belongs to the Austronesian family, and Thai is a member of the Tai language family. Sanskrit first appeared in South Asian inscriptions during the early centuries of the Common Era and subsequently exerted a wide-ranging influence across the South Asian subcontinent and much of Southeast Asia, including regions where Malay is spoken. The Thai language has likewise been influenced by Sanskrit for centuries. A comparative analysis of Sanskrit-derived words in Malay and Thai demonstrated notable semantic shifts. The most frequently observed type of semantic change was widening of meaning, followed by narrowing and transferring. The use of a crossword puzzle game proved to be an effective supplementary tool. Evidence from pre-test, post-test and intervention data indicated improvements in students' understanding of Sanskrit-derived vocabulary in both Malay and Thai.

Index Terms—Malay word, Sanskrit Loanword, Thai, crossword puzzle, game

I. INTRODUCTION

Student learning has evolved significantly from the past to the present day. Pimpuang and Yuttapongtada (2023) noted that Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) has been adapted for application in the digital era, offering lists of related action verbs that instructional designers can use to formulate effective learning objectives. In this context, the digital taxonomy incorporates contemporary terminology and tasks relevant to digital learning environments, integrating activities that support modern pedagogical practices.

The crossword puzzle game exemplifies a creative and engaging technique inspired by Bloom's taxonomy, adapted to suit the digital age. As learners today are immersed in a digital environment, instructional strategies that align with this context are essential. Werbach and Hunter (2012) stated that although gamification is a relatively recent pedagogical innovation, it has been successfully applied in the business sector. Gamification involves the use of game elements and design techniques in non-game settings and has demonstrated effectiveness in motivating learners, empowering them, and fostering a relaxed and engaging learning environment. These pedagogical factors highlighted earlier by Brown (1994) are considered essential components of effective teaching and learning (Jorge, 2015, p. 32).

Previously, instruction on semantic changes in Malay words of Sanskrit origin—many of which also serve as loanwords in Thai—had not incorporated crossword puzzle activities in the Thai language program at Kasetsart University. Traditional teaching approaches relied heavily on rote memorization within the cognitive domain of Bloom's original taxonomy. Learners were often expected to memorize extensive lists of vocabulary without a deeper understanding of the relationships between Malay and Thai words of common Sanskrit origin. Such methods frequently resulted in disengagement and poor learning outcomes, as students struggled to retain information or make meaningful connections.

To address this issue, the adoption of creative and engaging instructional techniques is essential. Instructors should consider implementing innovative learning approaches such as the use of crossword puzzle games as adjunct tools to support the teaching of topics related to the historical influence of Sanskrit on Malay and Thai and the comparative semantic changes of shared lexical items.

Therefore, the application of crossword puzzle games in the learning process of Malay words of Sanskrit origin, as well as their Thai cognates, represents a promising and creative instructional strategy. This method has been incorporated into the teaching process to promote student success, enhance engagement, and foster a more enjoyable and productive learning experience. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher is confident that integrating this

component into the course will yield substantial benefits for students in their understanding of linguistic relationships and semantic development.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Learning in the Modern Era

Learning in the modern era has undergone significant transformation, evolving from traditional methods to more dynamic and student-centered approaches. Unlike the past, when education was primarily teacher-centered and classrooms were dominated by lecture-based instruction, modern learning environments emphasize active student engagement. This shift reflects broader educational reforms aimed at enhancing learning outcomes through innovative strategies such as active learning and game-based learning.

Among these approaches, game-based learning has emerged as a particularly effective technique. It challenges and motivates students by incorporating elements of play into the educational process, thereby increasing learner engagement and participation. Students who engage in lessons through games often demonstrate higher levels of enthusiasm, critical thinking, and sustained interest. Therefore, integrating game-based learning into classroom practice is an important consideration for educators seeking to enhance student-centered learning.

Boonlue (2018) stated that game-based learning operates across three distinct phases. First, before gameplay, learners encounter a challenge and set specific goals to achieve during the activity. This initial phase stimulates curiosity and establishes a clear purpose. Second, during gameplay, learners experience reduced stress and become immersed in the task. They are often able to temporarily suspend their real-life identities and take on roles or actions they have never attempted before, all while striving to win rewards or achieve in-game objectives. Finally, after gameplay, learners recognize that the activity was a simulated experience unrelated to their personal lives. Nonetheless, the intrinsic enjoyment of the game often leads to a desire to engage in similar learning experiences again.

In conclusion, the evolution of modern learning has highlighted the importance of innovative, student-centered methods such as game-based learning. When effectively implemented, these strategies not only enhance learner motivation, but also contribute to meaningful and memorable educational experiences.

The Crossword Puzzle as a Form of Game-Based Learning

Lestari and Yulia (2018) stated that the crossword puzzle is a type of word game that consists of a grid of squares into which words, numbers, or letters are inserted, often guided by numbered clues. As a form of game-based learning, the crossword puzzle has gained recognition for its effectiveness in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and reinforcing learning.

Research conducted by Franklin et al. (2003) found that crossword puzzles can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery. Similarly, Weisskirch (2006) emphasized the value of crossword puzzles in reviewing course materials. In this approach, learners complete a crossword puzzle prior to an examination and another one afterward, supporting both preparatory and reflective learning.

The educational benefits of using crossword puzzles in the teaching and learning process are manifold. One of the key advantages is the ability to increase student motivation, particularly when learning new vocabulary in the classroom. Dashela et al. (2017) outlined several additional benefits of using crossword puzzles as follows:

1. The crossword puzzle is an effective tool for vocabulary instruction and enrichment because it reinforces meaning through the inclusion of definitions or synonyms directly within the clues.
2. Crossword puzzles encourage learners to consult dictionaries or thesauruses, and they facilitate the acquisition of specialized terminology in particular subject areas. They are also suitable as quizzes or review tools at the conclusion of a lesson, chapter, or unit.
3. Crossword puzzles are simple for instructors to design and adapt for student use, making them a practical and flexible educational resource.

Therefore, the crossword puzzle is an effective and engaging instructional tool that instructors can employ to enhance students' vocabulary development. Although easy to implement and accessible to learners, it provides a dynamic and enjoyable learning experience that supports both comprehension and retention.

Sanskrit in Southeast Asia and Malaysia

Andaya and Andaya (1982) observed that by the seventh century, a significant number of Sanskrit-derived words had been incorporated into Old Malay, largely due to the cultural and economic influence of the Indian subcontinent. This influence was prominent before the widespread adoption of Islam by Malay rulers on the Malay Peninsula. Following the conversion to Islam, Arabic began to exert increasing lexical influence on the Malay language (p. 53).

In tracing the historical presence of Sanskrit in Southeast Asia, Sarkar (1985) highlighted that historical records indicate sustained cultural contact between the Indian subcontinent—particularly under the Pallava and Chola dynasties, and several Southeast Asian polities, including Ilamandalam (Sri Lanka), Sri Vijaya (Sumatra), Chavakam (Java), Kambuja (Cambodia), Kadaram (the Malay Peninsula), and Champa (Vietnam). The enduring legacy of these interactions is evident in the region's art, architecture, and cultural expressions. From the early centuries of the Common Era, Southeast Asia emerged as a significant center for the diffusion of Indian, especially Sanskritic cultural and religious traditions. Many Southeast Asian languages bear the imprint of this deep-rooted Sanskrit influence.

Bronkhorst (2011) provided a comprehensive account of the spread of Sanskrit across South and Southeast Asia. According to his research, Sanskrit first appeared in inscriptions in South Asia during the early Common Era and gradually expanded its reach, ultimately becoming the principal language of inscriptions across the Indian subcontinent and into Southeast Asia. For nearly a millennium, Sanskrit maintained this dominant status, prompting Pollock (1996) to refer to the region as the “Sanskrit cosmopolis,” which he dates from approximately 300 to 1300 CE.

In light of this historical evidence, it is apparent that Sanskrit played a pivotal role in shaping the linguistic and cultural landscape of Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia. Through sustained cultural exchange, particularly in the domains of religion, philosophy, and governance, Malay absorbed a substantial number of Sanskrit loanwords. Despite Malaysia’s present-day status as a Muslim-majority nation, the Malay language retains a considerable inventory of Sanskrit-derived vocabulary. Jefbeck (2023) emphasized that the relationship between Sanskrit and Malay is characterized by cultural exchange and mutual enrichment, with Sanskrit contributing not only lexical items but also philosophical concepts and cultural practices to the development of Malay language and society.

Malay Words of Sanskrit Origin

Following the introduction of Sanskrit into the Malay Peninsula and surrounding islands, a substantial number of Sanskrit words were assimilated into the Malay language. The Malay-speaking population gradually adopted Indian vocabulary alongside indigenous Malay terms, resulting in a significant infusion of Sanskrit-derived lexicon. As in other Southeast Asian languages, Sanskrit vocabulary in Malay is particularly prevalent in domains related to religion, philosophy, and classical literature.

A considerable portion of this lexical borrowing stems from Sanskrit epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which introduced numerous cultural and philosophical concepts to the region. Consequently, many Malay words are traceable to Sanskrit roots. Examples include *manusia* (from Sanskrit *manusya*, meaning human), *sakti* (from *sakti*, meaning power or divine energy), *ratna* (from *ratna*, meaning jewel), *isteri* (from *strī*, meaning woman or wife), and *asmara* (from *samara*, meaning passion or love).

These examples illustrate the extent to which the Malay language has drawn from Sanskrit, particularly from early Indian literary and religious traditions. Even in contemporary usage, a substantial portion of the Malay lexicon retains Sanskrit-origin terms. Samad Ahmad (1974) noted that the prevalence of Sanskrit in Malay is so extensive that nearly every sentence in spoken Malay is likely to contain at least one word of Sanskrit origin. This observation underscores the profound and enduring influence of Sanskrit on the Malay language.

Shared Religious and Philosophical Sanskrit Loanwords in Malay and Thai

Matminchainara (n.d.) observed that the widespread dissemination of Sanskrit across Southeast Asia led to its extensive use in religious, philosophical, and belief-related discourse. This observation aligns with the view of Samad Ahmad (1974), who, in his work *Sanskrit Words in Malay*, noted that contact between the Indian subcontinent and the Malay world dates back approximately 2,000 years. According to Ahmad, Sanskrit was introduced to the Malay-speaking regions alongside the transmission of Brahmanism, Hinduism, and Buddhism by Indian emissaries who sought to promote prosperity and spiritual development among the peoples of Southeast Asia, who at the time practiced animistic belief systems.

Over time, Sanskrit began to play a significant role in the spoken language of the early Malay population. Many of the Sanskrit words adopted into Malay were drawn from Hindu scriptures and classical Indian literature, including the *Jataka* tales and the *Pañcatantra* (rendered as *Panca Tanderan* in Malay).

A parallel linguistic process occurred in Thailand, where Sanskrit words also entered the Thai language—initially through religious texts associated with Brahmanism and Hinduism. This simultaneous adoption in both cultural-linguistic spheres demonstrates the extensive influence of Sanskrit on the languages of Southeast Asia. As a result, Malay and Thai now share a considerable number of Sanskrit-derived loanwords, particularly in religious and philosophical contexts.

Hence, the religious and philosophical traditions that accompanied the spread of Sanskrit contributed to its integration into both Malay and Thai. The enduring presence of these loanwords underscores the profound and lasting impact of Sanskrit on the linguistic and cultural development of both nations. Evidence of this influence is clearly documented in major lexicographical works, such as contemporary Malay dictionaries in Malaysia and the dictionaries produced by the Royal Institute of Thailand. Supporting this view, Matminchainara (n.d.) confirmed that a significant number of Sanskrit-origin words remain embedded in the Malay lexicon. Similarly, Thongprasert (1977) remarked that in dictionaries compiled by the Royal Institute of Thailand, more than half of the entries consist of Sanskrit loanwords, thereby attesting to the magnitude of Sanskrit’s impact on the Thai language (p. 37).

Semantic Change and Its Application to Sanskrit Loanwords

In historical linguistics, the concept of semantic change refers to the evolution of word meanings over time. Khanittanan (1984) clearly stated that semantic change involves alterations in the meaning of a word, which may include the addition, removal, or modification of its senses and connotations. Over time, such changes can result in cognates across different languages or periods having significantly divergent meanings.

The theory of semantic change provides a useful framework for analyzing how Sanskrit loanwords have evolved in both the Malay and Thai languages. This theoretical lens is particularly applicable to the study of Pali and Sanskrit vocabulary as used in contemporary Southeast Asian linguistic contexts. Pimpuang (2016) stated that semantic change

typically occurs in three main forms: widening of meaning (generalization), narrowing of meaning (specialization), and transferring of meaning (semantic shift). These categories serve as key analytical tools in identifying and interpreting changes in word meaning across languages and over time.

In his survey of Sanskrit loanwords in Malay, Jefbeck (2023) noted that many of these terms have undergone semantic transformation. As Sanskrit words were assimilated into Malay, they often acquired new meanings and connotations distinct from those in their original cultural and linguistic context. This transformation was influenced by the socio-cultural and linguistic environments of the Malay-speaking population. For instance, the Sanskrit term *karma*, which in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy refers to the concept of action and its consequences (Apte, 2010, p. 339), has been semantically broadened in Malay to mean 'fate' or 'destiny' in a more general sense.

This example illustrates how Sanskrit words, when adopted into the Malay language, undergo semantic change driven by the needs, usage patterns, and cultural perspectives of the receiving linguistic community. A similar process occurs in Thai, where Sanskrit loanwords are likewise subject to the same types of semantic transformations outlined in the universal theory of semantic change. Thus, the application of semantic theory provides valuable insight into the dynamic and adaptive nature of Sanskrit-derived vocabulary in Southeast Asian languages.

Using a Crossword Puzzle Game to Learn Malay and Thai Words of Sanskrit Origin

The crossword puzzle, as a form of educational game, can be effectively utilized by instructors to design engaging and interactive classroom activities—particularly for teaching Malay words of Sanskrit origin that are shared as loanwords in the Thai language. The rationale for selecting the crossword puzzle as an instructional tool lies in its simplicity and effectiveness. It provides an enjoyable platform that encourages students to actively engage with the learning material, stimulating their critical thinking and enabling them to apply their knowledge in academically meaningful ways. Moreover, it motivates learners to consult dictionaries and actively participate in vocabulary learning with enthusiasm.

In the context of teaching content such as Sanskrit-derived words in Malay and Thai, traditional lecture-based methods may prove less effective—especially in the current digital era. Therefore, innovative, creative, and learner-centered strategies are needed to maintain student engagement while promoting deeper learning. When properly implemented, vocabulary games such as crossword puzzles not only make the learning process more enjoyable, but also contribute to learners' cognitive development, linguistic awareness, and practical language skills.

Harwika (2018) emphasized that vocabulary is a crucial component in language acquisition, as it serves as the foundation connecting the four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In this regard, employing crossword puzzles in the classroom offers an effective and engaging means to enhance students' mastery of Sanskrit-origin vocabulary in both Malay and Thai. This technique fosters both retention and understanding through active, playful, and contextualized learning.

Based on the literature reviewed in support of this research, a conceptual framework was developed to guide the study. This framework was designed to achieve three primary objectives: 1) to examine the historical background and influence of Sanskrit in Malaysia and Thailand; 2) to analyze the semantic changes in Malay words of Sanskrit origin that are also used as loanwords in Thai; and 3) to investigate the effects of using crossword puzzle games as a pedagogical tool for learning Sanskrit-derived Malay vocabulary in the context of Thai language education.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample of the Study

The sample for this study consisted of nine graduate students from Kasetsart University who were enrolled in the course 01361513: Foreign Languages in Relation to the Thai Language, part of the Master's degree program in the academic year 2024. This research focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin that also function as shared loanwords in the Thai language.

While numerous Malay words of Sanskrit origin have cognates in Thai, a total of 50 such words specifically related to religion and philosophy were selected for investigation using a purposive sampling technique. The rationale for selecting words within the domains of religion and philosophy is grounded in the historical context of Sanskrit's transmission to the Malay Peninsula. Sanskrit entered the region primarily through religious and philosophical channels, and it is within these domains that shared loanwords are most prominently found in both Malay and Thai.

Methodology

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods within an overall inductive framework. The research procedures were conducted as follows:

1. Data surveying and collection focused on 50 Malay words of Sanskrit origin related to the fields of religion and philosophy, which are also shared loanwords in the Thai language. The primary sources for data collection included: 1) Sanskrit Words in Southeast Asian Languages compiled by the Somaiya Centre of Buddhist Studies (2005), 2) A Dictionary of English and Sanskrit compiled by Monier-Williams (1999), and 3) The Dictionary of the Royal Institute published by the Royal Institute of Thailand (2013).
2. From these sources, 50 Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which are also loanwords in Thai, were selected for inclusion in the crossword puzzle game platform. A pre-test and post-test were developed using these words to assess learner proficiency before and after engaging with the crossword puzzle activity.

3. The collected lexical items were classified into three groups: Sanskrit, Malay, and Thai. The Malay and Sanskrit words were analyzed in terms of their role as loanwords within the Thai language.
4. Descriptive and analytical accounts of the Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which also appear as loanwords in Thai, were prepared. Subsequently, crossword puzzle games were designed to facilitate learning these terms.
5. The pre-test and post-test scores were evaluated according to five performance categories: “very good” (90–100), “good” (70–80), “acceptable” (50–60), “low” (30–40), and “very low” (0–20). Students achieving scores within the “very good” range (90–100) on the post-test were considered to have met the learning standards.
6. The pre-test was administered prior to classroom instruction to assess learners’ baseline knowledge, while the post-test was conducted after the crossword puzzle intervention to evaluate improvements in the identification of Malay words of Sanskrit origin shared with Thai.
7. Each student’s pre-test and post-test scores were compared against established learning standards. The research findings, including conclusions and discussion, were presented using descriptive narratives supported by figures and tables to illustrate the results clearly.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

The primary objectives of this research were to examine the history and influence of Sanskrit in Malaysia and Thailand, to investigate the semantic changes of Malay words of Sanskrit origin that function as shared loanwords in Thai, and to evaluate the effects of using a crossword puzzle game to facilitate the learning of Malay words of Sanskrit origin in the context of Thai language acquisition. The key findings are as follows:

The Appearance of Sanskrit in Malay and its Relationship to the Malay Language

Samad Ahmad (1974) asserted that contact between the peoples of the Indian subcontinent and the Malay world dates back approximately 2,000 years. During this period, Hindu and Buddhist missionaries introduced Sanskrit through religious texts to facilitate the propagation of their religions in the Malay Peninsula. Sanskrit entered Southeast Asia, and by the seventh century, numerous Sanskrit-derived words had been incorporated into Old Malay, largely as a result of the cultural and economic influence exerted by the Indian subcontinent prior to the adoption of Islam by several Malay rulers (Andaya & Andaya, 1982, p. 14).

This perspective is further supported by Sarkar (1985), who traced the spread of Sanskrit in Southeast Asia and Malaysia through archaeological evidence, including art and architecture. Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia, became prominent centers of Indian cultural influence from the early centuries of the Common Era. Bronkhorst (2011) corroborated this account by dating the earliest Sanskrit inscriptions in South Asia to the early centuries of the Common Era, after which Sanskrit gradually spread, impacting numerous languages across the South Asian subcontinent and much of Southeast Asia, including Malay-speaking regions.

Pollock (1996) estimated the period of Sanskrit’s expansion to Southeast Asia as spanning approximately from 300 to 1300 CE. Based on these historical findings and related evidence, it can be concluded that Sanskrit has a longstanding presence in Malaysia. The relationship between Malay and Sanskrit is fundamentally one of cultural exchange, with Sanskrit contributing extensively to the Malay language and culture through vocabulary, philosophical ideas, and cultural practices from antiquity to the present.

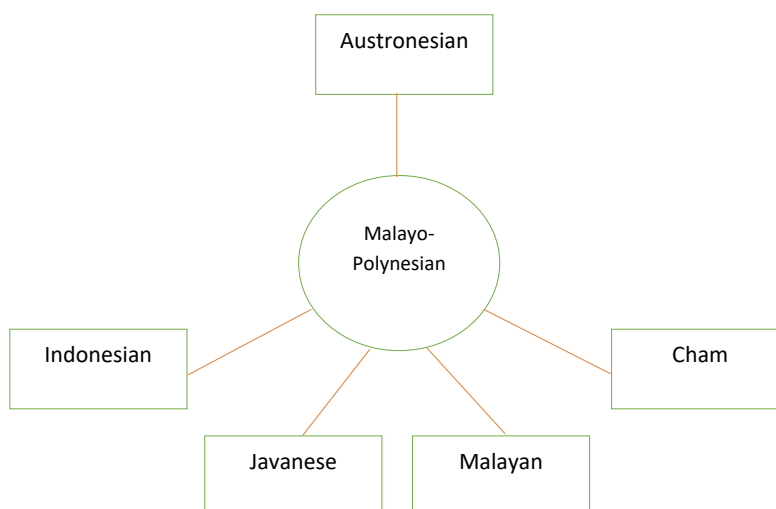


Figure 1. The Austronesian Language Family

The Relationship Between Malay and Thai Words Derived From Sanskrit

Although Malay belongs to the Austronesian language family and Thai to the Tai language family, both languages have incorporated a significant number of loanwords from Sanskrit. This linguistic borrowing is especially evident in

vocabulary related to religious and philosophical concepts. Several examples of Malay and Thai words of Sanskrit origin, particularly in these domains, are presented below:

TABLE 1
EXAMPLES OF WORDS OF SANSKRIT ORIGIN SHARED BETWEEN MALAY AND THAI

Malay of SKT	Austronesian	Original SKT	Indo-European	Tai	Shared Word in Thai
Bahasa (language)	⇔	Bhāṣā (language)		⇒	pha:-sā: (language)
Dewa (god)	⇔	Deva (god)		⇒	the:-wa:, thê:p (god)
Suria (sun)	⇔	Śūrya (sun)		⇒	sù-rá-já?, sū:n (sun)

Although Malay and Thai belong to different language families, some loanwords of Sanskrit origin exhibit similarities, despite slight variations in their written forms due to the distinct linguistic systems of each language.

Semantic Change in Malay and Thai Loanwords of Sanskrit Origin

This research identified three types of semantic change in Pali and Sanskrit loanwords: 1) widening of meaning, 2) narrowing of meaning, and 3) transferring of meaning. These can be explained as follows.

Widening of Meaning

Pali and Sanskrit words with originally narrow meanings may be employed with broader meanings, particularly when newly specified senses are added to the original definitions. Through such semantic change, these Pali and Sanskrit words acquire meanings that are more expansive than their originals. The new meanings may encompass a variety of senses or connotations; for example:

TABLE 2
EXAMPLES OF WIDENING OF MEANING

Malay of SKT	Meaning	Original SKT	Meaning	Shared Word in Thai	Meaning
Ganggaa	The deified Ganges, in Malay often an indefinite honorific suggesting the divine (see also nilaganga) e.g. naga ganga-a supernatural dragon, gangga Melayu-artificial alphabet used for clandestine correspondence. In Perak, gangga Melayu is a cryptic alphabet.	Gaṅgā	The river Ganges, the most sacred river in India. The Ganges is personified as a goddess.	กนก (khon-kha:)	The river Ganges in India, rivers in general.
Saambuu	The benevolent, Siva, the crocodile spirit	svayambhū	Causing happiness, granting prosperity; Samhuh-name of Siva	สอญ (sà-jòm-phu:)	Self-produced, Siva, it means Buddha in the context of Thai society, a Buddha statue.
Karma	The law of cause and effect	karma	Action, work, deed, execution, performance, business, office, duty a religious rite, a specific action, moral duty, fate, the certain consequence of acts done in a former life.	กรรม (kam)	Action, work, errand, sin, bad luck, death

The examples of Malay and Thai words of Sanskrit origin, which function as shared loanwords in the Thai language such as *gaṅgā*, *svayambhū* and *karma*, are employed in both Malay and Thai with meanings broader than those of the original Sanskrit terms.

Narrowing of Meaning

The meaning of a Pali or Sanskrit loanword becomes less general or inclusive than its original sense. This type of semantic change is also referred to as specialization. One characteristic of a Pali or Sanskrit loanword with a narrowed meaning is that it may acquire either positive or negative connotations due to semantic restriction (Makchaeng, 1982). For example:

TABLE 3
EXAMPLES OF NARROWING OF MEANING

Malay of SKT	Meaning	Original SKT	Meaning	Shared Word Thai in	Meaning
agaa maa	Religion, belief in god, Hindu,	Ágama	A traditional doctrine or precept, a sacred writing or scripture, a voucher or written testimony, science, a system of philosophy, the Vedas, the sacred scripture, Satra, coming, approach, acquisition, birth, origin	อาคม (ʔa:-khom)	sorcery, magic, charm, spell, enchantment,
anuugeraah	Favour, grace, gracious, award, gift (from a ruler or superior), bounty (of princes or gods)	anugraha	favour, kindness, obligation, showing favour, rewarding, assistance, help (shown to the poor in feeding them), facilitating by spells, acceptance, princely bounty	อนุเคราะห์ (ʔa-nú-khrǎʔ)	favour, help
bahaagia	Joy, good fortune, blessing, happy,	bhÁgya	Lucky, fortunate, fate, destiny, luck	ภาคี (phâ:k)	luck, lucky

Examples of Malay and Thai words of Sanskrit origin, such as *Ágama*, *anugraha* and *bhÁgya*, are used in their respective languages with meanings that are less general or inclusive than those of the original Sanskrit terms.

Transferring of Meaning

Pimpuang (2008) stated that the original meaning of a Pali or Sanskrit word is discontinued in usage, and a new meaning is explicitly coined and employed in its place (p. 124). For example:

TABLE 4
EXAMPLES OF TRANSFERRING OF MEANING

Malay of SKT	Meaning	Original SKT	Meaning	Shared Word Thai in	Meaning
maara	Advance, progress, peril, danger, misfortune, evil, injury, calamity	mÁra	Killing, slaughter, slaying, an obstacle, hindrance, opposition, the god of love; death	มาร (ma:n)	Ogre, enemy, a person who is an obstacle to making merit
sengsaara	Hazard, peril, difficulty, trouble, affliction, suffering, misery, torment, torture, pain	saḥsÁra	The misery of the mundane world, course, passing, mundane existence, transmigration	สังสาร (sǎ:n)	Having compassion, Being merciful
asaa	Hope, trust	ÁḌÁ	Hope, expectation	อาสา (ʔa:-sǎ:)	Offering oneself to do some thing

Examples of Malay and Thai words of Sanskrit origin, which function as shared loanwords, have lost the original meanings of the three Sanskrit words *mÁra*, *saḥsÁra* and *ÁḌÁ*. Instead, new meanings have been coined and are now employed in place of the originals.

As a result of a comparative study examining three types of semantic change; widening, narrowing, and transferring in Malay and Thai loanwords of Sanskrit origin, it was found that among the 50 Malay words sampled in this research, the majority (24 words) exhibited semantic widening. This was followed by 22 words demonstrating semantic narrowing, and only 4 words showing semantic transferring. The figure below illustrates the semantic changes observed in the 50 Malay and Thai words of Sanskrit origin.

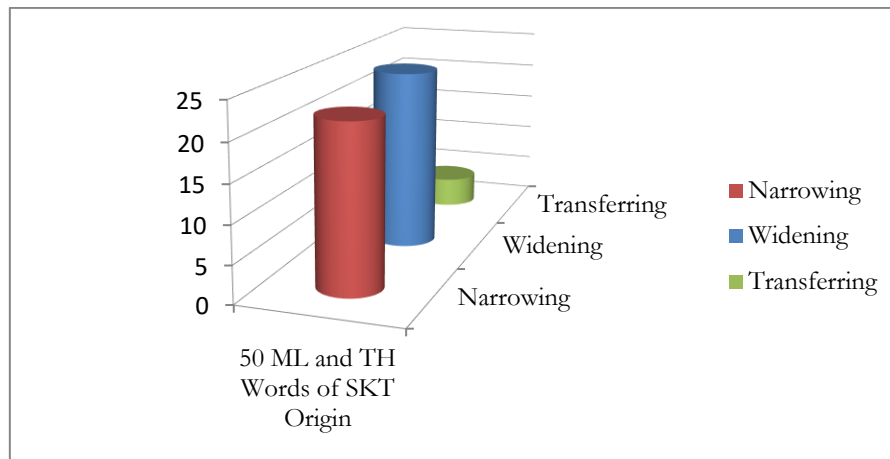


Figure 2. Results of Semantic Changes of 50 Malay and Thai Words of Sanskrit Origin

Using Crossword Puzzles to Learn Malay Words of Sanskrit Origin in Thai

Regarding the use of crossword puzzle games to facilitate the learning of 50 Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which are shared loanwords in the Thai language, crossword puzzles were employed to assist lecturers in creating interactive classroom activities. Simultaneously, this approach helped students engage with the content more effectively while enjoying the learning process. Rahayu et al. (2021) outlined the following steps for learning Malay words of Sanskrit origin—also loanwords in the Thai language—through the use of crossword puzzles:

TABLE 5
STEPS OF IMPLEMENTING THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE GAME

Steps	Description
Step 1	Write the keyword (clue) terminology related to the assigned subject matter.
Step 2	Create boxes to accommodate the length of each answer, whether long or short.
Step 3	Formulate questions that correspond to the keywords.
Step 4	Distribute crossword puzzle sheets to the students.
Step 5	Set a time limit for completing the activity.
Step 6	Assess students both individually and in groups.

As shown in the table above, six preparatory steps are necessary prior to implementing the crossword puzzle game for teaching Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which are shared loanwords in Thai, within vocabulary instruction.

Effectiveness of Learning Through the Crossword Puzzle Game

The effectiveness of learning 50 Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which are shared loanwords in the Thai language, through the use of the crossword puzzle game is illustrated and discussed in Figure 3.

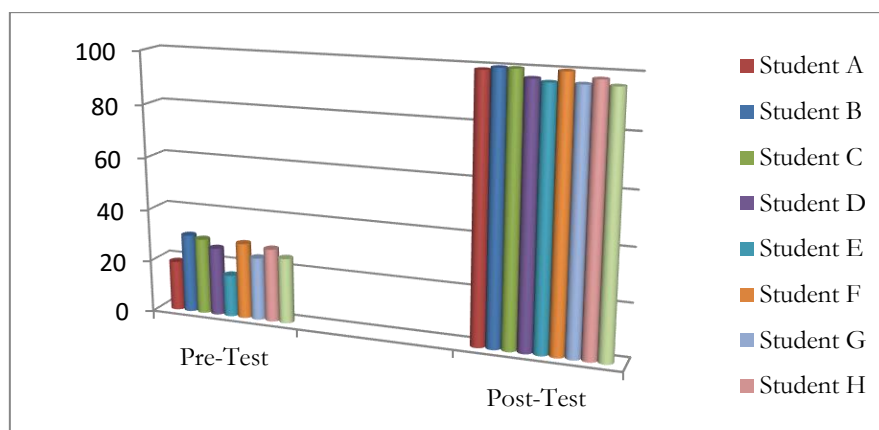


Figure 3. Effectiveness of Learning After Pre-Test and Post-Test

Figure 3, as presented above, illustrates the effectiveness of learning Malay words of Sanskrit origin shared as loanwords in the Thai language through the use of a crossword puzzle game. The figure provides both pre-test and post-test scores to facilitate a comparative analysis. Subsequently, statistical analysis was conducted, and the results were categorized into five performance levels: “Very Good” (90–100), “Good” (70–80), “Acceptable” (50–60), “Low” (30–40), and “Very Low” (0–20). The extent of the differences between students’ performance in the pre-test and post-test was then analyzed and interpreted as follows:

TABLE 6
DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Student	Pre-test	Post-test	Development Summary	Achievement Level
A	Prior to engaging with the crossword puzzle game designed to teach Malay vocabulary of Sanskrit origin that also exists as shared loanwords in the Thai language, Student A demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding of the target vocabulary, correctly identifying only 19% of the words in the pre-test.	In the post-test, Student A demonstrated a strong understanding of the vocabulary, accurately identifying 99% of the target words.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student A successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good
B	Before engaging with the crossword puzzle game designed to teach Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which are shared loanwords in the Thai language, Student B achieved a score of only 30% on the pre-test.	In the post-test, Student B demonstrated complete mastery of the vocabulary, accurately identifying 100% of the target words.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student B successfully achieved the expected learning standard.	Very Good
C	Before engaging with the crossword puzzle game focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin—shared loanwords in the Thai language—Student C was able to correctly identify only 29% of the words in the pre-test.	In the post-test, Student C demonstrated a clear understanding of the vocabulary and achieved a perfect score of 100%.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student C successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good
D	Before engaging with the crossword puzzle game focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin—shared loanwords in the Thai language—Student D demonstrated a very limited understanding of the vocabulary, correctly identifying only 26% of the words in the pre-test.	In the post-test, Student D demonstrated a solid understanding of the vocabulary, correctly identifying 97% of the words.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student D successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good
E	Before engaging with the crossword puzzle game focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin—shared loanwords in the Thai language—Student E possessed very limited knowledge, achieving a score of only 16% on the pre-test.	However, in the post-test, Student E demonstrated a strong understanding of the vocabulary, achieving a score of 96%.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student E successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good
F	Before engaging with the crossword puzzle game focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin—shared loanwords in the Thai language—Student F demonstrated limited understanding, correctly identifying only 29% of the words in the pre-test.	However, Student F demonstrated clear proficiency, correctly identifying 100% of the words in the post-test.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student F successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good
G	Before engaging in the crossword puzzle game focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which are shared loanwords in the Thai language, Student G exhibited very limited understanding and scored only 24% on the pre-test.	In the post-test, Student G demonstrated a strong understanding of Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which also function as loanwords in the Thai language, achieving a score of 96%.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student G successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good
H	Before engaging with the crossword puzzle game focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin—shared loanwords in the Thai language—Student H demonstrated limited understanding, correctly identifying only 28% of the words in the pre-test.	However, Student H demonstrated strong proficiency, correctly identifying 98% of the words in the post-test.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student H successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good
I	Before engaging with the crossword puzzle game focused on Malay words of Sanskrit origin—shared loanwords in the Thai language—Student I demonstrated very limited understanding, obtaining a score of only 25% on the pre-test.	In the post-test, Student I demonstrated a solid understanding of Malay words of Sanskrit origin, which also serve as loanwords in the Thai language, achieving a score of 96%.	Upon completion of both assessments, Student I successfully met the expected learning standard.	Very Good

Therefore, the use of the crossword puzzle game in this study appears to have served as a highly effective supplementary tool, significantly enhancing student learning outcomes. Improved performance in acquiring Malay words of Sanskrit origin shared as loanwords in the Thai language was clearly observed following the implementation of the crossword puzzle game in the learning process.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of the research findings yields several key insights. Although Malay and Sanskrit originate from distinct language families—Malay from the Austronesian family and Sanskrit from the Indo-European family—historical contact facilitated the adoption of numerous Sanskrit-derived words into the Malay lexicon. This linguistic influence can be traced back to the early centuries of the Common Era, when Sanskrit inscriptions began to emerge across Southeast Asia. As Pollock (1996) notes, Sanskrit played a pivotal cultural and linguistic role in the Malay Peninsula and surrounding regions between approximately CE 300 and 1300.

This assertion supports the earlier claim by Samad Ahmad (1974), who noted that people from the Indian subcontinent had interacted with the Malay population for over 2,000 years. As Sanskrit spread, it gained prominence as a liturgical language of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. It was introduced as a written language in Southeast Asia, facilitating the assimilation of Sanskrit vocabulary into local languages, including Malay (Jefbeck, 2023).

Present-day Malay retains many Sanskrit-origin words such as *Dewa* (god), *Bahasa* (language), *Indera* (god Indra), *Guna* (virtue), and *Setia* (loyalty). Interestingly, these words are also found in the Thai language as shared loanwords, albeit with potential phonological and semantic modifications due to the distinct linguistic systems of Malay and Thai.

The semantic changes observed in these Sanskrit-derived Malay and Thai words include semantic widening, narrowing, and shifting (transference). Among these, semantic widening was most frequently encountered, followed by narrowing and transference. As noted by Pimpuang and Yuttapongtada (2023) while the core religious concepts conveyed by these Sanskrit terms remained relatively stable, their meanings evolved when used in secular contexts, resulting in various types of semantic shifts across different cultures and societies.

In terms of pedagogical implications, the integration of a creative digital tool the crossword puzzle game proved highly effective in enhancing vocabulary learning. This innovative approach not only supported students' comprehension but also increased their motivation and enjoyment. As Rahayu and Srirahayu (2019) emphasize that crossword puzzle games are effective tools for improving vocabulary mastery. In this study, the game served not only to reinforce the learning of Sanskrit-origin Malay words but also to foster an engaging and dynamic classroom environment.

These findings align with the observations of Pimpuang et al. (2023), who advocated for inno-creative approaches in teaching Thai to students in the digital era. The use of crossword puzzle games in this study significantly improved learning outcomes. Pre-test results indicated limited prior knowledge, while post-test results showed clear improvements in understanding, vocabulary acquisition, and achievement of learning standards.

Furthermore, the increased student interest and enjoyment suggest that such game-based strategies enhance both cognitive and affective aspects of learning. This is consistent with the findings of Rahayu et al. (2021), who noted that crossword puzzle games create an engaging classroom atmosphere, promote vocabulary development, and sustain students' attention.

Finally, the broader implications of this research suggest a shift from rote memorization to more interactive and creative learning strategies. Traditional methods of memorizing Sanskrit-origin Malay and Thai words were often ineffective. However, the use of the crossword puzzle game significantly improved learning outcomes and student satisfaction. Therefore, this approach could be extended to other languages with Sanskrit influence, such as Indonesian, to support vocabulary acquisition and foster meaningful learning experiences.

REFERENCES

- [1] Andaya, B. W., & Andaya, L. Y. (1982). *A history of Malaysia*. St. Martin's Press.
- [2] Apte, V. S. (2010). *The practical Sanskrit-English dictionary*. Motilal Banarsidass.
- [3] Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives* (handbook: The cognitive domain). David McKay.
- [4] Boonlue, S. (2018). *Gamification in education*. <http://qa.hcu.ac.th/km/Fileuploads/Gamification-2561.pdf>/ Retrieved July 11, 2025.
- [5] Bronkhorst, J. (2011). "The spread of Sanskrit in Southeast Asia." In Manguin, Pierre-Yves, Mani, A., & Wade, Geoff (Eds.), *Early interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on cross-cultural exchange* (pp. 263–275). Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- [6] Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Prentice Hall.
- [7] Dashela, T., Supardi, I., & Wardah. (2017). Improving students' vocabulary in irregular and regular verbs by using Crossword Puzzle. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa*, 6(5), 1-10.
- [8] Franklin, S., Peat, M., & Lewis, A. (2003). Nontraditional interventions to stimulate discussion: The use of games and puzzles. *Journal of Biological Education*, 37(2), 79–84.
- [9] Harwika. (2018). *Using Wordwallmedia to improve the students' vocabulary mastery at the seventh grade of SMPN 4 Marioriawa Kab, Soppeng* [Master's thesis]. TarbiyahFaculty State Islamic Institute.

- [10] Jefbeck, E. (2023). *Malay words from Sanskrit: A linguistic analysis with 20+ vocabulary*. <https://ling-app.com/ms/malay-words-from-sanskrit/> Retrieved April 8, 2025.
- [11] Jorge, F. F. (2015). Using gamification to enhance second language learning. *Digital Education Review*, 27(21), 32-54.
- [12] Khanithanan. W. (1984). *Historical linguistics: Evolution of Thai and English*. Thammasat University Press.
- [13] Lestari, N., & Yulia, Y. (2018). The use of Crossword Puzzle to improve vocabulary mastery of the fifth grade students of SD N GOLO. *Journal of English Language and Language Teaching*, 2(2), 71-79.
- [14] Makchaeng, S. (1982). *Pali-Sanskrit in Thai language*. Department of Thai Language, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thonburi College of Teachers.
- [15] Matminchainara, P. (n.d.). *Malay words in Thai*. Department of Thai Language and Oriental Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prince of Songkla University.
- [16] Monier-Williams. (1999). *A dictionary of English and Sanskrit*. Motilal Banarsidass.
- [17] Pimpuang, K. (2008). *Pali-Sanskrit loanwords*. Bangkok: Department of Thai Language, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University.
- [18] Pimpuang, K. (2016). Fundamental sentence structure of Pali and English: A comparison for translating into Thai language. *Journal of International Studies*, 6(2), 46-66.
- [19] Pimpuang, K., Yuttapongtada, M., & Sunghor, N. (2023). Thai conversation learning and teaching for foreigners based on Thai culture context in the CTLF program at Kasetsart University: Evolution and inno-creative approach. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(10), 2536-2543.
- [20] Pimpuang, K., & Yuttapongtada, M. (2023). Effectiveness of learning English words of Sanskrit origin as loanwords in Thai through WordWall Gamification. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 16(2), 451-468.
- [21] Pollock, S. (1996). 'The Sanskrit cosmopolis, 300-1300: Transculturation, vernacularization, and the question of ideology'. In Jan E.M. Houben (Ed.), *Ideology and status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the history of the Sanskrit language* (Brill's Indological Library, 13, pp. 197-247). Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- [22] Rahayu, A. C., Yosephin, M., & Sophia, T. C. (2021). The use of Crossword Puzzle in teaching English vocabulary. *Proceeding of English Teaching, Literature and Linguistics (Eternal) Conference*, 1(1), 271-283.
- [23] Rahayu, Y. S., & Srirahayu, A. (2019). *The effectiveness of crossword puzzles game towards improving students' vocabulary mastery* [Unpublished pre-experimental study]. SMP Muara Madani, Indonesia.
- [24] Royal Institute. (2013). *Dictionary of the royal institute B.E.2554* (2nd ed.). Royal Institute.
- [25] Samad Ahamad, A. (1974). *Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu 1*. Dean Bahasa Dan Pustaka, Kementerian Delajaran Malaysia.
- [26] Sarkar, H. B. (1985). *Cultural relations between India and Southeast Asian countries*. Motilal Banarsidass.
- [27] Somaiya Centre for Buddhist Studies. (2005). *Sanskrit words in South-East Asian languages* (Satyavrat Sastri, Kalpakam Sankaranarayanan, Parineeta Deshpande, Eds.). Somaiya Publications.
- [28] Thongprasert, C. (1977). Karn nam kam balee leh sanskrit ma chai nai pasa Thai [Application of Pali and Sanskrit in the Thai Language]. *Royal Institute*, 3(2), 37-40.
- [29] Weisskirch, R. S. (2006). An analysis of instructor-created Crossword Puzzles for student Review. *College Teaching*, 54(1), 198-201.
- [30] Werbach, K., & Hunter, D. (2012). *For the win: How game thinking can revolutionize your business*. Wharton Digital Press.



Kowit Pimpuang was born in Buriram (Thailand) in 1976. He is an Associate Professor of the Department of Thai Language, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University Bangkok (Thailand) from 2007 to the present. He earned his Ph.D. in Sanskrit (Sanskrit-language, philosophy and literature) from the University of Pune (India) in 2004. He is an expert in teaching Thai for international students from 2010 to the present. His 66 academic articles were published in national and international journals. Associate Professor Dr. Kowit Pimpuang won the Best Presentation Award in ICHLSS Brisbane, Australia.

Medical Students' Perceptions of the Value of Communication Skills and Their Attitudes Towards Learning Soft Skills

Habibullah Pathan

Faculty of Language Studies, Sohar University, Sultanate of Oman;
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russia

Muhammad Arif Soomro*

Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology (QUEST), Nawabshah-Sindh, Pakistan;
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russia

Oksana Ivanovna Aleksandrova

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russia

Shazia Ayyaz

Modern Languages Department, Al Zahra College for Women, Muscat, Oman

Abstract—Effective communication skills are essential for clinical practice; medical students' attitudes toward physician-patient communication are a real concern among the medical community. The present study aims to investigate the positive and negative attitudes of RUDN University medical students toward learning communication skills and to compare our findings with those from other countries. We adopted the Communication Skills Attitudes Scale (CSAS) as the primary research instrument due to its widespread use, validity, and reliability. First- and second-year medical students ($n = 300$) completed an online 26-item questionnaire, and all responses were analyzed using SPSS v. 20. Our study findings demonstrate that medical students consider learning communication skills essential for their professional clinical practices and for fostering a healthy environment between doctors and patients. We found that students had significantly more positive attitudes towards learning communication skills. Furthermore, statistically significant differences were found between the positive attitude scale and the negative attitude scale between male and female students. Overall, the findings of principal component analysis suggest the differences in eight components out of twenty-six items in many aspects from those of earlier research studies. The study concludes that attitudes towards communication skills are very important in guiding the communication skills of medical students and help them more broadly in learning communication skills.

Index Terms—communication skills, CSAS, learning needs and attitudes, medical students

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication skills (CS) are essential to the doctor and patient relationship. Learning about attitudes toward communication skills is of interest to the medical community, curriculum developers, and policy advisors (Meryn, 1998). Better communication skills develop, maintain, and sustain relationships and are adapted to improve patient health outcomes, such as satisfaction, better self-care, and adherence (Street et al., 2009).

Communication skills include face-to-face interpersonal communication, oral presentations, group communication, speaker-audience communication, telephonic communication, conferences and seminars, speeches, interviews, group discussions, meetings, and negotiation skills. The choice depends on the need and purpose of the communication. Soft skills, including interpersonal and socio-emotional skills, are in high demand in the job market. These skills not only reflect personal skills but are also based on concepts such as social responsibility, creativity, ethics, and emotional intelligence (Villán-Vallejo et al., 2022, p. 485). Soft skills are skills related to political, personal, and interpersonal relationships in a work environment or personal life, and each job requires different skills (Acharya et al., 2023).

Researchers have focused on medical students' attitudes toward communication learning (Anvik et al., 2007; Rees et al., 2002; to name a few). Investigating attitudes of recently admitted undergraduate medical students toward communication skill learning, the study finds a positive learning attitude (Timilsina et al., 2019). It has been observed that many graduates remain unemployed even though their academic performance is excellent. The main reason for these graduates has been identified as the lack of effective communication skills. This is because the demand of organizations in recruiting manpower has changed. Consequently, graduates need to possess "soft skills", such as the ability to socialize, communicate, and exchange ideas to support their "hard skills" (New Straits Times, 2007).

Their study indicates that facilitation and importance within the medical context were the two main attitudinal aspects to improve CS learning. Interpersonal communication skills in medical consultations significantly affect doctor and patient relations and can improve international clinical placement (Bellier et al., 2022). Attitudes toward learning communication skills determine how medical students will invest in acquiring these skills and how they will be used in caring for individual patients (Anvik et al., 2008). To address this research gap in knowledge, the purpose of our study was to investigate how important communication skills are perceived by RUDN University medical students and to assess their positive attitude scale (PAS) and negative attitude scale (NAS) toward learning communication skills.

II. NEED AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Communication skills (CS) or soft skills (SKs) are important across various professional career development, particularly in the medical fraternity. Soft skills (SKs) are defined as the group of skills acquired by a person that facilitate the optimization of their own performance. One of the most important skills in medicine is communication (Mohamad-Isa et al., 2021). The importance of communication skills is highlighted by WHO for doctors as the quality of care, promoting a healthy lifestyle, adapting to the use of new technologies, reconciliation of individuals and community, and the ability to work in a team (Cleland et al., 2005). English language is needed among learners for professionalization and developing positivity towards communication skills (Khokhar et al., 2021).

The Ministry of Health (Minzdrav) of the Russian Federation also emphasizes that medical students who finish their undergraduate studies shall obtain effective communication skills. In this era of globalization, international project leadership, cultural communication, and cooperation are constantly increasing. This indicates that graduates must be well-versed in effective communication skills. Kuzminov et al. (2019) found that the skill sets of employable human capital include both general skills and specific skills. They described that specific skills are developed through years of focused education and work experience in a specific field. It is worth mentioning here that general skills are divided into two categories: soft skills and hard skills. Zhao and Kularatne (2020) showed that soft skills are cognitive and interpersonal in nature, which ensures successful social integration in the workplace. In contrast, hard skills involve IQ and cognitive performance to technically control various processes and tools. Therefore, lesser or ineffective communicative skills can create problems and can lead to poor delivery of information, failure to understand the doctor-patient perspective, etc. This can be avoided by acquiring communication effectively (Hobgood et al., 2005).

It has been observed that many graduates remain unemployed even though their academic performance is excellent. The main reason for these graduates has been identified as the lack of effective communication skills. This is because the demand of organizations in recruiting manpower has changed. Consequently, graduates need to possess "soft skills", such as the ability to socialize, communicate, and exchange ideas to support their "hard skills" (New Straits Times, 2007). Morreale et al. (2000) found that oral communication skills make people socialized and participants in developing interpersonal relationships. Ahn et al. (2009) adapted CSAS into Korean to explain the positive and negative aspects of Korean medical students towards CS learning. The need of integrating professional, technological and digital learning is essential for professional development (Pathan et al., 2024).

In the field of health sciences, the need to work on these types of competencies is particularly apparent, as their many benefits are highlighted in the clinical context of patient care (Sancho-Cantus et al., 2023). Changing patient expectations requires an update in thinking about communication skills assessment in health professions education. This consensus statement draws on existing literature, expert opinion, and emerging challenges to establishing communication skills assessment in the contemporary health professions education context (Gilligan et al., 2024). Schmidt (2023) found that health professionals, particularly interns, enjoyed the informal interaction with faculty, staff, and other program practitioners. They appreciated the opportunity to learn soft skills such as interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and leadership.

Factors affecting communication skills and competence are: communication apprehension is a person's degree of fear or anxiety related to either anticipated or real communication with another person or persons. Communication apprehension is present during academic and non-academic settings that affect communication skills. Communication apprehension has been explored to improve the oral communication skills of undergrads because it badly affects students' educational success (McCroskey et al., 1989). Communication apprehension is directly related to the oral communication performance of students, and it is the most quoted barrier in a variety of communication studies. Communication anxiety, social anxiety, stage fright, performance anxiety, unwillingness to communicate, poor confidence, shyness, confusion, reticence, fear, stress, low self-esteem, nervousness, and audience sensitivity are all directly related to communication apprehension of undergraduates (Soomro et al., 2019).

III. DATA AND METHODS

A. Participants and Procedures

All participants were medical students of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russia. The data were collected from March to May 2024. Moreover, we asked for background data such as age, gender, year of study, and year of studying the communication skills subject/course. The number of responses was based on a self-reported online questionnaire survey created in Google Forms, of which we received first- and second-year students

(n=300) 26-item online questionnaire and all responses. Students were at the bachelor's level from the medical faculty. The overall response rate was higher among female (75.3%) than male (24.7%) students (see details in Table 1).

B. Ethical Considerations

The data collection procedure of the study was in line with research ethics, and all participants remained anonymous. Moreover, the participation was voluntary, and digital informed consent was obtained. However, our study does not involve any experimentation and did not ask for any sensitive information; the ethical approval from the scientific research committee of RUDN University was not required according to the rules.

C. Instrument and Measures

The Communication Skills Attitude Scale (CSAS) was developed by Rees et al. (2002) to determine medical students' attitudes towards learning communication skills. The CSAS consists of 26 items/statements: Subscale-I Positive Attitude Scale (PAS) 13 items (1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 23 and 25) for example, learning communication skills will increase or improve my ability to communicate with the patient – item 10.

While subscale II 13 items (2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, and 26) Negative Attitude Scale (NAS), e.g., "I don't see the point in learning communication skills" – paragraph 2, to learn communication skills. The CSAS consisted of a five-point Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. However, to achieve similarity in positive and negative item scores, NAS item scores were reverse-coded with the 13 negative items.

We present both PAS and NAS statistics to describe possible score variance in attitudes toward communication skills. We distributed both the translated (Russian) version of CSAS and the English version. However, the Russian translated version, after data collection, was back-translated into English for data analysis. The reason for using CSAS became certain due to its high reliability and validity. The instrument is widely adopted and adapted to fit the study contexts in several research studies (Fazel & Aghamolaei, 2011; Anvik et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2019; among many others).

D. Statistical Analyses

We analyzed the data by performing the following statistical tests: reliability test, Cronbach's α coefficient for internal consistency of SCAS, descriptive statistics of PAS and NAS, Principal Components Analysis (PCA), and t-test of PAS and NAS among male and female students.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Participants' Features

The sociodemographic features of the participants' age were observed as 96.6% between 18 and 25 years, and the male students were 24.7% and the ratio of female respondents increased to 75.3%. The sample size is limited and cannot be representative of the broader population of Russian medical students. We asked participants to indicate what year they studied the communication skills course; they responded that 67.4% were in the first year, and 32.6% in the second year. However, the data collected from respondents ranged from the highest number of first-year (51.7%) to fifth-year (2.3%) students. Table 1 reports the sociodemographic features of 300 respondents who filled out the online questionnaire, SCAS of this study. However, seven questionnaires were dropped due to incomplete responses.

TABLE 1
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Characteristics		Total (n = 300) N (100%)	Total
Age (years)	18-21	76.4	100%
	22-25	20.2	
	26-28	2.3	
	29-31	1.1	
Gender	Female	75.3	100%
	Male	24.7	
Year of studying communication skills	1 st	67.4	100%
	2 nd	32.6	
Current year of studies	1 st	51.7	100%
	2 nd	21.3	
	3 rd	20.2	
	4 th	4.5	
	5 th	2.3	
	6 th	0	

B. Communication Skills Attitudes Scale (SCAS)

The internal consistency of the scale was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficients (see Table 2). The scale items showed a .664 reliability of the internal consistency of the items. Additionally, we performed reverse coding of the scores on negative statements.

TABLE 2
RELIABILITY TEST

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.664	26

C. Scores of Students' Attitudes Towards Learning Communication Skills

The descriptive statistics of the subscale-I positive attitudes scale (PAS) toward learning communication skills comprised 13 items (1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 23, and 25). For subscale-I score, which demonstrates significant differences in positive items like 'to be a good doctor I must have good communication skills', the mean was 4.27 with .853 standard deviations. The positive items' weightings ranged from 4.10 (item 10) to 3.20 (item 17). In addition, all positive items showed minimum standard error ranging from .044 (item 23) to .058 (item 25).

Of the 26 items, the subscale-II negative attitudes scale (NAS) includes (2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, and 26) items that show negative attitudes towards communication skills learning. For subscale-II score indicates considerable differences of negative items, e.g., 'I can't see the point in learning communication skills', the mean was 3.99 with .993 standard deviations. The positive items' weightings ranged from 3.73 (item 19) to 2.41 (item 18). Moreover, all negative statements indicate minimum standard error ranging between .046 (item 22) and .057 (item 2). Statistically, there were significant differences between the mean of PAS, which was higher at 4.27, and the lowest NAS was 2.41 for learning communication skills (see details in Table 3).

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SUBSCALE-I PAS AND SUBSCALE-II NAS ITEMS

No.	Subscale-I 13-items PAS	Mean	SE*	SD**
1.	Positive item 1	4.27	.049	.853
2.	Positive item 4	3.87	.053	.918
3.	Positive item 5	4.00	.053	.913
4.	Positive item 7	3.94	.045	.771
5.	Positive item 9	4.04	.046	.800
6.	Positive item 10	4.10	.046	.793
7.	Positive item 12	3.56	.050	.865
8.	Positive item 14	3.90	.048	.828
9.	Positive item 16	3.78	.049	.844
10	Positive item 17	3.20	.048	.830
11	Positive item 21	3.68	.050	.865
12	Positive item 23	3.56	.044	.754
13	Positive item 25	3.76	.058	1.00
	Subscale-II 13-items NAS***			
1.	Negative item 2	3.99	.057	.993
2.	Negative item 3	3.05	.054	.931
3.	Negative item 6	3.22	.054	.932
4.	Negative item 8	3.08	.054	.943
5.	Negative item 11	2.89	.049	.847
6.	Negative item 13	2.82	.048	.866
7.	Negative item 15	2.96	.049	.849
8.	Negative item 18	2.41	.050	.866
9.	Negative item 19	3.73	.057	.980
10	Negative item 20	2.98	.053	.920
11	Negative item 22	2.78	.046	.801
12	Negative item 24	3.27	.055	.955
13	Negative item 26	3.49	.055	.952

* SE= Standard Error ** SD= Standard Deviation *** NAS items scores were reversed and coded

D. Factor Structure

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.720, and Bartlett's test of sphericity showed significance <0.000, both indicating that principal component analysis (PCA) was appropriate.

Of the 26 questionnaire items, principal components analysis using the varimax rotation method with Kaiser normalization yielded eight factors with raw eigenvalues >1, explaining 69.4% of the variance (Table 4). Table 4 and the graph (Figure 1) show that the CSAS mostly tests one factor that explains 26.3% of the variance. Furthermore, the scree plot showed equality from factor 7 onwards. Thus, we included two additional factors that explained 9.7% and 8.3% of the variance, respectively.

TABLE 4
PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS BETWEEN FACTORS WITH EIGENVALUES GREATER THAN 1

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.1	26.355	26.355	3.572	13.229	13.229
2*	2.6	9.701	36.057	3.563	13.198	26.427
3*	2.2	8.391	44.448	2.570	9.520	35.947
4	1.8	6.916	51.364	2.134	7.904	43.851
5	1.4	5.405	56.769	2.018	7.473	51.324
6*	1.3	4.990	61.758	1.838	6.807	58.131
7	1.0	3.875	65.633	1.641	6.078	64.209
8*	1.0	3.829	69.462	1.418	5.253	69.462

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation, 8 components extracted out of 26

* Items are negative, and the score has been reversed and coded

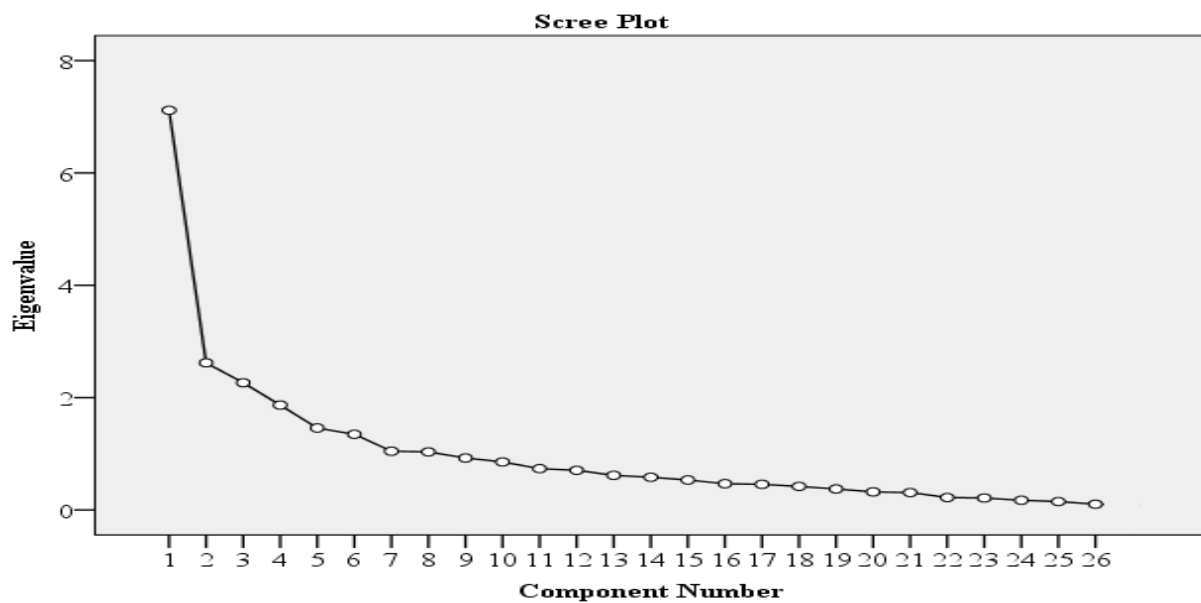


Figure 1. Scree Plot With Eigenvalues for Each of the 26 Components

E. Attitudes of Different Genders Toward Learning Communication Skills

The findings on the differences between genders (both male and female) towards learning communication skills were significant. The mean score for subscale-I PAS among female students was 62.5 (SD=6.4 and SE=1.29402), and for male students, the mean score was 53.8 (SD=4.9 and SE=0.42987). For subscale-II NAS, males' mean score was 38.7 (SD=2.3 and SE=0.62379), and for females, 24.8 (SD=4.3 and SE=1.38795). Thus, the female students had more positive attitudes in comparison to males on subscale I. Moreover, a similar tendency was observed in that female students had significantly less negative attitudes in contrast to male students towards learning communication skills on subscale-II (Table 5).

TABLE 5
COMPARISON OF ATTITUDES USING T-TEST IN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS TOWARDS LEARNING CS

Subscales	Male (n=74)			Female (n=226)			t	P
	Mean	SD	SE	Mean	SD	SE		
PAS	53.8	4.9	0.42987	62.5	6.4	1.29402	-7.5	0.00*
NAS	38.7	2.6	0.62379	24.8	4.3	1.38795	5.3	0.01*

* $P < 0.05$

V. DISCUSSION

Our study provides significant evidence of undergraduate students' characteristics that are possibly determinants of attitudes toward learning communication skills. Moreover, students' sociodemographic characteristics, for instance, the year of studying the course communication skills, were divided into two years; some students studied in their first year, and others in their second year. However, their current year of studying was found to be affecting the importance and attitudes towards learning communication skills. Similarly, other studies support our study findings that medical students prove that communicative abilities are determined by factors such as professional experience, empathic tendency, and the intensity of agreement (Iwanow et al., 2021).

All Subscale-I variables were positive statements about learning communication skills, indicating that Subscale-I demonstrated medical students' positive attitudes toward communication skills. Furthermore, the second subscale suggests negative statements about learning communication skills (items 2, 6, etc.). The results of our study are consistent with similar studies, including those by Rhee et al. (2002) and Cleland et al. (2005) who analyzed the PAS of female students with significantly higher grades and lower mean NAS scores than male students compared to male students. Male and female students have positive attitudes towards learning communication skills. According to Ruiz-Moral et al. (2021), there was a significant decrease in positive attitudes and a significant increase in negative attitudes among medical students regarding communication skills. Notably, female students exhibited more positive attitudes toward communication skills than male students. Men tend to overestimate their communication skills, which could be the cause of this trend (Rees & Sheard, 2002). Data analysis on medical undergraduates shows that attitudes toward developing communication skills are mixed for men and women. Overall, female students outperformed male students in our study in terms of positivity.

Previous research studies show conflicting findings regarding whether younger medical students have better learning attitudes compared to older students (Rees et al., 2002; Rees & Shread, 2002). However, our findings did not find that age was a factor influencing the importance of learning communication skills in situations. The students in our study considered it important, without significant age differences. Although the gender ratio of PAS and NAS students is the greatest predictor of positive attitudes towards communication skills in dental students in Malaysia (Noor et al., 2011), a similar trend was also observed in our study. In contrast, several studies in Nepal (Timilsina et al., 2019), Sri Lanka (Marambe et al., 2012), and India (Varma et al., 2018) did not find statistically significant differences between genders in learning attitudes towards communication skills.

Therefore, it may be that the academic environment and cultural influences are such that female students in our study tended to be more positive and willing to take leadership roles in doctor-patient communication. Moreover, the workshop participants reported learning more about positive strategies for communicating with team members, feeling more comfortable working with other professionals to encourage positive team dynamics, and feeling better about their differences. Professionals were more willing to encourage team leadership (Shrivastava et al., 2022).

VI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the trends and significance of communication skills learning among medical undergraduates. Our results confirm the hypothesis that medical students have both positive and negative attitudes and believe that learning communication skills is important. The gender of the student is a significant factor in placement determination. According to the findings of our study, female students are more enthusiastic about acquiring communication skills than male students. Nonetheless, there were not many gender differences when it came to the importance of communication skills, as both thought they were crucial for a better understanding of the relationship and for clinical practice between doctors and patients. Consequently, these results can be used as compelling evidence to emphasize the value of communication skills education and alter the way that medical students approach learning about soft skills.

The study has some limitations: the sample size is small; therefore, the generalization of the findings may be difficult. Students were selected from only one university, the CSAS used statistical analyses, and interviews of the participants can increase the validity of quantitative findings. Situational, cognitive, and affective factors were excluded when interpreting the findings.

Key practical points	
▪ Medical university students' attitudes towards learning communication skills seem to differ significantly, and they consider it important for doctor-patient interaction and relations. ▪ Female students appear to be more positive towards learning communication skills; hence, gender is a significant variable affecting the attitudes. ▪ The findings of our study corroborate with previous studies that the attitudes of medical students were established based on different sociodemographic characteristics. ▪ Further research is important to determine the effects of changing different aspects of medical students' attitudes toward learning communication skills.	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication has been supported by RUDN University Scientific Project Grant System Project No. 050740-2-000, "English Teachers' Motivation for Professionalization in Internationally Oriented Universities", Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), 6, 117198, Russian Federation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Acharya, S., Preda, M. B., Papatheodorou, I. et al. (2023). The science behind soft skills: Do's and Don'ts for early career researchers and beyond. A review paper from the EU-CardioRNA COST Action CA17129. *Open Research Europe*, 3:55. <https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.15746.2>

- [2] Ahn, S., Yi, Y. H., & Ahn, D. S. (2009). Developing a Korean communication skills attitude scale: comparing attitudes between Korea and the West. *Medical Education*, 43(3), 246–253. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2008.03271.x>
- [3] Anvik, T., Gude, T., Grimstad, H., Baerheim, A., Fasmer, O. B., Hjortdahl, P., Holen, A., Risberg, T., & Vaglum, P. (2007). Assessing medical students' attitudes towards learning communication skills--which components of attitudes do we measure? *BMC Medical Education*, 7(4), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6920-7-4>
- [4] Anvik, T., Grimstad, H., Baerheim, A., Bernt Fasmer, O., Gude, T., Hjortdahl, P., Holen, A., Risberg, T., & Vaglum, P. (2008). Medical students' cognitive and affective attitudes towards learning and using communication skills--a nationwide cross-sectional study. *Medical Teacher*, 30(3), 272–279. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01421590701784356>
- [5] Bellier, A., Chaffanjon, P., Morand, P., Palombi, O., Francois, P., & Labarère, J. (2022). Student characteristics associated with interpersonal skills in medical consultations. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 338. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03412-9>
- [6] Cleland, J., Foster, K., & Moffat, M. (2005). Undergraduate students' attitudes to communication skills learning differ depending on year of study and gender. *Medical Teacher*, 27(3), 246–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01421590400029541>
- [7] Fazel, I., & Aghamolaei, T. (2011). Attitudes toward learning communication skills among medical students of a university in Iran. *Acta medica Iranica*, 49(9), 625–629.
- [8] Gilligan, C., Bujnowska-Fedak, M. M., Essers, G., Frerichs, W., Brinke, D. J.-T., Junod Perron, N., & Rosenbaum, M. (2024). Assessment of communication skills in health professions education; Ottawa 2024 consensus statement. *Medical Teacher*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2024.2413021>
- [9] Iwanow, L., Jaworski, M., Gotlib, J., & Panczyk, M. (2021). A Model of Factors Determining Nurses' Attitudes towards Learning Communicative Competences. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(4), 1544, 2-15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18041544>
- [10] Khokhar, S., Pathan, H., Jhatial, A. A., Taj, S., & Mushtaq, F. (2021). Customization and validation of a scale measuring second language teachers' motivation for professionalization. *TESOL International Journal*, 16(1), 139–156.
- [11] Kuzminov, Y., Sorokin, P., & Froumin, I. (2019). Generic and specific skills as components of human capital: new challenges for education theory and practice. *Foresight STI Gov.*, 13, 19–41. doi: 10.17323/2500-2597.2019.2.19.41
- [12] Marambe, K. N., Edussuriya, D. H., & Dayaratne, K. M. (2012). Attitudes of Sri Lankan medical students toward learning communication skills. *Education for Health (Abingdon, England)*, 25(3), 165–171. <https://doi.org/10.4103/1357-6283.109796>
- [13] Meryn, S. (1998). Improving doctor-patient communication. Not an option, but a necessity. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 316(7149), 1922. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.316.7149.1922>
- [14] Mohamad-Isa, M. Z., Mohamed-Yassin, M. S., Badlishah-Sham, S. F., Baharudin, N., & Ramli, A. S. (2021). Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Psychometric Properties of the Malay Version of the Communication Skills Attitude Scale (CSAS) among Medical Students in Malaysia. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(7), 3778, 2-15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073778>
- [15] Nor, N. A., Yusof, Z. Y., & Shahidan, M. N. (2011). University of Malaya dental students' attitudes towards communication skills learning: implications for dental education. *Journal of Dental Education*, 75(12), 1611–1619. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.00220337.2011.75.12.tb05222.x>
- [16] Pathan, H., Moskvitcheva, S. A., Khatoon, S., & Aleksandrova, O. I. (2024). The Relationship between Teachers' Motivation, Professional Development, and Mobile Technology Integration in Language Learning. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (IJIM)*, 18(09), 50–60. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v18i09.48865>
- [17] Rees, C., Sheard, C., & Davies, S. (2002). The development of a scale to measure medical students' attitudes towards communication skills learning: the Communication Skills Attitude Scale (CSAS). *Medical Education*, 36(2), 141–147. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01072.x>
- [18] Rees, C., & Sheard, C. (2002). The relationship between medical students' attitudes towards communication skills learning and their demographic and education-related characteristics. *Medical Education*, 36, 1017-1027. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01333.x>
- [19] Ruiz-Moral, R., Monge Martin, D., Garcia de Leonardo, C., Denizon, S., Cerro Pérez, A., & Caballero Martínez, F. (2021). Medical students' attitudes towards communication skills training: a longitudinal study with one cohort. *GMS Journal for Medical Education*, 38(6), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3205/zma001503>
- [20] Sancho-Cantus, D., Cubero-Plazas, L., Botella Navas, M., Castellano-Rioja, E., & Cañabate Ros, M. (2023). Importance of Soft Skills in Health Sciences Students and Their Repercussion after the COVID-19 Epidemic: Scoping Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(6), 4901. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20064901>
- [21] Schmidt, J. M., Porter, J. T., Rivera-Amil, V., & Appleyard, C. B. (2023). Promoting crucial team building, collaboration, and communication skills in graduate students through interactive retreats. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 47(4), 919-929. <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00125.2023>
- [22] Shrivastava, S., Martinez, J., Coletti, D. J., & Fornari, A. (2022). Interprofessional Leadership Development: Role of Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills Training. *MedEdPORTAL*, 18:11247. https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.11247
- [23] Soomro, M. A., Siming, I. A., Channa, M. A., Shah, S. H. R., Naeem, N., & Abbasi, M. A. (2019). An Analysis of English Oral Communication Apprehension and Anxiety of Engineering Undergraduates in Pakistan. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(2), 162-173. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n2p162>
- [24] Street, R. L., Jr, Makoul, G., Arora, N. K., & Epstein, R. M. (2009). How does communication heal? Pathways linking clinician-patient communication to health outcomes. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 74(3), 295–301. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2008.11.015>
- [25] Timilsina, S., Karki, S., & Singh, J. P. (2019). Attitudes of Recently Admitted Undergraduate Medical Students Towards Learning Communication-Skills: A Cross-Sectional Study from Chitwan Medical College. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 10, 963–969. <https://doi.org/10.2147/AMEP.S229951>
- [26] Varma, J., Prabhakaran, A., & Singh, S. (2018). Perceived need and attitudes towards communication skill training in recently admitted undergraduate medical students. *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, 3(3), 196–200. <https://doi.org/10.20529/IJME.2018.049>

- [27] Villán-Vallejo, A., Zitouni, A., García-Llamas, P. et al. (2022). Soft Skills and STEM Education: Vision of the European University EURECA-PRO. *Berg Huettenmaenn Monatsh*, 167, 485–488. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00501-022-01275-7>
- [28] Zhang, Y., Jiang, G., Sun, Y., Zhao, X., & Yu, X. (2019). Adaptation of the Communication Skills Attitude Scale (CSAS) to Surgical Residents in China. *Journal of Surgical Education*, 76(2), 329–336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsurg.2018.07.027>
- [29] Zhao, Z., & Kularatne, I. (2020). Relationship between generic skills and employability skills: an exploratory study in the context of New Zealand postgraduate education. *Management*, 15, 291–307. doi: 10.26493/1854-4231.15.291-307



Habibullah Pathan is currently serving as a Professor (Research) at Sohar University, Oman.

He has published research articles in many reputable journals published by Springer, Taylor and Francis, Emerald, Sciendo De Gruyter, National University of Malaysia, RUDN University Moscow among others. Moreover, he has numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals, including the 3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature, Russian Journal of Linguistics, TESOL International Journal, Asian EFL Journal, Asian ESP Journal, Asian Education and Development Studies, among others. He served as Guest Editor of Russian Journal of Linguistics (Scopus Q1).

His research interest includes Technology integration in TESOL, L2 motivation, CDA and corpus linguistics. Moreover, he won a number of research and travel grants, and fellowships, among which are an international research grant awarded by RUDN University, a research grant awarded by USEFP State Department, USA, Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship, AFHEA, and HEC Faculty Development Scholarship. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3425-3594>



Muhammad Arif Soomro is an assistant professor of linguistics at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science & Technology (QUEST), Nawabshah, Sindh, Pakistan.

He successfully became an early PhD (code 45.06.01 Linguistics and Literary Studies) from RUDN University, Moscow, with direction/specialty Theory of Language and Discourse Analysis.

His research interest focuses on socio-psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, politeness theory, forms of address, cross- and intercultural pragmatics, cultural linguistics, applied linguistics, communication apprehension/anxiety. He authored articles in international journals including Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, Corpus Pragmatics, 3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature® The Southeast Asian Journal, GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies, Integration of Education, Eurasian Journal of

Applied Linguistics, Jordan Journal of Modern Languages & Literatures (JJMLL), Journal of Language and Cultural Education, International Journal of Instruction, among others. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1503-5375>



Oksana Ivanovna Aleksandrova is a PhD in Philology, an associate professor of General and Russian linguistics at the Faculty of Philology, RUDN University, Moscow.

Her research interests include linguistic semantics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, technology integration, and teaching Russian as a Foreign Language. She has published a number of publications in reputed journals, e.g., Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, Training Language and Culture, RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics, Russian Journal of Linguistics, International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM), Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Information Sciences Letters, Philological Sciences. Scientific Essays of Higher Education, among others. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6950-4109>



Shazia Ayyaz is an assistant professor at the Modern Languages Department, AlZahra College for Women, Muscat, Oman.

She completed a PhD in English (Applied Linguistics) from the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad, Pakistan, and became a PhD research fellow at UNT, Denton, Texas, USA.

She is working as an Assistant Professor at the Modern Languages Department, Al Zahra College for Women, Muscat, Oman. Prior to this, she served as an Assistant Professor at Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore, Pakistan.

She completed my PhD in Linguistics from Pakistan with a research fellowship from the USA. Her research interests include ELT, AI, Language and Learning, Critical Discourse Analysis, Gender and Language, and other areas of Applied Linguistics. She also co-edited a book, AI Applications for English Language Learning, and published many research articles in different journals, has also presented at various international conferences, and has been serving as a reviewer for journals, PhD theses, and books. Presently, she is leading a research project on self-assessment in higher education. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6950-5731>

Linguo-Conceptual and Linguocultural Analysis of the Concept “Memory”: Semantic Typology of Kazakh-Russian-English Phraseology

Altyn Bakytzhanova

Institute of Legislation and Legal Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, Kazakhstan

Saltanat B. Bekmukhambetova

Training teachers of foreign languages and literature, West Kazakhstan University named after M.Utemisov, Uralsk, Kazakhstan

Elmira K. Utemissova

Training teachers of foreign languages and literature, West Kazakhstan University named after M.Utemisov, Uralsk, Kazakhstan

Syrym Zhanzhigitov*

Department of Kazakh Linguistics, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan

Aigul Y. Alpysbayeva

Department of Foreign Philology and Translation Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh national University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Gulmira S. Omarbayeva

Department of Foreign Philology and Translation Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh national University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Svetlana S. Tatiyeva

Department of Languages, International Information Technology University, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan

Abstract—The present study is devoted to the linguo-conceptual and linguo-cultural analysis of the phraseological representation of the concept *memory* based on the material of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages. The trilingual language policy and approach in Kazakhstan promotes proficiency in Kazakh as the state language, Russian as the language of interethnic communication, and English as the language of international integration. The object of analysis is phraseological units that form the phraseosemantic macrofield *memory* within the structure of the intellectual conceptual sphere of the aforementioned linguocultures. The research is based on a comprehensive methodological approach, which includes etymological, componential, structural-semantic, comparative methods, and modeling. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the development of a semantic typology of phraseological units representing the concept *memory*, as well as in the identification of its cognitive structure, which includes three microfields: *processes of memory consolidation, forgetting, and reproduction of previously acquired information*. In addition, an analysis of linguocultural connotations and evaluative components was carried out, reflecting cultural values, archetypes, and mental model's characteristic of each of the examined language systems. The results obtained broaden the understanding of the ways memory is conceptualized as a cognitive and cultural phenomenon, contribute to the theoretical foundation of anthropocentric linguistics, and have practical applications in intercultural communication, translation studies, linguoculturology, and foreign language teaching.

Index Terms—memory, language, culture, phraseology, cross-cultural comparison

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and intercultural communication, there is a growing interest in the study of universal and nationally specific concepts that reflect the worldview of speakers of different languages. One of such key concepts is the concept of ‘memory’, which holds an important place in collective consciousness, cultural identity, and the linguistic picture of the world. The present study is focused on the linguoconceptual and linguocultural analysis of the concept ‘memory’ in the phraseology of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages, based on semantic typology.

The relevance of the topic is determined by the need for a deep understanding of the mental and cultural codes

* Corresponding Author.

embedded in set expressions, especially in the context of active cultural dialogue and growing interest in the cognitive aspects of language. Phraseology, as the most figurative and stable layer of language, serves as a unique tool for identifying cultural archetypes, attitudes, and value orientations. The study of the concept *memory* makes it possible to trace how the processes of storing, transmitting, and interpreting individual and collective experience are reflected in language across different linguocultures.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the comparative semantic analysis of phraseological units (hence after PU) representing the concept of 'memory' in three typologically diverse languages, which contributes to identifying both universal and unique features of its linguistic representation. Based on the results of the analysis, a semantic typology of PU reflecting the concept is proposed, taking into account cognitive and cultural parameters.

The obtained results can be applied in linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, and translation studies, as well as in the practice of intercultural communication and foreign language teaching. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction between language, thinking, and culture, thus expanding the theoretical foundation of the modern anthropocentric paradigm in linguistics.

In scholarly literature, memory is defined as a cognitive ability of the individual to retain and preserve in consciousness information about the external world and one's own self, as well as to accumulate life experience and knowledge in the form of stable neurophysiological traces (so-called engrams). This term encompasses both the ability to reproduce and actualize previously perceived impressions and knowledge in the process of speech and thought activity, and the totality of data preserved in consciousness. The primary function of memory is to ensure various processes of storing, processing, and transforming information (Popova & Sternin, 2007).

In other words, memory is a form of mental reflection, manifested in the processes of fixation, storage and subsequent reproduction of individual experience, which allows to reuse it in activity or actualize it in consciousness. Thanks to memory, a continuous connection between the subject's past, present and future is established, the integrity of his personality and its progressive development are ensured. Memory occupies a key place in the structure of human cognitive activity.

Modern sources of psychological science reflect ambiguous interpretation of the term memory. Nevertheless, as noted by the well-known psychologist B. M. Mescheryakov, all of them are reduced,

to four typical meanings: 1) memory is a set of information storages (reservoirs); 2) memory is very information that we store and retrieve as needed; 3) memory is a set of basic stages and processes that make up the mnemonic cycle: memorization, storage, and retrieval; 4) memory is considered as a diverse set of actions of a subject (or a group of subjects) associated with the solution of mnemonic tasks. (Meshcheryakov, 2004, pp. 5-6)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistics and related disciplines have developed an understanding that metaphor serves as a basic cognitive mechanism of conceptualization, linking linguistic expression to mental models (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The theory of conceptual metaphor, laid out in the works of Lakoff and Johnson and developed further, allows abstract concepts to be explored through concrete imagery schemas, which is particularly important for cross-cultural concept analysis. This approach is widely used in linguoconceptual and linguocultural studies to identify universal and specifically cultural features of the semantic structure of concepts (Kövecses, 2005; Jesudas & Mohammed, 2024; Budiman, 2019; Zhang, 2021). Numerous studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the conceptual-metaphorical method in comparing linguistic worldviews: metaphorical models reflect general patterns of human thinking and simultaneously vary under the influence of national-cultural experiences (Hadidi & Zare, 2020; Akbulut, 2023; Al-Minawi, 2024; Đào, 2022). Researchers across languages and discourses show that concepts such as memory and other mental phenomena are conceptualized through similar images (e.g., through metaphors of space, path, container), although the content of these images may differ across cultures (Bullo, 2017; Chang, 2022; Tien, 2022; Lai, 2022; Quan & Huynh, 2024).

In cognitive linguistics and cultural studies, the conceptualization of memory is examined at different levels, from individual processes of remembering to collective forms of experience retention (Bull & Hansen, 2016; Kirik et al., 2018). Memory is studied as a phenomenon of individual consciousness and simultaneously as a component of collective and cultural memory, showing that personal memories are woven into shared community narratives (Ben-Aroia & Ebbrecht-Hartmann, 2020; Jamalpour & Yaghoobi-Derabi, 2022). Considerable attention has been paid to cultural memory, the set of traditions, rituals, and media practices through which a society stores and broadcasts past experiences; simultaneously exploring new, digital forms of memory in the modern era (Hoskins, 2016; Hagedoorn, 2019; Schliephake, 2016; Liu & Nie, 2023). The narrative nature of memory is emphasized: making sense of the past through stories, literature, and media links memory processes to identity and the creative reinterpretation of experience (Temple, 2021; Andersen & Ortnor, 2019; Putri & McDermott, 2023). Thus, memory studies are interdisciplinary, combining cognitive, cultural and mediatic approaches, and reflect the relevance of studying memory in different contexts, from folklore to digital culture (Gülüm, 2023; Gaál, 2023).

The comparative analysis of phraseological units in Kazakh, Russian and English languages shows how the concept memory and related concepts are verbalized through stable expressions, revealing both universal metaphorical motifs and culturally specific images. A number of studies note the presence of common conceptual metaphors of memory in

the three languages - for example, the representation of memory as a storehouse, treasure, or burden that can be 'carried' or 'lost' (Radbil et al., 2020; Sedykh et al., 2023; Mamasheva et al., 2021). At the same time, unique phraseological phrases reflect the original historical and cultural experience of each nation, demonstrating national specificity in the linguistic expression of the processes of remembering and forgetting (Hasanbievna & Bizhoyev, 2021; Kozhakhmetova & Sagidolda, 2019; Savelyeva et al., 2019). The newest works devoted to the comparison of idioms related to memory confirm the presence of both universal figurative schemes and non-equivalent units: some phraseological phrases coincide in metaphor in different languages, while others have no direct analogs (Sopova, 2020; Alisoy, 2024; Pugach, 2024). These studies emphasize the importance of taking into account the cultural context when analyzing phraseology and show that metaphorical conceptualizations of memory serve both as a 'window' into universal cognitive mechanisms and unique worldviews of different cultures.

Thus, the literature review demonstrates that the study of the concept of memory at the intersection of cognitive linguistics, cultural studies and comparative linguistics has interdisciplinary significance and scientific novelty. Combining the ideas of the theory of conceptual metaphor with the studies of cultural memory and cross-linguistic phraseology allows us to comprehensively illuminate how language reflects and shapes our perceptions of memory. The analysis of metaphorical models in different languages reveals the universal foundations of human experience and simultaneously highlights the unique worldviews characteristic of individual cultures. The relevance and promise of this approach are due to the fact that the concept of memory provides researchers with valuable data on the relationship between language, thought, and culture, which has implications for a range of fields, from linguistics and anthropology to cognitive science and intercultural communication.

III. MATERIAL AND METHODS

In the present study, *memory* is of interest as a human cognitive ability, representing one of the fragments of reality - the human cognitive sphere. In this regard, it is interesting to reveal the specificity of reflection of this fragment of reality by figurative means of language – phraseological units (hereinafter - PUs).

This study holds particular methodological value in the aspect of describing phraseological material, as it realizes an integrated approach combining cognitive-semantic and contrastive analysis. The object of comparison is the phraseology of Kazakh, Russian and English languages – genetically and typologically dissimilar, but being in the conditions of cultural-linguistic interaction, which allows to reveal both universal and specific features of representation of the concept "memory".

At the same time, the comparative description of types of memory and PUs representing this semantic fragment of intellectual conceptsphere, as well as the peculiarities of verbal expression of memory *processes* in the phraseology of Kazakh, Russian and English languages seems to be significant. As rightly emphasized by Popova and Sternin (2007), the comparison of semantic spaces of different languages contributes to the identification of universal for mankind ways of reflecting the surrounding reality, while allowing to reveal the specificity – national, ethno-cultural, as well as group and individual - in the formation and structuring of conceptual content.

The assertion that memory occupies a central place in the human cognitive system and represents a complex phenomenon of cognitive activity is confirmed by linguistic data: in particular, in phraseology it is reflected through the variety of PUs forming a branched semantic field associated with the processes of remembering, storing and reproducing information.

The analyzed semantic fragment "memory" is integrated into a broader structure of the semantic field covering the sphere of cognitive activity or cognitive sphere of a person, within the framework of which *memory* performs the key function of ensuring the preservation and processing of information. From this point of view, in the present study we designate it as a semantic macrofield or phraseosemantic macrofield "memory".

In the process of defining the structure and stages of the research, the following methodology was developed, including the following key categories and methods:

- *Cognitive category*: concept as a mental-linguistic unit;
- *Linguocultural category*: phraseology as a reflection of cultural values;
- *Phraseosemantic macrofield* as an object of semantic structuring of the concept "memory" in the linguistic picture of the world;

Methods: etymological, component, structural-semantic, comparative and linguocognitive modeling.

The developed research algorithm included:

- 1) selection of PUs representing the concept "memory";
- 2) distribution of PUs into microfields on the basis of dominant semantic features;
- 3) identification of cultural-evaluative components and conceptual connotations;
- 4) comparative analysis of interlingual similarities and differences in Kazakh, Russian and English phraseological systems.

The conceptual structure of the phraseosemantic macrofield "memory" is represented as a cognitive-organized system including three semantic micropoles:

- microfield 1: processes of fixation in memory;
- microfield 2: forgetting processes;

- microfield 3: reproduction of previously acquired information.

These microfields reflect cognitive dynamics and psycho-emotional aspects of memory functioning through phraseological explication.

The component composition of PUs within the semantic macropoly “memory” demonstrates a high degree of imagery and cultural labeling. The following semantic components have been identified:

- temporal (the age/freshness of the memory);
- emotional (nostalgia, pain, joy);
- modal (unexpectedness, incompleteness of reproduction);
- metaphorical (fire, water, trace, light/darkness as memory images).

The typology of memory types and their representing PUs is based on functional and psychological criteria, including:

- involuntary memory (e.g., “popped into my head”);
- conscious memorization (e.g., “to carve it on one’s nose”);
- collective memory (e.g., “no one is forgotten, nothing is forgotten”);
- historical memory, fixed in stable national images; each type corresponds to a set of PUs, which makes it possible

to build an interlingual typology on the basis of the functional-semantic approach.

Linguocultural peculiarities of phraseological modeling of memory represent nationally specific mental and cultural images:

- in Kazakh linguoculture, the dominant image is that of generational continuity and the sacralization of memory (e.g., *таубесін есіне түсірді* – reminded (someone) of their repentance);
- in Russian – emotional-psychological states and dramatization of memories (e.g., *захлестнуло в памяти* – flooded/engulfed in memory);
- in English – rationality, individualization and technologization of memory (e.g., *have a photographic memory*).

The analysis of the linguoconceptual characteristic of PUs allowed us to identify - cultural, value-based and evaluative connotations reflecting:

- attitude to memory as a moral category;
- perception of memory as a keeper of truth, identity and experience;
- diversity of attitudes: from sacral ancestral memory to everyday forgetting.

The research material demonstrated that within the phraseosemantic macropoly “memory”, an *integrative concept* is formed, combining cognitive processes, cultural meanings, and linguistic means of explication in its structure.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the conducted study, a multi-level methodology for the linguistic-conceptual and linguocultural analysis of the phraseosemantic macrofield ‘memory’ in Kazakh, Russian, and English phraseology was developed. The methodological approach was based on a combination of principles: cognitiveness, comparability, cultural determinism, and semantic typologization, which ensured a comprehensive nature of the linguistic analysis.

The phraseosemantic fragment memory in the comparison of Kazakh, English and Russian languages demonstrates universal and specific features in the structural-semantic organization of PUs reflecting the processes of remembering and preserving information. In particular, in the Kazakh language there is an active use of abstract nouns denoting cognitive processes, such as *ой* (thought), *жады* (memory), *көңіл* (attention, mood), *көкей* (consciousness), as well as somatisms – *кеуде* (chest cavity, bust, torso) and *көкірек* (chest), as part of PUs associated with memory.

Examples of Kazakh PUs reflecting *the processes of memorization and retention*: *ойдан кетпеді* (lit. ‘does not leave the mind’) ‘is not forgotten’; *ойдан шықпады* (lit. ‘has not left the mind’) ‘is constantly present in the memory’; *ойында қалды* (lit. ‘remained in the thoughts’) ‘remembered’; *көкейіне сақтады* (lit. ‘kept in consciousness’) ‘firmly entered into consciousness’; *кеудесіне түйді* (lit. ‘tied in the chest’) ‘kept in memory’, etc. In Russian language similar memory processes are expressed through such PUs as: *держат в мыслях* (lit. ‘to keep in thoughts’) – to remember constantly about someone or something, *жить в памяти* (lit. ‘to live in memory’) – to remember constantly, *зарубить себе на носу* (lit. ‘to carve it on one’s nose’), *зарубить на стенке* (lit. ‘to carve on the wall’) – to remember firmly, forever, *не выходит из головы* (lit. ‘does not leave the head’) – is constantly present in one’s thoughts, is not forgotten, *врезаться в память* (lit. ‘to cut (or engrave) into memory’) – to remember firmly, firmly; to be imprinted, etc. The English language also contains a wide range of idiomatic expressions that describe various memory-related processes – from short-term retention to deeply ingrained recollections. For example, the expression *to stick in one’s mind* is used when something remains in memory for a long time and is not easily forgotten. It is comparable to the Kazakh expression *ойдан шықпады* and the Russian *не выходит из головы*. The idiom *to be etched in someone’s memory* resonates with the Russian *врезаться в память* and the Kazakh *кеудесіне түйді* – used when an event or image leaves an indelible impression on one’s consciousness. Another common phrase is *to commit to memory*, which refers to the deliberate act of memorizing something. This is similar in meaning to the Kazakh expression *көкейіне сақтады* (stored in consciousness) and the Russian *зарубить себе на носу*. The idiom *to bear in mind* refers to consciously keeping information in memory, and aligns with the Russian *держат в мыслях* and the Kazakh *ойында қалды*. Some English expressions emphasize the emotional intensity of memories. For instance, *to burn into one’s brain* or *to engrave on one’s mind* use metaphors of fire and carving to highlight how strongly something is imprinted

in one's mind. These metaphors correspond to the Russian *жить в памяти* or *врезаться в память*, and the Kazakh *ойдан кетпеді*. More neutral or formal expressions such as *to retain in memory* and *to keep in mind* are also widely used, both in everyday speech and in academic contexts.

The comparative analysis of PUs representing the concept “memory” provides an opportunity to reveal the specifics of its conceptualization in different linguistic and cultural systems. Such research contributes to a more detailed understanding of cognitive mechanisms and cultural determinants that determine the processes of formation, structuring and functioning of PEs reflecting mental processes associated with the preservation and reproduction of experience.

It should be emphasized that Kazakh PUs denoting the processes of remembering and preserving in memory, as a rule, have positive evaluative coloring. In other words, the subject fixes in consciousness or keeps in memory mainly significant and emotionally positive for him images, life moments or situations – conventionally labeled as “pleasant memories”. Such linguistic constructions are often found in fiction, as well as in everyday colloquial speech, which indicates the cultural specificity of value attitude to memory in Kazakh linguoculture.

At the same time the PU *өңіліне дiм сақтады* (lit.: keeps in the mood bad, unpleasant) in the meaning ‘to keep, to keep in memory an offense, to remember about an offense’ was found. In Russian, this PU is conveyed by the lexical unit *vindictive* (cf.: *злопамятный человек – кекшіл адам*) (translated from Kazakh - *vindictive person*).

Russian language PUs such as - *не выходит из головы* (*does not get out of one's head*), *не идет из памяти* (*does not leave memory*), *не выходит из ума* (*does not leave the mind*), *выбрасывать из головы* (*to throw out of one's head*), *выкидывать из памяти* (*to discard from memory*) (Stepanova, 2006), in most cases are used in the meaning associated with the *processes of memorization and retention* in memory, which occur contrary to the will or desire of the subject. These fixed expressions can denote attempts to *forget something/someone or not to remember something/someone*, but at the same time leave a trace in the memory, which indicates a discrepancy between the desired and the result, when a thought or image cannot be eliminated from consciousness.

The etymology of the Russian PUs *зарубить себе на носу*, *зарубить на лбу*, *зарубить на стенке* (literally, “to carve on one's nose/forehead/wall”) is an interesting phenomenon, which is connected with cultural and historical factors. These PUs reflect the “purposeful” process of fixing information in memory, which is carried out by the effort of the subject's will. The image of a nick as a physical mark on a body or surface symbolizes a deliberate, conscious imprinting of important information, emphasizing that the process of remembering is associated with an active effort to keep something in memory for a long period of time.

As the analysis of factual material has shown, PUs belonging to the semantic microfield “processes of fixation in memory” in Kazakh and Russian languages mainly reflect the processes of *long-term memorization*. This includes such types of memory as *short-term, operative and intermediate* memory, with the main emphasis being placed on memory providing *long-term preservation of information* with the possibility of conscious retrieval. It is important to note that long-term memory, as a rule, obeys the pattern of forgetting, in the process of which all unnecessary or secondary, as well as a certain proportion of important information is forgotten.

In Kazakh phraseology, *the process of forgetting* is reflected by such PEs as *ойдан шықты* (literally: “went out of the thought”) meaning ‘forgotten’, *есінен шықты* (literally: “went out of consciousness”) meaning ‘not retained in memory, forgotten’, *жанынан шықты* (literally: “went out of the soul”) and others. It is interesting to note that in this semantic group *the process of forgetting* is expressed by means of the verb component *шығу* (*шықты*), which literally translates as ‘to come out’ (cf. Russian expressions like “*выпадать из памяти*” or “*из головы вон выскочило*” — ‘to fall out of memory’ or ‘popped out of the head’).

In Russian, such expressions occur with greater frequency compared to Kazakh. For example, we can single out the following PU: *вычеркнуть из памяти*, which means ‘to forget or forcibly get rid of memories about a person or event’; *выбрасывать из головы*, which implies an attempt ‘to get rid of thoughts or memories’; *выкидывать из памяти*, which denotes ‘to forget or ignore a thought about someone or something’; *выбивать из головы*, which means ‘to rid oneself of obsessive thoughts’; *упускать из виду*, which expresses ‘forgetting or ignoring some information’ (Kunin, 2006).

In English, the processes of forgetting are also widely reflected in the phraseological system. Similar to Kazakh expressions containing the verb *шығу* (to go out) and Russian verb constructions such as *выбросить* (to throw out) or *вычеркнуть* (to cross out), English idioms often contain dynamic verbs conveying the idea of *removal, disappearance, or expulsion* of information from one's consciousness.

One of the most common expressions is *to slip one's mind*, which literally means “to slip out of the mind” (Ayto, 2010). This fixed expression is used when someone forgets something due to carelessness or absent-mindedness: “*It completely slipped my mind*” – meaning “I completely forgot”. In both meaning and imagery, it is close to the Kazakh “*ойдан шықты*” (“left the mind”) and the Russian “*выпало из памяти*” (“slipped from memory”).

Another typical expression is *to block something out*, which refers to the conscious or subconscious repression of a memory, particularly unpleasant ones: “*He tried to block out the memory of the accident*”. This is similar to the Russian “*вычеркнуть из памяти*” or “*выбросить из головы*” – to mentally eliminate a memory.

The idiom *to erase from memory* carries a similar meaning, referring to both spontaneous and intentional forgetting. This phrase is frequently used in emotionally charged or traumatic contexts – similar to the Russian “*выбросить из памяти*” and structurally close to the Kazakh “*есінен шықты*” (“left the consciousness”).

Another commonly used expression is *to forget all about*, which emphasizes total and complete forgetting: “*I forgot all about our meeting*”. This expression is more colloquial in nature, similar to the Kazakh “*жанынан шықты*” (“left the soul”), which often carries an emotional connotation.

In conversational speech, one may also encounter metaphorical constructions such as *to go out of one's head*, which directly corresponds to the Russian “*вылетело из головы*” (“flew out of the head”). This expression conveys sudden and involuntary forgetting of some information.

Thus, English phraseology, like that of Kazakh and Russian, actively uses metaphors of motion or removal to describe the process of forgetting. In all three languages, memory and oblivion are presented as dynamic processes in which thoughts “exit”, “slip away”, “are erased”, or “thrown out” reflecting universal cognitive and cultural conceptions of memory.

The process of forgetting that takes place ‘without the subject's participation’ is also reflected in the conceptual semantics of PUs, for example: *захлестнуло в памяти*, which means complete forgetting; *улетучиться из памяти*, indicating ‘the complete disappearance of a memory’; *из ума вон выскочило*, expressing ‘complete forgetting of something’; *вылетать из головы*, which also means ‘complete disappearance from memory’.

The third component group of the macrofield ‘memory’ is made up of PUs representing *the process of reproduction of previously learned information*. The semantic microfield formed by these PUs is functionally opposed to the microfield reflecting *the forgetting processes*, but there is a dialectically complementary relationship between them, conditioned by the specifics of memory functioning as a cognitive mechanism.

Psychological science identifies various forms of information reproduction, each of which is characterized by specific cognitive mechanisms. These include: *recognition* – a process in which previously learned information is identified by repeated perception of an object; *recollection* – actualization of information without direct perception of the object, based on internal cognitive processes; *recall* – an active form of reproduction, requiring volitional effort and often associated with the search for information in memory; *reminiscence* – delayed reproduction of previously perceived material that seemed to be forgotten; *eidetism* – the ability to retain and reproduce vivid and detailed images of a previously perceived object.

In the context of Kazakh language phraseology there are peculiarities in designation of the process of *reproduction of previously learned information*. Most often there are PUs reflecting *recollection in the absence of the object of perception*. For example: *ойға оралды* (literally: “returned to thoughts”) – meaning “was remembered”; *көңілге түсті* (literally: “came to attention”) – meaning “came to memory, was recalled”; *ескі жараның аузын ашу* (literally: “to open the mouth of an old wound”) – used in the sense of “to recall the past” (Kenesbaev, 2007). These PUs emphasize the process of information reproduction initiated by internal cognitive mechanisms without external stimuli, which reflects the cultural and linguistic features of the Kazakh language.

Adjacent to the semantic micropole of reproductive memory processes is the PU *ойға салды* (literally, “put into thoughts”), whose semantics express the reproduction of previously perceived information under external influence – initiated by another subject or object. In this context, it denotes a form of memory conditionally interpreted as “reminder”, i.e. reproduction of information activated from the outside. The English expression “*to jog someone's memory*” serves as a counterpart to the Kazakh idiom *ойға салды* (literally, “to place onto one's thoughts”), which refers to recalling something under the influence of an external trigger. In English, this phrase implies that someone or something helps awaken a memory that had been forgotten or suppressed. For example, “*Seeing the old house jogged my memory of childhood summers*” suggests that the sight of the house unexpectedly brought back recollections from the past (Cambridge international dictionary of idioms, 1998).

Other commonly used expressions include *to bring something to mind* and *to remind someone of something*. Both of these idioms describe a return of memory prompted by an external stimulus. For instance: “*This smell brings my grandmother's kitchen to mind*” or “*This song reminds me of high school*”. In each of these cases, the memory does not emerge on its own but is triggered by something in the environment. These expressions highlight how, in both English and Kazakh, the process of remembering is often portrayed not only as an internal act but also as something that can be initiated from the outside.

In addition, in Kazakh and Russian, phraseology demonstrates pronounced evaluative aspects of memory through *regular mentioning of the subject* in a positive or negative way. Thus, the Kazakh expressions *сақтан саққа жүгірту*, *тоғыз саққа жүгірту* convey the meaning of frequent and typically critically colored mention of someone, whereas the constructions *аузынан тастамау*, *аузынан екі елі түсірмей* indicate constant, more often positive, remembrance or mention. Analogous functions in Russian are performed by phraseological units such as *вспоминать добрым словом*, *вспоминать добром*, where memory is activated as an expression of respect, gratitude, or reproach.

In these PUs there is a combination of three semantic characteristics – *processuality* (to remember, to mention and to speak), *subjectivity* and *relations of subjects* to each other.

In English, just like in Kazakh and Russian, there are many idiomatic expressions that reflect not only the act of remembering but also the emotional tone attached to those memories. These expressions show how memory is not just a mental function, but a deeply human experience shaped by feelings and relationships.

Positive recollections are often expressed through phrases like “*to remember someone fondly*” or “*to look back with affection*”. These idioms highlight a warm, respectful remembrance of someone, much like the Kazakh expression

аузынан тастамау (literally “not letting out of one’s mouth”), which suggests constant and affectionate mention, or the Russian *вспоминать добрым словом* (to speak of someone kindly). For instance, when someone says, “*I always remember her fondly – she was so kind to me*”, it’s clear that the memory is cherished and emotionally significant. Similarly, the expression *to hold someone in one’s memory* conveys the idea of keeping someone close in one’s thoughts, as a sign of honor and respect – “*He will always be held in our memory*”.

But memory is not always kind. English also has many idioms that express the burdens of recollection, especially when memories are painful, obsessive, or carry a tone of criticism. These are similar in meaning to the Kazakh phrase *сақтан саққа жүгірту* (to keep bringing someone up critically) or the Russian idea of *вспоминать с упрёком* (to recall someone with reproach).

For example, when someone says “*That moment still haunts my memory*”, it evokes an experience that continues to trouble them long after it has passed – much like a ghost that lingers. Another expression, *to keep bringing someone up*, is often used when someone won’t let go of a topic or a person, usually in an annoying or negative way. A typical example might be, “*He keeps bringing up his ex – it’s getting annoying*”.

Through such idioms, English reveals a nuanced approach to memory – one that captures its complexity and emotional depth. These expressions draw clear lines between memories that return to us uninvited and those that are shaped by strong emotions, whether affectionate or bitter. In this way, English, like Kazakh and Russian, reflects the universal human tendency to treat memory as a living, emotional, and relational part of our lives.

The analysis revealed that these PUs are the most “active” components of the semantic field “memory”, occupy positions in the peripheral zones of the conceptsphere within two (sometimes three) semantic microfields.

In the Russian language, the semantic micropole reflecting *the processes of reproducing previously acquired information* is represented by a variety of phraseological units, each correlating with a specific form of memory described in psychological science. For instance, the PUs *всплывать в памяти* (to surface in memory) and *приходить на ум* (to come to mind) denote the *process of spontaneous recall*, corresponding to the actualization of long-term memory. Expressions such as *вертится в голове* (spinning in the head) and *крутится на языке* (twisting on the tongue) reflect a state in which the subject senses the presence of information but experiences difficulty fully reproducing it, which relates to the phenomenon of *reminiscence* (Teliya, 2006; Yarancev, 2006). The PU *вызывать в памяти* (to evoke in memory) indicates a purposeful effort to recall previously acquired information, corresponding to *the process of recollection*. Finally, the expression *вставить перед глазами* (to stand before the eyes) describes a vivid, detailed *memory* akin to *eidetic images* in psychology. Thus, the phraseological repertoire of the Russian language demonstrates a richness and diversity of means for verbalizing *the processes of memory reproduction*, reflecting both spontaneous and intentional acts of remembering.

In English, there is also a wide range of idiomatic expressions that denote the process of recalling previously acquired information, especially in situations where the memory arises spontaneously, without any external stimulus. These expressions, much like those in Kazakh, are often based on metaphors of return, awakening, or sudden appearance in the mind. One of the most common idioms is *to come to mind*, which means that a thought or memory suddenly appears in one’s head, as if it “returns” from memory without any outside trigger: “*When I saw the photo, her name suddenly came to mind*”. A similar expression is *to spring to mind*, literally meaning “to jump into the mind” which emphasizes the unexpected and spontaneous nature of the memory. This construction is analogous to the Kazakh “*о́йға оралды*” (“returned to the mind”) “*His face sprang to mind when I heard the song*”. The idiom *to flash back* is also used to describe the vivid and sudden recollection of past experiences, often emotionally charged. In psycholinguistics, it is associated with traumatic or significant memories, similar to the Kazakh *ескі жараның аузын ауы* (“to open the mouth of an old wound”): “*She suddenly flashed back to her childhood*”. Another interesting expression is *it popped into my head*, which suggests the image of a thought instantly surfacing from the subconscious without effort: “*Your name just popped into my head!*” The idiom *to bring back memories* is used in a broader sense, but in specific contexts it can also refer to involuntary recall, especially when something mentally transports a person to the past: “*That smell brought back memories of my grandmother’s house*”.

Thus, in English phraseology, as in Kazakh, the act of remembering is often conceptualized as a return or a sudden emergence of thoughts into consciousness, highlighting the internal and spontaneous nature of the process. These expressions vividly reflect the cognitive features and figurative thinking embedded in the language and culture, where memory is perceived as something alive, dynamic, and unexpectedly resurfacing.

V. CONCLUSION

As a result of the conducted research on the PUs constituting the phraseosemantic macrofield of “memory” in Kazakh, Russian, and English languages, it has been established that the concept of memory in these languages functions as a cognitive human ability related to the processes of memorization, retention, and reproduction of information. At the same time, forgetting is perceived as a deviation from the norm, indicating a decline in cognitive activity. In Kazakh phraseology, mnemonic processes are represented through the following conceptual metaphors:

- memory is associated with reason, consciousness, thought, and attention, which emphasizes its connection with the cognitive sphere of a person;
- memory is viewed as a repository where information can be “fixed,” “tied,” “held,” or “stored,” reflecting the

representation of memory as a physical space for storing knowledge;

- memory is correlated with the spatial code of culture, which manifests in the use of noun components in the nominative case (шығыс септігі), indicating the direction of information movement from inside outward;
- memory is identified with the somatic code of culture, which is expressed through the use of somatic terms such as *кеуде* (thoracic cavity, bust, torso) and *көкірек* (chest), emphasizing the bodily localization of memory.

It should be noted that in Kazakh phraseology, unlike Russian, the semantic macrofield of “память” (memory) is represented more extensively in quantitative terms. This may be explained by extralinguistic factors, such as the later development of literacy among Kazakhs compared to Russians. Consequently, the oral tradition has flourished in Kazakh culture, which is evidenced by a rich heritage of oral folk art: legends, epics, and tales passed down from generation to generation. Kazakh national traditions, including the upbringing of children using numerous proverbs and oral behavioral rules, also testify to the importance of memory and its verbal expression in the culture. Such linguocultural educational tools were transmitted from grandmothers to mothers, from mothers to daughters, and so on. They were neither read from books nor written down, yet Kazakh women know these admonitions and remember them throughout their lives; Kazakhs have a strong memory of their “genealogical tree”. It is believed that every Kazakh should remember their origins up to the seventh generation (*жәмі атасы*), their belonging to a particular род (ru), etc.

The aforementioned extralinguistic factors presumably influenced the formation and development of memory mechanisms among speakers of the Kazakh language and found their reflection in the phraseological stock, which represents one of the most original and representative layers of the language, serving as a mirror of the culture, mentality, and everyday life of the ethnos.

In Russian phraseology, the modeling of the semantic fragment “память” is realized through the following linguo-cognitive models:

- memory as an anthropic code of culture;
- memory as that which is stored in the head: correlated with the somatic code of culture;
- memory as a repository, a container where what is recalled spins, is stored, surfaces, pops out, evaporates, or falls out;
- memory as a material code of culture: that which can fall out, evaporate, pop out, surface, etc.;
- memory as a spatial code of culture, represented through the use of prepositions such as *из* (from), *в* (in);
- memory processes as a household code of culture: *зарубить на стенке* (to carve on the wall).

In Russian PUs, nominal components such as *память* (memory) and *голова* (head) are characteristic, whereas in Kazakh phraseology the components *ой* (thought), *ес* (attention, mind), *кеуде* (chest, torso), *жады* (memory) are prevalent.

English idioms display both universal cognitive metaphors and culture-specific features:

- cognitive and spatial models of memory: many English idioms conceptualize memory as a physical space or mental repository, from which information may emerge or disappear. This aligns with the repository metaphor common to all three languages;

- memory as an autonomous mental process. English also employs expressions that present memory as an internal cognitive mechanism that can function independently of the will. These idioms highlight the spontaneity and suddenness of recollection: to come to mind, to spring to mind, to pop into one’s head – depict involuntary recall; to flash back – conveys sudden recollection, often emotionally charged (comparable to Kazakh *ескі жараның аузын ашу*). This internal, automatic mechanism aligns with the Kazakh model where memory resurfaces without external prompting, emphasizing its deep cognitive embedding;

- forgetting as disappearance, evaporation, and ejection. Forgetting in English phraseology is often conceptualized through metaphors of evaporation, removal, or slipping away, indicating that memory can fade without conscious control: to slip one’s mind, to fade from memory, to vanish from memory, to escape one’s memory, to go out of one’s head – all reflect unintentional and sometimes complete forgetting. These expressions correlate closely with Russian metaphors such as *вылетело из головы*, *улетучилось из памяти*, and Kazakh expressions like *ойдан шықты* or *есінен шықты*, where the verb *шығу* (“to exit”) plays a central role in describing forgetting. In contrast, English also includes idioms for intentional forgetting: to block out and to erase from memory – imply mental effort to suppress or eliminate memories, often unpleasant ones. This matches Russian *вычеркнуть из памяти* and Kazakh *санасынан өшіру* (not present in the original sample but semantically close);

- memory triggered by external stimuli – English idioms also capture externally initiated memory retrieval, similar to the Kazakh *ойға салды* (placed on the mind): to jog someone’s memory, to remind someone of something, to bring something to mind – indicate that a person or event externally reactivates a memory. This illustrates the perception of memory as interactive and responsive to stimuli – a theme found across all three linguocultures;

- evaluative aspect of memory. Like Kazakh and Russian, English phraseology includes evaluative idioms that reflect positive or negative emotional attitudes toward remembered persons or events: to remember someone fondly, to look back with affection, to hold someone in memory – express respectful or loving remembrance (cf. *аузынан тастамау*, *вспоминать добрым словом*); to haunt one’s memory, to keep bringing someone up – convey intrusive or painful recollections, often critical or obsessive in tone (cf. *сақтан саққа жүгірту*, *вспоминать с упрёком*). Such idioms emphasize that memory in language is not merely a cognitive function, but a socially and emotionally embedded

phenomenon.

Thus, the study revealed specific features of the perception and expression of the concept “memory” in Kazakh, Russian, and English, allowing for a deeper understanding not only of the cognitive mechanisms but also of the cultural particularities associated with its linguistic representation. Special attention is given to identifying the cognitive structure of memory, which includes three key micropoles: “processes of memory consolidation”, “forgetting” and “reproduction of previously acquired information”. The results of the research emphasize the importance of considering linguistic and cultural differences in the study of phraseology and open prospects for further research in the fields of comparative linguistics and cognitive semantics.

REFERENCES

- [1] Akbulut, F. (2023). Cross-cultural pragmatics and conceptual metaphor theory: The translation of idiomatic expressions. *Söylem Filoloji Dergisi*, (Çeviribilim Özel Sayısı), 594–606. <https://doi.org/10.29110/soylemdergi.1184722>
- [2] Al-Minawi, R. (2024). Analyzing the rhetoric of the Aqsa flood war (2023–2024): A study of Hamas' official discourse through conceptual metaphor theory and critical discourse analysis. *International Journal of Linguistics Literature and Translation*, 7(1), 191–198. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2024.7.1.17>
- [3] Alisoy, H. (2024). Semantic classification of phraseological units. *Acta Humanitatis et Linguarum*, 1(2), 43–55. <https://doi.org/10.69760/aghel.01024064>
- [4] Andersen, T., & Ortnner, J. (2019). Introduction: Memories of joy. *Memory Studies*, 12(1), 5–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698018811976>
- [5] Ayto, J. (2010). *Oxford dictionary of English idioms* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- [6] Budiman, A. (2019). *War metaphors in political contestation prior to 2019 presidential election*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/iccd-19.2019.12>
- [7] Bullo, S. (2017). Investigating intertextuality and interdiscursivity in evaluation: The case of conceptual blending. *Language and Cognition*, 9(4), 709–727. <https://doi.org/10.1017/langcog.2017.5>
- [8] Bull, A., & Hansen, H. (2016). On agonistic memory. *Memory Studies*, 9(4), 390–404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698015615935>
- [9] Ben-Aroia, B., & Ebbrecht-Hartmann, T. (2020). Memorials as discursive spheres: Holocaust and Second World War iconography in public commemoration of extremist-right violence. *Memory Studies*, 14(4), 797–818. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698020959800>
- [10] Cambridge University Press. (1998). *Cambridge international dictionary of idioms*. Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Chang, K. (2022). Re-picturing the reception of the spirit with ritual experience: The role of baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13. *Biblical Theology Bulletin Journal of Bible and Culture*, 52(3), 182–195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461079221108371>
- [12] Đào, H. (2022). Conceptual “politics is war” metaphors in titles and sapos of Nhan Dan Online and The New York Times. *Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences S VSSR*, 210(4), 75–89. [https://doi.org/10.56794/vssr.4\(210\).75-89](https://doi.org/10.56794/vssr.4(210).75-89)
- [13] Gülüm, E. (2023). Folkloric memory: (Re)connecting the dots for broader perspectives. *Memory Studies*, 16(6), 1466–1483. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980231204175>
- [14] Gaál, G. (2023). The city as memory in contemporary Polish women's literature. *Tudásmenedzsment*, 24(4. különszám), 128–137. <https://doi.org/10.15170/tm.2023.24.k4.10>
- [15] Hadidi, Y., & Zare, F. (2020). Exploring the metaphors of loyalty, courage and friendship in Harry Potter novels and their Turkish translations. *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 23(4), 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.5782/2223-2621.2020.23.4.5>
- [16] Hoskins, A. (2016). Memory ecologies. *Memory Studies*, 9(3), 348–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698016645274>
- [17] Hagedoorn, B. (2019). Cultural memory and screen culture. In *Cultural Memory and Popular Culture* (pp. 179–197). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19262-4_7
- [18] Hasanbievna, T., & Bizhoev, B. (2021). *Reflection of national consciousness in the emotiology of Kabardino-Circassian language*. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2021.11.203>
- [19] Jesudas, R., & Mohammed, Z. (2024). Eloquent metaphors: Leveraging linguistic tools for leadership in Biden's inaugural political rhetoric. *EJCEEL*, 2(2), 19–33. [https://doi.org/10.59324/ejceel.2024.2\(2\).02](https://doi.org/10.59324/ejceel.2024.2(2).02)
- [20] Jamalpour, H., & Yaghoobi-Derabi, J. (2022). Cultural memory and neuro-critical reading of Ian McEwan's Atonement. *Revista De Investigaciones Universidad Del Quindío*, 34(S2), 436–442. <https://doi.org/10.33975/riuq.vol34ns2.1142>
- [21] Kenesbaev, I. K. (2007). *Frazeologiyalyq sozdik* [Phraseological Dictionary]. Almaty: Arys.
- [22] Kunin, A. V. (2006). *Anglo-russkiy frazeologicheskiy slovar'* [English–Russian Phraseological Dictionary]. Moskva: Russkiy Yazyk-Media.
- [23] Kozhakhmetova, G., & Sagidolda, G. (2019). Yurt as a micro model of the universe in the context of "language: culture" (Linguistic and cultural analysis on the material of the Kazakh and Mongolian languages). *Homeros*, 2(2), 31–38. <https://doi.org/10.33390/homeros.2.005>
- [24] Kövecses, Z. (2018). *Metaphor, cognition, culture*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190879228.003.0002>
- [25] Kirik, V., Leshkevich, T., & Motozhanets, A. (2018). *Memory culture as the main priority of the modern education process*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icadce-18.2018.129>
- [26] Liu, W., & Nie, X. (2023). Cultural heritage game design based on the collective memory reconstruction model. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 167, 02004. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202316702004>
- [27] Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- [28] Lai, H. (2022). Metaphor in Hakka proverbs. *Language and Linguistics 語言暨語言學*, 549–576. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lali.00020.lai>
- [29] Mamasheva, O., Madmarova, G., Abytova, G., Berdibekova, B., Bolotakunova, G., Ormokeeva, R., & Abdullaeva, Z. (2021).

- Reflection of nations mentality in the Kyrgyz, Russian and English language phraseological units. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 11(1), 24–33. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2021.111002>
- [30] Meshcheryakov, B. G. (2004). *Pamyat' cheloveka: Effekty i fenomeny* [Human Memory: Effects and Phenomena]. Moskva: OOO «Voprosy psikhologii».
- [31] Popova, Z. D., & Sternin, I. A. (2007). *Kognitivnaya lingvistika* [Cognitive Linguistics]. Moskva: AST: Vostok-Zapad.
- [32] Putri, W., & McDermott, S. (2023). Bridging a transnational mother-daughter's relationship through a memoir. *Enjourme (English Journal of Merdeka)*, 8(1), 48–56. <https://doi.org/10.26905/enjourme.v8i1.10373>
- [33] Pugach, Y. (2024). The verbalization of emotions in English phraseological units. *Scientific Journal of National Pedagogical Dragomanov University. Series 9: Current Trends in Language Development*, (27), 38–50. <https://doi.org/10.31392/npu-nc.series9.2024.27.04>
- [34] Quan, T., & Huynh, A. (2024). Modulation of moving conceptual metaphors in Vietnamese translation in economic discourse. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 40(1), 26–56. <https://doi.org/10.63023/2525-2445/jfs.ulis.5208>
- [35] Radbil, T., Akhmetzhanova, G., Zhmagulova, Z., Seralieva, A., & Seralieva, G. (2020). Dusha (“soul”) and telo (“body”) in the aspect of contrastive analysis of cultural concepts: Materials for the linguo-cultorological phraseological dictionary of Russian-Kazakh correlations. *Nauchnyi Dialog*, (3), 127–150. <https://doi.org/10.24224/2227-1295-2020-3-127-150>
- [36] Schliephake, C. (2016). Literary place and cultural memory. In *The Literary and Cultural Reception of Charles Darwin in Europe* (Vol. 2, pp. 569–589). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110314595-031>
- [37] Sedykh, A., Buzinova, L., Akimova, E., Pashkovskaia, N., Skvortsov, K., Shcherbakov, A., & Beshinskaya, N. (2023). Phraseological picture of the world and communication: Take “carpe diem” as an example. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(5), 1159–1166. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1305.08>
- [38] Savelyeva, M., Khomutnikova, E., & Borovykh, Y. (2019). Semantic classification of object phraseological units with zoonymic component in English. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 69, 00099. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20196900099>
- [39] Sopova, I. (2020). *Personal transformations of phraseological units in the discourse of politics*. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2020.12.04.102>
- [40] Stepanova, M. I. (2006). *Frazeologicheskiy slovar' russkogo yazyka* [Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language]. Sankt-Peterburg: Poligrafuslugi.
- [41] Teliya, V. N. (Ed.). (2006). *Bol'shoy frazeologicheskiy slovar' russkogo yazyka: Znachenie. Upotreblenie. Kulturologicheskiy kommentariy* [The Big Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language: Meaning, Usage, Cultural Commentary]. Moskva: AST-Press Kniga.
- [42] Temple, C. (2021). Africana cultural memory in the Afro-European context. *Journal of Black Studies*, 52(4), 418–440. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934721999296>
- [43] Tien, T. (2022). Universality vs. cultural specificity of anger metaphors and metonymies in English and Vietnamese idioms. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 26(1), 74–94. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-24951>
- [44] Yaranecv, R. I. (2006). *Russkaya frazeologiya: Slovar'-spravochnik (ok. 1500 frazeologizmov)* [Russian Phraseology: Dictionary-Reference (approx. 1500 phraseological units)]. Moskva: Russkiy Yazyk-Media.
- [45] Zhang, X. (2021). Development and critiques of conceptual metaphor theory. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11(11), 1487–1491. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1111.18>

Altyn Bakytzhanova is a Candidate of Philological Sciences, Lead Researcher at the Institute of Legislation and Legal Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan. ORCID iD: 0000-0002-5305-8295 Email: altyn051275@gmail.com

Saltanat B. Bekmukhambetova is a Master of Pedagogical Sciences, Senior Lecturer at the EP “Training teachers of foreign languages and literature”. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8467-8544> Email: bekmukhambetovas@mail.ru

Elmira K. Utemissova is a Master of Pedagogical Sciences, Senior Lecturer at the EP “Training teachers of foreign languages and literature”. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9897-8661> Email: moka_1970@mail.ru

Syrym Zhanzhigitov is PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Kazakh Linguistics. ORCID iD: 0000-0002-7814-1378 Email: syrymphd@gmail.com

Aigul Y. Alpysbayeva is PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation Studies. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5947-6084> Email: Alpysbayeva.Aigul@kaznu.kz

Gulmira S. Omarbayeva is a Candidate of Philological Sciences, Senior Lecturer at the of Foreign Philology and Translation Studies. Email: omar.gulmira@gmail.com

Svetlana S. Tatiyeva is a Master of Humanities, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Languages. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6784-4214> Email: statieva29@gmail.com

Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

Aims and Scope

Theory and Practice in Language Studies (TPLS) is a peer-reviewed international journal dedicated to promoting scholarly exchange among teachers and researchers in the field of language studies. The journal is published monthly.

TPLS carries original, full-length articles and short research notes that reflect the latest developments and advances in both theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching and learning. We particularly encourage articles that share an interdisciplinary orientation, articles that bridge the gap between theory and practice, and articles in new and emerging areas of research that reflect the challenges faced today.

Areas of interest include: language education, language teaching methodologies, language acquisition, bilingualism, literacy, language representation, language assessment, language education policies, applied linguistics, as well as language studies and other related disciplines: psychology, linguistics, pragmatics, cognitive science, neuroscience, ethnography, sociolinguistics, sociology, and anthropology, literature, phonetics, phonology, and morphology.

Special Issue Guidelines

Special issues feature specifically aimed and targeted topics of interest contributed by authors responding to a particular Call for Papers or by invitation, edited by guest editor(s). We encourage you to submit proposals for creating special issues in areas that are of interest to the Journal. Preference will be given to proposals that cover some unique aspect of the technology and ones that include subjects that are timely and useful to the readers of the Journal. A Special Issue is typically made of 15 to 30 papers, with each paper 8 to 12 pages of length.

A special issue can also be proposed for selected top papers of a conference/workshop. In this case, the special issue is usually released in association with the committee members of the conference/workshop like general chairs and/or program chairs who are appointed as the Guest Editors of the Special Issue.

The following information should be included as part of the proposal:

- Proposed title for the Special Issue
- Description of the topic area to be focused upon and justification
- Review process for the selection and rejection of papers
- Name, contact, position, affiliation, and biography of the Guest Editor(s)
- List of potential reviewers if available
- Potential authors to the issue if available
- Estimated number of papers to accept to the special issue
- Tentative time-table for the call for papers and reviews, including
 - Submission of extended version
 - Notification of acceptance
 - Final submission due
 - Time to deliver final package to the publisher

If the proposal is for selected papers of a conference/workshop, the following information should be included as part of the proposal as well:

- The name of the conference/workshop, and the URL of the event.
- A brief description of the technical issues that the conference/workshop addresses, highlighting the relevance for the journal.
- A brief description of the event, including: number of submitted and accepted papers, and number of attendees. If these numbers are not yet available, please refer to previous events. First time conference/workshops, please report the estimated figures.
- Publisher and indexing of the conference proceedings.

If a proposal is accepted, the guest editor will be responsible for:

- Preparing the “Call for Papers” to be included on the Journal’s Web site.
- Distribution of the Call for Papers broadly to various mailing lists and sites.
- Getting submissions, arranging review process, making decisions, and carrying out all correspondence with the authors. Authors should be informed the Author Guide.
- Providing us the completed and approved final versions of the papers formatted in the Journal’s style, together with all authors’ contact information.
- Writing a one- or two-page introductory editorial to be published in the Special Issue.

More information is available on the web site at <http://www.academypublication.com/tpls/>

English Subtitling Strategies for Mythological Names and Titles in Beijing Opera Film: A Case Study of <i>Havoc in Heaven</i> <i>Yang Qiuling, Syed Nurulakla bin Syed Abdullah, Pabiyah HajiMaming @ Pabiyah Toklubok, and Yi Liu</i>	4056
Minority Language Maintenance: A Case Study of Mandaran Language in Kampung Mandar Village, Banyuwangi <i>Agus Sariono, Bambang Wibisono, Hairus Salikin, Akhmad Haryono, and Muta'allim</i>	4067
AI Tools and Saudi University English Translation Students: A Mixed-Methods Study Based on TAM <i>Muneer H. Alqahtani and Arif A. Al-Ahdal</i>	4077
The Kindness of Nature in Aboulela's <i>The Kindness of Enemies</i> : An Ecocritical Reading <i>Majd M. Alkayid, Raed A. Alqassas, Murad Al Kayed, Mais N. Al-Shara'h, and Malik N. Alkawaldeh</i>	4087
Discursive-Integrative Politeness Meanings in Digital Spaces: A Third-Wave Pragmatic Analysis of Face-Threatening Acts in Online Communication <i>R.Kunjana Rahardi, Yuliana Setyaningsih, Roni Sulistiyono, and Seli Tria Febriani</i>	4096
Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills: The Impact of Improv Cards in Role-Playing Technique <i>Rabaa Said Mohamed Aljngawi, Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh, and Wedad A Abdelgawad Abdella</i>	4108
The Correlation Between the Use of AI Translation Tools in Foreign Language Learning and the Positive Performance of Foreign Language Students <i>Nabil Al-Awawdeh, Mahmud Mohammad Kaddum, Dorine Nasr, Nermine Merhye, and Maria Nasr</i>	4117
The Reflection of the Local Cultural Value of Javanese Literature in an Ethno-Pedagogy Context <i>Octo Dendy Andriyanto, Darni, Heny Subandiyah, Sukarman, Yohan Susilo, Latif Nur Hasan, Meilita Hardika, Bahar, and Pensri Panich</i>	4127
Navigating and Surpassing the Survival Works: The Relationship Between Occupations and Identity Construction in Hijra Life Writings <i>Sakthi Brinda D and Gayathri N</i>	4134
The Puzzle of Words: Discovering Semantic Change in Malay–Sanskrit Loanwords Shared With Thai <i>Kowit Pimpuang</i>	4143
Medical Students' Perceptions of the Value of Communication Skills and Their Attitudes Towards Learning Soft Skills <i>Habibullah Pathan, Muhammad Arif Soomro, Oksana Ivanovna Aleksandrova, and Shazia Ayyaz</i>	4154
Linguo-Conceptual and Linguocultural Analysis of the Concept "Memory": Semantic Typology of Kazakh-Russian-English Phraseology <i>Altyn Bakytzhanova, Saltanat B. Bekmukhambetova, Elmira K. Utemissova, Syrym Zhanzhigitov, Aigul Y. Alpysbayeva, Gulmira S. Omarbayeva, and Svetlana S. Tatiyeva</i>	4162

Sillinity as Survival: Humor and the Modern Refugee Condition in Three Narratives <i>Bayan AlAmmouri, Sukayna Ali, and Hanan Al-Jabri</i>	3901
Fragmented Voices and Sonic Resistance: Trauma, Memory, and the Politics of Healing in Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> <i>Srividya Lakshmi K, Priyadarshini M.C, Karthik Kumar S, and K. Gobalakrishnan</i>	3910
Culinary Spaces for Subaltern Sites of Resistance: A Subaltern Studies Reading of <i>Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada</i> by Shahu Patole <i>Ng Miew Luan, Megala Rajendran, Subhash Y. Kamalkar, J. Sathish Kumar, Tan Tiam Lai, Keerthana R, Parthasarathy S, and Prakash A</i>	3920
Translating Contract Law Terminology in the <i>Civil Code of the P.R.C.</i> : A Corpus-Based Analysis <i>Jing Duan and Lin Sun</i>	3930
Bilingual Communication Dynamics in Saudi Colleges: Non-Arab Speakers' Perceptions <i>Mazeegha Al-Tale and Tanzina Halim</i>	3939
Designing Graded Grammar Modules for Autonomous Language Learning <i>I Made Rai Jaya Widanta, Anak Agung Raka Sitawati, Sri Hardiningsih H.S., Putu Dyah Hudiananingsih, Ni Putu Somawati, I Made Darma Sucipta, Ni Nyoman Ayu Tri Hidayanti, Luh Nyoman Chandra Handayani, I Nyoman Sukra, and I Wayan Dana Ardika</i>	3947
Sacred Ecoscapes: Ethics of Ecology From the Ramayana <i>Ishwaria Prabhakaran and Soumen Mukherjee</i>	3958
Displacement, Alienation, and Intergenerational Conflicts in Arab Diasporic Literature <i>Baraah I. AlGharaibeh</i>	3967
Clause Structure and Topicalization in Nias Language: A Typological Analysis <i>Ida Basaria and Dardanila Dardanila</i>	3974
Exploring the Factors Influencing Novice Saudi EFL Teachers' Implementation of Educational Action Research as a Professional Development Tool <i>Musa A. Alghamdi</i>	3984
An Optimality-Theoretic Account of Superheavy Syllables in Urban Irbid Dialect <i>Bilal Alsharif, Razan Khasawneh, and Rula Abu-Elrob</i>	3995
The Influence of Social Norms and Etiquette on the Behavior and Decision-Making of Characters in Jane Austen's <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> <i>Brezky Simare Mare, Burhanuddin Arafah, Herawaty Abbas, Winnie Alisa Rano, Ummul Hayat Almahdali, Catleya Karenina Wicaksono, Ririn Arnita Sari, and Nurroidah Fadhilah Malik</i>	4006
A BLEU-Based Evaluation of ChatGPT's Chinese-to-English Translation <i>Linli He and Mozhan Ghassemiazghandi</i>	4017
Language and Terrorism: A Pragmatic and Semiotic Analysis of the Girls' Transformation in <i>Four Daughters</i> (2023) <i>Fuad Khasawneh, Qasem Abdelkarim Shukran, Abdullah Hussein Obeidat, Mahmoud Nayel Taani, Amer Fathi AL-gharaibeh, BILAL Mohammad Aldiabat, and Mowafaq Alsaggar</i>	4027
Semantic Extension of HEAD in Korean and Thai: A Contrastive Perspective <i>Seongha Rhee, Aphiwit Liang-Itsara, and Kultida Khammee</i>	4036
Memoir as Resistance: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Patrisse Khan-Cullors' <i>When They Call You a Terrorist</i> <i>Aishwarya Mary Thomas and Mohamed Sahul Hameed M. A</i>	4047
