

**5TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON ANGLO-AMERICAN CULTURE
AND LITERATURE
MARCH 25-29, 2026
DUBAI, BAE**



**EDITOR
PROF. DR. BÜLENT CERCİS TANRITANIR**

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5th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANGLO-AMERICAN
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March 25-29, 2026 / Dubai, BAE



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SYMPOSIUM TITLE

5th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANGLO-AMERICAN CULTURE
AND LITERATURE

DATE AND PLACE

March 25-29, 2026 / Dubai, BAE

ORGANIZATION

İKSAD INSTITUTE

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Samet KUŞKIRAN

PARTICIPANTS COUNTRY (15 countries)

TÜRKİYE, UZBEKISTAN, ROMANIA, NIGERIA, UKRAINE, NIGER, MOROCCO,
BANGLADESH, VIETNAM, BELARUS, GUINEA, BENIN, IRAN, MOLDOVA,
ALBANIA

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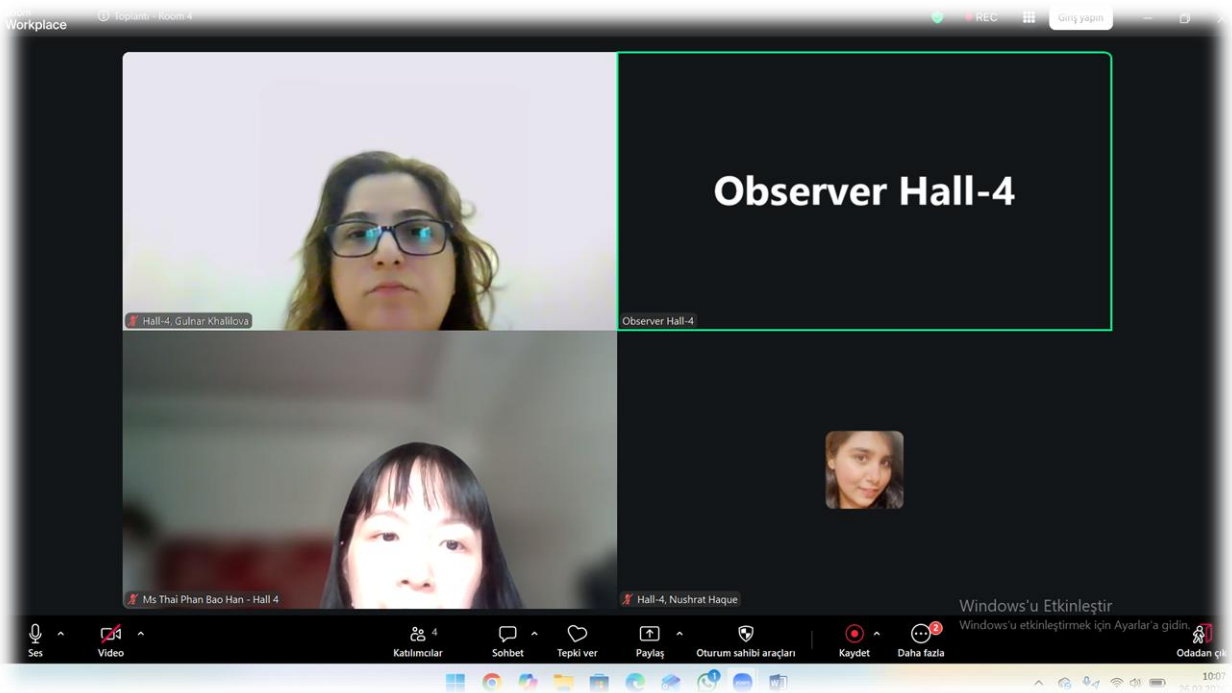
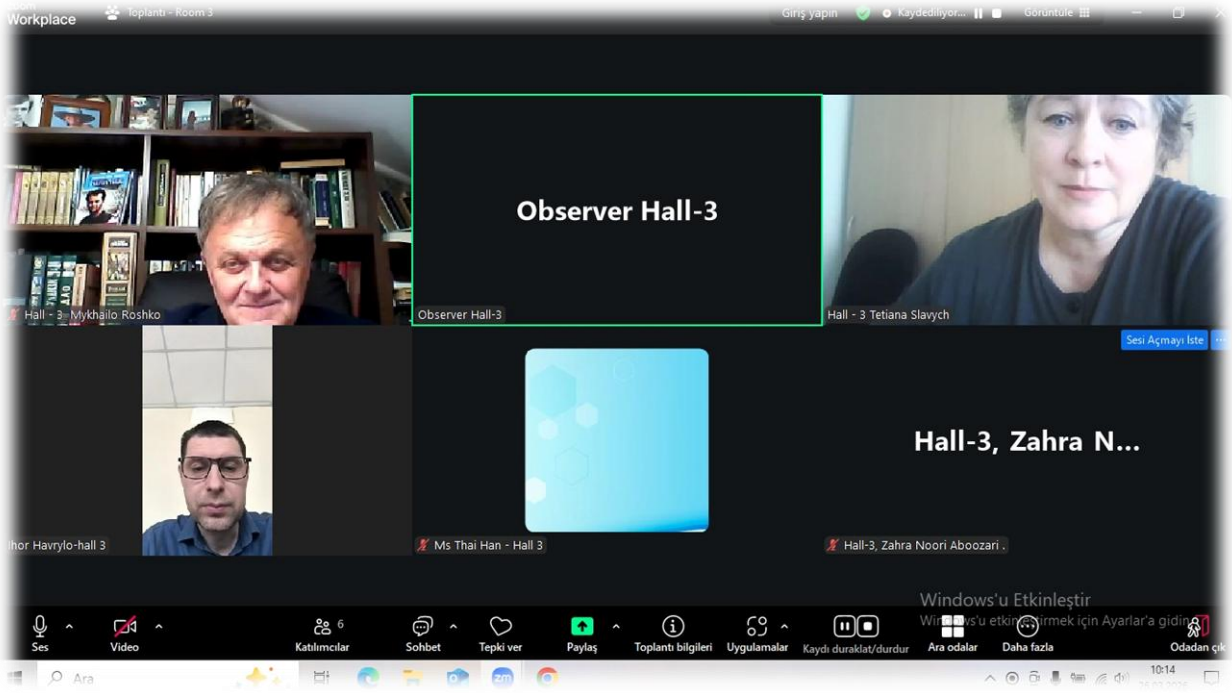
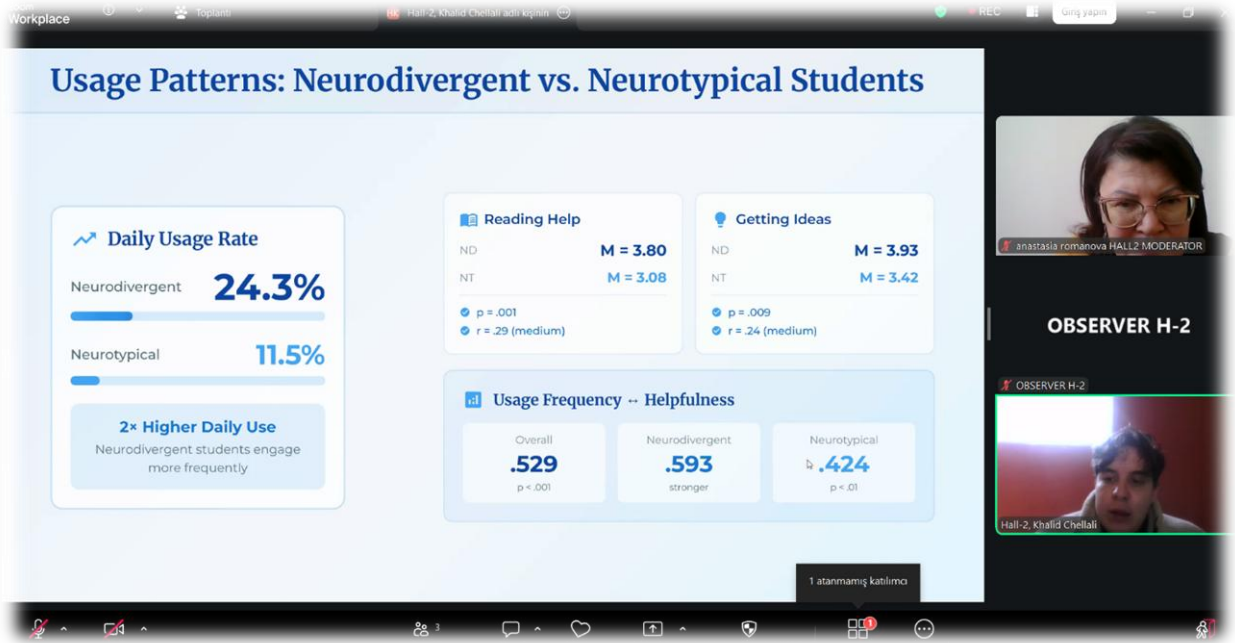


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5th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANGLO-AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE

March 25-29, 2026 / Dubai, BAE

In collaboration with Van Yuzuncu Yil University (Van YYU) Department of English Language & Literature and the Institute of Economic Development & Social Research (IKSAD)

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84770430612?pwd=ggMZot2jkq3WcOw8ebSDohPg0QG78a.1>

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Date: 26.03.2026 / Time: 09:40-10:00

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626

Prof. Dr. Bülent Cercis TANRITANIR

Van Yüzüncü Yıl University

HEAD OF SYMPOSIUM

Prof. Dr. Aydın GÖRMEZ

Vice Rector of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University

26.03.2026 / Hall-1
Dubai Local Time: 11:00 – 13:30
Ankara Local Time: 10:00 – 12:30

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626
Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ibrahim YEKINI

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INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE MEDIA FOR LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: FROM PRINT TO BROADCAST	ODU Adejare Samuel Abdulrazaq Laro YUSUF	The Federal Polytechnic NIGERIA Kwara State University NIGERIA
FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE WORLD: THE POWER OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SHAPING THE FUTURE	Cobzaru Andreia	Zvorișteea Secondary School ROMANIA
ENGINEERING THE STANZA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HUMAN AND AI APPROACHES TO TRANSLATING POETRY	Natalia Petiy Tetiana Pochepetska	Uzhhorod National University UKRAINE
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GLOBAL ENGLISH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE : STUDENT PERSPECTIVES FROM ISLAMIC STUDIES	Manar SOUHAIR	Mohammed V University MOROCCO
RESILIENCE OR SELF-DECEPTION? JOHNSON'S BEHAVIOUR UNDER COLONIAL LABOUR IN JOYCE CARY'S MISTER JOHNSON	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ibrahim YEKINI Sylvia Claire M. KOUSSINOU Dr. Morel Marly MENSAH Dr. S. Désiré Christel ZINSOUVI	(British Studies, UAC) English Linguistics and Didactics (UAC/FLASH- Adjarra)

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26.03.2026 / Hall-2
Dubai Local Time: 11:00 – 13:30
Ankara Local Time: 10:00 – 12:30

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626
Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Anastasia ROMANOVA

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THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY WITH SOME TEACHERS OF TAHOUA REGION IN NIGER	Dèkandé Sylvestre Tchagnonhou	Djibo Hamani University NIGER
LISTENING AS A KEY COMPETENCE: STRATEGIES FOR MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION	Assoc. Prof. Anastasia ROMANOVA	Academy of Economic Studies MOLDOVA

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26.03.2026 / Hall-3
Dubai Local Time: 11:00 – 13:30
Ankara Local Time: 10:00 – 12:30

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626
Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Afrouz

Title	Author(s)	Affiliation
MAPPING THE “LOVE LANGUAGES”: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CROSS- CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION BETWEEN CHINESE AND ENGLISH SPEAKERS	Kozlyakovskaya Alesya Aleksandrovna	Baranavichy State University BELARUS
LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH	Kozlyakovskaya Alesya Aleksandrovna	Baranavichy State University BELARUS
ASSESSING TRANSLATION QUALITY: THE CASE OF INFORMATIVE TEXTS	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Afrouz Narjes Asgari Vartooni	Isfahan University IRAN
POST-EDITING IN THE AGE OF AI: A NEW TRANSLATION PARADIGM	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Afrouz Fatemeh Aghakhani Chegeni	Isfahan University IRAN
INSIDE THE BLACK BOX: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRANSLATION	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Afrouz Zahra NOORI ABOOZARI	Isfahan University IRAN
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THE ROLE OF THE NARRATOR IN THE NOVEL «AS I LAY DYING» BY WILLIAM FAULKNER	Roshko Myhailo Slavych Tetiana Havrylo Ihor	Uzhhorod National University UKRAINE

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26.03.2026 / Hall-4
Dubai Local Time: 11:00 – 13:30
Ankara Local Time: 10:00 – 12:30

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626
Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Rrezarta Draçini

Title	Author(s)	Affiliation
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THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN SHAPING STANDARDS AND ADVOCATING FOR TRANSLATORS	Narjes Asgari Vartooni Sajjad Tahmasbi Boveiri Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Afrouz	Isfahan University IRAN
TRANSLATING WORD PLAYS: PUN IN FOCUS	Narjes Asgari Vartooni Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Afrouz	Isfahan University IRAN
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THE LINGUOCULTURAL SEMIOTICS OF WORD ORDER IN THE WORLD'S LANGUAGES: FROM STRUCTURAL DETERMINANT TO CULTURAL STRATEGY	Gülнар Xəlilova	Odlar Yurdu University AZERBAIJAN
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26.03.2026 / Hall-5
Dubai Local Time: 11:00 – 13:30
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Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626
Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Memet Metin BARLIK

Title	Author(s)	Affiliation
BODY, WAR, AND RESISTANCE: POTENTIALITY IN EDWARD BOND'S HAVE I NONE AND HOWARD BARKER'S SCENES FROM AN EXECUTION	Lect. Zeliha KURUDUCU	Karabük University TÜRKİYE
JOHN MUIR: POSTHUMAN DYNAMICS IN A WIND-STORM IN THE FORESTS	Şermin ERKAN Prof. Dr. Bülent Cercis TANRITANIR	Van Yüzüncü Yıl University TÜRKİYE
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TEMPORAL EXCESS AND SPATIAL COMPRESSION: A TEXTLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF VONNEGUT'S "TOMORROW AND TOMORROW AND TOMORROW"	Kadir ÖGEN Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gülşen TORUSDAĞ	Van Yüzüncü Yıl University TÜRKİYE
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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BORDER NARRATIVES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF MIGRATORY TRANSFORMATION: GLORIA ANZALDÚA'S BORDERLANDS; MOHSİN HAMİD'S EXIT WEST; AND MEHMET UZUN'S BİRA QEDERÊ	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Memet Metin BARLIK	Van Yüzüncü Yıl University TÜRKİYE

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26.03.2026 / Hall-6
Dubai Local Time: 11:00 – 13:30
Ankara Local Time: 10:00 – 12:30

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 7043 0612 / Zoom Passcode: 262626
Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gülşen TORUSDAĞ

Title	Author(s)	Affiliation
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SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE AND THE IDEOLOGY OF NORMALITY IN A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND	Sümeyye ÇİFTÇİ Prof. Dr. Bülent Cercis TANRITANIR	Van Yüzüncü Yıl University TÜRKİYE
LOST SELF IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD FROM THE MIRROR OF THE CITY OF GLASS BY PAUL AUSTER	Pınar KAVAK Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gülşen TORUSDAĞ	Van Yüzüncü Yıl University TÜRKİYE
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**ETHICS BEFORE ONTOLOGY: LEVINASIAN ETHICS AND NATURALISM IN
STEPHEN CRANE'S *THE MONSTER***

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ABSTRACT

Introduction and Purpose

This study examines the ethical implications of naturalism in Stephen Crane's *The Monster* (1898), arguing that Crane's naturalist framework does not produce ethical indifference but instead foregrounds a narrative of inescapable responsibility. While literary naturalism is often associated with determinism, moral detachment, and the reduction of human action to environmental and biological forces, Crane's story complicates this assumption. The narrative centers on the ethical significance of encountering the Other and thereby anticipates Emmanuel Levinas's philosophical claim that ethics precedes ontology. In this context, responsibility does not emerge from rational judgment, free will, or conventional moral systems. Rather, it arises from the subject's exposure to the vulnerability of the Other. The primary aim of this study is to demonstrate that *The Monster* constructs an ethical framework in which responsibility precedes ontological categorization and challenges deterministic interpretations of naturalism.

Materials and Methods The study employs a qualitative research approach based on close textual analysis. The narrative structure, characterization, and ethical tensions within *The Monster* are examined through the conceptual lens of Levinasian ethics. Particular attention is given to the representation of Henry Johnson and the social responses of the Whilomville community following his disfigurement in the fire. The analysis investigates how the community attempts to categorize Henry as abnormal, dangerous, or socially useless, thereby reducing him to an ontological label. This process is interpreted as the community's ethical failure. The figure of Dr. Trescott is also analyzed as a subject positioned within an unavoidable ethical relation, whose responsibility toward Henry Johnson persists despite social exclusion and professional loss.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings suggest that Crane's determinism does not eliminate ethical responsibility; rather, it underscores its inevitability. In *The Monster*, responsibility appears as an enduring obligation rather than a voluntary moral choice. The narrative offers neither moral resolution nor a path to redemption, leaving ethical duty unresolved. By refusing narrative closure, Crane's text draws the reader into the same ethical tension. Consequently, the study challenges the widespread assumption that naturalism is ethically disengaged and argues that Crane redefines ethics as an unavoidable dimension of subjectivity grounded in the encounter with the Other.

Key Words: Stephen Crane, American Naturalism, *The Monster*, Levinasian Ethics, Face of Other, Ethical Responsibility

**WHO IS RAISING THE NEW GENERATION? DIGITAL PARENTING IN RAY
BRADBURY'S *THE VELDT***
**YENİ NESİLİ KİM BÜYÜTÜYOR? RAY BRADBURY'NİN *THE VELDT* (BOZKIR)
ÖYKÜSÜNDE DİJİTAL EBEBYLİK**

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ABSTRACT

The Veldt is a short story by American author Ray Bradbury, about a tragic tale of the automated house and the nursery which takes roles of parents, published in 1950. Unlike many other science fiction writers, Bradbury is an influential writer who can portray his futuristic fears as a visionary of digital age through his past. His fear is not for technology but how people use it. He tells the anxiety of losing human emotions, because he thinks that when we allow machines to raise our children, we are not make a better life for them, we make a new digital generation who do not recognize their family ties. Especially written with an anti technological perspective, Bradbury's works are known for exploring the tension between human and digital world, loss of humanity and over reliance on technology. Bradbury focuses on how children can be isolated from both parents and society by exposing the violent images of African veldt in this story *the Veldt*. In this dystopian fiction, it is possible to observe Bradbury's anxieties regarding a future where technology replaces human labor. This story serves as a warning to parents who fulfill every wish of their children. Parents who want to provide their children with a better life through smart homes are actually destroying their human emotions. Digital screens not only cause children to become emotionally alienated from their parents, but also leave them with a meaningless, boring, and virtual life. Bradbury does not only write about a violence room, he also reflects a digital panopticon, as theorized by Michel Foucault, that controls everything related to humans. *The Veldt* highlights that this system watches us, knows our needs before us and offers a comfort life, in real, creates a digital prison. The aim of this study is to reveal how new generation is raised by digital screens instead of parents and the tragic consequences of technological parenting on the children through the *The Veldt*, in the frame of Panopticon theory.

Keywords: New Generation, Digital Parenting, Panopticon Theory, *The Veldt*, Ray Bradbury.

ÖZET

The Veldt, Amerikalı yazar Ray Bradbury tarafından yazılan; ebeveynlerin rollerini üstlenen otomasyonlu bir ev ve kreşin trajik hikayesini konu alan, 1950 yılında yayımlanmış kısa bir öyküdür. Diğer birçok bilim kurgu yazarlarının aksine Bradbury dijital çağın bir vizyoneri olarak geleceğe dair korkularını geçmişi üzerinden betimleyebilen etkili bir yazardır. Onun

korkusu teknolojinin kendisi değil insanların onu nasıl kullandığıdır. O insani duyguların kaybedilme kaygısını taşır çünkü çocuklarımızı büyütmek için makinelere izin verdiğimiz zaman onlar için daha iyi bir hayat yapmadığımızı, aile bağlarını tanımayan dijital yeni nesil ortaya çıkardığımızı düşünür. Özellikle Bradbury'nin teknoloji karşıtı çalışmaları insan ve dijital dünya arasındaki çatışmayı, insanlığın yok oluşunu ve teknolojiye aşırı güveni incelemekle bilinmektedir. Bradbury, öyküsünde çocukların Afrika bozkırındaki şiddet görsellerine maruz kalarak ebeveynlerinden ve toplumdan nasıl koptuklarına odaklanmaktadır. Bu distopik kurguda Bradbury'nin, insan gücünün yerini alan teknolojinin yaratacağı geleceğe dair kaygılarını görmek mümkündür. Bu öykü çocukların her isteğini yerine getiren ebeveynler için bir uyarı niteliğindedir. Akıllı evler aracılığıyla onlara daha iyi bir hayat sunmak isteyen ebeveynler aslında onların insani duygularını yok etmektedir. Dijital ekranlar çocukları sadece anne ve babalarından duygusal olarak yabancılaştırmaya sebep olmamakta aynı zamanda onlara anlamsız sıkıcı ve sanal bir hayat bırakmaktadır. Bradbury sadece bir şiddet odasından bahsetmiyor, ayrıca insanla ilgili her şeyi kontrol eden, Michel Foucault'nun kuramlaştırdığı, dijital bir panoptikomu da tasvir ediyor. *The Veldt*, sistemin insanları izlediğini, ihtiyaçlarımızı bizden önce bildiğini ve bize konforlu bir hayat sunarken aslında dijital bir hapishane yarattığını vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, *The Veldt* öyküsü üzerinden ve Panoptikon kuramı çerçevesinde yeni nesilin anne baba yerine nasıl dijital ekranlar tarafından büyütüldüğünü ve teknolojik ebeveynlerin çocukları üzerindeki trajik sonuçlarını ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yeni nesil, Dijital Ebeveynlik, Panoptikon Kuramı, *The Veldt*, Ray Bradbury.

**PAUL AUSTER'IN *CAM KENT*'İ AYNASINDAN POSTMODERN DÜNYADA
KAYBOLAN BENLİK**

**LOST SELF IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD FROM THE MIRROR OF
THE CITY OF GLASS BY PAUL AUSTER**

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ÖZET

Kaybolma duygusu, insan hayal gücü ve benlik algısı üzerinde ciddi bir sarsıntı yaratır. Günümüzde bireylerin kimliklerinin belirsizleşmesi, modern dünyanın yarattığı kırılmaların sonucu olarak öne çıkan temel sorunlardan biridir. Bu kırılmalar, edebî akımların dönüşümünü de etkilemişlerdir. Modernitenin uzantısı olarak nitelendirilen postmodernizm, edebî bir akım olarak etkisini, büyük anlatıların meşruiyetini sarsmak ve edebî metinleri belirsizlik ile çoğulculuk temelinde yeniden biçimlendirmek amacıyla göstermektedir. Geçmiş, kültürel birikimi ve tarihsel süreci bütüncül bir şekilde ele alan bu bakış açısı, edebiyatta üstkurmaca ve metinlerarasılık gibi yazınsal tekniklerin yaygınlaşmasına zemin hazırlamıştır; çünkü postmodern anlatı, metinlerin birbiriyle sürekli iletişim hâlinde olduğunu, anlamın sabit değil çoklu olduğunu ve okuyucunun üretim sürecine aktif olarak katılması gerektiğini ortaya koyar. Böylece postmodern edebiyat, klasik anlatı düzenlerini yeniden düşünmeye zorlayan, çok sesli bir üretim alanı olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu çalışma, modernizm–postmodernizm ayrımını kısaca ele aldıktan sonra postmodern edebiyatın belirleyici teknikleri olan metinlerarasılık ve üstkurmaca odaklanacaktır. Paul Auster'in *New York Üçlemesi*'nin ilki olan *City of Glass (Cam Kent)*, hem postmodern anlatı tekniklerini hem de postmodern bireyin benlik sorunlarını Daniel Quinn anlatıcısıyla örnekleyen önemli bir metindir. Postmodern dünyada bireydeki kimlik arayışının Quinn karakteri, postmodern dünyanın ise New York metaforu üzerinden anlatılması Auster'in yazın anlayışını açık biçimde ortaya koyar. Bu çalışma postmodernizmi, postmodern bireydeki kimlik karmaşasını ve Auster'in yazınsal yaklaşımını ortaya koymayı amaçlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Modernizm, Postmodernizm, Kimlik Karmaşası, *City of Glass*, Paul Auster.

ABSTRACT

The feeling of being lost creates a serious shock on the human imagination and sense of self. Nowadays, the ambiguity of individuals' identities is one of the main problems that come to the fore as a result of the breakdowns created by the modern world. These breakdowns have

also influenced the transformation of literary movements. Described as an extension of modernity, postmodernism, as a literary movement, exerts its influence by undermining the legitimacy of grand narratives and reshaping literary texts on the basis of ambiguity and pluralism. This perspective, which holistically addresses the past, cultural heritage, and historical process, has paved the way for the widespread use of techniques such as metafiction and intertextuality in literature; because postmodern narrative reveals that texts are in constant communication with each other, that meaning is not fixed but multiple, and that the reader should actively participate in the production process. Thus, postmodern literature can be defined as a polyphonic production space that forces a rethinking of classical narrative structures. Following a brief discussion of the modernism-postmodernism distinction, this study will focus on intertextuality and metafiction, which are the defining techniques of postmodern literature. *The Glass City*, the first of Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy*, is an important text that exemplifies both postmodern narrative techniques and the postmodern individual's problems of identity through the narrator Daniel Quinn. The exploration of individual identity through the character of Quinn, along with the depiction of the postmodern world through the metaphor of New York, clearly reveals Auster's literary approach. This study aims to reveal postmodernism, the identity confusion in the postmodern individual, and Auster's literary approach.

Keywords: Modernism, Postmodernism, Identity Confusion, *City of Glass*, Paul Auster.

POWER AND GENDERED SPEECH IN ANGELA CARTER'S *THE BLOODY CHAMBER*: FROM LINGUISTIC DOMINANCE TO GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

Language plays an important role in shaping power relations and gender identities in literary texts. Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* provides a productive framework for examining the relationship between discourse and power. This study analyzes the discursive structure of the story through the perspectives of linguistic dominance and Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity. The tension between forms of discourse associated with male authority and the position of the female subject within the narrative is explored. In this way, the story illustrates how language can function both as a mechanism that reinforces patriarchal power and as a space where gender identity is continuously produced and negotiated. By bringing these perspectives together, the study suggests that the story not only reflects unequal power relations but also reveals the processes through which gendered identities are constructed and maintained. In this sense, language appears both as a tool of domination and as a space where the boundaries of gendered subjectivity can be questioned and reconfigured.

Keywords: Linguistic dominance, gender performativity, discourse and power, patriarchal language, female subjectivity

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BORDER NARRATIVES WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF MIGRATORY TRANSFORMATION: GLOIRA ANZALDÚA'S
BORDERLANDS; MOHSIN HAMÍD'S *EXIT WEST*; AND MEHMET UZUN'S *BÎRA
QEDERÊ***

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary era, migration represents a profound epistemological shift that forces individuals to undergo complex psychological, cultural, and linguistic transformations. The concept of the border has evolved from a rigid geopolitical demarcation into a dynamic, lived experience where identities are continually deconstructed and reconstructed. This paper presents a comparative analysis of three foundational literary narratives of border crossing to explore the multifaceted nature of displacement: Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Mehmet Uzun's *Bîra Qederê*, and Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*. By placing these distinct works in dialogue, the study examines how different forms of crossing shape the modern migrant condition. Anzaldúa illustrates the visceral trauma of the physical border and the resulting development of a resilient, hybrid psychological identity. Uzun highlights the invisible borders of statelessness, demonstrating how political exile catalyzes a linguistic reclamation that preserves cultural memory across national lines. Finally, Hamid projects migration into a hyper-modern context through magical realism, revealing that the erasure of physical boundaries only amplifies the profound existential and technological traumas of arrival. Ultimately, this analysis argues that migratory transformation is a continuous evolution of shedding old selves and synthesizing new ones, with literature acting as a crucial space for articulating the trauma, agency, and resilience inherent in the global migrant experience.

Keywords: Gloria Anzaldúa, Mehmet Uzun, Mohsin Hamid, Migration, Borderlands, Identity, Trauma.

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEXT: A STUDY ON STRUCTURAL EXPERIMENTS
AND VISUAL ARCHITECTURE IN MODERN AND POSTMODERN NARRATIVE**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the unconventional narrative techniques central to modern and postmodern literature from a structural and visual perspective. These techniques, which challenge the traditional, linear, and chronological boundaries of narrative, are categorized in terms of the fragmentation of time, the physical structure of the text, and the reader's interaction with the text. The article examines a wide range of works, from the 'nested/annular' structure in Michael Christie's *Greenwood* to the 'ergodic' (physically demanding) arrangements in Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*, from the 'chiasmic' (symmetrical) structure in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* to Italo Calvino's 'metafiction' experiments. The originality of the study lies in not only theoretically analyzing these complex narrative models but also concretizing each technique under the concept of 'narrative architecture' through visual diagrams, flowcharts, and structural maps. In conclusion, this article aims to demonstrate that unconventional narrative techniques are more than mere formal embellishments; they are carriers of meaning integrated into the essence of the story, transforming the reader from a passive recipient into an active co-creator of meaning.

Key Words: Narrative architecture; Postmodern novel; Nonlinearity; Ergodic literature; Structural analysis; Visualization.

**TEMPORAL EXCESS AND SPATIAL COMPRESSION: A TEXTLINGUISTIC
ANALYSIS OF VONNEGUT’S “TOMORROW AND TOMORROW AND
TOMORROW”**

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ABSTRACT

Dystopian narratives often make social crises visible not only at the content level but also through the construction of time and space. In such texts, the vision of the future becomes a tool for questioning the idea of historical progress, while the shrinking of the individual’s living space becomes an indicator of social and ideological oppression. This study aims to reveal how the relationship between *temporal excess* and *spatial compression* is established at the linguistic level by examining Kurt Vonnegut’s short story “Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow” (1954) from a textlinguistic perspective. In the story, the extension of lifespan through biotechnological interventions leads to the accumulation of generations and the replacement of the sense of historical progress with repetition and stagnation. Drawing on Halliday and Hasan’s theory of cohesion and Van Dijk’s macrostructure approach, the study analyzes the ideological function of lexical repetitions, chains of reference, and textual motifs. It argues that temporal signs in the story produce a cyclical nature under the illusion of historical progress through repetition; the study shows that spatial designations, too, textually anchor intra-family power relations. The discourse of consumption that becomes prominent at the end of the story creates the ideological trap of advertisement narrative by enabling the reinterpretation of biotechnological immortality within a capitalist framework. In conclusion, the study argues that in Vonnegut’s dystopia, textual organization not only reflects the thematic content but also performatively reproduces time, space, and power relations through language.

Key Words: Temporal Excess; Spatial Compression; Textlinguistics; Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow; Kurt Vonnegut.

BODY, WAR, AND RESISTANCE: POTENTIALITY IN EDWARD BOND'S *HAVE I NONE* AND HOWARD BARKER'S *SCENES FROM AN EXECUTION*

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses two contemporary plays—Howard Barker's *Scenes from an Execution* (1990) and Edward Bond's *Have I None* (2000)—in accordance with Agambenian terms, including the notions of bare life, the state of exception, and potentiality, to deconstruct the intersection between body, war, and resistance. Mainly focusing on Agamben's post-Foucauldian reading of biopolitics, the study argues that the notion of sovereign power reduces the human body to mere bare life; however, paradoxically, this reduction simultaneously reveals the body as a site of potential resistance. In both plays, the body becomes an object where control, violence, and potentiality converge—serving as a catalyst for the possibility of freedom. In the light of Agamben's conceptualization of potentiality and impotentiality, the act of resistance appears as both an ethical and aesthetic gesture that opens the possibility of alternative forms of being. The role of art and the artist itself becomes a space that possesses the power to resist the biopolitical order.

Keywords: Agamben; Bare Life; Potentiality; Resistance; Contemporary British Drama

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN ELT CLASSROOMS: EVIDENCE FROM BANGLADESHI UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Critical Pedagogy is an educational approach that encourages learners to critically examine their social realities, including power relations, contradictions, and structural inequalities. This study explores students' perceptions of the significance of Critical Pedagogy in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms at Bangladeshi universities. In this context, perception refers to the ways individuals interpret and make sense of phenomena based on their experiences and understanding. Accordingly, the study investigates students' internal perspectives, including their opinions, attitudes, abilities, biases, emotions, and beliefs regarding the role of Critical Pedagogy in ELT. By utilizing a quantitative methodology, the study assesses the current adoption status of Critical Pedagogy and its influence on students learning experiences. Data was gathered through an online survey from 20 universities and completed by 120 students enrolled in ELT courses. The preliminary findings show that students are becoming more aware of the benefits of Critical Pedagogy in fostering critical thinking, cultural understanding, and social justice in language education. However, the study also points out challenges in its effective use, including resistance to traditional teaching methods and a lack of training for teachers. The research highlights the need for a more thorough integration of Critical Pedagogy into ELT curricula to improve students' language skills and critical thinking abilities in the Bangladeshi educational context.

Key words: Bangladeshi University, Critical Pedagogy, ELT classroom, Students' perception

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN RURAL SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND PERSPECTIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT:

English language learning in rural schools represents an essential dimension of educational equity and students' integration into a globalized context. However, the educational process in rural areas faces multiple structural and pedagogical challenges, such as limited access to modern teaching resources, a shortage of qualified teaching staff, underdeveloped digital infrastructure, and reduced exposure to authentic language use contexts.

This article analyzes the impact of these factors on students' academic performance and motivation, highlighting the disparities between rural and urban environments in terms of acquired language competencies. It also explores the opportunities offered by digitalization, European educational programs, and interactive teaching methods, which can contribute to reducing educational gaps. Adopting a pedagogical and socio-educational perspective, the study proposes concrete intervention strategies, including continuous teacher training, the development of digital competencies, and the implementation of teaching approaches adapted to the specific characteristics of rural communities. The conclusions emphasize the need for coherent educational policies that support equitable access to English language learning and facilitate the integration of rural students into the European educational and professional space.

Key words: English language; education; globalization; intercultural communication; social integration; future skills

**THE ROLE OF THE NARRATOR IN THE NOVEL «AS I LAY DYING» BY
WILLIAM FAULKNER**

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ABSTRACT

William Faulkner's literary legacy constitutes a powerful prose focused on the writer's contemporary reality, deeply rooted in the historical past of the American South. All of Faulkner's novels are constructed in a highly original manner: they combine both condensed and extended temporal frameworks, employ a multiplicity of narrators behind whom the authorial presence is concealed, and are characterized by complex narrative stylistics. In the novel «*As I Lay Dying*» (1930), the narrator has a significant emotional and semantic role: he smiles, grieves, expresses irritation, clarifies details, resorts to repetition, employs irony, and conveys surprise; at the same time, the narrator often lacks complete knowledge, rendering the narrative only partially reliable, as characters may at times reproduce the words of others. Faulkner's narrators are diverse figures: the uneducated farmer Anse Bundren, his young son Vardaman, or the taciturn Cash, whose utterances are frequently simple and structured around tautology. Nevertheless, the introduction of such narrators generates a polyphonic narrative texture. On occasion, a single event is recounted by several narrators (Cash, Darl, Dewey Dell), enabling the revelation of previously unknown details within the same episode. In this way, the author penetrates the confusion of impressions and thoughts, factual discrepancies, and contingencies to arrive at a multidimensional representation of life's complexity.

Another technique characteristic of Faulkner's prose is narration in the third person, employed through multiple narrative voices. The author's apparent withdrawal from the narrative produces a specific psychological effect on the reader. Instead of explicit authorial judgments, the reader encounters events refracted through the consciousness of individual narrators. As a result, the narrative conveys not the event itself but the manner in which it is perceived, understood, and remembered by a particular character. This approach allows W. Faulkner to explore the inner worlds of his characters more profoundly and engage the reader in the search for truth or narrative meaning.

INSIDE THE BLACK BOX: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

For decades, translation studies focused mainly on the end product or the final text. Translation scholars often compared the source text with the translated version to judge accuracy. Translation scholars often examined the source text and compared it with the translated text to see whether it is accurate. But translation is not just a linguistic operation—it is not merely about words. It is also a complex cognitive activity that occurs inside the mind of a translator. The paper looks at the intersection of ‘linguistics’ and ‘cognitive science’. We have actually attempted to explore the psychological side of translation. It seeks to open the ‘black box’ or the translator’s mind to see what goes on in his/her brain while s/he is engaged in the process of translation. We do so to understand how translation happens, not just what the final product or the target text (TT) looks like. The article discusses several key mental functions. One of them is memory. The translator has to hold part of a sentence in his/her working memory while simultaneously looking in his long-term memory for accurate and proper equivalents. Attention is another crucial factor. Translators do not read like normal or ordinary readers. They scan the source text for meaning, structure, tone, and cultural signals simultaneously. Moreover, the article highlights the critical role of emotion (or affect). Translation cannot be thought of as a robotic or mechanical task. A translator’s mood, stress levels, and emotional reaction to a text can significantly influence and impact the final product. For instance, translating a traumatic news story or tragic story is very different from translating a dry manual or a technical guide. Understanding the psychology of translation has important practical value. By understanding Cognitive Load or the mental effort required, we can design better translation software (CAT tools) that reduces fatigue and exhaustion. In addition, we can improve translator training, teaching students how to harness their cognitive resources or how to manage their attention, memory, and decision-making. Ultimately, the paper reminds us that every translated text (TT) is created by human minds. Behind every sentence (generated by human being!) stands a person who is thinking, feeling, and choosing.

Keywords: cognitive translation, psychology of translation, working memory, attention, emotion, translator training, cognitive load

Introduction

Translation is viewed by many to be a specialized skill. Many individuals picture a translator sitting at a desk, replacing one word with a word from another language. It may appear to be a peaceful, mechanical process from the outside. However, this picture does not capture the essence of the process of translation. Translation is a rigorous mental process. It requires concentration, judgment, creativity, and emotional stability.

Previous research into the process of translation has centered mainly around the text. The text has been compared to the translation. Questions such as: "Is the meaning correct?" "Is the grammar correct?" "Is the translation natural?" have been asked. These are all significant questions, but they do not capture the entire process of translation. They only focus on the outcome, rather than the process.

Recently, more research has centered around the mental process of the translator. Instead of asking "What has the translator produced?" we now ask "How has the translator arrived at the final product?" This is a shift from the page to the brain.

The human mind is a 'black box.' We can see what goes in and what comes out, but we cannot see what goes on inside. Translation is a perfect example of that. A translator reads a sentence in a language and translates it into another sentence in a different language. What seems to be a very simple activity involves a great deal of mental processing, which happens in a matter of seconds.

When translating, translators are making decisions every second. Should they stick to the original sentence form, or change it? Should they use a literal meaning, or a non-literal meaning? Should they stick to the cultural reference, or change it? These are all decisions that involve mental processing.

But that's not all. Translators are not translating just one thing at a time. They are also trying to comprehend meaning, grammar, style, previous parts of the text, and readers. That's a lot of thinking.

Emotion is also involved. Translators are human beings, not machines. Emotion is involved in their mental processes. A translator who is translating a document under stress may be in a hurry to finish the translation. A translator who is translating a tragic story may be emotionally involved.

Understanding the psychology of translation is important for a number of reasons. One is to show respect for the complexity of translation as a profession. Translation is not just a mechanical transfer from one language to another. It is a complex mental process. Second, understanding psychology can be useful in training translators. One does not have to focus on teaching vocabulary and grammar alone. Third, it can be useful in designing translation aids.

Cultural issues (especially culture-specific terms) are one of the challenges which may impose require great cognitive effort on the side of a translator and more specifically, interpreters, to find proper equivalents (Parvaz & Afrouz 2021; Latifi Shirejini & Afrouz 2022a, 2022b, 2023; Afrouz 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d, 2022e, 2022f, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2025; Afrouz & Shahi 2024). The notion of 'culture', as Culpeper (2015: 137) confirms, "must surely stand as one of the most controversial, most difficult to define concepts in academia". Besides, the central "focus of modern Translation Studies", sounds to be "the ever changing challenges of successful cross-cultural communication" (Burazer 2013: 127). It is by no way a simple task "to present a foreign culture through literature to a target culture, since the translator must be able to adapt foreign words or on many occasions add footnotes to explain what an exotic word actually means" (Kočan Šalamon 2015: 213).

This paper is an examination of the psychology of translation. It looks at memory, attention, perception, emotion, and cognitive load. It also looks at decision-making processes. This is to show that behind every translation is a person who thinks and feels. Understanding the psychology of translation is like opening a black box to get a better understanding of translation itself.

Literature Review and Theoretical Issues

Translation as a Cognitive Activity

Translation, at its most basic, is a process of understanding and re-expression. The translator must first comprehend what is in the original text. Then, he or she must re-express that understanding in another language. Both processes are heavily dependent on cognitive activities.

Translation is not a passive activity. Unlike reading, where a person might gloss over a text, translation requires active processing. A person reading for entertainment might gloss over a sentence. A translator cannot. This shows that translation is not a passive activity. Rather, translation is a constructive activity. The translator must construct meaning.

Working Memory

Working memory is the space in our minds where we temporarily hold information while we process it. For a translator, this space is always in use. Suppose we are translating a sentence. Before we finish reading it, we must hold onto the beginning of the sentence. We must also hold onto the translation. If we overload our working memory, we might make errors. We might miss words. We might lose connections.

However, experienced translators sometimes find ways to ease the pressure. One such method is breaking up long sentences into smaller ones. Another is taking notes. These methods help maintain mental clarity.

Long-Term Memory

Long-term memory is the part of memory that stores information acquired from years of learning. This includes vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions. When a translator is searching for an appropriate word or phrase, he or she uses long-term memory. The more information in long-term memory, the faster the information is retrieved.

Practice improves memory. Over time, the translator becomes familiar with patterns and can recognize them easily. This process becomes second nature. However, long-term memory is not without its flaws. At times, a word is familiar but elusive.

Attention

Attention is the ability to focus on information while ignoring the rest. Translation requires attention to details while filtering out distractions. This ability is needed for a long time while translating a document. However, attention has limitations. After working for hours, attention starts to decline. This makes it difficult to translate a document. It is because of this reason that breaks are needed while translating a document.

A translator also uses divided attention. While translating a document, a translator looks at several aspects of a document at the same time. This makes it difficult to translate a document because it requires a lot of attention.

Perception and Reading Style

A translator reads a document differently from a casual reader. While a casual reader reads a document for information, a translator reads a document analytically. A translator also perceives a document differently from a casual reader. For instance, a translator may stop at a single adjective used in a document. The translator may ask himself whether the adjective used is emotional or neutral. It may also ask whether the adjective used in a document is formal or casual.

Emotion and Affect

Emotion is sometimes overlooked when talking about professional activity. However, it is a strong influence on performance. A calm translator can think clearly. An anxious translator may have trouble selecting words. Emotional exhaustion can decrease creativity. The subject matter itself can also cause emotional reactions. Translating a happy story can be invigorating. Translating information about violence or suffering can be draining. Being aware of these emotional influences can help translators look after their well-being.

Cognitive Load

Cognitive load is the sum of mental effort needed for a task. Translation can be a high cognitive load because so many processes occur simultaneously. If the load becomes too great, quality will suffer. This is why cognitive load management is so important. Effective tools, reasonable deadlines, and favorable working conditions can all mitigate unnecessary cognitive load.

Method

The design of the study is generally descriptive and theoretical. It is based on library research and critically analyzes the issue from various perspectives.

Results and Discussion

Decision-Making in Translation

Each translation involves many small decisions. Many decisions are made so fast that the translator is not aware that they are making decisions. Some decisions are linguistic. Some are cultural. Some are stylistic. Decision-making is an improvement with experience. Experienced translators are able to trust their intuition while still checking their decisions.

The Role of Experience

Experience affects how translation is processed in the brain. New translators often process translation word by word. This requires mental energy. Experts process larger units of meaning. Their reading is faster and more confident. This makes translation easier and allows more room for nuances.

Stress and Time Pressure

Deadlines are common in translation work. Some pressure can improve concentration. Too much pressure can reduce accuracy. Stress reduces attention. The translator may miss subtle meaning. Healthy work habits are therefore important. Planning ahead and allowing time for revision are examples of such practices.

Technology and Mental Effort

Translation technology may also aid memory and consistency. Translation technology relieves the translator of tedious work. However, if translation technology is not well designed, there is the chance for distraction. This is because the technology will constantly distract the translator. Technology should not compete with the mind but rather aid the human mind.

Training the Mind

There are various ways in which the education of translators can benefit from a psychological point of view. For example, the translator should learn how to train his or her mind. Basic practices such as working in quiet places or reading difficult material later on are examples of such practices.

Knowing one's self is also important. This is because the translator will then be able to train his or her mind.

The Human Element

Translation technology may have improved over the years, but translation is still a human activity. This is because computers are able to process translation but cannot feel any responsibility towards the meaning of the translation.

Human translation involves judgment, understanding, and empathy. Such human translation skills are derived from the mind as a whole, not from language knowledge alone.

Conclusion

If we were able to see inside the mind of the translator, we would see how complex the process of translation is. It is not a simple process; it is a complex cognitive process.

If we see translation in this way, we will see that translators are not invisible technicians; they are skilled thinkers. This way of seeing translators is important because it will help us develop better training programs, tools, and working conditions.

Most importantly, it will help us see that every translation is imbued with a human presence. Behind each sentence is a person who has read thoughtfully, thought thoughtfully, and chosen thoughtfully. The black box is important because it will help us see the intelligence and thoughtfulness that goes into translation.

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LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Modern linguoculturology, situated at the intersection of linguistics, cultural studies, and anthropology, investigates the relationship between language and culture, revealing how linguistic structures reflect and shape the value orientations of an ethnic group. One of the key aspects of this interaction is the study of emotional communication, in particular, the ways of expressing love in different linguocultures. This paper examines the linguocultural features of verbal and non-verbal expression of love in Chinese and English-speaking traditions based on Gary Chapman's concept of the "five love languages."

Relevance of the study is determined by several factors. First, in recent years, business and cultural interaction with the People's Republic of China has been expanding in the Republic of Belarus. Therefore, for better mutual understanding, it is necessary to know not only the language but also the culture of the people. Since communication takes place both in English and Chinese, it is necessary to study the linguistic worldview. Furthermore, in the context of globalization, understanding differences in emotional communication becomes crucial for effective intercultural interaction.

Keywords: linguoculturology, linguistic worldview, concept, explicitness, implicitness, love languages.

The purpose of the study: To conduct a comparative linguoculturological analysis of verbal and non-verbal ways of expressing love in Chinese and English-speaking (based on material from the USA and Great Britain) cultures using Gary Chapman's concept of the "five love languages."

Research materials and methods: The theoretical foundation included works on linguoculturology, psycholinguistics and intercultural communication by domestic and foreign authors V.A. Maslova, A. Wierzbicka, G. Chapman, as well as textbooks, scientific articles encompassing research on the concept of the "five love languages" and peculiarities of expressing emotions in different cultures.

The practical part involved a survey of English-speaking and Chinese native speakers via the Google Forms platform based on a developed questionnaire. The results were processed using the built-in Google Forms package, as well as non-parametric statistics, and were presented in tables with examples of lexical units and their cultural meanings. For processing the results, methods of comparative-contrastive analysis, discourse analysis of speech formulas and interpretation of cultural contexts were applied.

Table 1**Preferences for love languages among English-speaking and Chinese respondents**

Love Language	English-speaking respondents	Chinese respondents
Words of affirmation	87%	20%
Quality time	73%	47%
Receiving gifts	33%	60%
Acts of service	27%	93%
Physical touch	80%	13%

Main research results: Verbal expression (Words of affirmation): A cardinal contrast was revealed. In English-speaking culture, direct and frequent verbal expression of feelings ("I love you", "You mean the world to me") is the norm (confirmed by 87% of respondents), reflecting the values of emotional openness and low-context communication. In Chinese culture, indirect, implicit forms dominate, where love is expressed through words of care ("Have you eaten?", "Go to bed early") or silent actions. The direct phrase "我爱你" (wǒ ài nǐ) is rarely used (20% of respondents) and carries high social weight.

Non-verbal expression: Analysis of the "love languages" revealed culturally conditioned preferences:

Acts of service: They are the dominant way of expressing love in Chinese culture (93%), rooted in the Confucian ethic of duty and care. In the English-speaking tradition, they are also present but are more often accompanied by verbal reinforcement.

Quality time: Valued in both cultures, but interpreted differently. For English-speaking respondents (73%) it is active, emotionally rich communication. For Chinese (47%) — often, silent presence and joint performance of everyday tasks are sufficient.

Physical contact: Widely spread and normalized in the English-speaking environment (80%). In Chinese culture, especially publicly, it manifests significantly more restrained (13%) due to norms of decency.

Receiving gifts: Significant in both cultures, but their semantics differ. In China, gift-giving is more strictly regulated by ritual and the principle of reciprocity ("礼尚往来"). In the English-speaking tradition, the personal, emotional symbolism of the gift is more important.

Conclusion. The conducted research allowed for a comprehensive linguoculturological analysis of the concept of "love languages" in Chinese and English linguocultures. Linguoculturology, as an integrative discipline, provides an effective toolkit for studying emotional communication. The research confirmed that the realization and interpretation of "love languages" are deeply determined by key parameters of the cultural paradigm. The analysis of the realization of the concept "love" within the framework of the linguistic worldview revealed its cultural conditioning: in the English-speaking tradition it is associated

with individualism and expressiveness, while in the Chinese — with Confucian values of duty, harmony and implicitness.

The Chinese high-context culture, based on collectivism and Confucian norms, prefers implicit forms of expressing love through actions, care and ritual behavior. The obtained results have practical significance for intercultural communication, helping to overcome barriers of mutual understanding.

The research confirmed the hypothesis about the deep cultural conditioning of ways to express love. "Love languages" function as markers of the basic values of a linguoculture. The obtained results have practical significance for predicting and preventing communicative failures in intercultural dialogue, as well as for linguodidactics and translation theory.

MAPPING THE “LOVE LANGUAGES”: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION BETWEEN CHINESE AND ENGLISH SPEAKERS

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ABSTRACT

This article reports the results of an empirical study designed to quantify and analyze cross-cultural differences in the preference for Gary Chapman’s “Five Love Languages.” The study involved a comparative survey of two groups: native Chinese speakers and native English speakers. Participants were asked to identify their primary and secondary modes of giving and receiving affection. The results present a clear and statistically significant cultural divide. The paper provides a detailed “map” of these preferences, discusses their correlation with established cultural dimensions (individualism/collectivism, high/low context), and offers practical recommendations. These findings are crucial for developing intercultural competence, aiding in personal relationships, international education, and global business partnerships by making implicit emotional codes explicit and understandable.

Keywords: five Love Languages, empirical study, cross-cultural differences, survey, Chinese respondents, English-speaking respondents, acts of service, words of affirmation, communication styles, intercultural competence.

The purpose of the study: The primary aim of this study was to empirically identify and visually map the key differences in preferences for ways of expressing affection (according to G. Chapman’s classification) between native speakers of Chinese and English-speaking cultures, in order to create a practical guide for intercultural interaction.

Research materials and methods:

The main research tool was a structured online questionnaire on the Google Forms platform. The sample consisted of Chinese and native English speakers from the USA/UK). The methodology included ranking the “love languages” by importance, selecting typical speech formulas, and analyzing situational contexts of their use. Data processing was carried out using quantitative analysis to determine percentage shares and qualitative analysis to interpret examples. The results were processed using the built-in Google Forms package, as well as non-parametric statistics, and were presented in tables with examples of lexical units and their cultural meanings.

Table 1

Preferences for love languages among English-speaking and Chinese respondents

Love Language	English-speaking respondents	Chinese respondents
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Receiving gifts	33%	60%
Acts of service	27%	93%
Physical touch	80%	13%

Main research results:

- 1. Quantitative Picture of Preferences:** The data revealed diametrically opposite profiles:
 Top-2 for English-speaking respondents: Words of Affirmation (87%), Physical Touch (80%).
 Top-2 for Chinese respondents: Acts of Service (93%), Receiving Gifts (60%). This confirms the hypothesis of verbal-physical vs. action-ritual dominants.
- 2. Qualitative Analysis of Speech Patterns:** Specific communicative practices underlie the quantitative indicators.
 English Pattern: Direct declarations of feelings (“You mean the world to me”), open physical gestures (public hugs), verbalization of services (“I made this for you”).
 Chinese Pattern: Indirect expressions through care (“早点休息” – “Go to bed early”), non-verbalized actions (cooking without being asked), ritual nature of gifts (“礼尚往来” – reciprocity in courtesy).
- 3. “Quality Time”:** Different Connotations: For English-speaking participants, it is active, joint engagement (date night, conversation). For Chinese participants, it is often passive, co-present existence (“陪伴” – “being together”), which is already perceived as a signal of devotion.

Conclusions and Practical Recommendations: The study empirically confirmed the existence of systemic differences that must be taken into account in the practice of cross-cultural communication. Based on the results, practical recommendations are formulated:

- For interacting with Chinese partners/colleagues: Emphasize reliability, practical assistance, and attention to ritual aspects (gifts, shared meals), without expecting frequent verbal praise.
- For interacting with English-speaking partners: Regularly use verbal support and do not avoid open (within an acceptable context) expression of approval and emotions.
- Awareness of these differences helps to avoid false interpretations: the absence of the word “love” does not mean the absence of feelings in the Chinese context, and an emphasis on actions does not replace the need for words in the English-speaking one.

LISTENING AS A KEY COMPETENCE: STRATEGIES FOR MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the complex challenges of listening comprehension in second language learning—an ability that, while central to overall linguistic development, has often been marginalized in teaching practice, methodological studies, and classroom application. The research outlines the fundamental elements of the listening process, highlights the teacher's pivotal role in facilitating comprehension, and proposes key principles for effective instruction.

Special focus is placed on listening within multicultural settings, where learners must interpret not only linguistic input but also the cultural meanings embedded in speech. In these contexts, listening emerges as a vital skill for fostering intercultural dialogue, preventing miscommunication, and encouraging mutual respect across diverse communities.

The paper argues that understanding the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms behind listening is essential for shaping teaching methods, developing suitable instructional resources, and creating purposeful tasks. Its main objective is to show that learners' listening proficiency can be significantly enhanced through guided pedagogy, exposure to authentic materials, and well-structured exercises that strengthen both strategic listening and metacognitive awareness.

Particular attention is given to the role of university instructors, who are uniquely positioned to develop students' active listening skills by integrating reflective practices, cultural perspectives, and interactive tasks that mirror real-life communication. By addressing both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of listening, educators can better equip students for participation in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

Finally, the article draws on teaching practice to suggest directions for future research aimed at bridging theoretical frameworks with classroom application. It offers methodological insights, practical exercises, and pedagogical strategies that can serve as a resource for educators, teacher trainers, and researchers working to refine approaches to listening comprehension and speech perception in today's globalized, culturally diverse learning environments.

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY WITH SOME TEACHERS OF TAHOUA REGION IN NIGER

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of language teachers concerning the promoting of rural development in the Tahoua Region of Niger. It explores how English and French language teachers contribute to both learners' linguistic growth and the socio-economic and cultural transformation of their living environments. The mixed-methods approach used allowed to collect data through interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations with selected teachers from rural schools. The results show that language teachers play a crucial part in raising awareness about development issues, enhancing communication skills for local entrepreneurship, and fostering public investment among rural youth. However, their impact is often limited due to insufficient teaching resources, poor infrastructure, and lacking professional development possibilities. In short, the study suggests that, to significantly enhance language teachers' contribution to sustainable rural development, it is necessary to empower them through continuous training, material support, and community partnership. Besides, it recommends that policymakers and educational stakeholders should integrate language education into broader rural development strategies.

Keywords: Language teachers – Rural development – Tahoua Region – Education for development – Community empowerment – Niger – Case study.

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACTS OF VOCABULARY DEFICIENCY ON EFL STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS: THE CASE OF SOME KONNI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGER

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ABSTRACT

This study, that used a mixed research methods, investigates the influences of vocabulary deficiency on EFL students' communication skills at Konni Senior High School (Niger). Indeed, the mixed methods used allowed to collect data from learners (questionnaires), their teachers (questionnaires), and classroom observations. From quantitative results it appears that a large majority of students ($\geq 79-97\%$) and teachers ($\geq 79-97\%$) consider insufficient vocabulary as a significant obstacle to speaking and writing skills before which students hesitate, switch to French/Hausa, shorten utterances, or avoid speaking altogether. Qualitative observations confirm these findings and further enclos avoidance strategies, misuse of words, and anxiety-related silence as learners' options. In addition to the effective counter-measures that both students and teachers crucially identify such: contextualized teaching, vocabulary notebooks, regular quizzes/games, extensive reading, and communicative tasks, suggest that enriched vocabulary strongly increases learners' confidence and participation in role-plays, debates, and group work. Finally, the study unveils that vocabulary development is central to EFL communicative competence; besides, it discloses that substantial lexical gap reduction and communication improvement depend on coordinating teacher-student practices, supporting school resources and policy-level backing

Keywords: vocabulary deficiency, EFL communication, mixed methods, classroom observation, Konni Senior High School.

THE IMPACTS OF VOCABULARY DEFICIENCY ON EFL COMMUNICATION SKILLS: EVIDENCE FROM KONNI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study, using a mixed research methods, investigates the influences of vocabulary deficiency on EFL students' communication skills at Konni Senior High School (Niger). Indeed, the mixed methods used allowed to collect data from learners (questionnaires), their teachers (questionnaires), and classroom observations. From quantitative results it appears that a large majority of students ($\geq 79-97\%$) and teachers ($\geq 79-97\%$) consider insufficient vocabulary as a significant obstacle to speaking and writing skills before which students hesitate, switch to French/Hausa, shorten utterances, or avoid speaking altogether. Qualitative observations confirm these findings and further enclos avoidance strategies, misuse of words, and anxiety-related silence as learners' options. The study reveals that students and teachers identify crucial counter-measures like : contextualized teaching, vocabulary notebooks, regular quizzes/games, extensive reading, and communicative tasks. Thus, it suggest that enriched vocabulary strongly increases learners' confidence and participation in role-plays, debates, and group work. Besides, it unveils that vocabulary development is central to EFL communicative competence. Furthermore, it discloses that substantial lexical gap reduction and communication improvement depend on coordinating teacher–student practices, supporting school resources and policy-level backing

Keywords: vocabulary deficiency, EFL communication, mixed methods, classroom observation, Konni Senior High School.

CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS IN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETY: A CULTURAL APPRAISAL IN SELECTED CHINUA ACHEBE'S NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

Modern African societies have become a theatre of conflict due to African leaders' lack of appropriate approach of conflict resolutions. The aim of this paper is to examine conflict resolutions in traditional African society through the study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964). Through cultural and postcolonial approaches, it is revealed through the analyses of conflict resolution of the traditional settings of the novels that traditional people do not go into a conflict with their neighbouring villages without consultations. The consultations are carried out at the levels of great valiant men of war and at the level of the oracles. Another aspect is that they try to solve their indifferences with their opponent by using a pacific way like dialogue. In addition, it is exposed through the author that choosing an unexperienced person as an emissary for settlement of conflict can be dangerous whenever there is a problem between neighbouring villages, so an elderly/experimented person, full of wisdom is chosen in that occasion. Likewise, to guarantee peace, in African traditional society, historical link is considered and compromise or sacrifice is observed from both parts in order to avoid unjust war.

Keywords: Conflict, resolution, traditional, African society, cultural appraisal.

CHATGPT AS UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR NEURODIVERGENT ENGLISH LEARNERS? PERCEPTIONS FROM MOROCCAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions have yet to accommodate neurodivergent populations for whom cognitive processing, attentional regulation, and learning variances deviate from conventional expectations. Generative AI tools like ChatGPT align theoretically with Universal Design for Learning principles, yet limited research examines whether they meet neurodivergent learner needs or risk compounding inequities, especially in Global South contexts. This quantitative study assessed ChatGPT use and perceptions among English major students (N=122; 70 neurodivergent, 52 neurotypical) in Hassan II University of Casablanca in Morocco using a UDL framework comparing group differences across Engagement, Representation, and Action and Expression. Neurodivergent students rated ChatGPT significantly more favorably than neurotypical students for Engagement and Action and Expression, with particular value for reading comprehension support and idea generation. No group differences emerged for Representation or perceived Barriers, as both groups acknowledged concerns about academic dishonesty and over-reliance. Usage frequency strongly correlated with perceived helpfulness. These findings represent the first systematic assessment of ChatGPT as a compensatory tool for neurodivergent learners in multilingual, under-resourced settings. Results suggest AI-mediated scaffolding can address executive functioning challenges and literacy accessibility gaps when institutional accommodations remain insufficient, though ethical concerns require attention from educators and policymakers.

Keywords: ChatGPT, neurodiversity, Universal Design for Learning, English language learning, Morocco; higher education

**APPLYING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO ENHANCE WRITING SKILLS IN
VIETNAMESE AND ENGLISH FOR GRADE 10 UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN VIETNAM**

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ABSTRACT

The world is undergoing an accelerated phase of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, with artificial intelligence (AI) emerging as its defining force. This transformation presents an urgent imperative for education systems to adapt and reform in a timely manner in order to remain aligned with contemporary developments; only through such responsiveness can the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning be sustainably enhanced. In this context, AI has progressively established itself as a practical and influential tool in educational practices, both in Vietnam and globally. Educators are therefore required to develop the capacity to harness AI effectively in pedagogical processes so as to cultivate students' curiosity, intrinsic motivation, and ability to independently construct and manage knowledge. This paper seeks to provide a concise overview of artificial intelligence, examine the pedagogical benefits of integrating AI into teaching and learning activities, and, in particular, propose several instructional approaches that employ AI to enhance writing skills in both English and Vietnamese for Grade 10 students at the upper secondary level. Furthermore, the study addresses critical challenges related to academic integrity and the regulation of AI overuse, emphasizing the need to prevent learner dependence that may result in unintended and adverse educational consequences. At present, this issue constitutes a significant challenge for students, as the high level of convenience offered by AI may foster passivity, diminish cognitive engagement, and ultimately exert negative effects on learning outcomes.

Keywords: AI, Teaching English, High School Students

LANGUAGE, SECURITY AND THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

National security has been one of the teething challenges militating against the growth and development of the African countries and Nigeria in particular in the 21st century. In Nigeria, different security agencies such as the Nigerian Military, the Police, the Civil Defence Corps, the community vigilante group and many others have deployed diverse mechanism to curb the issue of insecurity, despite the diverse approaches employed, the issue of nation security has continued to reign supreme in Nigeria. This ugly situation has placed Nigeria on a red alert globally. It is very important to note that language and security are fundamentally intertwined, hence, the thrust of this paper is to explore how language can be employed as a tool for ensuring national security in Nigeria. The major pre-occupation of this study involves strategic and appropriate application of language in the management of crises; continual maintenance of peace and unity as well as mutual collaboration among citizens and government in order to enhance crises free environment. The study is empirically based. The findings of the study include wrong language management among political leaders; unfulfilled political promises by politicians as well as corruption among politicians are threats to national security. The paper recommends that political leaders should avoid unguarded utterances during public gathering; feedbacks from the electorate or citizens should be strengthen and communication competence be encouraged. The Government should as a matter of importance be pragmatic in issues relating to national security.

Keywords:

language, national security, Nigerian national development, security agencies

RESILIENCE OR SELF-DECEPTION? JOHNSON'S BEHAVIOUR UNDER COLONIAL LABOUR IN JOYCE CARY'S *MISTER JOHNSON*

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ABSTRACT

Although Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* has received consistent critical attention, most studies have focused on colonial power and issues of identity conflict. Little attention has been given to Johnson's work conditions within the colonial structure. This study examines the behaviour of Johnson in the narrative, by focusing on his response to exploitative colonial labour. Addressing the challenges of daily life under colonial rule, it explores the working conditions that shape Johnson personality and choices. Drawing on emotional labour theory, alongside a postcolonial perspective, it investigates how Johnson manages his emotions to survive within exploitative work system. The analysis reveals that Johnson's behavior under a colonial harsh system is both resilience and self-deception. His cheerfulness and loyalty are symptoms of colonial exploitation that demanded psychological submission alongside physical labour. He survives through emotional labor at the cost of masking his true feelings. Johnson's experience sheds light on modern workplaces and social systems where individuals are expecting to manage their emotions to meet organizational or societal aspirations.

Keywords: Resilience, Self-deception, Emotional labour, Colonial labour, Exploitation, Survival

GLOBAL ENGLISH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE : STUDENT PERSPECTIVES FROM ISLAMIC STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

Introduction and Purpose: While there has been a lot of recent research conducted on the attitudes of Islamic Studies students vis-à-vis English, there is scarcity of research on their attitudes with respect to social justice and even more so within the context of Morocco . This study, therefore, sheds light on the phenomenon of the global spread of English with respect to the concept of social justice as is understood within the framework developed by Philippe Van Parijs. It does so by examining the attitudes and perceptions held by the students of the Islamic Studies department.

Materials and Methods: This study utilized three types of instruments: structured and semi-structured interviews as well as an interview questionnaire in the process of data collection. It employed an emic (i.e., participant-relevant) approach in which the analytical typologies and themes which informed the analysis emerged from the answers provided by the participants with respect to their attitudes towards the global spread English and its relation with social justice. The participants comprised 11 Islamic Studies undergraduate students and a professor of Islamic Studies at the Hassan II faculty of letters and social sciences in Casablanca, Ain Chok.

Results: The results indicated that Islamic Studies students possess positive attitudes vis-à-vis English and acknowledge its utility especially in the act of da'wah. In the same vein, the students explained how by learning English and using it to preach the teachings of Islam to non-Muslims they are also spreading social justice which constitutes one of the core values in the religion of Islam. However, generalizations can only be made if future studies investigate the same phenomenon among bigger and more diverse samples.

Discussion and Conclusion: This study has found out that there is indeed a strong linkage between social justice and global English, one which is exhibited through Islam, which in turn acts as the vehicle in the process. The findings suggest that Islamic Studies students have positive attitudes towards English and specifically its spread around the world; they also regard it as instrumental and as a necessary tool in the spread of Islam.

Key Words: Social Justice, Religion, Globalisation, Attitudes, Qualitative.

**SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF POOR COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT AND
ITS EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE IN OGBADIBO LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**

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ABSTRACT

Language is central to human development and societal progress, mediating social interaction and sustaining collective worldviews through a reciprocal relationship with society. In institutional settings such as rural community health care facilities, effective communication management depends on language to promote mutual understanding, coordinate activities, and ensure efficient service delivery. Community members in Ogbadibo Local Government of Benue State report frequent discourteous treatment by health workers, leading many to abandon formal health facilities in favour of traditional medicine. This situation is indeed worrisome, considering the risk associated with the traditional medical practices. The gap created by the lack of successful communication in the community health facilities is what this paper seeks to address. The paper explores the causes and the extent to which the break in communication has affected the community members, as well as suggests ways in which the challenges can be remedied. The study was anchored on Dell Hymes' theory of Ethnography of communication. Data were collected from 60 respondents randomly selected from the communities, while a simple percentage was used for data analysis. The findings indicate deficiencies in health workers' interpersonal conduct, including impatience, hostility, and preferential treatment, alongside the exclusion of illiterate community members through the use of English. The study also notes inappropriate attitudes among some community members regarding service order and recommends communication management workshops for both health workers and community members.

Keywords: Sociolinguistic, communication management, community health care, language

FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE WORLD: THE POWER OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SHAPING THE FUTURE”

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, proficiency in the English language has become a fundamental skill for educational success, professional development, and social integration. This paper explores the transformative role of English as a global lingua franca, emphasizing its impact on access to knowledge, international mobility, intercultural communication, and lifelong learning. From early education to higher education and the labor market, English functions not merely as a subject of study, but as a strategic tool that empowers individuals to participate actively in global academic, economic, and cultural exchanges. The paper highlights the importance of developing communicative competencies in English within formal education, while also addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with digitalization, globalization, and inclusive education. Ultimately, the English language is presented as a key factor in shaping future-ready citizens, capable of adapting to rapid social change and contributing meaningfully to a knowledge-based society.

Key Words: English language; education; globalization; intercultural communication; social integration; future skills

ASSESSING TRANSLATION QUALITY: THE CASE OF INFORMATIVE TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Assessment of translation quality is an important issue in translation studies, particularly when working with informative texts. Informative texts are intended to convey and deliver precise facts, true and accurate data, and helpful knowledge to the target audience/readers. Examples of informative texts include reports, instructional manuals, academic articles, news articles, and public information documents. In informative texts, the central aim is not artistic or aesthetic expression but clarity, reliability and veracity. This is why even minor translation issues can impact the message reception. This paper explores how translation quality can be assessed when the source text is English and the target text is expected to communicate information in a clear and trustworthy way or credible manner. The paper focuses on pragmatic or practical criteria that can assist translators and evaluators in assessing whether a translation has successfully accomplished its task. Instead of relying on complicated models, the paper focuses on basic but crucial factors such as accuracy, clarity, consistency, readability, and attention to audience needs. The paper also discusses the role of the translator as a decision-maker. In many cases, translators are faced with the dilemma of being close to the source text or making the message easier for readers or more accessible to the audience. A good translation of informative texts should not be unnecessarily complicated while preserving the original meaning. The paper argues that quality assessment should not only be concerned with finding mistakes or looking for errors but should also be concerned with how well the message is communicated in the translation. In addition, the paper has discussed some of the challenges encountered in translation quality assessment (TQA), including technical terms, ambiguous sentences, cultural differences, and stylistic differences. The paper has confirmed that a balanced and flexible approach is more helpful and it is more useful to be flexible rather than rigid in dealing with TQA. By considering the issue of communication or reader understanding, one can make translation quality assessment easier. In conclusion, this paper has provided an accessible view of TQA for informative texts. It encourages translators to adopt thoughtful strategies that support both accuracy and readability.

Keywords: translation quality assessment, informative texts, accuracy, clarity, readability

Introduction

Translation plays an important role in the modern world. People need to read the translation of any text to gain knowledge, follow the instructions, and take decisions accordingly. Among the numerous types of translation, informative texts are the most sensitive ones because people need to read them to obtain correct information. A mistranslated sentence or any single sentence of the translation, if not done properly, can create confusion and sometimes may even cause harm and be dangerous for the readers.

Under these circumstances, the issue of quality is the most important one to be discussed. What makes a translation good? How can we judge the quality of the translation of an informative text? These questions have always guided many discussions in translation studies and have been the focal point of such discussions; however, they remain practical concerns for working translators and editors.

Generally, the informative texts are different from the literary ones in several ways. The most important aspect is the purpose of the translation. The informative texts are not supposed to transfer any kind of emotions; rather, they are supposed to transfer the facts to the readers. The language used is usually direct and functional or simple and clear; the readers should not face any problem understanding the message, nor should they notice the translator's presence.

Quality assessment, therefore, is not merely about finding mistakes or error detection. It is about assessing how well the translation functions as a tool or a means of communication. A translation can be grammatically correct but still fail if the text is unnatural and confusing. A slightly restructured sentence, on the other hand, may better serve readers and may be more beneficial to the audience if it enhances or improves clarity.

It is majorly argued that informative texts, after being translated, do not require re-translations. This may not always be true concerning all kinds of informative texts. Actually, nearly all old translations require re-translations (Aghakhani Chegeni et al, 2025). Of course, it is important to train good human translators, re-translators, and post-editors. Afrouz and Asgari Vartooni (2025) describe good translators as translators who can play the role of good translator trainers. These are translators who have enough theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in the field and who know “what ‘good translation’ means” (p. 1010). Cultural knowledge is an important factor in this regard. Karamanian (2002) states that culture deals with the collective, the personal, and the expressive human activity. One of the most important characteristics of a text which can make it difficult for translation is the problem of culture. Culture can be defined as an “entangled system of norms and values which confer meaning on individual and collective identity” (Addler 1977, as cited in Sukwiwat 1981, 216). It is interesting that language reflects “one of the fetters of identity” (Kondali 2012, p. 102).

In the era of AI, “while technology can significantly help us in terms of translation speed, it should be remembered that professional or specialized human translators can play a pivotal role in capturing the cultural nuances and emotional resonance” of the SL text (Asgari Vartooni & Afrouz, 2025a: 112). Researchers can center their research toward “the evolving role” of AI in rendering different text-types, especially texts related to children's literature (Asgari Vartooni & Afrouz, 2025b: 103). Although the issue of culture is more important in other text-types, such as expressive ones, one cannot ignore it totally in all types of informative texts.

TQA with a focus on informative texts translated from English is discussed in the current paper. A practical approach to TQA is presented, which is based on a set of values such as accuracy, clarity, consistency, and reader orientation. Instead of presenting a rigid set of rules or formula, a thoughtful approach is suggested—one that considers the purpose of the text and the needs of its audience.

The sections that follow describe some of the most important theoretical ideas, discuss some of the most major challenges, and offer some advice on how to evaluate translations more effectively.

Literature Review and Theoretical Issues

Understanding Informative Texts

Informative texts are meant for knowledge transfer. The effectiveness and success of the text is dependent on the clarity of the message conveyed to the reader. Unlike creative writing, these texts do not invite or allow for multiple interpretations. The reader is generally searching for a single interpretation and clear meaning.

This peculiarity affects and shapes the translation process. The translator needs to emphasize accuracy while ensuring that the language flows well. A literal translation can make the text cumbersome, while excessive freedom or too much leeway can lead to a loss of meaning. The best or ideal approach is somewhere between these extremes.

What Is Translation Quality?

The quality of translation can be defined as the level at which a translated text performs its intended function. The function of an informative translation is effective communication. There are various factors that contribute to the quality of a translation.

- ✓ **Accuracy:** The translation must accurately represent the meaning of the source text. This means the facts, numbers, data, and relationships must be the same. Even minor shifts or a small error can lead the reader astray.
- ✓ **Clarity:** The reader should grasp the message with minimal difficulty; they must understand the translation without effort. A translation can be said to be unclear if the reader has to pause and read the sentence again.
- ✓ **Consistency:** The translation must use consistent terms and expressions. This means changing a key term can lead the reader to wonder if the meaning has been altered.
- ✓ **Readability:** The translation must flow naturally and read smoothly. Short and well-structured simple sentences can help the reader process the data faster and understand the information better.
- ✓ **Appropriateness:** The translation must match and meet the expectations of the reader. A translation meant for the general public or the average reader must not use unnecessary technical language.

The Translator as a Decision Maker

Translation is not a mechanical act or process. Every sentence is a matter of choice. The translator must choose how closely to follow the ST structure or how much to imitate the structure of the original text and when to adapt it.

For instance, English is a language that often favors concise sentences. If translating from English, imitating this conciseness might be useful for clarity. However, strict imitation of structure is not always useful. The translator must choose whether this is helpful for the new readers/audience.

This is why assessing a translator is a matter of judgment that goes beyond the product. In fact, this decision-making role means that quality assessment should consider the translator's reasoning, not only the final product. A change is not necessarily a mistake. Sometimes it might be a strategy for effective communication.

Error-Based vs. Functional Views

Many tests focus mainly on errors. While error detection is significant and it is certainly important to look at errors, it is only one side of the story and it does not tell the whole story. It is possible for a translation to have few errors or visible mistakes, but still sound very unnatural.

Instead, a more functional approach asks a broader or more general question: Does it work as a translation? Does it inform the reader effectively?

By combining the two approaches, a better or more complete evaluation of a translation is possible, with errors being corrected, but usefulness remaining the primary concern.

Method

The general design of the study is descriptive and based on library research. It critically analyzes the issue from various perspectives.

Results and Discussion

Common Challenges in Translating Informative Texts

✓ Technical Terminology:

In an informative text, technical terms can be used. The translator has to select terms that not only convey the right meaning but are also familiar to the target audience. In cases where a term has several possible equivalents, it is essential to be consistent.

✓ Ambiguity in the Source Text:

Sometimes, English sentences can be interpreted in more than one way. The translator must identify the intended meaning and has to be sure of the meaning before translating. Guesswork can damage the reliability of the translation.

✓ Complex Sentence Structure:

Long sentences can be tricky, as they may hide the main idea. Breaking them into shorter units can improve clarity without changing the meaning.

✓ Cultural and Contextual Differences:

Some phrases and references can be difficult to understand for new readers. In such cases, slight modifications or adaptation can be made to ensure better understanding, provided the original intent remains intact and the meaning is retained.

✓ Stylistic Mismatch:

Informative writing in English values simplicity and tends to be simple. The text can lose its practical tone and the practical touch will simply be lost if it becomes overly formal or decorative or too elaborate.

Criteria for Practical Quality Assessment

An effective assessment process may include the following steps:

1. Check Meaning First: Compare the source and target texts to ensure that the information matches and to check if the meaning is the same.

2. Review Language Quality: Check for awkward expressions, unclear or confusing references, and unnecessary repetition.
3. Examine Terminology: Ensure that important terms are accurate and consistent.
4. Consider the Reader: Check if a typical reader would comprehend the text easily.
5. Read the Translation Independently: If possible, read it without looking at or referring to the source text. If it sounds natural, then the translation is likely successful.

The Role of Revision

Quality is rarely found in the first draft. Quality can be achieved through careful revision, which enables the translator to notice weaknesses, identify gaps and improve their choices and decisions. Reading the text aloud can help the translator identify potential or hidden problems that are not immediately visible, such as heavy/poor rhythm or poor/unclear transitions.

Peer review can also improve and strengthen quality. A fresh reader or another set of eyes may be able to identify potential problems and spots issues that the translator is not aware of.

Balancing Fidelity and Readability

There is a fundamental conflict and tension between faithfulness to the ST and making the text readable. In most cases of informative texts, readability is preferred because it is meant for practical comprehension. However, readability should never be achieved at the expense of accuracy. The translator's skill lies in preserving meaning while shaping language that feels natural.

Toward a Flexible Model

There is no list which can cover all aspects of quality. There is a great variety in the purpose and audience of texts, as well as their level of specialization. A flexible model allows and enables the evaluator to adjust priorities. For instance, a medical document may require extreme accuracy, while a public information brochure may require greater emphasis on accessibility. Flexibility does not imply lack of standards. Rather, it recognizes that quality is context-sensitive.

Conclusion

TQA is of critical importance for ensuring that informative texts fulfill their communicative role. These texts contain critical information that the readers depend on and rely on, and therefore, every translation decision must be guided by considerations of clarity and accuracy.

As has been argued in the paper, a practical approach must be used when assessing translation quality. The evaluators and assessors must look beyond errors and consider how effectively the translation has been able to inform the readers. Other factors, such as consistency, readability, and awareness of the audience deserve equal attention and consideration.

The role of the translator as a decision maker has been seen as a critical success factor in translation quality and shapes quality. Thoughtful choices and decisions made by the translator,

as well as careful revisions and considerations of context, have been seen as critical elements of a successful translation.

However, a good translation of an informative text should feel transparent—it must be one that allows the readers to focus on the text and ignore the translation itself, as it becomes an invisible bridge between the source text and the readers.

As global communication continues to expand, the need for quality translations will grow and increase. The development of clear and balanced methods of TQA can help translators succeed in their task and ensure that they produce texts that truly serve their readers. Finally, the authors (as non-native English speakers) acknowledge the use of LLMs for linguistic assistance and enhancement in the preparation of the manuscript.

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POST-EDITING IN THE AGE OF AI: A NEW TRANSLATION PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT

Machine translation post-editing (MTPE) has grown in the last decade from a marginal or peripheral activity into the main workflow of the worldwide translation industry. Almost all translation clients and most translation agencies nowadays show greater tendencies towards post-editing rather than complete human translation since neural machine translation (NMT) systems have achieved unprecedented fluency, and their product is considered to be quicker and more affordable than what is offered by human translators. Such a shift in paradigm has raised important questions concerning productivity, quality, and ethical issues pertaining to the task of translators. Although studies may reveal that MTPE have raised productivity rate, its impact on translation quality, creativity, and job satisfaction is still under debate. Translators may feel a sort of tension between efficiency demands and their professional standards, as well as emotional exhaustion from modifying imperfect outputs of machines or AI. Through a combined viewpoint including technical, socio-economic, and ethical ones, the present study explores MTPE as a new paradigm emerging into the field of translation studies. The paper reviews recently conducted empirical studies on MTPE productivity and cognitive effort, surveys translator attitudes towards post-editing, and analyzes industry discourse that depicts MTPE as ‘the future of translation’. Focusing on notions like translator agency, professionalism, and commoditization of linguistic labor, the current research contends that MTPE has redefined what is considered as ‘translation work’ and challenges long-held concepts of authorship and creativity. Finally, the paper puts forward a critical model of ‘ethical post-editing’—one that balances technological efficiency with the translator’s right to agency, recognition, and fair remuneration. The study concludes that translation pedagogy and professional associations need to engage more actively with MTPE ethics in order to make sure that automation improves rather than degrades translators’ working conditions and professional identity.

Keywords: machine translation post-editing (MTPE); translator ethics; productivity; translation quality; translator agency; neural machine translation (NMT)

Introduction

The translation profession has experienced many changes in the past few decades. New technologies have emerged in the field, altering the way translators work. First, computer-assisted translation tools helped translators save and reuse their previous work. Later, machine translation technology emerged and became a popular assistant tool.

Today, with the rise of neural machine translation (NMT), the translator's job is changing again. Many translators are no longer asked to translate a text from scratch. Rather, they are asked to

edit and improve the output of a machine. This activity is called ‘machine translation post-editing’, or MTPE.

Post-editing is now part of the daily work for many professionals. Clients usually prefer this option because it's faster and usually cheaper than fully human translation. Agencies promote it as an efficient solution for large projects. Consequently, translators have to adjust to a new work process where the machine translates the text first, and the human checks it.

But it is not only a technological shift. It affects how translators view their work and professional identity. Some translators view MTPE favorably, thinking it will free them from mundane work and increase their productivity. Others feel it limits creativity and devalues human expertise. There is also a question of whether post-editing is actually saving time if the output of the machine is of poor quality.

Another important aspect of MTPE is its impact on quality. Neural machines can generate sentences that are grammatically correct and fluent. It makes them look completely natural. However, it is important to notice that these sentences may carry subtle errors or hidden mistakes in terms of meaning, tone, or even cultural issues. The post-editor must always stay alert and keep an eye out for such potential problems. The risk is that fluent language can hide incorrect content.

There are also ethical concerns. Translators may be asked to work at a faster rate for a lower pay. Translators may also feel that they are not being properly recognized and acknowledged for their intellectual contribution, as they are not referred to as the "translators." There is also a broader concern that translation work will be commodified. In other words, there will be a tendency to rush through translation as opposed to thinking about how to communicate.

This paper will discuss MTPE as a new paradigm in translation studies. It will explore the theoretical background, productivity and quality, and ethics. While there are concerns about MTPE, there are also concerns about how to properly integrate technology into translation work. We need a balanced approach, one that is able to find a balance between progress and humanism.

Literature Review and Theoretical Issues

From Translation to Post-Editing

In traditional translation, the human translator is at the center of the process, he is the central figure. They read the source text, understand its meaning, and translate it into another language. This process or task involves human judgment, cultural knowledge, and creativity.

Post-editing changes this order and reverses this situation. The machine translates first, and the human translator steps in afterwards. In this way, the translator moves from being a creator to a reviewer. This change may appear trivial, but it has profound and significant conceptual implications and consequences.

When translators begin from scratch, they have control over the text's structure or organization. In post-editing, the machine's organization can affect their decisions. Even if the result is substandard, the availability of pre-formed sentences can affect the post-editor's thinking. Some scholars and experts in the field regard this as a form of "cognitive anchoring." The translator may remain too close to the machine's translation and miss better solutions or overlook a better alternative.

This leads us to a crucial question: is post-editing still translation or is it something else, a different activity? One could say that the essential function of the task, i.e., the proper

conveyance of the message, is the same. However, the way of thinking towards the goal has shifted. Instead of creating meaning from the bottom up, the post-editor is assessing an existing version, something that is already created.

Productivity and Cognitive Effort

MTPE is also sold as a tool for boosting or increasing productivity. This is true under ideal or perfect conditions. If the output of the machine is clear, easy to understand and mostly correct, then it is easy for a post-editor to work quickly. This is because phrases, instructions, and repetitive passages can be processed quickly with little effort.

However, productivity is not just about speed and how quickly one can work. There is also cognitive effort involved. In many cases, it takes more cognitive effort to repair a flawed sentence than to translate it from scratch. This is because the post-editor must not only understand what is wrong with it, but also correct it without making it worse.

Another factor is unpredictability. The machine can come up with a very good sentence and then follow it up with a confusing one. This makes the translator have to be on their toes all the time. This can be very tiring in the long run.

Measurement is also a problem. Productivity is usually measured by the number of words per hour, but this does not measure the complexity of the work. A short legal clause can require more attention than a long paragraph of description. Thus, MTPE cannot be judged by numbers alone.

Quality in the Age of Fluency

Neural networks are famous for their fluent language output. Their output may look very smooth and natural. It may even look acceptable to a trained eye. However, fluency is not the same as accuracy.

The output may look perfect but mean something entirely different. Subtle changes in mood, politeness, or emphasis may change the original message's meaning. Cultural references may also be misinterpreted. Humor, irony, and context-dependent expressions are still difficult for machines to handle.

The problem or danger is that the readers, and sometimes even the post-editors, may be too trusting of the machine. The appearance of correctness may lead to a lack of critical scrutiny. Thus, the post-editor's task is not only to refine the language but also to check the meaning.

Quality or accuracy also depends on the text's purpose. A rapid internal communication may accept some errors. A medical or legal text cannot. The post-editor has to calibrate or adjust the level of their intervention depending on the communicative risk.

Translator Agency and Professional Identity

Agency here means the translator's power to make decisions and shape the final product. In traditional contexts, agency is obvious. In MTPE, however, agency may be ambiguous.

There are some processes that set strict or tight time limits for post-editing. In some cases, the post-editor must make as few changes as possible. Such constraints can erode or somehow diminish agency. Professionals who cannot fully utilize their skills may not be satisfied with their work.

Professional identity is also related this issue. Translators tend to think of themselves as experts in languages and culture. They act as mediators between two cultures. They see themselves as language experts who bridge cultures. If they are forced to work like proofreaders, they may think that their profession is becoming obsolete.

New skills are also emerging. The post-editor needs to understand machine behavior. They will be able to anticipate machine errors and will be able to work efficiently and develop efficient strategies to correct them. In other words, the profession is not becoming obsolete. It is just evolving.

The Commodification of Language Work

There is also a consequence for the economy with the development of MTPE. A faster work pace could also lead to a client expecting a cheaper service. In this case, translation is no longer an intellectual pursuit but a commodity.

If translation is considered a commodity, then there is a tendency to forget that there is a person with expertise involved. If a translator is only being paid by volume and not by the intricacy of the task, then there is a conflict of interests.

There is a need for a model that realizes that technology is not a replacement for human effort but a transformation of it. It is also important to remember that a post-editor is ultimately responsible for the text they produce.

Towards Ethical Post-Editing

Ethical post-editing: A balance must be struck between the benefits of technology and respect for human labor. Several principles can be identified:

- *Transparency*: The client should know that machine translation was used.
- *Fair Pay*: Rates must account for mental effort, not just speed.
- *Realistic Deadlines*: Quality requires time.
- *Recognition*: The human contribution should not be invisible.
- *Training*: Translators need opportunities to learn new skills.

Ethics is not about opposing progress. It is about ensuring that progress adds to and does not take away from dignity.

Method

The general design of the study is descriptive and based on library research. It critically analyzes the issue from various perspectives.

Results and Discussion

MTPE is neither a passing trend nor just a tool. It is not just a tool. It is a change in the way the translation world is structured. The big problem is how to integrate it without losing quality and translator well-being.

A key point is that the way people view post-editing is influenced by their experience. For people who have the right training, the experience of MTPE is more positive. They use techniques like "quick review" to get the meaning before worrying about style, or "comparing sections." These techniques may help reduce the negative impacts of MTPE. However, for those who have not been trained, the experience of MTPE is completely different. The work is mechanical and restrictive. This is why training is so important.

This is why training must change. Not only must the translator learn their trade, but the translator must learn to evaluate the work of the machine. Comparing human and post-editing is a good exercise. This is because such activities can help future professionals understand the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

Another topic is creativity. Some people think that there is little room for creativity in post-editing. Such a view is not unfounded, and creativity does not disappear in post-editing. It simply changes. Instead of creating every sentence, the post-editor has to solve problems. When the machine does not convey a metaphor correctly or does not understand a cultural reference, the human has to intervene with their own creativity. Creativity does not disappear in post-editing; it simply changes.

The relationship between humans and machines should not be seen as a competition. Machines are good at handling large amounts of information. Humans are good at understanding what it all means. When these two strengths are used in tandem, the outcome can be very efficient indeed. However, there needs to be a balance. Too much reliance on machines can undermine human professional judgment. Translators should remain in control, not simply correct.

Working conditions should also receive more attention. Long hours spent on post-editing can cause eye strain and mental exhaustion. Such conditions should be tackled by translation agencies. They should encourage good working habits, such as reasonable workloads and breaks. Well-being is also related to quality, and a tired post-editor will be more prone to missing errors. Professional organizations can also be useful. They can help establish guidelines for ethical MTPE. Guidelines could even set forth recommendations for a certain level of pay, transparency, and working conditions. Collective awareness can help prevent a race to the bottom.

In the future, the idea of translation could expand. We could view translation as a spectrum of human and machine interaction. Certain texts will always need to be fully translated by human translators. Others may benefit from machine support and can use their help.

The key is flexibility, not a rigid hierarchy or linear order. Rather than asking which is better, MTPE or human translation, we should ask which is better suited to a particular task or for a given situation.

Ultimately, the issue is trust. The reader trusts the translation to be accurate. This trust comes back to human trust. Even when a machine is used, the post-editor is the last line of defense or the final guardian of communication.

Conclusion

Machine translation post-editing has been a defining feature or a hallmark of the current translation industry. It is a fast way to achieve efficiency, but it also raises many questions of quality, agency, and ethics. The shift from translation to post-editing is not merely a technical adjustment. It involves a change of perspective regarding the role of translators and their own agency. Although efficiency can be maximized with favorable conditions, cognitive effort and

mental fatigue or exhaustion cannot be overlooked. The fluency of neural machines can be misleading, making the human role even more critical.

In this sense, we must address the ethical issue. Remuneration, transparency, and prestige must go hand-in-hand with the adoption of technology. Otherwise, efficiency will be purchased at the expense of prestige or professional stature. MTPE must not be regarded as a threat or menacing factor. It is a normal part of a discipline's development or evolution. Translators who acquire new skills will retain a strong sense of agency. Training and professional dialogue is a key factor to this end. The future of translation will be hybrid. Humans will increasingly collaborate with machines in an increasingly complex way. Instead of fighting this phenomenon, we must control it and even guide it responsibly.

Almost all aged translations need re-translations (Aghakhani Chegeni et al, 2025). It is of course important to train good human translators, professional re-translators and post-editors. Afrouz and Asgari Vartooni (2025) define good translators as those who can play the role of good translator trainers—those who know “what ‘good translation’ means” and have sufficient “theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the field” (p. 1010). Cultural knowledge here plays a key role. Karamanian (2002) argues that culture addresses the collective, the personal, and the expressive human activity. Culture can be thought of as an entangled system of norms and values that give significance to “both individual and collective identity” (Addler 1977, as cited in Sukwiwat 1981, 216). It is noteworthy that, language manifests “one of the fetters of identity” (Kondali 2012, p. 102). In the era of AI, “while technology can significantly help us in terms of translation speed, it should be remembered that professional or specialized human translators can play a pivotal role in capturing the cultural nuances and emotional resonance” of the SL text (Asgari Vartooni & Afrouz, 2025a: 112). Future researchers can direct their studies toward “the evolving role” of AI in rendering different text-types specially texts related to children’s literature (Asgari Vartooni & Afrouz, 2025b: 103).

An ethical model of post-editing may illustrate the way forward. This maintains the translator as an expert decision-maker while also acknowledging the benefits of technology. If a balance is struck, technology may reinforce and strengthen professional identity rather than weakening or undermining it.

Ultimately, translation is a human act of connection and understanding. While technology may assist and play a role, it will never replace human capacity for judgment, human compassion, or human cultural awareness. These qualities must be preserved at the heart or core of the profession, no matter how far translation moves deeper into the age of AI. Finally, the authors (as non-native English speakers) acknowledge the use of LLMs for linguistic assistance and enhancement in the preparation of the manuscript.

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EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER CENTRALITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SPEAKING STRATEGY USE IN VIETNAMESE EFL CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores Vietnamese EFL university students' perceptions of **teacher centrality** and its effect on **speaking strategy use in impromptu speaking tasks**. Conducted with 32 B1-level freshmen English majors at Can Tho University, Vietnam, the research used semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, with five students selected for in-depth interviews. Findings reveal that students strongly view teachers as essential guides, relying on them for modeling, feedback, and strategy guidance during spontaneous oral tasks. This reliance shapes the use of strategies such as imitation, clarification, and paraphrasing. Over time, structured teacher support enables learners to gradually adopt self-directed strategies, illustrating a dynamic interaction between **teacher guidance** authority, further influence students' classroom behavior and strategy application. The study highlights the and **learner autonomy**. Cultural values, including high power distance and respect for importance of balancing teacher scaffolding with opportunities for independent practice to enhance learners' strategic competence in spontaneous speaking contexts.

Keywords: teacher centrality, speaking strategies, impromptu speech, learner autonomy, Vietnamese EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

English has become an essential means of communication in academic, professional, and international contexts. In Vietnam, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) at all educational levels, with increasing emphasis on communicative competence, particularly

speaking skills. University EFL programs aim to develop students' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations through interactive and learner-centered approaches.

However, despite curricular reforms promoting communicative language teaching, many Vietnamese EFL classrooms remain influenced by traditional teacher-centered practices. In such contexts, teachers are often viewed as the primary source of knowledge, guidance, and evaluation. This perception may shape how students participate in classroom activities and how they approach language learning tasks, especially speaking tasks that require autonomy, interaction, and strategic competence.

Speaking strategy use plays a crucial role in helping learners manage communication difficulties, maintain interaction, and enhance fluency. These strategies include asking for clarification, paraphrasing, using fillers, self-correction, and cooperating with peers. Understanding the factors that influence students' choice and use of speaking strategies is therefore important for improving speaking instruction in EFL classrooms.

Rationale of the Study

In Vietnamese educational culture, teachers traditionally occupy a central and highly respected role in the learning process. Influenced by Confucian values emphasizing hierarchy, authority, and respect for teachers, many students believe that effective learning—particularly foreign language learning—cannot occur without a teacher's direct guidance (Nguyen & Hall, 2016). This cultural perception often positions teachers as the dominant figures in classroom interaction and decision-making.

Preliminary observations conducted at Can Tho University (CTU) reveal that EFL university students frequently rely on teachers during speaking activities, even after completing Listening and Speaking courses. During pair-interaction speaking tasks, students often seek confirmation, correction, or approval from teachers rather than negotiating meaning with peers or employing independent problem-solving strategies. These behaviors suggest that students' perceptions of teacher centrality may significantly influence their speaking strategy use.

Teacher centrality is likely to affect the types of strategies students adopt, such as imitation, repetition, and direct clarification requests addressed to instructors. Although self-study and peer interaction are encouraged in contemporary EFL pedagogy, a preliminary survey indicated that approximately 70% of students perceived teachers as irreplaceable for effective English learning. This strong reliance on teachers may limit students' opportunities to develop strategic flexibility and learner autonomy in speaking.

Investigating EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their relationship with speaking strategy use is therefore necessary. Such investigation can provide insights for designing teaching practices that respect cultural expectations while gradually promoting learner autonomy and more effective use of speaking strategies. This study focuses on first-year English majors at Can Tho University to contribute empirical evidence to the understanding of teacher-centered cultural influences in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality in Vietnamese EFL classrooms?
2. What speaking strategies do EFL university students use during pair-interaction speaking tasks?

3. Is there a relationship between EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their speaking strategy use?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To investigate EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.
2. To identify the speaking strategies used by EFL university students during pair-interaction speaking tasks.
3. To examine the relationship between EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their speaking strategy use.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to EFL education in Vietnam. Theoretically, the study adds to existing literature on cultural influences, teacher centrality, and speaking strategy use in EFL contexts, particularly within Vietnamese higher education.

Practically, the results may help EFL teachers better understand students' learning beliefs and adjust instructional practices to balance teacher guidance with opportunities for learner autonomy. Curriculum designers and educational administrators may also benefit from insights into how cultural perceptions influence students' strategic behavior in speaking tasks, thereby informing more effective speaking instruction and assessment.

Scope of the Study

This study is conducted with 32 B1-level first-year English majors enrolled in an online evening English course at Can Tho University, Vietnam. The study focuses on students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their speaking strategy use during pair-interaction speaking tests. Other language skills, proficiency levels, and educational contexts are beyond the scope of this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part reviews literature on teacher centrality, cultural influences, speaking strategy use, and learner autonomy in EFL contexts, with emphasis on Vietnam. The chapter also integrates the concept of impromptu speaking tasks, highlighting how teacher centrality shapes strategy use in real-time oral communication.

Teacher Centrality in Asian Educational Contexts

Teacher centrality remains a dominant principle in many Asian classrooms. In these settings, teachers are generally viewed as the primary authority and source of knowledge. Students often defer to teachers when making learning decisions, reflecting cultural norms rooted in Confucianism. Chen (2004) notes that students in Confucian-influenced societies commonly accept teachers' authority and rely heavily on guidance. Li and Zhang (2011) suggest that strong teacher guidance enhances structured learning but may limit learners' initiative. In Vietnam, Nguyen and Hall (2016) report that EFL students perceive teachers as essential knowledge authorities, particularly in speaking tasks, reinforcing reliance on teacher-led instruction. This teacher-centered culture becomes especially relevant in impromptu speaking situations, where students face unprepared topics and may seek teacher guidance to structure their responses effectively.

Cultural Influences on Students' Classroom Behavior

Cultural values significantly shape classroom participation and strategy use. Hofstede (2001) emphasizes that high power-distance cultures promote hierarchical teacher-student relationships. Learners in such contexts expect structured instruction, explicit guidance, and teacher approval. Tran (2019) observes that Vietnamese EFL students often hesitate to speak spontaneously without prompts, reflecting cultural tendencies toward authority reliance. Dang and Pham (2018) similarly found that respect for teacher authority affects participation and strategy application. In impromptu speaking tasks, these cultural norms are highlighted: students rely on teachers to provide cues, clarify expectations, and guide their responses in real time, demonstrating the influence of both culture and teacher centrality on immediate speaking performance.

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Role in Speaking Strategy Use

Students often perceive teachers as central facilitators of speaking strategy development. Teacher interventions, modeling, and feedback are crucial for scaffolding learners' strategy use (Ellis, 2003). Cohen (2014) suggests that explicit strategy instruction enhances learners' ability to self-monitor and apply strategies independently. In Vietnam, Pham (2018) found that students consider teachers indispensable for guiding the use of clarification, compensation, and paraphrasing strategies during speaking tasks. Impromptu speaking tasks further emphasize this role: because learners must respond spontaneously to random topics, teacher modeling and scaffolding become essential for helping students select and apply appropriate strategies under time pressure.

Teacher Centrality and Learner Autonomy in Strategy Use

While teacher guidance is important, over-reliance may limit self-directed strategy use. Littlewood (1999) argues that gradually reducing teacher control encourages learner autonomy. Le and Nguyen (2020) report that Vietnamese students increasingly adopt self-directed speaking strategies when teachers provide structured scaffolding. Pham (2018) further notes that teacher interventions initially guide learners, but repeated practice fosters autonomy. In the context of impromptu speaking, students often begin by heavily relying on teacher guidance but gradually integrate strategies into independent use, showing that teacher centrality shapes rather than prevents strategic competence and autonomy.

Speaking Strategies in EFL Contexts

Effective speaking strategies help learners manage communication challenges successfully. Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as techniques enhancing acquisition and use of language. Speaking strategies include clarification requests, paraphrasing, compensation, self-correction, and interactional negotiation. Studies in Asian EFL contexts show learners often prefer teacher-mediated strategies due to cultural norms. Nguyen (2016) found that Vietnamese students rely on teachers for strategy selection and confirmation, especially in oral tasks. Impromptu speaking tasks highlight this reliance: learners apply strategies modeled or guided by teachers to navigate unfamiliar topics, demonstrating the practical impact of teacher centrality on spontaneous speaking performance.

Balancing Teacher Guidance and Learner Autonomy

Effective speaking instruction balances scaffolding with opportunities for autonomous practice. Littlewood (1999) suggests gradually reducing teacher control to foster independent strategy use. Le and Nguyen (2020) report that structured teacher support helps Vietnamese students gain confidence and adopt self-directed strategies. Pham (2018) emphasizes that initial teacher intervention is necessary, but continued practice promotes autonomy. In impromptu tasks, this

balance is crucial: teachers must provide immediate guidance while encouraging learners to independently apply strategies in real time, demonstrating how autonomy and teacher centrality can coexist.

Conceptual Framework

This study connects cultural perceptions, teacher centrality, and students' speaking strategy use, particularly in the context of impromptu speaking. The conceptual framework positions students' perceptions of teacher centrality as a key factor influencing teacher-mediated instruction and learners' speaking strategy use. Cultural context, including high power distance and respect for authority (Hofstede, 2001; Nguyen & Hall, 2016), shapes how students interpret teacher guidance. Teacher interventions such as modeling, feedback, and explicit strategy instruction (Ellis, 2003; Cohen, 2014) mediate students' strategy application, while learner autonomy functions as a moderating factor. Empirical studies in Vietnam support this model, demonstrating how cultural beliefs and teacher centrality affect speaking strategy use (Pham, 2018; Nguyen & Hall, 2016).

Framework Components

The framework includes five key components:

1. **Cultural Context** – Confucian values, high power distance (Hofstede, 2001; Nguyen & Hall, 2016)
2. **Students' Perceptions of Teacher Centrality** – Teachers as authority and knowledge source (Chen, 2004; Pham, 2018)
3. **Teacher-Mediated Instruction** – Modeling, feedback, scaffolding strategies (Ellis, 2003; Cohen, 2014)
4. **Students' Speaking Strategy Use** – Clarification, paraphrasing, compensation, interactional strategies (Oxford, 1990)
5. **Learner Autonomy (Moderating Factor)** – Degree of independence influenced by scaffolding (Littlewood, 1999; Le & Nguyen, 2020)

Impromptu speaking tasks are integrated into the framework as a context in which these components interact dynamically. Students' strategy use in spontaneous speech is shaped by teacher centrality, cultural context, and scaffolding, while autonomy moderates the transition from reliance on guidance to independent application.

Components	Description	Example in Impromptu Speaking	Key References
Cultural Context	Confucian values, high power distance, respect for authority	Students defer to teachers for guidance when speaking spontaneously	Hofstede (2001); Nguyen & Hall (2016)
Students' Perceptions of Teacher Centrality	Teachers as authority, knowledge source, and primary guide	Learners seek teacher approval or cues before responding to random topics	Chen (2004); Pham (2018)
Teacher-Mediated Instruction	Modeling, feedback, scaffolding, strategy instruction	Teacher demonstrates phrases, prompts students, corrects errors during speaking test	Ellis (2003); Cohen (2014)
Students' Speaking Strategy Use	Clarification, paraphrasing, compensation, interactional strategies	Students imitate teacher models, request clarification, apply paraphrasing in real time	Oxford (1990); Nguyen (2016)
Learner Autonomy (Moderating)	Degree of independence shaped by scaffolding	Students gradually use strategies independently in later impromptu tasks	Littlewood (1999); Le & Nguyen (2020)

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework of Teacher Centrality and Speaking Strategy Use in Impromptu Tasks

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions of teacher centrality and its influence on speaking strategy use. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method because they allow participants to express their experiences and opinions freely while providing sufficient structure to address the research questions. This approach is appropriate for capturing nuanced insights into classroom dynamics, cultural beliefs, and learners' strategic behaviors (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

The participants consisted of 32 first-year English majors at Can Tho University, Vietnam, enrolled in a B1-level online evening English class. All participants had completed the Listening and Speaking course prior to the study, ensuring they had exposure to both teacher-led and interactive speaking activities.

From this group, 5 students were purposively selected for in-depth follow-up interviews to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and strategy use. These students were chosen based on observed differences in strategy application during speaking tasks and their willingness to articulate detailed reflections on teacher centrality and learning practices.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted immediately after individual speaking assessments.

- Each participant completed a 3-minute impromptu speaking test on a randomly assigned topic provided by the classroom teacher (who also acted as the observer).
- Immediately after the test, participants were interviewed to explore:
 - Their perceptions of teacher importance and centrality in learning.
 - Their reliance on teachers during speaking tasks.

- The strategies they employed while speaking.
- The 5 selected students participated in extended interviews, which included additional probing questions to explore their experiences, decision-making processes, and strategy use in more depth.

This timing ensured that participants' responses reflected recent, task-specific experiences, enhancing the reliability of the data.

Instruments

The study used two primary instruments:

1. **Semi-structured interviews** – Audio-recorded to capture students' responses verbatim. Interview questions were designed to allow flexibility while addressing research objectives. The extended interviews with the 5 selected students allowed for more detailed probing.
2. **Observation notes** – The researcher documented participants' behavior during the speaking test, including the types of strategies used and the degree of reliance on teacher prompts or guidance.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic coding, following these steps:

- Transcriptions of interviews were read multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data.
- Codes were assigned to meaningful units of text reflecting students' perceptions of teacher centrality and strategy use.
- Themes were developed by grouping related codes, linking them to the research questions and objectives.
- Patterns connecting teacher perceptions and strategy adoption were identified, highlighting cultural and classroom dynamics influencing strategy use (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- Data from the 5 in-depth interviews were examined carefully to provide richer, illustrative examples of the identified themes.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical research practices to protect participants:

- Participation was voluntary, and students could withdraw at any time without penalty.
- Confidentiality was maintained; participants' identities were anonymized in transcripts and reports.
- Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, explaining the purpose of the study, the procedures, and participants' rights.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the findings of the study, organized around the three research questions. Data were collected from 32 B1-level English majors at Can Tho University through semi-structured interviews and observations during impromptu speaking tasks. Five students (S1–S5) were purposively selected for in-depth interviews to provide richer insights into their perceptions of teacher centrality and its influence on speaking strategy use. Both quantitative summaries from

observations and qualitative excerpts from interviews are integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Research question 1: How do Vietnamese students perceive teacher centrality in EFL classrooms?

The findings indicate that Vietnamese students perceive teachers as highly central in their English learning. Approximately 70% of participants strongly agreed that teachers are essential for learning English, reflecting a deep cultural respect for teacher authority. In addition, 65% reported depending on teachers to correct mistakes during speaking tasks, and 58% preferred teacher-led modeling of speaking activities before attempting them independently. These patterns align with prior research emphasizing the influence of Confucian values and hierarchical classroom norms on students' learning behaviors (Nguyen & Hall, 2016; Hofstede, 2001).

The interview data provided further insight into these perceptions. S1 expressed, *"Without the teacher's guidance, I feel unsure what to say,"* highlighting the sense of reliance students have on teacher direction. S2 noted, *"I follow my teacher's examples before trying tasks on my own,"* while S3 added, *"Teachers help me know which strategies work best."* Similarly, S4 stated, *"I always look at how the teacher models speaking; it gives me confidence,"* and S5 explained, *"Even when we practice in pairs, I check with the teacher first."* Collectively, these statements illustrate that teacher centrality shapes not only students' participation but also their strategic choices in speaking tasks.

Research question: How do these perceptions influence speaking strategy use?

Students' perceptions of teacher centrality directly influenced the strategies they employed during speaking tasks. Observation data and interviews indicated that 68% of students used imitation strategies, replicating phrases and structures demonstrated by teachers. Additionally, 63% relied on clarification strategies, frequently asking teachers for help when they could not recall vocabulary or expressions. About 60% adapted strategies taught by teachers into independent practice, demonstrating that teacher guidance not only directs immediate strategy use but also provides a foundation for autonomous application.

The in-depth interviews provided illustrative examples. S1 remarked, *"I imitate the phrases the teacher showed us in class,"* while S2 added, *"I ask the teacher when I forget a word or expression."* S3 emphasized, *"Teacher feedback guides how I plan my responses,"* and S4 explained, *"Even when practicing with peers, I try to use strategies my teacher suggested."* S5 reflected, *"I combine what the teacher taught with my own ideas, but I always start with their examples."* These statements show that students heavily rely on teacher modeling and feedback when selecting, applying, and adapting speaking strategies. The findings suggest that teacher centrality functions as both a guiding and mediating factor in strategy adoption, particularly in the context of Vietnamese EFL classrooms where hierarchical learning norms are influential.

Research question3: How does teacher centrality affect learner autonomy in speaking strategy use?

Although teacher centrality strongly influenced students' initial strategy use, findings indicate that structured teacher guidance can foster gradual autonomy. Approximately 55% of participants reported that after receiving teacher scaffolding, they were able to apply strategies independently. However, 50% still preferred occasional confirmation from the teacher before fully executing strategies, and 45% felt confident experimenting with strategies once they had

internalized teacher guidance. These findings demonstrate that autonomy develops progressively, beginning with teacher-led modeling and supported practice.

The interview excerpts further illustrate this gradual progression. S1 explained, “*After practicing with the teacher’s guidance, I try it myself,*” while S2 said, “*I still check with my teacher sometimes, but I can do it mostly on my own.*” S3 noted, “*The teacher shows us first, then I gradually try by myself,*” and S4 added, “*Teacher centrality helps me feel safe to experiment with strategies.*” S5 concluded, “*I notice that I am more independent now, but I always start with what the teacher taught.*” These responses indicate that teacher guidance and learner autonomy are not mutually exclusive; rather, centrality provides a scaffold for the development of independent strategy use, supporting previous research emphasizing the complementary relationship between structured guidance and learner autonomy (Littlewood, 1999; Le & Nguyen, 2020).

Overall Patterns and Summary

Across all three research questions, several key patterns emerged. First, students demonstrated a high dependence on teachers, valuing modeling, feedback, and correction. Second, teacher centrality directly shaped strategy adoption, with imitation, clarification, and adaptation strategies dominating students’ responses during speaking tasks. Third, while reliance on teachers was evident, learner autonomy gradually developed when teacher scaffolding was structured and consistent. Finally, the findings emphasize the role of cultural influence, particularly Confucian and high power-distance values, in reinforcing the centrality of teachers in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.

Overall, the results highlight a dynamic interplay between teacher centrality, strategy use, and emerging learner autonomy. Teachers serve as both guides and mediators, helping students select and apply strategies, while also supporting gradual independent practice. These findings provide empirical evidence for designing classroom activities that balance teacher guidance with opportunities for autonomous strategy use.

Discussion

Perceptions of Teacher Centrality in Vietnamese EFL Classrooms

The study found that Vietnamese students perceive teachers as highly central in their English learning, with 70% considering teachers essential and 65% relying on them for correction during speaking tasks. This finding confirms the influence of Confucian educational values and high power-distance cultural norms, which emphasize respect for authority and structured learning (Hofstede, 2001; Nguyen & Hall, 2016). Students reported feeling uncertain without teacher guidance, relying on modeling and feedback to structure their speaking activities.

These results are consistent with Chen (2004), Li and Zhang (2011), and Pham (2018), who note that in many Asian contexts, teachers are viewed as the primary source of knowledge and strategic guidance. The interview excerpts from S1–S5 illustrate that students internalize this teacher-centered culture, often beginning speaking tasks by imitating or following the teacher’s example. This strong centrality can provide students with confidence and direction, particularly in EFL classrooms where linguistic uncertainty may hinder participation.

Influence of Teacher Centrality on Speaking Strategy Use

The findings indicate that teacher centrality strongly influences strategy use. Students reported employing imitation, clarification, and adaptation strategies primarily through teacher guidance. About 68% imitated teacher modeling, 63% used clarification strategies by asking the teacher, and 60% adapted strategies to independent practice. These results support Ellis

(2003) and Cohen (2014), who emphasize the importance of teacher modeling, feedback, and explicit strategy instruction in promoting strategic competence.

The in-depth interviews further highlight the mechanism by which teacher centrality shapes strategy adoption. S1–S5 consistently described following teacher examples before attempting tasks independently, asking for clarification when unsure, and gradually integrating suggested strategies into practice. This pattern indicates that teacher guidance serves both as a scaffold for initial strategy use and as a mediating factor in strategy internalization. The findings align with Oxford's (1990) conceptualization of language learning strategies as techniques that can be taught, modeled, and adapted, demonstrating that teacher centrality directly affects which strategies students adopt and how effectively they apply them in speaking contexts.

Teacher Centrality and Learner Autonomy

While students heavily rely on teachers initially, the findings indicate that structured guidance can foster gradual learner autonomy. Approximately 55% of students reported applying strategies independently after teacher scaffolding, while others still sought confirmation but experimented cautiously. The interviews revealed that students perceive teacher centrality as supportive rather than restrictive; guidance provides a secure *foundation for experimenting with strategies* (S1: “After practicing with the teacher’s guidance, I try it myself,” S4: “Teacher centrality helps me feel safe to experiment with strategies”).

This finding supports Littlewood (1999) and Le & Nguyen (2020), who argue that teacher centrality does not necessarily inhibit autonomy when scaffolded appropriately. Instead, it provides learners with a framework from which independent application emerges. In the Vietnamese context, where cultural norms promote deference to authority, teacher-guided scaffolding appears particularly effective for developing both strategic competence and confidence in speaking.

Cultural Considerations and Implications

The study highlights the importance of cultural context in interpreting teacher centrality and strategy use. High power-distance values in Vietnamese classrooms encourage students to rely on teachers for both knowledge and strategic guidance. While Western models of learner autonomy often emphasize independence from the outset, this study suggests that in Confucian-influenced EFL classrooms, autonomy can emerge gradually through structured teacher support.

The findings imply that curriculum design and teaching methods should balance teacher guidance with opportunities for independent practice. For example, teachers might begin with modeling and explicit strategy instruction and gradually allow students to apply strategies in peer interactions or independent speaking tasks. This approach aligns with the observed progression in S1–S5, who initially relied on teachers but gradually incorporated strategies independently.

Contributions to Theory and Practice

This study contributes to the literature on teacher centrality and strategy use in EFL contexts by demonstrating the interplay between cultural beliefs, teacher guidance, and learner autonomy. It provides empirical evidence that teacher centrality, while reinforcing dependence initially, can also serve as a scaffold for developing strategic competence and autonomy.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that Vietnamese EFL teachers should:

1. Provide **explicit modeling of speaking strategies**.
2. Encourage **clarification and adaptation** to allow students to personalize strategies.

3. Gradually **reduce centrality** to promote learner autonomy while respecting cultural norms.

These implications are particularly relevant for curriculum designers, teacher educators, and EFL instructors in high power-distance contexts.

In summary, Vietnamese students perceive teachers as central figures in EFL classrooms, and this centrality strongly influences the adoption and application of speaking strategies. Structured teacher guidance fosters strategy use while supporting gradual learner autonomy. Cultural values, particularly respect for authority and hierarchical classroom norms, play a key role in shaping these dynamics. The study demonstrates that teacher centrality and learner autonomy are complementary, rather than opposing, factors in developing effective speaking strategies in Vietnamese EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study explored Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of teacher centrality and its influence on speaking strategy use. The findings indicate that teacher centrality plays a critical role in shaping how students adopt and apply strategies in speaking tasks. Cultural respect for teachers and high reliance on authority figures lead students to favor imitation, clarification, and guided strategy application as primary methods of learning. While students initially depend heavily on teacher modeling and feedback, they gradually integrate these strategies into independent practice, demonstrating a dynamic interplay between structured guidance and learner autonomy.

The study also highlights the importance of cultural context. Vietnamese students' reliance on teacher authority is closely tied to Confucian values and high power-distance educational norms, which shape classroom behaviors and strategy preferences. Structured teacher support does not hinder autonomy; rather, it scaffolds learners' development, enabling them to gradually apply strategies independently while maintaining confidence and accuracy in speaking tasks. Overall, teacher centrality and learner autonomy emerge as complementary elements in fostering effective speaking strategy use in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.

Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for EFL teaching and curriculum design in Vietnamese contexts. First, teachers should provide structured modeling and guided practice of speaking strategies while gradually encouraging students to apply strategies independently. Such scaffolding helps learners build confidence and competence before attempting tasks on their own. Second, curriculum design should strike a balance between teacher guidance and autonomous practice. Activities such as pair work, peer interaction, and independent speaking tasks can allow students to internalize strategies effectively while still benefiting from structured teacher support. Finally, teachers need to be culturally aware of students' perceptions of authority and teacher centrality. Understanding that high respect for teachers influences learners' strategy use enables educators to scaffold instruction in ways that both respect cultural norms and promote the gradual development of learner autonomy.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, it was conducted in a single university context, focusing on B1-level English majors at Can Tho University, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other Vietnamese EFL learners in different regions, universities, or proficiency levels. Second, the study relied solely on qualitative interviews and limited classroom observation, without incorporating quantitative measures, which restricts the

breadth of evidence available for analysis. Finally, the sample included only freshmen English majors in an online evening class, meaning the findings may not fully represent the experiences of learners in other classroom settings or course levels. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the role of teacher centrality in shaping speaking strategy use and learner autonomy.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should expand on the findings of this study in multiple ways. Comparative studies across different universities and regions could help determine whether the patterns observed at Can Tho University are consistent in other Vietnamese EFL contexts. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines interviews, classroom observation, and quantitative surveys could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teacher centrality affects strategy adoption and autonomy. In addition, longitudinal studies tracking learners' development over time would shed light on how teacher-guided scaffolding supports the gradual emergence of independent strategy use and speaking competence. Such studies would offer richer insights into the dynamic relationship between teacher centrality, cultural expectations, and learner autonomy in EFL classrooms.

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THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN SHAPING STANDARDS AND ADVOCATING FOR TRANSLATORS

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ABSTRACT

Professional associations are valuable supports to translators, helping to make the profession more robust and respected. Such groups bring translators together to share knowledge, establish expectations of quality work, and advocate for fair treatment in the marketplace. In the absence of such organizations, translators are often isolated, which makes the development and enforcement of standards almost impossible, while poor pay and unrealistic deadlines become readily exploitable. Associations help change this by creating shared guidelines for ethical practice, offering training opportunities, and providing resources that individual translators may not have access to. They can also act as a collective voice when dealing with clients, agencies, and policy makers to advocate for reasonable rates, proper recognition of translators' skills, and respect for time and expertise that goes into translating. This advocacy is needed because translation is a very invisible profession when done well, yet extremely important in global communications. Associations work to make the profession more visible and valued. They also help new translators enter the field with confidence by offering mentorship and clear pathways for professional growth. Challenges remain, including reaching freelancers who work in isolation and adapting to rapid changes in technology. Still, professional associations continue to be a cornerstone of a healthy translation community. They remind us that while translation happens one word at a time, progress for the profession happens when translators stand together. This paper explores how these organizations shape everyday practice and fight for translators' interests—not through force, but through shared purpose and steady, practical work.

Keywords: professional associations, translation standards, advocacy, translator rights

Introduction

The position of translation is at the center of how both an individual and an organization communicate. Despite its obvious importance, translators, as a profession, are often not recognized. They are thanked only when successful, but silently; otherwise, they are denounced when they fail, but loudly. It is a tremendously unfavorable environment in which professionals try to create a successful presence. Translators are often individuals, often operating from their homes. They struggle to make a fair wage, work faster, and operate at lower rates, without the

support of an organization. It is at such a time that professional organizations are seen not as a distant force, but as a lifeline, offering nothing more than a very effective thing: community.

By bringing translators together into a common identity, these organizations clear space for mutual action. They clarify what good translation looks like—not because of a set of fixed rules, but thanks to evolving conversations about ethics, skill, and responsibility. They step in when translators need backup—whether that means pushing back against agencies demanding weekend turnaround on complex legal documents or educating clients about why machine translation alone can't replace human judgment. This paper examines in close detail how professional associations pursue two intertwined missions: developing norms that inform daily practice, and advancing the interests of translators in a thick marketplace. It doesn't claim associations have all the answers. It shows instead how their persistent presence helps individual translators feel less isolated, work with greater assurance, and slowly raise the profession as a whole. The paper focuses on contexts where English is the dominant language, as that's where associations have evolved the most distinct approaches in recent decades.

Theoretical issues

Professional associations play a pivotal role in elevating translator standards through certification, training advocacy, and market regulation, while fostering professional identity and solidity amid technological and economic challenges. These organizations bridge gaps between education, practice, and policy across diverse national contexts (Berry & Stern, 1981; Yılmaz-Gümüş, 2018; Koby & Melby, 2013; Hlavac, 2013; Chan & Liu, 2013).

Understanding the role of professional associations begins with a basic question: what does it mean to be a professional translator? Unlike doctors or lawyers, in many places, translators do not need a government license to practice. Anyone can call themselves a translator. This openness has its advantages—it allows talented people to enter the field without heavy barriers—but it also creates confusion. Clients may not know how to spot skilled translators. Newcomers may not understand what separates competent work from careless output. Professional associations step into this gap by offering a voluntary framework for professionalism. They do not control who can translate, but they do define what it means to translate well within their community.

Standards in translation are more than grammar or vocabulary. They represent deeper questions of judgment. How should a translator handle a culturally specific joke that doesn't have a direct equivalent? Under what circumstances can a phrase be adapted for the target audience, and when does the original meaning need to stand? Associations help translators negotiate those gray areas by developing codes of ethics and practice guidelines. These documents bubble up from real experience—discussions among working translators about the moral quandaries they face every day. The resulting standards feel practical, not theoretical. They might address confidentiality, for example, reminding translators that client materials stay private unless permission is given. Or they might speak to accuracy, encouraging translators to flag unclear source text rather than guess at meaning. These guidelines do not absolve a translator of the need to think critically. Rather, they offer a shared touchstone—a way for translators to explain professional choices to clients or colleagues.

Another theoretical layer involves professional identity. Translation work can feel isolating. A translator might spend whole days with a screen, moving text from one language into another, never seeing the end users nor understanding the full impact of their work. This isolation, over time, tends to make a person's identification with the profession diminish. Associations counter this by fostering connection. They host events, online forums, and local

meetups where translators share frustrations and solutions. This social fabric matters because identity shapes behavior. When translators understand themselves to be part of something greater than themselves—things shared—the better they tend to hold on to those values in their own work. They also become more willing to support peers—recommending colleagues for jobs they cannot take, or warning others about problematic clients. This mutual support strengthens the entire field.

Lastly, collective action as a final theory. While one translator demanding proper fees may be dismissed, ten may face a diplomatic decline. But hundreds or thousands represented by an association? That prompts closer client and agency ears. It's not about conflict; it's about power balance. Associations collect information on payment rates, work environments, and market trends. They then use this to enlighten or educate all parties involved: translation associates and clients. A newly emerging translation professional who wishes to know more about proper payment rates should turn to an association's collected statistics. A client unaware of standard rush rates should become aware by means of association resources. This not only creates balance; it also boosts credibility. If an association constantly promotes respectful practices and expectations, then clients are more apt to respect translation work as a skilled trade and not a product to be bought and paid for as cheaply as possible.

Method

The general design of the study is descriptive and based on library research. It critically analyzes the issue from various perspectives.

Discussion

Professional organizations adopt standards in various pragmatic ways. First off, they provide certification or accreditation services to their members. These are not government-issued licenses, but rather voluntary credentials that prove a translator's dedication to quality. Essentially, in exchange for certification, translators must take examinations to determine their reading proficiency, writing proficiency, and general translation competence to real-world problems. The act of certification alone helps to promote standards; prior to sitting their examinations, translators must familiarize themselves with standards and other best practices in translation that emphasize quality and efficacy. Once they successfully pass their examinations, they display their certification to clients or customers as further evidence of their professionalism in the field. Clients profit in the sense that they can more easily sift through the numerous translators available in the marketplace and select from those who are properly certified.

Second, there exist codes of professional conduct. These codes set standards with respect to confidentiality and accuracy. The codes can empower translators not to take assignments outside their field of expertise or require them to disclose any interest that might be conflicting with their duties. However, it should be noted that these codes are not static; they change with the passage of time. In other words, they exist in the present but in the present progressive tense. This indicates that they can be modified when circumstances change. This would be particularly important in cases where new issues require codes to change quickly—e.g., when AI translators become available in the field.

Thirdly, these organizations facilitate translation services with ongoing educational options. Webinars, workshops, and conferences serve as opportunities for translators to advance their skills and remain abreast of developments in the profession. A translator might specialize

in medical translation and attend a presentation on translation of telehealth terminology. Another translator might profit from discussions on how to secure better deals with clients. Even though this is not direct support, translators who possess skill and confidence will resist undervaluing of their services and become better promoters of the profession through positive action like excellent service delivery.

Advocacy activities may take place at various levels. At the personal level, the associations provide resources that translators may use. Translators can benefit from resources such as sample contracts, rate calculators, and even client communication templates. With these resources, translators are better able to market themselves and look out for their own best interests. There are situations that a translator finds him/herself in. It could be a situation where a client does not wish to make payment. The associations offer advice, where a translator might be linked to someone who has had a similar experience before.

At the industry level, there might be contact with translation agencies, direct clients, and technology companies. For example, they might publish papers on the importance of sustainable rates to achieve high-quality output. Alternatively, they might collaborate with translation companies that are willing to promote sustainable practices and create a "preferred partner" program, which will be advantageous to both parties. Associations might also launch awareness campaigns to showcase the importance of translation and how good translators facilitate trade, legal justice, and understanding between people of different backgrounds.

Policy advocacy forms another level. Although the regulation of translation is not stringent in English-speaking countries, organizations always keep an eye open for legislation regarding translators. There are issues of data privacy, copyright, and even immigration policies, all of which affect a translator in a particular manner. What they essentially do is observe these matters and, at an official level, offer their views to the authorities. It is always not reported in the press, but a more stable environment is created for professionals.

However, challenges exist. Translators do not all join translation associations. Some cannot afford to do so, particularly if they are newly established translators. Some may even complain that they are concentrating too much on some specific sorts of translation, like legal or medical translation, instead of literary or community-based interpreters. Some people may also complain about distance; it would be hard for someone who lives in a far-flung place to take part in activities organized by translation associations if they themselves live in a different place. The translation associations have their own ways of trying to address these challenges.

Technology brings both opportunity and tension. Machine translation tools have altered clients' expectations, at times placing pressure to "just edit" machine output for very low rates. Associations help translators navigate this change in the market by explaining to them the value of human post-editing in relation to full translation and by advocating for appropriate compensation for each service type. They also explore how technology can support translators-through terminology databases, project management tools, or platforms connecting qualified professionals with clients seeking quality. This is not resistance to change but an effort toward shaping it in a translator-friendly manner.

Despite such challenges, benefits of association involvement tend to reverberate outward. Translators who participate in their professional community start to feel more confident in refusing or challenging client demands. They hear about improved tools and methods. They make connections that will lead to referrals and partnerships. Taken together, over time, such individual dividends reinforce the profession's collective health. Clients face greater reliability. New translators join the profession with more clarity. The public's vague notion about what translation entails becomes a little more realistic. Of course, none of this happens overnight. Advances are gradual and spotty.

When thinking about the future, it's clear that the associations will continue to adjust to changing circumstances. The ways in which translators connect may change due to the current rise of working remotely. There will be more development in the field of artificial intelligence, which will again spark discussions about the role of humans in language transfer. The organizations that will be at the forefront are those that are attuned to what their members are saying—particularly the younger generation and those who may be less represented in society overall. The ultimate function of translation associations will not change: they will continue to assist translators to do their best work in exchange for being treated fairly for that work. This function extends not only to the translators' livelihood but also to the quality of worldwide communication that exists across different tongues.

Conclusion

Professional organizations won't solve all of the translation world's problems. They won't make clients pay fair fees or miraculously alleviate scheduling pressures. What they will provide may not be immediately obvious but can be just as impactful: translation unions provide the basis for strength in numbers. Certainly, they enable the field to articulate what quality translation looks like and why it should be rewarded well. Undoubtedly, they provide individual translators with a megaphone of voice to be heard loud and clear by clients and politicians alike. But the greatest strength of translation unions lies in reminding translators that they aren't alone in their battles and dreams.

This work of shaping standards happens quietly: through updated ethics codes, thoughtful certification exams, and workshops where experienced translators share hard-won insights. So does advocacy: a well-worded email to a client association, a rate survey that gives freelancers confidence to quote higher fees, a public statement explaining why translation deserves respect. None of these actions is likely to make news. But over years and decades, they shift expectations. They help clients understand that translation takes skill, judgment, and time. They help new translators take up their work with realistic expectations and practical tools at their command. They help experienced professionals feel valued beyond their immediate client relationships.

Perhaps the greatest challenge that a translator faces is isolation. Professional associations are the antidote to isolation, though not in a dramatic fashion. Associations are a place where translators can ask their questions, share their triumphs, and vent over their challenges. It is human interaction like these that gets translators through bad weeks and portends a long-term commitment to their craft.

New pressures will surface in the future: faster technology cycles, evolving client demands, economic uncertainties. Associations will have to remain agile, attuned to members but relentless in insisting on quality and equity. Their success will be less about dramatic victories, more about small, incremental gains—more translators earning sustainable incomes, more clients valuing translation as skilled labor, more young entrants with confidence in their choice of field.

Ultimately, professional associations matter because translation matters. Clear, accurate communication across languages underpins justice, commerce, healthcare, and human connection. When translators thrive, society benefits. Associations help translators thrive not by speaking for them, but by creating conditions whereby translators can speak—and work—with greater confidence, skill, and collective support. That work continues, one word, one standard, one advocacy effort at a time. Finally, the authors (as non-native English speakers) acknowledge the use of LLMs for linguistic assistance and enhancement in the preparation of the manuscript.

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TRANSLATING WORD PLAYS: PUN IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

Pun marks a peculiar point of friction between linguistic form and semantic content, and as such, has been variously described as the "bête noire" of the translator. A pun depends upon a particular phonological or orthographic coincidence in a Source Language (SL) to establish a double meaning. This paper entitled "Translating Word Plays: Pun in Focus" highlights the intrinsic problems a translator faces in transferring this linguistic duality into a Target Language (TL) where such coincidences hardly exist. The principal problem is rooted in the concept of Linguistic Asymmetry. A pun is a "vertical" stacking of meanings on a single word anchor. In translating, the translator is mostly forced to "flatten" such a stack, opting for one meaning over the other, losing thereby the humor or rhetorical impact. This creates the classic dilemma: faithful to the meaning-semantics-and killing the humor, or faithful to the humor-function-and altering the meaning. By drawing on the seminal work of Dirk Delabastita (1993), we argue that the answer lies in breaking out of Word-for-Word Equivalence and into Functional Equivalence. Compensation, e.g., which involves adding a pun elsewhere in the text to compensate for one that has been lost, and Rhetorical Substitution, e.g., which involves using irony, rhyme, or alliteration in place of a pun, are strategies that must be explored. The "untranslatability" of puns, we wish to argue, is largely mythical; albeit it is true that the form of the linguistic item itself cannot be translated, it can, nevertheless, be replicated through creative "transcreation." The translator ceases to be merely a messenger and becomes co-author. S/he rewrites the text to preserve its playful spirit.

Keywords: pun translation, wordplay, functional equivalence, linguistic asymmetry, transcreation, translation strategies

Introduction

'Translation' is not just about substituting phrases from one language to another. "Translation" is about transferring meanings, emotions, styles, and intentions across linguistic boundaries. Some aspects of language are easily transferable from one culture to another, while others are difficult to translate. Among the hardest parts of language to translate are word plays, such as puns.

A pun is a unique form of language. It generates humor or rhetorical effect through the use of an expression with more than one meaning, or words that sound the same. These kinds of words are often enjoyed by the readers because they prompt the readers to take time and appreciate the creativity of the words. What a pun does to make it enjoyable is what also makes it difficult to translate.

Languages are created differently. They have different pronunciations, spelling, and cultural links. A word or phrase that perfectly creates the effect of a pun in one language can be useless in another. When translators encounter such situations, they are often in a dilemma. Should they stick to the word or change it to recreate the effect of the word?

This paper aims to examine what a pun is and the problems posed by it to the translator. This paper claims that a pun is not untranslatable per se, but it demands a great deal of creativity and flexibility on the translator's part. To this effect, the translator needs to think as a writer does. He needs to look for a way to recreate the experience of the reader, as opposed to the structure of the sentence.

The process begins with a discussion of theoretical considerations related to pun translation. It continues with a consideration of practical strategies. Finally, it includes a reflection on the changing role of translators as writers.

Theoretical Issues and Literature Review

What Is a Pun?

A pun is a kind of wordplay characterized by a sense of ambiguity. Often, a pun occurs when a word has two different meanings, or when two words sound different although they have different meanings. This sense of surprise sometimes leads to a kind of humor. For instance, if we take the example of the sign placed in the bakery, which says "We knead your support." What makes this statement funny is that the word 'knead' has the same meaning as the word 'need.' The key feature of a pun is compression. Multiple words wait on a single point. The reader makes these words available almost instantaneously.

Puns have a long literary history, extending back to the time of Homer in the 8th century B.C., as noted by Shaw (1905), who connects them with wordplay in classical texts (p. 18). Michelson (2005) describes puns as a form of wordplay that playfully suggests distinct interpretations for a single word or uses two or more words that sound alike but have different meanings (p. 143).

Crisafulli (1996) defines puns as meaningful connections between words that are formally similar but semantically distinct. An example of such a pun is the pairing of "thyme" and "time," creating a clever wordplay based on similar sounds but differing meanings. Gray (1984) defines a pun as "a play on words by using words in an amusing and tricky manner, make a pun" (p. 168). Winarti (2011) studied word plays of the animated movie "Madagascar II Escape to Africa." Moreover, Sadeghpour (2013) has analyzed the translatability of pun words in Hafiz's poetry, focusing on the challenges and strategies employed by two prominent English translators. Koochacki (2016) investigated the intricate challenges of pun translatability in the English versions of Sa'di's poems.

Linguistic Asymmetry

One of the reasons why translating puns is hard is the concept of asymmetry. Languages do not mirror one another. In other words, a coincidence in pronunciation or spelling does not appear in another language.

If we take an example where in a language there are words combining "bank," the financial institution, and "bank," the side of a river, if the other language has completely different words, there is no place for the original pun to continue.

This asymmetry demands a decision from translators. The translators are not able to transfer this structure without making a decision about what matters most.

Form Versus Function

The key conflict when translating puns is between their form and function.

Actual words, sounds, and structure are the form.

Function is the purpose the pun achieves, which is typically to entertain, surprise, and/or persuade.

If the translator keeps the form, it may sound strange or confusing. If the translator keeps the function, the words may change, yet the reader may get a similar experience.

In many cases, the purpose matters more than the form. In most instances, the audience is not interested in the structure of the joke but whether the joke will make them laugh.

Loss and Gain in Translation

There is always some loss involved in translation, of course, and puns, in particular, can often visibly suffer in this regard—meaning falling flat as just a single line of text.

Of course, translation is not just about losing, it is also about gaining. The translator might come up with a new pun that suits the new language perfectly. Although it is not the same as the original, it achieves the same or even greater effect.

This concept modifies our notion of translation. We might now consider translation as a creative process, not as a mechanical operation.

The Translator as a Creative Agent

With respect to wordplay, translators cannot remain passive observers. They have to ask themselves, what is the purpose of this pun? Is it to make people laugh? Is it to criticize? Is it to draw attention?

Once the purpose has been established, the translator can look for tools within the target language. This activity is likened to writing instead of copying, whereby the translator becomes a co-creator of the text.

Such creativity does not imply betrayal. In fact, such an act speaks volumes of the respect one has for the original work.

Method

The general design of the study is descriptive and based on library research. It critically analyzes the issue from various perspectives.

Discussion

Common Challenges in Pun Translation

Translators come across a number of problems:

First, structural gaps between languages. Some languages depend heavily on homophones, and others do not. This limits direct transfer.

Second comes the aspect of cultural distance. A pun may be dependent on shared knowledge. Without that knowledge, the joke falls flat.

Third, genre expectations. While readers may welcome creative solutions in literary texts, creativity in either legal or technical texts must remain limited.

Strategy One: Direct Preservation

Sometimes a pun can be preserved almost exactly. This is the case when the target language contains a similar ambiguity. Such moments, though rare, are rewarding in as much as they create some sort of harmony between languages. Yet, translators shouldn't count on such a possibility.

Strategy Two: Sub

Substitution of the original word can be useful when direct transfer does not succeed. Here, the substitute word used in the translation will be different from the original word.

The new pun does not refer to the same objects or concepts, but there is again a renewal of the lighthearted tone found in the original. The audience engages with the humor without being aware of the modification to this sentence form.

Priorities in this approach lie with the reader, not language.

Strategy Three: Compensation

Compensation is the process of restoring the effect of playfulness in another part of the text. This is achieved by noting that while a single wordplay may not survive, the translator finds a way to introduce some form of humor

For instance, if a joke from a joke in the opening paragraph is not possible to translate, a light wordplay can counterbalance this effect elsewhere in the text. The total effect is lively.

Judgment is needed in this process. The new pun should be smooth, not contrived.

Strategy Four: Rhetorical Replacement

However, not all puns must be followed by another pun, and sometimes the translator has the opportunity to use another rhetorical device.

Alliteration may produce musicality.

Rhyme may add charm.

Irony can spark thought.

Although the process is different, the richness of style is still felt by the reader.

Strategy Five: Controlled Explanation

In certain circumstances, particularly within an academic or historical context, a brief explanation might be provided, and this is where an explanation can be given, explaining, for instance, that a play on words occurred.

However, this approach should be done sparingly. Over-explaining ruins the reading flow and dilutes the humor.

Evaluating Success

How can one measure whether or not a translated pun works? The test you can apply is a "Reader Response Test." If the translated text reads smoothly and elicits an emotional response, then the translation is complete. However, if the response elicited is a pause caused by an awkwardly phrased sentence, the translation still has a long way to go. Naturalness is a key determinant of quality.

Ethical Responsibility

Creativity should be balanced with responsibility. Translators should avoid adding any joke which might alter the tone of the author. No serious text should be made lighthearted without cause.

The aim is not to display the translator's wit, but to serve the text.

Pun Translation in the Modern World

Global communication increases contact between languages. As a result of the growing diversity of audiences in communication, translators need to be very flexible.

The use of wordplay is ubiquitous in digital media, advertising, and entertainment, and translators who work in these fields must be able to think creatively and write well.

The modern translator is thus both a language expert and a creative problem solver.

Conclusion

Puns illustrate that intriguing balance between language and its meanings. Puns underscore that translation is not just an exchange of words and meanings, but rather an act of interpretation and creation.

Punning, which is difficult to translate but hardly impossible, is addressed in the process from the standpoint of function, not form, and new possibilities emerge through the methods of replacement, compensation, and rhetorical replacement.

Most importantly, pun translation redefines the role of the translator. The translator does not simply convey messages with words but is actually a part of the meaning-making process. Creativity is no longer a personal luxury but a ladder to professionalism.

The fallacy of untranslability is dissipated when we admit to ourselves that languages do not have to resemble each other to facilitate communication properly. The key to this process is the impact on the reader, their smile, their surprise, the moment of recognition.

Ultimately, the translation of the pun is not so much about words as it is about spark. It should be noted that the authors (as non-native English speakers) acknowledge the use of LLMs for linguistic assistance and enhancement in the preparation of the manuscript.

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ETHICAL DILEMMAS OF TRANSLATORS WORKING IN CONFLICT ZONES

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ABSTRACT

The translators working in conflict zones provide a much-needed service to the militaries, aid organizations, and local populations through their work. But, in return, this puts them right in the middle of very serious ethical issues that are well beyond basic questions of linguistic accuracy. This paper looks at the particular moral landscape these translators go through. Their argument is that this position is not just linguistic but highly human and political, driven to very strong value choices with real-world consequences. The central ethical challenge is the problem of divided loyalties. Translators have to decide where their primary duty lies: with the employer, maybe a foreign military, with the local community from which they come, or with a broader sense of humanitarian principle. This tension creates constant moral stress. But even the act of translation itself carries an ethical charge. How does one translate threats, interrogation questions, propaganda? A strictly neutral translation might enable harm, while a softened translation might misrepresent intent and create strategic danger. Again, the translator is an active participant, rather than a passive conduit. The translators working in conflict zones provide a much-needed service to the militaries, aid organizations, and local populations through their work. But, in return, this puts them right in the middle of very serious ethical issues that are well beyond basic questions of linguistic accuracy. This paper looks at the particular moral landscape these translators go through. Their argument is that this position is not just linguistic but highly human and political, driven to very strong value choices with real-world consequences. The central ethical challenge is the problem of divided loyalties. Translators have to decide where their primary duty lies: with the employer, maybe a foreign military, with the local community from which they come, or with a broader sense of humanitarian principle. This tension creates constant moral stress. But even the act of translation itself carries an ethical charge. How does one translate threats, interrogation questions, propaganda? A strictly neutral translation might enable harm, while a softened translation might misrepresent intent and create strategic danger. Again, the translator is an active participant, rather than a passive conduit.

Keywords: Conflict Translation, Ethical Loyalty, Translator Safety, Mediation Ethics

Introduction

The public needs to talk to each other in any war or conflict: soldiers talk to villagers, aid workers to those needing help, and negotiators to opposing sides. When these groups don't share

a language, translators become the essential bridge. They are the voice in the room, the meaning in the chaos. But in a conflict zone, this is far from simple. It is a role filled with danger and difficult choices.

But translators in these contexts are so much more than the changing of words from one language to another. They work in a world of high tension, where every word carries the potential for life and death. It is not an office job. It is about rubble, military bases, and refugee camps. This nature of the environment escalates the ethical problems into something very unique and heavy. Ethics here is not about academic debates; it is about daily decisions affecting real people's lives.

This paper looks directly at these ethical dilemmas. It moves past the idea of a translator as a neutral machine. Instead, it argues that in conflict, a translator is a human agent caught in the middle. They must balance competing duties, manage their own safety, and decide how much to shape the message they carry. We will explore the core tensions they face: who they are truly working for, how they handle dangerous content, and how they live with the personal risks their job creates. The goal is to understand the heavy human reality behind a job that is too often seen as just technical.

Theoretical Issues: Moving Beyond Neutrality

Translators and interpreters in conflict zones face profound ethical tensions, balancing professional neutrality, personal identities (national/political), and life-threatening risks. Sources highlight dilemmas like perceived loyalty biases, moral crises overriding codes, and agency limits amid violence (Inghilleri & Harding, 2010; Garcés, 2017; Li et al., 2016; Bello, 2021; Rosendo & Persaud, 2016; Dolmaya, 2011).

The more traditional thinking on the process of translation centers around the concepts of fidelity and neutrality. In this line of thought, the good translator is akin to a pane of glass that does not distort vision: meaning from one language should be transferred to another without distortion, without the addition of opinion, and without the message being changed. The only loyalty is to the text and its reproduction.

This theoretical model crashes in a conflict zone. The "clear pane of glass" is a perilous illusion. First, there is no neutral space. A translator is always standing somewhere, physically and politically. They are often local, part of the community experiencing the conflict. They have family, friends, and personal histories that bind them to one side of the story. On the other hand, their paycheck and perhaps a promise of safety or visa come from the foreign employer. From the beginning, the translator has conflicting allegiances.

This leads to one important theoretical shift: we must consider the conflict zone translator as a mediator and an ethical agent, rather than a conduit. Mediation refers to being in the middle and working actively to enable understanding, sometimes by managing emotion, explaining context, or softening tone to prevent violence. Being an ethical agent means they have moral responsibility for their choices. They are not robots; they are people making judgments.

The core theoretical issues, therefore, revolve around agency and consequence. Every translation is an act with potential outcomes. Translating a soldier's demand to search a house could lead to that house being destroyed. Translating a victim's testimony could bring justice or could bring retaliation. The translator cannot escape being part of the chain of action. Therefore, the old theory of neutral fidelity must be replaced with a theory of situated ethics. This means the ethical path is not a fixed rule but depends on the specific, dangerous situation.

The translator must constantly ask: What is my duty here? To whom? What might happen because of the words I choose to say right now?

Method

The general design of the study is descriptive and based on library research. It critically analyzes the issue from various perspectives.

Discussion: The Three Core Dilemmas

In practice, these theoretical problems manifest as three overlapping and painful dilemmas.

The Dilemma of Divided Loyalty

This is the most constant pressure. A translator's loyalties are split in at least three directions. First, there is duty to the employer. This might be a military unit, an NGO, or an international body. The employer provides a mission, rules, and survival income. There is a professional duty to serve them well.

There is also duty to the local community, in which the translator has his own people, neighbors, and culture. They may share their suffering, political views, or reasons for general distrust of outsiders. The community may view the translator as a traitor for working with foreigners, or as a potential protector who can explain their plight.

There is the duty to a personal moral code or humanitarian principle. The translator may adhere to human rights, peace, or simply to reducing suffering. It could well run counter to the orders of the employer or expectations of the community.

For instance, a translator for a military unit may overhear the plans of some operation. Sharing that information with the community could save lives but would be treason to the employer. Keeping it secret makes them complicit in potential harm to their own people. There is no clean choice. Every assignment forces a re-calibration of which loyalty is prioritized, creating deep moral stress and guilt.

The Dilemma of Intervention: To Change or Not to Change the Message?

This is the practical heart of the ethical struggle during the act of translation: conflict communication is fraught with aggression, fear, and threat in which literal words matter a great deal.

How do you translate a soldier's shouted, crude command to a frightened elder?

How could she translate the desperate, rambling plea of a trauma victim to a busy aid official?

How do you translate propaganda for the purpose of deceiving, or interrogation questions for the purpose of breaking someone?

A strictly "faithful" translation of a threat may escalate violence. A translator might instinctively soften the tone-changing "Get out or we will shoot!" to "The soldier requests you leave the building for your safety." This intervenes to de-escalate. But it also changes the message. The employer did not get what they said. This could have tactical consequences; the recipients might not understand the serious urgency. On the other hand, translation that is too faithful might cause unnecessary harm. The translator is now editing reality, making an ethical

call on the spot about what version of the truth will serve what he or she sees as the better outcome. This is the ultimate departure from the neutral model. No longer just a voice, the translator is a filter and buffer-sometimes a protector.

The Dilemma of Safety and Survival

Ethical decisions cannot be separated from the translator's physical reality. They are incredibly vulnerable. To one side, they may be seen as a spy. To the other, they may not be fully trusted. Their visibility makes them a target.

This creates a survival-focused ethical layer. A translator might choose to not translate something accurately because they fear the listener's reaction might put them in immediate danger. They might withhold information from their employer to protect their family from community backlash. They might even accept working on morally questionable missions because saying "no" could mean losing their protected status and being abandoned.

The promise of evacuation or visas for translators who work with foreign forces highlights this dilemma painfully. It can create a coercive environment where translators feel they must endure ethical compromises to secure a future for their family. Their ethical freedom is limited by the primal need for safety. This dilemma forces them to weigh ABSTRACT principles against the very real possibility of death or harm, a calculation few other professions demand.

Conclusion

The translators in a war zone are not just technicians of languages, but human beings who work amidst unimaginably hard conditions. Every word that they utter is laden with ethical weight. In a few instances, the traditional ideal of the invisible, neutral translator proves a comprehensive misfit against war's messy realities. As we have seen, they are in actual fact active mediators and ethical agents caught up in impossible choices.

Their work is defined by three crushing dilemmas: the split in loyalty between employer, community, and conscience; the daily choice of whether to intervene in a message to prevent harm or stay "faithful"; and the constant negotiation of these choices against a backdrop of personal danger. These dilemmas are not occasional; they are the fabric of the job.

Understanding this reality is the first step towards better practice. Employers—whether military, governmental, or humanitarian—must recognize this complex role. Training should go beyond language and include ethical scenario planning. Policies must prioritize the physical and psychological safety of translators, understanding that a terrified person cannot be a fair moral agent. Ultimately, giving these translators a voice and a framework to discuss these dilemmas is crucial. We must stop seeing them as tools and start honoring them as participants who bear a unique and heavy moral burden. Their work is essential for communication in conflict, and their ethical struggle is an inseparable part of that essential, human task. Finally, the authors (as non-native English speakers) acknowledge the use of LLMs for linguistic assistance and enhancement in the preparation of the manuscript.

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THE LINGUOCULTURAL SEMIOTICS OF WORD ORDER IN THE WORLD'S LANGUAGES: FROM STRUCTURAL DETERMINANT TO CULTURAL STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction and Purpose : This article re-evaluates the phenomenon of word order in world languages by moving it beyond the limits of traditional syntactic typology and positioning it within the conceptual framework of linguocultural semiotics. While classical linguistics predominantly interprets word order as the outcome of grammatical determinants, structural stability, and linguistic universals, such an approach does not sufficiently account for its correlation with cultural codes, communicative strategies, and the organizational mechanisms of social cognition.

Materials and Methods: The primary objective of this study is to conceptualize word order not as a passive structural element of language, but as an active semiotic instrument involved in the construction of cultural meaning. Within this perspective, the dominant word order patterns observed in world languages are examined not merely descriptively, but in correlation with cultural context, symbolic coding systems, and information structuring mechanisms. Functions of word order such as the foregrounding of information, prioritization of the subject, marginalization of the object, and transformation of action into a communicative core are interpreted as structural manifestations of culturally shaped cognition.

Results; Drawing upon the theoretical and methodological potential of linguoculturology and semiotics, the article argues that word order should be regarded not as a purely grammatical construct, but as a mediator embedded within ideological, social, and cultural meaning-production processes.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that word order functions as an intermediary between structural necessity and cultural strategy, thereby providing a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

Keywords: word order, linguocultural semiotics, syntactic structure, cultural code, discourse

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means of human communication, but also a complex system in which thinking, social relations and cultural norms are expressed. The sequence of words in a sentence, that is, word order, is closely related to the formation of meaning and the processes of perception of the reader or listener. This sequence is not only a product of grammatical structure, but also develops in interaction with cognitive, social and cultural determinants. Modern linguistic research shows that word order should be considered not only as a grammatical sequence, but

also as a multidisciplinary phenomenon reflecting the semiotic functions of language, cultural priorities and the mechanism of information flow.

The study of word order, conducted from a typological, cognitive, and semiotic perspective, allows us to understand the interaction of its universal and local determinants. This approach ensures that word order is evaluated not only as a syntactic category, but also as a manifestation of human thought, culture, and social behavior at the linguistic level. The article examines the universal regularities, cognitive structure, and cultural determinants of word order in world languages from a theoretical and empirical perspective.

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE AND UNIVERSAL SYNTACTIC MODEL

Word order is one of the most fundamental elements of the grammatical system of a language and is manifested in different typological patterns in different languages. Typological studies show that the sequences SVO (Subject-Vocal-Object), SOV (Subject-Object-Vocal) and VSO (Vocal-Subject-Object) are present in the vast majority of all languages, and the prevalence of these sequences cannot be explained solely as a random phenomenon. These sequences are closely related to the information processing mechanisms of the human brain and provide structural stability in accordance with universal grammatical principles.

The topic-rheme structure, i.e. the placement of already known information at the beginning and new information at the end of the sentence, plays a crucial role in the clear transmission of meaning and the functional effectiveness of language. Universal principles of word order also ensure the efficiency of syntactic integration, the harmonious arrangement of sentence components, and the optimal organization of perception. In this regard, word order requires a theoretical explanation not only as a grammatical category, but also as a complex phenomenon in which cognitive structure and cultural determinants are combined.

LINGUOCULTURAL DETERMINATION AND CULTURAL FACTOR

Local variants of word order, that is, cultural, social and historical determinants, are one of the most important components that determine the semiotic code and functional differentiation of each language, and these components require the assessment of language not only as a communicative tool, but also as a complex phenomenon in which cultural, social and cognitive determinants are combined. Human language acts as a system that encodes the interaction between the individual and society, and local adaptation of word order, as the most visible manifestation of this interaction, requires in-depth analysis from a theoretical point of view.

Cultural determinants provide local specificity of word order and organize the sequence of sentence components in accordance with cultural priorities, social norms and rules of social behavior; this organization increases the functional efficiency of word order, ensures the accuracy of semiotic interpretation and optimizes the process of information perception. Social factors also increase the flexibility of word order, maintaining universal grammatical stability and ensuring the expression of local semiotic codes. Thus, word order should not be perceived only as a syntactic sequence, but should also be theoretically analyzed as a multidisciplinary system formed by cultural and social determinants.

The linguocultural perspective clearly shows the functional and semiotic role of word order. This approach suggests that word order should be theoretically justified not only as a grammatical structure of language, but also as a phenomenon that develops in interaction with

cultural and social determinants and is adaptive in different social contexts. Local adaptation of word order both preserves the semantic accuracy of the sentence and enriches the cognitive interpretation of language, thus word order is considered as an expression of both global and local language functions.

The influence of cultural determinants on word order is not limited to local differences, they also shape the cognitive structure of the language and the mechanism of meaning processing. The human brain takes into account the functional adaptation of word order in the process of information processing, which allows it to express cultural and social specificity without violating universal grammatical stability. The flexibility and adaptability of word order, thus, arise as a result of the interaction of cultural determinants with grammatical structure and increase the semiotic richness of the language

Social determinants regulate the communicative function of word order and optimize the perception of information flow. These determinants, by determining the sequence of placement of sentence components, regulate the interpretation of information and the transmission of social messages. Cultural determinants, on the other hand, provide local adaptation of word order, making it possible to express the semiotic codes of language in a cultural context. This interaction shows that word order should not be perceived only as a grammatical category, but should also be analyzed as a theoretical and scientific system in which cultural, social and cognitive determinants are combined.

Linguocultural determinants of word order interact with typological regularities and enrich the semiotic system of the language. This allows word order to express local cultural specificity while maintaining universal grammatical stability. Local semiotic codes of each language are included in the functional structure of the sentence and provide the adaptability of word order, theoretically justifying the interpretation of cultural determinants at the language level.

Theoretical analysis of the linguocultural determinants of word order allows the development of a multidisciplinary approach that combines the functional and semiotic aspects of language. This approach shows that word order is not only a grammatical category, but also requires theoretical and scientific analysis as a product of the interaction of cultural, social and cognitive determinants. Cultural factors ensure local adaptation of word order, while social determinants optimize communicative effectiveness and the perception of the flow of meaning.

The flexibility of word order combines universal grammatical stability with cultural and social specificity, increasing the functional and semiotic richness of language. This process requires the insufficient consideration of word order as a syntactic sequence alone, but also the consideration of it as a key element of a theoretical framework that integrates it with cultural and social determinants. Linguocultural determinants provide a multidisciplinary approach to the theoretical and scientific analysis of word order and allow us to explain the functional interpretation of language on a scientific basis.

The adaptability of word order also ensures its functional adaptation to the local cultural and social context, which preserves the semantic accuracy of the language, optimizes the perception of information, and increases the efficiency of communication; thus, word order is evaluated not only as a grammatical category, but also as a theoretical and scientific phenomenon that arises as a result of the interaction of social, cultural, and cognitive determinants.

Linguocultural determinants of word order should be theoretically analyzed as a complex system that integrates the social, cultural, and cognitive functions of language. This approach shows that word order can be explained scientifically not only as a syntactic sequence, but also as a multidisciplinary phenomenon formed as a result of the interaction of cultural, social, and cognitive determinants,

The flexibility and adaptability of word order, as a result of the combination of cultural and social determinants with grammatical stability, increases the functional and semiotic richness of language. This process requires that word order is not only perceived as a syntactic sequence, but also considered as a theoretical framework that integrates cultural and social determinants, thus linguocultural determinants play a key role in the scientific and theoretical analysis of word order.

THE CONCEPT OF LINGUOCULTURAL SEMIOTICS

The semiotic aspect of word order requires that it not be considered solely as a grammatical sequence. Word order is also viewed as a means of regulating the semiotic functions of language, shaped by cultural and social determinants. This perspective presents word order as a multidisciplinary phenomenon in which grammatical, cognitive, and cultural determinants are combined.

The cognitive and semiotic role of the topic-rheme sequence allows for a deep analysis of the functional structures of language. The flexibility and adaptability of word order, combining universal grammatical stability with local cultural specificity, provides both global and local functions of language. This approach theoretically justifies the fact that word order is not only a grammatical category, but also a manifestation of cultural and cognitive systems at the linguistic level.

TYPOLOGICAL AND FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF WORD ORDER IN WORLD LANGUAGES

The typological and functional aspects of word order in world languages act as one of the fundamental indicators of the structural and semiotic richness of the language, and theoretical research in this area requires the assessment of word order not only as a grammatical sequence, but also as a complex phenomenon formed in interaction with cultural, social and cognitive determinants. The typological approach shows how word order is connected between universal grammatical principles and local adaptations, and this connection provides an important framework for theoretically substantiating the semiotic and functional potential of each language.

Typological aspects of word order allow us to analyze the structural differences of the language, the local adaptations of semiotic codes and the functional sequence of sentence components. This approach shows how universal grammatical regularities are manifested locally in different language groups and theoretically justifies the flexibility, adaptability and semiotic richness of word order. Typological analysis provides a consideration of word order from both a functional and semiotic perspective and covers the local characteristics of each language, as well as the interpretation of language in a social and cultural context.

Functional aspects explain the role of word order in organizing the flow of information, maintaining the semantic accuracy of the sentence, and ensuring communicative effectiveness. This aspect reveals that word order is not just a grammatical category, but also a dynamic system that interacts with cultural, social, and cognitive determinants. The functional approach shows that the flexibility of word order serves to optimize the sequence of placement of sentence components, increase the accuracy of semiotic interpretation, and ensure the efficiency of information transmission.

The interaction of typological and functional aspects, combining local adaptation of word order and universal grammatical stability, thus theoretically underpins the semiotic and functional potential of language. This interaction requires the assessment of word order not only as a syntactic sequence, but also as a theoretical and scientific phenomenon resulting from the interaction of cultural, social and cognitive determinants.

Typological regularities of word order in the world's languages allow us to theoretically explain the semiotic and functional differences in different language families. These regularities show that local adaptation of word order, in accordance with universal grammatical principles, preserves the functional structure and semantic accuracy of the sentence. The semiotic and typological features of language ensure the adaptability of word order, and this adaptability contributes to the cognitive interpretation of language and the process of optimal organization of information flow.

Functional analysis suggests that word order interacts with cultural and social determinants to enhance communicative effectiveness and information comprehension. Social determinants regulate the dynamics of word order and optimize the sequence of sentence components, while cultural determinants ensure the interpretation and functional adaptation of local semiotic codes. This approach emphasizes that it is not enough to consider word order solely as a syntactic sequence and that it must be analyzed within a multidisciplinary theoretical framework.

The typological perspective provides a harmonious integration of the global and local linguistic functions of word order, and through this integration, the semiotic and functional potential of word order is theoretically justified. Theoretical analysis of functional aspects shows that word order should be considered not only as a grammatical category, but also as a complex system formed in interaction with cultural, social and cognitive determinants.

The adaptability and flexibility of word order, as a result of the interaction of typological and functional aspects, increase the semiotic richness and communicative effectiveness of the language. This adaptability ensures that word order is evaluated not only as a grammatical sequence, but also as a theoretical and scientific phenomenon in which social, cultural and cognitive determinants are combined. The combination of linguocultural and typological approaches allows for a multidisciplinary approach to the theoretical analysis of word order and explains the functional interpretation of language on scientific grounds.

The harmonious integration of typological regularities and functional principles combines local adaptation of word order and universal grammatical stability. This combination preserves the semantic accuracy of the sentence, ensures the optimal organization of the information flow, and theoretically substantiates the functional, cognitive, and semiotic aspects of language. The

flexibility of word order, combined with typological and functional determinants, increases the semiotic richness of language and allows it to be explained within a multidisciplinary theoretical framework.

Theoretical analysis of functional aspects shows that local adaptation of word order, while maintaining the semantic accuracy of the sentence, is formed as a result of the interaction of cultural and social determinants. Social determinants regulate the sequence of sentence components, while cultural determinants ensure the interpretation and functional adaptation of local semiotic codes. This interaction requires the theoretical and scientific assessment of word order as a multidisciplinary system.

The typological and functional aspects of word order theoretically substantiate the semiotic, cognitive, and communicative potential of language and integrate local adaptation of word order with universal grammatical regularities. This integration shows that word order should be considered not only as a syntactic sequence, but also as a scientific and theoretical phenomenon that is shaped by the interaction of cultural, social, and cognitive determinants.

DIALECTIC OF UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL FACTORS

Word order formation occurs as a result of the interaction of universal and local determinants. Universal factors ensure grammatical stability, maintain the structural harmony of the language, and regulate the effective arrangement of sentence components. These universal regularities shape the initial structure of word order and optimize the sequence of cognitive processing.

Local factors, on the other hand, ensure the adaptability of word order and create specific semiotic codes in cultural, social and historical contexts. These factors adapt word order to the local context, increase semiotic richness and align the functional arrangement of sentence components with cultural priorities. The dialectical interaction of universal and local factors ensures that word order is both flexible and stable and reveals the multidisciplinary function of language.

PSYCHOLINGUISTIC AND COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF WORD ORDER

The psycholinguistic and cognitive aspects of word order are considered to be one of the most important components underlying the processes of language processing in the human brain, information perception and semantic interpretation, and theoretical studies in this area show that the structure of word order should be analyzed not only as a grammatical sequence, but also as a complex system formed in interaction with cultural, social and cognitive determinants. The adaptability and flexibility of word order in the process of human language processing increases both the speed of perception and the accuracy of information interpretation, thus, psycholinguistic approaches require the theoretical substantiation of word order not only as a syntactic category, but also as a functional and cognitive phenomenon.

The psycholinguistic perspective theoretically explains the influence of word order on the processing of language centers in the brain, the organization of information flow, and the process of encoding meaning. This approach shows that local adaptation of word order, while preserving grammatical structure, is formed as a result of interaction with cultural and social determinants. The flexibility and adaptability of word order, thus increasing the functional, cognitive, and semiotic potential of language, ensures the effectiveness of information perception and the accuracy of meaning interpretation.

Cognitive aspects explain how word order is encoded in the brain's working mechanisms and how information processing is optimized. The human brain, taking into account the sequence of placement of sentence components, increases the speed and efficiency of information flow while maintaining semantic accuracy. This process shows that word order should be evaluated not only as a grammatical sequence, but also as a theoretical and scientific phenomenon formed in interaction with cognitive determinants. Theoretical analysis of the psycholinguistic and cognitive aspects of word order reveals the functional and semiotic potential of language, as well as its interaction with cultural and social determinants, through a multidisciplinary approach. This approach shows that the adaptability of word order ensures the optimal organization of information flow while maintaining the semantic accuracy of the sentence and provides a scientific basis for the functional interpretation of language.

Social and cultural determinants influence the psycholinguistic and cognitive adaptation of word order, optimizing the functional sequence of sentence components and the efficiency of information flow. This interaction suggests that word order should not be viewed solely as a syntactic sequence, but should also be analyzed on theoretical and scientific grounds as a multidisciplinary system that integrates cultural, social, and cognitive determinants.

The harmonious integration of typological, functional and psycholinguistic aspects combines local adaptation of word order and universal grammatical stability. This combination preserves the semantic accuracy of the sentence, ensures the optimal organization of the information flow and theoretically substantiates the functional, cognitive and semiotic aspects of language. The flexibility of word order, combined with psycholinguistic and cognitive determinants, increases the semiotic richness of language and allows it to be explained within a multidisciplinary theoretical framework.

Psycholinguistic analysis shows that local adaptation of word order, in addition to increasing the speed of information perception and the accuracy of interpretation, is formed as a result of the interaction of cultural and social determinants. Social determinants regulate the sequence of sentence components, while cultural determinants ensure the interpretation and functional adaptation of local semiotic codes. This interaction requires the assessment of word order as a multidisciplinary system on theoretical and scientific grounds.

The psycholinguistic and cognitive aspects of word order theoretically substantiate the semiotic, cognitive, and communicative potential of language and integrate local adaptation of word order with universal grammatical regularities. This integration shows that word order should be considered not only as a syntactic sequence, but also as a scientific and theoretical phenomenon that is shaped by the interaction of cultural, social, and cognitive determinants.

Theoretical analysis of cognitive aspects shows that the adaptability of word order, while maintaining semantic accuracy in the working mechanisms of the brain, increases the speed of information flow and the accuracy of interpretation. This adaptability ensures that word order is evaluated not only as a grammatical sequence, but also as a theoretical and scientific phenomenon combined with psycholinguistic, cognitive, cultural and social determinants.

The harmonious integration of functional and psycholinguistic aspects ensures local adaptation while maintaining the universal grammatical stability of word order, and this process theoretically justifies the semiotic, cognitive and functional potential of language. This approach shows that the scientific and theoretical analysis of word order should be carried out not only as a syntactic sequence, but also as a multidisciplinary phenomenon formed by the interaction of cultural, social and cognitive determinants.

Theoretical analysis of the psycholinguistic and cognitive determinants of word order develops a multidisciplinary approach that combines the functional and semiotic aspects of language and combines local adaptation of word order with universal grammatical principles. This process ensures that word order is evaluated not only as a grammatical category, but also as a theoretical and scientific phenomenon that is shaped by the interaction of social, cultural and cognitive determinants.

THEORETICAL BASIS OF EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Empirical approaches show that the analysis of word order should not be limited to the study of grammatical sequence alone, but also requires a theoretical framework that takes into account the interaction of cognitive, semiotic, and cultural determinants. Typological and statistical analyses identify universal patterns and confirm the global structural stability of word order. However, local adaptation of word order cannot be fully explained without taking into account the role of cultural determinants and cognitive features.

The cognitive perspective explains word order as an organizational structure of information processing, while the topic-rheme sequence theoretically underpins the processes of meaning perception and memory retention. Cultural determinants, on the other hand, determine the local specificity and semiotic value of word order. As a result, word order can be theoretically justified as a multidisciplinary phenomenon that combines universal grammatical regularities, cognitive structure, and cultural determinants.

CONCLUSION

Word order is considered a multidisciplinary phenomenon formed by the interaction of universal grammatical imperatives, cognitive organization, and cultural determinants. Typological,

Cognitive and theoretical results show that word order analysis is not limited to grammatical aspects alone, but should also take into account cultural, social, and semiotic aspects. This approach offers rich perspectives for future linguistic, translation, and educational research.

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THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE: A CASE STUDY OF RAPH ELLISON'S *INVISIBLE MAN* AND HARRIET BEECHER'S *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the construction and negotiation of identity in African-American literature through a comparative analysis of *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Anchored in postcolonial theory, critical race theory, and identity studies, the study investigates how African-American identity is represented, contested, and reshaped within socio-historical contexts marked by slavery, segregation, and systemic racism. By juxtaposing Stowe's nineteenth-century abolitionist narrative with Ellison's twentieth-century modernist novel, the research highlights both continuity and transformation in the literary articulation of Black subjectivity.

The study employs qualitative textual analysis, focusing on narrative voice, symbolism, characterization, and thematic structures related to visibility, selfhood, resistance, and agency. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which dominant ideologies influence representations of Black identity, as well as how African-American characters navigate imposed identities and strive for self-definition. While *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reflects the moral and ideological frameworks of its abolitionist context - often mediating Black identity through a white authorial perspective - *Invisible Man* foregrounds an internalized, fragmented, and evolving sense of self shaped by modern racial realities.

By bringing these two canonical texts into dialogue, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of identity formation in African-American literature across historical periods. It demonstrates how literary narratives function both as sites of ideological constraint and as spaces for resistance and self-assertion. Ultimately, the study underscores the centrality of identity as a dynamic and contested concept in African-American literary tradition and offers critical insights into the role of literature in articulating marginalized experiences.

Keywords: African-American literature, alienation, identity, post-colonialist theory.

INTRODUCTION

For decades literary works of the canons have been appreciated by their mastery of the language and its artistic side that literature is. However, more recent theorists argued that literature is not innocent from the outer factors that may indeed affect the production of a given literary work. Therefore, literature has been articulated on multiple platforms to convey an idea or to oppose it. African American literature is not an exception to this rule; their literary works have emerged under different circumstances that are peculiar to the African Americans only.

African American literature, in particular, is regarded as an outstanding kind of literature that sprang from the suffering of the blacks from enslavement and ill-treatment of the whites that stripped them of any rights. Therefore their authors at first wrote to challenge the common controversies that the blacks are not able to produce an adequate literary work besides, to claim their rights to be treated as equal human being as it has been stated in the Declaration of Independence “ that all man are created equal”.

Negro writers have always involved in their writings the theme of the search for identity that came to the surface due to the racial discrimination and racism. Ralph Ellison’s work *Invisible Man* and Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* for instance, depicted the social realities of that of the blacks, and their dilemmas they get encountered within a world dominated by white values and ideologies in which they were marginalized from.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Problem Statement

The search for identity has long been a central concern in African American literature, reflecting the historical and cultural struggles of a people marginalized through slavery, segregation, and systemic racism. African Americans have historically been denied full recognition of their humanity, resulting in complex questions about selfhood, agency, and belonging. Literature has served as a powerful medium through which Black writers and their allies have explored these issues. Two major works that engage with the theme of identity though from different centuries and ideological standpoints are Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) and Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952).

Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, written in the context of antebellum America, was a politically motivated novel aimed at exposing the moral atrocities of slavery. While it played a significant role in raising awareness among white readers and fueling abolitionist sentiment, its portrayal of African American characters, especially the protagonist Tom, has been criticized for reinforcing submissive and stereotypical identities. The African American identity in Stowe’s narrative is constructed through the lens of Christian morality, self-sacrifice, and passive endurance, offering limited space for self-definition or resistance. Consequently, while the novel attempts to humanize Black characters, it simultaneously imposes restrictive notions of identity shaped by white, paternalistic perspectives.

In contrast, Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, written a century later, delves into the psychological and existential aspects of identity in a modern, segregated America. The protagonist, an unnamed Black man, embarks on a journey to understand himself in a society that refuses to see him as a full human being. The metaphor of invisibility captures the deep sense of alienation and marginalization experienced by African Americans in the 20th century. Ellison’s novel critiques various societal structures—including education, politics, and race relations—that contribute to the erasure or distortion of Black identity. The protagonist’s struggle is not merely about survival, but about asserting his individuality in a world that seeks to define him through prejudice and expectation.

Despite their differing historical contexts, both novels reveal the constraints placed on African American identity and raise essential questions about self-perception, societal roles, and the possibility of authentic selfhood in an oppressive environment. However, a significant gap remains in comparative studies that examine how identity is constructed, challenged, or reclaimed in these two foundational texts. Most existing scholarship tends to treat these novels in isolation or focus on their sociopolitical impact rather than their shared thematic engagement with identity.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by offering a comparative literary analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Invisible Man*, focusing specifically on the portrayal and evolution of African American identity. By analyzing how each text reflects, negotiates, or resists dominant narratives of Black identity in its historical moment, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that shape selfhood in African American literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and compare how African American identity is represented, constructed, and challenged in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These two novels, though written a century apart, both address the social and psychological consequences of racial oppression on African Americans and the ongoing struggle for self-definition in a society structured by white supremacy.

This study aims to analyze how each author presents the African American experience in relation to identity, focusing on the different ways characters respond to marginalization, invisibility, and societal expectations. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe portrays African American characters from a sympathetic, yet externally imposed, perspective, shaped largely by Christian morality and abolitionist intentions. Meanwhile, in *Invisible Man*, Ellison presents a first-person narrative that internalizes the conflict, offering a more introspective and existential examination of identity in the 20th-century United States.

By examining the literary techniques, character development, and thematic concerns in both texts, this research will uncover how the idea of identity evolves between the 19th and 20th centuries in African American literature. The study will also consider how historical, cultural, and political contexts influence these representations.

Ultimately, this research seeks to highlight the continuity and transformation of the identity struggle across time, illustrating how African American literature has served as a voice of resistance, empowerment, and self-realization. The comparative analysis will contribute to a deeper understanding of how African American authors and their characters navigate imposed identities and strive for self-definition within a racially oppressive society.

Hypotheses

On the basis of the preceding sections, the study formulates the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *Invisible Man* presents a more individualized and psychologically complex portrayal of African American identity than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, due to its first-person narrative and 20th-century sociopolitical context.

Hypothesis 2: In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, African American identity is constructed primarily through external perceptions particularly white abolitionist and Christian ideals while in *Invisible Man*, identity is shaped through internal conflict and personal realization.

Hypothesis 3: The historical context of each novel significantly influences the representation of African American identity, with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reflecting pre-emancipation ideals of submissive morality, and *Invisible Man* reflecting post-emancipation struggles for autonomy and visibility.

Hypothesis 4: Both novels portray African American identity as socially constrained, but *Invisible Man* offers a more critical and resistant stance toward the systems of racial oppression than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Hypothese 5: Readers are more likely to interpret *Invisible Man* as a critique of systemic erasure of identity, whereas *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is more often interpreted as a moral appeal to white conscience.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to a deeper understanding of how African American identity has been portrayed, shaped, and challenged in American literature across two distinct historical periods. By examining Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the research bridges the 19th and 20th centuries, providing insights into the evolving nature of African American self-perception and representation.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, though authored by a white abolitionist, played a critical role in shaping early literary portrayals of Black identity. Its influence on American consciousness during the antebellum era is undeniable; however, the text has also been critiqued for reinforcing stereotypes and offering limited agency to its Black characters. In contrast, *Invisible Man* presents a powerful narrative of self-discovery and resistance from an African American perspective. It reflects a shift from external definitions of identity to an introspective, existential struggle for visibility, dignity, and individuality in a racially biased society.

By comparing these two works, the study illuminates the literary and ideological transformation in the depiction of Black identity—from victimhood and moral appeal to resistance, self-realization, and complexity. It highlights how changing historical and cultural contexts, including the abolition of slavery, the Harlem Renaissance, and the civil rights movement, influenced literary forms and themes.

The study also offers valuable implications for literary criticism, African American studies, and postcolonial discourse. It challenges simplistic readings of African American identity by showing how literature both reflects and critiques dominant narratives. Furthermore, it helps educators, scholars, and students understand the power of storytelling in shaping racial consciousness and cultural identity.

Moreover, this research encourages critical reflection on the ways literature can either empower or limit marginalized voices, depending on who tells the story and how it is told. Through this comparative lens, the study promotes a more nuanced and historically grounded appreciation of African American literature and its role in the broader struggle for social justice, recognition, and human dignity. Ultimately, this research emphasizes the enduring relevance of literary works in addressing contemporary questions of race, identity, and belonging, making it a meaningful contribution to academic discourse and societal understanding.

ASPECTS AFFECTING IDENTITY IN *INVISIBLE MAN* AND *UNCLE TOMS CABINET*

Identity in *Uncle Toms Cabinet*

Biography of Harriet Beecher Stowe

Harriet Beecher Stowe was an author and social activist best known for her popular anti-slavery novel 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Harriet Beecher was an author and the matriarch of a family committed to social justice. Stowe achieved national fame for her anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which fanned the flames of sectionalism before the Civil War. Stowe died in Hartford, Connecticut, on July 1, 1896.

Harriet Elizabeth Beecher was born on June 14, 1811, in Litchfield, Connecticut. She was one of 13 children born to religious leader Lyman Beecher and his wife, Roxanna Foote Beecher,

who died when Harriet was a child. Harriet's seven brothers grew up to be ministers, including the famous leader Henry Ward Beecher. Her sister Catharine Beecher was an author and a teacher who helped to shape Harriet's social views. Another sister, Isabella, became a leader of the cause of women's rights. Harriet enrolled in a school run by Catharine, following the traditional course of classical learning usually reserved for young men. At the age of 21, she moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where her father had become the head of the Lane Theological Seminary.

Lyman Beecher took a strong abolitionist stance following the pro-slavery Cincinnati Riots of 1836. His attitude reinforced the abolitionist beliefs of his children, including Stowe. Stowe found like-minded friends in a local literary association called the Semi-Colon Club. Here, she formed a friendship with fellow member and seminary teacher Calvin Ellis Stowe. They were married on January 6, 1836, and eventually moved to a cottage near in Brunswick, Maine, close to Bowdoin College.

Along with their interest in literature, Harriet and Calvin Stowe shared a strong belief in abolition. In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law, prompting distress and distress in abolitionist and free Black communities of the North. Stowe decided to express her feelings through a literary representation of slavery, basing her work on the life of Josiah Henson and on her own observations. In 1851, the first installment of Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, appeared in the *National Era*. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published as a book the following year and quickly became a best seller. Stowe's emotional portrayal of the impact of slavery, particularly on families and children, captured the nation's attention. Embraced in the North, the book and its author aroused hostility in the South. Enthusiasts staged theatrical performances based on the story, with the characters of Tom, Eva and Topsy achieving iconic status.

After the Civil War began, Stowe traveled to Washington D.C., where she met with Abraham Lincoln. A possibly apocryphal but popular story credits Lincoln with the greeting, "So you are the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war." While little is known about the meeting, the persistence of this story captures the perceived significance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the split between North and South. Stowe continued to write and to champion social and political causes for the rest of her life. She published stories, essays, textbooks and a long list of novels, including *Oldtown Folks* and *Dred*. While none of these matched *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in terms of popularity, Stowe remained well known and respected in the North, particularly in reform-minded communities. She was often asked to weigh in on political issues of the day, such as polygamy.

Despite the moral rectitude of the Beechers, the family was not immune to scandal. In 1872, charges of an adulterous affair between Henry Ward Beecher and a female parishioner brought national scandal. Stowe maintained that her brother was innocent throughout the subsequent trial. While Stowe is closely associated with New England, she spent a considerable amount of time near Jacksonville, Florida. Among Stowe's many causes was the promotion of Florida as a vacation destination and a place for social and economic investment. The Stowe family spent winters in Mandarin, Florida. One of Stowe's books, *Palmetto Leaves*, takes place in northern Florida, describing both the land and the people of that region. Stowe died on July 1, 1896, in Hartford, Connecticut. She was 85. Her body is buried at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, under the epitaph "Her Children Rise up and Call Her Blessed."

Landmarks dedicated to the life, work and memory of Stowe exist across the eastern United States. The Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, is where Stowe lived when she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In 2001, Bowdoin College purchased the house, together with a newer attached building, and was able to raise the substantial funds necessary to restore the

house. The Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Hartford, Connecticut, preserved the home where Stowe lived for the final decades of her life. The home is now a museum, featuring items owned by Stowe, as well as a research library. The home of Stowe's next-door neighbor, Samuel Clemens (better known as Mark Twain), is also open to the public.

Analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

"*Uncle Tom's Cabin*," written by Harriet Beecher Stowe and published in 1852, is a pivotal work in American literature that dramatically portrays the realities of slavery in the United States. The novel follows the life of Tom, a devoted and virtuous enslaved man, whose experiences reflect the moral and social tensions of the time. Stowe's narrative sparked intense debate, particularly between the Northern and Southern states, with the North generally viewing it as a truthful critique of slavery, while the South condemned it as a gross exaggeration and an affront to their way of life.

The book not only tells Tom's story but also explores broader themes of Christian morality and the potential for redemption, influencing various characters, including a Southern slave owner who ultimately liberates his slaves. The character of George Harris, who seeks to escape to Liberia, introduces the controversial idea of colonization, reflecting a complex debate about the future of freed African Americans in a racially divided society.

Despite its initial acclaim, "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*" has faced criticism over time, particularly regarding its portrayal of African American characters and the term "Uncle Tom," which has evolved into a pejorative. Nevertheless, Stowe's work remains a crucial entry point for discussions about race, morality, and the historical context of slavery in America, continuing to resonate in contemporary conversations about social justice and equality. The final chapter quoted above shows George Shelby, the son of Tom's kindly original owner at the start of the book, freeing all his slaves as a tribute to Tom's Christian example. Tom is dead by this point in the novel, having been beaten to death on the orders of Simon Legree, the particularly cruel slave owner to whom he had unfortunately been sold. Stowe who came from a family of ministers and was married to a biblical scholar infused her novel with Christian themes and meant Uncle Tom to be a paragon of Christian virtue, forgiving even his tormentors as they flog the life out of him, causing them to convert to Christianity afterward.

However, Tom's benevolence toward his oppressors has also led to the novel's other great cultural legacy: the conversion of the name "Uncle Tom" into an epithet to describe African Americans perceived as subservient and too eager to please whites. Despite the diversity of opinion regarding *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it was successful as a piece of art in that it provoked discussion and served as a conduit in making the lives of slaves more real to those far removed from the scenes of the cotton fields. Despite the negative reinvention of her principal character, the powerful impact of Harriet Beecher Stowe's work is still strongly felt in the twenty-first century.

Plot Summary

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852, is a powerful anti-slavery novel that played a key role in influencing American attitudes toward slavery before the Civil War. The novel opens in Kentucky, where Mr. Shelby, a plantation owner facing financial trouble, decides to sell two of his slaves—Uncle Tom, a mature, deeply religious Black man, and Harry, the young son of Eliza, a household slave to a slave trader named Mr. Haley. Though Shelby's wife is morally opposed to slavery and had promised Eliza that her son would never be sold, Mr. Shelby proceeds with the transaction. Upon learning of the plan, Eliza flees with her son Harry in a desperate and dramatic escape, famously crossing the icy Ohio River to reach the North. Meanwhile, Uncle Tom, rather than fleeing, submits to his fate with dignity and faith,

choosing not to run away and instead trusting in God. Tom is taken from his family, including his loving wife Aunt Chloe and their children, and sold south. Eliza and Harry's flight is assisted by a network of abolitionists and Quakers who help enslaved people escape to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Along the way, they reunite with Eliza's husband, George Harris, a bright and determined man who had previously escaped slavery. Together, they face numerous dangers, narrowly escaping slave catchers while making their way to Canada, where they ultimately find freedom and safety. Their journey illustrates the cruelty of slavery and the courage of those who risked everything for liberty.

While Eliza and George are fighting for their freedom, Uncle Tom is sold to a kind-hearted but morally passive man named Augustine St. Clare in New Orleans. St. Clare opposes slavery in principle but continues to benefit from it. In St. Clare's household, Tom meets Eva, the angelic and devout young daughter of St. Clare, who quickly grows fond of him. Eva is portrayed as a Christ-like figure—pure, compassionate, and wise beyond her years. She and Tom form a deep spiritual bond, united by their shared Christian faith. Eva's kindness and gentle influence begin to touch those around her, including her father, who eventually promises to free Tom. Unfortunately, tragedy strikes when Eva falls seriously ill and dies, leaving behind a vision of heavenly peace and love that deeply affects the household. St. Clare, moved by her death, begins to take more decisive steps to free Tom, but before he can complete the manumission, he dies suddenly from a stab wound in a tavern. Following his death, the control of the household falls to his cruel and selfish wife, Marie, who has no intention of honoring her husband's promise. She quickly sells Tom at auction, sending him to one of the harshest and most brutal environments of all a cotton plantation owned by the vicious and sadistic Simon Legree.

Simon Legree, a Northern-born slaveholder, is a man devoid of compassion, driven by greed and cruelty. On his Louisiana plantation, he deliberately seeks to crush the spirit of his slaves, using violence, psychological abuse, and terror. Unlike St. Clare, who showed moments of kindness, Legree is a cruel tyrant who resents Tom's inner strength and his refusal to submit fully to his authority. Despite the horrifying conditions, Tom remains steadfast in his Christian faith, offering moral and spiritual support to the other slaves. He tries to protect and encourage Cassy, a once-beautiful woman who has been sexually abused by Legree and has lost her children, and Emmeline, a young girl newly purchased to serve Legree's immoral desires. Cassy is intelligent and cunning, and with Tom's support, she devises a plan to escape with Emmeline. Tom refuses to reveal their whereabouts when Legree becomes suspicious, even under severe torture and whipping. In one of the most heart-wrenching scenes in the novel, Tom is beaten so badly that he eventually dies from his injuries, forgiving his tormentors with his final breaths and expressing unwavering belief in God's justice. His death is portrayed as a Christian martyrdom, his soul ascending to peace, and his suffering serving as a moral indictment of slavery's dehumanizing cruelty.

Shortly after Tom's death, George Shelby—the son of Tom's original master arrives at the plantation to buy back Tom's freedom, only to discover that he is too late. Grieved and angered, George returns home determined never to own another slave. When he arrives at the Shelby estate in Kentucky, he announces to all the enslaved people there that they are now free and urges them to live worthy lives, inspired by Uncle Tom's integrity and faith. Meanwhile, Cassy and Emmeline successfully escape and find refuge in Canada. In a surprising turn, Cassy is reunited with her long-lost daughter, who is now married to George Harris. Together, the Harris family, Cassy, and Emmeline plan to emigrate to Liberia a colony in West Africa founded for freed American slaves—seeking to build a new life free from oppression and filled with Christian values. George Harris, a man of great intelligence and ambition, hopes to contribute to the development of a moral and just society in Africa.

Through this interwoven narrative of multiple characters' journeys, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* addresses several key themes, including the incompatibility of slavery with true Christianity, the moral responsibility of individuals to act against injustice, the sacredness of family, and the courage and dignity of those who resist oppression. Tom's unshakable faith, even in the face of death, positions him as the moral center of the novel, a character who represents the redemptive power of love, patience, and faith. In contrast, characters like Simon Legree and Marie St. Clare symbolize the moral corruption and dehumanization that slavery inflicts on both enslavers and the enslaved. While the novel features some racial stereotypes reflective of its time, it was groundbreaking in its humanization of African Americans and its emotional appeal to white readers to recognize the horrors of slavery. The female characters such as Eliza, Eva, Cassy, and even Mrs. Shelby—also play important roles, often serving as voices of moral clarity and compassion in a brutal world. Stowe uses these women to demonstrate the power of maternal love, the strength of female conviction, and the importance of Christian morality in opposing systemic injustice.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was not only a literary success it was a political and cultural phenomenon. It sold hundreds of thousands of copies in its first year and had a profound effect on the American public's perception of slavery. The novel helped fuel the abolitionist movement and brought the emotional reality of slavery into the homes of readers who had previously been indifferent. Though later adaptations distorted the character of Uncle Tom into a passive stereotype, in the original novel, Tom is depicted as a strong, courageous man whose resistance takes the form of spiritual endurance, moral clarity, and unbreakable faith. His sacrifice inspired many and gave a human face to the suffering of millions. Stowe's novel remains a cornerstone of American literature and an enduring symbol of the struggle for justice and human dignity. Despite its 19th-century origins, the moral questions it raises and the emotional truths it conveys continue to resonate in discussions of race, human rights, and social justice today.

Identity in *Invisible Man*

Ralph Ellison, in *Invisible Man*, devoted his novel to give insight to the African American life through his protagonist who goes through his journey of self-discovery in a Eurocentric society, dominated by the white culture and values. This chapter explores the effect of racism, marginalization, and alienation on the personal growth of the character; and how these external factors did influence the development personal identity of the African American individual through the *Invisible Man*; using postcolonial theory to analyze the effect of oppression and racism on the identity of the blacks due to racial discrimination.

Ralph Ellison's Biography

The personal experience of Ralph Ellison with racism and social inequality sparked his motivation to write his novel *Invisible Man*. Ralph Ellison, he is an African American writer, a literary critic, and a scholar. He was born on March 1, 1914, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. A grandson of slaves; Ellison's father Lewis Alfred Ellison was a construction foreman, he died when Ralph was three years old. His mother; Ida Millsap was a domestic servant. Ralph has shown an abiding interest in jazz music, from his earliest years; which led him to study the cornet and the trumpet. In the late 1930's, he won a scholarship to study music. So, he left

Oklahoma to join the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama which is now called Tuskegee University. The Institute was founded in 1881 by Booker T. Washington, one of the well-known black figures in American history, later on, this institute became one of the nation's most important black colleges. In Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, this college was depicted as the model black college the narrator attended.

In 1936, Ellison left the Tuskegee and moved to New York City and settled in Harlem, where he studied sculpture in addition to photography. Ellison met and befriended the most important modernist figures of the African-American literature, such as Langston Hughes and Richard Wright, in addition to the socialist Albert Murray. Ellison's most important, complicated, and long relationship would be with the author Richard Wright, it is considered as the starting point in Ellison's career as a writer. Wright was Ellison's motivator and guide to the writing by supporting him to write for him.

At the end of the W.W.II, Ellison started writing *The Invisible Man*, after serving in the segregated army as a cook in Merchant Marine. In 1946 he married Fanny McConnell, who supported him financially and spiritually. Ellison published a few critics but devoted most of his time to the editing of *Invisible Man*, published in 1952 by Random House. Where in one of his interviews about the novel, said that "All novels are about certain minorities: the individual is a minority. The universal in the novel – and isn't that what we are all clamouring for these days? – is reached only through the depiction of the specific man in a specific circumstance." (Rahim, 2014). He emphasized that his writing is universal and anyone can relate to it as an individual, despite the color or race. In the year after, he won the 1953 U.S National Book Award for Fiction. In 1985, Ellison returned to the United States where he started teaching American and Russian literature at Bard College and began "Juneteenth", a second novel.

Ellison wrote for the Communist party, before their betrayal towards the African Americans just with the beginning of the W.W.II. In 1955, Ellison moved to Europe where he wrote his Essay *A New Southern Harvest*. During the 1950s, he worked with his lifelong friend Albert Murray and they published *Trading Twelve*, which is selected letters of both of them. In 1964, he published *Shadow and Act*, and became a teacher at Rutgers University and Yale University, and carried on working on his novel, at the same time. In 1969, Ellison received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Then in 1975, he was elected to The American Academy of Arts and Letters. Nine years later, he received the New York City College's Langston Hughes Medal, in 1984. Ellison was awarded the National Medal of Arts, in 1985.

Then in 1986, he published his collection of seventeen essays, *Going to the Territory*. Ralph Ellison died on April 16, 1994, due to pancreatic cancer. Following his death a lot of manuscripts were discovered in his house, resulting in the publication of *Flying Home and Other Stories* in 1996, and his novel *Juneteenth* in 1999. On January 26, 2010, Ellison's last work *Three Days Before the Shooting*, was published by Modern Liberty. (AMARI, 2015)

Plot Summary

Invisible man is a novel narrated in first person point of view, by a nameless character who undergoes his journey from the south, toward the north to seek opportunities. At the beginning, the narrator states that he is invisible and lives in a hole underground. After, he starts to narrate his adventure of self-discovery and experiences that eventually made him decide to become invisible.

While he undertakes his journey, the narrator is constantly hunted by his grandfather's advice who tells him to always obey and to succumb the whites in order to succeed. Before going to college, he was forced to participate in a battle called "the battle royal" in which he had to fight against other blacks in order to win the scholarship. The narrator after a while was forced to leave college when he takes an important guest to a wrong place. Dr. Bledsoe the president of the college, cunningly betrays him by giving him a recommendation letters that were supposed to open job opportunities for him, after convincing him to move to New York, but he soon discovered that he did the opposite.

In New York, the narrator managed to get a job in a paint factory where he was injured and rushed to the hospital and was unexpectedly tortured by white medical professionals through giving him electric shocks. This incident was degrading since he was treated as a laboratory rat. After this humiliating experience, he joins an organization that claims to defend minorities called the Brotherhood. The narrator was soon betrayed since they used him just to promote and bring a better picture to the organization. A riot breaks out and one of the members gets killed by the police, the protagonist gets confused and finally refuges to underground and rejects both, his grandfather's advice and that of the society that tried to define him.

Racism in *Invisible Man*

Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* is a representation of African American history. It is about the reality of racism and the problem of black identity from the late 1920s until the beginning of 1930s. The key to understanding the *Invisible Man* is through the protagonist's experience with the racist American society and his escaping from the segregationist south to the racist north.

In *Invisible Man*, race is a fixed subject of inquiry. The protagonist always confronts the idea of race through experiencing other's racism - from the degradation he went through in the Battle Royal to his realization of his token role in the Brotherhood. However, the novel also explores the question of whether race could be a genuine/authentic tick of individual's identity, far from the context of racism and other narratives imposed by other writers. The narrator quickly realizes that his blackness is very significant, but cannot easily decipher what it should mean to him.

Racism Reflected in the Growth Process

The character in *invisible man* is a black man who lives in a segregated racist south where the blacks are still poisoned by the ideology of slavery. They still believe in the superiority of the whites and that the only way to coexist is to serve them without any hesitation. In college, the narrator endured the unfair treatment he was given by the whites which made him understand the real meaning of racism and the apartheid policies of the United States and feel alienated.

Growing up the narrator experienced the spiritual shock repeatedly. The poor black youth kept asking himself, Who am I? Where am I from? How can I be a true man? These were both the most ABSTRACT and natural questions. Growing up, the protagonist began to know the definition of visibility and invisibility and transformed himself from visible man to invisible man so often. From the young's inner change, the author presented the issue of racial discrimination multiple times.

In the story, the narrator's grandfather warned his family members in which he said:

“Son, after I am gone, I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country ever since I give up my gun back in the reconstruction. Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction. Let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open.” (*Invisible Man*, 1952:13)

By these words, his grandfather wants to say that as blacks they should always keep two identities. On the one hand, they should pretend to be a good slave, behaving as their former masters' wish. However, on the other hand, they should remember their resentment and bitterness, and fight against this enforced false identity. It was the usual way Blacks would do to fight against the racial discrimination. They sorted out a way to protect them but never fought for their rights and identity. This shows how the blacks were highly influenced by the American

racial discrimination. They believed that in order to have a better life in a white society they must wear a mask, and never try to impose their true identity in any way. The narrator claimed submission and humility as the key to the advancement of black Americans. “*On my graduation day I delivered an oration in which I showed that humility was the secret, indeed, the very essence of progress. (Not that I believed this -- how could I, remembering my grandfather? -- I only believed that it worked.)*” (Invisible Man, 1952:14)

All they wanted was equal human rights to the whites, so they can be real Americans, too, but instead they got nothing but a series of grave insults and humiliation, which led them to think that their rights are just dreams and illusions and that the whites will always be superior and more equal than them. (Amari, 2015)

Racism reflected in Social Life

After being excluded from college, the young man's journey to enter the large society began. In the bus on his way to his new home, New York City, he was sitting in the last row although it was vacant. This shows how blacks were not considered as equals as the whites; neglected, marginalized and do not have the right to share the same places and positions as them. In that same bus, he met a vet who showed sympathy to the blacks' situation in the American society that is so unfair to them, and who was treated as a mental patient from this society, because he illustrated the fact of its racial discrimination. The vet could easily express his thoughts while the young man did nothing but listen because he has no freedom of speech. Before he got off, the vet gave the narrator a very important piece of advice that the narrator did not understand its meaning at that time. He told him that the blacks should learn to be their own masters if they want to be free. When the protagonist came to New York, he was so confident and believed that he can build his own value through his efforts and hard work. He wanted to become visible, attain an important social status in this industrial society and obtain acknowledgment through his efforts and struggle. (Jing, 2016)

He went to a paint factory that was named Liberty with the help of the son of a trustee, Emerson; thinking that he can make his dream come true, in this place. The first thing he saw when he walked in was a huge electric sign that says “Keep America Pure with Liberty Paint.” At first, the narrator was satisfied with everything in the factory, from the work environment to the way the paint was produced. The way the product was made did not differ much from how the American society works; different races working together to produce one flawless product. In other words, the American prosperity and development cannot be separated from the contribution of the blacks; both races complete each other, just like the way this factory works. But, unfortunately, most of the times, people only focus on the final product; they only see the big image and forget about the details and how things were made.

One of the most significant events in the protagonist's journey is when he got injured during his work in the Liberty Paints factory and was sent to the hospital where he was treated as a test object by the white doctors. He temporarily lost his memory and the ability to speak due to the electric shock treatments he received there. When the doctor asked about his name, his mother's name and about Buckeye The Rabbit, but the narrator could not remember anything related to his identity (his semi-conscience) (Ellison, 2014: 233). After leaving the hospital, the protagonist could not return to the paint factory, although he knew that it is difficult for an injured black man to find a job in American industrial society. (Jing, 2016)

The narrator's experience in the hospital symbolizes the racist behaviors towards the blacks even in public places, the narrator claims that “I was setting in cold white reject chair, a man was looking at me out of a bright third eye” this description refers to the white men who are

white and cold, just like the doctor who enjoyed giving him the electric shock treatments, and saying that the blacks had such a rhythm dancing. Furthermore, the doctor's questions about his name and the Rabbit song related to his origins; aimed to remind him of his African origins and his slave roots (Abbot et al, 231).

Later on, by joining the Brotherhood which is an organization that focuses on social activism, banding together to fight for people who have been “dispossessed of their heritage”, the narrator’s position within, provides him with the opportunity to impassion public speaking, he becomes the Brotherhood orator. He soon realizes that the organization does not care about individuals, but only about its benefits. They used the Invisible man as means to achieve their goals. The Brotherhood evaluates the narrator not as an individual human being but rather as an ABSTRACT symbol of his race; which is a real depiction of the reality of the

American society. Foley argues, that the Brotherhood is a stand-in for the US Communist Party, with which Ellison was closely associated in the 1930s and early 1940s. As such, the text has become something of an anticommunist classic, using a sophisticated array of rhetorical strategies to link radical politics with white racism and ultimately promote an ideology of American exceptionalism”(Foley, 1997). (AMARI, 2015)

Indirectly, Ellison criticized the communist party that pretended to fights for justice and equality for all people; however, it exploits blacks and uses them to promote its own political agenda, similarly, to the novel’s event when the narrator was exploited by the Brotherhood organization and used him as means to achieve their goals (Ward et al., 2002: 50-58; Prudchenko, 2012). Ellison's protagonist experiences and memories with the racist. American society show the powerful social and political forces that conspire to keep black Americans in their place, far away from equality, prosperity, and freedom.

Post-colonial Power in *Invisible Man*

Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952) brings to surface a number of post-colonial issues on a close reading. Ralph Ellison narrates the tale of African Americans being on the margin and at the bottom of the social hierarchy. African Americans have an unparalleled history which is different from any other group in America. They have a unique past which comprises of Africa, the Middle passage, slavery, liberation, migration to north, racism, dual identity etc. White people hold the center and their civilization is glorified, while the rest of the world comes after and is marginalized. *Invisible Man* is a story of a nameless black narrator who travels a hard and rough route to find out the hidden faces behind the mask of whiteness and even blackness.

Center/ Margin

The novel opens with its protagonist who tells us in the prolog that he lives in a “hole in the ground”, which is a “basement” of a building that is “*rented strictly to whites*”. This "section of basement" "was shut off and forgotten during nineteenth century". This means that the whites are at the "center" of the building and he is living "rent-free" in a portion which is neglected and out of use. His living away from other people, under the surface instead of on the ground among other folks shows that he is marginalized, and does not enjoy life in the center, in the hustle and bustle of civilization. He says that “*I'm invisible and live in a hole, I am dead. I am neither dead nor in a state of suspended animation...I am in a state of hibernation*” (*Invisible Man*, 1952:6). He is cast out of human beings and acquires the quality of an “other” species since hibernation is the quality of some particular animals. Then he goes on to inform the reader that his “hole is warm and full of light.” This light comes from the center "Monopolated Light & Power". The narrator carries on “a fight” with the company, and uses “their services and pay them nothing at all”. (*Invisible Man* 1952:5) This was his way of taking revenge.

Whenever the protagonist had to deal with people from the center, he felt marginalized and "invisible", because they would see "everything and anything except me [him]". (*Invisible Man*, 1952:1) This creates "invisible music of my [his] isolation" (*Invisible Man*, 1952:13) and made him start questioning his color and his being, "What Did I Do to Be so Black and Blue" (*Invisible Man*, 1952:8) having the answer in itself. Here the categories are fixed as white and black, colonizer and colonized. Beating up "a tall blond man" with "blue eyes" at the beginning of the prolog shows the consequence of the colonial distinction and exclusion. The colonial suppression and denial of one's/margin's proper place in the society are bound to offend and "cause us tragic trouble." (*Invisible Man*, 1952:14)

As the title of the novel indicates, the protagonist has no name which symbolizes those marginalized people who possess no identity and are cut off from the center. In the first chapter, the narrator does not know himself, he is still searching for who he really is, he says "I was looking for myself", realizing that he is "nobody". After his grandparents got their freedom they were still not totally free and equal to the whites. They were told that they are "united with others" of the country but "separate like fingers of hand". (*Invisible Man*, 1952:15) The inability of unifying the marginalized and neglected segment of the society with the center and the advantaged shows the failure of breaking the monopoly of the colonialism. They are to remain "separate", on the edge, on the margin.

Also, the narrator's grandfather's advice makes it evident that people on the margin should develop tactics in order to be able to survive in "enemy's country". "Our life is a war", he says. (*Invisible man*, 1952: 16) This is due to colonial injustice produced by the colonial binary division of the world into the center and margin, more privileged and completely deprived. The narrator's grandfather is conscious of the whites as "other". His words show the binary of "them" and "us". (*Invisible Man*, 1952:16)

On the graduation day, the narrator delivers a speech about "humility" being the "secret" and the "essence of the progress". He is invited to make a speech again at "a gathering of the town's leading white citizens." (*Invisible Man*, 1952:17) The ceremony starts with a white "magnificent blonde stark naked" dancing in the center. The "big shots" start yelling at the protagonist and the other boys. "Some threatened us if we looked and others we did not". (*Invisible Man*, 1952:20) The colonial center does not know what they actually want from those on margin whether to enjoy the white beauty or not. Their attitude towards that woman demonstrates that they are even unable to give respect to one of their own kind. The way this blonde was treated is another example of being marginalized despite being part of the center. She is an example of "margin-in-centers". The white men "caught her" after the dance and "tossed her as college boys are tossed at a hazing". The narrator sees "the terror and the disgust in her eyes, almost like my own terror and that which I saw in some of the other boys." Here both the blonde and the black boys are marginalized and share the same feels, hate and fear for the powerful white. Both are there for the "entertainment" of the town's "big shots". (*Invisible Man*, 1952:17-20)

The battle royal follows the dance. Ten boys including the narrator are "ordered to get into the ring." They are "blindfolded with broad bands of white cloth." indicating whiteness is blindness because it hinders the vision to see the world around. In the ring "everyone fought hysterically" and "everybody fought everybody else". Blows, blood, sweat, smoke and shouts of the "white faces" filled the atmosphere, some crying, "I want to get at that ginger-colored nigger. Tear him from limb." others screaming, "Kill him! Kill that big boy". The whites have got mad in their frenzy. "The harder we fought the more threatening the men became." (*Invisible Man*, 1952:21-24)

The dehumanizing behavior of the whites reaches its peak when the boys are taken to the "electrified" "rug covered with coins". They are asked to come down "on their knees" to get the

money. The whites enjoy the shrieks of the boy, their "muscles twitching like the flesh of a horse stung by many flies", *their dancing on the "charged rug"*. *It all happens "amid the booming laughter" of the whites telling them "Leggo, nigger! Leggo."* (*Invisible Man*, 1952: 26-29)

Fonteneau (1990) has reasoned that the narrator fails twice to see his engagement "in an ideological war between "us" and "them"" once on the occasion of the "Battle Royal" and second in the event of "Trueblood" (*Invisible Man*, 1952:411). Those who are in the center have a terrible attitude towards those who are in the margin. They do not give any importance to them as a human being with feelings that can easily be hurt. For them, they are toys and devices that they can control and use whenever they want to feed their egos. When the narrator mistakenly utters "social equality" in his speech instead of "social responsibility", they went mad and furious and made him repeat the phrase to assure that he did not do it on purpose, it was just a mistake. And they did not miss the chance to remind him "you've got to know your place at all times." (*Invisible Man*, 1952:31)

At the end of the ceremony, the narrator gets a "calfskin briefcase" with "a scholarship to the state college for Negroes." In the same night, he dreamt of his grandfather asking him to open the briefcase and read the document. The statement engraved on it "Keep This Nigger Boy Running" puzzles and perplexes the boy. But what he will endure in the future proves that his grandfather has more insight and knowledge of the colonial thinking and dealing with "them/other" than he does.

The founding father of the Negro college is nameless like the narrator indicating the lack of identity of the margins. The whites view themselves as a homogeneous group and not a heterogeneous one. The idea of considering the colonized as stereotypes lacking individuality and distinct personality is reinforced by keeping other black characters nameless such as the founding father of the Brotherhood organization which the narrator joins later.

(Samina, 2013) The statue of founding father with "his hands outstretched", "empty eyes" and "a kneeling slave" implies that those marginalized have to be submissive and obedient if they want success in the white world.

At college, the narrator is designated as the driver of Mr. Norton, a white trustee of the university, "a bearer of the white man's burden". The narrator blunders first in taking him away from the center to the margin "down this road" where there is "log cabin" of a sharecropper named Trueblood and then to the Golden Day, a brothel. (*Invisible Man*, 1952:46) Mr. Norton listens to the account of Trueblood getting his daughter pregnant. Afterward, he comes across "vets, a little shell-shocked" in the Golden day. (*Invisible Man*, 1952:73) He sees and listens carefully what is too much for a man of his status and [so-called] sensibilities. Norton symbolizes the center which aims to create havoc by approaching the margin that is why he was paying attention to every word he has been told; while the encounter symbolizes the meeting of the two categories the center and the margin. The two characters belong to two different and opposite races, black and white. Norton refers to the center which is at the same time the "Other" for the narrator and the narrator who is the margin and also is the "Other" for Norton. So, each of them subtends his opposite, the "Other" in this ride. (Samina, 2013)

Jack. (*Invisible Man*, 1952:309) The name is not exposed or revealed which means that it is the center's right and duty to decide and draw who the margin should be and what identity suit them. Those in the margin have no chance or right in deciding who they want to be and how they want to be projected to the world. It seems like "*blacks and whites*" work in "complete agreement" and are "absorbed with the cause" but the protagonist realizes that it is "a white man's world", where no black can share this place/center with them even after independence.

Ralph Ellison minutely interweaves the issues of center/margin in his work *Invisible Man*. The "civilized center" conceives the margin less than men "a thing not a man" and the margin's perception of the center is more than men, "a God". The forces at the center are equated with God because of their powers to make or mar the lives of the marginalized. The niggers are "other" for the whites, different from them in status, color, they are an alien race. The vet tells Mr. Norton that the narrator believes in that "*great false wisdom*" which makes the slaves to learn the lesson of "*white is right*". (*Invisible Man*, 1952:95) The weak cannot challenge and deny those who are in power. He has no choice except to believe in the righteousness of the whites/center.

The idea of equality is unbearable for the colonial minds even at the time of post-independence as it is contradictory to the enlightened and civilized center and opposed to any savage, barbaric margin. The incidents tear apart the mask of civilization from the face of the colonizers revealing their brutal and bestial nature. Their white complexion tries hard to hide their inner ugliness and hideousness but fails miserably in achieving desired results. The tall claims of civilization and refinement are as false as the coin on the electrified rug which the narrator finds out to be fake and useless later on.

Invisibility and Blindness in *Invisible Man*

During the 40s and the 50s of the last century, new concepts emerged in the African American literature and were revolutionary in the perception of racism and social discrimination. Ralph Ellison amongst other writers of that period went beyond the classical portrayal of the white oppression like Mark Twain's sequence *Huckleberry Finn*, and dived more into the psychological viewpoint of the black's psyche as well as the whites'.

Invisibility as Ellison argues, comes from blindness "*I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me [...] When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination - indeed, everything and anything except me.*" (*Invisible Man*, 1952:3) In addition, blindness is the result of stereotypes and prejudices that were formed to view the blacks which hinder the whites to see beyond them. These prejudices are a blindfold to the whites that limits the horizon of thinking only of the skin color rather than the individual himself. The blacks also are limited in the way they conceive themselves as inferior beings than the whites. Invisibility could be interpreted as "*the situation of men whose individual identity is denied.*" (Lieber, 1972: 86) Ellison reflected this in his work, *Invisible man* which the title itself is self-explanatory:

That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. (Invisible Man, 1952:3)

Many incidents in the novel about invisibility and blindness are presented in the novel using metaphors and at times symbolism. For example, when the protagonist is invited to deliver a speech about freedom in a white party, he was forced to participate in a *The Battle Royal* "as a part of entertainment" ; a racist show where he has to fight other blacks with blindfolded eyes which was humiliating but the blacks failed to see this act as humiliating. "*All ten of us climbed under the ropes and allowed ourselves to be blindfolded with broad bands of white cloth*" (*Invisible Man*, 1952:17). The blacks' blindness is emphasized when they allowed themselves to be blindfolded while accepting this humiliation and submit to the white stereotypes, furthermore, white bands are symbols of the whites blindness just as well, to dodge them with their traditional stereotypes were conceived by the blacks which made them believe in their inferiority to towards the whites and see themselves as mere servants. In the royal battle, the boys were not only blindfolded but also were forced to fight against each other:

Everyone fought hysterically. It was complete anarchy. Everybody fought everybody else. No group fought together for long. Two, three, four, fought one, and then turned to fight each other, were themselves attacked. (InvisibleMan, 1952:19)

The blacks do not realize their humility, in addition, their blindness when they fight against each other while they should be fighting the whites instead. The blindness is mutual since both the blacks and the whites see each other as a mass rather than a distinctive individual. The blacks are disabled to perceive their personal self-worth and esteem, and the whites are trapped in their prejudices. The character has been deceived by the reality of society and its norms that tried to impose on him its expectations and limited his true selfidentity, by wearing masks in order to meet people's expectation of him rather than accepting him as a human being. "*I myself after existing twenty years, did not become alive until I discovered my invisibility*" (Invisible Man, 1952:6) the protagonist embraces his invisibility after his awful experience with the whites in which he was convinced the only path to gain success and approval is by serving the whites, that are the most powerful and superior to him as he was taught.

Alienation in *Invisible Man*

Alienation has become the result of the oppression black folks had endured after they were plucked from their native lands and were dropped to distant lands by slave ships so as to be slaves. Even after the abolition of slavery, black folks were bereft of social and legal rights that White race benefited from, this led them to grow a kind feeling of estrangement. Alienation has become a constant element within the literature produced by blacks. In *Invisible Man*, alienation is formed by his society that refused to see him as an individual and from his true identity in terms of imposed stereotypical cultural heritage that he views too limited and restricted.

The *Invisible Man* states, after discovering the truth about his society that keeps neglecting him, he decides to assert himself to be Invisible on account of the surrounded blind people who cannot see him for what he is. He said, "*I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me... When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination -- indeed, everything and anything except me.*" (Invisible Man, 1952:03) The protagonist is able to see and notice his surroundings, but in return, he goes unnoticed; their blindness leads him to consider himself as invisible. This blindness derives from the racial prejudices about the blacks in which they were still considered as inferior to the whites, and have no privilege to be among this white society that is dominated by the whites. However, he is highly aware of a universe in which his existence is disregarded, annulled and rejected. This latter, caused him to develop a sense of alienation and estrangement from his true self. In other words, when he attempts to work in order to prove that the values of society are misguided, he developed the most hatred to himself by his society because he tried to voice the truth. Ultimately, he was left with no solution but to become invisible. The unnamed narrator, therefore, annotates, "*That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality.*" (Invisible M an, 1952:03) This means the relationship of blind and invisible increases the development of difficulties and estrangement for his identity to be identified due to the limitation of the social prejudice. That is why, when he finds a hidden room in a "*closed-off section of a basement, his mind agitates him, stirs him to thought*" ("SparkNote on Invisible Man" par. 3). It is conveyed from the above that he stays in a hole to make his mind think about whom he really is and what he really wants in fact. (Bounasri, 2016)

Accordingly, the narrator at the end comes to understand that hiding underground makes him realize that his relationship with himself does not resemble that of his society and that he is invisible but not blind. He claims, “*I’m an invisible man and it placed me in a hole-or showed me the hole I was in, if you will-and I reluctantly accepted the fact,*” said the narrator. (Invisible Man, 1952:44) Consequently, the invisible man makes a deal that life is not to be controlled, life is to be lived, and “humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat. “*Their fate is to become one, and yet many*” (Invisible Man, 1952:447). In the hole, his grandfather's words come to his mind "agree 'em to death," and that nothing results from saying "yes" to the Brotherhood, for instance. These words, for him, must be questioned again in terms of their true meaning. He begins to wonder whether the yeses that his grandfather spoke about were an affirmation of the stereotypes and prejudices on which the country is based or are really meant to transcend the cultural heritage of that society instead. Furthermore, the nameless narrator highlights on a mishap happened on a subway, where he meets an aged white man who seemed to be lost but is ashamed to ask for direction. He then, recognizes this person or Mr. Norton that he used to accompany when this latter comes close to him and asks him how to arrive at the Centre Street. There, the narrator tries to remind him of the Golden Day, while he answers him with wanderings about why he should remember him, just for the narrator to tell him: "*Because I'm your destiny . . . I made you. My destiny, did you say? , Young man, are you well? , I've lived too long in this world to be ashamed of anything (he responds).*" (Invisible Man, 1952:448) At this stage, when a lost man asks an invisible man for direction, this seems for the narrator to be a dangerous thing which makes him see this world of estrangement as none seems to know who he is or where he is going. This very moment makes him realize his way to his identity and eventually declares, “*My problem was that I always tried to go in everyone's way but my own. I have been called one thing...while no one really wished to hear what I called myself. So, after years of trying to adopt the opinions of others I finally rebelled. I am an invisible man.*” (Invisible Man, 1952:444) In other words, he is now aware that if he trusts his guts and own identity, he would not allow others to complicate things as it is. He now discovers that identity lies in its authenticity which is consequently a path to his freedom. Moreover, by declaring his rebellion when he says, “*I am an invisible man*” (Invisible Man, 1952:03), this, in fact, means that his true identity is his real true self even if others refuse to see it and that’s the point. (Bounasri, 2016)

In the case of Invisible Man, the feeling of alienation is brief and prosperous for one to discover who he really is in such a world. His experience with the white society forms his initial resentment of normlessness and alienation as a result of the values of his community. It shows how blacks should be in accordance to the superior white in a first position.

The quest for Identity in *Invisible Man*

The whole novel, from the start, is wrapped upon the nameless character who takes his journey from the south to the industrial, modern north in order to seek opportunities just as any black individual at that time. Toward his adventure, the protagonist goes through a psychological journey to discover his true identity. After his confrontation with the society, the character begins to become more aware of the obstacles that he faces with the outside world, and eventually decides that he is *Invisible Man*.

The Case of identity has been a major concern for the African Americans; over centuries they felt the urge to define themselves and reassert their identity in various ways like literature. The novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison on a close reading brings to the surface the social issues of the African Americans which they encounter with a white dominant culture and values. The blacks face a hard time to establish an identity of their own without the interference of whites’ prejudices which instruct them on how they should be, instead of being their genuine selves. “*The white world, the only honorable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected*

to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man or at least like a nigger."(Fanon, 86). In the novel, the character finds difficulty in developing his identity especially in a society that is predefined by the whites which do not recognize or see him as equal as them. For this, he tries to follow the ideals of the whites in order to have status in the society, so he neglects himself and acts in accordance to what the white man expect him to be.

"For, like almost everyone else in our country, I started out with my share of optimism. I believed in hard work and progress and action, but now, after first being 'for' society and then 'against' it, I assign myself no rank or any limit, and such an attitude is very much against the trend of the times." (Ellison, 446)

The Invisible Man after he immigrated to the north, he believed that by serving the whites which he perceived as superior to him, will grant him success and usher him towards his true being. But he eventually realizes that he is invisible to them, and they are blind to see him without putting their prejudices on him.

"I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination -- indeed, everything and anything except me."(03)

The protagonist struggles with white man's prejudices and their racist view of him, they see their perception of him and their formed thoughts about the blacks, which they see him only as an inferior race but failed to see him without the interference of all these social factors that does distort his identity. These realizations were formed after the character had multiple experiences and situations that urged him to adopt different identities, believing that with representing to people what they expect from him to see, will ultimately earn a place in that society and they are the responsible for defining him. *"I would have to weigh many things carefully before deciding and there would be some things that would cause quite a bit of trouble, simply because I had never formed a personal attitude toward so much. I had accepted the accepted attitudes and it had made life seem simple"* (206).

The cultural hegemony in America privileged the European ideals and looked down upon the African American culture which planted in them the sense of inferiority. The American culture did not welcome the blacks and always put them in the margin. Invisible man because of his inferiority complex, he rejected his black heritage and identity in order to be recognized by whites, through joining the Brotherhood and working for the white leader in which he was used and manipulated for their purposes. Still, he was not acknowledged for his blackness by the whites. The psychological battle in the mind of the narrator results from the rejection of society of him he feels neither American nor African which made him ask questions like *"Who am I? But it was like trying to identify one particular cell that coursed through the torpid veins of my body. Maybe I was just this blackness and bewilderment and pain, but that seemed less like a suitable answer than something I'd read somewhere."*(186) As W.E.B Du Bois describes this phenomenon that is *"peculiar"* to the blacks which result from Double Consciousness where he describes it as:

"...the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true selfconsciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks

on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

This double consciousness is a state of mind and a feeling where the American Negro had to endure, to live with two conflicting ‘thoughts’, ‘two souls’ and ‘two ideals’. The black is not granted any place in the white world, and his identity construction is constantly dependent on how the white will see him and define him. The western ideals are privileged and beheld as ‘right’, and anything that is outside these criteria is wrong and put in the margin. The invisible man before reaching his full realization, believed by adopting the western ideologies and mingle with the whites, he will attain success in society and will be respected. *“I am not ashamed of my grandparents for having been slaves. I am only ashamed of myself for having at one time been ashamed.”* (13). Before, In the Battle Royal where he was supposed to deliver a speech to the white folks, he was obliged to participate in the battle along with his black schoolmates against his will in which he knew it was going to affect the dignity of his speech. In spite of the humiliation he received from the whites, he was blind to recognize it until further incidents that happened to him.

Another marking incident is when he joined the Brotherhood; for the narrator, it was an opportunity to become visible and achieve a social hierarchy within his society. In order to accomplish his goal, he impersonated a new identity. When the leader of the association tells him to use a new name, he accepts without any hesitation, thinking of him this new identity will lead him to what he hopes. Although he adopted a new one, the protagonist still feels alien to himself and he is only embracing somebody else's' ideology. The invisible man's perception of himself is constantly affected and especially by white people who regard them as superior.

After he was tracked down by the society, he breaks free from people's expectations and restriction that were imposed on him, whether his own black community or the whites. He finally refuges to a hole in a basement and ultimately decides that he is nobody but himself (Pryse, 9). *“I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I, could answer. It took me a long time and much painful boomeranging of my expectations to achieve a realization everyone else appears to have been born with: That I am nobody but myself.”* (12-13). through deciding to be himself, it enabled him to set himself free from his past and his grandfather's advice of living with two identities and embrace himself as he is and not what society told him to be. Even though living in the basement might seem as a prison, for him it was a resort from the world and the exterior conditions that may influence his decisions, and finally his identity. *“So after years of trying to adopt the opinions of others, I finally rebelled. I am an invisible man. Thus I have come a long way and returned and boomeranged a long way from the point in society towards which I originally aspired.”* (Invisible Man, 1952:444)

THEMATIC AND SYMBOLIC COMPARISON BETWEEN *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* AND *INVISIBLE MAN*

Both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Invisible Man* are landmark texts that address the theme of African American identity. Despite being written a century apart, each novel uses powerful themes, symbols, and narrative techniques to explore how African Americans are seen by society and how they see themselves. This chapter compares the major themes and symbolic elements in the two works, showing how each author uses literature as a tool to examine racial injustice and the search for selfhood.

Identity, Race, and Invisibility

One central theme in both novels is the search for identity in a racially oppressive society. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, identity is largely defined by religious values and moral character. Tom's unwavering Christian faith becomes a symbol of inner strength and spiritual identity, even in the face of slavery's brutality. However, his identity is shaped and often confined by how white characters perceive him as loyal, submissive, and morally pure.

In *Invisible Man*, identity is more complex and fluid. The narrator is constantly reshaped by his experiences and the roles society forces upon him. Unlike Tom, who finds strength in faith, the Invisible Man struggles with confusion and seeks meaning through education, activism, and isolation. His journey reflects the modern struggle for self-definition in a society that ignores or misrepresents Black individuals.

Both novels also deal with the theme of invisibility. In Stowe's work, the humanity of Black characters is invisible to the dominant white society until it is framed in Christian and emotional terms. In Ellison's novel, invisibility is psychological and metaphorical. The narrator says he is invisible "simply because people refuse to see me." This theme speaks to a deeper existential crisis about recognition and self-worth in a racist society.

Symbolism in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Stowe uses Christian symbols throughout the novel to frame identity in moral and spiritual terms. Uncle Tom himself is a Christ-like figure who suffers and dies for the sins of others. His Bible, which he reads constantly, represents hope, dignity, and a higher truth. The theme of redemption is symbolized through characters like Eva, the angelic white child who sees Tom's humanity and represents the possibility of racial reconciliation through love and innocence.

The journey to freedom particularly Eliza's flight across the ice is also symbolic. It represents both physical escape and the spiritual quest for dignity and identity. Stowe's use of emotion and sentimentality serves to humanize enslaved characters and appeal to the conscience of white readers.

Symbolism in *Invisible Man*

Ellison's symbolism is more ABSTRACT and layered. The concept of invisibility itself is a powerful metaphor for how Black individuals are socially erased. The narrator's descent into an underground hole at the end of the novel represents his retreat from a society that refuses to acknowledge his identity. However, this withdrawal also becomes a space for reflection and rebirth.

Other symbols include the briefcase the narrator carries, filled with items from his past. Each item represents a false identity or failed attempt to be accepted. The dancing Sambo doll and the coin bank shaped like a grinning Black man expose the grotesque stereotypes that white society imposes on Black people. These objects serve as reminders of the internalized racism the narrator must confront.

Light and darkness are also important symbols. The narrator initially seeks light as a symbol of truth and enlightenment, but learns that too much light can blind and distort. In contrast, darkness and invisibility allow him to find clarity and define his identity on his own terms.

Narrative Style and its Impact on Identity

Stowe uses a third-person omniscient narrator to guide readers' emotions and understanding. The narrative voice provides moral commentary and shapes how the reader views each character. This technique works to direct sympathy toward the enslaved and condemnation

toward the institution of slavery. However, it also limits the characters' own voices, since their identity is often interpreted through the narrator's moral lens.

Ellison, on the other hand, uses a first-person narrative that allows the protagonist to speak directly and subjectively about his experiences. This style creates a deeper psychological portrait and emphasizes personal voice and self-awareness. The reader sees the world through the eyes of someone struggling to be seen. This narrative choice reinforces the novel's central themes of identity and invisibility.

Differences in Perspective and Purpose

The two novels differ in their intended audiences and purposes. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was written primarily for a white audience, aiming to inspire empathy and fuel the abolitionist movement. As a result, it often simplifies characters to fit moral or religious types. While groundbreaking for its time, it also reinforces certain racial stereotypes that have been critiqued by later generations.

Invisible Man, by contrast, is written for a more diverse and modern audience. Ellison challenges readers to think critically about identity, power, and ideology. His purpose is not just to expose racism but to question how individuals can build authentic identities in a world of conflicting forces. The novel does not offer easy answers, but instead presents identity as a personal and evolving process.

Uncle Tom's Cabin and *Invisible Man* both explore the complex theme of African American identity through rich symbolism and thematic depth. Stowe's work uses religious symbols and emotional appeals to argue for the humanity of enslaved people, while Ellison's novel uses surrealism, metaphor, and psychological insight to depict the struggle for self-definition in a modern world. Together, these novels show the evolving nature of African American literature and the enduring challenge of being seen and understood in a racially divided society.

CONCLUSION

Invisible Man is reckoned to be an eminent work of African American literature, due to its bold statement about racism and the cruelty of the whites towards African American minorities that are refused the rights of full citizenship and involvement in the white community.

Even though the novel shows the story from the first-person point of view, it does, however, speak for all the black Americans' condition during that period of tension and segregation in the mid-twentieth century. Ellison portrayed his character going through multiple settings like the immigration from the south to the north, as any black man used to endeavor in order to seek opportunities. He also exposed the protagonist to different situations in which he was urged to adopt different identities to fit in the white society. As an individual, the Protagonist's ambition to reach his dream was soon crushed by the bitter reality and obstacles they were put for him. He realizes that as a black man in a racist society, he will always remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy amongst the superior white race.

Ralph Ellison in his novel gave a new image of the blacks through diving to the psyche of the black individual, revealing how the blacks feel, think and react to racism and discrimination by the whites. He emphasized on the problematic of the skin color which is a burden the Negro has to cope with; the blacks will always feel inferior and as he showed in the novel, the narrator at the beginning of his journey was ashamed of his past and as a consequence he adopted many identities in a hope to be a part of the society, even if he was conscious it does not reflect who he really is.

The writer through his novel challenged the traditional views and ideologies that limited the perception of individual's identity in the United States, instead, he wanted to show the

universality of identity and it should not be restricted to race or culture. The individual as Ellison claims is a complex being as he said, “We all have at least double identities.” And the person should not be defined by his race, group or in the case of the African Americans, color.

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LANGUAGE AND RELIGION: LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES IN COMMUNITIES WITH DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the complex relationship between language and religion by examining the linguistic influences that emerge in communities with different religious affiliations. The study focuses on Albania, which provides a historical example of interfaith coexistence, where Muslim and Catholic communities speak the Albanian language and share a common national identity. While both communities have historically preserved their language and national heritage, religious differences have shaped specific linguistic practices.

The paper investigates how religious affiliation influences language use at multiple levels, including lexical choices, idiomatic expressions, religious terminology, and personal naming conventions. The analysis demonstrates that religion does not generate separate dialects but enriches the language through distinct registers, discursive practices, and identity markers that reflect cultural and religious traditions. Language also functions as a unifying factor, maintaining linguistic cohesion within a multireligious society, while religious differences are symbolically manifested in greetings, everyday expressions, and vocabulary selection.

Methodologically, the study draws on sociolinguistic and theoretical frameworks related to social identity, diglossia, and language variation. It integrates comparative analysis and scholarly literature on interfaith coexistence in the Balkans. The findings offer a comprehensive understanding of how language and religion interact to construct both cultural and national identity in communities that speak the same language but belong to different religious groups.

Keywords: *Interfaith Coexistence, Language, Linguistic Influences, Multireligious Communities, National Identity, Religion.*

Linguistic Variation in the Religious Context

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language functions as a key marker of identity and group affiliation. As Bolinger (1975) observes, linguistic communities are characterized by virtually unlimited diversity, while Labov (1972) demonstrates that linguistic variation is systematically correlated with social structure. In this sense, patterns of speech reflect a range of social variables, including class, age, gender, and cultural belonging. Extending this view, Rorty (1992) argues that language should not be understood merely as a representational tool, but as a constitutive medium through which reality itself is constructed. Similarly, Sapir (1929) conceptualizes language as a “guide to social reality,” emphasizing that human perception is mediated by linguistic structures. This position is further reinforced by Whorf (1956), who contends that individuals interpret the world according to the categories embedded in their native languages, thereby highlighting the intrinsic relationship between language and cognition.

An additional dimension of language is its interactional function. Hymes (1974) introduces the concept of *communicative competence*, arguing that linguistic knowledge cannot be fully understood without reference to its contextual use. From this perspective, language extends beyond a system of grammatical rules to become a socially embedded practice, shaped by and reflective of the norms and values of specific communities.

Within this framework, religion emerges as a significant factor influencing linguistic variation. Fishman (1999) identifies language as a powerful symbol of both ethnic and religious identity, thereby explaining why individuals sharing the same geographical space may exhibit distinct linguistic behaviors based on religious affiliation. Such differences are manifested through specialized terminology, discourse conventions, and communicative practices that are specific to particular faith communities.

In line with this argument, Hudson (2002) emphasizes the dual function of language as both a communicative tool and a mechanism for the identification and analysis of social groups. Likewise, Bernstein (1971) demonstrates that different linguistic codes, namely restricted and elaborated codes, are closely linked to social structures and significantly influence how individuals interpret and articulate their experiences.

Linguistic variation, therefore, cannot be reduced to the internal properties of language alone; rather, it is deeply conditioned by social and cultural variables (Labov, 1972). Within this broader sociolinguistic paradigm, religion may be considered a central determinant of variation, as it gives rise to distinct discursive communities governed by specific norms of language use. For instance, the use of religious expressions, ritual lexicon, and forms of politeness and greeting varies not only across religious traditions but also across local contexts in which these traditions are practiced.

Fishman (1967) further contributes to this discussion by introducing the concept of *domains of language use*, within which religious institutions occupy a central role. In such domains, linguistic choices are regulated by community norms and carry symbolic meaning. Consequently, particular words or phrases may acquire context-dependent meanings and function as markers of religious identity. In this way, religion operates not only as a system of belief, but also as a mechanism for the preservation and intergenerational transmission of linguistic practices.

In the Albanian context, this phenomenon is especially pronounced due to the coexistence of multiple religious traditions. In cities such as Shkodër, where interreligious coexistence has a long historical trajectory, religious language often incorporates shared elements that reflect mutual accommodation among communities. For example, children typically employ standardized linguistic forms in educational and peer-group settings, while reserving religious expressions for ritual or family contexts.

Religiously conditioned linguistic variation should thus be understood not merely as a stylistic feature, but as a fundamental process in the construction of social identity and the maintenance of group solidarity. This perspective aligns with Fishman's theoretical framework on language use within institutional religious domains.

Furthermore, religious discourse is intrinsically intersected by other social variables such as age, gender, and social status. Adolescents, for instance, may employ religious expressions or ritual terminology not only as a reflection of inherited tradition, but also as a strategy for negotiating identity and reinforcing group belonging within peer networks (Prinstein & Dodge, 2010; Laursen & Bukowski, 2017).

Religion as a Symbolic System and the Role of Language in Social Identity

Religion can be understood as a complex symbolic system that structures individuals' perceptions and actions within a given community. In *The Sacred Canopy*, Peter L. Berger (1967) defines religion as a "symbolic universe" through which individuals derive meaning and order in the world. This universe does not exist solely at a spiritual level; rather, it is articulated and reproduced through language, which becomes a powerful medium for communicating norms, beliefs, and values within a group. In this sense, religious differences are often materialized and rendered perceptible through variations in discourse, speech styles, and linguistic structures specific to each community.

The classical analysis of Émile Durkheim (1912/1995) on the social function of religion further supports this perspective. According to Durkheim, religion is not merely an individual experience of spirituality, but a collective mechanism that reinforces social solidarity. Language, as the primary medium of interaction and communication, plays a central role in this process. Religious texts, liturgies, and ritual practices employ language to transmit shared meanings, thereby fostering a collective group identity and maintaining social cohesion. In this way, language and religion operate in tandem to create a framework within which individuals orient themselves socially and identify with their community.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the role of language within a religious context can be conceptualized as an instance of discursive identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Individuals who identify with a particular religious community not only adopt its specialized vocabulary, but also its communicative styles and norms of interaction. This process is not merely imitative; rather, it reflects an active effort to sustain social belonging and to articulate a distinct identity within the community. For example, the use of conventional liturgical formulas, moral expressions, or loanwords derived from sacred languages does not simply indicate linguistic competence, but serves as a marker of cultural and religious affiliation.

Beyond identity construction, religious language also performs a standardizing function within the community. Religious texts often serve as normative linguistic models, guiding individuals toward the use of specific registers shaped by belief systems and ritual practices. This process contributes to the preservation of symbolic and social coherence, providing individuals with a clear understanding of the roles, expectations, and norms associated with group membership.

Thus, when examining religion as a symbolic system in relation to language, several key conclusions may be drawn:

1. Religion and language are intrinsically interconnected in the construction of both individual and collective identity; language articulates the beliefs and rituals that structure social life.
2. Religious language not only reproduces the content of belief systems, but also reinforces communicative norms and specialized codes that sustain social solidarity.
3. Religious differences are frequently manifested through discursive variation, reflecting distinct identities within a society and strengthening the relationship between the individual and the group.

Language use within religious contexts provides a clear illustration of how individuals construct identity by negotiating social norms, expectations, and group-based pressures.

Religion, Language, and the Influence of Peer Groups on the Development of Linguistic Identity

Religion can be conceptualized as a rich symbolic system that structures individuals' perceptions and actions within a community. This symbolic universe is materialized and reproduced primarily through language, which serves as a key medium for communicating the norms, beliefs, and values that sustain social cohesion. In this sense, religious differences are often manifested through variations in discourse, speech styles, and the use of specialized terminology within religious communities.

The classical analysis of Émile Durkheim (1912/1995) on the social function of religion supports this perspective. Durkheim argues that religion is not merely an individual experience of spirituality, but a collective mechanism for reinforcing solidarity and cohesion within society. Language, as a central medium of communication and social interaction, plays a crucial role in this process, particularly in liturgies, rituals, and religious discourse, where it is used to transmit shared meanings and construct a collective group identity.

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, language use within religious contexts can be understood as a form of discursive identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Individuals do not simply employ specific lexical items; rather, they adopt patterns of speech that reflect their affiliation with a given community, actively expressing both belonging and distinction from other groups. For instance, the use of ritual phrases, moral expressions, or terms borrowed from sacred languages does not merely reflect linguistic knowledge, but functions as a marker of cultural and religious identity.

Within this framework, the influence of peer groups on an individual's linguistic development becomes equally significant. Contemporary research demonstrates that peer interactions play a crucial role in shaping speech styles, lexical choices, and discourse structures, particularly during adolescence (Eckert, 2012; Prinstein & Dodge, 2010; Laursen & Bukowski, 2017). This process parallels the role of religious language in identity formation: individuals engage with their social environment to negotiate norms and establish their linguistic practices, thereby reflecting both affiliation and differentiation.

Religion and peer groups thus represent two key sources of linguistic socialization. While religion provides a symbolic and normative framework, peer groups encourage linguistic experimentation and the construction of new identities, often through the use of humor, slang, and elements borrowed from media and other cultural influences. This dynamic interplay between the structured norms of religious tradition and the social pressures of peer interaction helps explain how individuals develop a unique linguistic identity—one that simultaneously reflects group membership and individual distinctiveness.

Sociologists and developmental psychologists have consistently identified adolescence as a critical period for the formation of both linguistic and religious identity. According to Erikson (1968), this stage is characterized by an identity crisis in which individuals reassess their values, affiliations, and modes of self-presentation. During this phase, peer group influence becomes particularly salient, while religious language may provide a stable framework for moral and normative orientation. Consequently, the interaction between peer engagement and participation in religious practices enables individuals to construct a balanced identity that integrates social belonging with individual expression.

Religion as a symbolic system and the influence of peer groups constitute two interrelated dimensions in the development of linguistic identity. Language should not be viewed merely as a tool of communication, but as a means of negotiating identity, articulating belonging, and interpreting the social world. The integration of religious, sociolinguistic, and psychological

perspectives underscores that linguistic identity is not formed in isolation; rather, it emerges through continuous interaction with the symbolic structures of religion and the normative pressures of peer groups, resulting in a complex and dynamic system of meaning.

Shkodra: Religious Coexistence and Linguistic Variation

Historical and Cultural Context

In examining more closely the impact of religious differences on language, this study focuses on Shkodra, a city in northwestern Albania where Catholic and Muslim communities have coexisted for centuries. The linguistic situation in this city of approximately 130,000 inhabitants reveals that speakers are often able to identify their interlocutor's religious affiliation, even when they belong to the same broader speech community, due to subtle yet persistent linguistic differences associated with religious identity.

The institutional dimension of religion contributes to linguistic conservatism, reinforcing the preservation of distinct linguistic features. These religion-based linguistic differences have remained deeply embedded in Albanian society despite two major historical developments: a- the 50-year period of communist dictatorship, during which religious practice was legally prohibited and a significant number of clergy were persecuted or executed; b- more than 80 years of interfaith marriages, even though speakers often continue to belong to relatively close-knit social networks.

Historically, Shkodra has been a major economic and administrative center and one of Albanian regions that succeeded in preserving Catholicism despite Albania being part of the Ottoman Empire for approximately five centuries. The segment of the population that maintained the Catholic faith also preserved a corresponding linguistic variety characterized by distinct religious elements.

Over time, religious division contributed to a degree of spatial differentiation within the city. As noted by Ziu (2002), the eastern part was catholic, whereas the western part was muslim. "These two parts composed of the inhabitants of the same city, but of different religions, were separated from the road "Piac"..." (Ziu, 2002).

Scholars generally interpret this division not as a result of conflict, but as a gradual and largely peaceful process shaped by differing religious mentalities. Despite distinctions in various cultural and social aspects, interreligious relations in Shkodra have traditionally been characterized by tolerance and mutual understanding, with no historical evidence of sustained conflict or violence between communities.

Religious Lexicon as an Identity Marker

According to the sociolinguistic theory of indexicality (Silverstein, 2003), linguistic forms can function as markers of social identity. This theoretical perspective is clearly reflected in the sociolinguistic reality of Shkodra.

In this context, the following expressions index Islamic affiliation: "Inshallah", "Mashallah", "Elhamdulillah", "Bismillah", "Allahu e di", "Zoti të shpërbleftë", etc.

By contrast, the following expressions are associated with Catholic identity: "Hyju ju dhantë paqe", "Në dashtë Zoti", "Falë Zotit", "Zoti të bekoftë", "Dita e emrit", "Në emër të Atit, Birit dhe Shpirtit Shenjt", etc.

The data in the tables below were collected from field observations in the Shkodër area. (*These data were organized into tables with the assistance of AI*).

Religious Community	Phrase / Greeting	Core Ritual Terms	Context of Use	Sociolinguistic Function
Muslim	Selam alejkum	Namaz, Iftar, Eid, Zakat, Synet	Greetings, prayer, religious celebrations	Signals religious affiliation and intra-group solidarity; the use of Arabic-Turkish expressions preserves connections to Islamic tradition
	Insha'Allah	Kur'an, Ramazan, Haxh	Everyday conversation or important decisions	Expresses faith and submission to divine will; reinforces both individual and group identity
Catholic	Zoti ju bekoftë	Meshë, Krishterim, Bekim, Kisha e Shën Mërisë	Greetings, prayer, religious celebrations	Reinforces belonging to the Christian community; preserves liturgical repertoire and transmits cultural norms
	Hyji ju dhëntë paqe	Pashkë, Bajrami (disa raste), dasma	Social or ritual interactions	Expresses respect, solidarity, and participation in ritual life; strengthens group identity in social contexts

A second table further illustrates lexical and cultural distinctions between the two communities:

Domain	Catholic Community	Muslim Community
Toponyms	p.sh. Zagore–Ndreaj	p.sh. Zagore–Isufaj
Anthroponyms	Shtjefën, Tefë, Gjin, Kolë, Nikollë, Tom	Ahmet, Sulltane, Hamdi, Mehmet, Bajram, Ajet, Habibe
Religious terms	kishë, meshë, meshtar, shejt, shejtua	xhami, tyrbe, hoxhë, imam
Religious figures	Krisht / Jezu Krisht, Maria e Bekueme, Shën Jozefi, Shën Antoni	Allahu, pejgamberi
Religious periods/practices	Kreshmët, e Marta e Shrove	Bajrami i Madh, Bajrami i Vogël, Kurban Bajrami, Ramazani
Expressions and oaths	Pasha Zotin, për Zotin, pasha Zojën e Bekueme	Pasha Allahun, pasha din e iman
Religious actions	bëj kryq, rrëfhem, kungohem	ninoj, me ra shehadet
Greetings/formulas	Qoftë levdu Jezu krishti	selam, alekum selam, selam alekum, bismilah
Afterlife terminology	Paradise	xhehnet, xhehnem, ahiret
Linguistic influences	Borrowings from Italian	Borrowings from Turkish and Arabic

Religion influences lexical choices rather than the grammatical structure of the Albanian language.

Everyday expressions and ritual terms function as markers of identity within the community.

In cities with a long tradition of coexistence, such as Shkodra, there are instances in which children use terms from both communities in an integrative manner, maintaining a shared repertoire for everyday communication. In areas characterized by stronger historical divisions, the use of religious expressions becomes a symbolic instrument of social and religious differentiation.

Synthetic Analysis of the Influence of Religion on Language and Discourse

A comparison of different social and religious contexts allows us to draw several important conclusions regarding the ways in which religion interacts with language and discursive identity:

1. Religion influences language at the lexical and discursive levels, not at the grammatical level
 - Sociolinguistic studies indicate that there are virtually no grammatical differences between Muslim and Catholic/Orthodox Albanians; syntactic and morphological structures remain the same (Hudson, 2002; Bucholtz & Hall, 2016).
 - The influence of religion is most evident in specialized vocabulary and discursive expressions. Words such as “*Bismillah*”, “*Selam*”, “*Zoti ju bekoftë*”, and expressions used during festivals, prayers, or religious rituals function to signal religious affiliation and communicate identity within peer groups (Berger, 1967).

This phenomenon is particularly salient during adolescence, when individuals are highly sensitive to peer pressure and the need to assert social belonging.

2. The stronger the politicization of religion, the more pronounced linguistic differences become
 - In societies where religion has played a political role or has been closely linked to national identity, linguistic differences often reflect not only religious affiliation but also political or ideological status (Labov, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
 - For example, in Albania during the communist period, when religious practice was suppressed and limited, discursive differences diminished. However, following the religious revival after 1990, the appearance of religious terms and the use of specific discursive patterns became more pronounced as markers of identity and affiliation.
3. **In Shkodra, long-term coexistence has produced an integrative model**
 - Shkodra has a long history of coexistence among Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim Albanians, with communities sharing urban spaces, markets, and educational institutions.
 - This coexistence has fostered a flexible and tolerant discourse, where the use of religious expressions does not disrupt intergroup relations nor generate strong linguistic differentiation. For instance, children growing up in this city frequently use a shared standard language at school and in play with peers, while employing religious phrases primarily in cultural and ritual contexts (Shkurtaj, 2004; Eckert, 2012).
 - This integrative model exemplifies how religious identity and social identity can coexist without creating linguistic tension, reflecting Berger’s concept of the “symbolic universe” as both flexible and reproducible.

Conclusions

From these examples and comparisons, we can assert that religion does not alter grammatical structure, but it creates a distinctive lexical and discursive repertoire used to express identity and social affiliation. Historical and social contexts, including conflict or coexistence, shape the intensity of linguistic differences.

Long-term coexistence, as observed in Shkodra, promotes integrative models and linguistic flexibility. This analysis clearly demonstrates that language is always intertwined with religious identity, social context, and community history, highlighting that discourse serves as a fundamental tool for identity construction within religious frameworks.

The relationship between language and religion is not mechanical but symbolic. Religion does not generate entirely new linguistic systems; rather, it produces discursive variants that function as identity markers.

The case of Shkodra illustrates that:

- Religious differences can coexist within a single linguistic unit.
- Language can act as an integrative factor even when religious affiliations diverge.
- Lexical variation represents a cultural asset rather than linguistic fragmentation.

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DETERMINISM, INDETERMINISM, AND FREE WILL IN DON DELILLO'S *LIBRA*

DON DELILLO'NUN *LIBRA* ROMANINDA DETERMINİZM, İNDETERMINİZM VE ÖZGÜR İRADE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine Don DeLillo's novel, *Libra*, from the perspectives of determinism and indeterminism. *Libra*, written in a postmodernist narrative style, is composed of two separate stories told simultaneously. *Libra*, in which H. Lee Oswald's individual story and the process of the J.F. Kennedy assassination are told simultaneously, is a novel that balances causality and randomness. Don DeLillo often emphasizes coincidence in his novel *Libra*, but some events in the novel occur in a cause-effect relationship beyond coincidence. The causal and coincidental nature of events casts doubt on free will in the assassination. In this article, the position of free will be examined looking at the work of *Libra* from Deterministic and Indeterministic perspectives.

Key Words: Determinism, Indeterminism, Free Will, *Libra*

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Don DeLillo'nun *Libra* romanını determinist ve indeterminist bakış açısıyla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Postmodernist bir anlatım tarzında yazılmış olan *Libra*, aynı anda anlatılan iki ayrı hikâyeden oluşmaktadır. H. Lee Oswald'ın bireysel hikayesi ve J.F Kennedy suikastının oluşum sürecinin aynı anda anlatıldığı *Libra*, nedensellik ve rastlantısallığı denge içinde barındıran bir romandır. Don DeLillo *Libra* romanında çoğu kez tesadüf vurgusu yapmaktadır ancak eserde bazı olaylar tesadüfün ilerisinde sebep-sonuç ilişkisi içinde meydana gelmiştir. Olayların nedensel ve tesadüfi oluşması suikastın gerçekleşmesinde özgür iradenin şüpheli konuma düşmesine sebep oluyor. Bu çalışmada, *Libra* eserine determinist ve indeterminist bakış açısı ile bakılarak özgür iradenin konumu incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Determinizm, İndeterminizm, Özgür İrade, *Libra*

INTRODUCTION

The assassination of J.F. Kennedy is one of the most striking and mysterious events of 20th century. The event, which still remains a mystery today, has left behind many conspiracy theories. Gerald Posner estimates that by 1992 over 2,000 books had been written about the assassination (THOMAS, 1997, p. 107). The *Libra* novel can be considered one of these conspiracy theories. However, beyond being a conspiracy theory book, *Libra* is also a novel that explores the complex events, connections, causes and coincidences underlying the assassination. In his book, DeLillo balances between H. Lee Oswald's personal life and the process of the Kennedy assassination. He has balanced between the lives of H. Lee Oswald and J.F. Kennedy, between necessity and coincidence, between the individual and the environment. This balance is also seen in the narrative style of the novel. DeLillo, a postmodernist writer, wrote his novel *Libra* in a narrative style that deviates from the classical narrative style.

Traditional forms of history find their coherence in narrative structure, a chronological form with a beginning, middle, and end, unencumbered by questions regarding the suitability of such a form. *Libra* challenges this historical form by suggesting that random actions and the workings of chance will connect and collide with each other in a way that cannot be anticipated or adequately explained, in what is almost a chaos theory of history. (THOMAS, 1997, p. 108)

Nothing in history processes according to plan. Coincidences and chance events can also shape history. In *Libra*, DeLillo uses parallel and fragmented narratives to show that historical events are complex and random, and therefore unpredictable. In *Libra* DeLillo tells three different stories simultaneously. A "biography" of Lee Harvey Oswald; a plot to make an attempt on the life of President Kennedy, which is designed to be a "spectacular miss"; and the efforts of the retired secret service agent Nicholas Branch, who is trying to write a secret history of the assassination for the CIA (THOMAS, 1997, p. 107). Lee Oswald's life story, Kennedy's assassination, and Nicholas Branch's works are linked together like a chain. So, is this chain entirely random, or is it a chain of events linked together by cause and effect? What is the position of free will within these events, which are connected to each other within this principle of chance or necessity? In this article, we will seek answers to these questions.

From Necessity to Chance: Theories of Determinism and Indeterminism:

In order to understand whether the events in *Libra* are governed by fate or shaped by random coincidences, it is essential to examine the philosophical concepts of determinism and indeterminism.

Determinism:

Determinism: the view that every event or state of affairs is brought about by antecedent events or states of affairs in accordance with universal causal laws that govern the world (Audi, 1999, p. 228). The understanding that maintains that everything occurring in the universe happens within a chain of causality, and that all phenomena and events in the physical universe, and consequently in human history, are absolutely dependent on their causes and are conditioned by them (CEVIZCI, 1999, p. 223).

Determinism as a philosophical thought dates back to ancient times. However, it became a widespread view with the Enlightenment. Especially, with Newton's physics became an accepted view in many fields. With Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation, the idea that physical laws are singular and valid throughout the entire universe became prevalent

(Küçüksönmez, 2022, p. 181). Therefore, Newton thought that everything in universe could be calculated and expressed mathematically. According to Newton, the universe has a continuous and predictable structure. Therefore, the laws that govern matter will also apply to human beings, who are composed of matter, and within the context of the causality principle, their actions will be the cause of their subsequent actions (Küçüksönmez, 2022, p. 118). Human being, as a part of universe are also subject to this predictability and cause-and-effect relationship. A person's actions depend entirely on cause-and-effect relationships. An individual's action is the result of their previous action and the cause of their next action. This cause-and-effect chain eliminates the human impact on the universe. In this sense, determinism appears to be an obstacle to the idea that people could act otherwise (DEMİR, 2022, p. 13).

Newton's view that everything could be explained mathematically influenced several thinkers. One of these thinkers was Pierre Simon de Laplace. Laplace, who is influenced by Newton's understanding of mechanics, believed that if every moment of every atom could be calculated, everything in the universe could be known. According to Laplace, a superior intelligence (Laplace's demon) that knows all the details of the position and velocity of all particles in the universe at a given moment can know everything about the past and future of the universe (TASLAMAN, 2006, p. 164). For example, in an archery competition, if an athlete knows the speed at which the arrow leaves the bow, its angle, the wind speed, gravity and the humidity in the air, they can predict which target the arrow will hit. Let's take an example from *Libra*. If Lee Oswald had been able to calculate the wind, humidity, distance, he could have killed General Walker. He couldn't have missed the target. This view of calculability eliminates chance and coincidence.

Determinism is fundamentally similar to fatalism. According to both views, everything is predetermined and unchangeable. In other words, the same causes produce the same effects (ULUDAĞ, 2015, p. 260). In a deterministic universe, there are no gaps; 'A' always determines 'B', and 'B' always determines 'C'. When 'B' occurs, what follows it is predetermined, and an opposite outcome is impossible (TASLAMAN, 2006, p. 166). However, there is a clear difference between determinism and fatalism. Both views argue that everything is predetermined and that human intervention is impossible. However, in fatalism, events do not occur according to natural laws or cause and effect relationships. Instead of events developing according to natural laws or cause-and-effect relationships, the source of the assurance that they will occur is found in gods' will, their divine foresight, or some other fundamental teleological component of the universe (ACAR, 2022, p. 9). However, according to determinism, events are determined by natural laws. Everything depends on certain causes but is not prewritten. Nevertheless, the fact that everything is depends on certain reasons makes human beings just a puppet. If determinism is true, then it is impossible to do otherwise, and if free will depends on a person's ability to do otherwise, then no one can be said to have free will (DEMİR, 2022, p. 17). Therefore, a person who does not have free will cannot be held responsible for their actions. If a person's behaviour is determined by their genetic makeup, history, and environmental conditions, then they cannot be held responsible for bad behaviour over which they have no control (DOĞAN, 2004, p. 2). When looking at *Libra* from a deterministic perspective, it was determined that Oswald would assassinate Kennedy. No matter what Oswald did, he could not escape that.

Determinism in *Libra*:

When looking the novel from determinist perspective, Oswald would appear just as a puppet. Because Oswald had no involvement in the chain of events. This chain of events was determined before Oswald was even born. *Libra* follows some of these random yet also path-dependent plotlines and their generation by what some might call coincidence and others fate

(Wöll, 2022, p. 5). Determinists see these events as neither coincidences nor fate. Determinists believe that chains of events are linked by cause and effect. They believed that it is not a destiny written by God or a random coincidence. There is no such thing as coincidence. We don't know what to call it, so we say coincidence (DeLillo, 1988, p. 434). Coincidences arise from ignorance. Ignorance and coincidence are equivalent (ULUDAĞ, 2015, p. 267).

When we approach the novel *Libra* from a deterministic perspective, we see that all the events Lee Oswald experiences are necessarily linked to each another. Everything Oswald did ultimately led to him to Kennedy's death. Oswald's deployment to Japan as a marine, accidentally shooting himself in the military, his imprisonment in military prison, his meeting with Dupard in prison, his defection to Russia and subsequent return, his reunion with Dupard and subsequent shooting of General Walker and his move to Dallas, all these events are closely interconnected. They are part of cause-and-effect chain. Every step Oswald unknowingly took brought him one step closer to Kennedy's assassination. At this point, Oswald had no free will. We can see an example of this in the novel *Libra*. After Oswald defected to Russia, he met and married a Russian girl there. Later, the couple came to America from Russia. The couple who was struggling financially received help from some people. One of them was Ruth Paine. Paine was a woman who wanted to improve her Russian. Therefore, she took Oswald's wife on as a resident worker. Ruth knew Oswald was unemployed and one day while sitting with her neighbours, one of them mentioned that her brother was working at a book depository and they were looking for an employee. Then, Oswald started working at that workplace. However, the workplace was located in downtown Dallas, on Elm Street. That street was one of the routes Kennedy would take during his visit to Dallas. While Oswald believed that he had gone to Russia of his own free will and married Marine of his own free will, all events led him back to the same point: Kennedy's assassination.

You see what this means. It shows you what you have to do. We didn't arrange that job in the building, we didn't set the route of the motorcade. We aren't that powerful. There is something else operating to bring this about. Something that reaches down and pulls you out of the whirl of history (DeLillo, 1988, p. 434).

Ferrie, who was part of the assassination, is saying these words to Oswald. Oswald initially refuses to carry out the assassination, so Ferrie tries to convince him by showing him the causal link between events. He tries to show that Kennedy's assassination is the next chain of events in Oswald's life. It began to worry him when he thought about it. The idea of other people making decisions in his name. He wants to believe that nothing is in his control anymore (DeLillo, 1988, p. 416). And the result inevitably leads Kennedy's assassination. When looking the novel from deterministic perspective, although Kennedy's assassination was not planned by Oswald, it was predetermined that he would be a part of this assassination before his birth. That plan was one of the inevitable events in Oswald's life. It is not coincidence that Oswald fits perfectly into Everett Win's plan. They design a plan and you fit perfectly into it. They lose track of you, and you appear before them. Everything happens the way it's supposed to (DeLillo, 1988, p. 374). In the novel, Ferrie says this sentence again. Ferrie is the deterministic figure in the novel. He constantly refers to the predetermination and inevitability of events. He also refers to astrology, which is a deterministic view. According to astrology, a person's personality is influenced by the position of the planets at the moment of their birth. In other words, if we know the details of a person's birth time and date, we can analyse their character by looking at the position of the planets. Astrologers claim that movements in the Solar System can provide information about the lives and destinies of not only individuals but also societies, and that by correctly interpreting these movements, predictions can be made for almost every aspect of life (İŞLİYEN, 2024, p. 1026). This view is similar to Laplace's demon. It is similar to the belief that if we know everything in the universe, we can see the future.

In the novel, Ferrie attempts to analyse the personality of Oswald, who is a Libra according to astrology.

There are two varieties of Libran, the positive who has achieved self-mastery. He is well-balanced, level headed, a sensible fellow respected by all. We have the negative Libran who is, let's say, somewhat unsteady and impulsive. Easily, easily, easily influenced. Poised to make the dangerous leap. Either way, balance is the key (THOMAS, 1997, p. 113).

Determinism defends the idea that all events are necessarily connected to one another. However, some thinker and scientists have opposed deterministic thinking. They have thought that some events in the universe occur based on probabilities and coincidences. This idea is indeterministic thinking.

Indeterminism:

We have previously mentioned that in a deterministic universe, all events are intertwined in a cause-and-effect relationship. Until the 20th century, the result of the physics research of scientists like Newton, James Clerk Maxwell and Albert Einstein led to the acceptance of the view that the universe operated in an orderly manner and that events occurred through cause-and-effect relationships (Şengör, 2024, p. 41). Later, with the researches on physics, the indeterminist idea that the universe does not function completely depending on the cause-and-effect relationship and that there are uncertainties in the universe (DEMİR, 2022, p. 18) was adopted. Deterministic thinking is based on Newtonian physics. However, after the introduction of quantum physics, the idea that there is order and causality in the subatomic world, collapsed. In the atomic model of quantum theory, it is more accurate to refer to electrons as probability waves rather than revolving planets (TASLAMAN, 2006, p. 168). According to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, which explains the quantum state, it is impossible to calculate the position and velocity of particles at the atomic level simultaneously (TASLAMAN, 2006, p. 168). Therefore, if the motion and speed of the atoms that make up all physical objects cannot be determined, it is inevitable to conclude that the universe itself cannot be determined either (Kar, 2024, p. 304). This view also refutes Laplace's demon view. Because unpredictability brings about uncertainty. In other words, it is impossible for there to be an intelligence that solves all the mathematics of the universe and can calculate everything, because the universe is fundamentally uncertain. The doubt about deterministic thought has led to the spread of indeterministic thought. The previously adopted idea that 'event A necessitates event B, and event B necessitates event C' has been replaced by the idea that 'A does not necessarily determine B; it determines one option from the set of possibilities; C or D is as likely as B (TASLAMAN, 2006, p. 175)'. In other words, events in the universe proceed probabilistically. In turn, probabilities bring about randomness. The idea of indeterminism reached its peak with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and encompassed the understanding that humans possess free will (Şengör, 2024, p. 42). Unlike determinism, indeterminism does not deny free will. However, indeterminism is criticized because it is uncertain how a person's will can be active in a universe where probabilities exist (Şengör, 2024, p. 53). Unlike determinism, in an indeterministic universe, it is uncertain what events a person will encounter and how they will behave. In other words, it contains multiple possibilities. Which of these possibilities will occur is random. In a universe where events occur randomly, free will is called into question.

According to indeterminism, it is mystery which events will occur and which will not. Consequently, it is argued that human actions also take place randomly and depend on chance. Each behaviour will be formed by chance-based decisions. Thus, while the determinist view of the universe, which operates like

a clock, claims that humans cannot possess free will, indeterminism, with its model of an uncertain and probabilistic universe, is argued to make room for free will (Şengör, 2024, p. 71).

Indeterminism makes room for free will but cannot fully explain it.

Don DeLillo constantly emphasizes coincidence in *Libra*. He sees everything that happens to Oswald as a coincidence.

Indeterminism in *Libra*:

When we look at the *Libra* from indeterministic perspective, many coincidences stand out. The most obvious of these coincidences is the similarity in the lives of Oswald and Kennedy.

Coincidence. Lee read two or three books at the same time, just like Kennedy. He did his military service in the Pacific, just like Kennedy. His handwriting was terrible, he made awful spelling mistakes, just like Kennedy. Their wives became pregnant at the same time. Both of their brothers' names are Robert (DeLillo, 1988, p. 381).

According to indeterministic thinking, this is merely coincidence. It is not predetermined or linked by cause and effect. It is seen as a series of events that occurred within probability. Another coincidence emphasized by Don DeLillo is the events that occurred in Oswald's life, particularly in October and November.

It was that time of year. His birthday was in October. He had enlisted in the Marine Corps that month. The time he had shot himself in the arm in Japan was again in October. October and November were a period of decisions and bad events. He had arrived in Russia in October. He had tried to kill himself that same month. He had last seen his mother in October a year ago. The missile crisis had erupted in October. Marina had left him the previous November, and then returned. November was the month he and Dupard decided to shoot General Walker. He had last seen his brother in November (DeLillo, 1988, p. 419).

All of these events are the most important events in Oswald's life. According to indeterminism, they are merely coincidences. They are not predetermined. Actions that have happened always retain their possibility. Which action will be performed is not predetermined (Şengör, 2024, p. 46).

In an indeterminist universe, when events occur randomly, the agent's will is cast into doubt (Şengör, 2024, p. 66). Because if the action is random, the individual has no chance to intervene in this event. To endorse coincidence as the ruling force behind events is to deny individual agency and thus to diminish the possibility of direct responsible political action (CORNIER, 2010, p. 153). On the other hand, in deterministic universe, since events occur from necessity, the individual's will also is in doubt. If an action is completely determined by factors beyond the agent's control, or completely or partially random, then it is not freely willed in the sense required for the agent to be morally responsible for it (Ginet, 2002, p. 305). So, what is free will in this case? If there is no free will, does all responsibility belong to the universe?

Free Will:

The concept of free will has been extensively discussed and reformulated over many years in philosophy, yielding a plethora of theories (Mudrik, et al., 2022, p. 559). However, in general, free will refers to our ability to choose and perform the actions we desire (ÇAKIR, 2023, p. 78).

This means that we must have the right to choose in order to have free will. According to some thinkers who believe that all events in the universe are connected by cause and effect, there is no room for free will in the deterministic thinking. These thinkers defend the view of incompatibility. According to incompatibility, if determinism is true, we cannot speak of existence of free will (ÇAKIR, 2023, p. 82). There is no room for choice in deterministic thinking. Everything is predetermined and does not allow for intervention. The same causes produce the same effects (ULUDAĞ, 2015, p. 260). Determinism's refusal to allow for free will raises the problem of moral responsibility. An individual has no moral responsibility for events in which they could not intervene. If it was predetermined that Oswald would kill Kennedy even before he was born, then no matter what he did, he could not escape it. Therefore, the universe, not Oswald, is responsible for this event. If Oswald's growing up without a father, constant moving, his exclusion wherever he went, and his difficult life led him to become an assassin, Oswald becomes a victim, not a criminal. If we try to justify every action morally because of its connection to the past, the distinction between innocent and guilty disappears, which is a difficult result to accept intuitively (DOĞAN, 2004, p. 12). Incompatibilists states that a person is morally responsible for what he has done only if he could have done otherwise (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 829). However, they believe that an individual has no chance to act otherwise in a deterministic universe. Therefore, determinism and free will are incompatible. Frankfurt, who is a compatibilist, has called this claim of incompatibilists the Principle of Alternative Possibilities (PAP) (ÇAKIR, 2023, p. 96).

Frankfurt opposes the principle of alternative possibilities. According to Frankfurt, even though circumstances play a role in bringing a person to the point of doing what they do, their acting is not entirely dependent on those circumstances and the impossibility of doing otherwise (ÇAKIR, 2023, p. 98). According to him, an individual can be morally responsible even if they have no other choice. An individual's life can be predetermined. However, if they perform an action of their own free will, they are morally responsible. Even though a person is subject to a coercive force that precludes his performing any action but one, he may nonetheless bear full moral responsibility for performing that action (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 834).

In the *Libra*, Oswald's life may have somehow led him to Kennedy's assassination, but the fact that he did not give up until the last moment and killed Kennedy makes him morally responsible. According to compatibilists, even though the universe is governed by deterministic laws, a person could have acted differently if they had wanted to. Therefore, Frankfurt thought that PAP needed to be changed and he gave some examples. Let's try to understand Frankfurt's examples by adapting it to *Libra*. Suppose that Everett, T-Jay and the others threatened Oswald to kill Kennedy. If Oswald shot Kennedy because he was threatened, he would not be morally responsible. Because he was under threat. However, if Oswald shot Kennedy without being influenced by the threat, he would be morally responsible. In *Libra*, Oswald shoots Kennedy without being threatened. This makes him morally responsible. Even though circumstances and certain factors influence a person's actions, it should be noted that the choice itself still belongs to the individual (ÇAKIR, 2023, p. 106). Although Oswald's life was determined by natural laws, Oswald kills Kennedy of his own free will. The main point is that human actions arise without any coercion, and thus the action is free (Kar, 2024, p. 308). Therefore, the principle of alternate possibilities should thus be replaced, in Frankfurt's opinion, by the following principle: a person is not morally responsible for what he has done if he did it only because he could not have done otherwise (Frankfurt, 1969, p. 838).

Compatibilists, like incompatibilists, accept that the universe is deterministic. However, they still defend that individuals can make free choices. Even if an action predetermined by God's foreknowledge, if it occurs as a result of the agent's desires, beliefs and character, it is performed with free will (Şengör, 2024, p. 39).

On the other hand, the libertarian idea, which is an incompatible thought, considers that free will is incompatible with deterministic thought. According to them, it is necessary to accept that universe is either completely or partially indeterministic. This necessity is the only claim that will prove the existence of free will or claim that it is possible (Kar, 2024, p. 307). However, in a universe full of coincidences, there is no room for free will. Therefore, although it is claimed that free will is compatible with indeterminism, it cannot be said that it alone is sufficient to resolve the problem of free will (Şengör, 2024, p. 53).

CONCLUSION:

Don DeLillo's novel *Libra* is a novel of balance: On one side is Oswald's life, on the other is Kennedy's life; on one side is fate, on the other is coincidence; on one side is necessity, on the other side is free will. All these elements are balanced within the novel. DeLillo constantly emphasizes coincidence in the novel, but causality is present in many parts of the novel. Don DeLillo explains that there is not only a causal deterministic link between Oswald and Kennedy's assassination, but also the influence of random and coincidental events. If we consider a solely deterministic link between Oswald and Kennedy's assassination or if we consider that everything is random, Oswald's free will disappears. However, in *Libra* we see that this is also balanced. The events and coincidences in Oswald's life led him to Kennedy's assassination, but Oswald carried out the Kennedy assassination with his own will. Therefore, Oswald is morally responsible. Furthermore, the novel ends with a balance. At the end of the novel, Oswald is an assassin and a victim of assassination.

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ENGINEERING THE STANZA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HUMAN AND AI APPROACHES TO TRANSLATING POETRY

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ABSTRACT

The investigation provides a thorough analysis of the possibilities and limitations of using generative artificial intelligence models in translating Ukrainian poetic texts into English. The relevance of the study is determined by shift in the translation paradigm, associated with the transition from computer-assisted translation tools to the involvement of large language models, which requires a rethinking of translation competence and the role of the human translator in the creative process. The analysis is based on the translation of Lina Kostenko's poetry generated by the model Claude which is compared with the translation produced by professional translators (S. Galperin and A. Zeyliger). The methodological foundation of the study is an experimental comparison of machine translation results obtained both with a basic prompt and with a modified prompt (with specified parameters of poem length, rhyme, and stylistic features) against human translation.

The findings show a clear dependence of machine translation quality on the accuracy and thoughtfulness of prompt formulation. It has been proven that basic prompts lead to literal translation and ignore the prosodic characteristics of the text, whereas extended and specially constructed guidelines make it possible to approximate significantly the result to the formal features of a poetic text, particularly rhyme and rhythm. At the same time, comparative and stylistic analysis reveals the inability of artificial intelligence to deeply interpret and understand the poetic text, since it does not operate with cultural associations, subtexts, or holistic emotional perception of the original, giving preference instead to technical rhyming. In contrast, the analysis of human translation reveals a strategy of creative processing of the text and the preservation of its "soul."

Based on a SWOT analysis, the authors identify the prospects for using artificial intelligence as an auxiliary tool for preparing translation drafts and selecting rhymes, which corresponds to the "human-in-the-loop" approach. The research confirms that despite the growing technological awareness of experts, fundamental translation competence remains an exclusive prerogative of the human translator.

Keywords: literary translation, generative artificial intelligence, large language models, poetic translation, prompt engineering, Lina Kostenko, comparative analysis, human-machine interaction.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of large language models (LLMs) as viable instruments of literary translation constitutes one of the most consequential and contested developments in contemporary translation studies. For decades, the translation of poetry was regarded as the field, which is most irreducibly resistant to automation, a domain in which the thesis about untranslatability found its most persuasive explanation. The simultaneity of semantic, phonological, metrical, and affective demands that characterise lyric poetry used to place it beyond the reach of any statistical or neural processing. The rapid development of LLMs since 2020 has substantially complicated this consensus.

The present article takes as its subject a poem by Lina Kostenko (b. 1930), the foremost and iconic living poet of Ukraine. The analyzed poem, the erotic-existential lyric “Stop Me” (“СПИНИ МЕНЕ, ОТЯМЯ І ОТЯМ!”), presents challenges of metrically dense syllabic-tonic structure, existentially charged neologistic coinage, and tonal compression operating by means of imperative urgency.

The analytical method employed is that of systematic close reading applied uniformly to all translation versions of both poems. Theoretical references are limited to those directly necessary to contextualise the findings.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The empirical study of LLM performance in literary translation has consistently found that professional human translations outperform AI outputs on literary-specific criteria, while also demonstrating that prompt engineering substantially improves AI performance. A. Guerberof-Arenas and A. Toral (2020, 2022) established that human translation achieves higher creativity scores, measured by the ratio of creative shifts to errors, than machine translation under all tested conditions, and that post-editing of machine output constrains translatorial creativity even in professional post-editors. The CREAMT extension (Guerberof-Arenas et al., 2025) found that detailed stylistic prompts substantially improve Chat GPT’s creative shift scores across all evaluated language pairs, though not to the level of professional literary translators.

R. Zhang, W. Zhao, & S. Eger (2025) show that, in fact, basic automatic metrics, e.g., BLEU, COMET, BERT Score, are not good evaluators of literary quality, favoring accuracy over other, aesthetic, or affective parameters. N. Resende & J. Hadley (2024) focused their research on the efficiency of LLMs in translating poetry, showing that, although they can function as an auxiliary tool, reversing the process (i.e., using the AI results as the basis for the human translation) can cancel out the efficiency achieved. These studies inform the context for the present analysis, where the interest is on the difference between basic AI results, modified results, and AI results versus human results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

L. Kostenko’s poem opens with the compressed double-directed imperative “СПИНИ МЕНЕ, ОТЯМЯ І ОТЯМ!”. It is an appeal simultaneously addressed to another (“stop me”) and to oneself (“отямся”), collapsing subject and object in a single syntactic gesture. The poem is built on a syllabic-tonic structure approximating iambic pentameter with a cross-rhyme scheme (ABAB), which is available in three quatrains and a closing couplet. The dominant metaphorical system employs fire and ice, dissolution and consumption. The central semantic coinage “раз в ніколи”

("once in never") is a compressed oxymoron that collapses temporal logic to express the absolute exceptionality of the experience.

The translator must therefore simultaneously maintain approximate iambic pentameter, sustain the ABAB rhyme scheme, preserve the oxymoronic force of "раз в ніколи", render the double-directed opening imperative, and preserve the elemental antithesis of the closing couplet. The following analysis tracks how each of the three versions deal with these demands.

The basic prompt requested a straightforward translation of the poem with no formal constraints specified. The result is presented below:

Lina Kostenko (Ukrainian original)	Claude - Basic Prompt
<p><i>Спини мене, отямся і отям! Така любов буває раз в ніколи. Вона ж промчить над зламаним життям, За нею ж будуть бігти видноколи, Вона ж порве нам спокій до струни, Вона ж слова поспалює вустами! Спини мене, спини і схамени, Ще поки можу думати востаннє! Ще поки можу... але вже не можу. Настала черга й на мою зорю: Чи біля тебе душу відморозжу, Чи біля тебе полум'ям згорю.</i></p>	<p><i>Stop me, let me come to my senses and understand! Such love happens once in never. It will sweep over a broken life, Horizons will chase after it, It will tear our peace to shreds like strings, It will burn up words with our lips! Stop me, stop and bring me to reason, While I can still think one last time! While I can still... but I can no longer. My turn has come for my star: Whether I'll freeze my soul beside you, Or burn up in flames beside you.</i></p>

The basic translation achieves sufficient semantic coverage at the level of the individual image. The coinage "once in never" is correctly preserved. We consider it a non-trivial achievement that demonstrates the model's capacity to recognise and reproduce a semantically loaded oxymoron without explanatory intervention. The central antithesis of the closing couplet "freeze my soul / burn up in flames" is accurately rendered, preserving the philosophical nucleus of the poem.

On formal grounds, the basic translation fails comprehensively. No rhyme scheme is maintained since the poem resolves into free verse, ruining Kostenko's carefully constructed ABAB pattern entirely. The metrical inconsistency is pronounced: lines of five, eight, and eleven syllables are juxtaposed without rhythmic logic, producing a text that reads as paraphrase rather than poem. The opening line "Stop me, let me come to my senses and understand!" dissolves the syntactic and rhythmic compression of the original into a fourteen-syllable sprawl.

The addition of "like strings" to the metaphor of torn peace is an explanatory addition, which weakens the image by clarifying it. The phrase "bring me to reason" substitutes a cognitive frame for the Ukrainian "схамени", which carries the sense of awakening from a delirious or

trance-like state – a shade of meaning with significant implications for the poem’s psychology of obsession.

The closing two lines “Whether I’ll freeze my soul beside you, / Or burn up in flames beside you” preserve the antithesis but lose the rhyme pair entirely, and the repetition of “beside you” creates a monotonous effect. The poem’s emotional climax is thus delivered without prosodic amplification.

The modified prompt assigned the model with the task to preserve the metre approximating iambic pentameter, a cross-rhyme scheme (ABAB), tonal register, pay attention to stylistic devices. The result is as follows.

Lina Kostenko (Ukrainian original)	Claude - Modified Prompt
<p><i>Спини мене, отямся і отям! Така любов буває раз в ніколи. Вона ж промчить над зламаним життям, За нею ж будуть бігти видноколи, Вона ж порве нам спокій до струни, Вона ж слова поспалює вустами! Спини мене, спини і схамени, Ще поки можу думати востаннє! Ще поки можу... але вже не можу. Настала черга й на мою зорю: Чи біля тебе душу відморозю, Чи біля тебе полум'ям згорю.</i></p>	<p><i>Stop me, come to sense and make me see! Such love comes once in never, once alone. It tears across a life's broken debris, While horizons chase what cannot be known. It rips our peace to shreds, string after string, It burns the very words upon our lips! Stop me, stop me, make me reasoning, While final thought still from my fingers slips! While I still can... but no, I can no more. My turn has come; my star begins to rise: Will I freeze my soul down to the core Or burn in flames before your very eyes?</i></p>

The modified translation represents a qualitative transformation in formal competence. The rhyme scheme is consistently maintained throughout: see/debris, alone/known, string/lips, slips/more, rise/core, eyes – forming an ABAB CDCD EFEF GG pattern with predominantly exact or near-exact rhymes. The metrical organisation approximates iambic pentameter throughout “Stop ME, come TO sense AND make ME see”. Minor deviations occur but are consistent with the licensed metrical variation of English iambic verse.

The opening line “Stop me, come to sense and make me see!” achieves something the basic version fails to do. It compresses the double-directed imperative into a single line while adding alliterative cohesion (“sense... see”). The sibilant and fricative cluster “come to sense and make me see” creates a phonic texture that approximates the phonological density of the Ukrainian original.

The expansion of “once in never” to “once in never, once alone” is analytically significant since it introduces the motif of loneliness. It is existentially plausible in context, but absent from the original – as a direct consequence of rhyme pressure: “alone” is required to pair with “known”

in the following line. This is the example of what might be called rhyme-driven semantic addition as the model generates an interpretively defensible expansion, but the motivation is formal rather than interpretive.

“It tears across a life’s broken debris” replaces “над зламаним життям” (“over a broken life”) and results in a more visceral image since the word “debris” amplifies the sense of catastrophic dissolution and substantially upgrades the register. “While horizons chase what cannot be known” introduces an epistemological dimension wholly absent from the original, love becomes not only an overwhelming force but an unknowable mystery, again generated by the formal requirement to rhyme “known” with “alone”.

The closing antithesis “Will I freeze my soul down to the core, / Or burn in flames before your very eyes?” is characterized by formal elegance (the rhyme pair “core/eyes” is imperfect, but prosodically satisfying) while introducing a significant communicative transformation. The addition of “before your very eyes” imports an addressee and converts the poem’s interior monologue into a dialogic utterance. This is the most consequential single deviation in the modified translation, altering the poem’s existential register from soliloquy to interpersonal drama.

The translation by S. Galperin and A. Zeyliger represents the poem’s reception by two translators deeply attuned to the English lyric tradition and possessing the cultural literacy required to deal with L. Kostenko’s Ukrainian literary-historical context. The text is presented below.

Lina Kostenko (Ukrainian original)	S. Galperin & A. Zeyliger (Human Translation)
<p><i>Спини мене, отямся і отям! Така любов буває раз в ніколи. Вона ж промчить над зламаним життям, За нею ж будуть бігти видноколи, Вона ж порве нам спокій до струни, Вона ж слова поспалює вустами! Спини мене, спини і схамени, Ще поки можу думати востаннє! Ще поки можу... але вже не можу. Настала черга й на мою зорю: Чи біля тебе душу відморозжу, Чи біля тебе полум'ям згорю.</i></p>	<p><i>Oh, stop me, come to senses, halt my dreams! Such love descends from heaven once in never. Over my broken life like a typhoon it screams And leaves behind horizons in its fervor. It tears our serenity to bits, Its fiery lips are scorching words to ashes! Oh, stop me, stop — and help me find my wits Before my sanity forever crashes! While reason holds... but no, the hope is lost. At last my hour has come to see the dawn: For next to you my soul will turn to frost Or next to you I will enflame and burn.</i></p>

The translation opens with “Oh, stop me, come to senses, halt my dreams!”, a significantly more expansive rendering of the Ukrainian opening than either AI version. The exclamatory “Oh” sets an emotionally heightened register that the AI translations do not achieve. More strikingly, “halt my dreams” is a creative interpretation and arguably a transformation of

“отямся”, where the Ukrainian imperative commands awakening from a delirious state, S. Galperin and A. Zeyliger render it as a command to halt the dreaming faculty itself. This shifts the poem’s psychology since the speaker is not merely intoxicated but dreaming, and the interlocutor must intervene to arrest the oneiric process. This is an interpretive addition that is culturally motivated and strategically consistent, here love is framed as a form of waking dream from the outset.

“Such love descends from heaven once in never” adds a vertical, sacred dimension absent from the original. For translators, love is not only rare but celestially originated. This is the boldest semantic addition in the human translation, it imposes a theological register on a poem that is existential rather than metaphysical. Whether this constitutes enrichment or imposition depends on the critic’s interpretive framework; what is analytically certain is that it is a conscious strategic choice rather than a formal necessity.

“Over my broken life like a typhoon it screams” is the most tonally intense line in any of the three translations. The original has no typhoon: “промчить над зламаним життям” (“will sweep over a broken life”) is violent but relatively understated. S. Galperin and A. Zeyliger’s addition of the typhoon metaphor with the synaesthetic “screams” amplifying an already extreme vehicle creates a hyperbolic register markedly more histrionic than the original. This is a deliberate intensification that serves the translators’ overall strategy of emotional maximisation.

“Oh, stop me, stop – and help me find my wits / Before my sanity forever crashes!” is the most rhetorically amplified version of the second imperative in any translation. The repetition “stop me, stop” creates a rhythmic stutter that dramatises the moment of final lucidity, and “find my wits” is the culturally idiomatic English rendering of “схамени” that both AI versions fail to locate. “My sanity forever crashes” is an addition, “forever” is not present in the original, and “crashes” reconnects compositionally with “typhoon” earlier in the poem, creating an architectural arch that neither AI version constructs.

“While reason holds... but no, the hope is lost” is the most philosophically weighted rendering of “Ще поки можу... але вже не можу”. The AI versions preserve the modal logic, while S. Galperin and A. Zeyliger reframe it as an opposition between reason holding and hope being explicitly lost. The word “hope” is not in the original, its introduction externalises an emotional state that Kostenko leaves implicit, and “the hope is lost” introduces a note of definitive despair absent from the more ambiguous Ukrainian.

The final stanza introduces the image of dawn (“At last my hour has come to see the dawn”). It is a creative interpretation of “настала черга й на мою зорю” (“my turn has come for my star”). The “star” of the original becomes the moment of seeing the dawn, which gives the poem an existential concreteness and temporal specificity that ABSTRACT “star” does not carry. The antithesis “my soul will turn to frost / I will enflame and burn” preserves the elemental structure while deploying the archaic verbal form “enflame”, an elevated, slightly ceremonial word that raises the stylistic register in a way that neither AI version achieves. The rhyme pair “frost/lost” and the near-rhyme “dawn/burn” create a complex phonic texture consistent with the emotional complexity of the poem's conclusion.

CONCLUSION

The following matrix synthesises the findings of this analysis into a structured assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats presented by the use of LLMs in the translation of poetry.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instantaneous generation of multiple translation variants • Strong semantic fidelity at the level of the individual image • Ability to adopt formal constraints when prompted (metre, rhyme scheme) • Consistent syntactic handling across linguistic levels • Prompt-responsive creativity: modified prompts yield qualitatively superior output • Preservation of key metaphors and semantic coinages ("once in never") • Ability to render neologisms and structural figures of speech • No fatigue, no bias toward self-referential cultural memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic prompt mode lacks spontaneous prosodic consciousness • Systematic tendency toward over-explanation of implicit images • Limited access to Ukrainian literary-cultural intertexts • Absence of organic musical intuition: formal achievement is mechanical • Risk of semantic addition absent from the original (epistemological glossing) • Cannot independently select translatorial strategy without explicit instruction • Communicative structure may be inadvertently altered (monologue → dialogue) • No embodied emotional experience underlying lexical choices
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified prompts can substantially close the gap with professional human translation • Usable as a first-draft or exploratory instrument for professional translators • Prompt engineering research may further improve poetic output quality • Potential for AI–human collaborative translation workflows • Scalability: enables rapid comparative study across multiple language pairs • Can simulate various stylistic registers on demand • Valuable for translation pedagogy and student training • Low-resource languages may benefit from AI-assisted literary translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation may devalue professional literary translators' expertise • Basic AI output may be mistaken for publication-ready translation • Cultural flattening: reduction of Ukrainian specificity to English idiom • Semantic drift: added content may distort authorial intent • Evaluation metrics (BLEU, COMET) unreliable for poetry assessment • Over-reliance on AI in translation education • Copyright and attribution ambiguity in AI-generated literary texts • Potential homogenisation of poetic voice across models

The SWOT matrix confirms the complexity of the evaluative picture. The strengths of AI poetic translation are primarily located in the dimensions of speed, scalability, semantic coverage, and prompt-responsiveness. The weaknesses are concentrated in the affective, cultural, and organic-musical dimensions that define the highest literary achievement: AI rhyme is mechanical; AI addition is locally motivated; AI tonal control is unstable. The most significant opportunity identified is the prospect of AI–human collaborative translation workflows in which prompt-engineered AI output serves as a structurally competent substrate for human creative revision. The most significant threat is the commodification of literary translation: if basic AI output is taken as publication-ready, the cultural and artistic value of professional literary translation will be systematically devalued.

This analysis has demonstrated that the translation of Lina Kostenko’s poetry by Claude under basic prompting conditions achieves adequate semantic coverage but fails systematically on formal-aesthetic grounds, producing paraphrase where the original demands verse. Under modified, engineered prompting conditions, Claude produces formally accomplished translations that approach, though do not attain the standard of professional literary translation. The gap that remains is located not primarily in formal technique, which can be substantially addressed through prompt engineering, but in the domains of cultural embeddedness, strategic semantic coherence, and the organic integration of form and meaning that characterises the finest literary translation.

The human translation examined by S. Galperin and A. Zeyliger demonstrate precisely those qualities that remain beyond the current reach of AI: a consistent interpretive strategy applied across the whole poem, culturally motivated creative additions, and the capacity to transform individual poems into new, organically coherent English-language lyric texts. S. Galperin and A. Zeyliger pursue a strategy of emotional maximisation, constructing a compositional arch across the poem and deploying the archaic “enflame” to achieve a raised stylistic register.

The SWOT analysis confirms that AI-assisted poetic translation is best understood as a powerful tool in an expanded translatorial toolkit, most valuably deployed in an assistive capacity alongside, rather than in replacement of, human literary translators. The development of hybrid workflows, in which prompt-engineered AI output serves as a structurally competent first draft for human creative revision, represents the most promising methodological direction. Such workflows honour the empirical findings of computational translation studies while preserving the interpretive authority of the human translator, who alone can supply the governing vision that transforms a formally competent rendering into a poem.

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DEVELOPING RESEARCH LITERACY AMONG EFL VIETNAMESE UNDERGRADUATES THROUGH A RESEARCH METHODS COURSE

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ABSTRACT

Research literacy is an essential competence for undergraduate students who are required to conduct graduation research or participate in institutional scientific research. However, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) undergraduates in rural Vietnamese universities have limited exposure to academic research and experience anxiety when required to conduct research in English. This classroom-based qualitative study examines the development of research literacy among 65 third-year EFL Vietnamese undergraduates through participation in a short research methods course at a public university in the Mekong Delta, Southern Vietnam. The 30-period face-to-face course employed bilingual Vietnamese–English instruction, sample-based learning using bachelor’s theses, institutional research reports, and national and international journal articles, as well as guided use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and DeepSeek. Data were collected through classroom observations, student artifacts, achievement test results, semi-structured interviews, and the teacher-researcher’s reflective journal. The findings indicate that students developed clearer understanding of basic research components, improved ability to formulate research titles, research questions, objectives, and research tools, and increased confidence in conducting English-medium graduation research or participating in institutional scientific research. The study suggests that a short, scaffolded research methods course can effectively support foundational research literacy development in rural EFL contexts.

Keywords: research literacy, EFL undergraduates, research methods course, bilingual instruction, AI tools

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

In contemporary higher education, undergraduate students are increasingly expected to engage in academic research as part of graduation requirements or institutional scientific research activities. Research literacy, understood as the ability to comprehend research structure, research logic, and basic methodological procedures, has therefore become a key learning outcome at the undergraduate level. For students majoring in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing research literacy is particularly challenging because graduation theses and scientific research products are required to be written in English.

In Vietnam, especially at public universities located in rural areas, EFL undergraduates often enter their third year of study with little or no prior exposure to academic research. Many students are unfamiliar with research terminology, research formats, and the organization of research chapters. As a result, they experience anxiety and lack confidence when preparing for graduation theses or participation in faculty- or university-level scientific research in institutional scientific research.

At a public university in the Mekong Delta, Southern Vietnam, third-year EFL undergraduates are required to complete a graduation thesis in their fourth year or participate in institutional scientific research projects at the departmental or institutional level. However, before receiving formal instruction, most students demonstrate limited understanding of research titles, research questions, research objectives, methodologies, and data analysis procedures. The requirement to conduct research in English further intensifies students' fear of research and academic writing.

To address this gap, a short research methods course consisting of 30 face-to-face class periods was designed and implemented. The course aimed to develop foundational research literacy rather than advanced research expertise. Instruction focused on understanding the format of bachelor's theses and institutional scientific research products, formulating research titles, research questions, and objectives, designing basic research tools such as questionnaires and interview questions, and interpreting simple quantitative and qualitative data. Due to time limitations, advanced statistical analysis was not included; instead, the course emphasized descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

The course employed bilingual Vietnamese–English instruction, sample-based learning using bachelor's theses and published research articles, and guided use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and DeepSeek. These instructional strategies were intended to reduce cognitive load, clarify ABSTRACT research concepts, and inspire students to engage more confidently in English-medium research.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to examine the development of research literacy among third-year EFL Vietnamese undergraduates through participation in a research methods course. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine students' development of understanding of basic research components, including research titles, research questions, objectives, research structure, and methodology;
2. explore students' ability to design basic research tools and link literature review content with questionnaires and interview questions;

3. investigate students' perceptions of their confidence and readiness to conduct English-medium graduation research or participate in institutional scientific research after completing the course.

Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do EFL Vietnamese undergraduates develop their understanding of basic research components through participation in a research methods course?
2. How do students demonstrate their ability to design basic research tools and connect literature review content with questionnaires and interview questions?
3. How do EFL Vietnamese undergraduates perceive changes in their confidence and readiness to conduct graduation research or participate in institutional scientific research after the course?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Literacy in Higher Education

Research literacy refers to students' ability to understand, evaluate, and produce academic research. Brew (2013) emphasizes that research literacy involves active engagement with research processes rather than passive consumption of research outputs. Willison and O'Regan (2007) further conceptualize research literacy as understanding research purposes, structure, and methodology. At the undergraduate level, developing research literacy is essential for preparing students for graduation research and lifelong learning (Healey & Jenkins, 2009).

In the Vietnamese higher education context, research literacy is closely linked to systematic methodological training. Le Van Hao (2015) argues that novice researchers must first develop foundational awareness of research logic and structure before engaging in independent research tasks. This view supports the inclusion of introductory research methods courses at the undergraduate level.

Teaching Research Methods to EFL Students

Teaching research methods to EFL students presents unique challenges due to language barriers and limited exposure to academic discourse. Hyland (2016) notes that EFL learners often struggle with academic terminology and research conventions. Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that novice researchers benefit more from explicit instruction and guided practice than from ABSTRACT methodological explanations.

Vietnamese research methodology textbooks frequently adopt step-by-step instructional approaches that combine theory and practice (Le Van Hao, 2015). Such approaches are particularly appropriate for short research methods courses that aim to build research literacy rather than advanced methodological expertise.

Bilingual Instruction and Scaffolded Learning

Bilingual instruction has been shown to support learners' comprehension of complex academic content. Cook (2010) argues that strategic use of learners' first language can reduce cognitive load and facilitate conceptual understanding. In research education, bilingual explanations help clarify ABSTRACT methodological concepts and increase EFL students' engagement.

In Vietnamese classrooms, bilingual instruction is commonly used to support academic learning, especially in research-related courses (Ta Ngoc Tan, 2001). When combined with scaffolded instruction, bilingual teaching can effectively support research literacy development among novice researchers.

Sample-Based Learning through Research Articles

Sample-based learning exposes students to authentic academic texts, enabling them to understand genre conventions, research organization, and methodological presentation. Swales (1990) highlights the role of model texts in helping learners internalize academic structures, while Hyland (2007) emphasizes their importance in academic writing instruction.

In research education, analyzing completed research products allows students to observe how research components are realized in practice. Through guided analysis of sample texts, students can identify how research titles are formulated, how research questions and objectives are aligned, and how methodology and findings are presented across chapters.

In this study, students analyzed bachelor's theses, institutional scientific research reports, and approximately 70 peer-reviewed research articles published in European journals, primarily from Romania. These articles were not used as theoretical references but as instructional samples. Students examined them individually and in small groups to identify research structure, chapter organization, and the relationship between literature review content and research tools.

This sample-based approach helped students move from ABSTRACT explanations to concrete understanding. By repeatedly engaging with authentic research texts, students gradually developed awareness of what constitutes a "good" research product and how research components function together within a complete study.

AI Tools in Research and Academic Writing Instruction

Recent studies suggest that AI tools can support academic learning when used appropriately. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) indicate that AI technologies can assist learners in organizing information and understanding complex concepts. Kasneci et al. (2023) further argue that tools such as ChatGPT can support academic writing and research learning when used under instructor guidance.

In this study, AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and DeepSeek were introduced as supportive learning resources rather than substitutes for students' independent thinking. AI tools were used to help students clarify research formats, refine research questions, and organize ideas. Consistent with Le Van Hao's (2015) view, students were guided to critically evaluate AI-generated content rather than accept it uncritically.

Standard Structure of Academic Research Products and Undergraduate Research Literacy

In higher education, academic research products such as bachelor's theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, conference papers, and journal articles generally follow a shared underlying structure. Despite differences in length and depth, these research products typically include core components such as an introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This standardized structure reflects common research logic rather than level-specific requirements.

At the undergraduate level, particularly in EFL contexts, students are not expected to demonstrate the same level of theoretical depth or methodological sophistication as postgraduate researchers. However, several scholars argue that developing familiarity with the standard structure of full academic research is a crucial foundation for undergraduate research literacy (Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Willison & O'Regan, 2007). Understanding how research titles, research questions, objectives, literature review, research tools, data analysis, and discussion function together enables students to engage meaningfully with academic research, even if their studies remain small-scale.

In Vietnam, bachelor's theses and institutional scientific research reports generally adopt a structure similar to that of journal articles, particularly those following the IMRD or five-chapter format. Le Van Hao (2015) emphasizes that novice researchers should first master this structural logic before attempting advanced methodological techniques. This approach is especially relevant for short research methods courses, where the goal is to develop research literacy rather than full research competence.

In the present study, the research methods course was explicitly designed to introduce third-year EFL undergraduates to the standard structure of a complete research product, comparable to a bachelor's thesis, a simplified MA-level study, or a conference/journal article. Instruction emphasized how core components align across research genres and academic levels, helping students understand that research logic remains consistent even when research scope and complexity differ.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have examined research literacy, bilingual instruction, sample-based learning, and AI-assisted learning separately, limited research has explored how these elements are integrated within a short research methods course for EFL undergraduates in rural Vietnamese contexts. Existing studies often focus on urban universities or long-term research training programs, leaving short, practice-oriented courses underexplored.

Furthermore, little research has examined how such courses prepare EFL undergraduates for English-medium graduation research and institutional scientific research. This study addresses these gaps by investigating how a short, bilingual, AI-supported research methods course contributes to the development of foundational research literacy among EFL Vietnamese undergraduates in a rural university setting.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative classroom-based research design with descriptive quantitative support. The design was selected to address the three research questions by examining students' learning processes, research artifacts, and perceptions during and after participation in the research methods course. The researcher served as both the course instructor and the researcher, allowing close observation of students' research literacy development throughout the course.

Participants and Research Context

The participants were 65 third-year EFL Vietnamese undergraduates (40 females and 25 males, aged 21–22) enrolled in a public university in the Mekong Delta, Southern Vietnam. After graduation, students are expected to work as English teachers, tour guides, administrative staff in foreign companies using English, or pursue postgraduate studies. Prior to the course, most participants reported little or no knowledge of academic research. The research context is directly linked to the three research questions, as the course was designed to prepare students for fourth-year graduation theses and participation in institutional scientific research.

Course Description

The research methods course consisted of 30 face-to-face class periods. Instruction focused on:

- research formats of bachelor's theses and doing university research products;
- formulation of research titles, research questions, and objectives;

- questionnaire design and interview question construction;
- basic data analysis using percentages, mean, and standard deviation;
- interview coding and appendix preparation;
- understanding the functions of Chapters 1–5 in research reports.

Instruction was delivered bilingually in Vietnamese and English. Students analyzed research samples individually and in groups of three. AI tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, and DeepSeek) were used under teacher guidance to support understanding and idea organization.

Data Collection

Data were collected through:

- classroom observations;
- student artifacts, including draft research components and final achievement tests;
- semi-structured interviews with selected students;
- the teacher-researcher's reflective journal.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data were analyzed thematically in relation to the three research questions. Achievement test results were analyzed descriptively to support qualitative findings. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation of data sources, member checking, and reflective consideration of the researcher's positionality.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Development of Understanding of Research Components

The findings indicate that students developed clearer awareness of basic research structure after completing the course. Participants demonstrated improved understanding of research titles, research questions, research objectives, chapter organization, and the relationship between literature review and research tools. Analysis of student artifacts, including draft research components and final tests, showed that most students were able to formulate coherent research titles and align research questions with objectives. Compared to the beginning of the course, students showed greater accuracy in identifying key elements of Chapters 1–3 and explaining their functions within a research report.

Importantly, students demonstrated increased awareness that bachelor's theses, institutional research reports, and journal articles share a common underlying research structure. Many participants reported that analyzing full research products helped them recognize consistent patterns across Chapters 1–5, similar to the structure used in conference papers and journal articles. This indicates that the course supported students' understanding of research logic at a level comparable to simplified versions of full academic research.

Students' Perceptions of Research Literacy Development

Students reported increased confidence in understanding and discussing research in English. Research concepts that were previously perceived as difficult or inaccessible became more manageable through bilingual explanations and repeated practice. Although students did not claim mastery of research methods, they expressed greater readiness to engage in graduation research tasks and participate in institutional scientific research projects. Many students emphasized that the course reduced their fear of English-medium research and helped them feel more prepared for fourth-year academic requirements.

Several students noted that understanding the standard structure of a complete research product reduced their fear of graduation research. Instead of viewing a bachelor's thesis as something fundamentally different from published research, students perceived it as a smaller-scale version of a journal or conference study. This shift in perception contributed to increased confidence and readiness to engage in English-medium research.

Perceived Supporting Course Elements

Students identified bilingual instruction, sample-based learning, and guided use of AI tools as the most supportive elements of the course. Vietnamese explanations helped clarify ABSTRACT research concepts, while English examples familiarized students with academic discourse. Model texts provided concrete illustrations of research structure and methodology. AI tools were perceived as helpful for organizing ideas and refining research components when used under teacher guidance, rather than as tools for copying content.

Sample-based learning using complete bachelor's theses and journal articles played a key role in helping students visualize the structure of a full research product. Guided use of AI tools further supported students in identifying how research components function consistently across different academic levels

Discussion

The findings of this study support previous research highlighting the importance of scaffolded and bilingual instruction in EFL academic contexts (Cook, 2010; Hyland, 2016). Similar to Swales' (1990) genre-based approach, the use of sample-based learning enabled students to internalize research structures through exposure to authentic academic texts.

Beyond confirming the effectiveness of bilingual and scaffolded instruction, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of explicitly teaching the standard structure of a full academic research product at the undergraduate level. While previous studies often focus on isolated skills such as academic writing or methodology, the findings suggest that helping EFL undergraduates understand the shared logic across bachelor's theses, institutional research, and journal articles can significantly enhance research literacy. This structural awareness enables students to approach graduation research not as an unfamiliar task, but as a simplified version of established academic practices.

However, this study extends existing literature in several ways. First, it demonstrates that foundational research literacy can be developed within a short, practice-oriented research methods course, even in a rural EFL context with limited research exposure. Second, while prior studies have examined AI tools in academic writing, this study shows how AI can be pedagogically integrated into research instruction as a supportive and supervised resource, rather than as a replacement for students' thinking.

Importantly, the study highlights the role of confidence-building in research education. For EFL students required to conduct research in English, reduced anxiety and increased readiness are critical outcomes. The findings suggest that combining bilingual scaffolding, authentic research samples, and guided AI use can effectively prepare EFL undergraduates for English-medium graduation research and institutional scientific research.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that a short research methods course can effectively develop foundational research literacy among EFL Vietnamese undergraduates at a rural public university. Through bilingual instruction, sample-based learning, and guided use of AI tools,

students gained clearer understanding of academic research structure and increased confidence in engaging with English-medium research.

In addition to improving students' understanding of individual research components, this study highlights the importance of explicitly introducing EFL undergraduates to the standard structure of a complete academic research product. Through analyzing bachelor's theses, institutional research reports, and journal articles, students came to recognize that graduation research follows the same underlying logic as conference papers and journal publications, differing primarily in scope and depth. This structural awareness played a key role in reducing students' anxiety toward English-medium research and increasing their readiness to undertake graduation theses and participate in institutional scientific research.

Pedagogical Implications

For EFL Students

Helping EFL undergraduates understand that bachelor's theses and institutional research share the same structural logic as conference and journal articles can demystify academic research. Early exposure to this standard structure reduces anxiety, supports confidence, and enables students to approach graduation research as a manageable, structured task rather than an unfamiliar academic burden.

For EFL Teachers

EFL teachers should explicitly teach the standard structure of complete research products rather than focusing only on isolated skills. Combining bilingual explanations, full research samples, and guided AI use can help students internalize research logic and better prepare them for English-medium graduation research.

For Curriculum Designers

Curriculum designers should integrate research literacy instruction earlier in EFL programs, with an emphasis on the shared structure of academic research across bachelor's theses, institutional research, and journal articles. Short, practice-oriented research methods course can serve as effective bridges to final-year research requirements, particularly in rural contexts.

Limitations

This study was limited to one research methods course at a single institution and relied primarily on qualitative data. The findings may not be generalizable to other contexts. In addition, the short duration of the course limited the scope of research skills that could be developed.

In addition, the course focused on structural understanding rather than full methodological depth, which may limit students' preparedness for advanced postgraduate research.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could examine whether early instruction in the standard structure of academic research leads to higher-quality graduation theses or increased participation in conference and journal publication. Comparative research across rural and urban EFL universities could further clarify the role of structural research literacy in undergraduate research success.

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EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER CENTRALITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SPEAKING STRATEGY USE IN VIETNAMESE EFL CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores Vietnamese EFL university students' perceptions of **teacher centrality** and its effect on **speaking strategy use in impromptu speaking tasks**. Conducted with 32 B1-level freshmen English majors at Can Tho University, Vietnam, the research used semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, with five students selected for in-depth interviews. Findings reveal that students strongly view teachers as essential guides, relying on them for modeling, feedback, and strategy guidance during spontaneous oral tasks. This reliance shapes the use of strategies such as imitation, clarification, and paraphrasing. Over time, structured teacher support enables learners to gradually adopt self-directed strategies, illustrating a dynamic interaction between **teacher guidance** authority, further influence students' classroom behavior and strategy application. The study highlights the and **learner autonomy**. Cultural values, including high power distance and respect for importance of balancing teacher scaffolding with opportunities for independent practice to enhance learners' strategic competence in spontaneous speaking contexts.

Keywords: teacher centrality, speaking strategies, impromptu speech, learner autonomy, Vietnamese EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

English has become an essential means of communication in academic, professional, and international contexts. In Vietnam, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) at all educational levels, with increasing emphasis on communicative competence, particularly

speaking skills. University EFL programs aim to develop students' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations through interactive and learner-centered approaches.

However, despite curricular reforms promoting communicative language teaching, many Vietnamese EFL classrooms remain influenced by traditional teacher-centered practices. In such contexts, teachers are often viewed as the primary source of knowledge, guidance, and evaluation. This perception may shape how students participate in classroom activities and how they approach language learning tasks, especially speaking tasks that require autonomy, interaction, and strategic competence.

Speaking strategy use plays a crucial role in helping learners manage communication difficulties, maintain interaction, and enhance fluency. These strategies include asking for clarification, paraphrasing, using fillers, self-correction, and cooperating with peers. Understanding the factors that influence students' choice and use of speaking strategies is therefore important for improving speaking instruction in EFL classrooms.

Rationale of the Study

In Vietnamese educational culture, teachers traditionally occupy a central and highly respected role in the learning process. Influenced by Confucian values emphasizing hierarchy, authority, and respect for teachers, many students believe that effective learning—particularly foreign language learning—cannot occur without a teacher's direct guidance (Nguyen & Hall, 2016). This cultural perception often positions teachers as the dominant figures in classroom interaction and decision-making.

Preliminary observations conducted at Can Tho University (CTU) reveal that EFL university students frequently rely on teachers during speaking activities, even after completing Listening and Speaking courses. During pair-interaction speaking tasks, students often seek confirmation, correction, or approval from teachers rather than negotiating meaning with peers or employing independent problem-solving strategies. These behaviors suggest that students' perceptions of teacher centrality may significantly influence their speaking strategy use.

Teacher centrality is likely to affect the types of strategies students adopt, such as imitation, repetition, and direct clarification requests addressed to instructors. Although self-study and peer interaction are encouraged in contemporary EFL pedagogy, a preliminary survey indicated that approximately 70% of students perceived teachers as irreplaceable for effective English learning. This strong reliance on teachers may limit students' opportunities to develop strategic flexibility and learner autonomy in speaking.

Investigating EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their relationship with speaking strategy use is therefore necessary. Such investigation can provide insights for designing teaching practices that respect cultural expectations while gradually promoting learner autonomy and more effective use of speaking strategies. This study focuses on first-year English majors at Can Tho University to contribute empirical evidence to the understanding of teacher-centered cultural influences in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

4. What are EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality in Vietnamese EFL classrooms?
5. What speaking strategies do EFL university students use during pair-interaction speaking tasks?

6. Is there a relationship between EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their speaking strategy use?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

4. To investigate EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.
5. To identify the speaking strategies used by EFL university students during pair-interaction speaking tasks.
6. To examine the relationship between EFL university students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their speaking strategy use.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to EFL education in Vietnam. Theoretically, the study adds to existing literature on cultural influences, teacher centrality, and speaking strategy use in EFL contexts, particularly within Vietnamese higher education.

Practically, the results may help EFL teachers better understand students' learning beliefs and adjust instructional practices to balance teacher guidance with opportunities for learner autonomy. Curriculum designers and educational administrators may also benefit from insights into how cultural perceptions influence students' strategic behavior in speaking tasks, thereby informing more effective speaking instruction and assessment.

Scope of the Study

This study is conducted with 32 B1-level first-year English majors enrolled in an online evening English course at Can Tho University, Vietnam. The study focuses on students' perceptions of teacher centrality and their speaking strategy use during pair-interaction speaking tests. Other language skills, proficiency levels, and educational contexts are beyond the scope of this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part reviews literature on teacher centrality, cultural influences, speaking strategy use, and learner autonomy in EFL contexts, with emphasis on Vietnam. The chapter also integrates the concept of impromptu speaking tasks, highlighting how teacher centrality shapes strategy use in real-time oral communication.

Teacher Centrality in Asian Educational Contexts

Teacher centrality remains a dominant principle in many Asian classrooms. In these settings, teachers are generally viewed as the primary authority and source of knowledge. Students often defer to teachers when making learning decisions, reflecting cultural norms rooted in Confucianism. Chen (2004) notes that students in Confucian-influenced societies commonly accept teachers' authority and rely heavily on guidance. Li and Zhang (2011) suggest that strong teacher guidance enhances structured learning but may limit learners' initiative. In Vietnam, Nguyen and Hall (2016) report that EFL students perceive teachers as essential knowledge authorities, particularly in speaking tasks, reinforcing reliance on teacher-led instruction. This teacher-centered culture becomes especially relevant in impromptu speaking situations, where students face unprepared topics and may seek teacher guidance to structure their responses effectively.

Cultural Influences on Students' Classroom Behavior

Cultural values significantly shape classroom participation and strategy use. Hofstede (2001) emphasizes that high power-distance cultures promote hierarchical teacher-student relationships. Learners in such contexts expect structured instruction, explicit guidance, and teacher approval. Tran (2019) observes that Vietnamese EFL students often hesitate to speak spontaneously without prompts, reflecting cultural tendencies toward authority reliance. Dang and Pham (2018) similarly found that respect for teacher authority affects participation and strategy application. In impromptu speaking tasks, these cultural norms are highlighted: students rely on teachers to provide cues, clarify expectations, and guide their responses in real time, demonstrating the influence of both culture and teacher centrality on immediate speaking performance.

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Role in Speaking Strategy Use

Students often perceive teachers as central facilitators of speaking strategy development. Teacher interventions, modeling, and feedback are crucial for scaffolding learners' strategy use (Ellis, 2003). Cohen (2014) suggests that explicit strategy instruction enhances learners' ability to self-monitor and apply strategies independently. In Vietnam, Pham (2018) found that students consider teachers indispensable for guiding the use of clarification, compensation, and paraphrasing strategies during speaking tasks. Impromptu speaking tasks further emphasize this role: because learners must respond spontaneously to random topics, teacher modeling and scaffolding become essential for helping students select and apply appropriate strategies under time pressure.

Teacher Centrality and Learner Autonomy in Strategy Use

While teacher guidance is important, over-reliance may limit self-directed strategy use. Littlewood (1999) argues that gradually reducing teacher control encourages learner autonomy. Le and Nguyen (2020) report that Vietnamese students increasingly adopt self-directed speaking strategies when teachers provide structured scaffolding. Pham (2018) further notes that teacher interventions initially guide learners, but repeated practice fosters autonomy. In the context of impromptu speaking, students often begin by heavily relying on teacher guidance but gradually integrate strategies into independent use, showing that teacher centrality shapes rather than prevents strategic competence and autonomy.

Speaking Strategies in EFL Contexts

Effective speaking strategies help learners manage communication challenges successfully. Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as techniques enhancing acquisition and use of language. Speaking strategies include clarification requests, paraphrasing, compensation, self-correction, and interactional negotiation. Studies in Asian EFL contexts show learners often prefer teacher-mediated strategies due to cultural norms. Nguyen (2016) found that Vietnamese students rely on teachers for strategy selection and confirmation, especially in oral tasks. Impromptu speaking tasks highlight this reliance: learners apply strategies modeled or guided by teachers to navigate unfamiliar topics, demonstrating the practical impact of teacher centrality on spontaneous speaking performance.

Balancing Teacher Guidance and Learner Autonomy

Effective speaking instruction balances scaffolding with opportunities for autonomous practice. Littlewood (1999) suggests gradually reducing teacher control to foster independent strategy use. Le and Nguyen (2020) report that structured teacher support helps Vietnamese students gain confidence and adopt self-directed strategies. Pham (2018) emphasizes that initial teacher intervention is necessary, but continued practice promotes autonomy. In impromptu tasks, this

balance is crucial: teachers must provide immediate guidance while encouraging learners to independently apply strategies in real time, demonstrating how autonomy and teacher centrality can coexist.

Conceptual Framework

This study connects cultural perceptions, teacher centrality, and students' speaking strategy use, particularly in the context of impromptu speaking. The conceptual framework positions students' perceptions of teacher centrality as a key factor influencing teacher-mediated instruction and learners' speaking strategy use. Cultural context, including high power distance and respect for authority (Hofstede, 2001; Nguyen & Hall, 2016), shapes how students interpret teacher guidance. Teacher interventions such as modeling, feedback, and explicit strategy instruction (Ellis, 2003; Cohen, 2014) mediate students' strategy application, while learner autonomy functions as a moderating factor. Empirical studies in Vietnam support this model, demonstrating how cultural beliefs and teacher centrality affect speaking strategy use (Pham, 2018; Nguyen & Hall, 2016).

Framework Components

The framework includes five key components:

6. **Cultural Context** – Confucian values, high power distance (Hofstede, 2001; Nguyen & Hall, 2016)
7. **Students' Perceptions of Teacher Centrality** – Teachers as authority and knowledge source (Chen, 2004; Pham, 2018)
8. **Teacher-Mediated Instruction** – Modeling, feedback, scaffolding strategies (Ellis, 2003; Cohen, 2014)
9. **Students' Speaking Strategy Use** – Clarification, paraphrasing, compensation, interactional strategies (Oxford, 1990)
10. **Learner Autonomy (Moderating Factor)** – Degree of independence influenced by scaffolding (Littlewood, 1999; Le & Nguyen, 2020)

Impromptu speaking tasks are integrated into the framework as a context in which these components interact dynamically. Students' strategy use in spontaneous speech is shaped by teacher centrality, cultural context, and scaffolding, while autonomy moderates the transition from reliance on guidance to independent application.

Components	Description	Example in Impromptu Speaking	Key References
Cultural Context	Confucian values, high power distance, respect for authority	Students defer to teachers for guidance when speaking spontaneously	Hofstede (2001); Nguyen & Hall (2016)
Students' Perceptions of Teacher Centrality	Teachers as authority, knowledge source, and primary guide	Learners seek teacher approval or cues before responding to random topics	Chen (2004); Pham (2018)
Teacher-Mediated Instruction	Modeling, feedback, scaffolding, strategy instruction	Teacher demonstrates phrases, prompts students, corrects errors during speaking test	Ellis (2003); Cohen (2014)
Students' Speaking Strategy Use	Clarification, paraphrasing, compensation, interactional strategies	Students imitate teacher models, request clarification, apply paraphrasing in real time	Oxford (1990); Nguyen (2016)
Learner Autonomy (Moderating)	Degree of independence shaped by scaffolding	Students gradually use strategies independently in later impromptu tasks	Littlewood (1999); Le & Nguyen (2020)

Figure 2.1 *Conceptual Framework of Teacher Centrality and Speaking Strategy Use in Impromptu Tasks (Adapted from Hofstede, 2001; Oxford, 1990; Ellis, 2003; Littlewood, 1999; Cohen, 2014).*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions of teacher centrality and its influence on speaking strategy use. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method because they allow participants to express their experiences and opinions freely while providing sufficient structure to address the research questions. This approach is appropriate for capturing nuanced insights into classroom dynamics, cultural beliefs, and learners' strategic behaviors (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

The participants consisted of 32 first-year English majors at Can Tho University, Vietnam, enrolled in a B1-level online evening English class. All participants had completed the Listening and Speaking course prior to the study, ensuring they had exposure to both teacher-led and interactive speaking activities.

From this group, 5 students were purposively selected for in-depth follow-up interviews to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and strategy use. These students were chosen based on observed differences in strategy application during speaking tasks and their willingness to articulate detailed reflections on teacher centrality and learning practices.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted immediately after individual speaking assessments.

- Each participant completed a 3-minute impromptu speaking test on a randomly assigned topic provided by the classroom teacher (who also acted as the observer).
- Immediately after the test, participants were interviewed to explore:
 - Their perceptions of teacher importance and centrality in learning.

- Their reliance on teachers during speaking tasks.
- The strategies they employed while speaking.
- The 5 selected students participated in extended interviews, which included additional probing questions to explore their experiences, decision-making processes, and strategy use in more depth.

This timing ensured that participants' responses reflected recent, task-specific experiences, enhancing the reliability of the data.

Instruments

The study used two primary instruments:

3. **Semi-structured interviews** – Audio-recorded to capture students' responses verbatim. Interview questions were designed to allow flexibility while addressing research objectives. The extended interviews with the 5 selected students allowed for more detailed probing.
4. **Observation notes** – The researcher documented participants' behavior during the speaking test, including the types of strategies used and the degree of reliance on teacher prompts or guidance.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic coding, following these steps:

- Transcriptions of interviews were read multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data.
- Codes were assigned to meaningful units of text reflecting students' perceptions of teacher centrality and strategy use.
- Themes were developed by grouping related codes, linking them to the research questions and objectives.
- Patterns connecting teacher perceptions and strategy adoption were identified, highlighting cultural and classroom dynamics influencing strategy use (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- Data from the 5 in-depth interviews were examined carefully to provide richer, illustrative examples of the identified themes.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical research practices to protect participants:

- Participation was voluntary, and students could withdraw at any time without penalty.
- Confidentiality was maintained; participants' identities were anonymized in transcripts and reports.
- Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, explaining the purpose of the study, the procedures, and participants' rights.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the findings of the study, organized around the three research questions. Data were collected from 32 B1-level English majors at Can Tho University through semi-structured interviews and observations during impromptu speaking tasks. Five students (S1–S5) were purposively selected for in-depth interviews to provide richer insights into their perceptions of teacher centrality and its influence on speaking strategy use. Both quantitative summaries from observations and qualitative excerpts from interviews are integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Research question 1: How do Vietnamese students perceive teacher centrality in EFL classrooms?

The findings indicate that Vietnamese students perceive teachers as highly central in their English learning. Approximately 70% of participants strongly agreed that teachers are essential for learning English, reflecting a deep cultural respect for teacher authority. In addition, 65% reported depending on teachers to correct mistakes during speaking tasks, and 58% preferred teacher-led modeling of speaking activities before attempting them independently. These patterns align with prior research emphasizing the influence of Confucian values and hierarchical classroom norms on students' learning behaviors (Nguyen & Hall, 2016; Hofstede, 2001).

The interview data provided further insight into these perceptions. S1 expressed, *"Without the teacher's guidance, I feel unsure what to say,"* highlighting the sense of reliance students have on teacher direction. S2 noted, *"I follow my teacher's examples before trying tasks on my own,"* while S3 added, *"Teachers help me know which strategies work best."* Similarly, S4 stated, *"I always look at how the teacher models speaking; it gives me confidence,"* and S5 explained, *"Even when we practice in pairs, I check with the teacher first."* Collectively, these statements illustrate that teacher centrality shapes not only students' participation but also their strategic choices in speaking tasks.

Research question: How do these perceptions influence speaking strategy use?

Students' perceptions of teacher centrality directly influenced the strategies they employed during speaking tasks. Observation data and interviews indicated that 68% of students used imitation strategies, replicating phrases and structures demonstrated by teachers. Additionally, 63% relied on clarification strategies, frequently asking teachers for help when they could not recall vocabulary or expressions. About 60% adapted strategies taught by teachers into independent practice, demonstrating that teacher guidance not only directs immediate strategy use but also provides a foundation for autonomous application.

The in-depth interviews provided illustrative examples. S1 remarked, *"I imitate the phrases the teacher showed us in class,"* while S2 added, *"I ask the teacher when I forget a word or expression."* S3 emphasized, *"Teacher feedback guides how I plan my responses,"* and S4 explained, *"Even when practicing with peers, I try to use strategies my teacher suggested."* S5 reflected, *"I combine what the teacher taught with my own ideas, but I always start with their examples."* These statements show that students heavily rely on teacher modeling and feedback when selecting, applying, and adapting speaking strategies. The findings suggest that teacher centrality functions as both a guiding and mediating factor in strategy adoption, particularly in the context of Vietnamese EFL classrooms where hierarchical learning norms are influential.

Research question3: How does teacher centrality affect learner autonomy in speaking strategy use?

Although teacher centrality strongly influenced students' initial strategy use, findings indicate that structured teacher guidance can foster gradual autonomy. Approximately 55% of participants reported that after receiving teacher scaffolding, they were able to apply strategies

independently. However, 50% still preferred occasional confirmation from the teacher before fully executing strategies, and 45% felt confident experimenting with strategies once they had internalized teacher guidance. These findings demonstrate that autonomy develops progressively, beginning with teacher-led modeling and supported practice.

The interview excerpts further illustrate this gradual progression. S1 explained, “*After practicing with the teacher’s guidance, I try it myself,*” while S2 said, “*I still check with my teacher sometimes, but I can do it mostly on my own.*” S3 noted, “*The teacher shows us first, then I gradually try by myself,*” and S4 added, “*Teacher centrality helps me feel safe to experiment with strategies.*” S5 concluded, “*I notice that I am more independent now, but I always start with what the teacher taught.*” These responses indicate that teacher guidance and learner autonomy are not mutually exclusive; rather, centrality provides a scaffold for the development of independent strategy use, supporting previous research emphasizing the complementary relationship between structured guidance and learner autonomy (Littlewood, 1999; Le & Nguyen, 2020).

Overall Patterns and Summary

Across all three research questions, several key patterns emerged. First, students demonstrated a high dependence on teachers, valuing modeling, feedback, and correction. Second, teacher centrality directly shaped strategy adoption, with imitation, clarification, and adaptation strategies dominating students’ responses during speaking tasks. Third, while reliance on teachers was evident, learner autonomy gradually developed when teacher scaffolding was structured and consistent. Finally, the findings emphasize the role of cultural influence, particularly Confucian and high power-distance values, in reinforcing the centrality of teachers in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.

Overall, the results highlight a dynamic interplay between teacher centrality, strategy use, and emerging learner autonomy. Teachers serve as both guides and mediators, helping students select and apply strategies, while also supporting gradual independent practice. These findings provide empirical evidence for designing classroom activities that balance teacher guidance with opportunities for autonomous strategy use.

Discussion

Perceptions of Teacher Centrality in Vietnamese EFL Classrooms

The study found that Vietnamese students perceive teachers as highly central in their English learning, with 70% considering teachers essential and 65% relying on them for correction during speaking tasks. This finding confirms the influence of Confucian educational values and high power-distance cultural norms, which emphasize respect for authority and structured learning (Hofstede, 2001; Nguyen & Hall, 2016). Students reported feeling uncertain without teacher guidance, relying on modeling and feedback to structure their speaking activities.

These results are consistent with Chen (2004), Li and Zhang (2011), and Pham (2018), who note that in many Asian contexts, teachers are viewed as the primary source of knowledge and strategic guidance. The interview excerpts from S1–S5 illustrate that students internalize this teacher-centered culture, often beginning speaking tasks by imitating or following the teacher’s example. This strong centrality can provide students with confidence and direction, particularly in EFL classrooms where linguistic uncertainty may hinder participation.

Influence of Teacher Centrality on Speaking Strategy Use

The findings indicate that teacher centrality strongly influences strategy use. Students reported employing imitation, clarification, and adaptation strategies primarily through teacher guidance. About 68% imitated teacher modeling, 63% used clarification strategies by asking

the teacher, and 60% adapted strategies to independent practice. These results support Ellis (2003) and Cohen (2014), who emphasize the importance of teacher modeling, feedback, and explicit strategy instruction in promoting strategic competence.

The in-depth interviews further highlight the mechanism by which teacher centrality shapes strategy adoption. S1–S5 consistently described following teacher examples before attempting tasks independently, asking for clarification when unsure, and gradually integrating suggested strategies into practice. This pattern indicates that teacher guidance serves both as a scaffold for initial strategy use and as a mediating factor in strategy internalization. The findings align with Oxford's (1990) conceptualization of language learning strategies as techniques that can be taught, modeled, and adapted, demonstrating that teacher centrality directly affects which strategies students adopt and how effectively they apply them in speaking contexts.

Teacher Centrality and Learner Autonomy

While students heavily rely on teachers initially, the findings indicate that structured guidance can foster gradual learner autonomy. Approximately 55% of students reported applying strategies independently after teacher scaffolding, while others still sought confirmation but experimented cautiously. The interviews revealed that students perceive teacher centrality as supportive rather than restrictive; guidance provides a secure *foundation for experimenting with strategies* (S1: “After practicing with the teacher’s guidance, I try it myself,” S4: “Teacher centrality helps me feel safe to experiment with strategies”).

This finding supports Littlewood (1999) and Le & Nguyen (2020), who argue that teacher centrality does not necessarily inhibit autonomy when scaffolded appropriately. Instead, it provides learners with a framework from which independent application emerges. In the Vietnamese context, where cultural norms promote deference to authority, teacher-guided scaffolding appears particularly effective for developing both strategic competence and confidence in speaking.

Cultural Considerations and Implications

The study highlights the importance of cultural context in interpreting teacher centrality and strategy use. High power-distance values in Vietnamese classrooms encourage students to rely on teachers for both knowledge and strategic guidance. While Western models of learner autonomy often emphasize independence from the outset, this study suggests that in Confucian-influenced EFL classrooms, autonomy can emerge gradually through structured teacher support.

The findings imply that curriculum design and teaching methods should balance teacher guidance with opportunities for independent practice. For example, teachers might begin with modeling and explicit strategy instruction and gradually allow students to apply strategies in peer interactions or independent speaking tasks. This approach aligns with the observed progression in S1–S5, who initially relied on teachers but gradually incorporated strategies independently.

Contributions to Theory and Practice

This study contributes to the literature on teacher centrality and strategy use in EFL contexts by demonstrating the interplay between cultural beliefs, teacher guidance, and learner autonomy. It provides empirical evidence that teacher centrality, while reinforcing dependence initially, can also serve as a scaffold for developing strategic competence and autonomy.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that Vietnamese EFL teachers should:

4. Provide explicit modeling of speaking strategies.

5. Encourage clarification and adaptation to allow students to personalize strategies.
6. Gradually reduce centrality to promote learner autonomy while respecting cultural norms.

These implications are particularly relevant for curriculum designers, teacher educators, and EFL instructors in high power-distance contexts.

In summary, Vietnamese students perceive teachers as central figures in EFL classrooms, and this centrality strongly influences the adoption and application of speaking strategies. Structured teacher guidance fosters strategy use while supporting gradual learner autonomy. Cultural values, particularly respect for authority and hierarchical classroom norms, play a key role in shaping these dynamics. The study demonstrates that teacher centrality and learner autonomy are complementary, rather than opposing, factors in developing effective speaking strategies in Vietnamese EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study explored Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of teacher centrality and its influence on speaking strategy use. The findings indicate that teacher centrality plays a critical role in shaping how students adopt and apply strategies in speaking tasks. Cultural respect for teachers and high reliance on authority figures lead students to favor imitation, clarification, and guided strategy application as primary methods of learning. While students initially depend heavily on teacher modeling and feedback, they gradually integrate these strategies into independent practice, demonstrating a dynamic interplay between structured guidance and learner autonomy.

The study also highlights the importance of cultural context. Vietnamese students' reliance on teacher authority is closely tied to Confucian values and high power-distance educational norms, which shape classroom behaviors and strategy preferences. Structured teacher support does not hinder autonomy; rather, it scaffolds learners' development, enabling them to gradually apply strategies independently while maintaining confidence and accuracy in speaking tasks. Overall, teacher centrality and learner autonomy emerge as complementary elements in fostering effective speaking strategy use in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.

Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for EFL teaching and curriculum design in Vietnamese contexts. First, teachers should provide structured modeling and guided practice of speaking strategies while gradually encouraging students to apply strategies independently. Such scaffolding helps learners build confidence and competence before attempting tasks on their own. Second, curriculum design should strike a balance between teacher guidance and autonomous practice. Activities such as pair work, peer interaction, and independent speaking tasks can allow students to internalize strategies effectively while still benefiting from structured teacher support. Finally, teachers need to be culturally aware of students' perceptions of authority and teacher centrality. Understanding that high respect for teachers influences learners' strategy use enables educators to scaffold instruction in ways that both respect cultural norms and promote the gradual development of learner autonomy.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, it was conducted in a single university context, focusing on B1-level English majors at Can Tho University, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other Vietnamese EFL learners in different regions,

universities, or proficiency levels. Second, the study relied solely on qualitative interviews and limited classroom observation, without incorporating quantitative measures, which restricts the breadth of evidence available for analysis. Finally, the sample included only freshmen English majors in an online evening class, meaning the findings may not fully represent the experiences of learners in other classroom settings or course levels. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the role of teacher centrality in shaping speaking strategy use and learner autonomy.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should expand on the findings of this study in multiple ways. Comparative studies across different universities and regions could help determine whether the patterns observed at Can Tho University are consistent in other Vietnamese EFL contexts. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines interviews, classroom observation, and quantitative surveys could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teacher centrality affects strategy adoption and autonomy. In addition, longitudinal studies tracking learners' development over time would shed light on how teacher-guided scaffolding supports the gradual emergence of independent strategy use and speaking competence. Such studies would offer richer insights into the dynamic relationship between teacher centrality, cultural expectations, and learner autonomy in EFL classrooms.

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SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE AND THE IDEOLOGY OF NORMALITY IN “A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND”

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ABSTRACT

In Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find", violence operates not only through visible brutality but through the invisible structures that sustain it. Drawing on Slavoj Žižek's distinction between subjective, symbolic, and systemic violence, this study foregrounds systemic violence as the dominant force shaping the narrative. While the Misfit's murders represent subjective violence, they function primarily as a rupture that exposes a deeper ideological order. The grandmother's moral discourse and nostalgic attachment to the Old South reveal how symbolic violence normalizes exclusion and moral superiority. Beneath these layers lies systemic violence, an entrenched structure that renders inequality, hypocrisy, and spiritual emptiness part of everyday normality. From this perspective, the Misfit emerges less as the source of violence than as a symptom of a society already destabilized by its own ideological contradictions.

Keywords: Systemic violence, Objective violence, Symbolic order, Žižekian theory

Introduction

Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" is generally read as an aggressive and abrupt work featuring violent figures. However, the story ultimately reveals a different dimension of violence: it shows not the visible violence itself, but the conditions that produce and sustain it. Readers are thus encouraged to consider the deeper ideological and structural implications of violence, including its political dimensions. From a Žižekian perspective, this concept must be approached differently, as Slavoj Žižek remains one of the most influential contemporary thinkers in critical theory. This study, therefore, proposes a shift in perspective by drawing on his distinction between subjective, symbolic, and systemic violence. Most crucially, systemic violence designates the often invisible, normalized structures that sustain inequality, exclusion, and ideological control. Unlike subjective violence, which appears as a disruption of order, systemic violence is embedded within what is perceived as order itself. Drawing on Slavoj Žižek's distinction between subjective, symbolic, and systemic violence, this study argues that systemic violence constitutes the primary determining force in the text.

Critics have approached "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" from a variety of perspectives, often foregrounding its moral, theological, and social dimensions. For instance, Ralph C. Wood interprets violence in O'Connor as a vehicle for divine grace, suggesting that the

grandmother's final moment constitutes a form of spiritual recognition (Wood, 2004: 38-41). In this reading, violence functions not merely as destruction but as a necessary condition for moral awakening. Building on this perspective, Robert H. Brinkmeyer shifts the focus toward moral ambiguity, arguing that the story destabilizes fixed ethical categories. According to Brinkmeyer, the Misfit is not simply a figure of evil, but one who exposes the fragility of conventional belief systems and the limits of inherited moral frameworks (Brinkmeyer, 1989: 150-152). This approach complicates the binary opposition between "good" and "bad" that the grandmother persistently relies on. At the same time, critics such as Susan Srigley emphasize the social and cultural dimensions of the narrative. Srigley argues that the grandmother's identity is shaped by the performative codes of Southern "ladyhood," which reinforce hierarchical distinctions based on class, race, and respectability (Srigley, 2004: 77-80). From this perspective, the grandmother's moral discourse is not neutral, but deeply embedded in a historically constructed system of exclusion. While these approaches provide valuable insights into the story's theological, ethical, and social dimensions, they tend to focus primarily on moments of visible violence or individual moral realization. However, such a focus risks overlooking the broader structures that make these moments possible. It is precisely at this point that a Žižekian framework becomes particularly productive.

As a central character in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find", the Misfit is an escaped convict whose philosophical reflections on morality, faith, and justice complicate his role as a mere criminal. In this context, the murders committed by the Misfit should not be understood merely as the product of an individual deviation; rather, they must be interpreted as a symptom of an already decayed social order. The story exposes forms of violence rendered invisible within the framework of everyday normality, thereby interrogating how the notion of the "normal" is ideologically constructed. The grandmother's insistence on categories such as "good" and "bad," her nostalgic attachment to the Old South, and her reliance on superficial moral judgments all point to a symbolic order that normalizes hierarchy and exclusion. As Žižek argues, the most insidious form of violence is not the one that shocks us, but the one that remains unnoticed precisely because it is experienced as normal (Žižek, 2008: 1-2). In this sense, the story reveals how violence is not an external intrusion into an otherwise stable social world, but an internal feature of that world. The family's seemingly ordinary road trip is already structured by ideological assumptions, affective blindness, and moral inconsistency. The grandmother's casual racism, her aestheticization of poverty, and her belief in inherited "goodness" all function as mechanisms through which systemic violence is reproduced at the level of everyday life. The Misfit emerges less as a deviant outsider than as a symptom of a society already destabilized by its own contradictions. His presence does not introduce violence into the narrative; rather, it makes visible what has been there all along. By foregrounding systemic violence as the dominant force shaping the story, this study aims to demonstrate that "*A Good Man Is Hard to Find*" offers not merely a portrayal of individual evil but a profound critique of the ideological structures that sustain the illusion of moral normality.

Symbolic and Systemic Violence: Ideology, Language, and the Production of Normality

While subjective violence in the story appears most visibly through the Misfit's actions, it is not the most decisive form of violence shaping the narrative. Rather, as Slavoj Žižek argues, the most pervasive and insidious forms of violence are those that operate through language, ideology, and normalized social structures (Žižek, 2008: 1-2). In "A Good Man Is Hard to Find", these forms emerge most clearly through the grandmother's discourse and the seemingly ordinary social world the characters inhabit. The grandmother's language is saturated with implicit hierarchies that reflect deeply internalized social and cultural codes. Her casual remarks reveal not only personal prejudice but also a broader symbolic order that normalizes

exclusion. For instance, when she encounters a Black child, she reduces the moment to an aesthetic object, remarking, “Wouldn’t that make a picture?” (O’Connor, 1953: 2). This statement is significant not because of overt aggression, but because of its normalization. The child is not recognized as a subject, but as an image—an object to be framed, consumed, and distanced. In Žižekian terms, this constitutes symbolic violence: a form of violence embedded in language that structures perception itself.

The grandmother’s insistence on moral categories such as “good” and “bad” reflects a deeply ideological framework. Her claim that she can identify a “good man” based on appearance and background, “You don’t look a bit like you have common blood,” reveals how morality is conflated with class, lineage, and cultural identity (O’Connor, 1953: 8). Here, language does not merely describe reality; it actively produces a hierarchical worldview in which value is unevenly distributed. As Susan Srigley suggests, such attitudes are closely tied to the performative codes of Southern “ladyhood,” which reinforce distinctions based on race, class, and respectability (Srigley, 2004: 77-80).

Beyond individual discourse, the story also presents a broader social environment shaped by systemic violence. This is evident in the pervasive sense of moral decline and distrust expressed by characters such as Red Sammy, who remarks, “A good man is hard to find... Everything is getting terrible” (O’Connor, 1953: 4). This statement reflects a world in which ethical coherence has already eroded. However, what is crucial is that this condition is not experienced as a crisis, but as a normalized state of affairs. The characters do not question the structures that produce this reality; instead, they accept it as inevitable. In this sense, systemic violence operates as the invisible foundation of the narrative. It manifests not through isolated acts, but through everyday assumptions, inherited beliefs, and unexamined social norms. The family’s road trip itself, seemingly mundane and uneventful, is structured by these ideological conditions. Their interactions are marked by superficiality, miscommunication, and moral inconsistency, all of which contribute to a world in which violence is already embedded.

The grandmother’s discourse and the broader social context reveal that violence in the story is not an external disruption, but an internal condition of normality. The Misfit’s actions do not introduce violence into an otherwise stable world; rather, they expose the violence that has been operating all along at the level of language, ideology, and social structure. This dynamic can also be understood in relation to O’Connor’s broader aesthetic strategy. As critics have noted, violence in her fiction is not merely gratuitous but serves a revelatory function. John W. Wilson argues that O’Connor deliberately employs extreme and shocking situations in order to expose what readers have come to perceive as normal (Wilson, 2012: 126). In this sense, violence operates as a disruptive force that makes visible the distortions already embedded within everyday life. Rather than introducing something new, it reveals what has been normalized and rendered invisible. This perspective reinforces the argument that the Misfit’s actions do not constitute the origin of violence in the story, but rather function as a moment of exposure that brings underlying ideological structures to the surface. Thus, when read through a Žižekian lens, “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” ultimately shifts the focus from visible brutality to the invisible mechanisms that sustain it. The story demonstrates that the most dangerous form of violence is not the one that shocks, but the one that remains unnoticed precisely because it is embedded in what is perceived as normal.

Subjective Violence: The Misfit as Visible Disruption

Within Slavoj Žižek’s theoretical framework, subjective violence refers to direct, observable acts of physical aggression carried out by a clearly identifiable agent (Žižek, 2008). In “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”, this form of violence is most visibly embodied in the figure of the Misfit, whose actions appear to constitute the central source of brutality within the

narrative. The Misfit's entrance marks a decisive shift from latent tension to explicit violence. What initially appears as a distant threat becomes an immediate and irreversible reality with the execution of the family. However, the significance of this violence extends beyond its physical dimension. The Misfit's discourse reveals that his actions are underpinned by a deeper philosophical and existential crisis. His statement, "No pleasure but meanness," encapsulates a worldview in which violence is not merely instrumental but constitutive of existence itself (O'Connor, 1953: 10). At the same time, the Misfit articulates a profound disjunction between action and meaning, particularly in relation to justice and punishment. As he remarks, "I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment," thereby exposing the collapse of any stable correspondence between crime and consequence (O'Connor, 1953: 9).

From a Žižekian perspective, however, the analytical focus should not remain on the immediacy of these violent acts. As Žižek argues, subjective violence often functions as a visible disturbance that obscures the deeper, systemic conditions that produce it (Žižek, 2008: 1-2). In this sense, the Misfit's violence should not be understood as the origin of disorder within the narrative, but rather as a rupture that renders an already unstable social reality perceptible. The Misfit cannot be reduced to a figure of individual deviance or moral failure. Instead, his actions must be read as symptomatic of a broader ideological and structural crisis. His violence does not introduce chaos into an otherwise coherent world; rather, it exposes the incoherence that has been present all along. Thus, subjective violence in the story operates not as an endpoint, but as a critical moment of revelation, making visible the underlying structures that sustain the illusion of normality. This ideological dimension of violence becomes clearer when considered in relation to the construction of meaning itself. As Slavoj Žižek argues, meaning is not discovered but produced retroactively through interpretation (Žižek, 1992: 56). In this sense, what appears as truth is not given, but constructed after the fact. A similar logic applies to literary narratives, where events acquire coherence only through narration. As Sarah Kruse notes, "symptoms are meaningless traces... their meaning is not discovered... but constructed retroactively" (Kruse, 2010: 1). From this perspective, the grandmother's moral judgments do not reflect an objective ethical order, but rather function as ideological constructions that impose coherence on an unstable reality. Thus, symbolic and systemic violence operate not only through discourse, but through the very processes by which meaning is produced and stabilized.

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**SEIZING THE DAY AGAINST THE GRAIN OF HISTORY: A NEW HISTORICIST
READING OF POWER, RESISTANCE, AND SUBJECTIVITY IN *DEAD POETS
SOCIETY***

**TARİHİN AKIŞINA KARŞI ANI YAŞAMAK: ÖLÜ OZANLAR DERNEĞİ'NDE
İKTİDAR, DİRENİŞ VE ÖZNELEŞME ÜZERİNE YENİ TARİHSELÇİ BİR OKUMA**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the *Dead Poets Society* using the New Historicist literary theory. The connection between literary works and history will be emphasized, and the back ground of the actions mentioned in the text will be examined. Certain scenes from the book will be explained using the theories of important figures such as Foucault and Gramsci. For a total of seven scenes, quotations from the book and the characters' behaviors will be linked to the historical, cultural, and traditional norms of society. The fact that literature can exist without history, but remains incomplete, will be demonstrated in each chapter. Although the story appears to revolve around a school, teacher, and student triangle, its deep connection to history and political ideologies will be highlighted using various scenes from the book. Finally, the social and historical contexts behind every decision made by individuals in society will be explained with examples.

Keywords: New Historicism, *Dead Poets Society*, sociality, Foucault, Gramsci, individuality, 1950s America, cultur

Özet

Bu çalışma, *Ölü Ozanlar Derneği*'ni Yeni Tarihselcilik edebiyat kuramını kullanarak açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Edebi eserler ile tarih arasındaki bağlantı vurgulanacak ve metinde bahsedilen olayların arka planı incelenecektir. Kitaptan bazı sahneler, Foucault ve Gramsci gibi önemli isimlerin kuramları kullanılarak açıklanacaktır. Toplam yedi sahne için, kitaptan alıntılar ve karakterlerin davranışları, toplumun tarihsel, kültürel ve geleneksel normlarıyla ilişkilendirilecektir. Edebiyatın tarih olmadan da var olabileceği ancak eksik kalabileceği gerçeği her bölümde gösterilecektir. Hikaye bir okul, öğretmen ve öğrenci üçgeni etrafında dönüyor gibi görünse de kitabın çeşitli sahneleri kullanılarak tarih ve siyasi ideolojilerle olan derin bağlantısı vurgulanacaktır. Son olarak, toplumdaki bireylerin aldığı her kararın ardındaki sosyal ve tarihsel bağlamlar örneklerle açıklanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni Tarihselcilik, *Ölü Ozanlar Derneği*, Foucault, Gramsci, bireyselcilik, 1950'ler Amerika'sı, kültür

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a discipline that delves deeply into society, culture, and values, rather than focusing solely on individual skills. It reveals the subtle details of society and culture, sometimes integrating these details with history, psychology, sociology and other scientific fields. Each literary work demonstrates the prevailing social structure and ideological framework of the period in which it was written, through a specific event. In this way, literature becomes not only an aesthetic realm but also the most valuable source and reference point, bearing witness to all times. Furthermore, it produces works catering to the reading tastes of every individual in society through diverse narrative forms that appeal to a wide audience. Greenblatt observes that "literature... functions as a part of the system of social and cultural control" (Greenblatt, 1980, p. 6). He positions *Dead Poets Society* as both product and summary of 1950s ideological control. Greenblatt's foundational desire "to speak with the dead" presents this New Historicist analysis of *Dead Poets Society* as a dialogue between 1950s students and historical literary voices.

New Historicism promotes the idea that history is not and should not be an objective witness. Although it is preserved on bookshelves, it sometimes loses its importance because it does nothing but giving dates. History is a field unearthed under the light of power relations which are formed by political developments. Here, nobody can claim that history and literature are different from each other. Instead of having ideas about their irrelevance, their intertwined narrative and their promotions to each other should be highlighted. Michel Foucault's theories on knowledge, power and politic have unique impacts on New Historicism. For Foucault, power creates oppression and shapes subjectifications as well as it brings knowledge together. That is why, it will not be wrong to say that history and culture within they live and reside are among core elements building people's characters and thoughts.

In light of this theoretical framework, *Dead Poets Society* ought to be investigated with a period focused approach, given that it gives clues about how people deal with conservative America of 1950s to ensure their lives. Audiences usually watch movies adapted from book but for *Dead Poets Society* it is otherwise. The book was inspired by the movie and it tells students' pursuit of happiness and freedom. On the other hand, from a New Historic view, the evolution of individuals while running after their desires is tied to family, religion, social structure and definitely educational system of the time. Welton Academy's traditional values (Tradition, Honor, Discipline, and Excellence) are inseperetable parts of their education. These values are also parts of thoughts of society and thus the Academy is appreciated by society too.

For example, Neil Perry's interest in art and theater goes beyond a personal interest. This attitude, contrasting with the moral, cultural, and social expectations that dominated the family structure of the time, created barriers to loving theater and art. On the other hand, Todd Anderson is interested in poetry. Loving or being interested in poetry can be seen as a reflection of being misunderstood within society. At this point, poetry manages to be a different language that expresses emotions and thoughts, but in 1950s America, this language cannot be spoken; it is suppressed. Therefore, the young people's search for happiness and freedom in *Dead Poets Society* is not viewed as innocently as they see it, because there are also historically accepted ideological elements that transcend their understanding. These elements also contain cultural values and reject difference.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the work through the lens of New Historicism literary theory and to analyze scenes that can be better understood within their historical context. The study will show that the work also has a back ground by examining how the scenes in the work clash with the political and cultural norms of 1950s America. The purpose of the selected scenes is to demonstrate how historical, social, and literary aspects can be better explained when considered together. Therefore, the events presented in these scenes, which support the aim of this study, will be explained using the theory of New Historicism.

“Carpe Diem”: An Alternative Discourse Within Ideological Confinement

The Carpe Diem scene is a pivotal breaking point in the work, because it gives readers the possibility to get clues to show Keating’s messages related to past and naturally history. His sentences are in the aim of transmitting the responsibilities of students which must be fulfilled. Unless they do their responsibilities, nobody will help them in their lives. Keating's revolutionary exhortation, "Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary" (Kleinbaum, 1989, p. 29), conjures up Foucault's subjectivation processes. The teacher himself is a type of barrier getting stronger against both oppressive and conservative community.

New Historicism does not strip any work of its historical and cultural details, because when history and culture are separated, only the event remains and loses its comprehensibility. On the contrary, it focuses on explaining the connection between these two important aspects of the work. From the perspective of New Historicism, the Carpe Diem scene allows the reader to evaluate all the thought patterns of society at the time in question. Keating's emphasis on "Carpe Diem" naturally causes confusion in these minds, which can be considered immature adolescents. The fact that one should live in the moment is not something that can be easily grasped during adolescence and youth. However, this emphasis also initiates a tradition of questioning among the students, which can be considered a negative aspect contrary to the era.

Foucault's understanding of power is quite effective in explaining this scene. Power is much more than just a term that creates oppression; it is a phenomenon that influences how and where every individual in society thinks and says what. Keating, by virtue of his profession, uses effective language to help his students understand this complex issue, and he quickly becomes a hero for each of them. Therefore, the advice "Carpe Diem" is important not for students to know what they should think, but for them to know what thinking is.

The defining characteristic of this scene, affecting the students, is that it makes the complex narrative more understandable. While their teacher's words broaden the children's perspectives on life, the prevailing ideologies of the time attempt to close those windows. The difficulties Neil Perry faces in pursuing his goals reveal that the force trying to close these windows is social and familial factors. Neil's struggle starkly demonstrates that personal struggle cannot be independent of societal contexts.

In conclusion, the Carpe Diem scene shows a significant relationship between literature and history. Keating, as a literature teacher, knows his words contradict societal norms, yet he does not feel it is right to avoid enlightening his students. Therefore, the scene emphasizes the beauty of the past, rather than the contrast between ideologies, and highlighting its importance without considering Neohistoricism would be inaccurate.

Following the Carpe Diem moment, the story's unconventional nature begins to gain strength. Because this mantra, in a way, violates the school administration's principles, from a Neohistoric perspective, we can understand that it has added a more intense dimension to the ideological conflict. Because where there is conflict, more information and debate are needed, and historical information is essential in any ideological debate. The Inauguration Ceremony

scene, emphasizing discipline and hierarchy in a military setting, also plays a key role in understanding the prevailing ideas in 1950s America. Viewed through the lens of New Historicism, this scene allows the reader to analyze the development and outcome of events.

Opening Ceremony: The Historical Scene of Discipline and Discourse

The opening ceremony scene at the school, as described in the book, illustrates the academy's deep attachment to its traditions and culture, and its unwavering commitment to upholding them no matter what. In this context, we can understand that the school aims not to cultivate free individuals, but rather individuals who value their principles. This, in turn, reveals the challenges a society might face. For in an environment where everyone shares the same thoughts and actions, differences dissolve, foreshadowing failure. **Foucault's insight that "discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power..."** (Foucault, 1995, p. 170). **This quotation demonstrates that Welton's Opening Ceremony is a New Historicism's site of subject production, because it includes seeds of history and it is open to debate the importance of rules accepted by both parents and educators.**

This scene aligns with Foucault's concept of a disciplinary society because students need to be controlled with similar principles to convince them that they are always doing the right thing. These constantly reiterated principles ensure that children understand them. Even the repetition of a single sentence affects the behavior of each individual. For example, constantly telling a student that they are diligent might alienate them from their studies because the child begins to feel self-sufficient. A similar situation exists in this scene. The emphasis on historical achievements, traditions, and discipline is thought to convince students that they will succeed. From this perspective, the ceremony can be considered quite logical, educational, and critical for the continuation of power across generations. However, nothing changes the fact that such actions are oppressive. Even though they are oppressive, individual resistance to these principles is inevitable. The more rules there are, the more likely it is that individuals will resist them.

On the other hand, it would not be logical to say that every resistor will succeed. Keating's discourse and influence on students can be considered a rare example of success achieved among a minority. The school's rules aren't limited to the school grounds; they also affect every student's life outside the school. Every mind that reads and questions, like Keating, is curious to try different paths. As different paths are explored, disciplinary boundaries are violated. From a New Historic perspective, resisting this oppression can move society forward, reshaping it. Therefore, the opening ceremony, in addition to being considered a military arena, is also a turning point for each individual to find themselves.

The opening ceremony is important for understanding the history of both the school and society. The mention of past successful students' names, the references made to them, and their being considered as examples demonstrate that the school also has a history and acts accordingly. The former students mentioned in this scene can actually be symbolized as the school's strength. There is nothing more natural than an institution recounting the successes it has facilitated, but not everyone has to be the same as those who came before. The fact that the same things are said to every student is proof that the school also has an ideology. However, students like Keating, who might stand out, should also be considered. If this is ignored and the emphasis is placed on everyone being the same, conflicts are quite natural.

Keating, a former student who became a teacher at this school, is a beacon of hope for students who see themselves as different. This oppressive approach towards students who are not yet adults diminishes their respect for their parents and even their teachers. Therefore, Keating encourages students to act according to their individual freedoms. Neil's passion for art contrasts sharply with his family's desire for him to become a doctor. Because his family is also

part of that society, a young boy's goals are hampered by societal barriers, some of which are constructed at the opening ceremony. Since it's impossible for everyone to have the same level of dedication, expectations can collide with reality and disappear. Therefore, Neil's secret involvement in theatre shows that he challenges the historical power structures of the school, his family, and society. This aspect makes him a unique example of how historical habits are not always correct.

Neil's Participation in the Play: The Conflict of Individual Desire with Historical Barriers

Neil Perry's involvement in the play determines the story's course. His rejection of his family and school's principles, choosing his own individual freedom, is a rebellion against circumstances. Neil's triumphant confession, "For the first time in my whole life, I know what I want" (Kleinbaum, 1989, p. 67). This quote conjures up Gramsci's counter-hegemonic breakthrough against 1950s patriarchal family domination. Neil makes a significant decision to shape his own life through his own choices by joining the theater. The fact that this goes against expectations is not an easy situation for a young man of that age to calculate.

New Historicism, a literary theory, also examines every individual in society, their decisions, and experiences through the lens of historical power relations. Because the theory focuses on power relations, Neil's participation in the play transcends the perception of a decision an individual makes for their own life. It's also important to focus on the impact of expectations, independent of the decisions made. Neil's unwavering pursuit of his goals, his risking his family's expectations, and even the intimidation he faces from his friends, all testify to his courage. This courage, even if it carries the potential for rejection by society, is invaluable for acting on free thought. His attempted suicide at the end can also be seen as a product of his own freedom. In this section, readers will read more than just about a student who values his freedom and stands by his decisions.

This scene also highlights Foucault's relationship between power and resistance. Wherever power, and therefore oppression, is constantly present, there may be a degree of acceptance. However, a young student's attempt to break free from this oppression by pursuing his own goals deserves admiration. From a New Historic perspective, it can also be considered an action that can serve as an example for future generations. The play was staged in a theater, but its impact was felt throughout society. The choice a high school student aspires to makes the values of a society, a family, and even a school with a history as significant as the society itself, open to questioning.

At the same time, this scene presents the public's adherence to historical norms in a different way during the period in which the work was written. In 1950s America, thanks to advancements in healthcare, every individual wanted their child to have a profession in that field. With traditional professions no longer in high regard, many people strived to have a say in their child's life. At this point, the impact of education on the family structure is clearly felt.

Dead Poets Society Meetings: Micro-Resistance and Discourse Space

The Dead Poets Society meetings are held in the cave taking place in a forest. They come together and read poetries there. These meetings have a unique importance, now that they bring construct a bridge between past, present and future. Sometimes they have conflicts about the poet. At the first glance, it seems like something negative. However, that students have different ideas and discussions improves their intellectual back ground. **Gramsci's assertion that "the philosophy of praxis is consciousness full of contradictions"** (Gramsci, 1971, p. 333). **Here, Gramsci's sentences are helpful to define Dead Poets meetings as a place where different ideas combine and where friendship is front albeit various thoughts.**

Considering America in the 1950s, students' gatherings cause so many different conflicts. From a New Historic perspective, that students make their own sentences by listening the poem requires lots of information both for literature, history and sociology. Perhaps, students do not want to have meetings because they develop themselves but because they have fun and get far away from their academy which has a lot of mandatories on children. In the period of Cold War, nothing a society has can be questioned because the idea highlighting that everything is correct and everyone has to obey was common. Therefore, instead of learning how to criticize and make the life better, students were taught to live even without elaborating the rules. New Historicism provides readers to combine historical events to daily life events and helps to investigate the events with a real perspective. Because, events basing on history tend to be understood easier. Welton School resembles America witnessing Cold War period, given that none of the principals are opened to discuss and everyone is supposed to follow them. During their meetings, students begin to learn how to argue via symbol poets' important poems. Literature makes their lives more meaningful.

Apart from the ideological developments, the place of meetings is quite crucial. Throughout the history, almost each development has roots coming from quiet places. In the places where people see, it is not possible to step forward in terms of development. That is why, their gatherings in the cave is also important for New Historicism, because they even remind readers Plato's Cave theory. Students, with the help of Keating, begin to judge the current events. Actually, they got this suggestions from their teachers. They create a free place to make free sentences. They create their own space.

On the other hand, the place where they feel their freedom is dangerous for their future. Although students desire to do good things, their innocent purposes bump into the the hars blocks. Therefore, when they hit the blocks, they cannot decide what to do and what not to do. For example, Neil always aims to join the play, however, his family does not support him. He cannot overcome his obstacles and unfortunately he suicides.

Neil's Suicide: The Ultimate Domination of Historical Structure Over Subjectivity

Neil Perry's suicide makes everybody sad but it should not be thought only a death. It is the ramification of his family's and his society's domination on young people. People sometimes skip takin into consideration the bad results. They tend to apply the things that are only beneficial for the society. The death of Neil is closely tied to cultural heritage. Families want to shape their kids' lives. Their desires are shaped by their history.

Here Montrose's idea related to the combination of history and literature will be necessary to understand the tragedy better. Montrose's principle that "what matters... is the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (Montrose, 1985, p. 24) can help audiences to receive that the society, the academy, the history of the society and the society itself are responsible for the death. With the help of New Historicism, we can perceive that the past of the society caused tragedy.

The System's Effort to Heal Its Own Wounds: Keating as Scapegoat

The fact that school tries to look for the reason of the death means that Welton Academy do not keep itself responsible. However, even their principles are constructed by the norms of society. Their indifferent attitudes while looking for the reason is a clear evident that they do not get their ruling system as a wrong and dangerous fact. According to Foucault, "power operates through a reticular organization... and every power relationship has a form of

resistance" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, 1990, p. 95). Instead of revising their principles, they are accusing of John Keating. This shows how indifferent the academy and the teachers are. When the event is analyzed by the lens of New Historicism, it can be promoted that the adherence to the cultural and traditional thoughts is far more important than the life of a young student.

John Keating left school because of the fact that he could not bear the bullying he exposed to. People blamed him, since they thought that he compelled Neil to join the play. However, he just attempted to teach children the importance of following their dreams. His impact on his students was felt with a very famous call from Walt Whitman's *O Captain! My Captain!*

The Moment of Wordless Resistance: "O Captain! My Captain!"

In the final moment, each student imitates their teacher to make him happy. Keating would study and live in the same place with them. He remembered his youthhood there and he tried to guide his students. A teacher's biggest dream is to see his/her students making their dreams true. An academy finished a teacher's job and they lost a teacher loved by his students. Montrose's has a good statement which is proper for this scene, "A social being against the world is a social being against history," (Montrose, 1985, p. 25). Audiences can understand that Keating's effect is more than Welton Academy.

From a New Historicist perspective, this scene demonstrates that history will repeat itself in different situations but with same effect. Students climbed on the desks cried like without being aware of history, nobody can be successful for their future. They once again showed that characters may be different but the idea is same and nobody can prevent the happenings.

CONCLUSION

Dead Poets Society is a book adapted by a movie. It includes so much elements to analyze the book with New Historicism. Readers read a story of 1950s America. There is a conservative worldview during that time and each value of both society and academy is explained under the light of New Historicism. School's important traditional principals base on its history and school administration's attitudes against the students stem from their adherence to their history. Via *Dead Poets Society*, audiences can get the importance of individual freedom. An old student of the school becomes teacher there. Therefore he can direct students with his experiences. The death of a student who never gives up running after his pleasure symbolizes the rigid yet wrong rules of the school. Albeit problems and bad results, neither school, family nor society blames itself. Instead they are accusing of a successful teacher. With New Historicism, we can deter to blame people. We begin to base every kind of thoughts to their past. Therefore, *Dead Poets Society* is a concrete evidence of rules made by history as well as it is a story building future under the light of past.

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POWER, EDUCATION, AND SOCIALIZATION IN *THE BEST MAN* AND *THE EDUCATION OF POPO*

***THE BEST MAN* VE *THE EDUCATION OF POPO* ADLI ESERLERDE GÜÇ, EĞİTİM VE SOSYALLEŞME**

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ABSTRACT

*This article aims to compare María Cristina Mena's narrative, *The Education of Popo*, with Gore Vidal's play, *The Best Man*. The comparison is examined within the framework of the concepts of socialization, education, and power. The study argues that education and socialization are not innocent processes that integrate the individual into society. It attempts to highlight that these terms are actually structures intertwined with ideological and symbolic power relations. In Mena's text, education leads to the shaping of the child within a social and cultural context. On the other hand, in Vidal's play, socialization and education are based on persuading society in the political arena. The article explains the individual's adaptation to power structures and the social environment, taking environmental factors into account. Thanks to the possibilities that literature offers the reader through these terms, the relationships between them are clearly explained.*

Keywords: *Socialization, Education, Power, Ideology, Ethical Responsibility, Cultural Conformity, María Cristina Mena, Gore Vidal*

Öz

*Bu makale, María Cristina Mena'nın *The Education of Popo* adlı anlatısını Gore Vidal'ın *The Best Man* adlı oyunuyla karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Karşılaştırma, sosyalleşme, eğitim ve güç kavramları çerçevesinde incelenmektedir. Çalışma, eğitim ve sosyalleşmenin bireyi topluma entegre eden masum süreçler olmadığını savunmaktadır. Bu terimlerin aslında ideolojik ve sembolik güç ilişkileriyle iç içe geçmiş yapılar olduğunu vurgulamaya çalışmaktadır. Mena'nın metninde eğitim, çocuğun sosyal ve kültürel bir bağlamda şekillenmesine yol açarken, Vidal'ın oyununda sosyalleşme ve eğitim, siyasi arenada toplumu ikna etmeye dayanmaktadır. Makale, çevresel faktörleri de dikkate alarak, bireyin güç yapılarına ve sosyal çevreye uyumunu açıklamaktadır. Edebiyatın okuyucuya bu terimler aracılığıyla sunduğu olanaklar sayesinde, aralarındaki ilişkiler açıkça açıklanmaktadır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sosyalizasyon, Eđitim, G¼¼, İdeoloji, Etik Sorumluluk, K¼¼lt¼¼rel Uyum, Maria Cristina Mena, Gore Vidal*

Introduction

Aiming to have power can be considered as one of the purposes of living better because people usually believe that without being strong both physically and economically it is not possible to step forward. In a way, it is understandable given that power is necessary to make decisions but it is not the only need for humanity. As in the all fields of life and concepts, ways of handling power depends on people, their ages, need, environment and etc. Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* play presents a story of two men trying to obtain power by politics. It is quite common that politics utter their ideologies in order to be advocated by the in which they live. However, their goal is not merely to do the things that can be beneficial for the society it is also to become powerful. This power consists of people's way of living and getting more crowded. In the life, people had better have an ideology because all the things that they do is in accordance with their perspectives. That is why, there may be some other people who desire to rule them. Gore Vidal's play tells a story of politic world.

The play takes place during a national convention of an American political party to select its presidential nominee. Two powerful senators are candidates: the idealistic and principled William Russell and the ambitious and ruthless Joseph Cantwell. Russell believes in the preservation of morality in politics and is unwilling to resort to dirty tactics to undermine his opponent. Cantwell, however, does not hesitate to use blackmail, smear campaigns, and fear-mongering to win. The media, intra-party negotiations, and vested interests further complicate the process. As the convention progresses, it becomes clear that the nomination race is not only a political test but also a moral one. In the end, the question left to the audience is not so much who wins the presidency, but who is the "best man." This play makes it possible to delve into how the lives of people depend on their purpose to have power.

On the other hand, being improved in terms of intellectual background, being aware of cultural values and morals provide a different way to handle power. In this context, the education unearths its importance, now that education differs from society to society. It includes norms of society and aims to ward off possible bad situations. Today, a valuable behaviour for Eastern countries may be received as unnecessary. Values, morals and other crucial concepts are parts of education. Therefore, without having deep information about those facts, it will be a dream to be an intellectual. Gender also plays a significant role in following the path of power. The development of boys and the growing girls may have different ramifications. Considering the sex, education is a pivotal point for power. What is more, it ought to begin in the very early period of life. Maria Cristina Mena's *The Education of Popo* is an example of this consideration. It is a story of a child growing up with cultural moral and ideology as well as being educated by his family's values.

Popo is a sensitive Mexican boy who feels pity for animals, cries, and fears violence. His family, especially his mother, finds this sensitivity unsuitable for a boy. Therefore, Popo is sent to live with his stern uncle to "learn manhood." His uncle takes Popo to bullfights, attempting to normalize cruelty. Popo cannot bear to see the bull suffer and experiences fear and sadness. However, the adults see his compassion as weakness. The story shows how Popo's innocence is compromised by being forced to witness violence, leaving the reader to question whether such "training" is truly necessary.

Education is among the most valuable fields of life. Albeit differences, it is always welcomed in all societies. Decisions, sentences even mistakes made by educated people may

be accepted by everyone. The reason behind this fact is that people tend to believe that educated ones can have various opinions and they can be supported. Even though they are not accepted, they are more likely to be appreciated. When it comes to reasons of having education, people witness more different purposes and the purposes will change for the sake of favours. For example, a child like Popo does not have any other options but for adapting the society because he has to live with that society. As John Dewey highlights in his book emphasizing clues about education “*It is a familiar fact that the young of the higher animals and especially the human young, have to learn to utilize their instinctive reactions*” (Dewey, 1916, p. 44). *What is one of the most important aspects for all living creatures is to gain the ability to adapt their habitat and environment. Therefore, Popo sometimes faces abandoning his habits in that they are not welcomed by his environment. Here, the significance of societal norms such as acting according to the rules of genders. In spite of the fact that those norms or expected behaviours are not selected by children, they may have to leave them. It is not the matter whether they like doing or not, it is the life style that commonly has been accepted by all previous ancestors.*

However, Russell and Cantwell are two adults passed the societal facts. The more people reside in a shape, the more they begin to forget questioning its truths. On the other hand, sometimes instead of accepting it, they search for alternatives changing the society’s way of looking the world. In this context, the role of politic comes out since politician ones are responsible for creating a more desirable environment. Although they sometimes fail fulfilling their charges, the mantra of ruling community bases on the fact that everyone had better live equally. Having willing to be a presidential nominee does not mean that people can hurt one another. At this point, the role of education makes itself felt. Education contains ways teaching how to make strategies for purposes. Both nominees attempt to prove themselves but they have different approaches. Style of education determines the attitudes. When it comes to adults, although they do not have a formal education period anymore, they learn by their experiences and it is truly the evident revealing the real characters of people. Behaving according to favours sometimes can cause losing the identity. It is widespread especially in politic. Like Rochefoucauld writes “*We become so accustomed to disguise ourselves to others that at last we are disguised to ourselves*” (Rochefoucauld, 1999, pp. 82-84).

Socialization is the period in which people look for opportunities to adapt the society’s norms, cultures and religious. It is necessary to be an individual because the absence of socialization brings about alienation and it is not possible have dreams about future when nobody is around. That process pivotal as it comprises concepts shaping identities. Socialization, additionally, does not only appear during childhood it also can be seen in adulthood. Family structure gives clues about the socialization and that process during childhood includes learning about environment. For instance, in *The Education of Popo*, readers follow a story of child experiencing family morals as wells as society’s culture.

After childhood, people commence to practice the things that they have learned. In this context, individuals begin to communicate and dialogues make it possible to be aware of the environment better. Furthermore, by having relationships via speeches, people learn how to improve their ties both with their families and their cultures. People also develop their actions while blending with social norms. In *The Best Man*, Russel and Cutwell present their experiences gained during their childhood. Although they are in the same party, they are rivals and their style of competing is the indication of their understanding of socialization. Finally, socialization plays a crucial role in understanding people.

This study will delve into *The Education of Popo* and *The Best Man* books under the light of concepts like power, education and socialization. Both works include clues about them and they are seen differently. All expectations take shape according to character’s decisions considering social structure. The characters’ reactions to events and the echo of their attitudes

will be probed. Quotations from important figures will be helpful to understand reasons of characters' choices.

Socialization, education and power: *The Best Man* and *The Education of Popo*

Socialization and education periods have fundamental functions to probe the communication between individual and the society. Also, they contain some basic points in which characters construct their power relations. Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* play and María Cristina Mena's *The Education of Popo* short story demonstrate those period's reflections, although they are not same literary works. While education in *The Education of Popo* can be considered as period built on social norms and creating an identity, in Vidal's play readers follow education in politic area and in politic, education functions as promoting power relations and ethical importance. Both works, in this context, present pivotal scenes which can be helpful for readers to evaluate how an individual grow up and how gain ability to evaluate relations.

In the *The Best Man* play, the process of socialization is not restricted with only character's way of thinking strategies about their politic future, it also provides them to have attitudes which can make them accepted by the society. For instance, the conflict scenes between William **Russell and Cantwell** (Vidal, 1998, pp. 50-51) are read as moments they experience adverse features of politic ambition and their moral understanding. In these scenes the characters get knowledge of how to obtain power and management of their own reputation. Likewise, their speech scenes which are taking place in front of media and society (Vidal, 1998, pp. 60-62) are concrete evident that show readers that socialization is a kind process of education. Here, characters improve producing strategy for their goals as well as learning societal hopes. These scenes make clear how individuals may have tendency to create a new persona for their purposes in society.

In Mena's *The Education of Popo* however, Mena handles socialization and education in cultural context conjuring up the significance of growing up under the light of society's expectations. Popo's learning of behaviours in various social environments put forth socialization's cultural dimension. For example, in the scenes that Popo attempts to understand Alicia's attitudes (Mena, pp. 95-98) readers see the individual's education of cultural norms and societal expectations. Following scenes, the moment Popo expresses his disappointment and anger (Mena, pp. 100-102) indicate the confrontation of the individual with building his own identity. With the help of these scenes, it can be received that education is not merely conveying information, it also provides to get educated in terms of social background and the appealing side of power.

In this context, theoretical frame will have unique contributions to understand the relationship between power, socialization and education. Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus" concept is necessary to get how an individual rises and takes shape. Furthermore, it assists us to notices how people's behaviours are shaped by society. As Bourdieu emphasizes, **"the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history"** (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). The reason why we ought to call for his quote is highlight that the behaviours of Popo and *The Best Man* characters are not coincidence. They are in the line of their past experiences. For example, attitudes presented by Russell during his determining for his politic strategies and by Popo in the moments of learning his environment demonstrate individual's attempts to adapt the society via habitus.

Like in many fields, Michel Foucault's considerations on power and information assure us to delve into education and socialization in the context of power. According to Foucault, **"there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power"**

relations” (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). The reason of this sentence is to show education is both conveying the information and process of building power. The fact that Vidal’s characters learning period in politic field and Popo’s embodying social norms are concrete evident for relationship between power and intellectuality.

Émile Durkheim, on the other hand, expresses education as a means of society’s retaining its presence and producing its own norms: **“Education is the means by which society perpetually renews the conditions of its own existence”** (Durkheim, 1956, s. 28). This quotation is crucial to tell the socialization period observed in both works. Russell’s and Popo’s adaptation to society’s expectation is not only related to learn information or attitudes, it is also tied to learn the environment. Education provides individual to contribute to persistence social order.

Antonio Gramsci’s hegemony concept assists us to get the fact that education and culture have a great role in practicing the power: **“The challenge is not only to attain political power but to establish cultural hegemony, shaping the norms and beliefs that structure social life”** (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). In this context politic competence in *The Best Man* and Popo’s educative period can be read as reproduction of cultural and ideological power. They are also an individual learning. And finally characters boost retaining of values.

In both works, socialization and education play a central role in how individuals learn social norms and internalize power relations. While *The Best Man* demonstrates practices of gaining and maintaining power in the political arena, *The Education of Popo* showcases social education processes through cultural norms and identity construction. In this context, education and socialization processes not only impart knowledge and behavior but also enable the reproduction of social structure and power relations. The scenes in the works concretize how the characters participate in and adapt to power dynamics.

The Individual's Struggle Against Imposed Socialization

In *The Education of Popo*, the child Popo's experience represents the process of internalizing social norms through power relations within education. In the early parts of the story (Mena, pp. 95-98), Popo's obligation to conform to the teacher's expectations in the classroom is a striking example of the tension between the individual and societal demands. In this context, one question is appearing and it is related to the role of education. Is it a tool of people’s favours or is it highlighting subjectivity? American historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt’s *Between Past and Future* has “The Crisis in Education. Her sentences in this chapter are helpful to have ideas about this dual, especially “Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable” (Arendt, 1968, p. 173) quotation is very crucial. The reason behind this importance is that according to Arendt, education prepares the individuals for the life and naturally the world. Furthermore, the responsibility of entrusting the world to them is also a part of education. However, in Popo's experience, this responsibility functions not only as a pedagogical task but also as a cultural imposition. The socialization process aims to conform the individual to dominant cultural norms rather than fostering their autonomy. In Vidal's **The Best Man**, the relationship between the individual and power is far more conscious and strategic, as the characters act with the intention of governing a society. The party meetings and discussions behind closed doors in Act I (Vidal, 1998, pp. 10-25) show that the characters do not blindly conform to power structures. On the contrary, instead of accepting them, the men tend to make a deal with them. This is one of the most fundamental scenes in the story that shows the reader the truth that education brings power. Here, the resistance is not silent as in **The Popo**, because the struggle is discursive, calculated, and often morally ambiguous. This

contrast reveals that in Mena's short story, power shapes the individual, while in Vidal's play, the individual attempts to shape power.

The Ideological Function of Education: Innocence or Manipulation?

Popo's process of learning to conform to society and his childlike reactions to it are far more than an innocent pedagogical process. Because his reactions can actually be read as an ideological reshaping. Especially in the scenes where Popo's behaviors are classified as "right" and "wrong" (Mena, p. 107), education suppresses the child's natural inclinations. The child creates an identity not according to his desires, but in the light of society's needs, and the somewhat tragic aspect is that while Popo does all this, he perhaps shows the reader how unfree life actually is. At this point, education, which should be a tool that allows the individual to question the world, appears as an ideological force that enables the acceptance of imposed realities. This situation is concrete evidence that countries and societies, in some respects, conquer themselves from within. The inability to move freely and the fact that decisions are always entangled in social networks portrays society as a cage and the individual as a bird trapped in that cage. The French philosopher Louis Althusser made essential observations regarding the relationship between ideology and education. Perhaps the most important quote from him is as follows: "The school... teaches 'know-how' but in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its 'practice'" (Althusser, 1971, p. 127).

As Althusser pointed out, school is not merely an institution that transmits knowledge because individuals do not have the right to interpret society or the system from their own perspective. In a sense, education has also become a tool that allows states to maintain their existence without question. Popo's education, though not explicitly, implicitly signifies the unquestioning internalization of culturally accepted values in society. Just as it makes sense to constantly repeat the same actions and expect different results, it is equally illogical to raise and limit everyone in a similar way. Unfortunately, in this respect, the education of society contains manipulation under the guise of innocence.

In *The Best Man*, however, education is not within the context of a formal school. After growing older, school walls, classrooms, and other aspects of education give way to social actions. Because every experience makes the individual more educated than before. Of course, the individual's reactions to the situations they encounter are also important. Education in schools is like this too. No matter how much you explain, unless it makes an impact on the student, the information remains nothing more than a buzzing sound.

In *The Best Man*, education also takes place through political experience and elite socialization. The characters are able to predict which discourses work in the political arena. In addition, they have learned which moral boundaries can be bent. The scenes in Act II concerning media and campaign strategies (Vidal, 1998, pp. 55-70) clearly demonstrate the ideological aspect of this "political education." Vidal reveals that in this process, education aims to produce truth. What matters is how an idea, even if false, is presented to society. This is why the politicians in the play scrutinize each other's private lives, hoping to find their weaknesses and put them in a difficult position. Once someone's vulnerability is discovered, silencing them is easy, and explaining it to the public is even easier.

In Mena's narrative, power largely manifests itself in private spheres such as the classroom, home, and teacher-student relationship. Because without education, there is no power. In Vidal, power is felt in the public sphere, on stage, and through the media. Power that is not seen or shown by society can be considered a weakness in a way. Politically acquired power must always be displayed in order to be supported by individuals in society. Every person has a weakness for power, consciously or unconsciously. Popo's relationship with his teacher emphasizes how power takes root in daily life. Even in education, power makes itself felt. If

the educator cannot be dominant, they do not seem very important to the learner. Popo does not make the mistake of questioning his teacher's authority. Although invisible, power is invisible but effective. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu presents these kinds of power relations in a more technical way. The power in Popo's story aligns with Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic power." Bourdieu's following quote clearly expresses what symbolic power means: "Symbolic power is a power of constructing reality, a power to make things with words" (Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 1991, p. 170).

Innocence, Morality, and Ethical Responsibility

Finally, as is likely to be the case in any literary work, the ethical dimensions of education and socialization should be discussed in both literary works so that the meaning derived from the comparison can be placed on a more logical foundation. Popo's innocence is seen by individuals living in society as a deficiency that "needs to be corrected." This situation necessitates questioning the moral responsibility of education: Is it to integrate the individual into society, or to use them for the benefit of society? This situation can be clarified by a quote from Frantz Fanon, a French psychologist and political philosopher who primarily examined the individual during the colonial period: "The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (Fanon, 1967, p. 18). It would not be an exaggeration to directly relate Fanon's observation to Popo's experience. Because the educational model presented in the story is accepted with the claim of "humanizing" the individual. However, it should not be forgotten that this education actually alienates the individual from their own being.

In *The Best Man*, ethical responsibility is directly related not only to individual innocence but also to the state of public morality. The characters are forced to choose between what is right and what will win. Vidal avoids resolving this moral dilemma and leaves it to the reader/audience.

Conclusion

This study analyzes María Cristina Mena's narrative, *The Education of Popo*, and Gore Vidal's play, *The Best Man*, using concepts such as socialization, education, and power. The impact of each concept on the characters is emphasized depending on the text in which it is used. Although both texts are different genres—one a short story and the other a play—they demonstrate to the reader the ideological aspects of socialization, education, and power.

In *The Education of Popo*, education is used in an ideological function, helping the individual adapt to their environment, but somewhat devoid of good intentions. Popo's silence, given his age, symbolizes a transformation in the face of power, and this is also an undeniable innocence. Here, education is a controversial process that, rather than creating the individual, makes them "suitable" for society. In this respect, Mena's narrative makes the symbolic and ideological power of education visible at the micro level.

In Vidal's *The Best Man*, socialization and education are limited by the power relations of politics, which are expected to benefit society. The characters are politicians who learn to use, sometimes subtly, sometimes strategically, the unstated but experienced phenomena of the political arena. However, every decision made and every step taken also defines the boundaries of morality and ethics. Vidal emphasizes the potential for individual self-interest to transform power and discusses the possible consequences of these possibilities.

In conclusion, when Mena and Vidal's works are read together, it becomes clear that education and socialization are processes that both shape and test the individual. Popo's quiet conformity in the private sphere and Vidal's characters' loud bargaining in the public sphere represent different facets of power. This comparison reveals that education is not only about the

transfer of knowledge but also a realm of moral, political, and cultural responsibility, once again confirming the power of literature in making these complex relationships visible.

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JOHN MUIR: POSTHUMAN DYNAMICS IN *A WIND-STORM IN THE FORESTS*

JOHN MUIR: *ORMANDA BİR FIRTINA*'DA POST-İNSAN DİNAMİKLERİ

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ABSTRACT

This study clarifies that there is a bridge in *A Wind-Storm in the Forests* which connects human relations with nature in terms of posthuman dynamics in which the boundary between human and world trembles, bends, and finally loosens. Rather than staging a confrontation between man and nature, the story arranges their entanglement. Muir says that as the trees moves, human body also moves away. Like forests bellows, human bellows too. In accordance with this requesting of control, Muir's essay, story, shows a profound spiritual tangle: the mirage of separation of souls. Power is described with nature's nobility. It is not a passive living creature; instead it is an active participant. The forest does not need the human care to exist at all. For, they are standing with their vitalisation when human surrenders to their rhythms, and human comes to know everything from it. Transcendentalism emerges and reminds itself with the mutual attachments of human and nature, and then moves beyond human.

Keywords: Posthuman dynamics, Interconnectedness, Vibrancy, Transcendental Roots

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, *Ormanda Bir Fırtına* metninde insan ilişkilerini doğayla post-insan dinamikler bağlamında birleştiren bir köprü bulunduğunu ve bu köprünün insan ile dünya arasındaki sınırın titrediğini, büküldüğünü ve sonunda gevşediğini ortaya koyduğunu savunur. Hikâye, insan ile doğa arasında bir karşı karşıya geliş sahnelemek yerine onların iç içe geçişini düzenler. Muir'e göre ağaçlar nasıl sallanıyorsa insan bedeni de öyle sallanır. Orman haykırmaları gibi, insan da haykırır. Kontrolün talebi doğrultusunda, metin daha derin bir felsefi düğümü açığa çıkarır: ayrılık yanılması. Güç, kontrol olarak değil katılım olarak yeniden tanımlanır. Orman, var olmak için insanın bakımına ihtiyaç duymaz. Çünkü orman, tüm canlılığıyla ayakta ve insan ondan her şeyi öğrenir. Transandantalizm burada kendini hatırlatır ve insan ile doğa arasındaki, hatta insan-ötesine uzanan birbirine bağlılığı vurgular. **Anahtar Kelimeler:** Post-insan dinamikleri, Bağlantılılık, Canlılık, Transandantal Kökle

Introduction

Nature is the only living being that procures everything for human life. Nature which shows, takes a change and transforms us in many ways we often fail to notice. It carries its own rules with ruling beyond human control. Because nature is an innocence idea and the order works naturally. Nature recalls us that nothing can be isolated or owned. The quiet movements of wind or storms through trees, the existence of rivers hollowing out their profound ways, and the stillness enlargement of forests all together proposes a world that perpetuates with or without human caring. In this condition, nature instills human being to be the salt of the earth and, by promoting us to identify our place within the universe where all threads are interconnected each other. Nature also gives a chance to make a self-realization, where the noise of the 19th century modern life sways and a deep-stated realization can exist. By engaging with nature, we do not just observe it; we become part of its ongoing process, discovering that meaning is not imposed by us, but formed through our relationship with the more-than-human world.

Everything that surrounded us is nature. Thanks to it, we can lead a life. Nature and human being always interact each other. The idea that nature precedes humanity is perhaps the first illusion of modern thought. On the contrary, human and non-human worlds have always co-existed together. This entanglement lies at the heart of two concepts such as post-humanism, and transcendentalism which challenge the anthropocentric idea focusing by nineteenth-century industrial modernity. In the context of the American Industrial Revolution, nature was thought as a passive resource, which means only using nature as a means and the purpose was to come into existence with economic power. As the expansion of industrial field increased, the natural world became the exploitable weld.

Given this reality, transcendentalist thinkers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau developed a completely different vision in which nature was not a powerless world; rather, it is a living and spiritual world. In *Nature*, Emerson argues that “Nature always wears the colors of the spirit” (1901:21) suggesting that the external world is inseparable from human consciousness. From the sentence, when nature is carrying the colours of human beings’ souls, it emerges as a dynamic creature which at the same time transforms this soul, pushes the limits and erodes human-centered meaning-production. Similarly, Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854) is an insurrection to industrial modernity by encouraging return to simplicity of the natural world. Since, nature, in this process, lost its special meaning and became an object which intensified by human-centered idea. In this position, post-humanism criticizes this anthropocentric notion by questioning the superiority of the human and regards that existence is a network in which human and non-human entities work together. Instead of considering nature as an inactive matter, posthumanist approach imputes some certain degree of agencies to it. In this context, the relationship between nature and human beings should be understood not as a one-way interaction but as a process of mutual interaction and co-becoming.

Post-humanist standpoint rejects the idea that man is at the center. In this approach, humans cannot be separated from nature; they live within it, exist thanks to it, and shaped by it. Nature, therefore, is not a passive background but a living, dynamic system where different forces interact. From this standpoint, literary works do not exactly represent human life experiences; these works give help to unveil the complex relationships between humans and the non-human world with the perspective of criticising. For this reason, *A Wind-Storm in the Forests* does more than describe nature by showing its power, influence, and resilience, with the post-humanist understanding. In this study, I examine post-humanist dynamics in *A Wind-Storm in the Forests* by John Muir, a text that is sometimes read as both an essay and a short narrative. By mixing post-humanism with transcendentalist movement, the study will try to show how the text questions the idea that humans come before natural world. In return, it presents a view in

which humans are the part of this large living system, shaped by the same forces that create forests, animals, and landscapes.

Post-humanism

Posthumanism is often defined as a posthumanism and a post-anthropocentrism. The general issue of the term is the human and the historical existence of humanism. The term criticizes the priority of human. For Posthumanism, it is wrong and human being is only a part world, universe. (Ferrando, Francesca. 2013:29). Posthumanism dares many types of notion which related to turning around only existence of privileged human subject and instead of it reveals that the concept's meaning does not show up particularly from human understanding. Posthumanism gives value to everything and does not create discriminations. Therefore, it offers that concept should be understood through relational networks rather than fixed categories, where boundaries between human and non-human merged each other and continuously negotiated. In this situation, these non human entities are not segregated into units. Since, they are mixed participants in these dynamic processes of post-humanism. As Jane Bennett goes to the deep layers of the traditional glance of *matter* as "passive stuff, as raw, brute, or inert," (2010:7) post-humanist understanding stresses that nature itself is as a living power rather than a quiet matter as Bennet says in her book. Such an understanding shapes nature as a real friend and with its interactions, humans can merged with it.

Within this views, John Muir's natural descriptions shed light on a world that matters like wind, trees are within a motion and they cannot be separated into independent ways but exist within a continuous flow of interaction. This type of representation softens the thought of constant identities and instead of these, it emphasizes transformation, equalization, and mutual influence. It also reconfigures perception itself, as the observer is no longer positioned outside the scene but becomes embedded within the very processes being described. At the same time, the rise of modern buildings and industrial economic networks divides into these complex systems by showing controlling forms and types of standardization. As production grows, nature became the addresses of mass dynamics and transformed into a measurable and manageable resource for economy of wheel of fortune. Not only work forces but also ecological movements are subjected to systems of regulation that reduce variability into predictable forms. The movement of populations toward urban parts speeds up this circle through disconnecting everyday life from natural points and aligning it with mechanical and scheduled patterns. Transformation of industrialized areas narrows the scope of outright experience and disguised it with reality by reinforcing the illusion that humans exist apart from the environments they inhabit.

Within this context, Muir's depictions of nature should not be read just for fun or should not be thought as only description of nature. These essays are offering an alternative ontological framework that resists such separations. Nature is not a passive object or a resource to be exploited. It is a layered field of existence with its own movements and agencies. This perspective also presents a new understanding of freedom by suggesting that it is not defined by domination or control, but by the capacity to exist within networks of relation. Consequently, a posthumanist reading exposes how modern political and economic systems reduce the complexity of the world, while at the same time opening up a way of thinking that understands existence as plural, interconnected, and constantly in transformation. Muir's work reflects a world where humans do not feel the real liberty which described through storms but, at the same time, destroy and harm the existence of nature. This becomes especially important. Because the government constructed new business lines and forced to people work in this factories by exploiting their labours. People moved to urban areas for a living. As they continued to work, their labour was increasingly exploited; the more they worked, the more the government profited. With each gain, industrialization extended, and as a result, nature was progressively degraded under human's prowesses. During this period, which corresponds to the 19th century,

nature was often treated as a resource to be used and controlled. There was nothing but misery outside. People started to live within the smoke of factories and forgot their essences. To put it more clearly, the American Industrial Revolution was not only an economic and technological transformation but also a turning point in the relationship between humans and nature. As stated by the Environmental Literacy Council, industrial mass manufacturing had profound dangerous consequences for the natural world and for human beings' ordinary lives (Environmental Literacy Council. 2026). For example, the widespread use of coal led to severe air pollution, factories contaminated rivers, and large areas of forest were destroyed. This process reinforced an anthropocentric worldview in which nature was treated as an object existing for human benefit.

At the same time, the historical context of industrialization, state power, and labor exploitation introduces a critical tension. Expanding economic systems transform both human and non-human life into measurable and controllable units, reducing the complexity of existence. Urbanization and the rise of productivity-driven lifestyles weaken direct connections with natural processes, limiting the ability to perceive the deeper relationships that sustain life. This shift demonstrates that changes in perception are not only philosophical but also shaped by material and political conditions. Ultimately, this study argues that posthumanist dynamics do not reject transcendentalist thought but reinterpret it by uncovering its hidden potential. What once appeared as a focus on human insight becomes, in this new light, part of a wider system of interconnected existence. Rather than emphasizing unity as something internal, this perspective presents existence as a dynamic and evolving network of relationships. In doing so, it offers a more complex understanding of meaning, agency, and being as fluid, shared, and constantly in motion.

A Wind-Storm in the Forest

A Wind-Storm in the Forests by John Muir describes his life experience during a storm in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Instead of hiding from the storm, Muir goes deeper into the forest and climbs a tall tree to observe what is happening. He, in real, asked to see the harmony of nature and wanted to feel what people do not realize at all.

“Most people like to look at mountain rivers, and bear them in mind;
but few care to look at the winds, though far more beautiful and sublime,
and though they become at times about as visible as flowing water” (Muir, John.
1984:120).

Nature is not composed of the forms what humanbeings be able to conceive; instead, people only think nature is what they see and a small and selected part of it, which they construct in their minds as “the world”. Posthuman dynamics tries to extend or even breaks this constructed world. From this reason, Muir aimed to show nature is not constant. It lives as humanbeings. He finds the freedom in nature. While people were stuck in factories and went crazy about earning money, he said that the real spiritual richness is the winds' motions: “But the winds go to every tree, fingering every leaf and branch and furrowed bole; not one is forgotten” (John, Muir. 1984:115). Then, he watches how the strong wind moves through the forest and affects the trees. As the storm becomes stronger, the trees bend and sway but do not break. The whole forest seems to move like waves, full of energy and motion.

“We hear much nowadays concerning the universal struggle for existence, but no struggle in the common meaning of the word was manifest here; no recognition of danger by any tree; no deprecation; but rather an invincible gladness as remote from exultation as from fear” (Muir, John. 1984:119-120).

These sentences present a powerful understanding for the idea of struggle for existence against spreading of political rhetorics of modern era, and specially industrialization thrust. Since, what observed in nature is harmony, continuity and peace, rather than fear and competition. In America, industrialization order and mechanisms that intertwined with the mass production describe the world as the land of battle and mandatory extention. However Muir’s descriptions of nature make these rhetorics look ridiculous. This situation, by merging with the idea of spiritual wholeness that transcendentalist thought found in nature object to the understanding of centering human and instrumenalizing nature. Moreover, when evaluated with the perspective of posthumanist understanding, it shows that non-human beings have their own ways of living and their own meaning, and they cannot be explained by human economic or political systems. So, nature is not something to control or a place of competition; instead, it is a complex world that works on its own, beyond humans. By and large, Muir does not describe the storm as something frightening; instead, he finds it exciting and beautiful. He feels connected to nature and narrates in this way:

“I kept my lofty perch for hours, frequently closing my eyes to enjoy the music by itself, or to feast quietly on the delicious fragrance that was streaming past”(Muir, John. 1984:120)

and enjoys being part of this intense moment. The essay shows that nature is not just a background setting but something active and powerful. Muir presents the forest as alive, full of movement and strength. At the same time, he shows that humans are not separate from nature but exist within it. Overall, the text emphasizes the beauty, power, and vitality of the natural world and invites the reader to experience nature more directly.

Transcendentalism and It’s Relation to Posthumanism

Henry David Thoreau who is the one of the most significant representers of the movement tries to engrain in that we are not the enemies of nature. Nature is a holistic place and must be respected by protecting the soul, which means God. He notes in *Walden*:

We need the tonic of wildness, — to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable. (Thoreau, Henry David. 1899:333)

Henry David Thoreau through this passage means that **Posthumanist thought** is not merely as an ennoblement of nature. Since, also Transcendentalism aims to decenter the human altogether. Rather than locating humans as investigators who direct and define the natural world, the passage exposes the limits of human knowledge and control. Because of human beings' asking to control or dominate everything, the order of universe is changing. It means that nature should remain partly unknown and cannot be fully understood or controlled. It challenges the human-centered way of thinking that tries to explain, classify, and dominate everything in the natural world.

From this perspective, the detailed evocation of animals—the bittern, the mink, the solitary bird—is not ornamental but relational: these beings inhabit a world that exists independently of human perception or purpose. The human enters this space not as a sovereign observer but as one presence among many, temporarily entangled within a network of agencies. What emerges is a vision of nature as an active, self-organizing system that resists being fully translated into human meaning. In this sense, wildness becomes not a resource for human renewal, but a reminder of a world that exceeds and destabilizes the human, aligning closely with posthumanism's effort to dismantle human exceptionalism.

Transcendentalism is a movement which started in New England at the beginning of the 19th century in America. The understanding of Transcendentalism is believing in the innate kindness of human, the integrity of the soul and the over-soul, and the equal value of the whole universe, and the sacredness of nature. With industrialization's growth, the increase in consumerism, expansion of built environment, wars which called as Civil War, and unfortunately exploiting of nature make inroads into emerging of transcendentalism (Tuğtekin Aydın, Merve Nur. 2022:22).

Transcendentalism can be seen not only as a reaction to industrialization, but also as a philosophical response to a crisis of materialism created by modern life. In this period, the culture of attachment to material possession weakened people's relationships with their surroundings and replaced it with mediated and standardized forms of experience. From a less widely discussed and known standpoint, Transcendentalist theorists do not only look at nature, but also shift the source of knowledge from the external world to inner intuition. Because they are proposing to a different way of understanding reality instead of empiricism. In this view, the human mind is not a passive receiver, but something that actively creates meaning. At the same time, wars and environmental damage showed that not only nature but also humans were exposed to similar systems of exploitation, which nature is sentenced to be used as a source center and conversely humans lapsed into itching palm. In this way, Transcendentalism is the only way for people to see their essence and tries to struggle with the fragmented perception of modern society by focusing and living something in nature deliberately through inner experience as a source of knowledge and meaning.

Transcendentalism constructs a way of truth based on inner feeling, questioning the shortcomings of the 19th century through materialism's power which exploit people. In this view, nature is not only a background for human actions but a way through which life shows itself, breaking simple use-based ties between people and their surroundings thanks to the Transcendentalism. Add it more, posthumanism takes this further away by questioning human value and sharing agency between human and non-human beings, which punctured the usual subject and object division. While intuition in Transcendentalist thought functions as a bridge

connecting the individual to a larger unity, posthumanist theory redesigns this integrity as a distributed network in which meaning is not centralized in human consciousness but emerges through multiple interacting forces.

At this juncture, these the two approaches, both Transcendentalism and Posthumanism, come together because both reject to see nature as lifeless or inactive matter. However, they begin to separate in their own ideas, since transcendentalism still depends on a human-centered way of understanding truth and focused on returning to the essence, while posthumanism moves away from this focus and spreads importance across human and non-human beings. Because in this universe, the things that are exist no matter what they are animate or inanimate bear meaning for human being's life. Furthermore, looking toward nature in the early of the 19th century American thought does not harbour a romantic understanding. Since, heading towards to nature concept is an epistemological critique of modernity's limits. Posthumanism aggrandizes this critique by reuniting insights from ecology, technology and emphasizing relationality, interdependence, and the fluid boundaries of being.

Conclusion

The notion of "nature is *mind*"(Mills, Jon. 2013:212) within Posthumanism, mind is no longer belong to the human. It means that nature itself has a shape of cognitive agency, too. With Transcendentalism, this idea conjures up earlier discernments about the integrity of mind and nature, which seen in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words : "The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God" (1901:20) which shows natural world and human world are already coalesced. Additionally, as Donna Haraway suggests through her rethinking of human-nonhuman relations, the boundaries between organism, environment, and technology are definitely merged (1991:151-162) by expanding the notion of mind beyond biology into hybrid and material systems.

This study has shown how a posthumanist dynamics understanding brings innovation to literary interpretation by receding from human-centered thinking and focusing on relational existence as a network of interacting with all creatures. John Muir's *A Wind-Storm in the Forests* shows us how human being forgot about his/her past because of industrialization and materialism. People started to see nature as a dead object. However, the sanctity of nature is always alive. In this context, transcendentalist ideas about inner intuition and unity can be reinterpreted not as purely human capacities, but as early signs of a broader interconnected awareness that goes beyond individual consciousness. The analysis also reveals that natural elements such as wind, trees, and sensory experience do more than describe a setting; they actively challenge the boundary between observer and environment. Muir ends his sentence with these words: "'My peace I give unto you' all the so called ruin of the storm was forgotten, and never before did these noble woods appear so fresh, so joyous, so immortal"(Muir, John. 1984:121) by suggesting what appears as destruction in nature is actually a process of reconfiguration of vitality, where the storm gives way to peace. It also reveals a shift in human perception, as the woods, once seen through chaos, emerge as more vibrant, joyful, and almost immortal. In this position, giving value to everything that exist in universe is not something difficult for human beings. We must be conscious about everything and changes our notions and biases for hopeful futures.

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PLURAL FORMS OF FUNDAMENTALISM IN ZADIE SMİTH'S *WHITE TEETH*

ZADİE SMİTH'İN *İNCİ GİBİ DİŞLER* ROMANINDA FUNDAMENTALİZMİN ÇOGUL BİÇİMLERİ

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how *White Teeth* challenges the Western reduction of fundamentalism to Islam by presenting multiple forms of ideological extremism. Rather than depicting radicalism as purely religious, Smith reveals that fundamentalism also appears through profane scientific rationalism, cultural liberal superiority, and political identity evolvments. Characters such as Samad, Magid, Millat, and the Chalfens demonstrate how historical displacement, cultural putrefaction and identity maze can generate competing absolutist worldviews. By contrasting these rigid ideological structures with Irie's hybrid personality, the novel suggests that fundamentalism arises not from Islam alone, but from universal human anxieties about belonging, authenticity, and certainty in postcolonial Britain.

Keywords: fundamentalism, plural fundamentalism, oppression, islamic, identity, Zadie Smith

Özet

Bu çalışma, *White Teeth* romanının fundamentalizmi yalnızca İslam'a indirgeyen Batılı söylemi nasıl sorguladığını ve bunun yerine çeşitli ideolojik aşırılık biçimlerini görünür kıldığını incelemektedir. Smith, radikalizmi salt dini bir olgu olarak sunmak yerine, dünyevi bilimsel rasyonalizm, kültürel-liberal üstünlük iddiası ve politik kimlik inşaları üzerinden de fundamentalizmin ortaya çıktığını gösterir. Samet, Macit, Millat ve Chalfen ailesi gibi karakterler, tarihsel yerinden edilme, kültürel çürüme ve kimlik karmaşasının birbiriyle rekabet eden mutlakiyetçi dünya görüşlerini nasıl üretebildiğini örnekler. Roman, bu katı ideolojik yapılara karşı Irie'nin melez kimliğini konumlandırarak, fundamentalizmin yalnızca İslam'dan doğmadığını, postkolonyal Britanya bağlamında aidiyet, otantiklik ve kesinlik arayışı gibi evrensel insan kaygılarından beslendiğini öne sürer.

Anahtar Kelimeler: fundamentalizm, çoklu fundamentalizm, islam, baskı, Zadie Smith

Introduction

Fundamentalism first entered academic discourse in the 1920s, referring to a movement within American Protestantism committed to preserving literal biblical doctrine against modernist interpretations (Bıyık, Mustafa. 2007:84). Derived from the Latin term *fundamentum* and associated with the concept of foundation in Turkish, the term fundamentalism means belonging and soul (Baygın Oğuz, Ayla. 2009:99). That is to say, Fundamentalism is a literary criticism that shows a community's cultural, sociological, political and religious values of every ambits of society. This literary criticism helps us to understand clearly the structures of society which are interconnected one another.

The concept of fundamentalism is examined within the context of various religious-cultural movements, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, and it holds a complex and versatilenotional structure. In that, the term, at first, was associated with religious notions and following this, the concept was criticised by Edward Said, who thought the term should not be looked by only religious perspective. Fundamentalism is frequently associated with opposition to liberal-radicalvalues and individual freedoms, which creates human being's existence. By and large, the literary criticism will be analysed not only religiously but also within radical-scientific and cultural-liberal fundamental fields, blended with Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*.

Zadie Smith's debut novel *White Teeth* (2000) hosts multilayered narrative and written ironically to portray three families' experiences from distinct sociocultural worlds: the Bangladeshi Muslim Iqbals, the English-Jamaican Jones family, and the German-Jewish Chalfens. Through the lived experiences, the novel builds a sequence life stories of London borough's native and third world population. *White Teeth* harbours plural ideological fundamentalisms by way of Samad Iqbal, a Bangladeshi Muslim refugee, struggles to preserve traditional-cultural Islamic fundamentalist values in the profane British society which leads to corruption within his family.

His twin sons, Magid and Millat, drifted into opposite directions: Magid abandons religion in favor of rationalism and Western secularism, while Millat heads towards a radical Islamic organization known as KEVIN (*Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation*) for seeking purpose and belonging. The characters draw a circle around the turbidity of traditional values, Archie Jones family remains passive to make visible two other famlies to radicalize, and also the Chalfen family forehends secular-scientific fundamentalism with FutureMouse experiment. Therefore, in the concept of the novel, Smith takes fundamentalism in hand within the context of an emotional and ideological rupture. Through these contrasting ideologies, the novel illustrates that religious fundamentalism is not exclusively a doctrinal issue but a response to displacement, identity crisis, and the pressures of assimilation within post-colonial Britain.

In *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith doesn't show fundamentalism as just a strict religious belief. Instead, she connects it to the characters' personal lives, their struggles, cultural conflicts, and search for identity. The novel shows that fundamentalism often comes from feelings of confusion and not belonging, rather than from religion alone. Samad's fixated aspiration to save ancestral lores and religious veracity manifests in his decision to send Magid to India, "...how *gladdened* by the thought that Magid at least, will, in a matter of four hours, be flying east from this place and its demands..." (Smith, 2000:207). Through these lines Samad thinks that returning to basics would strengthen the disjunction of religious values which occuring within the frameworks of British values. Consequently, Samad sends Magid to the East in the hope that at least one child will remain faithful to their roots.

To this respect, as a Muslim father, Samad, burns with by the struggle to maintain his values, decides to defy the idea of Westernization and takes the risk by sending his young son to East

alone. This Muslim fundamentalist mindset is revitalized by Eastern idea. Yet, in a striking irony, Magid does not embrace tradition and comes back to England. Alternatively, he becomes a devoted disciple of Marcus Chalfen's scientific vision, treating genetic rationalism as an absolute truth. "I am in awe of such a man as Marcus Chalfen. I call it an honour to be able to call him friend." (Smith, 2000:366-8). Through this inversion, Smith exposes fundamentalism as a phenomenon not confined to religion, but one equally capable of emerging through secular science and rationalist extremism.

On the other side, by being unable to decide where he belongs, Millat rejects his father and his own path while actually remaining caught between. The influences of this capitalist country gradually corrupt the second-generation immigrant community. Identity is lost, and values are forgotten. At the age of sixteen, Millat loses the innocence that his age should represent. Smith portrays this through Millat's stuff: *A clocwork Orange*. Millat shares the same age and similar characteristics with this protagonist (Alex) of book. Inclined toward crime, violence, and pornographic violence, this supposedly innocent young man becomes a lost character within the fundamnetal values of the missing country. "As far as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster, As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a muslim" (Smith, 2000:446). Namely, Millat, thus, caught between British street culture, diasporic shame, and a fragmented self-image, gravitates toward the radical Islamic group KEVIN, not out of pure spiritual conviction, but as a means to locate certainty, discipline, and belonging within a hostile postcolonial landscape.

The Chalfen family, meantime, with the believing of extremist-fundamentalist manifests within the society that they are, trying to outflank the second-generation immigrant with the absolutist and fanatic ideas. Joyce inspects accordingly by asking questions, Millat and Irie, about their faiths, physical appearances and roots by taking advantage of their being children. Adopting cultural paternalism, the Chalfen family unveils zealotry, which, in some way, reproduce well-meaning progressivism. Scientific-liberal fundamentalism shows up by rationality, however knowing and understanding omnia in scientifically, in other words, replaced with the God, the Chalfen family, does not prevent them insulting people within the hierarchal postcolonial England.

"You look very exotic. Where are you from, if you don't mind me asking? 'Willesden,' said Irie and Millat simultaneously.

'Yes, yes of course, but where *originally*?

'Oh' said Millat, You are meaning where from am I *originally*?

'Whitechapel,' said Millat, pulling out a fag. 'Via the Royal London Hospital and 207bus.' (Smith, 2000:319)

From these lines, by calling the children as exotic, she indicates something dangerous. Desiring to learn where they come from and, as I remarked before, her taking advantage of the children's ages to ask questions about their origins is related to her adoption of Western ideology and rationality, and also her effort to construct cultural superiority. The Chalfen family, in addition to teaching these children scientific lessons, creates a powerful yet exploitative bond by assigning them extra works, Irie files Marcus's FutureMouse Project documents and Millat works with Joyce in the garden, and instilling in them the sanctity of meta-belief structures, thus fostering economic superiority. This brings questions about the "good intentions" of Joyce's liberal-cultural fundamentalism, and Marcus's liberal-radical and absolutist fundamentalist perspectives, demonstrating that the weak, especially children, can be exploited in every way. Therefore, Irie begrudges this family and compares them with her family and then

flees from her own home. Millat, on the other hand, turns to more violence, sleeps with white girls, and complains about his family to Joyce. Consequently, that is, in turn, constitutes the complexities of the anxieties created by the privileged people of imperialist country.

In the twentieth century, technological developments were advancing without losing its speed. These advancements expanded its presence felt especially in the field of biology, genetic, psychology and so forth on. In the wake of the technological change, the world was heading another place and people started to query the concept of God and God's abilities. Science was articulated through more logical principles and the values, which people thought that they were belong to, were shaken by the absolutist realities of modern life in Britain. In *White Teeth*, Smith shows these developments and its ethic values within three different families and their shaky beliefs through gigantic scientific developments. Moreover, she brings these families up against their religious lores. Samad denies Marcus's project, which is actually God's job. Hence, for Samad, only God can create a new thing. Nevertheless, Joyce rooses her husband for creating a new thing.

“Her husband didn't just make money, he didn't just make things, or sell things that other people had made, he created beings. He went to the edges of his God's imagination and made mice Yahweh could not conceive of” (Smith, 2000:311).

Their worldview echoes Nietzsche's declaration that “God is dead” (Nietzsche, 1924:151): In this era, where divine values and sacred texts were being destroyed and fragmented, science shook the very concept of faith. People had become God through the cutting-edge technology. Therefore, as Nietzsche said, the people of this era deliberately ceased to the concept of faith. Furthermore, in *White Teeth*, religious fundamentalism transformed and regenerated into an absolutist force. It is obvious that liberal-radical fundamentalist Chalfen family has achieved scientific power in the West. However, they demonstrate this power by crushing the values of other cultures.

Put it differently, Zadie Smith portrays the Jones family as an intellectual, yet passive famiy caught in betweenness. Remaining neutral and uncommitted to any particular idea, this British-Jamaican family neither rejects nor supports the lives of the Chalfen and Iqbal families. Smith's point here is that blind adherence to an ideology leads to tragic problems. However, this family continues with their dull, ineffective and unfulfilled lives. Consequently, by challenging the rigid rules and ideologies imposed by life, they become a family that has become commonplace in post-colonial London borough.

‘Archibald! Shall I meet with my brother or not?’

Archie looked guilty at Samad and then back at his plate.

‘Archibald! This is very significant question for me. Should I or not?’

‘Go on,’ said Samad sourly. ‘Answer him. If he'd rather advice from two old fools and a man he barely knows than from his own father, then let him have it. Well? Should he?’

Archie squirmed. ‘Well... I can't ... I mean, it's not for me to say ... I suppose, if he wants ... but then again, if you don't think...’

‘Make a decision, Archibald. For once in your pathetic life, make a decision.’

‘Um ... heads, yes,’ gasped Archie, reaching into his pocket for twenty pence piece. ‘Tails, no. Ready?’(Smith, 2000:456-7).

Through these lines, Archibald, is portrayed in *White Teeth* as a character who, as a foreigner in his own country, has become a commonplace, neutral fundamentalist, trying to navigate the possibilities. Despite having no English friends, it is clear that the current situation in England is one that only those in the lower economic strata can live with each other. Moreover, by merging his life with different people who are belong to different cultures, Archibald slowly loses his identity. In this case, against the circumstances that science, religion and society imposes such kind of fundamentalist activities, he remains apathetic and does not stir up trouble. Consequently, as an Englishman joins forces with the fundamentalist Iqbal and radical-liberal Chalfen families and experiences the inadequacy that comes with neutrality in his own country.

Similarly, Clara's living her home without saying any word her mother Hortense, and Hortense's Jehovah's Witness fundamentalist understanding do not explain the building of an opposing view system; instead, it produces a liberal atmosphere for their belief system in England. However, Clara's absence cultural or doctrinal beliefs engender Irie because of losing identity among her friends. Therefore, when Irie also escaped from her home like her mother, she was said "Oh Irie Ambrosia... I knew you come in the end. All God's children return in the end" (Smith, 2000:384) in terms of returning back to God. In every part of religion, the system is the same. Believing in something is valuable. Hortense, too, tries to do the same one for her grandkid. In addition to these, Irie's attempts to interrogating her appearance reveals that the absence of fundamental belief does not lead to freedom. Thus, Smith's novel clarifies that fundamentalism imposes constraint not only for physical appearance but for relations among the English people. In this position, Irie breaks up both familial relations and her relation with different people from different nations because of her real roots, which do not let her to be free.

"Religion has always been a disruptive force. When Karl Marx famously described religion as 'the opium of the people'" (Bruce, Steve. 2008:1). The integration of Muslim communities in Britain is not merely determined by state policies or social manners; it is also shaped by the social responses and behaviors of Muslims themselves. Within this context, the presence of radical Islamic movements represents a critical challenge to social harmony with the other nations. As Edward Said says " 'Islam' has always represented a particular menace to the West." (1981:12). In *White Teeth*, this particular menace is presented as the speculative organization of KEVIN. It makes this clear in terms of ideological transformation by promoting a militant interpretation of Islam grounded in confrontation and separation rather than faith and dialogue.

" 'Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation,' repeated Millat, impressed. 'That's a wicked name. It's got a wicked kung-fu kick-arse sound to it' " (Smith, 2000:295) means that even its name also disperses fear. It is a trick which founded to demolish Islamic identities in the colonized country, as Iqbal family's downfall. Such radical organizations sabotage multicultural cohabiting by encouraging extremism and consolidating public fears. Their actions not only emerge from a sense of alienation but also intensify societal suspicion and anti-Muslim sentiment, as Samad says for his son, Millat, " The one I keep here is fully paid-up green bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist" (Smith, 2000:407). These lines show that the character is dropped into the organization to reflecting islamphobia in England.

Islamic fundamentalism is too often presented within western narratives as overtly violent and ideologically ferocious, while Christian and Jewish traditions and actions are naturalized as cultural standarts and therefore they are shielded from similar observations unlike KEVIN which means Muslim organization. In *White Teeth*, the organization KEVIN, which Millat joins, described as a radical fundamentalism and completely visible part of threat. In contrast, Archie's impartial Christianity understanding is written as ordinary and harmless. Likewise, although the Chalfen family, liberal fundamentalist family, also has a migrant history like the other people, and their cultural class immunity enable them to occupy a central, which means even England, authoritative social position unlike Iqbals and Jones. In Britain, radical Islamist groups challenge social stability by turning religion from a private faith into a rigid political doctrine, reinforcing a sharp divide between insiders and outsiders (Küçük, Hale. 2021:255). The novel therefore alters critical attention away from religion itself and toward the ideological structures through which western power distinguishes between identities that are normalized and those that are seperated from doubt.

Moreover, the ideological rigidity for liberal-radical fundamentalism is planted through the whole novel. For instance, the Chalfens' intellectual confidence moves through scientific directions rather than coercion, but it still imposes normative assumptions about progress, intelligence, and cultural worth. Joyce praises her husband by telling " 'Yes but, he's had everything, and so much of it is nurture, isn't it? I really believe that. We've just been lucky enough to give him so much and with a daddy like Marcus- it's like having a strong sunbeam shining on him twenty-four hours a day, isn't it darling?" (Smith, 2000:324) these words for Oscar by praising and directly asking validation questions to Irie, in order to compare her children with Irie and Millat's family structure. This means that this intellectual family, in reality, exposes strict control over the others' fundamental identities.

Similarly, Samad's paternal control over his children and Millat's political radical fundamentalist actions depend on the reflection of roots and belief sytsem, unveiling how balance of power wanders via both private and public ambits. By calling attention to these similiar structures, *White Teeth* generally elevates the opposition between brightened secular world and backward religiosity. Drawing on theoretical understandings of fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity pricipally Karen Armstrong's conception of fundamentalism says that in *The Battle for God*, modernity in Islamic world is not like progression. It is a compulsory model which brought to the west forcibly, the west's attitude produced another different dimensions of fudanmentalism (2000:201-202). Smith reframes fundamentalism as a *pattern* rather than a doctrine in society. In doing so, she actually breaks the dominant western tendencies in this respect.

In the novel, Irie, Millat and Magid's relations with their families and the Chalfens are crucial for explaining different forms of fundamentalism. In this position, Irie, with her family Archibald and Clara, symbolizes the passive voice of fundamentalism which remained in betweenness. Millat, with his faithful, so-called, father Samad, tries to be independent in terms of his doings in KEVIN. However, the system that Smith wrote in the novel Shows the Islam in a different way. For example, Millat sleeps with white girls and also uses different addictive drugs and also plans many cotaining violence for the society he exposes to. This is reflecting of radical Islamist discourse. Hence, Millat amis to use the KEVIN for demolishing western actions. On the other hand, Magid loses his identity whatever his father does. " There are no words. The one I send home comes out a pukka Englishman, white suited, silly wig lawyer"

(Smith, 2000:407). Through these lines, it is clear that Magid's liberal fundamentalist intentions make him different person from his real roots.

By locating these ideologies alongside within the same narrative sphere, Smith clarifies fundamentalism as a **universal subject** rather than a culturally specific domain. The novel suggests that under conditions of migration, hybridity, and postcolonial fragmentation. At this stage, according to Homi Bhabha, betweenness is not a lack or confusion between configured identities. It is a third space where meaning and identity are created in harmony with living experiences (1994:19-20). In *White Teeth*, Millat plies between radical Islam and British popular culture. Magid turns away from his roots and embraces western rationalism. Irie struggles between black identity, Englishness, and her physical appearance.

These characters show that identity is formed not through conflict, but through constant negotiation and change. Fundamentalism thus emerges not merely as belief, but as an affective response to instability, one that promises coherence while ultimately foreclosing dialogue. In this sense, *White Teeth* critiques fundamentalism as an anti-pluralistic force that undermines the very multicultural conditions from which it arises. Evenly important matter is the presence of cultural-liberal fundamentalism, which shaped the whole novel via the Chalfen's actual fundamental actions and by exposing cosmopolitanism into the lives of Irie and Millat, they create different dimensions of societal structures. While presenting herself as tolerant, progressive, and intellectually open to criticism, Joyce acts as an authoritative member within her house for the other children. Her insistence on classifying, educating, and improving the children proves the dominant universality of western liberal values.

The thing that unites these plural forms of fundamentalism is their mutual objecting to hybridity and uncertainty. Each ideology goes after to balancing the identity by prompting purity whether religious, genetic, cultural, or intellectual and by drawing sharp boundaries between the self and the other. In the context of postcolonial Britain, where identities are necessarily blended, the rigidity becomes both attractive and destructive for the young generation. Fundamentalism proposes clarity and belonging. However, such kind of ideologies try to twist its functions for their own interests. By foregrounding plural fundamentalism, *White Teeth* reframes the debate between these different families in terms of extremism. The novel offers the readers to move beyond reductive instructions that spot radicalism merely within the suppressed religious communities and instead interrogate the broader cultural systems that reward certainty and suppress ambiguity. Fundamentalism, Smith implies, is not a failure of integration or belief, but a structural response to a world that demands fixed identities in an era defined by movement, mixture, and historical rupture.

At this point, the novel becomes evident that Smith's writing style extends beyond individual characters and aims for the broader fundamental ideologies by operating within multicultural Britain. Fundamentalism in *White Teeth* functions less as a belief system than as a method for survival within the disintegrated social sights. Countered with many historical backgrounds, specially Islamic fundamentalism is racialized, and characters shrink up toward rigid standpoints that pledge bondage and moral clarity. Most importantly, these standpoints whether religious, scientific, or liberal-humanist identities, all the same, indicated by an urge to correct meaning for identity through eliminating. The novel thus reframes fundamentalism as a response to modernity itself: a defensive reaction against hybridity, contingency, and the unsettling openness of postcolonial life.

Conclusion

In *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith does not treat fundamentalism solely as a form of religious extremism. The three families' relationships clarify the modern world's situation. As Bauman argues the concepts of modern uncertainty and the desire for certainty (Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000: 61). According to the concepts, the idea of modern uncertainty concretizes with the increase of goals and the disappearance of clear direction through Irie, Millat and Magid when they try to find a certainty for their own lives. Throughout the novel, cultural, religious, scientific, and liberal forms of fundamentalism emerge to create order and control in response to the modern life. From this perspective, the novel is closely related with Edward Said's critique of cultural power and liberal humanist intentions. He argues that culture does not belong to the East or the West but is a dynamic, non-monolithic formation shaped by historical interaction and power in accordance with East-West and Islam-West binaries (1994:24). Therefore, by juxtaposing the Iqbal family, the Joneses, and the Chalfens, Smith mangles the idea of fundamentalism that belongs to Islam or to the East. However, it is inevitable for the reader to see that Islam is reflected in a negative way through the novel. Smith's tone is disdainful in terms of criticising the three families life experiences in England, especially Muslim Iqbals (Yıldız, Fırat. 2016:737). Moreover, Smith aims to show that fundamentalism has multiple forms and shows not through Islamic identity but through the other nations also. *White Teeth* stays back in the perspective of ideological resolution, by ending with uncertainty. The novel's finale scene refuses to give a real victory for characters or nations. By exposing the fragility of all forms of fundamentalism, Smith leaves the novel's open-ended conclusion to the readers's interpretation. For this reason, *White Teeth* stands as a multicultural world defined by hybridity and change of social relationships even among different nationalities.

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INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN THE CONTEXT OF BENIN REPUBLIC WITH EFL STUDENTS OF CEG DOWA

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the efficient use of social media as tools for enhancing communicative skills, focusing on EFL students of CEG DOWA. Addressing the challenges of oral communication development in Benin EFL context, this study explores the effectiveness of integrating social media into the teaching process. A total of fifteen (15) secondary school teachers of English who were working at CEG DOWA during the academic year 2023-2024, and seventy (70) advanced learners were selected through simple random sampling. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, including questionnaires and interviews, this study identifies that social media serve as valuable supplementary resources. However, it cannot replace the interactive element of teacher-student engagement. The findings suggest then combining social media with traditional teaching methods and meaningful learning activities can significantly improve oral communication skills. This approach highlights the potential of social media to support rather than supplant conventional educational practices.

Keywords: Social media, Communicative skills, EFL Learners

Introduction

Computers and digital technologies are now part of almost every area of life, including education. In English language teaching, tools like ICT and social media are changing traditional methods and creating new ways of learning. Social media and networking sites have become an integral part of human interaction and education, as noted by Hussain, Cakir, and Candeger. These platforms support communication and can enhance the teaching and learning of English.

Since English is a global language, students need to develop fluency, especially in speaking. Social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube offer opportunities for

interaction, practice, and sharing ideas, which can help improve oral communication. Studies by Tleuzhanova and Sosas show that tools like YouTube and video conferencing can significantly support learners' speaking development by improving fluency, accuracy, and confidence. However, their use must be controlled, as improper or excessive use may have negative effects.

Moreover, social media provide innovative materials and activities that make learning more engaging. Research by Ghezir and Smagulova suggests that integrating new digital resources into teaching, especially within competency-based approaches, can strengthen the effectiveness of the learning process. When properly used, these platforms help students become more autonomous, confident, and actively engaged in speaking activities. Therefore, this study focuses on how the effective use of social media can enhance the oral communication skills of Beninese EFL learners.

Problem statement

English has become one of the most widely used languages in the world. It is not only a school subject but also a key tool for communication in international, academic, and professional contexts. In today's interconnected world, being able to use English effectively is no longer optional; it is a necessary skill for participation in many areas of life.

However, when we look at how English is taught in secondary schools in Benin, a gap clearly appears. Most of the time, teaching focuses on passing exams rather than developing real communication skills. As a result, students spend several years learning English, yet many of them still struggle to express themselves freely and confidently. In other words, they learn about the language, but they do not truly learn how to use it in real-life situations.

At the same time, technological developments have transformed everyday life, especially with the rise of social media. These platforms are now part of students' daily routines and offer new possibilities for learning. Tools such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, and Zoom can create opportunities for interaction, discussion, and even direct communication with English speakers. Because of this, they have strong potential to support the development of speaking skills.

Nevertheless, students mostly use these platforms for entertainment rather than learning. They chat, share posts, watch videos, and interact socially, but rarely use these tools to improve their English. Although they are constantly connected, this connection does not automatically lead to meaningful language practice. As a result, a valuable learning opportunity is often lost. For this reason, there is a need to rethink how these digital tools are used. If properly guided, students can turn social media into spaces for collaboration, practice, and skill development. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how social media can be used more effectively to improve students' oral communication in English. It also aims to identify suitable platforms and practical ways to integrate them into the teaching and learning process.

Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of this study, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges of oral communication skills development in Benin EFL context?
2. How effective is the application of social platforms in teaching oral communication?
3. What are the strategies and techniques of integrating social media in teaching-learning process to improve oral communication?

The next section addresses the significance of this investigation. There, it explains the potential value of the study and findings to the field of education and to English teaching and learning procedures.

Purpose of the Study

Today English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching-learning procedures should take into account both Competency Based Approach (CBA) and Information Communication Technology (ICT). This is to conform to the updated educational challenges. That's why the current study aims to explore the effectiveness of social media as tools for oral communication.

Scope of the Study

This study seeks to address this imperative by exploring how students use effectively social media to improve their oral communication. The research work is done on CEG DOWA. The participants of the study are teachers of English and students of second cycle randomly chosen. This target population of students is chosen because they are young people who are fond of mobile phones. Therefore, they always manipulate them. The learners are about 70 students. They belong to seconde A.

Literature review

According to Gulaqa Anwari et al (2023): "*Social Media are computer-based technologies through which people communicate and share information, opinions, pictures, videos*". Some examples are: Whatsapp, TicToc, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook etc.

Chand (2021) maintains that EFL learners' speaking challenges are linked not only to poor vocabulary repertoire but also to the absence of a suitable environment to practice English.

Research design

This study adopts a mixed-method approach to better understand how social media affects EFL students' oral communication. By combining questionnaires and interviews, the research gathers both quantitative and qualitative data, which allows for a deeper analysis of the issue. The research was carried out in a public school called CEG DOWA, located at fifth district in Porto-Novo city, OUEME region. It has approximately three thousands seven hundreds and thirty-eight (3738) students split in two cycles: two thousands six hundreds and five (2605) students for beginners and one thousand one hundred and thirty-three (1133) advanced learners. The researcher has chosen this school because it is the biggest school of Porto-Novo.

Target Population and Sample

The study involved three main groups: English teachers, advanced learners, and teacher advisers. Fifteen teachers and seventy advanced students from Seconde A Alpha were randomly selected at CEG DOWA, along with five teacher advisers. The teachers received the questionnaires during their weekly workshop.

Method of data collection

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaires were closed-ended, while the interviews were semi-structured. The analysis followed four steps: data reduction, presentation, verification, and conclusion.

Results and interpretation

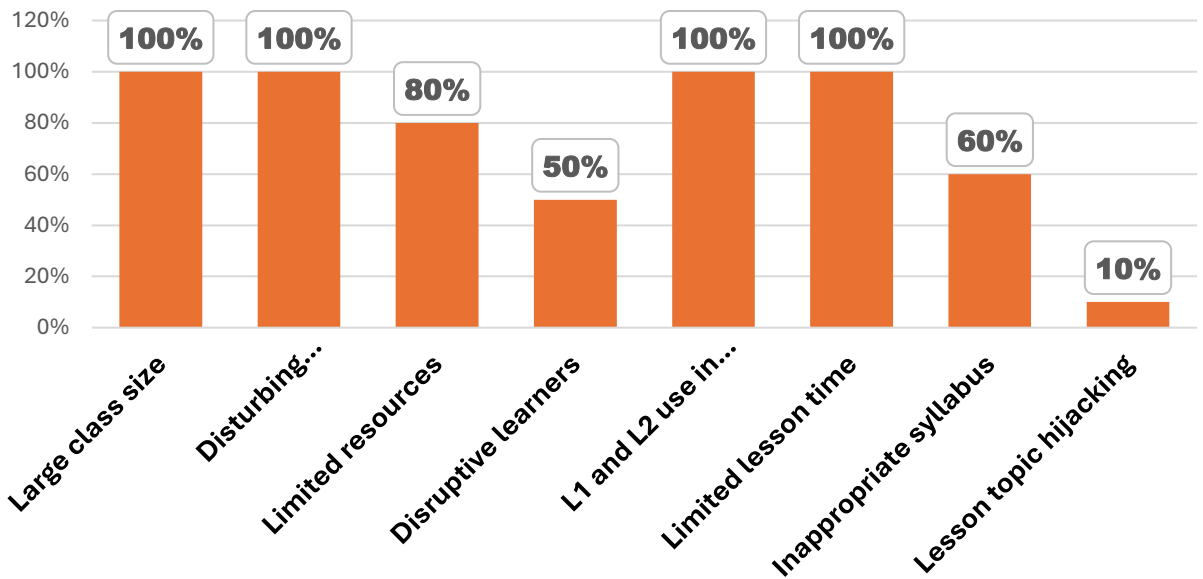


Fig 1 Challenges of oral communication skills development in Benin EFL context

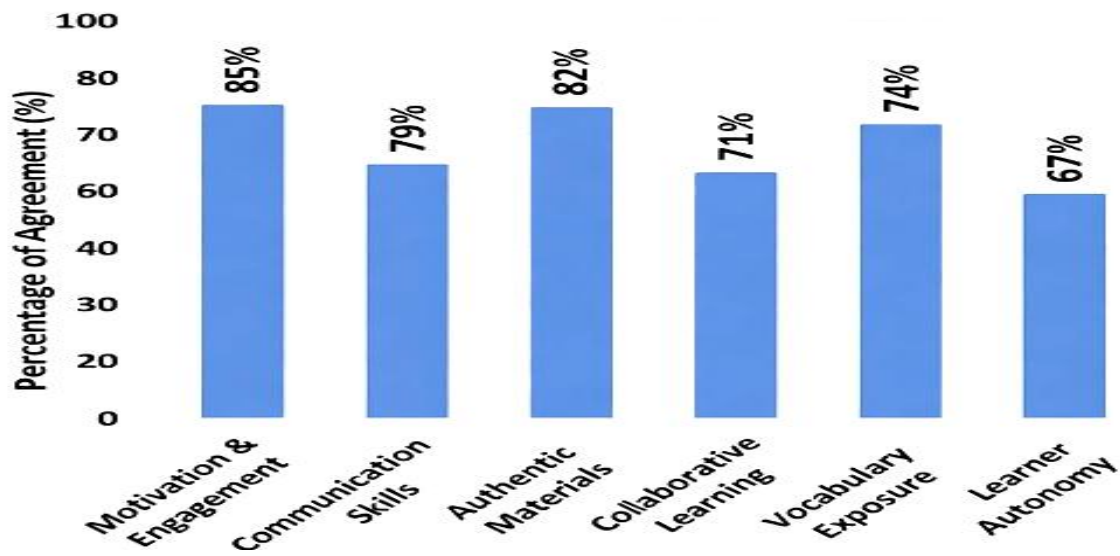


Fig2 Advantages of social media in Benin EFL context

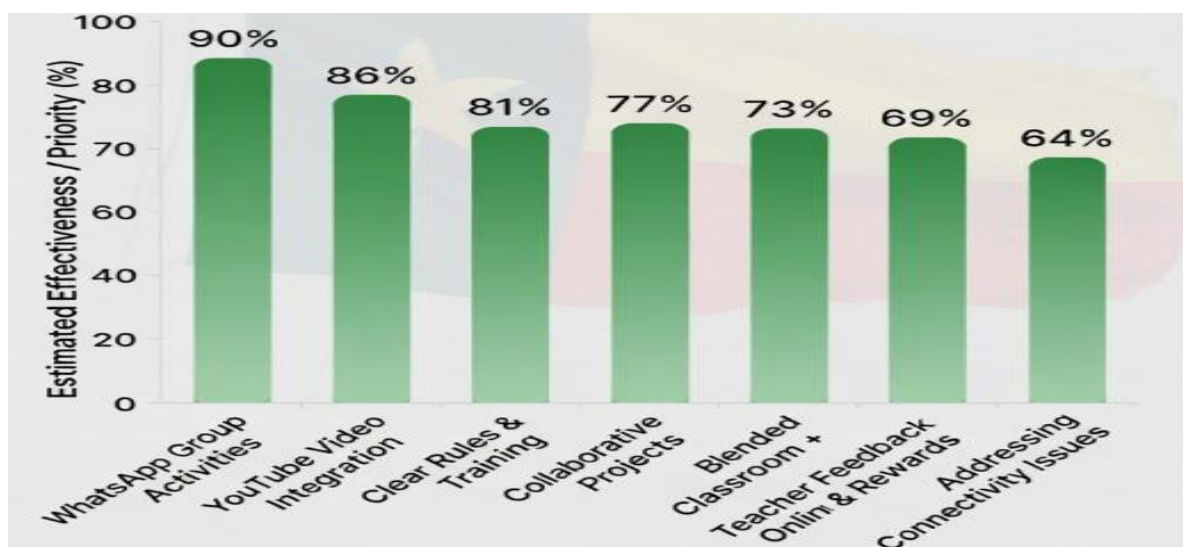


Fig 3 Strategies for effective integration of social media in teaching-learning process to improve oral communication

Among the five teacher advisors selected for interviews, only two (40%) experienced teaching with social media. They used social platforms as supplementary materials for learning English. They testify that they are effective as helping tools for diversified and authentic language input. Social media can also help for assignments and understanding the subjects due to the unlimited resources available online.

Recommendations

In light of the results of the current study, the researcher suggested not only that policy makers integrate social media in teaching and learning process but they should also design and provide training sessions to both students and teachers on the utilization of social media. Additionally, teachers should be ready for a paradigm shift and learn how to navigate the social media platforms. Finally, parents should spend time with their children on their phones so as to control their learning activities. This helps to avoid children distraction.

Conclusion

The case study of CEG DOWA illustrates how social media can be used to improve oral communication skills. Both teachers and students can use social media as supplements in their teaching learning process to improve oral communication. The choice of social media should be made in accordance with the students' abilities and the linguistic environment. The teacher-student interaction cannot be replaced by computers. Therefore, combining social media, teachers' assistant, and meaningful learning engagement can lead to a fruitful result.

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INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE MEDIA FOR LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: FROM PRINT TO BROADCAST

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ABSTRACT

There have been growing concerns for the decimation of indigenous languages across the globe. The reason for this is not far-fetched on the ground that whatever takes away the language of a people has indeed taken away their culture and identity. Meanwhile, language and communication theorists have always accused the media and the educational systems as the major culprits in the backwardness experienced in the utilisation and promotion of indigenous languages in Nigeria. To this end, this research endeavour was an attempt to trace the development of indigenous language media and their contributions the indigenous language media to language and cultural development in Nigeria. Two research questions were provided to give direction to the study and a systematic review approach was employed where the researchers engaged in comprehensive analysis of existing research outputs to trace and identify the contributions of indigenous language media to language and cultural development in Nigeria. The result revealed that the print media pioneered the development of language and culture in Nigeria but along the line it declined in their efforts. In contrast, the broadcast media appeared to be contributing more lately to the development of language and culture. A lot of indigenous broadcast media are springing up on daily basis especially radio stations. The development is giving a renewed hope to language and cultural development as well as language revitalisation and decolonisation. It was recommended that government at all levels should endeavour to support the existing indigenous language media and also consider establishing more indigenous language media.

Keywords: Indigenous Language, Indigenous Language Media, Language & Cultural Development, Print & Broadcast Media

BALANCING FORM-FOCUSED AND MEANING-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION IN ESL CLASSROOMS: A CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, teachers often face the challenge of balancing grammatical accuracy with communicative competence. Form-focused instruction emphasizes explicit teaching of grammar structures, while meaning-focused instruction prioritizes communication and fluency. This paper explores the importance of integrating both approaches to enhance language learning outcomes. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from second language acquisition and the author's teaching experience with secondary-level EFL learners, the study discusses how an imbalance between form and meaning can limit learners' ability to use English effectively in real-life contexts. The paper highlights practical classroom strategies that combine explicit grammar instruction with communicative activities, enabling learners to develop both accuracy and fluency. The discussion suggests that a balanced instructional approach supports learner engagement, improves language performance, and fosters confidence in speaking and writing. This conceptual paper contributes to ongoing discussions in ESL pedagogy and offers practical insights for teachers seeking effective instructional practices.

Keywords: Form-focused instruction; Meaning-focused instruction; ESL teaching; Grammar instruction; Communicative language teaching

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