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Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen
Department of English Studies



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PREFACE

The second issue of volume 12 of *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT* for 2024 includes papers on different topics in the fields of linguistics, methodology, cultural studies, literature, translation studies and two book reviews.

The first three articles in the journal are in the field of the media. The first one by Oleksandr Kapranov “Modality in Climate Change and Environmental Discourse by Greenpeace Australia Pacific” deals with the very hot issues on environmental protection, more specifically with the much debated question of climate change discussed by a number of non-governmental organisations in Facebook. It also dwells upon the implications modality through the use of modal verbs carry. The second one is “The Impact of Media on Youth in Shillong: A Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Perspective” by Gordon D. Dkhar and it discusses the interrelation between the intercultural and linguistic contacts between media users having different lifestyles. It also touches upon media and popular culture influence on young people in India through the extensive use of English among/ compared to other languages. The next paper “The Monochrome Tapestry of Solo Existential Travel in 21st Century Hollywood: A Critical Analysis” is by Namitha Nandan. It sheds light on the underinvestigated issue of racism and the absence of racial diversity as depicted in the first two decades of 21st century Hollywood solo existential travel films. Emphasis is put on the significance, relevance and aftermaths of this omission.

Abdul Awal with his “Gender Representation in English Language Textbooks in Bangladesh” analyses 6 to 10 class English course books by applying corpus analysis through AntConc, a textual analysis tool. This tool has been used for identifying the gender-related lexical items in the mentioned resources. A conclusion is made that the male-centred textbooks may lead to a wrong impact on students’ perceptions of gender roles and societal expectations.

In the following article “Systemic Functional Linguistics and Translator Education: A Literature Review” an emphasis is put on the linguistics and translator education from a systemic functional linguistics perspective. Reem Fahad Alshalan presents an overview of most of the references on the discussed issue. Some aspects of register analysis when training translators are pointed out. Comparative analysis for evaluating translations is applied.

The methodologically oriented paper “Assessing Gamification-Based LMS for EFL Students: A Self-Directed Learning Framework” by Joko Slamet and Yazid Basthomi raises awareness about self-directed learning (SDL), i.e. self-management, self-motivation and self-control by using gamification-based Learning Management Systems in facilitating English as a foreign language. The suggestions given to students are oriented towards personalized feedback

mechanisms and collaborative features for boosting learners' SDL skills by using gamified platforms.

Again, with a focus on methodology, Atipat Boonmoh and Intrira Kulavichian dwell upon "the new normal" environment in teaching online. Their paper titled "Enhancing Online and Intercultural Communication Skills through an Online Training Program for Thai Undergraduates in the New Normal" investigates online communication and intercultural communication skills of undergraduate students as well as their satisfaction from this online training program. However, the findings show that this way of training is insufficient for them to change their study habits.

The next paper in line is "Discourse of Dissent: Linguaging Resistance and Consciousness in Subaltern Literatures – Dalit and Black" by Chandan Kumar and Nivea Thomas K. As can be seen, it is literature oriented with a focus on language and culture in subaltern literatures. The method used is Critical Discourse Analysis. The discussed poems are created by using a simple everyday language. The theoretical framework of Subaltern Studies and Distributed Language is also employed for understanding the socio-political motifs behind the items from the corpus.

Yet another paper by N. Berrin Aksoy dwells upon literature issues, this time commenting on modernity. In "Spaces and Places of Modernity and the Modern Artist in Oğuz Atay's Railroad Storytellers - a Dream" the author touches upon Atay's modernist and innovative style expressed in his depiction of space and spatiality and influenced by Western modernists at the time after WW2. She also discusses the estrangement and alienation of the artist/author in the modern world.

The next article "Creating Creative Blends in 21 Century (a Comparative Study of English and Bulgarian)" by Svetlana Nedelcheva covers linguistic issues related to blending as a word-formative strategy applied to the use of newly coined words and phrases in English and English borrowings in Bulgarian. The study uses two databases (extracts from English and Bulgarian dictionaries) with whose help some morphological differences in the construction of English and Bulgarian blends are outlined.

Contrastive analysis is also applied for investigating frequently used idioms found in English and Albanian dictionaries. The study conducted by Agnesa Çanta and Leonora Husaj is based on three types of equivalence: full equivalence, partial equivalence, and non-equivalence. The corpus of idioms contains a number of the same idioms in both languages; however, there are differences in the construction of some idioms because of the different linguistic systems as well as of the different cultural and social backgrounds.

The focus of the last research in this issue is on translator training. Hussein Abu-Rayyash and Raidah Al-Ramadan fill in a void by looking into the models for quality assessment designed specifically for interlingual pre-recorded subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH). The study at hand aims to develop and validate a quality assessment model explicitly tailored for interlingual pre-recorded SDH. The proposed model is the Linguistic, Orthotypographic, and Technical (LOT) model which has been tested against other established assessment frameworks. To do that the scholars use a sample of 900 Arabic-English subtitles across diverse genres. As Hussein Abu-Rayyash and Raidah Al-Ramadan state, “the specialized LOT model designed for pre-recorded SDH yields markedly higher intercoder reliability and average quality scores compared to general subtitle assessment models, suggesting strong alignment with the multidimensional quality needs of the target SDH audience”. Therefore, if adopted in professional subtitling and training practices the model may enhance accessibility, inclusion, and overall viewing experience for deaf and hard-of-hearing media consumers.

Finally, there are 2 book reviews in the present issue:

One of them is by Desislava Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva on Boryana Kostova-Stamboliyska's *Legitimation and presidential campaign speeches: Discursive and pragmatic aspects* [Легитимация и предизборни речи: Дискурсивни и прагматични аспекти]. It problematizes the issue of ideology and linguistic imperialism implied in presidential campaign speeches of a period of 120 years (1900-2020). The problem of legitimation with its strategies is thoroughly exploited by using Critical Discourse Analysis. The review mentions some of the studies dedicated to concrete political speeches and their specificities on a comparative and contrastive basis. The reviewer draws upon the discussed issue of political discourse with its interrelation between politics and language as well as its characteristic features in general first and at a later stage applied and examined in the concrete materials. She has not disregarded the specificities of epistemic legitimation, epistemic modality, evidentiality, lexical means and personal deixis, to name but a few. Another focus of attention in the book deals with the use of intertextuality and myth-making exploited in the construction of the various speeches. The findings in the author's book summarise the analyses and end up with a classification of the verbal strategies used for legitimation.

The other book review is by Mihaela Culea on Brîndușa-Mariana Amălăncei's, *The analysis of gestures. A propaedeutic*. The author puts to the fore the importance of cultural differences and of verbalization upon reception while decoding body language in the form of gestures. She presents an overview of the different meanings attributed to gestures in the specialized literature. The complexity of gestures in communication and their interpretation based on the respective situation together with a classification of gestures are also pointed

out. The reviewer has mentioned the fact that what should be taken into account is various gestures used in different cultures performing different functions and practices. The relation between gestures and words determined by intentionality is also emphasised. Mihaela Culea stresses the idea of Habermas' distinction between communicative action and discourse applied and exploited in the book. She also underlines the interrelation between gestures and the meanings attached to them applied to various contexts of the French presidential debates between 1974-2012.

MODALITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE BY GREENPEACE AUSTRALIA PACIFIC

Oleksandr Kapranov

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Abstract: *The issue of climate change poses a serious challenge to the world we live in. People's concerns with the issue of climate change and environmental agenda are echoed by a number of nongovernmental organisations, for instance, Greenpeace Australia Pacific (GAP), which communicates its views on the matter to the public and selected target groups on Social Networking Sites (SNSs), such as Facebook. Currently, however, there is insufficient scholarship on GAP's communication on SNSs. In particular, little is known about the role of modality in GAP's climate change and environmental discourse on Facebook. The article presents a mixed-methods study that investigates how modality, which is often associated with modal verbs, is used by GAP in its communication on Facebook. The study involves a corpus of GAP's status updates on Facebook that are investigated for the frequency of the occurrence of modal verbs and their pragmatic roles. The results of the analysis reveal that the most frequently occurring modal verbs in the corpus are can, will, and would, which perform a range of pragmatic roles that are further discussed in the article.*

Keywords: *discourse, Greenpeace, modality, modal verbs, modals*

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Introduction

Currently, in 2024, the issue of climate change represents a challenge that affects business, political, and societal actors worldwide (Baquero & Monsalve, 2024; Hale, 2024; Kapranov, 2022a, 2024). The problems that are posed by climate change reverberate with civil society (Bulkeley & Newell, 2010; Kapranov, 2017a) and, more specifically, with a number of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), such as Greenpeace Australia Pacific, which is “an independent environmental campaigning organisation that uses non-violent direct action to work for solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future” (Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 2024). In its climate change- and environment-related activities, Greenpeace Australia Pacific (further in the article – GAP) relies heavily on Social Networking Sites (SNSs), for instance Facebook, in order to communicate with its supporters, disseminate its policies, calls for action and news, engage in fundraising, and raise people’s awareness of climate change, environmental protection, and sustainability (Ballew et al., 2015; Özgen et al., 2015; Silva, 2012). In this regard, the literature contends that SNSs (inclusive of Facebook) are regarded as a soft power tool that environmental NGOs (e.g., GAP) utilise in their communication with the public (Mavrodieva et al., 2019; Robelia et al., 2011). Therefore, it seems relevant to shed light on how GAP presents the issues of climate change and environment on Facebook and what kind of linguistic means are employed in representing these issues.

To-date, however, too little attention has been paid in the literature to the linguistic means of climate change and environmental communication by GAP on SNSs, especially on Facebook. Furthermore, there are no published studies that illuminate the use of modality, which is often represented by modal verbs, in climate change and environmental communication by GAP on Facebook. Seeking to address this understudied research facet, the article introduces and discusses a mixed-methods study that looks into the frequency and pragmatic use of modal verbs in a corpus of GAP’s Facebook status updates on the issues of climate change and environment. The focus on modality that is manifested by modal verbs is explained by the important pragmatic role that they play in climate change communication (Fløttum, 2010, 2014). Compare, for instance, the following two clauses that deal with the issue of climate change, whose pragmatic meanings depend critically on modality, which is manifested by the modal verbs *must* and *should*, respectively:

- (a) Municipal governments must be included in global efforts to mitigate climate change. (Betsill, 2001)
- (b) Municipal governments should be included in global efforts to mitigate climate change. (Adapted from Betsill (2001))

The critical difference between (a) and (b), as shown above, rests with the expression of necessity and, most likely, a strong recommendation in (a), whereas in (b) we can observe a situation that is associated with desirability and, perhaps, a mild suggestion. Taking into account the role of modal verbs in discourse, the aim of the study is to address the following research questions (RQs):

RQ 1: What are the frequently occurring modal verbs in the corpus of Facebook status updates by GAP?

RQ 2: What are pragmatic roles and types of modality that the frequently occurring modal verbs in the corpus associated with?

Setting the scene: A literature review on Greenpeace's discourse

Prior to addressing the RQs in the study, it seems pertinent to set the scene by acquainting the readers with an outline of the literature on Greenpeace and its climate change- and environment-related discourse. Founded in Canada in 1971, Greenpeace is considered one of the largest environmental NGOs worldwide (Gkotsis et al., 2006). Its branches are found in the major developed countries, inclusive of Australia (Eden, 2004). As a leading NGO that focuses on the issues of the environment, climate change, and environmental sustainability, Greenpeace has gained political and societal weight as a beacon of “an ecological sensibility that indirectly influences behavior at multiple scales, from individuals, to governments, to multilateral organizations” (Zelko, 2017, p. 319). Globally, Greenpeace is renowned for its social activism, which, typically, aims to “demand corporate change to tackle many issues, from the companies’ lack of attention to social problems to global climate demands” (Siedschlag & Lana, 2024, p. 1). The literature contends that Greenpeace’s discourse in general is (a) anti-corporate (Azpíroz, 2019), (b) anti-authoritarian, yet populist in tonality (Haig, 2001), and (c) science-based (Price, 2023).

In terms of communicating its environmental and climate change agenda, the literature indicates that Greenpeace’s discourse, or rather discourses, are reflective of the following challenge. Given that Greenpeace’s discourses pertain to global issues (e.g., climate change) that require local solutions carried out by local actors, the literature points to a certain degree of duality in environmental and climate change-related discourses by Greenpeace due to a global perspective on the one hand and a local fragmentation of the global issues and respective global discourses by its respective national branches on the other hand (Heinz et al., 2007). The literature, however, posits that despite the fragmentation of Greenpeace’s global discourses (Heinz et al., 2007), Greenpeace strives to portray itself globally in a positive light (Bennie, 1998; Gueterbock, 2004). In particular, in its climate change-related and environmental discourses Greenpeace seeks to capitalise on its successful environmental campaigns,

which facilitate the image of Greenpeace as an efficient and influential actor on the global environmental arena (Doyle, 2007; Kapranov, 2017a, 2017b; Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2019; Niceforo, 2021).

Despite a seemingly divergent array of fragmented discourses by the local branches of Greenpeace, the literature, however, demonstrates a surprising unity of Greenpeace discourses on climate change and environment, at least as far as the discursive means of multimodality (e.g., photos) are concerned (Doyle, 2007). Specifically, the literature posits that the iconic photos of polar bears without their natural sea ice habitat form an easy-to-understand visual metaphor of climate change, which is utilised quite successfully by Greenpeace and its branches in numerous environmental campaigns (Davis et al., 2016; Tsoukas, 1999). The extensive and pragmatically motivated use of multimodality is supported by fairly recent research findings, which reveal that Greenpeace, in particular, GAP, often resort to communicating their stance on environmental issues by such multimodal means as emojis and photos, which impart a visual dimension to GAP's online discourse that is critical to its environmental campaigns (Kapranov, 2023a).

Another multimodal means of environmental communication by Greenpeace involves an ample use of apps (e.g., *Plastic Radar*) and SNSs (for instance, Instagram) that facilitate its engagement with the public at large (Niceforo, 2021; Pramana et al., 2021). Furthermore, the literature reports that Greenpeace exploits video-narratives on sustainability on both YouTube and its official websites, which are characterised by a striking affinity with the language of advertising (Abbamonte, 2021). In particular, Greenpeace's video-narratives on sustainability often feature an idyllic landscape in conjunction with the behind-scenes narration that capitalises on implicit intertextual messages, which are conducive to creating an idealised, almost bucolic, eco-friendly image (ibid.). Given that Greenpeace utilises SNSs and multimodality rather generously, it seems logical to provide the readers with an outline of SNS-based discourse.

SNS-based discourse: Theoretical considerations

SNSs have become a part of people's daily reality (Sauter, 2014). In computer-mediated communication (CMC), an SNS is regarded as a communication system that involves registered participants and affords them digital tools for interaction and representation of their actions and thoughts (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Kapranov, 2016; Kytölä & Androutsopoulos, 2012). Given the pervasiveness of SNSs, at least in the Anglophone discursive space, SNS-based discourse has attracted research interest in CMC, discourse and media studies (Androutsopoulos, 2014, 2015, 2017; Kapranov, 2019).

The literature is indicative of several specific features that underlie SNS-based discourse. First of all, it is argued in the literature that one of the features

that determines the specificity of SNS-based discourse involves sharing. It is seen as an inherent, in-built component of SNS-based discourse (John, 2013). Specifically, sharing in the SNS-based discursive context presupposes (i) the distribution of digital content (e.g., hyperlinks) and (ii) communication as story-telling (e.g., a Facebook status update), which may involve people's locations, opinions of current events, and their quotidian activities (John, 2013). On Facebook, sharing can be regarded as discursive practices that take place in CMC contexts (John, 2013), such as the transformation of orally delivered discourse to its written form, which rather often includes multimodal elements, for instance hashtags, hyperlinks, videos, etc. (Androutsopoulos, 2011, 2013; Kapranov, 2014; Kytölä & Androutsopoulos, 2012).

Another feature of SNS-based discourse involves its participatory character (Androutsopoulos, 2015, 2017). This feature consists in assembling public and/or private audiences, who can be referred to as the recipients of sharing (John, 2013). They also can be seen in terms of Facebook as friends, followers, and subscribers. Typically, the recipients of sharing form a rather mosaic group or even groups of people, whose co-occurrence on a given SNS is known in the literature as “context collapse” (Androutsopoulos, 2014). “Context collapse” can be defined as a process of merging of diverse social contexts and their representatives into a common SNS-based context (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). In other words, SNSs tend to merge (i.e., collapse) those users, who would not share much in common in their offline lives, whilst their online presence could be marked by the “people they do not normally bring together, such as acquaintances, friends, co-workers, and family” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

In addition to the aforementioned construal of “context collapse”, SNS-based discourse is argued to involve the notion of “significant moments” (Androutsopoulos, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). It is posited in the literature that “significant moments” seem to be semiotically significant to the SNS users and their online activities (Androutsopoulos, 2014, 2015). Within the context of Facebook, for instance, “significant moments” are problematised as communicative acts that represent an important event to the user and their Facebook friends (Androutsopoulos et al., 2013). Obviously, only those Facebook friends that are privy to the background knowledge associated with a significant moment could understand and, if necessary, share the moment with other Facebook users and friends (Androutsopoulos & Tereick, 2015).

Finally, one of the salient features of SNS-based discourse involves the construal of “linguistic repertoire”, which is theorised to be an individualised, even SNS-specific, norm of the particular speech community that utilises CMC on SNSs (Androutsopoulos, 2007a, 2007b). The construal of “linguistic repertoire” in digital CMC contexts is argued to be associated with the specificity of different multimedia and digital communicative practices (Androutsopoulos, 2015, 2017).

In SNS-based discourse, linguistic repertoires seem to be determined and, to an extent, constrained by the users' flow of communication in space and time (Androutsopoulos, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017).

Having outlined the specificity of SNS-based discourse, it seems logical to proceed to the theoretical premises of the present study, which involve modality.

The present study and its theoretical premises that concern modality

As previously mentioned, there are no published studies on modality in GAP's discourse. In this regard, it should be emphasised that modality is rarely addressed in research on climate change- and environment-related discourses (Fløttum, 2010; Fløttum & Dahl, 2012; Kapranov, 2023b). The present study aims to fill in the current gap in scholarship by shedding light on the use of modality that is manifested by the central modal verbs in GAP's online communication on Facebook. Prior to doing so, let us consider the theoretical framework of the study that is based, predominantly, on the approach to modality formulated and developed by Palmer (1990).

Whilst there are multiple approaches to modality (Depraetere & Reed, 2006; Kapranov, 2022b; Payne, 2011; Skorasińska, 2014, 2019), the theoretical premises found in Palmer (1990) provide a solid theoretical background that facilitates the analysis of modality in written discourse produced by English native speakers (L1). Palmer's (1990) theoretical framework, which focuses on modality in English L1, is relevant in the context of the study, given that the corpus is comprised of Facebook status updates written by Australian Facebook users in Australia, i.e. in the country, where English is spoken as L1.

According to Palmer (1990), modality in English is "a broad notional area that may involve various kinds of linguistic expressions" (Tsangalidis & Facchinetti, 2009, p.19). Whilst modality is not clearly definable, it is, mostly, rendered by modal auxiliary verbs as well as other grammatical and semantic categories (Palmer, 1990). Furthermore, Palmer (1990) argues that a certain degree of vagueness associated with modality in English

gives the investigator no very clear guidelines concerning where to set the limits. Thus in English, although there are six modal verbs that must certainly be included (WILL, SHALL, MAY, CAN, MUST and OUGHT TO), there are two (DARE and NEED) that are more marginal; moreover, some of the meanings of these verbs are 'more modal' than others. Then there are several others of varying status: USED TO is formally within the system, but semantically has virtually nothing in common with the others, and will not be considered in this book. Have To, Be Able To, Be Willing To, Be Bound To and Be Going To

are closely related semantically (though with some significant differences), but formally outside the system, while *Is To* is problematic. (Palmer, 1990, p. 3)

Palmer (1990) distinguishes three main types of modality, namely (i) epistemic, (ii) deontic, and (iii) dynamic. According to Palmer (1990, p. 50), epistemic modality is subjective, given that the epistemic judgment rests with the speaker. Deontic modality is typically manifested by the modals that denote permission, obligation, and even a threat (Palmer, 1990, p. 69). Dynamic type of modality, as explained by Palmer (1990, p. 83), refers to the ability or volition of the subject in a clause. The types of modality in accordance with Palmer (1990) are further specified and illustrated in Table 1 below. It should be emphasised that all the examples and explanations in Table 1 are taken from Palmer (1990).

Table 1. *The Types of Modality According to Palmer (1990)*

#	The Type of Modality	Explanation According to Plamer (1990)
1	Epistemic modality renders	possibility, which is associated with <i>may</i>. It can be paraphrased as ‘possible that’. Under the heading of epistemic possibility the ‘concessive’ use of <i>may</i> might also be handled (e.g., “Whatever John may say ...”); a judgment, and/or a stronger claim than the strongest of all epistemic judgments; possibility expressed by <i>will</i>, however, it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to distinguish epistemic <i>will</i> from the <i>will</i> of futurity (e.g., John will go to London tomorrow). In case of epistemic <i>will</i>, the progressive form of the following verb is often used, where there is no duration, to indicate an epistemic sense (e.g., John <i>will</i> be going to London tomorrow); uncertainty and vagueness by the tentative forms <i>might</i> and <i>would</i>, which are the relevant forms of <i>may</i> and <i>will</i>; additionally, there are cases of <i>should</i> being used in what appears to be an epistemic sense (e.g., Well both of them should be on the Board).

#	The Type of Modality	Explanation According to Plamer (1990)
2	Deontic modality renders	possibility, which is marked by <i>may</i> and <i>can</i>. In particular, the occurrence or potential occurrence of <i>may</i> will usually distinguish this kind of modality from the other non-epistemic kinds. Deontic necessity involves <i>must</i>, but there is no clear line between its uses for deontic and neutral dynamic necessity; permission (<i>may</i>, <i>can</i>), an obligation (<i>must</i>), a promise or threat (<i>shall</i>). <i>May</i>, if not epistemic, is usually clearly performative; it gives permission. Unlike <i>can</i> it is not also used normally for dynamic possibility; necessity, which is associated with <i>must</i>, in which the speaker clearly takes responsibility for the imposing of the necessity (e.g., I've been telling Peter, as I've been telling several people, you know, 'You must get into permanent jobs); an undertaking or guarantees that the event will take place, which is associated with <i>shall</i>. <i>Shall</i> does not merely lay an obligation, but actually guarantees that the action will occur (e.g., You shall have it tomorrow).
3	Dynamic modality renders	the ability of the subject (e.g., He's one of the senior referees in the league, fairly strict disciplinarian, can handle games of this nature). Subject orientation should not, however be simply and strictly defined in terms of ability. Only animate creatures may have ability, but subject orientation is possible with inanimates, where it indicates that they have the necessary qualities to cause the event to take place (e.g., Religion can summate, epitomize, relate, and conserve all highest ideals and values). Can in the aforementioned example implies positive qualities of religion.

In addition to Palmer's (1990) approach to modality, the study is informed by the consideration of pragmatic roles of modal verbs in climate change- and environment-related discourse, which are described in Kapranov (2023b, 2023c) and Fløttum (2010, 2014). Specifically, they argue that modal verbs are amply utilised in corporate and political discourses in order to facilitate the creation of a positive image vis-à-vis the issues of climate change and environmental

sustainability. According to Fløttum (2010, 2014) and Kapranov (2023b, 2023c), the central modals, in particular *will*, are quite productively used as boosters in climate change discourse, in which they tend to express certainty and, less commonly, assertion. In line with Fløttum (2010, 2014) and Kapranov (2023d), the central modals (for instance, *would*) are regarded as a valuable pragmatic means of hedging that helps eschew an impression of being too authoritative or domineering, which, in turn, contributes discursively to positive image-building by a politician, a corporate and/or a public body. In light of the approach to the pragmatic roles of the central modals that is found in Fløttum (2010, 2014) and Kapranov (2023c), hedging in climate change discourse as well as environmental sustainability discourses is associated with *may*, *might*, *could*, *would*, and *should*, whereas boosting is typically expressed by *must*, *can*, and *will*. It should be noted that a similar approach to the pragmatic roles of the central modals is found in Hyland (1994, 2000), whose research, however, does not address climate change- and environment-related discourse.

It should be made clear, however, that whereas Fløttum's (2010, 2014) and Kapranov's (2023b, 2023c) views of the pragmatic roles of modals as a discursive image-building device form one of the cornerstones of this investigation, the central modals in the study are assumed to play an array of polyfunctional roles (Atsuko, 2001; Facchinetti, 2003). Arguably, a central modal verb may be associated with several pragmatic roles, which are actualised in the stretch of discourse and may contribute not only to positive image-building as indicated by Fløttum (2010, 2014) and Kapranov (2023c), but also to ascribing negative roles to discursive actors, depending on the communicative situation at hand.

The present study: Its specific research aims and corpus

Aided by the aforementioned theoretical considerations, the specific aims of the study are threefold: (i) to collect a corpus of GAP's status updates on Facebook; (ii) to establish the frequency of the central modal verbs in the corpus; (iii) to identify possible pragmatic roles, which the most frequently occurring modals play in the corpus; and (iv) to specify the types of modality the most frequently occurring modals in the corpus are associated with. In harmony with the research aims, the RQs have been formulated (see the introductory part of the article).

The corpus of the study is comprised of GAP's Facebook status updates posted online from 1 June 2023 to 30 November 2023 (i.e., six months in total). Following the literature (Kapranov, 2014, 2019, 2022a), the cut-off of six months is considered sufficient for the corpus collection. Hence, the corpus involves GAP's Facebook status updates downloaded from its official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/greenpeaceaustraliapacific>, converted into Word files and processed in the statistical program Statistical Package for Social

Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 (IBM, 2011). The application of SPSS to the corpus has revealed that it is comprised of 147 status updates and 7 385 words in total (mean 50.2, standard deviation 40.9).

Methodology

From the vantage point of methodology, the study is informed by the quantitative and qualitative considerations. The quantitative part is facilitated by the computer program AntConc (Anthony, 2022). Specifically, the quantitative corpus analysis in AntConc consists in computing the frequency of the central modal verbs (*can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, and would*). Thereafter, the frequency of the occurrence of each central modal verb is processed in SPSS (IBM, 2011) in order to calculate its mean, standard deviation, and the margin of error. In addition, the ratio of each central modal verb in relation to the total number of modals in the corpus is also calculated in SPSS.

The qualitative part involves the identification of pragmatic roles that the central modal verbs play in the corpus. The identification of the roles is based upon the theoretical premises outlined in Fløttum (2010) and Kapranov (2023c). In line with them, each central modal verb in the corpus is examined for its possible participation in creating (i) a positive image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders; (ii) a negative image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders; (iii) a negative image of GAP's opponents; (iv) a positive image of GAP's opponents; (v) an objective neutral role associated with stating and reporting facts, data, etc.; and (vi) a subjective role associated with expressing uncertainty, doubt and a vague opinion. In addition, the qualitative part of the analysis involves a manual investigation of the types of modality in accordance with Palmer (1990). Specifically, I analyse how the most frequently occurring modals in the corpus are associated with the types of modality postulated by Palmer (1990).

Results and discussion

The results of the quantitative analysis reveal that in total there are 56 occurrences (i.e., 100%) of the central modals in the corpus. Their descriptive statistics are given in Table 2, which summarises the total number (N) of the modals in absolute values, their means (M), standard deviations (SD), and the margin of error (ME) based upon the 95% confidence interval. Moreover, Table 2 involves the frequency of the occurrence of the modals normalised per 1000 words. In addition, Table 2 summarises the ratio (as percentage) of the specific modal verb relative to the total number of modals in the corpus.

Table 2. *The Frequency of the Central Modal Verbs in the Corpus*

#	Modals	Absolute Frequency	Normalised Frequency per 1000 words	The Ratio (in %) of the Specific Modal Relative to the Total N of Modals
1	<i>Can</i>	Total N = 22 M = 1.1 SD = 0.3 ME = 1.1 ± 0.131 ($\pm 11.95\%$)	3.0	39.3 %
2	<i>Could</i>	Total N = 2 M = 1.0 SD = 0 ME = 1 ± 0 ($\pm 0.00\%$)	0.3	3.6 %
3	<i>May</i>	Total N = 3 M = 1.5 SD = 0.5 ME = 1.5 ± 0.693 ($\pm 46.20\%$)	0.4	5.4 %
4	<i>Might</i>	-	-	-
5	<i>Must</i>	Total N = 2 M = 1.0 SD = 0 ME = 1 ± 0 ($\pm 0.00\%$)	0.3	3.6 %
6	<i>Shall</i>	-	-	-
7	<i>Should</i>	Total N = 1 M = 0 SD = 0 ME = 0	0.1	1.8 %
8	<i>Will</i>	Total N = 15 M = 1.3 SD = 0.8 ME = 1.25 ± 0.469 ($\pm 37.53\%$)	2.0	26.8 %
9	<i>Would</i>	Total N = 11 M = 1.2 SD = 0.4 ME = 1.22 ± 0.272 ($\pm 22.22\%$)	1.5	19. 6%

Let us discuss the findings, which are presented in Table 2, in conjunction with the RQs in the study.

Discussing RQ 1: The most frequently used modal verbs in the corpus

As indicated in the introduction, RQ 1 in the study seeks to learn about the most frequently occurring modal verbs in the corpus. It is seen in Table 2 that the most frequently occurring modals in the corpus are represented by *can*, *will*, and *would*. In this regard, the frequent occurrence of *can* and *will* in the corpus lends support to the literature, which indicates that they are utilised rather frequently in climate change discourse (Fløttum, 2010, 2014; Fløttum & Dahl, 2012; Kapranov, 2023b). Specifically, it has been found in the study by Kapranov (2023b) that *can* is the most frequent modal verb in academic discourse on climate change and climate-change-related health issues. Its frequency in normalised values in Kapranov's study (2023b) is rather similar to the normalised frequency in the present corpus.

Additionally, the present findings buttress the prior study by Kapranov (2023c), in which *can* is demonstrated to occur frequently in the discourses on environmental sustainability by two well-known British retailers. In particular, the normalised frequencies of *can* that are reported in Kapranov (2023c) and in the present corpus, respectively, are similar. These findings suggest that the frequent use of *can* in climate change discourse forms part of what Androutsopoulos (2007a, 2007b) refers to as “linguistic repertoire” in SNS-based communication. Arguably, it seems quite possible that climate change discourses, in particular SNS-based ones, may employ *can* rather frequently due to the specificity of SNS-bounded communication that is reflective of SNS users' proclivity to use a certain modal verb (Androutsopoulos, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). At the same time, however, it appears feasible that *can* might be one of the frequently occurring modal verbs in climate change discourses irrespective of their media. Obviously, these contentions should be treated with caution, since more data are needed to glean a more profound insight into the frequency of *can* in climate change discourses on SNSs.

The high frequency of *will* in the corpus supports the literature (Fløttum & Dahl, 2012; Kapranov, 2023b), which posits that it is often employed in climate change discourse. In particular, the high frequency of *will*, which is reported in the literature (Fløttum & Dahl, 2012; Kapranov, 2023c), is explained by political and corporate actors' confidence and certainty of what they communicate to their stakeholders as far as the issues of climate change and environmental sustainability are concerned. In other words, the literature (Fløttum, 2010, 2014; Fløttum & Dahl, 2012; Kapranov, 2023b, 2023c) suggests that the frequent use of *will* in climate change and environmental discourses correlates with the corporate and/or political actors' intentions to construe their positive image in

relation to the issue of climate change. Additionally, the high frequency of *will* in the corpus can be accounted by the contention found in the prior studies (Fløttum & Dahl, 2012; Kapranov, 2023b, 2023c), which point to the rather frequent occurrence of *will* in expressing judgements and opinions on the issues of climate change and environmental sustainability.

As mentioned, *would* is another frequently occurring modal in the corpus. However, its high frequency of occurrence is not reported in the literature on climate change discourse (Fløttum, 2010, 2014; Fløttum & Dahl, 2012; Kapranov, 2023b, 2023c). In particular, whereas in academic discourse on climate change and health the occurrence of *would* appears to be rather low (Kapranov, 2023b), *would* seems to be marginally present in corporate and political discourses on the issue of climate change (Fløttum, 2010, 2014; Fløttum & Dahl, 2012). A relatively high frequency of the occurrence of *would* in the present corpus can be accounted, arguably, by its pragmatic roles that are associated with tentativeness and uncertainty (Kapranov, 2023d). This observation leads us to the discussion of RQ 2 in the study, which looks into the pragmatic roles of the frequently occurring modals in the corpus.

Discussing RQ 2: The pragmatic roles and types of modality of the most frequently occurring modal verbs in the corpus

It is stated in the introductory part of the article that RQ 2 is concerned with the pragmatic roles and types of modality that are associated with the frequently occurring modals in the corpus. Given that the results of the corpus analysis have revealed that the most frequently used modal verbs are *can*, *will*, and *would* (see Table 2), let us focus the discussion on them, paying attention to their pragmatic roles.

Prior to proceeding to the pragmatic roles of *can*, *will*, and *would*, however, it seems reasonable to revisit the construal of sharing in the sense postulated by Androutsopoulos (2011, 2013). To reiterate, as a feature of SNS-based discursive practices, sharing presupposes online storytelling that involves people's opinions and reflects their quotidian activities (Androutsopoulos, 2011, 2013; John, 2013). We may argue that sharing in the context of climate change and environmental communication on Facebook by Greenpeace in general and GAP in particular would be characterised by a pragmatic tendency to focus on climate change-related environmental activism, which, typically, aims at presenting Greenpeace and its respective national branches in a positive light (Siedschlag & Lana, 2024) concurrently with creating a negative, or at least, less favourable image of corporations and authorities that are responsible for the negative consequences of climate change and environmental pollution (Azpiroz, 2019; Bennie, 1998; Doyle, 2007; Gueterbock, 2004; Haig, 2001; Kapranov, 2017a, 2017b, 2023a; Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2019; Niceforo, 2021; Price,

2023). In other words, Greenpeace and GAP, respectively, are likely to share positive news and storylines about themselves on Facebook.

Indeed, our reasoning that concerns GAP's pragmatic strategy of sharing positive status updates on Facebook is supported by the results of the qualitative analysis of the corpus. Specifically, the results have revealed that the frequently occurring modal verb *can* is involved, predominantly, in GAP's positive image-building, as evident from Table 3 below.

Table 3. *The Pragmatic Roles of 'Can' in the Corpus*

#	Pragmatic Roles of Can	Percentage
1	A positive image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders	68.2 %
2	A negative image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders	-
3	A negative image of GAP's opponents	9.1 %
4	A positive image of GAP's opponents	-
5	An objective neutral role associated with stating the facts	22.7 %
6	A subjective role associated with expressing uncertainty, doubt and a vague opinion	-

Judging from Table 3, the majority of the occurrences of *can* are associated with positive image-building by GAP (68.2%). This finding supports the literature (Fløttum, 2010, 2014; Kapranov, 2023b, 2023c), which demonstrates that *can* is involved in facilitating a positive image of corporate actors in climate change discourse. In the corpus, the utilisation of *can* seems to contribute discursively to the creation of positivity and affection that celebrate the GAP's flagship vessel The Rainbow Warrior, as exemplified by excerpt (1).

Today marks 38 years since the bombing and sinking of the original #RainbowWarrior in New Zealand. Today we remember our crew member, photographer and dear friend, Fernando Pereira, who was killed, and the spirit that still lives on nearly 40 years later as we continue our mission for #ClimateJustice in the Pacific. You can't sink a rainbow. (GAP, 2023)

Whilst in (1) we observe the occurrence of *can* in a negative clause (e.g., You can't sink a rainbow), *can*, nevertheless, conveys a strong message of positivity and GAP's optimistic perspective on its future, which is rendered by the reference to the rainbow that, in turn, serves as an allusion to the original vessel The Rainbow Warrior that had been sunk in New Zealand in 1985.

Just like (1), excerpt (2) emblematises the occurrence of *can* in a negative clause, which, however, is deployed to exhibit GAP's willingness and enthusiasm to involve its supporters and stakeholders in a journey across the Pacific Ocean.

Thank you for the warm welcome, Vanuatu!  Our crew onboard the Rainbow Warrior are feeling very humbled and overwhelmed after this week's warm

‘welcome home’ by civil society groups, local communities and government representatives in Port Vila, Vanuatu. ♥ We can’t wait to take you along with us over the next few weeks on our [#ClimateJustice](#) journey across the Pacific. (GAP, 2023)

In addition to the facilitation of positive image-building illustrated by (1) and (2), *can* is used in the corpus in the neutral pragmatic role (22.7%), which is associated with stating the facts, as seen in excerpt (3).

Today, we have already used all the resources the Earth can renew this year. Let that sink in. (GAP, 2023)

Unlike the positive image of GAP (inclusive of its supporters and stakeholders), *can* is also involved in creating a negative image (9.1%) of GAP’s opponents, which, rather frequently, are represented by international fossil fuel corporations, as demonstrated in excerpt (4).

(4) Climate leaders across the Pacific are urging you to make a strong submission to the International Court of Justice so that the world’s biggest polluters can be held accountable. (GAP, 2023)

In terms of the discussion of *can* in the corpus, it should be noted that *can* is associated with the dynamic type of modality. As mentioned earlier in the article, the dynamic type of modality according to Palmer (1990) is, typically, manifested by *can*, which denotes ability and possibility, respectively, and expresses judgments about the degree that an action is possible. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis indicates that *can* in the present corpus is associated with dynamic modality, which comprises ability and extrinsic possibility (i.e., the occurrence of an event is possible for the reason that external circumstances do not prevent it from occurring).

Another frequently occurring modal in the corpus is *will*, whose pragmatic roles are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. *The Pragmatic Roles of 'Will' in the Corpus*

#	Pragmatic Roles of Will	Percentage
1	A positive image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders	80.0 %
2	A negative image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders	-
3	A negative image of GAP’s opponents	-
4	A positive image of GAP’s opponents	-
5	An objective neutral role associated with stating the facts	13.3 %
6	A subjective role associated with expressing uncertainty, doubt and a vague opinion	6.7%

It is seen in Table 4 that the major pragmatic role of *will* in the corpus is associated with the positive image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders (80.0%). This finding is encapsulated by excerpt (5).

(5) We will nurse. We will teach. We will look after. We care. And we will lead.
♥🙏 (GAP, 2023)

In contrast to the pragmatic roles of positive image-building in (5), *will* is less commonly engaged in the neutral pragmatic role associated with presenting facts (13.3%), as seen in excerpt (6).

(6) “Vanuatu belongs to me” ♥♥♥ As part of our visit to Vanuatu, the [#RainbowWarrior](#) hosted a special Art Exhibition onboard the helideck, curated with communities from across the world to build solidarity through demonstration that the fight to protect tradition and culture in the face of [#climatechange](#) is one that is global. 🌍👉 These precious cultural relics will be transported with us to Canberra and then to the Hague to confront decision makers with the stories of communities that stand to be impacted by political discussions about climate change. (GAP, 2023)

In addition to the neutral pragmatic role, *will* in the corpus seems to be involved in the pragmatic role of expressing a subjective opinion that is rather vague in nature, as seen in excerpt (7) below.

(7) Greenpeace’s mission is to secure an earth capable of nurturing life in all of its magnificent diversity. Our campaign work is motivated by a deep love of nature and humanity, and we believe that a flourishing earth will only be secured if fairness, justice and equality are at the heart of our decision-making. (GAP, 2023)

Contrary to *will* in (5), in which *will* clearly serves as a booster whose pragmatic role consists in amplifying the main message in one of GAP’s environmental campaigns (GAP, 2023), *will* in excerpt (7) renders an uncertain possibility, e.g. “a flourishing earth will only be secured if fairness...” (GAP, 2023). This finding is not reported in the prior studies on the use of modals in climate change discourse (Fløttum, 2010, 2014; Kapranov, 2023b, 2023c). Presumably, the pragmatic role of *will* in (7) is determined, to an extent, by the epistemic type of modality in the sense found in Palmer (1990). According to Palmer (1990), the epistemic *will* in (7) is associated with possibility, which can be paraphrased as “something that might happen, but is unlikely or unknown”. Judging from the data, *will* in the corpus is, primarily, epistemic.

Similarly to the epistemic *will* in the corpus, the qualitative analysis indicates that the modal *would* appears to be associated with the epistemic type of modality in Palmer’s (1990) typology. It should be, perhaps, reminded that *would* is the third frequently occurring modal in the corpus. Its pragmatic roles are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *The Pragmatic Roles of 'Would' in the Corpus*

#	Pragmatic Roles of <i>Would</i>	Percentage
1	A positive image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders	18.1 %
2	A negative image of GAP, its supporters and stakeholders	-
3	A negative image of GAP's opponents	36.4 %
4	A positive image of GAP's opponents	-
5	An objective neutral role associated with stating the facts	9.1 %
6	A subjective role associated with expressing uncertainty, doubt and a vague opinion	36.4 %

It follows from Table 5 that *would* is involved in playing two major pragmatic roles in the corpus. The first one consists in the subjective role, which manifests a vague opinion (36.4 %), i.e., the opinion that lacks determination and precision, as seen in excerpt (8).

(8) From whale habitats to rare ocean ecosystems, deep sea mining would have devastating consequences. ❤️ (GAP, 2023)

The second one is represented by *would* that is actively involved in constructing a negative image of GAP's opponents (36.4 %), as illustrated by excerpt (9).

(9) [#BREAKING](#) 🇲🇵 Woodside has announced its plans to start seismic blasting near UNESCO-protected Ningaloo Reef for up to 80 days from TOMORROW.

...Despite an ongoing legal action filed in court challenging the regulator's decision to approve the work. 📢 Next door to a whale migration superhighway - including for endangered pygmy blue whales - the seismic blasting is to assess for climate-wrecking gas as part of Woodside's Burrup Hub development - the most polluting fossil fuel project currently proposed in Australia that would produce over 6 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over its lifetime until 2070. 😡 [#WhalesNotWoodside](#)

Given that *would* in the corpus is associated with the epistemic type of modality, it could be posited that its pragmatic use lessens the intensity of negativity that is aimed at GAP's opponents, which are usually represented by big fossil fuel corporations. In other words, we may contend that *would* in the corpus, at least in its role of the negative image-builder of fossil fuel corporations (e.g., Woodside), is utilised as a hedging device. As far as *would* as a hedging device is concerned, it can be argued that its relatively high frequency in the corpus could be accounted for by fairly recent rules on Facebook that aim at preventing hate speech and minimising uncivil comments (Kalsnes & Ihlebæk, 2021). It is quite feasible that GAP, being aware of Facebook regulations, self-moderates its online debates with its opponents, for instance, fossil fuel corporations, and uses *would* as a hedging device in order to present its discourse in a more restrained

manner. This finding is in contrast to Haig (2001), who argues that discourses by Greenpeace are assertive and even brash.

Summarising the discussion of RQ 2, it seems possible to indicate that the high frequencies of *will* and *can* and their respective pragmatic roles in the corpus lend support to the literature (Fløttum, 2010, 2014; Kapranov, 2023c), which reports that the aforementioned modals constitute a recurrent discursive means of positive image-building in climate change-related and environmental discourses. Furthermore, the present findings, especially those that involve the modal verb *can*, buttress a number of prior studies (Azpíroz, 2019; Heinz et al., 2007; Siedschlag & Lana, 2024), which demonstrate that Greenpeace (inclusive of GAP) foregrounds its positive image and, concurrently, portrays fossil fuel corporations rather negatively.

Conclusions, limitations, and suggestions for future research

The article introduces a mixed-methods study on the frequency of the central modal verbs and their pragmatic roles in the corpus of GAP's status updates on Facebook. The study shows that GAP utilises modality, which is manifested by the central modals, quite amply in its communication on Facebook. It has been established in the present study that GAP's discourse on Facebook is marked by a distinct tendency to use the frequently occurring modals *can*, *will*, and *would*, which are associated, predominantly, with facilitating the construction of GAP's positive image. This finding is novel in the context of climate change- and environment-related discourse by Greenpeace. Another novel finding consists in a relatively high frequency of the modal verb *would*. This finding is in contrast with the literature, which demonstrates that the occurrence of *would* in climate change and environmental discourse is low. In the present corpus, however, the high frequency of *would* is accounted by its pragmatic roles that convey uncertainty and vague opinions, as well as mitigate the criticism of GAP's opponents, which are typically represented by fossil fuel corporations.

Obviously, the aforementioned findings should be regarded with caution due to the limitations of the present corpus. Another limitation of the study rests with its exclusive focus on the central modal verbs as the manifestation of modality. However, modality is not confined exclusively to modal verbs. Hence, the limitation of the study consists in the lack of attention to other linguistic means of expressing modality, for instance, semantic categories and different word classes.

Taking the limitations of the study into account, we contend, however, that the findings offer a promising direction to be explored in future research. One of the possible research directions that may eventuate from the present study could involve an investigation of modality in conjunction with multimodal means, such as photos and videos in Greenpeace discourse on SNSs. Another viable

direction that can capitalise on the findings in this study could be related to shedding light onto potential differences in the frequency of the occurrence of modal verbs in online discourses by various branches of Greenpeace, where English is the first language (for instance, Canada) and English as a foreign language (for example, Indonesia). The juxtaposition of the frequencies and use of the modal verbs by different national branches of Greenpeace could be reflective of the local realities of using English, which could be studied in more depth in future research endeavours.

Primary Sources

<https://www.facebook.com/greenpeaceaustraliapacific>

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THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON YOUTH IN SHILLONG: A SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The rapid development of communication and mass media has broadened the scope of interconnectedness and globalization among the world's nations and cultures. These interconnections have ushered a network of intercultural and linguistic contact among users of different lifestyles, as featured in the media. As media is often cited in the literature as a powerful tool that shapes and influences public opinion and behavior, the cultures of advanced and developed nations tend to be the model that influences underdeveloped and developing nations to converge into a mass culture. However, this is not without its consequences. This study explores the consequences of media influence on the youth in the local setting of Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, India. In particular, as a preliminary investigation, it attempts to survey the impact of popular culture on the Khasi youths in Shillong and to evaluate the influence of media broadcasts on the socio-psychological aspect of language choice appropriated by the Khasi youths. A total of 100 Khasi youth participants aged 16-30 years, both male and female, were included in the study. Our findings demonstrate that Khasi youths in Shillong tend to associate themselves with trending forms and ideologies indoctrinated through media stereotypes. This has resulted in a departure from traditional conservatism as they integrate into an identity of 'sub-cultural' construction. Furthermore, English among the many alternative languages in media broadcast was found to be positively favoured by the Khasis youths in Shillong due to its relative scope, extensive communicative value, and utility compared to other languages.*

Keywords: *media, popular culture, socio-linguistic, impact of media, Shillong*

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Introduction

In the contemporary epoch of heightened global interconnectivity, various media modalities – ranging from traditional print media such as newspapers and magazines to the emergent digital realms of websites and social media platforms – have assumed a position of paramount significance as conduits for mass communication. These diverse media channels function as powerful sources of information and entertainment, transcending international borders, national divides, and local communities alike. The enhanced accessibility to media content has engendered possibilities for information retrieval and dissemination through these media platforms. As media technologies have evolved progressively, the way people relate to the media from sociocultural, linguistic, economic, and political vantages has exerted a transformative influence across all aspects of our lives. This is due to the enormous popularity and pervasiveness of print media, popular films, music, radio broadcasts and social media applications which have become a part of our everyday lives. A plethora of the existing scholarly literature has consistently portrayed media as the most persuasive and powerful tools in shaping public opinion, attitudes, and behaviors (e.g., Perse, 1986). Consequently, the intersection between media and the socio-cultural and linguistic realities of the audience within a given society cannot be overlooked. Reports on the study of media effects have been published since the late 19th century (Werder, 2009). Scholars investigating the influence of the media on society have employed various theoretical frameworks, including Cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1969), Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1971), and Uses and Gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973; Rosengren, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). These models illuminate how media exposure shapes our attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions (e.g., Perse, 1986; Cohen & Weimann, 2000). Within this broad academic context, the present study aims to evaluate the influence of the media on Khasi youth in Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, India.

The state of Meghalaya, situated in the Northeastern region of India, is a linguistically and culturally diverse region. Meghalaya, which translates in Sanskrit and other Indic languages as “the abode of clouds”, measures approximately 300 kilometers in length from east to west and 100 kilometers in width, encompassing a total area of around 22,429 square kilometers (Devi, 2010). According to the Census of India, conducted in 2011, Meghalaya had a total population of 2,966,889, with the Khasis and Jaintias constituting more than half of the total Scheduled Tribe (ST) population, while the Garos account for the second-largest group with 34.6 percent (War & Singh, 2013). Meghalaya is predominantly a tribal state. Linguistically, Khasi, Pnar and Garo are the principal languages spoken there. Pnar is a dialect of Khasi, while Khasi and Garo are the two associate official languages of the state (Dkhar & Singh, 2018).

English along with Khasi or Hindi are the link languages for inter-communication and English is used predominantly in the domain of mass communication and social media (Dkhar, 2023-2024).

The state of Meghalaya features a diverse media landscape, including a variety of newspapers and radio broadcasts for the dissemination of news items of state, national, and international importance. According to the Meghalaya Media (n.d.), The “Times of India, The Hindu, and The Indian Express are the most important national-level newspapers of the state. The Shillong Times, The Meghalaya Guardian, and The Northeast Today are three of the many local newspapers of Meghalaya”. All the mentioned newspapers are in English, except for some local newspapers such as “U Mawphor”, “U Nongsain Hima”, and “U Rupang” (among the most popular ones) which are Khasi-language newspapers. Ri Khasi Channel, U PCN (Peitngor Cable News), Ka Batesi, and T7 are among the popular local Khasi news channels in Khasi language, live broadcasted on television and on-demand through You-Tube platforms. Despite the proliferation of other media, radio remains a popular medium in Meghalaya because of its inexpensive and portable character and the fact that it provides an easy access to local news items, entertainment and advertisement for people of all socio-economic strata. Radio stations in Meghalaya, both government-owned and privately operated, offer a wide range of programs, including news, information, and entertainment (Meghalaya Media, n.d.). Television programs in Meghalaya feature national as well as international channels via IPTV services and live broadcast for local channels is also rampant. Apart from print and broadcast media, social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook, Twitter, You-tube, Instagram, and WhatsApp have gained unparalleled impulse and popularity in Northeast India in general and Meghalaya in particular. The popularity of these social networking sites allows rapid retrieval and dissemination of information, entertainment and interconnectivity in Meghalaya, alongside the rise of computer-mediated communication (CMC) applications. The global access via internet, electronic media, and social media, in general, has accelerated connections between different cultures, facilitating the development of a global society across boundaries and the introduction of elements of inter-cultural change. This is evident in the Northeast states, including Meghalaya. Marak (2018, pp. 23-24) points out that:

Technology and media have facilitated the introduction of new ideas and cultures into the Northeast”. This is particularly true in Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, which has gained popularity as ‘The Rock Capital of India’ where the influence of pop culture has taken a toll on the youths discerning from ‘a number of hip-hop rappers in Shillong today, the popular ones being Resemblance, Khasi Bloodz, Symphonic Movement, Cryptographic

1. Meghalaya Media. (n.d.). <https://www.mapsofindia.com/meghalaya/media/>

Street Poets, Kingdom Culture and Mawlai Emcees. According to the music songwriter K. Mark Swer, from Shillong, technology has enabled these artists to rise to this level of popularity today (ibid. p. 24).

Theoretical Underpinning

Culture denotes “all the ideas and assumptions about the nature of things and people that we learn when we become members of the social group. It can be defined as socially acquired knowledge” (Yule, 2010, p. 267). Mulholland (1991) describes culture as a shared meanings, values, and beliefs that guide a group’s identity and behavior. Culture has undergone a varied range of meanings in contemporary discourse. Citing Williams (1983), Zhen (2016, p. 24) mentions that the term culture is used in three relatively distinct senses to refer to: “the arts and artistic activity; the learned, primarily symbolic features of a particular way of life; and a process of development”. Baldwin (1998, p. 4) treats culture as the “works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity”. As an artistic activity, the meaning of culture was extended to refer to music, literature, painting, sculpture, and theatre, which, as explained by Zhen (2016, p. 24), are “closely related to the idea of becoming cultured, or of cultivating good taste and discriminating judgement”. Dakroury (2014) points out that “media and culture are interconnected; levels of understanding various cultures influence media contents, meanwhile, media platforms and contents impact cultural and day-to-day practices”. The development of democracy and mass literacy makes mass production and consumption of these cultural products, i.e., folk and high culture (which seemed to lose their distinction by the end of the eighteenth century with the onset of popular culture, a term replaced for folk culture), accessible to the general public via mass media, which gives rise to mass culture.

The nineteenth century saw the beginning of the era of popular culture, which is popularized by mass media for mass consumption. Culture thus becomes what Bourdieu (1984) contends – capital. Storey (1993) defines popular culture as that which is ‘leftover’ after the canon of high culture has been decided upon, or it may pertain to the mass-produced culture of the ‘culture industry’. In Moody’s (2010) analysis of prevalent characteristics found in many definitions of popular culture, it was noted that popular culture is commonly linked to mass media, particularly ‘free’ media such as radio or television. Furthermore, popular culture tends to have a consumer-oriented nature, often promoting the development of ‘fans’ for performers, products, or genres. Lastly, popular culture, much like other forms of consumer culture, is increasingly influenced by globalization. The exposure of popular culture through mass media is ubiquitous and has a bearing on every aspect of life. Thus, a broader definition of popular culture finds expression in Browne (1978, p. 12), who defines it as:

the cultural world around us, that is our attitudes, habits, and actions: how we act and why we act; what we eat and wear; our buildings, roads, and means of travel; our entertainment and sports; our politics, religion, and medical practice; our beliefs and activities, and what shapes and controls them. In other words, it is to us what water is to fish: it is the world we live in.

As a symbol of identity, Acharya (2015, pp. 23–24) opines that popular culture is an identity marker with the production and representation of the various registers and styles, and group memberships that it seeks to embody within itself. Certain linguistic representations in the popular media also propagate particular ways of thinking about social variables such as gender, class, caste, etc. In addition, media rhetoric, with its wide reach and appeal, also influences to a great extent both the social and linguistic behavior of consumers.

Media types like newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the internet are indispensable sources of information for virtually everything from the modern to the post-modern era, and they are easily accessible due to their association with the internet, which is distributed globally. According to Dakroury (2014), “media screens have become essential elements in public and private daily-life practices in societies and cultures”. As an innocent tool that purports to facilitate the dissemination of information, the media is not without its effect on the audience.

Werder (2009) mentioned that the study of media effects has been traced back to the late 19th century. As early as the 1960s, scholars recognized the effect of media, which manifests in the words of McLuhan (1964), who coined the phrase “the medium is the message”. Since then, there has been a plethora of theoretical issues that focus on propaganda and persuasion within media effects. This includes the Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1969), Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), Uses and Gratifications Theory (Rubin, 2002), Third Person Effect (Perloff, 2002), Effects of Media Violence (Sparks & Sparks, 2002) amongst others, which provided some insight into how exposure to media has a tremendous effect on a person’s perceptions of themselves, others, and society in all aspects of life, whether socio-culturally, socio-linguistically, or in practice.

Today, the use of media is immensely popular among youth across nations. In general, it has traversed “diverse individuals versus socially stratified culture and nationally versus global identities and communities” (Livingstone & Bober, 2005). Willis (2003) makes an astute observation about adolescents and identity formation, stating that traditional social, economic, and racial-cultural identities dimly define the youth’s identity more than their interests in commodity and electronic cultures, such as listening to R&B and rap music on MTV, DVDs, cell phones, or iPods. According to Guy (2007), pop culture is something that most of us appreciate. As pop culture consumers, people expect excitement,

amusement, and stimulation. The most popular and prolifically developed and disseminated cultural texts are TV, radio, cinema, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, art, music, etc. Dolby (2003) points out that it is the media business that produces the majority of these texts, such as soap operas, movies, ads, comics, sports teams, song lyrics, video games, superheroes, websites, and so on, and that popular culture is a location where the youth learn about the world. Learning means the interpretation of media's contents and production depending on the context of how recipients accommodate it in their daily lives. This is because ideology is propagated by the media, as Fuchs (2020) argues "traditional media often produce and disseminate ideology" (p. 347). The consequence of such mediation has consequently produced a generation of mass-audience consumers with a centripetal outlook on cultural and behavioral practice in society, closely aligned with popular culture, which, as Adorno and Horkheimer (1972, p. 48) put it, "mass-produced cultural products of low quality replaced high culture and traditional folk culture".

Linguistically, Dalha (2005) and Bashorun (2011) (as cited in Owolabi & Nnaji, 2013, p. 125) observed that "language remains an indispensable tool as a means of development and social cohesion, and in the current era of global information technology, it plays a major role, because no technological innovation is conceived in abstraction, that is, without the input of one language or the other". English is presently spoken by more people than any other language (as a first, second, or foreign language) and is regarded as an essential lingua franca by many nations (Graddol, 1997). According to Acharya (2015, p. 39), the media's stimulation of global diffusion of the English language "is directly proportional to the economic value it holds in the market". According to Ukoyen (2005, p. 34), "One look at the map of the world reveals that English now exists in every strategic corner of the globe, either as a mother tongue or as an official or second language". Tickoo (2006) claims that the educated middle class perceives English as the sole path to limitless prospects that have come to represent power, economic prosperity, and more recently, information-technology-driven modernity. Acharya (2015), in her studies on "Popular Culture and English Language Learning: A Study among Youth in India" found an emerging pattern of popular culture forms impacting young people. As per the sequential order of popular products divided in her study, her findings show that 'Mass Media' products are seen to be impacting the English language environment of the youth the most, followed by 'Other Media' and lastly, the 'Social Media'. Hjarvard, (2004, p. 77) argues that:

Globalization and the predominance of English at the expense of other languages is nothing new. It is rather a question of radicalization and acceleration of a centuries-long trend, in which local varieties of language die out, and more universal varieties survive.

Drawing on media effects theories, the proposed study aims to examine how media, as a central purveyor of popular culture, shapes the socio-cultural behavior and ideological practices of youth consumers in the local setting of Shillong. The study investigates the extent to which mass-mediated content and its widespread accessibility, facilitated by the global diffusion of languages like English, lead to the cultivation of dominant cultural sensibilities and the potential marginalization of indigenous linguistic and cultural expressions. By situating the inquiry within the local context, the research will provide nuanced insights into the interplay of cultural globalization, the tension between dominant and local cultural forms, and the linguistic implications of media-driven cultural shifts. This theoretically grounded and contextually embedded examination will contribute to a deeper understanding of the impacts of media on the socio-cultural and linguistic landscape of Shillong.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was mainly confined in Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya, India, for research convenience and accessibility of data. Subjects were randomly drawn from schools and college-going students in Shillong. Subjects are all Khasi native speakers drawn purposefully from different schools and colleges covering various regional zones in Shillong.

Demography

A total of 100 subjects were considered for our study. Subjects include both males and females. Since the study focuses on the impact of media on the socio-cultural and linguistic behavior of youths, subjects were carefully selected to include younger age groups (i.e., 16–30 years), as stipulated in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. *Demographic profile of the subjects by age groups and gender*

Total Nos. of Subjects	Age-Group	Gender	
		Male	Female
100	16-30	50	50

Objectives

1. To examine the impact of popular culture on Khasi media consumers, particularly the youth in Shillong.
2. To assess the influence of media broadcasts on the socio-psychological factors affecting language choice among Khasi media viewers in Shillong.

Data Analysis

For our study, a quantitative method was employed. Close structured questionnaires were used as tools for data elicitation. The data was analyzed using SPSS software. The data was analyzed and quantified based on the frequencies and averages. Schematic representations in the form of a tableau were generated to present the findings.

Results and Findings

Socio-Cultural Impact of Media

Table 2 presents the data with regards to the impact of media pop culture(s) on Khasi media consumers in Shillong. The assertions postulated in each parameter of the table below measure the influence of media popular culture(s) on variables pertaining to social, ideological, and cultural practices at the receiving end of Khasi youths in Shillong. The table below illustrates that the majority of the participants (Mean $\bar{X}$ =72.8%) agreed to most of the propositions stipulated in various parameters, though few negative (Mean $\bar{X}$ =16.3%) and neutral (Mean $\bar{X}$ =10.9%) responses were also elicited. This suggests that the majority of the participants agreed on the impact of media popular cultures and ideologies conveyed through media platforms, which have an influential role in inter-cultural transmission and an assimilative effect on the youths in a local paradigm of the Khasis in Shillong.

Table 2. *Socio-Cultural Impact of Media Popular Culture (PC) on the Youths in Shillong*

Items	Parameters	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	Media is the main window to gain insights into popular culture.	95.0%	5.00%	0.0%
2	You tend to have a positive attitude towards media PC worldview.	68.0%	18.0%	14.0%
3	PC enticed you to voluntarily partake in their cultural practices.	65.0%	25.0%	10.0%
4	PC has increased knowledge of foreign languages.	82.0%	18.0%	0.0%
5	PC has in some way influenced your personality development.	53.0%	23.0%	24.0%
6	PC has influenced your choice of dressing.	72.0%	10.0%	18.0%
7	PC has influenced your choice of grooming and styling.	78.0%	12.0%	10.0%
8	PC has influenced your choice of food.	71.0%	11.0%	18.0%
9	PC has influenced your choice of drinks.	78.0%	13.0%	9.0%

Items	Parameters	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
10	PC has influenced your language preference.	62.0%	25.0%	13.0%
11	PC has influenced your choice of how to spend your money?.	82.0%	18.0%	0.0%
12	PC has directly or indirectly influenced your lifestyle.	67.0%	18.0%	15.0%
Total Mean Score		72.8%	16.3%	10.9%

A close examination of each variable in each parameter (i.e., *Items 1–12*) resulted in the following responses:

The frequency score in *Item-1* elicits 95.0% positive response where participants ‘agree’ with the proposition that media is the main source to gain insights about modern, contemporary, and popular culture(s), in contrast to a frequency of 5.0% who ‘disagree’ with the assertion. *Item-2* shows that the majority of the participants ($f = 68.0\%$) conceded a positive evaluation of popular culture’s worldview as broadcasted by the media, in contrast to $f = 18.0\%$ who displayed a ‘negative’ attitude and $f = 14.0\%$ who remained ‘neutral’ with the assertion. It is not surprising then that the majority of these participants ($f = 65.0\%$) held the idea that media have positively enticed them to actively cultivate and integrate popular culture’s ideologies and practices (*Item-3*) in their day-to-day lives, apart from $f = 25.0\%$ who display a strong ‘negative’ reaction and $f = 10.0\%$ of the remaining participants who remain ‘neutral’ to the given proposition. Given media consumption, it is not surprising that the majority of the participants ($f = 82.0\%$) ‘agree’ that popular culture and language perspectives have educated them in the knowledge of foreign languages, as opposed to the few participants ($f = 18.0\%$) who ‘disagree’ with the proposition. Building on this positive evaluation appraised by the participants, which is statistically significant, it is then logical to statistically evaluate how popular culture’s ideologies are practically oriented in influencing participant’s real-life undertakings, as statistically computed in *Item-5–12*. The majority ($f = 72.0\%$) of the participants reported affirmatively to the idea that media have stimulated an integrative convergent attitude closely akin to popular cultural ideology and practices in the following perspectives: personality development (53.0%, see *Item-5*), sense of dressing (72.0%, see *Item-6*), styling and grooming ($f = 78.0\%$, see *Item-7*), food and cutlery ($f = 71\%$, see *Item-8*), choice of drinks (78.0%, see *Item-9*), linguistic preferences (62.0%, see *Item-10*), aspect of spending money (82.0%, see *Item 11*), and life-style ($f = 67\%$, see *Item-12*).

Socio-Psychology of Language Choice in Media:

Figure 1 below presents the data for the preferred choice of language which participants (n=100) mostly consume across different programs broadcast in Media channels.

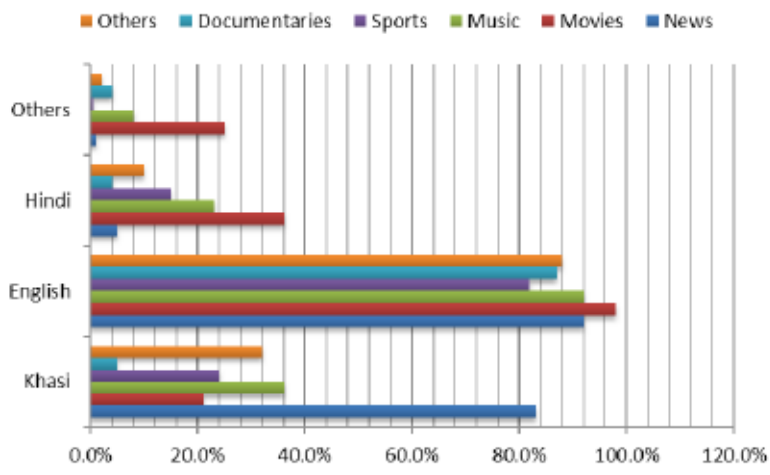


Figure 1. Preferred Language Choice across different media Programs

Table 3 provides the statistics on the socio-psychology of language choice and behavior employed by the Khasis in Shillong. The assertions made in each parameter of the table below, by extension, measure the factors that entail the choice of language claimed by the participants.

Table 3. Socio-psychology of Language Choice in the Media

Items	Parameters	English	Hindi	Khasi
13.	You find this language dominant in the Media	70.0%	21.0%	09.0%
14.	You find his language is mandatory to avail the range of Mass media	62.0%	20.0%	18.0%
15.	You find that learning this language is motivated by necessity than interest	62.0%	33.0%	05.0%
16.	You find that this language is more contended than all available alternatives	61.0%	05.0%	34.0%
17.	You find that this language is mostly used as subtitles in many films/documentaries etc.	95.0%	03.0%	02.0%
18.	You find that this language has slowly developed into a choice of the masses among media viewers	75.0%	15.0%	10.0%
19.	You find this language comfortable for sharing media contents and feedbacks	58.0%	10.0%	32.0%

20.	You find this language has wider audience's reception	66.0%	21.0%	13.0%
Total Mean Score		68.63%	16.00%	15.38%

Item-13 reveals that a statistically significant proportion of participants believe that English ($f = 70.0\%$) is the most dominant language in the media, followed by Hindi ($f = 21.0\%$) and Khasi ($f = 09.0\%$). In *Item-14*, a sizable proportion of participants ($f = 62.0\%$) believe that knowledge of the English language is required for all forms of media access, with only a few reporting Hindi ($f = 20.0\%$) or Khasi ($f = 18.0\%$). *Item-15* indicates that the majority of participants ($f = 62.0\%$) believe that learning English is motivated by need rather than desire. This suggests that other languages like Hindi ($f = 33.0\%$) and Khasi ($f = 0.05\%$), which received insignificant scores on utilitarian grounds in the media, are ineffective. In response to the question given in *Item-16*, a significant proportion of participants contends English ($f = 61.0\%$) above other accessible alternative languages like Hindi ($f = 05.0\%$) or Khasi ($f = 34.0$), which scored insignificantly. *Item 17* shows that an overwhelming proportion of participants perceive English ($f = 95.0\%$) as the language that is most frequently used as the target language for providing source language subtitles, as opposed to Hindi ($f = 03.0\%$) or Khasi ($f = 02.0\%$). In *Item-18*, the majority of participants believe that English ($f = 75.0\%$) is the language that has gradually become the language of choice among media consumers. Here, only a fraction of participants voted for Hindi ($f = 15.0\%$) and Khasi ($f = 10.0\%$), respectively. *Item-19* relates more to electronic media. Here, participants almost always share interactive social media content such as feedback in English ($f = 58.0\%$), followed by Khasi ($f = 32.0\%$), and Hindi ($f = 10$). Finally, *Item-20* shows that about 66.0% of participants rated English as the language that has the broadest appeal for a larger audience and better media reception while 21.0% and 13.0 % rated Hindi and Khasi, respectively.

Discussion

Consumers today find a considerable appeal in the media business and culture producers. The transmission of popular culture's contents, form, and ideology (whether entertainment, fashion, trends, linguistic conventions, or aesthetics) is almost indispensable in mainstream media. Media exposure has enabled consumers to accumulate sets of ideologies and beliefs that were trending in popular culture, as implied in the theoretical discussion above. Concomitantly, the impact of popular culture is analyzed by the end product of individual or collective consumerism and the resulting cultural influences on the consumer's assimilative behavior in real-life situations.

Our empirical findings from Shillong align with the theoretical discussion and support the notion of media effects. The data shows that the media played a significant role in shaping the cultural worldviews and practices of the Khasi community. This is evidenced from the participant's tendency to associate themselves with the popular forms, ideologies, and sociocultural practices propagated through media stereotypes. Our findings indicate that the majority of the Khasi audience (youths), in Shillong, endorsed a positive attitude towards popular culture's worldview (see *Item-2* of **Table 2**) and tended to associate themselves with the trending forms and ideologies indoctrinated through media stereotypes (compare **Table 2**). This reveals that most of the relevant aspect of pop culture, ideologies, and stereotypes, which the Khasi youths in Shillong tend to reproduce in their social practices are cultivated through media exposure. This encompasses all aspects of their socio-cultural fabrics, such as, one's sense of dressing or grooming, fashion, food and cutlery, drinks, and lifestyle, as well as one's choice of how they spend their money, language preference, and personality development (statistical information shown in *Items 4–12* of **Table 2**). Apparently, this growing impetus to practically assimilate cultural traits, behaviors, and ideologies consistent with the dominant pop culture (whether for reasons of emotional energy, interconnectedness, or group cohesion) has clearly resulted in a departure from their socio-cultural traditional conservatism as they gradually integrate into an identity of 'sub-cultural' construction.

The media landscape in Meghalaya encompasses a wide range of programs, from news to entertainment such as movies and music, as well as sports, educational programming, cultural programs, and documentaries. Our analysis, which is based on participant's statistical report on language preference (see **Figure 1**), reveals that local media channel broadcast in the Khasi language is meagre and consists primarily of news programs and to some extent, Khasi music video program which is occasionally available on live-broadcast but most likely accessible via IPTV or YouTube platform by the youths. Other program genres such as sports, documentaries, movie, and educational channels are still in their infancy in terms of Khasi-language offerings. Consequently, our findings indicate that participants consistently choose English as their language of preference when watching a variety of programs on media channels. Khasi, however, emerges as the second most frequently consumed language, particularly for news broadcasts, music, and other programs that primarily relate to cultural programs like short films, folklore, and folktales. In contrast, Hindi is the least preferred choice of language across different programs broadcast on media channels among the Khasi audience. Hindi is mainly preferred for its prominence in Bollywood movies, where Hindi entertainment channels like Star Plus, Zee TV, and Sony Entertainment etc., feature an array of TV shows and films. These findings suggest that the Khasi community's media consumption patterns are largely dominated by English-language programs,

with Khasi-language content being limited to certain program. The preference for English reflects the community's socio-cultural and educational orientation, while the secondary role of Khasi-language media may indicate a need for further development and promotion of local language content in the regional media landscape.

The analysis based on the statistics on the socio-psychology of language choice and behavior (see **Table 3**) reveals three key propositional conditions that determine one's attitude towards language preference in the media consumption context. These are:

1. *The relative scope of the language*: This refers to the extent to which a language enables access to the full range of media content and the ease with which participants can share or disseminate media content and feedback.
2. *Extensive communicative value*: This relates to the utility of a language, such as its suitability as a target language for subtitles, which enhances its communicative reach and value.
3. *Wider transmission*: As a language of wider communication, this condition reflects the ability of a language to ensure extensive comprehension and reception by a broader audience.

Since our data suggests that English is positively favored among the Khasis youths in Shillong, it also implies that English meets all three of these aforementioned conditions and evidence from our data necessarily validates these logical conditions. Thus, following these conditions, the choice of English among Khasi youths in Shillong include the following (see **Table 3** for a detailed statistical comparison):

- (i) *Scope*: English enables the Khasi youth to access the full range of media contents, as it is a language that is widely used and preferred over other available language choices. Participants also find English comfortable for sharing and disseminating media content and feedback.
- (ii) *Utility*: English is a suitable target language for subtitles, enhancing its communicative value and reach.
- (iii) *Wider transmission*: As a language of wider communication, English serves well to ensure extensive comprehension for a wider audience reception.

The cause-effect pattern of the choice of English, driven by its relative scope, utility, and wider transmission, demonstrates that language preference in the media can be deduced by the pre-conditions outlined above. Since English is coextensive with all these conditions, it becomes a viable and preferred choice among the Khasi youths in Shillong.

On an ideological level, this phenomenon reflects the emergence of English linguistic hegemony. As English has broader coverage in the context of mainstream media, particularly in showcasing popular culture, it has effectively supplanted other alternative languages available for media broadcast. The data (see *Item-15* of **Table 3**) shows that the Khasi youths do not retract but agrees with the proposition that the motor which drove the choice of English is not motivated by interests but rather by necessity. Along with its cultural attributes, English, therefore, purports to influence the socio-cultural, ideological, and linguistic behavior of Khasi youths. It also exerts a homogenizing agent at the consumer's receiving end in the name of globalization, with a tendency to control the choice of language (and hence, culture) to a mass norm among media users and consumers (see *Item-18* of **Table 3**) as seen from the case of Khasi youths in Shillong.

Conclusion

The media landscape in Shillong is marked by a pronounced inclination towards English-language content among the youth population, with Khasi emerging as a secondary preference, particularly in the context of news broadcasts, music, and cultural programs. Conversely, Hindi is relegated to the periphery, with its consumption largely restricted to Bollywood movies and entertainment channels. This paradigm is underpinned by a complex interplay of propositional conditions i.e. scope, utility and wider transmission that have elevated English to a position of linguistic dominance, thereby perpetuating a homogenizing influence on the cultural and linguistic practices of the youths in Shillong. This phenomenon is reflective of the pervasive power dynamics that underlie the dissemination of cultural ideologies, sociocultural norms, and popular forms through media stereotypes, thereby underscoring the profound impact of linguistic hegemony on the cultural and social fabric of Shillong.

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THE MONOCHROME TAPESTRY OF SOLO EXISTENTIAL TRAVEL IN 21ST CENTURY HOLLYWOOD: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *Solo existential travel films of Hollywood enjoyed their heyday in the first two decades of the 21st century with most of them emerging as cult classics that have inspired millions to venture out on backpacking trips. The solo travel beyond the margins of a materialistic society that promises the traveller some existential clarity, in theory, is a truly existential endeavour that lets the individual exercise their Sartrean freedom and responsibility. But a quick survey of the films produced by Hollywood over the decades reveals a rather stealthy racism within. Solo existential travellers in Hollywood films of the 21st century have predominantly been white Americans. Despite being a powerful tool to create one's meaning and authentic identity in society, solo travel is still an instrument of self-redemption that is kept away from people of colour, especially the black American community. The paper will look into the significance, relevance and consequences of this seemingly invisible omission. From an embodiment perspective, the paper will attempt to analyze the absence of racial diversity in the genre to shed light on why the coloured body is to find its space in Hollywood's tapestry of solo existential travel.*

Keywords: *embodiment, existentialism, travel films, Hollywood, racism*

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Introduction

Whilst being a ‘melting pot’ of diverse cultures, the USA has “tended to separate and segregate them from the masses, rendering them unassimilated because of racial discrimination” (Maddern, 2013, p.3). One of the reasons why the non-white communities find it hard to assimilate into the American cultural mosaic without losing their unique identity is the invisibility they face due to the absence of representation in various spheres of society (Kim, 2023; Wyly & Halloway, 2002; Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). In such a situation, arts emerge as a mighty asset that renders assistance in guaranteeing visibility to all ethnocultural communities that get shunned by the conspicuous white domination through a cultural resistance that demands cultural equity in a social tapestry that deems them invisible (Chang, 2024). Thus, inclusion and ample representation of people of colour in art arise as an issue of cultural power or equity and the cultural justice that the visibility provides emerges as “the healing of the erasure, suppression, and marginalization of people’s artistic and cultural practices” (Chang, 2024, p.24).

One of the most relevant and popular artistic tools that brandishes substantial power in influencing culture, promoting a certain type of cultural outlook and transmitting cultural stances in the US has been cinema aka Hollywood (Chen, 2023, p.843). In the US, cinema is not constrained by aestheticism but wields the power to invent hegemonic structures, reinforce the established authority, marginalize communities and propagate meanings that accommodate its preferences (Do Nascimento, 2019, p.27). Thus, to scrutinize, discern and question how Hollywood engages with race and racial representation is of utmost importance. This paper attempts to probe a specific genre of Hollywood, the under-explored yet promising category of solo existential travel films.

Despite its time-honoured ancestry, transformative corporeal travel is perceived as a phenomenon anchored in modernity, fueled by the idiosyncrasies of modern life such as alienation, escape, liberation, existential angst, etc. (Lean et. al., 2016). Hollywood films have also embraced this notion, crafting many movies on personal transformation, ranging from commercial hits like *Eat, Pray, Love* to eclectic and critically acclaimed creations like *Nomadland* (Harrill et. al., 2022, p.2557). The popularity of the transformative travel genre in Hollywood is attributed to how the audience could relate to a “trip leading to introspection and opportunity for personal growth” (Harrill et. al., 2022, p.2557; Sampaio, 2014). Notwithstanding their artistic and educational potential, transformative travel films lack diversity of representation (Harrill et. al., 2022, p.2565). Because “American film and American culture are considered mutually interdependent, each illuminating and providing a context for the other” (Sobchack, 1980, p.281) such an unvariedness in representation becomes all the more problematic.

Solo existential travel films are deemed as an audiovisual creation that makes use of the lived experience of the traveller to attain the concept of “touristic and communicative authenticity” (Argod, 2018, p.13). These films celebrate the intense physical voyage of a traveller, through trying terrains, to ascertain their authenticity and value autonomously. Here we get to see an amalgamation of embodiment and existentialism as it is a corporeal mobility that delivers the existential transformation. Denying the people of colour such an opportunity where their lived experiences could be brought on screen in all their complexity and subtlety is a blatant rejection of their existential angst and embodied subjectivity, and a denial of their interiority, reason and place in American society (Ndlovu, 2020, p.14).

Recalling a research gap *The Global Nomad* (Richards & Wilson, 2004) puts forth in its concluding chapter (p.272), this research paper inquires - Is solo existential travel exclusively reserved for those who can afford the physical and psychological vulnerability of moving to the margins of the society? The body that offers the currency of experience and perception to the traveller in their quest for existential authenticity dons the hues of race in this discussion. The paper will delve into the nuances of the monochrome structure of the solo existential travel genre of Hollywood to ponder on the immobility of the racialized body and the repudiation of its autonomous quest for existential authenticity.

Methodology

Solo Existential Travel – The Sartrean Perspective

Sartrean existentialism views the human being as primarily free, sans determinism, destined to be whatever they want (Thoibisana, 2017, p.123). Sartre defends existentialism as “a hopeful and optimistic expression of human freedom in the world” (Tubbs, 2013, p.480). Man is “condemned to be free” (Sartre, 2007, p. 38) and it is through his subjectivity, choices and actions that man gets to comprehend his purpose (Tubbs, 2013, pp.480-482). By his inherent freedom, man is bestowed with the responsibility to channel his actions to design his destiny without giving in to external forces (Adewumi & Jemilaye, 2022, p.287). In his attempt to exercise his freedom and responsibility man is oftentimes pushed into a state of unrest or anxiety (Strasser, 1996, p.45). In such instances, travel has emerged as a powerful tool to overcome existential anxiety owing to its ability to enable existential avoidance and catalyze existential authenticity (Canavan, 2018, p.551).

Being able to travel unrestrainedly, and savouring the experience of it, emerges as a marker of an individual’s agency and empowerment (Douglas & Barrett, 2020, p.765). To fashion something out of the feeling of “nothingness”, one must, according to Sartre, construct meaning via how they live their life to experience

authentic existence (Canavan, 2018, p.562). The pursuit of self-actualisation through travel surpasses the mere avoidance of routine life's mundanity, to generate sensations of autonomy and introspection (2018, p.562). Here travel ceases to be a form of hedonistic consumption to emerge as a eudemonic experience (Kirillova et. al., 2017, p.23).

Solo transformative travel, due to its empowering and liberating nature emerges as the most existentially charged variant of transformative travel when viewed from a Sartrean perspective. An existential traveller is “fully committed to an ‘elective’ spiritual centre... [and] is phenomenologically analogous to a pilgrim” (Cohen, 2004, p.77). Solo existential travel provides an opportunity to introspect and reflect as well as engage in experiential learning through encounters and dialogues with the ‘Other’ (Morgan, 2010). Thus, in the context of this research paper, solo existential travel can be termed “sustainable travel embarked upon by a traveller for the primary and intentional purpose of creating conditions conducive for one or more fundamental structures of the self to transform” (Ross, 2010, p.55). Within the scope of solo existential travel, the individual facing existential angst does not wait in bad faith for a liberator but commands the reins of their own life. And it is explicitly on account of this that the lack of diverse racial representation in the genre becomes all the more problematic.

Embodiment

The blame for disjoining the concept of mind and body is imputed to Plato and Descartes (MacLachlan, 2004, p.2). Plato’s “truth” that remained in pure-disembodied forms and the Cartesian notion of *cogito ergo sum* led to the segregation of mental life and physical existence, thereby leading to an objectification of the body (p. 3). But later on, through the phenomenological tradition, the connection between body and mind was restored. Phenomenology claims that “consciousness can become ‘worldly’ only by being embodied within the world as part of it” (Zaner, 2012, p.vii). One of the pioneers who managed to provide the body with a firm footing in philosophy was the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Initially established in *The Structure of Behaviour*, the centrality of the body fortified its standing through his magnum opus *The Phenomenology of Perception* and went on to gain a more refined form in his incomplete final work *The Visible and The Invisible*. Merleau-Ponty situates his analysis on the Husserlian distinction between the corporeal body (*Körper*) and the lived body (*Leib*) (Mohajel et. al., 2021, p.294). The Pontian body is an intersubjective body that subsists as an enmeshing of the body and the world and it is by employing this body that we accomplish perception and consciousness (p. 294). The symbolic systems that cinema puts forth can alter the boundaries of the perceptible world and can thus “open new dimensions by extending the scope and radius of our actions, and by giving rise to new kinds

of meanings and entities” (Hoel & Carusi, 2018, p.28). Thus, in the context of the current research, the representations and stories in Hollywood do indeed have the potential to open up empowering transformative trajectories for people of colour and this in turn validates the analysis of absence from an embodiment perspective. The primacy of movement in the effectuating and experiencing of the lived body in Pontian embodiment theory also is pertinent and significant in garnering a better understanding of solo existential travel and the types of bodies involved in it.

Discussion

The Racialized Body- From Body-Schema Concerns to Bodily Alienation

The whimsical aspect of human embodiment is that we are simultaneously the body we *are* and the body we *have* (Wehrle, 2020, p.499). Being a body is marked by functional and temporal intentionality and having a body means having an object intentionality (Wehrle, 2020, p.506). To be a body thus is to direct consciousness towards the world through bodily action and tangible engagement and to structure experiences temporally. The lived body that engages with the world and facilitates perception has a realm that is not perceived but remains a precedent to explicit cognition or perception (Halák, 2021). This is termed body schema.

Be it when you button up your shirt, carry a tray across the room or use a spoon to carry the food from the plate to your mouth, you are being a body that acts without consciously reflecting on the corporeal engagement. This pre-reflective awareness of the spatiotemporal lived body facilitates an ease of mobility and action. This is why “the motor experiences of the healthy subject are characterized by their flexibility, spontaneity, and adaptability” (Cañas, 2019, p.205).

Merleau-Ponty put forth the notion of body schema to “highlight the bodily know-how that makes the correspondence between embodied subjects and their situations smooth and seamless” (Zeiler, 2013, p.71). Body schema is crucial to moving about, acting accordingly and exercising one’s freedom in solo existential travel. In everyday life, if the body schema functions properly, the body can remain in the background, enabling us to be comfortable in our skin and confident about our body’s ability to adapt and react to situations (Ataria & Tanaka, 2020, p.655). This comfort and confidence of being our own body is crucial when it comes to pushing the corporeal self out into the unknown to explore the world in the quest for existential transformation. When the body schema takes a back seat, the subjectivity of the body is affected and results in the body emerging as an object, where the thought of the body takes centre

stage in the perceptual world, resulting in a domination of the ‘body image’ (Ataria & Tanaka, 2020, p.656).

Franz Fanon puts forth this overpowering of the body schema by the body image as a result of the “white gaze” in his work *Black Skin, White Masks*. People of colour are forced to be aware and cautious of their bodies while engaging in regular activities like walking or taking up a seat at a restaurant due to the virus of racism that plagues the society (Zeiler, 2013, p.77). Placing the way someone else perceives us at the centre of living is according to Sartre “solidification and alienation of one’s[my] own possibilities” (Sartre, 1956, p.263). Being reduced to a mere object thus pushes the individual into a life of conformity and bad faith, unable or hesitant to venture out and exert his/her freedom and authenticity.

The overpowering body image, through recurrency, evolves into what can be termed as excorporation. It is a “bodily phenomenon that is caused by structures of social normativity pertaining to gender, race, and sexuality” where some “quasi-transcendental structure becomes an embodied obstacle for the subject” (Wellborn, 2020, p.2). The prying racist gaze triggers an excorporation of the body schema resulting in a “pervasive disorientation and weightiness – that is, an experience of bodily alienation” (Leboeuf, 2022, p.126). A person venturing out on a solo existential journey is bound to face bodily alienation during his/her travel through variegated interactions and experiences. But first-hand testimony could act as a “bridge between the merely descriptive and normative”, where one can move beyond the lived experience and challenge the established order which alienates the people of colour (Leboeuf, 2022, pp.126-127). The biggest challenge the racialized body faces in acquiring this window to bring about change is the hostility the space holds, denying him/her even the consideration of accessing it.

The Racialized Space

“The lived experience of race has a spatial dimension, and the lived experience of space has a racial dimension” (Lipsitz, 2007, p.12). Racism often acts out in society through denial of or exclusion from spaces be it social, ideological or geographical. In the context of the solo existential travel films of 21st century Hollywood, the genre as well as the spaces the white existential traveller traverses to transform themselves denies access to people of colour. The journeys portrayed in the genre showcase individuals exercising their freedom and free will by leaving behind familiar spaces and venturing into unfamiliar ones (Sineokaya, 2020, p.1385). There is a physical space, a cultural space, an existential space and a cinematic space that is being established here. The traveller’s corporeal body that fills the physical as well as cinematic space, due to the intersubjective nature of the film viewing experience manages to communicate with the viewer’s body. Thus, people of colour need to have

existential travellers as well as existential travel experiences that they could connect and relate to based on similarities in lived bodily experiences. People of colour getting assimilated into the cinematic space of solo existential travel consequently becomes pivotal in incorporating ethnocultural diversity into the mindscape of the society.

Body schema has a spatial dimension that arises from its interconnectedness with the world instigated by the body's mobility and actions (Seamon, 2018, p.44). The lived body is hardwired to find its own space in the world and turn that space into a "zone of familiarity" or the world it has through habitual action (Jacobson, 2010, p.223). The zone of familiarity a white-American experiences while watching Christopher McCandless in *Into the Wild* or Julia Roberts in *Eat, Pray, Love* is non-existent for a person of colour. The habitual action of bringing in people of colour and their solo existential travel stories to the Hollywood landscape can thus create an existential world of their own for such communities, to venture out and win back their own meaning and authenticity.

The solo travel genre gained fitting prominence only by the beginning of the 21st century with *The Beach* (2000), and enjoyed its heyday all throughout the 2000s and 2010s. With movies such as *Into the Wild* (2007), *Wild* (2014), *Eat, Pray, Love* (2010), *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (2013), *Nomadland* (2020), etc., the genre flourished to emerge as one of the most popular cinematic genres through its remarkable integration of the marvels of travel and profound existential questions. The cult classic status of films like *Into the Wild* (2007) and *Eat, Pray, Love* (2010) and the plenitude of solo travellers they have managed to motivate, corroborates the significance of the genre when it comes to influencing American society and culture. Further exploration of the genre, brings to light a startling yet overlooked exclusion of people of colour. Through *Girls Trip* (2017) that celebrates extravagant group trips and *Green Book* (2018), a film that showcases the travels of a black musician and his white driver, Hollywood has indeed attempted to place the coloured protagonist in the genre. But the denial of the opportunity to be free and vulnerable on their own, which is evident in these films do raise innumerable questions about the limitations race forcefully imposes on the existential freedom of the coloured individual.

The white-washing of the solo existential travel genre forces the other coloured communities to be "in line" where they live out their lives in familiar spaces which determines what they can or cannot do (Zeiler, 2013, p.71). Such wrought iron orientations could only be challenged by something that can wake us from our slumber of conformity. The absence of people of colour in the space of solo existential travels of Hollywood, which has not yet been questioned, is thus an instance where the being 'in line' should be questioned to alter pre-existing racially charged orientations. As McDermott and Simmons point out about the spatialization of race, we are preprogrammed to consider certain spaces as just

belonging to the “blacks” or “whites” and cannot even question the internalized colonialism without strong external stimuli that force us out of our conformity (2013, p.163).

The exclusion of the coloured body from the space of solo existential travel films of 21st-century Hollywood creates a racialized space which perpetuates the Eurocentric colonizing view that creates and modulates conviction systems that tend to favour the white body over the coloured body. Thus, in this context, the denial of space to the people of colour to exert their coloured subjectivity in all its complexity becomes a reaffirmation of the colonial rejection of their interiority and reason (Ndlovu, 2020, p.14).

Conclusion – What a Coloured Future Holds?

Travel as a discipline has always favoured the white-bodies over the coloured bodies. Mobility emerges as the expression of the lived body in travel narratives. A feeling of buoyancy is produced as a result of the synthesis of the acting body, the surrounding, and the momentary feeling of being in balance, which the individual attunes to their capacity to move through the world (Kressbach, 2024, pp.201-202). Such moments provide the individual with an opportunity to strive to make some adjustments with the body and the self to attain some sense of balance (Kressbach, 2024, p.202). Despite being misfits, the coloured bodies are forced to fall out of equilibrium with their situations or milieus to become fully aware of their embodied existence in such situations (Eng, 2020, pp.356-357). The absent coloured body is robbed of this opportunity to attain that sense of balance in the world, a necessary need in the racialized space that brings about its bodily alienation. The study of the body is seen as “a useful starting point in examinations of how the singular body, that is the body which is unique and different from other bodies, can form and inform our embodied selves and influence our ways of interacting with others and the world” (Zeiler, 2013, p.69). Thus, the presence, the actions and the interactions of a body are of utmost importance in attaining a non-homogenised perception of the socio-cultural aspects of racial embodiment.

Cinema being a creator, propagator and regulator of meanings and perspectives, plays a crucial role in how bodies are perceived and how their actions and experiences are governed and circumscribed in our modern societies. Hollywood thus emerged as a powerful tool that hegemonized the cultural and ideological systems of the U.S. Even though Hollywood claims to be progressive and publicly condemns racism to support diversity, it is one of the most powerful and flagrant perpetrators of racism (Yuen, 2017, pp.49-50). The colourblind neutrality allows Hollywood to practice exclusionary methods and to divest themselves of any moral responsibility while steeping into bias and prejudice (ibid., pp.50-68). The fact that films starring people of colour managed to emerge

lucrative at the box office (Yuen, 2017, p.139) also points at the deliberate racism exhibited by Hollywood through their exclusion of people of colour from solo travel existential films.

The coloured communities being homogenized and being stereotyped or artificially introduced into pre-existing Eurocentric narratives does not empower them nor provide them the space to exert their own authentic identity or complexity. The lack of personal/ biographical insights into the lived experience of the coloured communities thus becomes one of the main reasons for the perpetuation of racism. The personal and complex existential stories that unravel alongside the corporeal presence and movement of the coloured body in the solo existential film thus emerge as a challenge against the colourblind racism of Hollywood and the racially charged ideological boundaries it purports. Challenging the racialized space that alienates their bodies and the reducing of their embodied subjectivities to objects becomes possible through the inclusion of their bodies in a space that is deeper than the mere material world of commodities and conformities.

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GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract: This study investigated gender representation in English textbooks from Classes 6 to 10 in Bangladesh, using corpus analysis. AntConc, a textual analysis tool, was used to quantify the occurrence of gender-related lexical items in resources. The corpus comprises approximately 147,698 tokens distributed across the four textbooks. The results revealed significant disparities in the distribution of male- and female-associated lexical items. Here, male-related words occurred 1,958 times (1.33 %), whereas female-related words occurred 1,165 times (0.79 %). The highest imbalance ratio (0.94 %) was found in textbooks of class 6 having male represented words (1.95%) and female represented words (1.01%). This male-dominated gender disproportion appeared in the other three textbooks at different ratios, which may reflect Bangladesh's cultural and societal norms. These distinctive and male-centred gender-biased textbooks may have an impact on students' perceptions of gender roles and societal expectations. The findings of this corpus analysis predict how much textbook content may affect female students' sense of inclusion and their collective consciousness of gender rights. Finally, it recommends ensuring gender equality and inclusion in the textbooks.

Keywords: Bangladeshi textbooks, corpus analysis, gender representation, gender bias, gender equality

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Introduction

Gender refers not only to social, cultural, and psychological characteristics but also to roles based on biological sex (Worthy et al., 2020). Thus, gender roles are cultural norms and expectations associated with each gender that have changed over time. Moreover, gender equality is essential for promoting a sense of inclusivity and social equality for gender rights regardless of gender identity.

Textbooks are an essential educational resource that facilitates learning in academic institutions. First, they provide structured and organized information, including key concepts, theories, and principles along with exercises, problems, and examples. Second, they often align with educational standards and learning goals, thereby providing a framework for instruction and assessment. In addition, textbooks serve as references for teachers, guide lesson planning, and provide additional resources. Finally, the information presented in textbooks is shaped by factors such as the author's knowledge, the target audience, and the educational background.

Textbooks can either represent gender stereotypes and biases or promote gender representation for critical collective consciousness and action against systemic social oppression (Moya-Mata et al., 2023; Heberle et al., 2020). Moreover, they are considered powerful tools for fostering students' perspectives and attitudes towards gender equality, social issues, and justice (Agha & Shaikh, 2022; Castro et al., 2022). Furthermore, textbooks develop national identity (Kim & Lee, 2021; Darmawan & Mulyana, 2019; Köroğlu & Elban, 2020; Fotopoulos et al., 2017; Afzal et al., 2021), national ideology and consciousness (Qazi & Shah, 2018) understanding of history, cultural norms, and values (Su, 2007; Fotopoulos et al., 2017) through the political and cultural agendas of the state or government (Kim & Lee, 2021; Rosemberg et al., 2009).

Literature Review

Gender bias in English textbooks significantly affects student perceptions and learning (Suhartono & Kristina, 2018). The representation of gender disparities in textbooks has been studied in different countries recently including Indonesia (Antiksari, 2011; Tyarakanita et al., 2021; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Suwarno et al., 2021; Tusita & Emaliana, 2020; Yonata & Yoniswan, 2021), Malaysia (Mukundan & Nimehchisal, 2008), Nigeria (Ogbonnaya-Iduma, 2014), Pakistan (Ahmad & Shah, 2019; Mahmood et al., 2021; Dar & Bano, 2023; Ali & Hussain, 2019), the Philippines (Tarrayo, 2014), Japan (Lee, 2018), Uzbekistan (Norova, 2020), India (Bose & Gao, 2022), and Uganda (Barton & Sakwa, 2012).

In the context of South Asia, gender bias and stereotypical traditional gender roles are found in English language textbooks in Pakistan (Ahmad & Shah,

2019; Dar & Bano, 2023), and a similar tendency is observed in Indian English language teaching textbooks (Bose & Gao, 2022).

In South-Eastern countries, different forms of gender bias have been observed in textbooks. For example, male characters are often presented negatively in Malaysia (Mukundan & Nimehchisal, 2008), while, women are less illustrated in occupational roles in the Philippines (Tarrayo, 2024). Although there is a gender-biased stereotype and male dominance in Indonesian English language textbooks, they acknowledge the need for gender equality in educational reforms and consciousness (Yonata & Yoniswan, 2021; Tyarakanita et al. 2021; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Antiksari, 2011; Suwarno et al., 2021; Tusita & Emaliana, 2020). According to Dalle et al. (2023), two factors contribute to the higher representation of males compared to females in Indonesia. Firstly, cultural norms that underscore male supremacy within the national culture exert a significant influence on the content of books. Secondly, the foundational cultural values of society place a considerable emphasis on the roles of males across various facets of life. Similarly, in the context of Central and West Asia, patriarchal norms (Norova, 2020) and an imbalance in gender representation (Tabatabaei, 2016) are found in the textbooks of both Uzbekistan and Iran.

In African countries, gender bias creates a strong negative effect in different domains of society; for example, gender disparity contributes to social discrimination against women in education in Nigeria (Ogbonnaya-Iduma, 2014), and similar social consequences occur in Uganda and Ethiopia through underrepresentation and stereotyping of females in textbooks (Bachore, 2022; Barton & Sakwa, 2012).

On the other hand, in the case of East Asian countries, there is an emerging trend of near-gender equality found in primary textbooks in Hong Kong (Yang, 2011, 2016; Lee, 2014) and Japan but still there is a 'male- first' phenomenon (Lee, 2018).

Research Method

This study used corpus analysis to investigate gender differences in four English textbooks at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB)¹ distributes these books freely and they are easily accessible to students across the country. As these textbooks are distributed to students aged between 11 and 18, the study examined whether there is a balanced representation of both genders, and whether one gender is predominantly portrayed over the other. The textbooks examined in this investigation were as follows:

1. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board, an autonomous entity under the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, is responsible for the development of curricula and production and distribution of textbooks for primary and secondary education.

Table 1. *English textbooks used in the study.*

No	Authors	Year	Title	Publishers	Pages in total	Use
1	Jahan et al., 2022a	2023	English Class Six	National Curriculum & Textbook board	167	Class 6
2	Jahan et al., 2022b	2023	English Class Seven	National Curriculum & Textbook board	183	Class 7
3	Haque et al., 2022	2023	English For Today	National Curriculum & Textbook board	144	Class 8
4	Shams et al., 2022	2023	English For Today	National Curriculum & Textbook board	203	Classes 9 & 10

The following procedures were considered when conducting corpus analysis: First, PDF versions of textbooks were downloaded from the NCTB website. Subsequently, these PDF files were transformed into the txt format to enable analysis. Third, the corpus analysis software AntConc (Anthony, 2022) was used for corpus analysis. Finally, specific keywords (Table 2) selected for this study were used for the analysis.

This study used Dalle et al. 's (2023) list of content words to investigate gender representation in Bangladeshi English textbooks. The methodological rigor and scholarly credibility of their work on gender equality in Indonesian junior high school language textbooks ensures reliable and comparable findings. It is adaptable across cultural contexts, emphasising its relevance to this study and enhancing the broader discourse on gender in educational materials.

Table 2. *Keywords associated with both gender category (based on Dalle et al., 2023)*

Male			Female		
brother(s)	boy(s)	dad	aunt	daughter	dame
father(s)	gentleman	he	her	heroine	girl(s)
him	his	husband	lady(ladies)	madam	Miss
hero	king(s)	knight	mistress	Ms.	Mrs.
lord	Mr.	man(men)	mom	mother(s)	niece
master	nephew	son(s)	queen	she	sister(s)
sir	uncle	widower	woman(women)	widow	wife

Results and Analysis

Corpus analysis showed a notable distribution of gender-associated lexical items in the textbooks. Two words from each gender category [male: nephew, gentleman; female: dame, mistress] do not appear in the text. Table 3 lists the various gender-associated lexical items found in the sample text.

Table 3. *Lexical items associated with gender found in four books*

Gender category	Lexical representation
Male	he, his, him, man(men), father(s), boy(s), king, knight, brother(s), son(s), uncle, dad, husband, hero, widower, sir, Mr., lord, master
Female	her, she, mother(s), mom, woman(women), sister(s), girl(girls), daughter(s), wife, lady(ladies), queen, aunt, heroine, niece, widow, madam, miss, Mrs., Ms.

Overview of Male Lexical Representation

The analysis of lexical frequencies in secondary school textbooks, as detailed in Table 4, shows a significant representation of male-associated words. The total frequency of the male lexis was 1,958, encompassing a range of references related to gender roles and identities. The most often occurring lexeme is “he,” with 717 instances, accounting for 36.64% of the total male lexis. This is followed by “his” with 450 instances (22.99%), and “him” with 158 instances (8.07%). Collectively, these three references alone formed 67.70% of the male lexical items, showing a strong focus on male pronouns. Other notable male-associated words included “man(men)” with 150 instances (7.66%), “father(s)” with 113 instances (5.77%), and “Mr.” with 71 instances (3.63%). Lexemes such as “boy(s),” “king,” “brother(s),” and “son(s)” also appear frequently, each contributing between 2.30% and 3.12% to the total male lexis. Lesser-used lexemes, such as “sir,” “uncle,” and “lord,” range from 1.58% to 1.69%, while the least frequent lexemes such as “widower” appear only once, accounting for 0.05%. The range of usage for these references is relatively consistent, with most words appearing across four different contexts, except for a few such as “husband” and “hero,” which appear in two or three contexts, and “widower,” which appears in just one. Overall, the high frequency and percentage of certain male-associated words emphasised male pronouns and roles, which could influence students’ perceptions of gender roles.

Table 4. *Male frequency and percentage of in texts of secondary school books*

No	Male lexis	Frequency	Percentage	Range
1	he	717	36.64%	4
2	his	450	22.99%	4
3	him	158	8.07%	4
4	man(men)	150	7.66%	4
5	father(s)	113	5.77%	4
6	Mr.	71	3.63%	4
7	boy(s)	61	3.12%	4
8	king	49	2.50%	4
9	brother(s)	45	2.30%	4
10	son(s)	45	2.30%	4
11	sir	33	1.69%	4
12	uncle	31	1.58%	4
13	lord	10	0.51%	3
14	dad	6	0.31%	4
15	husband	6	0.31%	2
16	hero	5	0.26%	3
17	master	4	0.20%	3
18	knight	3	0.15%	2
19	widower	1	0.05%	1
Total		1958	100%	

Overview of Female Lexical Representation

The analysis of Table 5, detailing the frequency and percentage of female-associated lexis in secondary school textbooks, offers critical insights into gender representation within these educational materials. The total frequency of female-associated words was 1,165 words. The pronoun “her” is the most frequently occurring, with 370 instances, accounting for 31.76% of the total female lexis. This is followed by “she,” which appears 289 times (24.81%), and “mother(s),” which occurs 222 times (19.06%). The cumulative percentage of these top three references – “her,” “she,” and “mother(s)” – is 75.63%, showing a substantial concentration of usage in a limited set of lexemes. In contrast, other references such as “woman (women)” (58 instances, 4.98%), “Ms.” (36 instances, 3.09%), “sister(s)” (38 instances, 3.26%), and “girl (girls)” (44 instances, 3.78%) collectively accounted for 15.11% of the total female lexis. This highlights a notable disparity in the frequency distribution of the female-associated lexemes. Less frequent references included “daughter(s)” (24 instances, 2.06%), “mom” (16 instances, 1.37%), “wife” (14 instances, 1.20%),

“lady(ladies)” (11 instances, 0.94%), “madam” (9 instances, 0.77%), and “Miss” (9 instances, 0.77%). References such as “queen,” “aunt,” “heroine,” and “niece” each appear fewer than seven times, with “widow” being the least frequent at one instance (0.09%). The range of usage indicated that most female-associated words appeared consistently across the four contexts, mirroring the pattern observed in the male lexis. However, references such as “girl(girls)” and “daughter(s)” have a narrower contextual range, appearing in three contexts and suggesting a more limited representation of these roles.

Finally, Table 5 indicates that a small number of female-associated lexemes dominate the lexical landscape, whereas many others are used infrequently. The high concentration of references such as “her,” “she,” and “mother(s)” suggests a limited and potentially biased portrayal of female roles within the textbooks. This imbalance calls for a more inclusive and diverse representation of female-associated lexis to better reflect gender equity in educational content. The findings highlight the need for critical evaluation and revision of educational materials to promote a more balanced and fair representation of gender roles.

Table 5. *Female frequency and percentage of in texts of secondary school books*

No	Female lexis	Frequency	Percentage	Range
1	her	370	31.76%	4
2	she	289	24.81%	4
3	mother(s)	222	19.06%	4
4	woman(women)	58	4.98%	4
5	Ms.	36	3.09%	4
6	sister(s)	38	3.26%	4
7	girl(girls)	44	3.78%	3
8	daughter(s)	24	2.06%	3
9	mom	16	1.37%	4
10	Wife	14	1.20%	4
11	lady(ladies)	11	0.94%	3
12	madam	9	0.77%	3
13	Miss	9	0.77%	3
14	Mrs.	7	0.60%	3
15	queen	7	0.60%	3
16	aunt	6	0.52%	2
17	heroine	2	0.17%	2
18	niece	2	0.17%	2
19	widow	1	0.09%	1
Total		1165	100%	

The comparative analysis of lexical frequencies in secondary school textbooks, as presented in Tables 4 and 5, showed a significant gender disparity, with male-associated words appearing far more frequently than female-associated ones. The total frequency of the male lexis is 1,958 instances, approximately 1.68 times higher than the 1,165 instances of the female lexis. Key male-associated words such as “he” (717 instances, 36.64%) and “his” (450 instances, 22.99%) dominate, while the most frequent female-associated ones are “her” (370 instances, 31.76%) and “she” (289 instances, 24.81%). The overall percentage representation further highlights this disparity, with male lexis forming 1.33% of the total content compared to 0.79% for female lexis, a difference of 0.54 percentage points. The range of usage for male-associated lexemes is generally consistent across the four different contexts, indicating a broader scope and variety of male lexis, whereas female-associated references appear in fewer contexts, suggesting narrower usage. These data indicate a pronounced male-centric bias in textbooks, which potentially influences students’ perceptions of gender roles and reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. The findings underscore the need for more balanced and inclusive language in educational materials to ensure equitable gender representation.

Male Lexical Representation Across Textbooks

Corpus analysis of the four textbooks revealed varying degrees of male lexical representations. As detailed in Table 6, the highest percentage of male lexical items was found in the Class 6 English textbooks (1.95%), whereas the lowest was in the Class 7 English textbooks (0.96%). The Class 8, Class 9 and 10 textbooks showed intermediate percentages of 1.05% and 1.46%, respectively. The variation in the frequency of male lexical representation across textbooks suggests a disparity in portrayals of male figures or references. The highest representation in the Class 6 textbook shows a more male-centric approach in earlier educational stages, which may influence young learners’ perceptions of their gender roles. The significant drop in male representation in Class 7 raises questions about the consistency of gender portrayals in the educational materials. Such inconsistencies may result in varied exposure to gender representation among students at different educational levels. The increase in the representation of male lexical items in the higher classes [Classes 8, 9, and 10] could imply a shift in narrative focus or the introduction of more complex subjects where male references become more prevalent. However, this shift also requires a critical examination of whether such changes maintain a balanced gender representation.

Table 6. *Male frequency and percentage in four books*

No	Book for	Tokens in the textbooks	Frequency of Male lexis	Percentage
1	Class 6	27128	528	1.95%
2	Class 7	40936	392	0.96%
3	Class 8	30882	326	1.05%
4	Class 9 & 10	48752	712	1.46%

Female Lexical Representation Across Textbooks

The analysis of the four textbooks revealed a notable variation in female lexical representation. As shown in Table 7, the Class 6 English textbook showed the highest frequency of female-associated words at 1.01%, while the Class 7 English textbook had the lowest at 0.58%. The Class 8, Class 9 & 10 textbooks showed frequencies of 0.61% and 0.96%, respectively. The highest representation of female lexical items in Class 6 suggests a more balanced approach to gender representation during the first stage of secondary education. However, the sharp decline in Class 7 textbooks is concerning. This drop may affect students' perceptions of female roles and their importance in various contexts, potentially reinforcing a gender bias. The slight increase in female representation in higher classes (Classes 8, 9 and 10) is encouraging but still highlights the need for a more consistent approach across educational stages. The variations in representation could reflect not only the content and focus of the textbooks but also broader societal attitudes towards gender roles.

Table 7. *Female frequency and percentage in four books*

No	Book for	Tokens in the textbooks	Frequency of Female lexis	Percentage
1	Class 6	27128	273	1.01%
2	Class 7	40936	238	0.58%
3	Class 8	30882	188	0.61%
4	Class 9 & 10	48752	466	0.96%

Differences in Gender Representation

Table 8 shows a consistent pattern of gender-based lexical disparity across the various educational levels. In all examined classes, classes 6, 7, and 8, and combined classes 9 and 10, the male lexis was more prevalent than the female lexis in both frequency and percentage references. Class 6 shows the most significant disparity, with male lexis appearing 528 times (1.95%) compared to female lexis, which appears 273 times (1.01%). This class showed the largest difference in percentage (0.94%). Class 7 shows the least disparity between

genders, with male lexis at 392 instances (0.96%) and female lexis at 238 instances (0.58%). Here, the difference in percentage was the smallest at 0.38%. Class 8 reflects a moderate disparity, where male lexis was recorded 326 times (1.05%), and female lexis 188 times (0.61%). The difference in percentage for this class stands at 0.44%. In the combined classes 9 and 10, male lexis was seen 712 times (1.46%), while female lexis was noted 466 times (0.96%). The percentage difference in this group was 0.50%.

Table 8. *Differences between male and female representation*

No	Book for	Frequency of Male lexis	Frequency of Female lexis	Percentage of Male lexis	Percentage of female lexis	Difference of the percentage of male and female lexis
1	Class 6	528	273	1.95%	1.01%	0.94%
2	Class 7	392	238	0.96%	0.58%	0.38%
3	Class 8	326	188	1.05%	0.61%	0.44%
4	Class 9 & 10	712	466	1.46%	0.96%	0.50%

Overview of Gender Representation

The results of the four textbooks, summarized in Table 9, show a significant difference in the representation of male- and female-associated words. The total number of tokens in the four books was 147,698, with male-associated words appearing 1,958 times, accounting for 1.33% of the total. By contrast, female-associated words occurred 1,165 times, constituting only 0.79% of the total.

Table 9. *Overall male and female representation*

Category	Total token in four books	Total categorical frequency in four books	Overall percentage of representation
Male	147698	1958	1.33%
Female		1165	0.79%

The analysis of lexical frequencies in the four educational textbooks revealed a marked disparity in gender representation, with male-associated words significantly outnumbering female-associated words. The data show that male lexis appeared 1,958 times, accounting for 1.33% of the total tokens, whereas female lexis appeared 1,165 times, constituting 0.79% of the total. This resulted in a raw frequency ratio of approximately 1.68:1 in favour of male-associated

have significant consequences for gender relations in Bangladeshi society. First, the historical background of Bangladesh is firmly grounded in patriarchal standards, where men have typically held authoritative and influential roles (Jaim, 2022; Hossen, 2020). Throughout history, societal expectations have positioned men as primary earners and decision-makers, while women have largely been confined to household duties.

These historical traditions and cultural norms continue to influence the provision of learning materials, resulting in textbooks that place a high focus on male perspectives, successes, leadership roles, and contributions (Islam et al., 2023; Mim, 2022; Prodip, 2022). These stereotypes are reflected in the development and approval procedures of instructional materials, where authors and editors, many of whom hold traditional beliefs, unintentionally reinforce biases by emphasising male-centric narratives at the expense of female representation. This persistent imbalance contributes to the continued prevalence of male-centred narratives (Dele-Ajayi et al., 2020; Kratchmer, 2021; Dhiman, 2023).

Moreover, governance structures in the education sector often exhibit significant gender imbalances, with decision-making bodies overseeing curriculum development and textbook approval being predominantly male, leading to a lack of female representation in the educational content (Mucheka, 2022; Tapala et al., 2022; Sengai, 2021; Keech, 2023; Shahzadeh, 2020). Moreover, gender imbalances are frequently observed in the government-structured education sector (O'Connor, 2020; Rosa & Clavero, 2021; Durrani & Halai, 2020; DeHart-Davis et al., 2020). This structural inequity perpetuates male-oriented narratives.

The gender gap in Bangladeshi textbooks has had a significant impact on everyday life (Muassomah et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2021; Durrani & Halai, 2020). The abundance of male-focused words and topics in textbooks has reinforced traditional gender stereotypes. This influences how young students perceive gender roles, with boys being socialised to see themselves as natural leaders and high achievers, while girls may internalise a limited view of their capabilities and potential roles in society. Additionally, the lack of female representation in educational materials can harm female students' self-esteem and aspirations (Mo et al., 2020; Varghese & Kumar, 2020; Aelenei et al., 2020). When textbooks highlight male accomplishments and minimise female contributions, girls may feel undervalued and discouraged from pursuing ambitious academic and career goals, leading to a noticeable gender disparity in various professional fields. The education system plays a critical role in shaping societal values and norms, and male-oriented textbooks contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality by marginalising women. This marginalisation impacts various aspects of life, from employment opportunities to participation in public and political spheres, thus perpetuating systemic gender disparities. Moreover, gender bias in education

has far-reaching social and economic effects (Lechman & Popowska, 2022; Merma-Molina et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024; Donkor & Mazumder, 2020; Nasir et al., 2020). By restricting the educational and career goals of half of the population, Bangladesh has decreased its potential for economic growth and social progress. Providing women with well-rounded education is significant for achieving sustainable development goals and creating a more inclusive society. Additionally, promoting traditional gender roles through education affects relationships within families and communities (Few-Demo & Allen, 2020; Reczek, 2020; Bullough et al., 2022; Mshweshwe, 2020). These predetermined roles may result in unequal power dynamics and restrict opportunities for fair and cooperative partnership between men and women. This situation perpetuates cycles of inequality and impedes the advancement of gender equality.

Textbooks should focus on the diverse and non-traditional roles of men and women. They should present a wide range of gender roles to promote inclusivity and fairness among the students. Moreover, the frequent use of specific female pronouns and nouns reflects societal attitudes towards gender roles. Emphasising traditional roles can limit students' understanding of the diverse contributions women make to society. Textbooks should offer a balanced representation of gender to help normalise equality and diversity while challenging traditional gender narratives. Furthermore, educational materials should follow linguistic inclusiveness to shape students' understandings of gender roles and equality. Therefore, future textbook revisions should move beyond the traditional roles to reflect a wider range of experiences and identities. Consequently, to ensure gender rights in academic discourse, textbooks should avoid overrepresentation or underrepresentation of one gender, because this can negatively influence students' beliefs about gender roles. Therefore, textbooks should offer a balanced view of all genders, requiring critical evaluation of gender roles to promote a progressive and egalitarian society. Inconsistent gender representation across grades is predicted to affect students' perceptions of their gender roles. A consistent and balanced representation of gender across all educational levels is crucial to avoiding perpetuating gender stereotypes. Often, male-associated words are more frequent and prominent in textbooks than female-associated words are. Therefore, an equal representation of gender-associated words should be developed to avoid stereotypical mindsets. Policymakers and textbook publishers should use analytical tools to review and revise content to align it with contemporary standards of gender equality. By addressing these disparities, educational materials can help to shape a more egalitarian society. The visual representation of the word cloud highlights the need for a more balanced linguistic approach to educational content to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Conclusion

A corpus analysis of four English textbooks from the secondary education national curriculum of Bangladesh showed a visible gender imbalance in linguistic representation. This imbalance is not only a linguistic issue, but also reflects deeper societal norms, cultural traditions, and historical perspectives that are often implanted in language teaching and educational materials.

The tendency to associate certain professions or roles with a specific gender in a language reflects societal bias. Moreover, cultural values that shape language can reinforce these biases, embedding them deeply into the educational content. The predominance of male-associated words in textbooks can affect students' self-image and the values they assign to different genders in societal contexts. Furthermore, a language that favours one gender over another may lead to feelings of exclusion and undervaluation among female students, possibly affecting their motivation and achievement. Biased linguistic portrayals can shape students' aspirations, steer them towards traditionally gendered career paths, and limit their potential.

This study recommends certain issues to endure gender rights and equity in Bangladesh in the domains of educational materials. First, there is an urgent need to review curricula to ensure that content at all educational levels reflects diverse perspectives and portrays gender equality. Writers and publishers of educational materials must strive for an equal representation of gender in the language and examples used in textbooks. Finally, teachers should be equipped with a strong understanding of gender equality to foster an inclusive and respectful learning environment. The clear contrast in the distribution of male versus female lexical items, exemplified by the more frequent use of "he" over "she," underscores the need for pedagogical adjustments. Addressing this gender imbalance is essential to promote equality, empathy, and mutual respect among students. Educational stakeholders must commit to producing and delivering content that not only teaches, but also reflects the egalitarian principles of contemporary society.

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SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATOR EDUCATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: Previous studies have shown that Systemic Functional Linguistics has a significant role in providing an in-depth analysis for translation purposes (Kim et al., 2021). Studies explored the effect of analyzing certain aspects of register analysis when training translators. Comparisons of the source texts with the target texts were conducted by using SFL as a tool for text analysis. The current paper is set to provide a full review on SFL and translation studies. The aim of this review is twofold: it aims to review how theories and empirical studies of translation and applied linguistics are interrelated; it also focuses on how SFL has been investigated in translation studies. The review shows that research has focused more on comparative analysis to evaluate translations even when used for translator education. Further research on applying full register analysis as a pedagogical tool for translator education is needed.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Linguistics; translation studies; translator education; register analysis; thematic progression

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Translation and Applied Linguistics

Defining and assessing translation is a controversial matter due to the interdisciplinary feature of translation where many theories can be applied (Marais, 2013). This has led scholars such as Toury (2012) to argue that scholars should agree not to define translation. Marais (2013) followed this view and contends that assessing translation must be aligned constructively in translator education due to the fact that there cannot be a universal assessment if there is no universal definition of translation. In the endeavor to describe the different types of TS, Toury (2012) discussed the map of TS created by Holmes which categorized TS into theoretical, descriptive, and applied studies. Figure 1 shows that translator training, as the focus of this review, was categorized under applied TS.

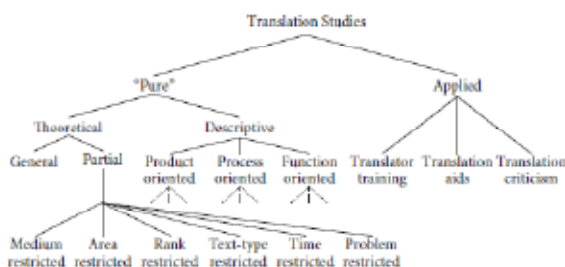


Figure 1. *Map of Translation Studies by Holmes (Toury, 2012, p. 4)*

Munday (2016) has also considered translator training under applied TS and branched it to involve teaching methods, methods of assessment, and curriculum design (Figure 2). This map also supported the fact that translator training is a branch of applied translation.

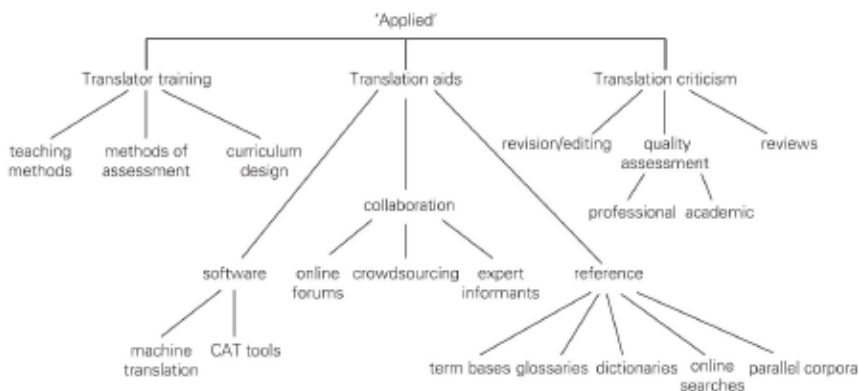


Figure 2. *Munday's Map of Applied Translation Studies (Munday, 2016, p. 20)*

TS, in which a crucial interaction between theory and practice occurs, is considered an interdisciplinary field with a substantial focus on linguistics (Manfredi, 2011). That is because of the diversity of theories (especially linguistics theory) that can be applied to explain the translation process and to justify the choices made in the translation product. Bell (1992) has also acknowledged translation as an interdisciplinary field combined with linguistics studies. Bell (1992) investigated translation thoroughly by creating a model and incorporating applied linguistics and psycholinguistics to understand translation through meaning and language processing. House (2015) incorporated different fields of linguistics to assess the quality of translation such as contrastive pragmatic discourse studies, psycholinguistics, corpus linguistics and neurolinguistics. Jmila (2014) added that linguistics provides translators with a framework to choose and defend linguistic choices in addition to equipping them with the appropriate metalanguage used to evaluate and criticize other translations. The aforementioned theories acknowledge the significance of applied linguistics in translation studies. Applied linguistics theories are able to provide an in-depth analysis of the translation process, justify translation choices, assess translation quality and understand translation through language processing.

Furthermore, additional empirical studies highlighted the significance of textual analysis in training translators. Dooley (2008) emphasized the role of the relevance theory in analyzing a text for translation training. The relevance theory which was proposed by Wilson and Sperber (1999) argues that relevance is a mental process where one uses contextual features to reveal the intended message of the communicator and the interpretation of the hearer. Dooley (2008) argued that applying the relevance theory in textual analysis was able to help translators focus on the context and the message being delivered and also help them analyze mismatches in contextual information in translation. Way (2012) has also supported the use of discourse analysis in translator training.

Way (2012) guided the trainees in the translation process by analyzing the ST by following Fairclough (2003)'s "members' resources" which has to do with the internalized social structures and conventions of a text. This helped the trainees understand the social practice of the source text. After that they explored whether there was an equivalence in the target language and culture to produce a similar meaning. Way (2012) argues that textual analysis helped translator trainees to understand the ST and guide them to choose suitable equivalences in the TTs.

In line with using textual analysis for translation purposes, studies have theorized and applied Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in translation. The following reviews SFL as a tool for text analysis, in addition to the theoretical and empirical research related to the usage of SFL in TS and in translator education.

SFL as a tool for text analysis

SFL is a theory of language which was developed by Halliday (Martin, 2016). It is unique for combining situational context and cultural context and it merely focuses on how language is used to convey meaning (Halliday, 1978). According to Martin (2016), Halliday’s SFL was first based on theories dating back to the 1950s and the 1960s particularly the level of form and substance (Hjelmslev, 1961, as cited in Martin, 2016) and the level of context (Firth, 1957 as cited in Martin, 2016).

According to SFL theory, language is understood through its global and local context and is viewed through different levels (Eggins, 2004). These levels are the context of situation and the context of culture, semantics, lexico-grammar, and phonology/graphology (Halliday, 2001).

SFL views language as a phenomenon that construes human experience into categories and taxonomies (Halliday, 2001). SFL considers functionality as an intrinsic feature in language and hence the term “metafunction” was developed to emphasize this idea. The metafunctions of language proposed by SFL are categorized into three main metafunctions (see Table 1) which are the ideational metafunction (involving both experiential and logical), the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction (Eggins, 2004). These metafunctions are recognized through register analysis involving field, tenor, and mode which are recognized respectively through lexico-grammatical analysis, through transitivity, mood and modality, and theme and rheme (Halliday, 2001).

Table 1. *SFL’s register (field, tenor, and mode) and metafunction (adopted from Martin, 2016)*

Extrinsic Functionality (context)	Reflected in	Intrinsic Functionality (metafunction)
Field	Construed by	Ideational
Tenor	Composed by	Interpersonal
Mode	Enacted by	Textual

FL has been used extensively in research as a tool for text analysis with different approaches and across various fields (Martin, 2016). SFL has been evident in second language education research and was used as a pedagogical tool to help second language learners to communicate in a new language and across different cultural contexts (Trojan et al., 2022). SFL analysis was also investigated as a discourse analysis tool of writing essays by students at different educational levels and across different fields and discourses. Alyousef (2016, 2020) explored marketing and accounting discourses by employing SFL and multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). Alyousef (2016) investigated marketing plan reports

of tertiary students by focusing on thematic progression patterns, composition of information value, and logico-semantic expansions between the visual semiotic resources and the surrounding text. Alyousef (2020) investigated how postgraduate business students used lexical and cohesive devices in individual assignments in English. In both studies, SFL was able to provide an insight to the understanding of the field by students and was able to provide insights and implications for teaching English to business students.

The clause level and the text level of discourse in SFL are considered in the analysis (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). It could be a top-down approach or a bottom-up approach if the meaning of constituents and the overall meaning are taken into consideration. Kim (2007) argues that this focus on meaning on both the clause and context level is what makes SFL applicable in translation. The following part reviewed how SFL and translation were combined in research.

SFL and Translation

SFL has provided a dense theoretical framework for TS (Manfredi, 2011). Catford (1965) acknowledged the importance of considering the levels and categories in language recognized by SFL in TS. Newmark (1988) argued that the translator can benefit from SFL as a tool for text analysis because they both focus on the centrality of meaning. SFL has been used in assessing translated texts (House, 2015) and understanding the semiotic implications of discourse in translation (Hatim & Mason, 1997). Models based on SFL were created to understand the process of translation (Bell, 1992) and SFL was used as a framework for training translators (Trosborg, 2000). Halliday (2001) has also contributed to the theory of incorporating SFL in TS and supported judging the quality of a translated text by using SFL tools.

Newmark (1988) highlighted the mutual interest of SFL and translation in their focus on the centrality of meaning. Newmark (1988)'s work focused on the importance of grammar in translation such as constituents, grammatical metaphor and cohesion. Newmark (1988) also emphasized the significance of register in text analysis, assessing translation and training translators.

House (2015) made a significant contribution to assessing the quality of translation based on SFL. The assessment of translated texts included language, register and genre. It starts from a bottom-up approach starting with textual metafunctions including field, tenor and mode. Then the communicative purpose of the text is evaluated which identifies the genre of the text. Since House (2015)'s focus was on translation, Halliday's SFL theory was adapted to consider more detailed classifications of register such as classifying tenor to four components which are stance, social role relationships, social attitude, and participation. House (2015) also emphasized the importance of considering the role of context

and purpose in determining translation choices which is recognized in the type of translation intended whether it was a covert or an overt translation.

Catford (1965) applied the concepts of SFL in translation by conceptualizing the notion of “translation shifts” which has been considered a crucial concept in TS. Catford identified translation shifts as a deviation from the ST when producing the TT. This shift can be between categories or levels of language, i.e. between levels of grammar and lexis (Catford, 1965).

Hatim and Mason (1997) adapted register analysis in translation to analyze ideological, cultural, and social aspects. They concentrated on variations in language use in translated texts. They differentiated between dialect and register and argued that language varies according to the user and the language use as stated by Halliday. Their approach is a top-down approach focusing on the ideational and interpersonal metafunction in determining textual choices in translation because the top-down approach analyzes a text from the context unlike the bottom-up approach which focuses on the lexico-grammatical elements.

Halliday (2001) argued that the quality of a translation is determined by the equivalence of the TT to the linguistic features which are favorable in the ST. He emphasized the importance of matching the ideational metafunction in the source and the TT. However, he mentions that sometimes even if the ideational is equivalent, the interpersonal and textual may be different which would affect the quality of the translation. Therefore, it is important to know the valued meanings in the ST and match those in the translation in order to have a good translation (Halliday, 2001). This is shown in a translation study by Anis et al. (2022) where analyzing theme and rheme has been applied to analyze the relationship between the translation ideology, method and technique. The findings were able to show that there is significant relationship between them.

Acknowledging the interdisciplinary feature of translation, Bell (1992) explored translation by focusing on model, meaning, and memory. Bell (1992) incorporated applied linguistics, discourse analysis and psycholinguistics to set a yardstick for understanding and evaluating the process and product of translation. Bell (1992) based his model on SFL analysis. The focus on meaning included analyzing ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings through field, tenor, and mode.

Furthermore, scholars in SFL and TS came together in a volume compiled by Kim et al. (2021). It composed various research articles where SFL and TS were interconnected. Steiner (2021) contributed to this volume by investigating the reading of the text in the pre-translation phase and analyzed the role of the translator and how it is similar to reading in SFL. That is because they both look at the language system as a whole and they also consider specific

elements of the text. Neumann (2021) also contributed to the intersection of SFL and TS in regard to register. Neumann (2021) argues in this volume that the register of every language is different linguistically and culturally. Hence, some translation equivalents which refer to cross-cultural register variation may affect identifying lexicogrammatical translational shifts especially in some corpus-based methodologies in TS which only consider text types. Neumann (2021) then asserts that SFL accounts for these register variations. As for Munday (2021), the focus of his article was on interpersonal meaning and the SFL system of Appraisal (specifically graduation which is a type of appraisal analysis that is concerned with the force and focus) and how it was investigated in TS. The contribution of Munday showed how TS is a crucial element of the linguistic system.

To conclude, in addition to what has been mentioned above, the significance of SFL in TS was highlighted in a recent published interview with Matthiessen (Wang et al., 2017). Matthiessen emphasized that translation is a linguistic and a metalinguistic process which needs a theory that accounts for both the ST and the TT from both a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach considering both context, meaning and lexico-grammatical features such as those recognized in SFL (Wang et al., 2017). Therefore, this study agrees with Matthiessen on his definition of translation and acknowledges the significance of SFL in translation. This significance was further investigated in research by applying it as a tool for translator education as reviewed in the following part.

Applying SFL for translator education

Empirical studies have highlighted the significance of using SFL in translation courses by focusing their analysis on certain aspects of SFL analysis. SFL was used as a pedagogical tool for analyzing the ideational, textual, and interpersonal metafunctions of the source and target texts (Kim & McDonald, 2012) and for error analysis (Aghagolzadeh & Farazandeh-pour, 2012). SFL analyses issues such as thematic progression, modality, ideational grammatical metaphor, and appraisal systems were also investigated in the classroom to convey the underlying meanings of both the source and TT (Manfredi, 2011). Thematic progression patterns in translator education were analyzed to investigate and show students the effect they have on the quality of translation (Alshehri, 2017; Kim, 2007; Sofyan & Tarigan, 2018). Other aspects were investigated by using SFL analysis such as the interrelation between clauses and context in translating logical links (Choi, 2013) and the effect of cohesion on the quality of translation (Khany, 2014; Kostopoulou, 2007; Jun, 2018).

SFL as a tool in translator education

Translator education refers to training translation students in university classrooms (Cui & Zhao, 2015). Kim and McDonald (2012) conducted a case study using SFL as a tool for text analysis in teaching translation and interpretation. The study aimed to create a model for a translation course that facilitates SFL as a tool for analyzing a text to understand the connection between contextual and textual variables and lexico-grammatical patterns. This study discussed the pedagogical benefits of applying SFL in translation education and its limitations. The study was an ongoing project based on the participants' reflective journals, text analyses and assignments, and course evaluations. The participants of the study ($n = 40$) had different linguistic backgrounds such as Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, Russian, German, French, and Spanish. The common language between them was English. The teacher provided the participants with an introduction to register, genre, texture, and cohesion. In addition, textual and interpersonal metafunctions at the text and clause level were discussed. Text analysis was then demonstrated and practiced in tutorials. Then, the journal assignment was conducted before any assignment on text analysis was given. The journal assignment ensured that the participants were able to express their understanding of the tools used for text analysis as a theory and were able to apply it. The study found that the most challenging aspect for the participants was the shift from a view of language as a set of structures to one with a wide variety of options. Also, the participants found that applying the theory to translation and interpretation was challenging.

Aghagolzadeh and Farazandeh-pour (2012) also explored SFL as an objective tool for error analysis of translated legal texts. The participants of the study ($n = 15$) were selected randomly from 400 participants in an English-Persian translation exam for a translator position at the Iranian Judiciary. The participants were asked to translate 735 words in 4 separate texts. The translated texts were analyzed for meaning at sentence level. The categories used in the error analysis included interpersonal, textual, logical, and experiential metafunctions. The experiential metafunction included participants, processes, and circumstances. The categories also included mistranslation, omission, and word choice. The findings support the benefits of using SFL as an objective tool to evaluate a translated text objectively.

Saridakis (2016) suggested that combining corpus linguistics, descriptive TS and SFL can benefit translation practitioners and trainee translators. Although this study focused on using computational tools, it highlighted the significance of using a multidisciplinary approach when training or teaching translation courses. It also highlighted the significance of SFL analysis for translator education.

Manfredi (2011) used SFL text analysis in a translation classroom in Italy. The study focused on the reflection of the teacher's experience in teaching translation courses. The teacher started each class with a translation brief following Nord (2014) to explain the purpose of the task and the communicative situation of the task. Then, the teacher provided authentic texts from different genres such as journalistic, tourist and specialized texts each of which was about 300 words. The students were asked to translate it individually or in a group. At Other times, the teacher provided both a ST and its published TT and analyzed both with the students.

The analysis was a bottom-up approach starting from lexico-grammatical analysis leading up to the context. The analysis involved modality, ideational grammatical metaphor, thematic progression and appraisal systems. The findings support the effectiveness of SFL as a tool for translation teaching.

Trosborg (2000) applied textual analysis for training translators. Trosborg focused on both the process of translation and the product of a selected text. The administration of the process of translation was demonstrated and analyzed in a process-oriented approach to translation. The textual analysis followed Halliday's SFL register analysis in addition to considering Vermeer (1998)'s Skopos theory of translation (explaining the translation brief which is the communicative purpose and the audience of the TT) following Nord (2014).

Li and Kim (2021) explored the ideational metafunction and the logical meanings of language by comparing four English translations of a Chinese novel. The results showed that analyzing translation shifts through explicitness and types assist in comparing translation choices. Al Herz (2021) set a model for translator trainees on how to use SFL as a tool. Al Herz focused on the interpersonal meaning through modality by evaluating English-Arabic translation shifts using SFL.

The mentioned studies supported the significance of using SFL as an objective analytic tool for translator education. More studies investigated specific aspects of SFL in translation such as thematic progression which will be reviewed in the following section.

Thematic progression in translator education

Kim (2007) conducted a study on the use of SFL as a tool for teaching translation. The focus of the analysis in the study was specifically on Theme. The participants of the study were 24 Korean students who were taught to apply text analysis in translating. The perceptions of the students were measured quantitatively and qualitatively through learning journals and a survey. The survey results were positive, and the learning journals showed the advantages and challenges that the students faced. The material used in the study was a short expository text

about fuels in the human body. Following Nord (2014), the teacher started to brief the students with the communicative purpose of the translated text. The teacher explained that the TT was for secondary students in Korea. Then the students were asked to translate the text individually. The translations were marked and two were selected for class discussion to analyze textual meaning in translation. The two selected translations were presented anonymously, and the students were asked to choose the most suitable text for a secondary textbook. Then, the teacher analyzed four texts. They were the ST, which was in English, and two TTs, which were translated into Korean by the students in addition to a comparable TT. After that, the teacher discussed why the textual meaning is different and why one is considered better than the other. The clause was considered the primary unit of analysis and the clause-level meaning was used as a point of orientation for the text-level meaning. The study concluded that the use of SFL as a tool for teaching translation was beneficial and emphasized its significance in providing students with tangible analysis which will help them explain their choices and not rely on their instinct.

Alshehri (2017) examined the thematic progression, which can be identified by analyzing thematic patterns, in texts translated from English to Arabic. The study investigated the variations in textual meaning by analyzing six Arabic translations of the same ST in English. It also investigated to what extent thematic patterning is similar or different. The findings showed that the intended textual meaning was changed, and translational shift occurred due to the translator's lack of understanding of the thematic patterns and the textual meanings they imply. Despite the fact that this study focused on analyzing the participants' translation and discussing the results instead of explaining the process of analyzing the text prior to translating it, it still supported the benefits of analyzing theme for translation analysis and translation education.

Sofyan and Tarigan (2018) analyzed thematic progression in TTs translated from English into Bahasa Indonesia by student translators. The study aimed at finding the most dominant pattern of thematic progression used and the translation problems student translators faced. The participants ($n = 15$) were asked to translate a news text from English to Bahasa Indonesia. The ST was an authentic text composed of 236 words and published by BBC online. The ST was measured for readability and supported the level of the participants who were university students with an advanced level of English as a foreign language. Translog was used to collect the data for the study. Translog is a software used to record keystrokes in time and to reflect the typing process of translators and to study cognitive processing through the recorded pauses and modifications (Jakobsen, 2011). The findings showed that hyper-theme progression was the most dominant type used. It also showed that the students had a problem with idea organization. The cause of this problem ascribed to the fact that students tried to imitate the thematic progression in the ST. Students tend to imitate the

style of the ST and focus less on the meaning transferred which resulted in a less cohesive TT. The study emphasized the significance of thematic progression as a tool for conducting a well-organized text.

Investigating thematic progression has supported translator education in providing instructors and translators with an objective tool that can justify translation choices and errors. It has also emphasized the differences and similarities between languages and how imitating the same thematic progression from one language to another may affect the cohesiveness of the TT. The importance of investigating cohesion in translator education studies will be mentioned in the following part.

Cohesion and logical links in translator education

Using SFL for translation education can be evident in studies exploring analyzing texts for cohesion (Khany, 2014; Kostopoulou, 2007; Jun, 2018; Alshalan & Alyousef, 2020). The knowledge of lexical cohesion patterns and translation quality was investigated by Khany (2014). It was found that there was a positive correlation between them. Kostopoulou (2007) emphasized the interrelation between text linguistics, cognition and translation by investigating coherence of the ST.

Kostopoulou found that focusing on the ST and analyzing it for coherence can assist translator trainees to understand the communicative message of the text and improve the quality of their translations. Semantic coherence in TS was also investigated by Jun (2018). The study supported the idea that the quality of translated texts improved when semantic coherence was achieved.

SFL was used in a study by Choi (2013) to explain translating logical links between clauses and the functional descriptions of the grammatical resources used to express meaning. This was done by using a sample from scientific texts and narrative texts. Three STs and their translations were analyzed. The STs were an everyday story, a scientific text, and a government administrative text. First, the story text and the scientific text were compared in terms of lexical density specifically grammatical metaphor, and the type of clauses used which determines how close they are to spoken or written language. Then the grammatical metaphors in the STs were compared with their translations in the TTs. After that, the published translation of the scientific text was compared with the translations of the participants who were trainee translators ($n = 10$). This was done to demonstrate how to translate the clause type favored in a text. Finally, the administrative text and the translations of the participants were analyzed thoroughly, and a suggested alternative was extracted to suit the target readership. This study concluded that clause combination and context whether genre or register or both are interrelated in producing logical meanings in translation texts. This interrelation can be useful for translation education. The

study also supported the benefits of SFL in providing specific tools to analyze a text before translating it and the benefits of combining SFL with other translation theories such as the Skopos theory which helps provide more information about the context of a text.

Alshalan and Alyousef (2020) analyzed 500 business texts (20,000 words in total) for cohesive features collected from the administrative website “Investopedia”. The aim was to investigate their suitability as STs to practice translation skills in the field of finance and administration. The framework used was Halliday’s (1978) SFL approach to language and Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) cohesion analysis scheme. The results showed that the most prominent type used was lexical cohesion, followed by reference and conjunctions. Ellipses and substitution were the less used. Cohesion analysis was able to assert that the texts can be used for translation practice because they are full of various textual features that can fulfill the needs of translation instructors and the participants in the field of finance and administration.

Studies investigating cohesion for translator education supported the impact of cohesion analysis of a text on the quality of translation. Studies have also shown that logical meanings in TTs were affected by register and genre analysis.

SFL and English-Arabic translator education

As has been mentioned above, SFL has been investigated for translation purposes and also for translator education; however, research has been scarce especially for English-Arabic translation classrooms. SFL has been applied to describe the Arabic grammar by Bardi (2008). Although the study was detailed and specific, it was not able to fully account for the Arabic language due to the complexity of Arabic and the fact that SFL was designed to describe the English language (Bardi, 2008). Bnini (2007) investigated training English Arabic translators. He focused on using text analyses and discourse analyses. The results supported the effectiveness of these analyses. SFL was not considered except in a study conducted by Althumali (2021) who investigated the effect of SFL on training English-Arabic translators. The participants in this study received SFL-based translator training where short English to Arabic translated extracts of fiction were given to the participants to analyze the English ST. The results showed that SFL helped the participants improve their translation due to their better understanding of the ST when learning how to use SFL to analyze a text and understand the underlying meanings intended. This study was conducted in Taif University, Saudi Arabia. Although this study has shown the effectiveness of SFL in translator training, it was a case study and generalizing the outcomes was not possible which requires further investigation of SFL in other translation classrooms. Further studies should benefit from these past experiences and

further investigate SFL for translator education in the language combination of English and Arabic.

Conclusion

From what has been reviewed, it can be deduced that SFL has a significant role in providing an in-depth analysis for translation purposes. Research investigated SFL as a tool for text analyses for translator education. Studies used different aspects of SFL to analyze and evaluate translations. They focused on investigating theme, cohesion, and other aspects of register analyses. Applying full register analysis is still scarce. Studies need to address how SFL can assist translators in understanding the underlying meanings of texts prior to translating them. The focus on the product has been thoroughly investigated; however, focusing on the process is still under investigated. Further studies are needed to explore the effect of applying full register analysis for translation education purposes. This will provide a detailed perspective on the benefits and challenges of using SFL as a pedagogical tool in translation education.

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ASSESSING GAMIFICATION-BASED LMS FOR EFL STUDENTS: A SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING FRAMEWORK

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Abstract: The efficacy of gamification-based Learning Management Systems (LMS) in facilitating English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning is an area of growing interest. However, a critical gap exists in comprehensively understanding how these platforms influence self-directed learning (SDL) among EFL students, particularly regarding self-management, self-motivation, and self-control. To address this lacuna, this study employs a survey design involving 50 EFL undergraduate students from STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo, a private university, in Indonesia. Grounded in Garrison's SDL Framework, the research evaluates the impact of gamification on SDL dimensions within the LMS milieu. The data were collected through a questionnaire for quantitative analysis and interviews for qualitative insights. Findings unveil a nuanced landscape: while gamification initially boosts engagement and motivation, sustained self-management and control pose challenges. Implications underscore the imperative for tailored interventions to fortify SDL competencies within gamified environments. Recommendations advocate for the integration of personalized feedback mechanisms and collaborative features to scaffold EFL students' SDL skills amidst gamified platforms.

Keywords: EFL students, gamification, LMS, self-directed learning

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Introduction

Research on Learning Management Systems (LMS) in educational contexts has revealed significant progress and notable challenges. While LMS platforms excel in course management (Mpungose & Khoza, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019; Udin et al., 2022), online collaboration (Ghilay, 2019; Taufiqurrochman et al., 2020), and learning enhancement (Bervell & Arkorful, 2020; Romsis et al., 2024), persistent issues exist. Implementation often diverges from pedagogical goals, leading to underutilization or misuse. Accessibility concerns, particularly for specific student populations, hinder effective engagement with LMS interfaces. Additionally, worries persist about the efficacy of LMS platforms in promoting deep learning, with some studies indicating a tendency towards surface-level engagement. The scalability and sustainability of LMS solutions, amidst evolving technological landscapes, remain underexplored. Recent efforts address these gaps through innovative strategies, including personalized learning pathways and adaptive technologies (Mpungose & Khoza, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019; Taufiqurrochman et al., 2020; Udin et al., 2022). Moving forward, interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based research are crucial for designing, implementing, and evaluating LMS platforms that support diverse learners and pedagogical practices. Future studies should prioritize examining the impacts of LMS usage on student outcomes and educational equity, contributing to the ongoing evolution of digital learning environments.

Within the realm of EFL education, moreover, existing literature has identified significant challenges in the development of self-management, self-motivation, and self-control among learners. Studies have shown that EFL students often struggle with time management, goal setting, and maintaining consistent engagement with learning materials, particularly in online environments such as gamified LMS (Bervell & Arkorful, 2020; Ismail et al., 2020). Moreover, research indicates varying levels of intrinsic motivation among EFL learners, influenced by factors such as cultural background, language proficiency, and individual interests (Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021; Radia, 2019; Supriyono et al., 2020). While gamification elements within LMS platforms hold promise for enhancing motivation through rewards and feedback mechanisms, the effectiveness of these strategies may differ based on learners' preferences and experiences (Amaya-Díaz & Bajiña-Zajia, 2020; Puig et al., 2023; Rojas-López et al., 2019; Slamet et al., 2024a). Additionally, the intersection of self-control and gamification presents challenges, as learners may grapple with balancing short-term gratification with long-term language learning goals (Palaniappan & Noor, 2022; Puig et al., 2023).

In response to these challenges, recent studies have initiated exploration into the potential of gamification-based interventions to cater to the needs of EFL learners within LMS environments. Research findings indicate that gamification

elements, such as progress tracking and virtual rewards, hold promise in positively impacting learners' motivation and engagement, resulting in heightened participation and improved learning outcomes (Bobkina & Romero, 2023; Cahyono et al., 2023; Huseinović, 2023; Romsı et al., 2024; Welbers et al., 2019). However, while these studies offer insights into the general efficacy of gamification, nuanced understandings of its specific effects on SDL skills among EFL students, particularly within the framework of Garisson's Self-Directed Learning (SDL) framework, remain scarce. Moreover, some investigations suggest a correlation between gamification and enhanced SDL behaviors, others caution against potential drawbacks, including an overreliance on extrinsic rewards leading to diminished intrinsic motivation over time (Afrilyasanti & Cahyono, 2022; Friedrich et al., 2020; Schöbel et al., 2020; Slamet et al., 2024b). Despite these advancements, significant gaps persist in the literature, notably regarding the intricate interplay between gamification elements and SDL skills within the context of EFL education. Further research is imperative to illuminate the mechanisms through which gamified LMS platforms influence SDL skills among EFL learners, while also considering individual differences and the nuances of instructional design.

To the best of our knowledge, the existing body of knowledge reveals substantial gaps regarding the interplay among self-management, self-motivation, self-control, and gamification within the realm of EFL education. While existing studies have explored the general impact of gamification on motivation and engagement among EFL learners (Afrilyasanti & Cahyono, 2022; Puig et al., 2023; Welbers et al., 2019; Slamet et al., 2024b), there is a distinct lack of comprehensive understanding regarding how specific gamification elements affect SDL behaviors, particularly within the framework of Garisson's SDL model. Additionally, although some research suggests a correlation between gamification and enhanced SDL behaviors, the literature lacks detailed examinations of potential drawbacks, such as overreliance on extrinsic rewards leading to diminished intrinsic motivation over time (Palaniappan & Noor, 2022; Rojas-López et al., 2019; Welbers et al., 2019; Slamet et al., 2024a). Furthermore, there is limited research investigating the nuanced relationships between gamification features within LMS and the development of self-management, self-motivation, and self-control skills among EFL students (Palaniappan & Noor, 2022; Romsı et al., 2024). This study aims to fill gaps in understanding the dynamics between gamification and SDL in EFL education, contributing to the design of more effective instructional strategies for the specific needs of EFL learners. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do EFL students perceive gamification elements within LMS on their SDL skills?
2. To what extent do gamification features within LMS platforms assist EFL students' SDL behaviors?

Literature Review

LMS in EFL Education

LMS have redefined educational practices, serving as integral tools in course management, content delivery, and collaborative learning environments. Particularly within EFL education, LMS platforms offer unparalleled benefits for both educators and learners alike (Slamet & Mukminatien, 2024; Taufiqurrochman et al., 2020; Udin et al., 2022). Educators benefit from streamlined administrative tasks, facilitating efficient resource organization, assignment distribution, and communication channels (Mpungose & Khoza, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019). Moreover, LMS platforms provide educators with valuable insights into student progress, enabling timely feedback and assessment, thus optimizing teaching practices and learning experiences (Farsad & Modarresi, 2023; Mukhibat & Wilujeng, 2021). For EFL learners, LMS platforms serve as gateways to a wealth of resources, interactive activities, and avenues for communication. The asynchronous nature of LMS enables learners to engage with course content at their own pace, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences. Furthermore, LMS platforms foster collaborative learning environments, encouraging EFL students to participate in group discussions, peer evaluations, and joint projects. Enhanced features such as multimedia resources, interactive quizzes, and gamification elements further augment learner engagement and motivation within the EFL learning context (Palaniappan & Noor, 2022; Romsis et al., 2024). Despite advancements, challenges persist in maximizing the benefits of LMS in EFL education. A significant hurdle involves aligning LMS features with pedagogical objectives and teaching methods. While LMS platforms offer diverse functionalities, educators may struggle to integrate them effectively, leading to underutilization. Accessibility issues also impede engagement, particularly for students with disabilities or limited access to technology. Moreover, ensuring the scalability and sustainability of LMS solutions remains a concern in the face of evolving technology and educational trends.

Gamification in LMS and Its Impact on EFL Learning

Gamification, characterized by the integration of game elements into non-game contexts, has emerged as a potent strategy for enhancing engagement and motivation in educational settings, including EFL instruction. Within LMS platforms, gamification elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and progress tracking systems incentivize learning activities, fostering a sense of achievement and progression among learners (Romsis et al., 2024; Schöbel et al., 2020; Slamet & Mukminatien, 2024). Extant research underscores the positive influence of gamification on learner motivation, participation, and performance within EFL contexts (Afrilyasanti & Cahyono, 2022; Friedrich et

al., 2020; Slamet et al., 2024a). Moreover, gamification elements within LMS platforms enhance learner engagement and satisfaction by creating immersive and interactive learning experiences (Amaya-Díaz & Bajaña-Zajia, 2020; Puig et al., 2023). For instance, gamified quizzes and challenges transform learning tasks into enjoyable and rewarding endeavors, motivating EFL students to actively participate and invest effort. Additionally, features such as progress tracking and virtual rewards provide learners with tangible markers of success, bolstering their motivation and commitment to language learning goals. While gamification shows potential for boosting extrinsic motivation and engagement in EFL education, concerns persist about its effects on intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement. Studies warn against excessive dependence on extrinsic rewards, which could reduce intrinsic motivation over time. Additionally, the efficacy of gamification in LMS for EFL learning may differ based on learner demographics, cultural contexts, and instructional settings. Therefore, a nuanced understanding of gamification's impact on learner motivation and language learning outcomes is crucial for refining instructional approaches in LMS environments.

Garrison's SDL Framework, Opportunities, and Challenges on LMS and EFL Students

Garrison's SDL Framework offers a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding SDL processes within the realm of EFL education focus on self-management, self-motivation and self-control (Garrison, 1997). Central to Garrison's framework is the notion of learner autonomy, where learners take ownership of their learning journey, setting goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on outcomes. In the context of LMS platforms, Garrison's SDL Framework presents opportunities for fostering learner autonomy, self-regulation, and lifelong learning skills among EFL students (Palaniappan & Noor, 2022). One notable opportunity lies in the learner-centered approach advocated by Garrison's SDL Framework. By empowering EFL learners to assume agency over their learning process, LMS platforms can facilitate the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and SDL behaviors (Bervell & Arkorful, 2020; Ghilay, 2019). Additionally, educators are encouraged to adopt facilitative roles, guiding and supporting learners as they navigate the complexities of self-directed learning within digital environments. However, challenges persist in the practical implementation of Garrison's SDL Framework within LMS platforms, particularly concerning the design and delivery of instructional materials and activities (Nur et al., 2022; Romsis et al., 2024; Slamet et al., 2024b). Educators may encounter difficulties in designing learning experiences that effectively promote SDL behaviors, such as goal setting, self-assessment, and reflection, within the constraints of LMS interfaces and tools

(Palaniappan & Noor, 2022). Additionally, learners may face challenges in navigating LMS platforms and accessing resources independently, particularly those with limited digital literacy skills or prior experience with online learning environments. Furthermore, the integration of gamification elements within LMS platforms introduces additional opportunities and challenges for promoting SDL behaviors among EFL students (Palaniappan & Noor, 2022). This study delves into the alignment of gamification with Garrison's SDL Framework and its impact on SDL skills in EFL education. By exploring their interplay within LMS environment, the research aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of SDL in digital contexts. The study seeks to inform the design of more effective instructional strategies and digital learning environments for EFL education by examining the opportunities and challenges presented by Garrison's SDL Framework within LMS platform.

Methodology

Research Design

To address the research questions, a survey research design was applied. This design integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the perceptions of EFL students regarding gamification elements within LMS and their impact on SDL skills. The sequential nature of the design involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. This approach enables the triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings by providing complementary insights into the research questions.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo, one of the private universities in East Java, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 50 EFL undergraduate students, within the Department of English Language Study Program, selected through purposive sampling. This sampling method was chosen to ensure that the participants represented a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences relevant to the study's aims. The demographic characteristics of the participants were as follows: the majority were female (72%), aged between 18 and 34 years old, with varying levels of English proficiency. Specifically, 64% of the participants were aged 18-24, 36% were aged 25-34, and none were aged 35 or above. Furthermore, 68% of participants were classified as beginners in terms of English proficiency, while 32% were categorized as intermediate. No participants fell into the advanced proficiency category.

Table 1. *Demography of the participants (N=50)*

Demographic Characteristics		Participants (N)	Percentage (%)
Age	18 – 24	32	64 %
	25 – 34	18	36 %
	35 and above	0	0 %
Gender	Female	36	72 %
	Male	14	28 %
English Proficiency	Beginner	34	68 %
	Intermediate	16	32 %
	Advanced	0	0 %

Instruments

The quantitative instrument used in this study was a questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions. The questionnaire comprised 15 items adapted from Yang et al. (2020), focusing on three categories: self-management (SM), desire for learning (DL), and self-control (SC). Participants were asked to rate their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagreeing (1) to strongly agreeing (5). Additionally, a semi-structured interview was conducted with eight selected participants to gain in-depth insights into their perceptions and experiences. The selection of interview participants was guided by specific criteria to ensure a comprehensive representation of diverse perspectives. The participants were chosen based on their responses to the questionnaire, with a focus on capturing a range of SDL skills and perceptions of gamification elements within the LMS. This approach allowed us to include individuals with varying degrees of SDL competence and differing viewpoints on gamification, ensuring that the interview data would provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between these factors.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection for this study was conducted with EFL undergraduate students enrolled in the “*English for Intermediate Level*” course via the eLSIDA LMS platform from October 16, 2023, to December 4, 2023. During this period, students engaged with various eLSIDA activities, including interactive quizzes, gamified assignments, and discussion forums, which were designed to support and track their self-directed learning (SDL) progress.

The questionnaire was administered in the second week of December 2023 by the first author to assess the participants’ SDL skills and perceptions of gamification elements within eLSIDA. Following the questionnaire, interviews were conducted by the first author between December 5 and December 15, 2023. These interviews, aimed at gaining deeper insights into students’ experiences, were audio-recorded. The recordings were transcribed by both the first and second

author, and the data were analyzed to identify key themes and patterns. The interviews utilized a combination of open-ended and semi-structured questions to explore the participants' views on eLSIDA's gamification elements.

Quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire were statistically analyzed using SPSS 26. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were assessed through item analysis using Cronbach's alpha and Pearson correlation. All composite validity coefficients were found to be satisfactory, with a coefficient of 0.892 indicating high internal consistency and validity. For the qualitative data collected from interviews, a thematic analysis approach was employed, guided by Garrison's SDL Framework. This framework provided a structured lens through which to explore the participants' perceptions and experiences across the three dimensions of SDL: SM, DL, and SC. Through the integration of quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between gamification elements within LMS and EFL students' SDL skills.

Results

Perceptions of the EFL Students on Gamification Elements within LMS and Their SDL Skills

The comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire data unveils nuanced insights into how the EFL students perceive gamification elements within LMS and their profound impact on SDL skills based on Garrison's SDL Model Framework. The questionnaire strategically encompassed three fundamental categories: SM, DL, and SC. Respondents meticulously rated their agreement with statements associated with each category using a meticulous 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), to Strongly Agree (SA). The detailed results from the SM dimension are presented in Tables 2.

Table 2. *The results from SM dimension*

Code	Item	SD (n, %)	D (n, %)	N (n, %)	A (n, %)	SA (n, %)	Std. Dev
SM1	I am able to set clear goals for my learning.	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	15 (30%)	21 (42%)	0.92
SM2	I effectively manage my time when using the LMS.	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	8 (16%)	17 (34%)	16 (32%)	1.05
SM3	I prioritize tasks effectively with gamified features.	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	10 (20%)	16 (32%)	13 (26%)	1.12
SM4	I efficiently utilize gamification-enhanced resources on the LMS.	2 (4%)	6 (12%)	11 (22%)	20 (40%)	11 (22%)	1.01
SM5	I take initiative in seeking help or clarification.	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	9 (18%)	19 (38%)	14 (28%)	0.98
SM6	I monitor my progress effectively on the LMS.	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	10 (20%)	18 (36%)	16 (32%)	1.08
SM7	I am disciplined in following through with my tasks.	3 (6%)	7 (14%)	9 (18%)	17 (34%)	14 (28%)	1.02
SM8	I adjust my learning strategies based on feedback.	4 (8%)	6 (12%)	12 (24%)	18 (36%)	10 (20%)	1.16
SM9	I am proactive in seeking additional learning materials outside the LMS.	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	11 (22%)	14 (28%)	14 (28%)	1.01
SM10	I reflect on my learning experiences while using the LMS.	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	8 (16%)	21 (42%)	15 (30%)	1.04

Table 2 presents a comprehensive overview of EFL students’ perceptions of their SM skills in the gamified LMS environment. In SM1, 42% (n = 21) strongly agreed on their proficiency in setting clear learning goals, reflecting commendable self-efficacy. The low standard deviation (0.92) indicates consensus among respondents. Moving to SM2, focusing on time management, 34% (n = 17) strongly agreed, with an additional 32% (n = 16) in agreement. Despite general proficiency, the higher standard deviation (1.05) suggests variability in time management skills. SM3 explores prioritization of tasks with gamified features; 32% (n = 16) agreed, but 26% (n = 13) were neutral, indicating uncertainty. The higher standard deviation (1.12) emphasizes diverse perspectives on task prioritization, suggesting potential areas for targeted interventions. Item SM4, concerning the efficient use of gamification-enhanced resources, yielded mixed responses. While 40% (n = 20) agreed, 22% (n = 11) were neutral, indicating varying confidence levels. The standard deviation of 1.01 highlights this variability in how students engage with gamified resources. For SM5, addressing seeking help or clarification, 38% (n = 19) agreed, but 28% (n = 14) were neutral, suggesting inconsistent proactive behaviors. The

low standard deviation of 0.98 indicates a more consistent perception among respondents.

Moving to SM6, focusing on monitoring progress, 36% ($n = 18$) agreed, but 32% ($n = 16$) were neutral, showing uncertainty or variability. The standard deviation of 1.08 suggests diverse perceptions, indicating potential variations in monitoring practices. SM7, addressing discipline in task completion, had mixed responses, with 34% ($n = 17$) agreeing, but 28% ($n = 14$) were neutral, indicating varied confidence levels. The standard deviation of 1.02 points to potential differences in discipline. For SM8, adjusting learning strategies based on feedback, 36% ($n = 18$) agreed, but 20% ($n = 10$) disagreed. The higher standard deviation of 1.16 indicates varied perspectives, suggesting potential areas for targeted support. In SM9, proactiveness in seeking additional learning materials, 28% ($n = 14$) agreed, but 22% ($n = 11$) were neutral, highlighting inconsistent engagement. The standard deviation of 1.01 indicates varied perceptions. Lastly, SM10, focusing on reflection, had a strong positive response, with 42% ($n = 21$) strongly agreeing, but 16% ($n = 8$) were neutral, suggesting inconsistent reflective practices. The standard deviation of 1.04 indicates diverse perceptions, emphasizing potential variations in reflective practices within the gamified LMS context.

In summary, the findings from Table 2 offer valuable insights into the EFL students' perceptions of their SM skills within the gamified LMS environment. Positive responses indicate strengths in goal-setting, time management, and proactive behaviors such as seeking help and reflecting on learning experiences. However, the presence of neutral responses suggests areas of uncertainty or variability in certain aspects of self-management, highlighting potential opportunities for targeted interventions. The variability in responses, as indicated by standard deviations, underscores the diverse perspectives among participants and emphasizes the need for personalized support strategies to enhance overall SM competencies effectively.

Furthermore, the results from the DL dimension, as presented in Table 3, provide a comprehensive exploration of the EFL students' motivation and enthusiasm within the gamified LMS environment. The responses offer insights shedding light on the impact of gamification elements on the EFL students' DL skills.

Table 3. *The results from DL dimension*

Code	Item	SD (n, %)	D (n, %)	N (n, %)	A (n, %)	SA (n, %)	Std. Dev
DL1	I am motivated to participate in activities on the LMS.	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	17 (34%)	23 (46%)	0.88
DL2	Gamification elements on the LMS motivate my learning.	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	8 (16%)	16 (32%)	20 (40%)	0.98
DL3	I am enthusiastic about learning through the LMS.	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	10 (20%)	18 (36%)	13 (26%)	1.10
DL4	I enjoy completing tasks and challenges on the LMS.	1 (2%)	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	20 (40%)	17 (34%)	0.96
DL5	I am curious to explore new features and content on the LMS.	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	18 (36%)	14 (28%)	1.02
DL6	I feel a sense of accomplishment when using the LMS.	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	8 (16%)	19 (38%)	17 (34%)	1.06
DL7	I am motivated to improve my skills through the LMS.	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	10 (20%)	16 (32%)	16 (32%)	1.04
DL8	I feel confident in my ability to learn using the LMS.	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	9 (18%)	22 (44%)	16 (32%)	1.12
DL9	I am eager to explore learning opportunities provided on the LMS.	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	21 (42%)	15 (30%)	0.98
DL10	I am motivated to achieve my learning goals through the LMS.	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	22 (44%)	16 (32%)	1.08

Table 3 provides a comprehensive insight of the EFL students’ motivation and desire for learning within the gamified LMS environment. Beginning with DL1, a majority of respondents (46%, n = 23) strongly agreed, indicating a high level of motivation among participants to participate in LMS activities. This strong agreement reflects a shared enthusiasm for engaging in learning tasks facilitated by the LMS. Similarly, DL2 revealed that a significant portion of respondents (40%, n = 20) strongly agreed on the motivating impact of gamification elements, emphasizing the consensus among participants regarding the effectiveness of gamified features in enhancing motivation. However, DL3 and DL4 exhibited some variability in enthusiasm and enjoyment levels, with standard deviations of 1.10 and 0.96, respectively. This variability suggests that while many students find learning through the LMS enjoyable and engaging, there are differences in the extent of enthusiasm and enjoyment experienced. Additionally, DL5 underscored varying levels of curiosity among participants (SD = 1.02), indicating differing degrees of interest in exploring new features and content on the LMS.

Furthermore, despite a strong agreement in DL6 regarding a sense of accomplishment (34%, $n = 17$), the standard deviation of 1.06 suggests potential differences in experiences, with some students feeling more accomplished than others. Additionally, DL7 revealed mixed responses regarding motivation to improve skills through the LMS ($SD = 1.04$), suggesting variability in motivation levels among participants. Similarly, DL8 reflected differing confidence levels among participants ($SD = 1.12$), despite a notable proportion strongly agreeing (44%, $n = 22$), indicating that while many students feel confident in their ability to learn using the LMS, there are variations in confidence levels. While DL9 demonstrated eagerness to explore learning opportunities ($SD = 0.98$), DL10 highlighted varying motivation levels to achieve learning goals ($SD = 1.08$). The presence of neutral responses in DL9 and DL10 suggests that while some students are eager to explore learning opportunities and motivated to achieve their learning goals, others may exhibit less eagerness and motivation.

In summary, Table 3 offers valuable insights into the EFL students' motivation and desire for learning within the gamified LMS environment. Positive responses highlight strengths in motivation and enthusiasm, while the presence of neutral responses underscores areas of variability. The standard deviations provide additional context, indicating diverse perspectives among participants and emphasizing the need for tailored interventions to support and enhance overall motivation levels within the gamified LMS context.

Lastly, the results from SC dimension, outlined in Table 4, provide a nuanced exploration of the EFL students' perceptions of within the gamified LMS environment. The findings reveal a complex interplay of SC skills, showcasing both areas of proficiency and potential challenges.

Table 4. *The results from SC dimension*

Code	Item	SD (n, %)	D (n, %)	N (n, %)	A (n, %)	SA (n, %)	Std. Dev
SC1	I am able to resist distractions with gamification features while using the LMS.	3 (6%)	7 (14%)	9 (18%)	18 (36%)	13 (26%)	1.05
SC2	Gamification elements help me stay focused on my learning tasks on the LMS.	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	20 (40%)	16 (32%)	0.98
SC3	I exhibit self-discipline when using gamified features on the LMS.	4 (8%)	6 (12%)	11 (22%)	18 (36%)	11 (22%)	1.10
SC4	I am able to regulate my emotions with gamification elements while using the LMS.	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	9 (18%)	16 (32%)	14 (28%)	1.02

Code	Item	SD (n, %)	D (n, %)	N (n, %)	A (n, %)	SA (n, %)	Std. Dev
SC5	I can resist the urge to procrastinate with gamified features on the LMS.	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	10 (20%)	19 (38%)	14 (28%)	1.06
SC6	I exercise self-control in managing my online activities with gamification features.	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	17 (34%)	15 (30%)	1.04
SC7	I am able to regulate the amount of time spent with gamification elements on the LMS.	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	8 (16%)	21 (42%)	15 (30%)	1.08
SC8	Gamification features help me resist the temptation to deviate from my learning goals.	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	9 (18%)	18 (36%)	15 (30%)	1.01
SC9	I exhibit self-control in managing distractions with gamification elements on the LMS.	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	20 (40%)	17 (34%)	1.02
SC10	I am able to maintain focus on my learning objectives with gamified features on the LMS.	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	10 (20%)	18 (36%)	14 (28%)	1.10

Table 4 reveals the EFL students’ perceptions of their SC skills in the gamified LMS environment. In SC1, addressing distraction resistance, 26% (n = 13) were neutral, while 36% (n = 18) agreed, indicating effective self-regulation. The standard deviation of 1.05 highlights variability in responses. SC2, focusing on gamification for task concentration, had 32% (n = 16) strongly agreeing, with a low standard deviation of 0.98, suggesting consensus on the effectiveness of gamification. SC3, exploring self-discipline with gamified features, showed varied responses, with 22% (n = 11) disagreeing and 36% (n = 18) agreeing. The standard deviation of 1.10 emphasizes differences in self-discipline perceptions. SC4, emotions regulation with gamification, exhibited a balanced distribution. The standard deviation of 1.02 suggests variability in emotional regulation, indicating the need for targeted support strategies. In item SC5, 38% (n = 19) agreed with their ability to resist procrastination, while 28% (n = 14) expressed neutral sentiments, indicating variability in procrastination tendencies. The standard deviation of 1.06 highlights potential areas for targeted interventions, despite some consistency in perceptions.

Moving to SC6, managing online activities showed a balanced distribution, emphasizing individual differences in skills (standard deviation = 1.04). SC7, regulating time spent with gamification elements, had 42% (n = 21) strongly agreeing, with a standard deviation of 1.08, suggesting variability in time

management practices and the need for personalized strategies. In SC8, 30% ($n = 15$) expressed neutral sentiments about resisting deviation from learning goals, but 30% ($n = 15$) agreed, with a standard deviation of 1.01, indicating variability in goal pursuit. SC9, self-control in managing distractions, showed balanced responses (standard deviation = 1.02), emphasizing the importance of tailored support. Lastly, SC10, maintaining focus on learning objectives, had a balanced distribution, with a standard deviation of 1.10, indicating variability in focus maintenance and the need for personalized interventions.

In summary, Table 4 offers valuable insights into the EFL students' perceptions of their SC skills within the gamified LMS environment. While positive responses indicate effective self-regulation in various domains, the presence of neutral responses highlights areas for targeted interventions to enhance SC skills effectively. The standard deviations offer insights into the variability of responses, emphasizing the need for personalized support strategies to address diverse learner needs.

The Impact of Gamification Features within LMS on the SDL Behaviors of the EFL Students

Addressing the second research question on exploration the impact of gamification features within LMS on the SDL behaviors of the EFL students, this study conducted semi-structured interview with eight participants (P1-P8, ensuring anonymity). The interview guidelines were designed to align with Garrison's SDL Model Framework, focusing on three pivotal dimensions: SM, DL, and SC. The following paragraphs present the nuanced insights gained from these interviews, providing a detailed understanding of how gamification influences each dimension of SDL.

Exploring the SM dimension within gamified LMS, participants presented varied perspectives on how gamification influences goal-setting and progress monitoring. P1 shared, *"The visual progress trackers help me stay organized and focused on my learning objectives"*. This positive sentiment is echoed by P3, who stated, *"The visual progress trackers really motivate me to set clear goals and monitor my achievements"*. These insights suggest that, for some participants, gamification elements effectively contribute to a structured and goal-oriented learning experience. Conversely, P5 expressed a contrasting view, emphasizing, *"While it's motivating, sometimes the emphasis on points can distract from the actual learning objectives"*. This sentiment is echoed by P6, who shared, *"I sometimes get caught up in earning points rather than focusing on the substance of my learning"*. These perspectives reveal a potential downside to gamification, with the risk of extrinsic rewards overshadowing the intrinsic value of learning objectives. The complexities within these differing viewpoints underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of how

gamification influences self-management skills. Adding to this discourse, P7 noted, *"The gamification elements make learning more enjoyable, but they can also be a bit overwhelming at times"*. This acknowledgment of both enjoyment and potential overload highlights the delicate balance required in gamification design. Similarly, P8 contributed, stating, *"I appreciate the gamified features, but I find that I need to set my own goals and priorities to stay on track"*. This viewpoint underscores the importance of learner autonomy in conjunction with gamification elements. Furthermore, P2 emphasized, *"I find it easier to manage my time and tasks with gamified features; they provide a clear structure"*. This positive remark aligns with the notion that gamification contributes to effective time management and task organization. Additionally, P4 echoed this sentiment, saying, *"I appreciate the visual feedback; it helps me track my progress and adjust my learning strategies accordingly"*. The positive feedback underscores the gamified features' role in offering valuable self-regulation feedback and facilitating learning strategy adjustments. These insights suggest that gamification can significantly impact SM skills by providing motivation, clear goals, and progress monitoring. However, it's crucial to navigate the potential risks of distraction and overwhelm in designing and implementing gamified elements. The findings emphasize the importance of a balanced approach that recognizes both the benefits and potential pitfalls of gamification in supporting SM skills among EFL learners. They highlight the necessity of considering individual learner preferences and needs when incorporating gamification into educational settings. Moreover, ongoing evaluation and refinement are essential to optimize gamification's effectiveness.

Delving into the nuances of the DL dimension within gamified LMS, the participants articulated a spectrum of perspectives, shedding light on the multifaceted impact of gamification features on their motivation levels. P4's affirmation, *"The virtual rewards and achievements give me a sense of accomplishment and motivate me to continue learning"* resonates with the positive influence of extrinsic rewards, creating a cycle of accomplishment and sustained motivation. This sentiment was further emphasized by P2, who noted, *"Virtual rewards and recognition make me more eager to engage with learning materials."* emphasizing the catalyzing effect of virtual rewards on the eagerness to participate. Building on the theme of enjoyment, P7 expressed, *"I enjoy earning badges and rewards; they make learning more fun and rewarding"*. This enjoyment factor introduces a layer of experiential value to the learning process, suggesting that gamification contributes to a more enjoyable and gratifying learning journey. Additionally, P1 highlighted the motivational impact of competitive elements, stating, *"The competitive elements also motivate me to stay engaged and strive for improvement"*. Here, the competitive aspect emerges as a motivating force, fostering engagement and a continuous pursuit of excellence. However, amidst the positive discourse, concerns regarding the

potential overshadowing of intrinsic motivation by extrinsic rewards were voiced. P5's caution, *"The extrinsic rewards are nice, but I worry that they might dominate the joy of learning for its own good."* and P6's reflection, *"I sometimes feel like I'm just chasing after rewards rather than truly engaging with the material."* introduce a critical perspective. These insights prompt a reflective pause, highlighting the delicate balance required to ensure that the allure of rewards doesn't compromise the genuine joy of learning. Moreover, P3 emphasized the need for intrinsic satisfaction stating: *"While the rewards are motivating, I think it's important to also find intrinsic satisfaction in the learning process itself"*. This introspective comment underscores the importance of cultivating a sense of fulfillment intrinsic to the learning journey. Additionally, P8 added nuance, noting, *"I appreciate the rewards, but I also find that I need to find my own motivation and reasons for learning"*. The recognition of the individualized nature of motivation implies that learners may seek personal meaning and motivation beyond external rewards. Overall, gamification, with its extrinsic motivational elements, has the potential to spark eagerness, competition, and a sense of accomplishment among learners. However, careful design is necessary to prevent overshadowing the intrinsic joy of learning. The delicate balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation underscores the importance of crafting gamified experiences that not only provide rewards but also nurture a lasting sense of fulfillment from the inherent value of the learning process. These considerations are crucial for establishing a harmonious and motivationally rich learning environment aligned with the unique aspirations and motivations of EFL students.

Lastly, exploring the realm of SC dimension of Garisson's SDL model framework within the context of gamified LMS, the participants shared diverse insights into their ability to navigate distractions and uphold focus. P4's affirmation, *"The gamified elements help me stay focused and on track; they provide a clear structure and sense of direction."* underscores the role of gamification in offering learners a scaffolded framework for maintaining focus and direction. This sentiment was echoed by P8 who remarked: *"I find that the gamification features help me resist the urge to procrastinate; they keep me engaged and motivated."* highlighting the proactive role of gamified elements in mitigating tendencies toward procrastination and fostering sustained engagement. Further emphasizing the efficacy of gamification in bolstering SC, P6 noted, *"The visual progress trackers help me stay organized and disciplined in my learning approach."* shedding light on how visual cues embedded within gamified interfaces serve as anchors for maintaining organizational discipline. Additionally, P1 echoed similar sentiments, sing, *"The gamified elements help me resist the urge to procrastinate; they keep me on track."* reinforcing the notion that gamification serves as a buffer against distractions, steering learners back on course. However, amid the prevailing discourse of empowerment, concerns

regarding the potential for gamification elements to introduce distractions were voiced. P5 articulated this apprehension, stating, *"While the rewards are motivating, I sometimes find myself getting distracted by the competitive aspects."* indicating a tension between the allure of rewards and the propensity for distraction. P3 echoed this sentiment, reflecting, *"I sometimes get caught up in the competition and lose sight of my learning goals."* highlighting the fine balance required to harness the motivational potential of competition without compromising learning objectives. Moreover, P7 raised concerns about the potential overwhelming nature of gamification elements, stating, *"While the gamification elements are fun, I think they can sometimes be a bit distracting and overwhelming."* This perspective underscores the need for gamified interfaces to strike a delicate balance between enjoyment and functionality, ensuring that extraneous elements do not overshadow the primary learning objectives. Similarly, P2 highlighted the nuanced interplay between motivation and competition, noting, *"Sometimes the competitive aspects can be distracting. It's a fine line between motivation and competition."* indicating the importance of judiciously moderating competitive elements to foster motivation without detracting from learning focus. Overall, these diverse insights holistically become evident that gamification holds promise in fortifying learners' SC by offering structure, motivation, and progress tracking mechanisms. However, the effective integration of gamified elements necessitates a nuanced understanding of their potential to both empower and distract learners. By carefully balancing motivational incentives with learning objectives and minimizing distractions, educators can harness the full potential of gamification to cultivate resilient SC skills among EFL students within LMS environments.

Discussion

This study embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between gamification features within LMS and the SDL behaviors of the EFL students, drawing upon Garisson's SDL Model Framework. Our investigation spans three critical dimensions of SDL: SM, DL, and SC. Through a combination of quantitative analysis via questionnaire responses and qualitative insights gleaned from the semi-structured interview, we endeavor to unravel the multifaceted implications of gamified learning environments on the EFL students' SDL practices.

In the realm of SM, our findings reveal a nuanced landscape of perceptions and experiences among participants. While many lauded the efficacy of gamification-enhanced goal-setting tools and progress trackers in fostering organization and focus, others voiced concerns about potential distractions arising from an overemphasis on extrinsic rewards. These divergent perspectives underscore the complexity of gamification design and implementation, wherein the alignment of game elements with educational objectives emerges as a critical consideration.

The positive insights resonate with prior research emphasizing the motivational potential of visual progress indicators and structured task management systems (Friedrich et al., 2020; Romsis et al., 2024; Schöbel et al., 2020; Slamet et al., 2024a). However, cautionary notes mirror discussions in the literature regarding the need to balance extrinsic motivators with intrinsic learning satisfaction to avoid undermining genuine engagement (Amaya-Díaz & Bajaña-Zajia, 2020; Palaniappan & Noor, 2022; Puig et al., 2023).

In the domain of DL, participants articulated a spectrum of responses to gamification features, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement to measured skepticism. Virtual rewards and recognition mechanisms were celebrated for their role in fostering a sense of accomplishment and stimulating eagerness to engage with learning materials. Yet, concerns were raised regarding the potential dilution of intrinsic motivation by an overreliance on extrinsic incentives. These findings resonate with scholarly discourse highlighting the delicate balance between external rewards and the inherent joy of learning for its own sake (Afrilyasanti & Cahyono, 2022; Rojas-López et al., 2019; Slamet et al., 2024b). The tensions uncovered underscore the need for gamification designers to tread carefully, ensuring that motivational benefits are maximized while safeguarding the integrity of the learning process (Huseinović, 2023; Slamet & Mukminatien, 2024; Welbers et al., 2019).

Moving to the realm of SC, our study elucidates the multifaceted interplay between gamification elements and learners' ability to regulate their behavior and maintain focus. Positive testimonies underscored the efficacy of gamified features in combating procrastination, enhancing task persistence, and promoting disciplined learning habits. However, participants also expressed reservations about potential distractions and the risk of becoming overly fixated on competitive elements. These insights align with prior research highlighting the motivational benefits of gamification in promoting engagement and persistence (Friedrich et al., 2020; Romsis et al., 2024). Yet, they also underscore the importance of striking a balance between motivation and distraction, with gamification designers tasked with optimizing engagement without compromising learning outcomes.

Comparative analysis of existing literature reveals both convergences and divergences in our findings. While our study corroborates prior research on the motivational benefits of gamification in educational contexts, it also unveils nuanced tensions and trade-offs that warrant closer scrutiny. The complexities unearthed underscore the need for a holistic and evidence-based approach to gamification design, one that considers the diverse needs and preferences of learners while prioritizing educational efficacy (Amaya-Díaz & Bajaña-Zajia, 2020; Friedrich et al., 2020; Palaniappan & Noor, 2022; Schöbel et al., 2020). By delving deeper into the intricacies of gamified learning environments, our study

contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on effective instructional design and student engagement in EFL education.

Overall, this study offers a comprehensive examination of the impact of gamification features within LMS platforms on EFL students' SDL behaviors, framed within the context of Garisson's SDL Model Framework. Through an integration of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, we have elucidated the multifaceted dynamics of SM, DL, and SC in gamified learning environments. Our findings underscore the importance of nuanced and context-sensitive approaches to gamification design, highlighting the need for educators and designers to strike a delicate balance between motivational incentives and pedagogical goals. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, ongoing research in this domain remains imperative to inform evidence-based practices and enhance the efficacy of gamified learning environments for diverse learner populations.

Conclusion

This study has shed light on the intricate relationship between gamification features within LMS and the SDL behaviors of the EFL students, framed within the context of Garisson's SDL Model Framework. Through a meticulous examination of self-management, self-motivation, and self-control dimensions, we have uncovered a diverse array of perceptions and experiences among participants. Our findings underscore the potential of gamification to enhance goal-setting, motivation, and focus, while also revealing nuanced tensions and trade-offs inherent in gamified learning environments. While virtual rewards and progress trackers were celebrated for their motivational benefits, concerns were raised about the risk of distraction and overemphasis on extrinsic incentives. These insights carry important implications for educational practitioners and designers, highlighting the need for context-sensitive approaches to gamification design that prioritize pedagogical efficacy and learner engagement. Furthermore, our study contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective instructional design and student engagement in EFL education. By elucidating the multifaceted dynamics of gamified learning environments, we have provided valuable insights that can inform evidence-based practices and guide future research endeavors. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of our study including its reliance on a single educational context and a relatively small sample size. Future research should seek to replicate and expand upon our findings in diverse settings and with larger participant cohorts. Additionally, longitudinal studies could offer deeper insights into the long-term effects of gamification on SDL behaviors and learning outcomes. Ultimately, as the educational landscape continues to evolve, ongoing research in this domain remains imperative to advance our understanding of effective instructional strategies and enhance learning experiences for diverse learner populations.

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Appendix: Interview Guidelines

Introduction

This interview aims to explore your experiences with gamification features in Learning Management Systems (LMS) and how they affect your self-directed learning behaviors as an EFL student.

a. Self-Management Dimension:

1. How do you set and manage your learning goals in the LMS?
2. What impact do progress trackers have on your learning progress monitoring?
3. How does gamification influence your task prioritization?

b. Self-Motivation Dimension:

1. How do virtual rewards and achievements affect your motivation to engage with learning materials?
2. What role do competitive elements play in motivating your participation in LMS activities?
3. How do you balance intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in gamified learning environments?

c. Self-Control Dimension:

1. How do you resist distractions and maintain focus while using gamification features?
2. How do gamification elements contribute to your self-discipline and time management?
3. How do you regulate your time spent on gamified elements to align with your learning goals?

d. Overall Experience:

Do you have any additional insights or thoughts to share about your experiences with gamification in the LMS?

ENHANCING ONLINE AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH AN ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THAI UNDERGRADUATES IN THE NEW NORMAL

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Abstract: *The objectives of this study were, firstly, to implement and determine the effectiveness of an online training program designed to enhance the online communication and intercultural communication skills of undergraduate students and, secondly, to investigate the level of satisfaction of undergraduate students towards the program. The participants were 50 international students at a Thai university who were enrolled in the first semester of the 2023 academic year in a course called "Learning and Problem Solving Skills" (Gen 121). The instruments used in the study consisted of a pre-test/post-test of online communication and intercultural communication skills and a satisfaction online questionnaire to determine the level of student satisfaction with the program. Quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. The results were twofold. Firstly, during the implementation of the online training program, the findings showed that the online was effective in enhancing the undergraduate students' online communication and intercultural communication skills, as shown in the pre-test ($\bar{x} = 9.5$) and post-test score ($\bar{x} = 14.3$). Secondly, the overall level of the students' satisfaction toward the program was high. Despite the students' increased awareness of online and intercultural communication skills, the results showed that this awareness was insufficient to change their study habits, particularly when it came to turning on cameras. Thus, teachers ought to provide students with explicit instructions encouraging them to turn on their cameras so that they can study online more effectively.*

Keywords: *general education, intercultural communication skill, online communication skill, online training program, satisfaction*

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Introduction

Communication is the act of transferring information from one person, group, or place to another by writing, speaking, or using a medium that provides a means of understanding. It is an important part of education as it can enhance the learning experience and create a positive atmosphere in class. Communication between teachers and students in the online context is more complicated and difficult than in a face-to-face class. In a face-to-face setting, instructors have the advantage of connecting with and communicating with their students via the use of body language and facial expressions (Alawamleh et al., 2020), which makes communication more effective.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected teaching and learning both globally and locally. As a result, it has led to an immediate change from traditional classrooms and face-to-face learning to emergency online learning (Boonmoh et al., 2022). Schools and universities needed to rapidly shift from onsite to online courses. Although there are many advantages of online learning, a number of students have difficulties with learning online, for a variety of reasons. One important reason is the decrease in the level of communication between the instructors and their students. In fact, the goals of online communication are the same as the goals of face-to-face communication, including bonding, exchanging information, and being heard and understood. Many studies have revealed that a major problem with online learning is the lack of interaction between instructors and students (Alawamleh et al., 2020; Boonmoh et al., 2021; Salarvand et al., 2023). In particular, students in Asian contexts tend to turn off their cameras; consequently, this is one of the important problems that teachers face. Teachers cannot view students' faces and their body language and so cannot ascertain their levels of understanding or attention.

At present, the post-COVID-19 situation in Thailand and in many parts of the world has greatly improved, and the mode of instruction in higher education has switched from 100% online to being physically onsite in many institutions, with some hybrid classrooms being used depending on the situation. As a result, there have been continuous changes toward onsite, online, or hybrid classrooms (Poungjinda & Pathak, 2022). It is possible that more in-person communication between teachers and students is likely to improve the learning experience and foster a healthy learning environment (Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020; Banjongjit & Boonmoh, 2018; Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak, 2017; Grobella, 2015). When traditional classrooms are replaced by online classrooms, teachers and students must communicate online (Renu, 2021). Nevertheless, difficulties remain with online communication for both teachers and students when teaching and learning online after the COVID-19 pandemic. These include weak interaction, engagement, nonverbal language, communication, and intercultural awareness (Xia et al., 2022;

Pansa et al., 2022; Kanchai, 2021; Boonmoh et al., 2021; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Instructors can be faced with silence, and students often turn off their cameras. Furthermore, students in online courses come from a wide range of backgrounds, including various faculties, different regions of Thailand, and even different countries. As students have different cultural backgrounds, when communicating with one another, it is essential for them to be aware of cultural differences. Differences in cultural norms can influence how students behave in the classroom, including how they respond to questions and their perceived role in the learner/teacher relationship. They must learn to adapt themselves to circumstances in order to behave appropriately. In order to develop their intercultural competency, especially in the online context, students should learn about cultural differences. Intercultural communication is a crucial aspect of interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. It is especially important when two or more people's communication is impacted by culture (Baldwin et al., 2014). Intercultural communication skills are required to reduce misconceptions and avoid communication breakdowns (Thongprayoon et al., 2020). This is beneficial to students, as they are capable of communicating in a variety of cultural and linguistic situations more effectively. There are many studies on the topic of intercultural communication skills development which frequently focus on language learning contexts in traditional classrooms. Little research has emphasized developing online communication and intercultural communication skills, especially in the Thai context.

Therefore, the present study implements and assesses an online training program which was developed based on teachers' and students' perceptions of studying general education (GE) courses in an online environment, as described in Boonmoh & Jumpakate's (2023) research. It is very significant to conduct this research in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the online training program and the satisfaction of learners as well as to obtain valuable comments and feedback. The outcomes obtained will be used to develop a training program that is more appropriate and effective for learners.

The following research questions were postulated:

1. What is the effectiveness of the online training program for enhancing online communication and intercultural communication skills?
2. What are the levels of undergraduate students' satisfaction and their attitudes towards the online training program?

This present study aimed to assess the efficacy of an online training program developed to improve undergraduate students' online communication and intercultural communication skills. Secondly, this study investigated the level of satisfaction of undergraduate students towards the program.

Literature review

In today's globalized society, it is increasingly significant for people to understand diverse cultures and the impact of intercultural communication (Baldwin et al., 2014). Although the COVID-19 situation has improved, online learning is still widespread. For this reason, in order to be effective online teachers and learners, it is essential for them to obtain online communication and intercultural communication skills. The following is a short comprehensive review of previous research on communication and intercultural communication skills of learners.

According to previous studies, intercultural communication competence and netiquette are two specific skill sets that students need in order to succeed in studying online. To understand and reach such skills, the Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was proposed by Byram (1997) and developed by Deardoff (2006). In Byram's (1997) study, the model consists of 1) intercultural attitudes, which refers to curiosity and openness, together with the readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own; 2) knowledge, which refers to the knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction; 3) skills of interpreting and relating, in other words the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own; 4) the skills of discovery and interaction, i.e., the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction; and 5) critical cultural awareness, which is the ability to evaluate, critically and based on explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. Subsequently, Deardoff (2006) suggested the Model of Intercultural Competence, which is similar to Byram's (1997) work in that it comprises abilities, attitudes, and knowledge and comprehension.

Additional to ICC, netiquette is an essential skill for online learning. Pewnili (2021) described netiquette as a digital etiquette or online communication rule for Thai digital citizens or Thai students to communicate effectively via online tools. Students in this generation are rather proficient in using technology; they are 'digital natives'. Prensky (2001) described the term "digital natives" as the generation that was born into the information age and uses digital platforms and devices for informational and recreational purposes. Despite the fact that students frequently use online content, this does not automatically suggest that they are able to effectively use digital technology for their online learning.

Intercultural communication has been researched in many studies (Haerazi & Nunez, 2022; Higgins & Siritaratn, 2022; Joshi & Varhelaht, 2022; Lee, Ho, & Chen, 2023; Thongprayoon et al., 2020). Joshi and Varhelaht (2022) explored

the experiences of 59 international students in Finland enrolled in a fully online degree program there when they participated in multicultural, multinational online study teams. The findings revealed that students found it important to have training in intercultural communication skills; moreover, it was revealed that teachers should be trained in the use of resources, tools, communication, teamwork, leadership, and organizational and online culture support in culturally diverse online contexts. Pham and Pham (2022) surveyed 336 Vietnamese public and private university students' intercultural competence. The results from the questionnaire indicated that the level of intercultural competence among the students in both types of university was low. The study revealed that they lacked knowledge about the diversity of culture and necessary skills to deal with intercultural situations. Although most students came from a variety of provinces and cities, they were still within the same region, the South of Vietnam, so cultural diversity was limited. When comparing the two types of schools, the students from the private universities were found to hold more positive attitudes towards values, practices, and different cultural perspectives. They also possessed the crucial skills to put into practice in intercultural communication in multicultural settings. It was evident that private universities had provided a more vibrant environment that enabled their students to engage in cross-cultural interactions through a range of extracurricular and club activities. Hofmeyr (2023) investigated 164 first-year Japanese students regarding the effects of cocurricular and extracurricular programs on the development of intercultural competence for one year. The results revealed that while formal programs positively affected the development of intercultural competence development, informal intercultural contact on campus negatively affected students' intercultural attitudes. The results also showed that student perceptions of intercultural competence at the pre-intervention stage affected engagement with intercultural opportunities on campus, suggesting the importance of introducing interventions prior to higher education.

Research on the development of intercultural competency has made use of massively open online courses, or MOOCs. Krishnan, Jin and Calahan (2021) evaluated the impact of including intentional intercultural learning (ICL) activities via massive open online course (MOOC) in an on-campus course on increasing the student cultural competence of 75 undergraduate students in the United States. The findings from the pre-test and post-test revealed that utilizing the MOOC in understanding diversity and inclusion as an ICL activity was an effective means of teaching intercultural competence and led to a significant increase in mean developmental orientation (DO) scores in the intervention group compared to the control group, which did not participate in the MOOC. Moreover, reflection papers written by the intervention group showed that the most significant benefits were greater self-awareness, a larger cultural worldview, and greater openness to diversity exploration. Similarly, Higgins and Siritaratn (2022) developed a teaching module based on conversation

analysis to improve the interactional and intercultural competence of 28 Thai undergraduate aviation students. The results of the questionnaire and interviews with the students regarding the implementation of the teaching module were favorable, demonstrating that the teaching module had a beneficial impact on the students' English proficiency in terms of their intercultural and interactional competence. Furthermore, it was discovered that students' comprehension and awareness of interactional and intercultural competency improved and increased with the number of opportunities which they had to observe real-world interactions in airport scenarios.

In the same year, Chang et al. (2022) surveyed 7,411 Thai junior high school students about the effect of intercultural competence on their resilience, well-being, and attitudes toward reading. The research findings suggested that improved intercultural competency of such students can lead to better resilience. The students were able to adapt better to their environment and to overcome challenges. Furthermore, having good intercultural competence can help students feel relaxed and happy when interacting with people from different cultures, which can create a sense of well-being. Also, the more interculturally competent students are, the more they enjoy reading and learning about different cultures. Another study carried out by Huttayavilaiphan (2022) in Thailand used the CEFR-based online intercultural communication activities to improve Thai students' communicative language competence. The findings revealed that their student participants not only improved their linguistic and communicative skills, but that they were also able to move beyond their comfort zone in using the English language. The interview results found that online communication in English with people from various backgrounds had enhanced the Thai students' linguistic knowledge, such as when they used more complex sets of vocabulary and grammar. Nevertheless, the results of some studies indicated that the online medium can cause complications. Shahini et al. (2020) used online discussions to examine the cultural communication practices that were in use among 3,821 MOOC participants from 148 countries. The findings showed that as the course progressed, only a very limited number of interactions had elements of transcultural awareness, and peer communication also declined. According to these findings, the learners inside the MOOC community might have benefited from a collaborative pedagogical approach.

Subsequently, Boonmoh and Jumpakate (2023) conducted a survey of 10 Thai teachers and 431 Thai and international undergraduate students enrolled in general education (GE) courses to obtain their opinions on the teaching and learning of GE courses in an online setting. The results from the survey and from interviews indicated that online communication skills including netiquette were essential for online learning, particularly GE courses. In addition, students mentioned that they had trouble with intercultural differences, intercultural communication skills, and online communication skills. For future requirements, the findings of this study suggested that both students and lecturers wanted short

workshops and training sessions about online communication and intercultural skills.

Additionally, Boonmoh and Kamsa-ard (2023) investigated the anxiety levels of pre-service EFL teachers regarding online teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that the primary sources of anxiety included concerns about the mode of instruction (online, onsite, or hybrid), stability of the internet connection, and the ability to integrate technology into teaching. This context underscores the need for targeted training to improve online communication and intercultural communication skills, especially during such unprecedented times (Boonmoh & Kamsa-ard, 2023).

As shown by the literature review, intercultural communication is a significant competency in order for learners to develop their understanding of other cultures. Even though numerous studies have been conducted to develop intercultural communication skills, these studies frequently focused on language learning contexts in traditional classrooms. Little research has emphasized developing online communication and intercultural communication skills, especially in the Thai context. At the time of this study, the COVID-19 situation has improved, but online learning persists in many institutions. Hence, it is crucial to carry out this research in order to evaluate the effectiveness of online training programs and the satisfaction of learners, and to obtain insightful comments and feedback. The results obtained will be applied to the development of a training program to make the program more suitable and efficient for online learners.

Methodology

As illustrated in figure 1, the following research framework was implemented throughout the study.

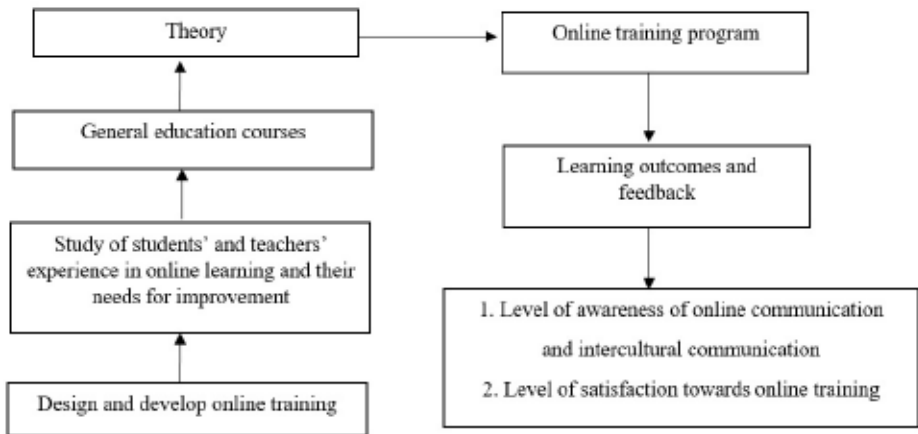


Figure 1. *Proposed research framework.*

The study’s participants consisted of 50 international students at a Thai university enrolled in the first semester of the 2023 academic year in the Gen 121 (Learning and Problem Solving Skills) course. This is a compulsory course for first-year students. The participants included 34 Thai students and 16 international students from Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, France, and Denmark. The participants included both male and female students. These students came from a variety of backgrounds, different faculties, different regions of Thailand, and different countries. All the participants were students between the ages of 20 and 21.

The sample group consisted of undergraduate students at a Thai university who were enrolled in Gen 121, and the 50 students in the sample were obtained using the cluster random sampling method. In addition, all the participants consented to participating in the study and to having their data collected by the researchers. The research project has been approved by the KMUTT IRB (Institutional Review Board) with a certificate number, KMUTT-IRB-COE-2023-163.

The training program was part of the Gen 121 course. Although Gen 121 is not an English course, the language of instruction for this international program is English.

Variables

1. Independent variable: This comprises the online training program for enhancing the online communication and intercultural communication skills for undergraduate students
2. Dependent variables: Learning outcomes from, and the level of student satisfaction with, the online training program for enhancing the online communication and intercultural communication skills of undergraduate students.

Research design

In this study, the one-group pre-test-post-test design was utilized.



X = Online training program for enhancing undergraduate students’ online communication and intercultural communication skills.

O = Learning outcomes from, and the levels of student satisfaction with, the online training program.

Instruments

1. Online training program and lesson plan: This consisted of three lesson plans for twelve different topics about online communication and intercultural communication skills, over three weeks for one hour per week. The online training program comprised English videos created from a prior survey of teachers and students' needs (Boonmoh & Jumpakate, 2023). There were three modules, and each module was divided into four units:

Module 1: How to prepare for studying. (1 hour)

Unit 1: How to set/prepare yourself in a learning environment. (15 minutes)

Unit 2: How to manage time for studying. (15 minutes)

Unit 3: Useful social media/applications/platforms for studying. (15 minutes)

Unit 4: Useful online communication skills. (15 minutes)

Module 2: How to speak when studying. (1 hour)

Unit 5: Four main intercultural communication skills. (15 minutes)

Unit 6: How to speak your mind. (15 minutes)

Unit 7: How to share ideas with friends in a group. (15 minutes)

Unit 8: How to reflect on your own ideas. (15 minutes)

Module 3: Submitting work, and the manner and demeanor when interacting. (1 hour)

Unit 9: What is netiquette in the classroom? (15 minutes)

Unit 10: How to react to friends when studying through an online platform. (15 minutes)

Unit 11: How to react to teachers when studying through an online platform. (15 minutes)

Unit 12: How to complete and submit tasks/assignments/activities online. (15 minutes)

2. Pre-test and post-test about online communication and intercultural communication skills: The pre-test and post-test are identical with shuffled choices. Each module had a pre-test and post-test consisting of 15 items, making a total of 45 items for the three modules. It was expected that there would be improvement from the pre-test to the post-test due to the training provided.

3. A satisfaction online survey: Forty-five items were divided into four parts: student's background, overall opinion on online training, opinion on the online training for each module, and additional suggestions. The questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in the field in order for it to be more accurate and relevant.

Data collection

- 1) Each week, students were asked to do a pre-test (15 items) before the start of the session about online communication and intercultural communication skills.
- 2) Students were asked to watch one module of the training program each week during class time, making it compulsory. The online training program consisted of three modules, and there were four units in each module. After watching the video each week, they were asked to do a post-test (15 items). Students who missed the class had access to the tests and the video later and could complete them outside of class time.
- 3) Additionally, students were asked to complete an online satisfaction survey after finishing the entire online training program. The survey was conducted one week after the completion of the training program to report their satisfaction and attitudes towards the online training program.

Data analysis

Utilizing the students' test results from the pre-test and post-test, the students' overall performance on the intercultural and online communication abilities was scored using the mean and standard deviation presented in the form of a table.

The questionnaire was used to measure both the students' level of satisfaction and their attitudes towards the online training program. In the first part of the questionnaire, frequency and percentage were used to analyze the demographic information of the participants. In the second and third parts of the questionnaire, 5-point Likert scales were used. The mean and standard deviation were used to specify the students' satisfaction towards the online training program. In addition to analyzing the questionnaire, the mean scores were determined and interpreted following Ruengprapan's (2000) rating scale:

- Mean score of 1.00 to 1.80 = "strongly disagree" or "very low"
- Mean score of 1.81 to 2.60 = "disagree" or "low"
- Mean score of 2.61 to 3.40 = "agree" or "moderate"
- Mean score of 3.41 to 4.20 = "agree" or "high"
- Mean score of 4.21 to 5.00 = "strongly agree" or "very high"

In order to determine the students' attitudes toward the online training program, data obtained from the open-ended question in the fourth part of the questionnaire were analyzed by using the content analysis technique.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the effectiveness of the online training program for enhancing online communication and intercultural communication skills?

To answer this question, a pre-test-post-test achievement test was employed before and after the training in each module so as to analyze the data. In order to investigate the effectiveness of the online training program, the achievement test was utilized to compare how the students' competencies developed. The results are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of student achievement before and after the online training

Test	N	Pre-test	Post-test
Module 1	50	10.4	14.5
Module 2	45	9.0	14.3
Module 3	50	9.3	14.3
Average		9.5	14.3

The findings suggest an improvement in student achievement from $\bar{x} = 9.5$ to $\bar{x} = 14.3$, respectively. The comparison shows that student achievement after the online training was higher than before. It was evident that following the training program, the students' understanding of online communication and intercultural communication skills had increased. The results show that the online training had a positive impact on the students' competency, and that it was effective in enhancing online communication and intercultural communication skills.

Research Question 2: What are the levels of undergraduate students' satisfaction and their attitudes towards the online training program?

To answer the second research question, the questionnaire was used to measure both the students' level of satisfaction and their attitudes towards the online training program. The findings regarding overall student satisfaction towards the online training are shown in Table 2. The satisfaction survey was conducted once, one week after the end of Module 3. This timing was chosen to allow students to reflect on the entire program, though it may have influenced their recall of specific topics.

Table 2. Students' overall satisfaction towards the online training program

No.	Items			
	Overall satisfaction	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpreted as
1	I am satisfied with this online course.	4.38	0.69	Very high
2	I obtained knowledge from this online course.	4.26	0.69	Very high
3	The platform of this online course is appropriate.	4.2	0.75	Very high
4	The length of time is appropriate.	4.26	0.69	Very high
5	The content in this online course is appropriate.	4.22	0.76	Very high

No.	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpreted as
	Overall satisfaction			
	Knowledge and understanding			
6	I had knowledge and understanding about online communication and intercultural communication skills before the training.	3.48	0.73	High
7	I have knowledge and understanding about online communication and intercultural communication skills after the training.	4.36	0.62	Very high
	Application			
8	I have confidence and am able to transfer knowledge to others.	4.2	0.69	Very high
9	I am confident that I can communicate in the classroom.	4.36	0.71	Very high
10	I am confident that I can study online effectively.	4.44	0.75	Very high
	Total	4.22		Very high

The results show a very high degree of overall satisfaction with the online training ($\bar{x} = 4.22$). All the elements were determined to be at a ‘very high’ level, with the exception of prior knowledge and comprehension of online communication and intercultural communication skills. The results indicate that following the training, the participants expressed very high satisfaction with the knowledge, length, and content of the online training. Their knowledge of online communication and intercultural communication skills had both reportedly increased. Students also possessed greater confidence in learning and interacting with others in an online classroom. In addition, the data showed that the participants had more confidence in their ability to study online more effectively.

Table 3. *Student satisfaction towards Module 1 of the online training program: How to prepare for studying*

No.	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpreted as
1	The videos from this module can help me to have better awareness about verbal and non-verbal online communication.	4.54	0.54	Very high
2	I am confident that I can prepare myself in a suitable learning environment.	4.36	0.69	Very high
3	I am confident that I can submit my work online on time.	4.32	0.71	Very high
4	I am sure that I can talk to my friends and my teachers in the classrooms.	4.22	0.76	Very high
5	I think I can handle a lot of homework and assignments.	3.92	0.93	High
6	I will use body language more in online classes.	3.90	0.90	High

No.	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpreted as
7	I think I can turn on cameras when studying online.	3.74	1.05	High
	Total	4.14		High

Table 3 shows that students possessed high levels of satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 4.14$) with Module 1 of the online training program (How to prepare for studying). The questionnaire items that scored the highest, highlighting the top three central tendencies, were awareness of verbal and nonverbal online communication, preparing oneself in a suitable learning environment, and submitting work online on time. The scores for these items were 4.54 (SD = 0.54), 4.36 (SD = 0.69), and 4.32 (SD = 0.71), respectively. The item with the lowest score ($\bar{x} = 3.74$) regarded switching on cameras while studying online. The results indicated that the participants reported having more awareness about verbal and non-verbal online communication; however, not all of them were likely to turn on cameras when studying online. The possible reason why students sometimes did not want to turn on cameras was their concern for personal appearance and physical surroundings. Fortunately, most reported having the ability to create or arrange a conducive learning environment and to submit work online on schedule.

Table 4. *Student satisfaction towards Module 2 of the online training program: How to speak when studying*

No.	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpreted as
1	I have a good attitude towards communicating with friends from different cultures.	4.46	0.61	Very high
2	The videos from this module showed me how to share ideas within a group.	4.36	0.69	Very high
3	I think I can collaborate with friends in group.	4.34	0.68	Very high
4	I am confident enough to allocate work to each member in group.	4.26	0.72	Very high
5	The videos presented the skills to communicate with friends from different cultures.	4.18	0.79	Very high
6	I am able to present my work/assignments effectively.	4.18	0.82	Very high
7	The training presented ways to share my ideas together with supporting statements.	4.12	0.79	Very high
	Total	4.27		Very high

Table 4 illustrates the extremely high level of student satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 4.27$) with Module 2 of the online training program (How to speak when studying), as all the elements were rated 'very high'. The items with the highest scores were item 1) having positive attitudes towards communicating with friends from diverse cultures, item 2) knowing how to share ideas within a group, and item 3) working together with friends in a group. This suggests that the participants' views on communicating with friends from diverse cultures had improved

following the training. They now reported having the ability to collaborate and exchange ideas with classmates.

Table 5 Student satisfaction towards Module 3 of the online training program: Submitting work, manner and demeanor when interacting

No.	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpreted as
1	The videos help me to be aware of the benefits of turning on a camera/webcam.	4.46	0.7	Very high
2	I am aware that having sufficient knowledge in English can help me to study better.	4.34	0.8	Very high
3	This module helps increase my awareness of turning on cameras and unmuting the microphone in classes.	4.28	0.8	Very high
4	I will have a good attitude about using English in online classes.	4.26	0.8	Very high
5	I think I know when the turn is to talk with friends and lecturers.	4.20	0.8	Very high
6	I am aware that I have to handle homework and assignments during class time.	4.16	0.8	Very high
7	I am confident that I have enough vocabulary in English to communicate with friends.	4.12	0.8	Very high
Total		4.26		Very high

As can be seen in Table 5, there was a very high degree of satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 4.26$) among students with regard to Module 3 (submitting work, manner and demeanor when communicating). All the items were ranked 'very high'. However, when examining the items separately, item 1) awareness of the benefits of turning on a camera/webcam) received the highest score ($\bar{x} = 4.46$). The second-highest score ($\bar{x} = 4.34$) was item 2) awareness that having sufficient proficiency in English can aid in studying more effectively. Item 3, which increased awareness about turning on cameras and unmuting microphones in class, received the third-highest score ($\bar{x} = 4.28$). It was rather interesting that the students realized the benefits of turning on a camera; nevertheless, they did not want to turn on a camera while studying online according to the results from table 3.

The findings clearly indicate that, in addition to participants' realizing the benefits of using cameras for online learning, the training also increased their awareness of the need for turning on cameras and unmuting microphones in classroom settings. The results also revealed that they understood how important English proficiency was to their ability to study more effectively.

Discussion

The research findings presented in this study suggest that online training significantly improves the online communication and intercultural communication skills of undergraduate students in Thailand. The results of the

achievement test and students' satisfaction survey both suggest that the online training program had a positive impact on the students' competency in terms of online communication and intercultural communication skills. Moreover, it was evident from their participation in the study that students were more aware of verbal and non-verbal online communication. This finding is consistent with the work of Krishnan, Jin, and Calahan (2021), who mentioned that the most significant benefits of using intentional intercultural learning (ICL) activities via a MOOC include greater self-awareness, a larger cultural worldview, and greater openness to diversity exploration.

The improvement in student achievement was evident from the comparison of results in the pre-test ($\bar{x} = 9.5$) to the post-test ($\bar{x} = 14.3$). This indicates a substantial enhancement in students' online communication and intercultural communication skills after the training. The satisfaction survey results also showed a very high level of overall satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 4.22$) with the online training program, indicating that students found the program beneficial and effective.

Similarly, the finding aligns with the study by Higgins and Siritaratn (2022), who stated that implementing a teaching module based on conversation analysis to promote interactional and intercultural competence could improve students' comprehension and awareness of these competencies. However, this awareness was insufficient to influence changes in their study habits. Students frequently turned on their cameras when interacting with friends virtually; nevertheless, they preferred to avoid using the camera while studying with teachers. This finding is consistent with Boonmoh and Jumpakate (2023), who discovered that most students do not feel confident turning on the camera during online study sessions. It seems plausible that they lacked familiarity with their teachers. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to establish a positive classroom environment and strong relationships with their students. Chaisiri (2023) mentioned that teachers need to establish and maintain a welcoming, stress-free, and encouraging environment in virtual classes where errors are readily and occasionally humorously acknowledged. Moreover, teachers should be mindful of the quantity of assignments, particularly for students with low fluency. Anxiety about using proper grammar in English can detrimentally affect learners' confidence when speaking. Punyaporn and Soontornwipast (2022) discovered that when students perceived their teachers as receptive to new ideas and perspectives, it could potentially bridge the communication gap between them.

Regarding using a camera when studying online, it is sensitive for some students to turn on the camera. Providing students with additional resources, such as the chat option, can motivate them to participate in class discussions. According to Le, Cunningham, and Watson (2018), when students felt they had less social presence, they were more likely to use English naturally in online settings. The

findings suggest that students' willingness to communicate decreased with increasing social presence in the online world. This is similar to the study by Punyaporn and Soontornwipast (2022), who found that when students were given the opportunity to interact with the class through the chat box, they were more eager to talk. Presumably, this is practical and related to issues with saving face in the classroom (Hofstede et al., 2005). It is possible that they are uncomfortable speaking in front of a large group of students in an individual capacity. This is consistent with Toth's (2010) finding that the propensity of certain individuals to avoid oral communication is one of the most researched areas related to communication.

Pedagogical implication

As evidenced by the fact that intercultural and communication skills are critical for learners in today's world, the present study reinforces the fact that educational institutions should incorporate these into their curricula so that students can use them in both their academic and professional lives.

In order to develop intercultural and online communication skills, Boonmoh and Jumpakate (2023) suggested that there should be icebreaker activities in the very first class to make students more familiar with their classmates and also with their instructors, especially in an online class. As a result, students will feel more at ease speaking with their new peers, so communication amongst students from various backgrounds will be easier in subsequent classes. Students who have good attitudes about communicating with friends from different cultures tended to share ideas and collaborate with friends more. Consequently, teachers should assign students to work in groups. Shahini et al. (2020) noted that a collaborative pedagogical approach may interconnect learners well in the MOOC community. Furthermore, peer feedback is an effective strategy for lowering students' anxiety, according to research by Motallebzadeh, Kondori, and Kazemi (2020).

Regarding cameras, teachers may need to design more creative and active tasks to stimulate their students to turn on their cameras. It is essential for teachers to reinforce the message for students to turn on their cameras, for instance by praising and showing their appreciation towards those students. Teachers need to mention and explain the many benefits of camera use in online learning. In addition, they should encourage students to prepare themselves to study in a suitable learning environment such as by having a good seating area and a strong internet connection as well as by studying in a quiet room, as this will increase the chance that they will communicate more in an online classroom.

Finally, this study indicates that in online environments with diverse cultural backgrounds, teachers should receive training in online resource usage, communication, teamwork, and leadership. In particular, educators need to

be compassionate and empathetic toward all their students. It is important for teachers to understand that while they should encourage students to the best of their abilities, they should not put them under excessive pressure in what is for many educational institutions a novel medium: the online classroom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the implementation of an online training program for enhancing online communication and intercultural communication skills is essential for learners to improve their communication abilities in both online and onsite learning environments. This study has shown that such training programs can significantly enhance students' awareness and proficiency in these skills. When students recognize the importance of online communication and intercultural communication skills, it can lead to changes in their learning behaviors, making them more effective communicators.

Teachers play a critical role in creating a positive classroom atmosphere that fosters efficient online communication and learning. By providing a supportive and engaging environment, teachers can help students feel more comfortable and confident in their online interactions. Additionally, the findings from Boonmoh and Kamsa-ard (2023) highlight the heightened anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need for effective online communication training to alleviate such concerns. This further supports the importance of our study in addressing these challenges.

However, this study has limitations that must be considered. The small sample size, drawn from a single Thai university, may affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, conducting the satisfaction survey one week after the end of the program might have influenced students' recall of the specific topics they were trained on. To better understand the efficacy of online training programs for enhancing communication skills, future research should involve larger and more diverse samples from different regions and countries. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term effects of such training programs on students' communication competencies.

The relevance of this study lies in its contribution to the growing body of research on online education. By demonstrating the positive impact of targeted training programs, this research provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to improve online learning experiences. The findings suggest that integrating online communication and intercultural communication skills into the curriculum can enhance students' overall learning outcomes and better prepare them for a globalized world.

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DISCOURSE OF DISSENT: LANGUAGE RESISTANCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN SUBALTERN LITERATURES – DALIT AND BLACK

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Abstract: *The paper highlights the pivotal role of language in Afro-American and Dalit movements, emphasizing identity affirmation and resistance to dominant aesthetic structures. It examines language's dynamic role in shaping subaltern experiences and fuelling revolutionary movements. While there is some analysis of the significance of literary trends and intellectual current in these parallel movements, a few scholarly inquiries integrate the linguistic and stylistic aspects comprehensively. The study addresses this critical gap by comparing and contrasting the selected study of these two movements to see their convergences and divergences. We employ the theoretical framework of Subaltern Studies and Distributed Language (DL) to understand socio-political motifs of pre- and post-production of a particular kind of language. The selected poems are closely read and analysed through Critical Discourse Analysis, with close reading as a key technique. It allows for an exploration of the intricate relationship between the linguistic structure, use of lexical items, emotive use of language, connotational significations, and compositional semantics. While selected Black literature poems experimented with internal morpho-syntax and everyday language, Dalit literature bluntly presented harsh facts using multilingualism, a unique Indian linguistic trait, and everyday vocabulary.*

Keywords: *Black and Dalit literatures, subaltern literature, distributed language, languaging, multilingualism*

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Introduction

In the complex construct of the Afro-American and Dalit movements, language emerges as a powerful tool to assert identity and challenge the established norms of the syntax of aesthetics (Limbale, 2010; Singh, 2012; Das, 2017; Ashok & Srinivas, 2016; Hall, 2011; Gates, 2016; and Taylor, 2016). The typical sight of aestheticism, a subjective sensory perception, is grounded in the cultural framework of the experience. An object thus is aesthetically pleasing when it meets the criteria of a standardized value of society/culture, which is subjected to (un)familiarity. In Bakhtin's discourse, such an example of the aesthetic contour is termed monologic; it is an effort of privileged discourse to isolate the object of aesthetics, be it language, art, music, clothes, and so on (Bakhtin, 1981). A subaltern aesthetic, as spirited in poststructuralism, is not a single entity with a defined and rigid syntax. It picks multitudes, multidimensionality, pluralism, pragmatism, individualism and everydayness. The Subaltern aesthetic, particularly in question, is characterised by arts for life's sake in opposition to the idea of art for art's sake. The underlying significance of such treatment of arts can be observed in both Dalit and Black literature. In Limbale's (2010) work *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*, the translator (Mukherjee) notes that Dalit literary and critical writings disrupt the theorization of Indian politics, society, culture, and literature. Limbale contends that Indian literary theory often dismisses Dalit literature as non-literary works, displaying a hostile stance. Indian literary tradition is characterized by the Sanskrit word *rasa*¹, translated as essence, taste, or flavour by the Britannica dictionary. This reflects the underlying philosophy of art in the Industrial era, i.e., art for art's sake. Both Indian and Western literary transitions and American ones can be viewed broadly from the same perspective. Apart from the philosophical, ontological, and cultural distinctions that have been observed in both kinds of literature (Canon vs Subaltern), the use of language becomes an important and interesting domain of differences. Following the standard and prevalent structure of the production of art, language is supposed to be creative, unique, standard and sophisticated.

On the other hand, subaltern literature is characterized by the use of simple and plain language. Most of the early Dalit literature has witnessed the local language that the author used to speak in their locale, at their homes, and with their friends. Kumari & Kapoor (2021) call it the language of everydayness. Following Bakhtin's philosophical project (Bakhtin, 1981), the idea of polyglossia defies the idea of monism, i.e., the isolated existence of standard language. Dalit writings not only bring plurality into the discourse of literature but undermine

1. "An Indian aesthetic theory in which human emotions are extracted to a set of eight or nine flavors arising due to the proper representation of a dramatic situation and its psychophysical expression of appropriate moods. *Rasa*, relished as a universal feeling, is thus autonomous, transcending individuality." (Bhushan et al., 2015, p. 102)

the idea of single, standard, and pure language. They also dismantle the idea of a distinction between spoken and written language – supposedly a literary and non-literary distinction. It can be overtly observed in the work of a Dalit writer, Namdev Dhasal. He is notable for his work *Golpitha* (Dhasal, 2011). He employs the language spoken in his surroundings, incorporating dialects, sociolects, and idiolects. He does not hesitate to blend multiple languages, including his dialect, Marathi, Hindi, and Sanskrit.

We see similar linguistic exercises in Afro-American writings. There is a deliberate use of what has been termed as vernacular or Black English, particularly in politically motivated writings. The poets or writers who were part of the movement (Black power) redefined the syntax of aesthetics, such as Baraka's poem, 'black art'. Black literature might lack multilingualism in the strict sense; however, it brings plurality in the language at all linguistic levels: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and writing conventions. Black poets literary production, however, is marked by the emotive use of language. It is noticed in many writers' poetry, but Amiri Baraka is notable for exercising the emotive aspect of the language. His writing has also been seen as his frustration towards the established aesthetic structure rooted in the Industrial Revolution. He criticises the fundamental principle of European-American aesthetic sensibility – 'art for art's sake'. He believes that if a literary work does not serve the socio-political purpose of the community, it has no use (Baraka, 2003). Similar characteristics can be observed in Dalit literature during the Dalit literary movement in the 1960s and onwards. Dalit is a political term that entered India's politics around the 1930s. It is assumed that the word is taken from Sanskrit/Hindi/Marathi and means 'downtrodden or crushed' (Omvi, 2012). In general discourse, this refers to the untouchable castes in India. Language was central to both revolutions, not just as a tool for a new aesthetic but as a way to visualize and manifest a new world and reality. It served as a source for renewed Dalit and Black consciousness, featuring unfiltered stories and treating art as both identity and progress. The Black and Dalit literature conveyed pain, anger, and revolt. Evaluating Dalit and Black Poetry based on Brahmanical and white poetic aesthetics would be unjust, given their distinct language, style, and experiences.

This paper delves into the significance of language within these transformative social currents, where both written and spoken words shape literature, a new aesthetic and become the catalyst for identity affirmation and resistance. By delving into the linguistic landscape of Afro-American and Dalit literature, the study seeks to position language as a way of emancipation. By exploring poetic expression and tones, we try to understand how the act of languaging, as both a liberating force and a contested ground, navigates the realms of identity, unity, and the redefinition of the syntax of aesthetics. This study aspires to achieve two objectives. Firstly, it attempts to see the act of languaging (in opposition to the

role of language) in shaping the subaltern's collective consciousness. Secondly, it examines the relationship between linguistic elements within Afro-American and Dalit literature and their worldview to see how it challenges, resists, and redefines the prevailing domain of the syntax and semantics of aesthetics.

Theoretical Framework

The current paper approaches the use of language in Black and Dalit literature through the lens of subaltern, which emerges in the post-colonial theories. Spivak (1985), in her Subaltern theory, focuses on the voices and experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups. She argues that these subaltern groups, typically excluded from mainstream discourses, must be understood and represented on their terms. She also argues against the external interpretation of the subaltern's internal narratives. For her, it is a risk of reinforcing existing power structures even in attempts to give voice to the marginalized. The theory targets not only socio-political and economic marginalization but also linguistic and cultural ones.

To complement the salient values of subaltern theory, we use the Distributed Language (DL) framework to explain the unique and rambunctious use of language. This framework is grounded in the theory of languaging (Becker, 1988) and distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995). Thibault (2017, p. 76) states that Languaging is “the praxis in and through which language events are achieved and recognised”. Languaging is coordination – a way to cognize the world. Distributed language, simply put, is a theory that views language as a dynamic process and practice rather than a static product (Gurney & Demuro, 2022, p. 1). This theory suggests that language is dynamic first and symbolic second. Cowley (2009), a key contributor to this theory, states that “language is, at once, social, individual, and constitutive of the feeling of thinking” (ibid., p. 1). It serves as a means of coordination between bodies, including language itself. According to Love (2007), language is not a code like Morse; it does not merely decode messages. Instead, it embodies and reinterprets – language is the message itself, not just the code. Unlike codes, language is integral to the “feeling of thinking” (Harnad, 2005). As speakers, writers, listeners, and readers, we interact emotionally with language and accomplish tasks through it. Leonardi (2013) suggests that while we cognize the world, symbols also work through us. They become part of who we are. This is possible because they constrain biodynamics as we speak, listen, think and create texts. The theory also echoes Deleuze and Guattari's idea of “assemblage²”; It views language as

2. “For Deleuze and Guattari, assemblages are more like machines, defined solely by their external relations of composition, mixture, and aggregation. In other words, an assemblage is a multiplicity, neither a part nor a whole. If the elements of an assemblage are defined only by their external relations, then it is possible that they can be added, subtracted, and recombined with one another ad infinitum without ever creating or destroying an organic unity. This is what Deleuze and Guattari paradoxically call a “fragmentary whole” (Nail, 2017, p. 23).

a dynamic interplay of semiotic elements, emphasizing its interrelationships both within and outside itself. This idea highlights language's co-dependency and convergence, making distributed language an effective hermeneutic tool for understanding language as a way of being (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

In line with Deleuze's philosophy (1994), languaging can be seen as a process of becoming. The creation of texts, particularly multilingual ones like Dhasal's and Baraka's writings, naturally brings events into existence through language, embodying a process of "eventing" the world. Therefore, the choice of lexical items, syntax, prosodic elements, and writing style is a way of transforming the world into events. This natural exercise of languaging – representing the worldview through semiotic processes and various (non)linguistic resources while rejecting the idea of language as a single, unified system – becomes a political act when grounded in Bakhtin's concepts of polyglossia and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981). In Bakhtin's opinion, the idea of polyglossia attacks the validity of singularity, one kind of language and discourse. It places one language (for our context) in a dialogical relationship with the other, consequently challenging both the formal and functional existence of the one without the other. It asserts the tension-filled space where languages contest and achieve meaning. The multilingual, multidialectal, sociolectal and idiolectal characteristics of texts, thus, indicate a dynamic and multifaceted interaction between the author, text and the reader. Language, thus, for this paper, "is dynamical, embedded, embodied, distributed and situated." (Cowley, 2009, p. 2).

We have used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for close reading and grounding the texts in our theoretical frameworks. CDA developed during the mid-20th century in response to the structure-oriented (denotational) analysis of language. Fairclough (1989; 2013) have grounded CDA in the theoretical framework of critical social theory. It draws from various disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, and political science. As a method, it critically analyses the use of language concerning power structure, social ideologies, group representation, intertextuality, social context, and agency and resistance.

A New Aesthetic: Discourse on Language in Black and Dalit Literature (Poetry)

In the literary expression, the convergence of Black and Dalit voices unveils a narrative that transcends conventional aesthetic and linguistic boundaries and challenges established norms. As we navigate the labyrinth of verses written by Black and Dalit poets, we recognize characteristics that distinguish their unique presentation of discourses. Along with exploring thematic elements, our attention is on the significance of language in shaping narratives, creating spaces for resistance, and fostering a sense of identity. Through this exploration, we seek to understand the intricacies of Black and Dalit poetry and engage in

a broader conversation on the power and potential that language subsumes as a liberating and empowering reflection of cultural resurgence.

Lee (1971) provided the following aesthetic categories as an effort to reflect the uniqueness of African American experiences.

1. polyrhythmic, uneven, short, and explosive lines;
2. intensity; depth, yet simplicity; spirituality, yet flexibility;
3. irony; humour; signifying;
4. sarcasm- a new comedy;
5. direction; positive movement; teaching; nation-building;
6. subject matter – concrete; reflects a collective and personal lifestyle; and
7. music; the unique use of vowels and consonants with the developed rap demands that the poetry be real and read out aloud.

Lee observed the poems written by Black poets who first identified themselves as black and then as poets. These characteristics are important both from a new aesthetic perspective and the emergence of black consciousness. Cooke (1986) argues that the history of African American literature passes essentially through four stages. He termed the first stage ‘imitation’, where African American authors imitated the styles and themes of white American and European literature. The second stage was a stage of assimilation. The writers of this stage often aimed to show that African Americans could integrate into white society and contribute to it meaningfully. The third stage, he argued, is identified with experiments with dialect and a way of narrating and poetizing, which involves a self-conscious insistence on verbal and linguistic differences. However, the last stage, which he argues is yet to be reached, indicates the freedom to expropriate all models. How can we do theory and criticism in white man’s language? It reflects the fact that we language our discourse or discourse our language. The worldly experience is embedded, consumed and experienced through one’s own language. According to Bakhtin (1981, p. 294),

... As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language for the individual consciousness lies on the borderline between oneself and the other... The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes one’s “own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language... but rather, it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own.

The identified categories (Lee, 1971), thus, are not stylistic but rather attributes that are characteristic of a unique cultural world. Morrison posits that language variations embody distinctions between multiple identities, defining individuals according to their unique standards in contrast to presumed expectations. She echoes Wittgenstein in contending that language puts constraints on or shapes human knowledge and thought. Her view on the interconnectedness of language, culture and self is reflected in the sentence, “Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence”. She further adds, “Sexist language, racist language, theistic language – all are typical of the policing languages of mastery, and cannot, do not permit new knowledge or encourage the mutual exchange of ideas” (Morrison, 2008, p. 201).

In Dalit poetry, we encounter similar characteristics mentioned by Lee (1971). Dalit poetry is characterized by expressions like revolutionary, radical, narrativization, short, emotive, anger, frustration, disgust, criticism, etc. Ashok and Srinivas (2016, p. 144) observed some of the characteristic features of Dalit literature. We have presented some of the characteristics they mentioned briefly here.

1. A literature of protest against all kinds of exploitation: caste, class, race or occupation.
2. It rejects both Indian and Western theoretical conceptions like Freud’s psychoanalysis, Barthes’s structuralism, and Derrida’s deconstruction together with the Indian theories of *Rasa* and *Dhwani*³.
3. It rejects the straightforward narrative of Indian mythologies. They found relevance in Buddhism.
4. Personal narrative, experience and authenticity are the characteristics of Dalit literature. Their language, as well as images, comes from their experiences.
5. Dalit literature imbibes “Dalit consciousness”, a consciousness of their slavery and their experience of exclusion, subjugation and oppression.
6. Emotive use of language that reflects shame, anger, and indomitable hope.
7. The Dalit writers found inspiration from the Black movement in America.

Sharan Kumar Limbale is a seminal figure in India’s Dalit literature and movement. In his book, *Towards the Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Consideration*, he argues that Dalit literature has paved a

3. Consult Das (2017, p. 30) for understanding *Rasa* and *Dhwani* as the theory of aesthetics in the Indian context.

different path compared to both Indian and Western aesthetic sensibility. He further says that “beauty-related experiences are object-specific, person-specific, and situation-specific” (Limbale, 2010, cited in Das, 2017, p. 27). He is against the general concept of beauty and aesthetics and argues that they can only exist in a conflict of dialogism and cannot be prescriptive. Limbale (2010, p. 105) comments on what constitutes Dalit literature and writes, “Dalit writers believe that Dalit literature is a movement. They see their literature as a vehicle for their pain, sorrow, questions, and problems. But when readers read the works of Dalit writers exclusively as ‘literature,’ the common ground between the writer and the reader is disturbed”. Dalit literary texts are examined as a societal expression of pain, agony, and anger, where their authenticity is revealed through rawness and a sense of “artlessness” (Limbale, 2010, p. 108). The aesthetics of art must be looked at from the objective of an art. Dalit literature must be analysed from a “sociological perspective focused on social values [rather] than on beauty” (Thiara, 2016, p. 257). Brueck (2014) is of the view that Dalit literature is marked by realism. The best way to reflect or represent reality is the language in which reality is lived and experienced. Therefore, Dalit writings take on a political dimension as they embody the unadorned, everyday essence of spoken language, positioned in contrast to levels characterized by refinement, standardization, classical norms, and purity. Arockiamary and Mary (2016, p. 139) say that “... In its own right, Dalit writing takes upon itself the language of the real world, thereby attempting to deconstruct the linguistic parameters long-held by the so-called mainstream literature ...”.

The language of the real world is best understood through the interaction between individuals, language, and events. It is essential to consider the language through which a specific emotion is felt, as this determines which form of language can most effectively convey that emotion. Also, Dalit and Black literatures are considered emotional due to their rich life experiences and protests, significantly influencing their linguistic expression. Majid (2012) notices that emotion interacts “with language at many levels of structure, from the sound patterns of language to its lexicon and grammar, and beyond to how it appears in conversation and discourse” (cited in Riegel et al., 2016, p.1636). Holmström (2012), in her translation of a Dalit writer Bama’s novel *Karukku*, writes in her introduction,

Bama is doing something completely new in using the demotic and the colloquial routinely, as her medium for narration and even argument, not simply for reported speech. She uses a Dalit style of language which overturns the decorum and aesthetics of received upper-class, upper-caste Tamil. She breaks the rules of written grammar and spelling throughout, elides words and joins them differently, demanding new and different patterns of reading (Holmström, 2012, p. XI).

Linguicism and Black Consciousness in Barack's Black Art and Sonia's 'right on' and 'blk rhetoric'

Baraka's radical poems are highly socio-political and demand immediate action from the community's members. They also try to liberate blacks from their prejudices. According to Neal (1968, p. 29),

The Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artists that alienates him from his community. Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept. As such, it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America. To perform this task, the Black Arts Movement proposes a radical ordering of the Western cultural aesthetic. It proposes a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology. The Black Arts and Black Power concept both relate broadly to the Afro-American's desire for self-determination and nationhood. Both concepts are nationalistic. One is politics; the other with the art of politics.

One of the important characteristics of Black Art is what was regarded as the use of unusual, direct, provocative, and obscene language. A language that characterizes everyday use. A language deemed unsuitable for artistic expression. By examining the conventions of linguistic elements such as lexical items, morphology, syntax, capitalization, and punctuation in the English language, the poems crafted by Black poets emerge as radical. This marks the inception of a novel or alternative aesthetic known as the Black aesthetic. Linguistically, this aesthetic can be defined by semantic play (as articulated by Gates (1987) in "Signifyin(g) Monkey"), exploration of phonological possibilities, inventive morphological constructs, freedom in syntax, and unconventional yet intentional stylistic choices in capitalization, punctuation, and vocabulary. Observe the following stanzas taken from Baraka's Black Art (1979). The poem is long; thus, we have taken only a few stanzas. The dots (.....) indicate that we have left something in between.

Poems are bullshit unless they are
teeth or trees or lemons piled
On a step.
Fuck poems
and they are useful, wd they shoot
come at you, love what you are,
breathe like wrestlers, or shudder
strangely after pissing.

The opening line itself challenges the traditional concept of a poem, a conventional European-American literary aesthetic. It confronts the idea of

“art for art’s sake”. The use of words such as bullshit, teeth, fuck, piss, and lemon highlights the “feeling of thinking”, reflecting the poet’s affective stance on artistic expression. He aims to use language in a way that is performative. He wants a poem that has teeth; it can mean that it can bite or chew; in other words, it must have some capability to do damage. He wants a poem about trees, possibly trying to connect with nature in a true African sense. He wants a poem like a lemon, which causes some disturbing emotions. It should not be sweet and pleasurable. His use of obscene and disturbing words like fuck, shoot and piss in the above stanza is indicative of the discursive nature of a discourse. It also talks about Black consciousness and asks them to be proud of who they are, not silently but overtly. Apart from a morphological protest, one can notice the use of capitals with functional words, which is against the standard form of English.

We want live words of the hip world live
fresh & coursing blood.
we want “poems that kill.”
Assassin poems, Poems that shoot
guns. Poems that wrestle cops into alleys
And take their weapons leaving them dead
With tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland. Knockoff
Poems for dope selling wops or slick half-white
Politicians Airplane poems, rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr... tuhtuthtuthtuthtuthtuth.....
....rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.... Setting fire and death to whities ass.
.....
We want a black poem. And a
Black world
Let the world be a black poem.

The aggression in these stanzas reflects the spirit of the people associated with the movement (Otaïwi & Hassan, 2020). Baraka wants words to be a weapon; he wants the poem to kill, shoot guns, assassin and wrestle. Many people, including black intellectuals, have critiqued the intention or possible interpretation of the poems that appear to be violent. However, it indicates what DL proposes of “feeling of thinking⁴” (Cowley, 2009; Harnad, 2005). The poem deconstructs language, highlighting its dynamics and the discursivity involved in its construction and expression. When Baraka expresses a desire for a poem that

4. What we hear influences feeling and thinking. It (language and, thus, emotion) emerges as we coordinate with other living beings.

can “kill”, there is an underlying sense of frustration, anger, and helplessness conveyed through the interplay of language with extralinguistic elements such as socio-political contexts, spatiotemporal settings, and the socio-psychological position of the individual. The poet articulates his frustration regarding the inaction of the black community, the brutal actions of whites against blacks, and prejudices faced by blacks and critiques the ethics, morality, aesthetics, and the social, legal, and cultural systems upheld by whites. When he says, “poems that wrestle cops into alleys.... And take their weapons leaving them dead....” it is a call of distress, a helplessness against police brutality. It implies black morality. It shows the dilemma of Black people/revolutionaries. Their moral principles prevent them from engaging in violence, taking lives, killing, or wrestling. As a result, Baraka envisions a poem – an abstract, inanimate entity – that inherently cannot perform such actions. However, the poem becomes an agent that carries out these actions, which only a conscious being could accomplish. This semantic anomaly makes the poem distinctive and quickly popular. It is an example of the use of active language. By “active”, we mean it has the “feeling of thinking” or action, in the spirit of Austin’s (1962) illocutionary act. It brings the central point of the theory of DL, i.e., “realizing values”.

A direct reference to how we do things with language is the representation of vocal sounds that Baraka produces in the poem, such as, “rrrrrrrrrrrr R..... tuhtuhtuhtuhtuh....rrrrrrrrrrrr..... It can be analysed as an onomatopoeic expression, a direct, unclouded association between the sound and the feeling. He wants the poem to be “Setting fire and death to whites ass”. Moreover, this emotion is not entirely racial but political. As he also mentions half-white politicians, Niggers and Jews. In line with Subaltern theory, the expression serves as a plea to draw attention to the Black situation in America. Black voices have gone unheard, been misrepresented, and viewed through the perspectives of European Americans.

As far as the poem’s aesthetic is concerned, it sets its poetic syntax and sensibility. The semantic or interpretational load that each word, phrase or sentence has is remarkable. Its complexity and simplicity are important poetic characteristics that are unique to Baraka’s style. The use of onomatopoeic sounds, profane language (or it can be said that this is their everyday language), and the innovative use of capital letters and spelling systems mark an alternative aesthetic in literature. Its aesthetics is in its objective, its reachability, its being common, its soul, its value, and its directness.

Sonia Sanchez ‘right on: white america’

The alternative aesthetic from the perspective of forms of language can be explicitly noticed in Sonia Sanchez’s poem ‘right on: white america,’ published in 1970. Unlike Baraka’s black art, where he used capitalization very differently,

just.
u & me
blk/ and un/armed.
this country might have
been a pio
neer land once.
and it still is.
check out
the falling
gun/ shells on our blk/ tomorrows.

An interesting observation is the use of slanted lines that are conventionally used to indicate the ‘or’ proposition in the English language. However, Sonia’s usage deviates from the standard usage and employs a new semantics. The use first simply interjects the conventional interpretation and demands a complicated reading of words and phrases. For example, “blk/ and un/armed” brings multiple interpretations with reference to the movement (such as police brutality and black rebellion), such as the proposition “black and armed”, “black and unarmed”, “black or armed”, and so on. Even the conjunction “and” does not straightforwardly bring out the idea of addition but of a conjunction and disjunction. Syntactically, it appears to make the structure of the poem look very different, and connotatively, we can interpret it as a black aesthetic that has the dual function of distorting the existing syntactic-semantic of the English language and creating a new Signification altogether (Gates, 1987). The use of space on the page is also structured in a way that accounts for the fluidity. Her engagement with the language at the morphological level is also fluid and intentional, viewed as linguistic violence by the language purists. Words such as “tomorrows”, “blk”, “allamerican”, “u”, and so on would definitely disturb white Americans, as she puts it in her poem’s title.

Sonia’s other poem, titled “blk/ rhetoric”, is more radical in terms of the syntax of poetry or, for that matter, language. Like the one described above, she does not use capital letters. Her use of the period is a protest. She uses a question mark, even if there is no question word (a characteristic of suprasegmental features (intonation)). She uses small brackets to write running thoughts. Her writing plays with the convention of using linguistic and non-linguistic elements such as the use of brackets, periods, commas, question marks, capitalization, shorthand, omission in spelling, word boundary, and sentence boundary. In the poem below, how she manifests her world in words on paper reflects her orientation and interaction with the world. The use of spaces to reflect the silence or pause, eliminating word boundaries to indicate how a dialect is spoken, creating new word boundaries to reflect the natural pauses, and so on.

who's gonna give our young
 blk / people new heroes
 (instead of catch / phrase)
 (instead of cad / ill / acs)
 (instead of pimps)
 (instead of wites / whores)
 (instead of drugs)
 (instead of new dances)
 (instead of chit / ter / lings)
 (instead of a 35c bottle of ripple)\
 (instead of quick / fucks in the hall / way
 Of wite / america's mind)
 like. this. is an S O S
 me. calling.....
 calling.....
 some / one
 pleasereplysoon.

Content and form blend creatively and effectively in all these poems. Sonia's poem, published in 1969, responds to Baraka's SOS, calling Black people to unite. She agrees with Baraka that there is a common enemy. However, she reflects upon the internal struggle and asks, "Who will be a role model and guide the black community?". It is a rhetorical question. Black poetry not only speaks out against white oppression but also seeks true revolution by addressing internal conflicts, particularly those highlighted by Black feminists. As a subaltern literature, two possible hypotheses emerge: (a) creation of new semantics by working through the language (structures); it not only generates possibly a new code (Black English) but also registers linguistic violence (an act of resistance), and (b) effort to build an identity which is rooted in the vernacular cultural and linguistic practices; echoing black consciousness and aesthetic.

Dalit Poetry: Languageing Personal Narrative, Anger, Protest and Criticism

There is a debate about who is a Dalit and what is Dalit literature. Who can write for the marginalized? Some argue that only a Dalit can write about and for Dalits, as they have experienced a life of discrimination. The debate started with Mulk Raj Anand's (1935) work "Untouchable", as the author is from a higher caste. Swaroopa Rani (1998) believes that a Dalit writing by the higher caste can only be considered sympathetic literature. On the question of who

is a Dalit, she posits that people who have been subjected to untouchability and denied social, economic, political and cultural rights are called Dalits. She opines that Dalit writing based on Dalit consciousness will reflect Dalit people's painful experiences (Rani, 1998, p. 21). A distributed language perspective supports such a stand as language cannot be devoid of subjectivity. Language is a phenomenon; a language that does not have a terminology of caste and caste-related insults cannot convey the emotion experienced (see also Kothari, 2013). Dalit Poetry reflects the essence of Dalit consciousness, a socio-political term given by Jotirao Govindrao Phule (Ghose, 2003). The Dalit movement in Maharashtra, initiated by Ambedkar, gained momentum with contributions from writers like Namdev Dhasal and Baburao Bhagal (Teltumbde, 2016). Inspired by the struggles of the Black community and the Black Panther Party in America, the Dalits established the Dalit Panther Party in 1972, sharing a common trajectory of oppression (Teltumbde, 2016). Both Dalits and Afro-Americans faced challenges – Dalits with the caste system and Afro-Americans with enduring racial issues, leading to their marginalization.

Dalit aesthetics starts with acknowledging and discarding two prevalent perspectives of literary aesthetics. Firstly, the Sanskritized syntax and semantics of poetry, and secondly, the European restrictive understanding of literature as a written or printed object. It recognizes the non-Sanskritized culture of literature in pre-colonial India. Poetry in India has always implied performance, music, retellings, and improvisation and transmission through oral traditions. Limbale (2010) argues that *Rasa* (beauty and aesthetic as prevalent in Sanskrit literature) can be rewritten as a new *Rasa* depicting the taste of pain, anger, rejection, rebellion, problems, struggles, injustices, and ill-treatment contained in Dalit literature. Dalit poetry is characterised as a political act and not merely an art, as Namdeo Dhasal describes it. Born in 1949, Namdeo Dhasal is a prominent Dalit poet from Maharashtra, a western state in India, and a founding member of the Dalit Panther (a socio-political entity). His poetry is known for its raw, intense, and tactile expressions. Dhasal's verses draw inspiration from his personal experiences and observations of his birthplace, the impoverished and gritty "Golpitha", marked by issues such as poverty, prostitution, and illness.

Subramaniam describes Dhasal's poetry as "Mumbai without her make-up, her Botox, her power yoga; the Mumbai that scathes, unruly, menacing, yet vitally alive, beneath the glitz mall and multiplex, the high rise and flyover. The Mumbai of the non-identifiable, the untameable, the non-recyclable" (2014, para. 3). Dilip Chitre, who translated Dhasal Poetry, "Namdeo Dhasal: Poet of the Underworld" into English, explores the fascinating archaeology of Dhasal's idiom, its many tones and registers, and its polyglottal fusion of Bumbaiya Hindi (a local dialect – mixture of Hindi, Urdu, English and Marathi) with the Mahar dialect that is Dhasal's family inheritance. Dhasal introduces his readers to his world through his own language. He acknowledges the use of profane

and abusive expressions in his poetry. He writes about his surroundings as *do number ki duniya* (a duplicate/evil world). He further writes, “This is where my poems come from.... I am showing it to you. I’ll show it to anyone who wants to know what life is like here. I grew up here. I have a bond with these people. They are my people – these lumpen; I am one of them. My poetry is about life here” (Dhasal, 2011, p. 162).

While examining the poems of Dhasal, Ketkar (2016) observes that Dhasal distorted and mocked Sanskrit words to introduce ambiguity, challenging not only the exclusivity of contemporary Marathi poetry but also the elitism associated with modernist language. We can observe this in one of the poems in the collection of Dhasal’s poetry, *Gandu Bagicha* (Gandu Garden), published in 1986. The term *Gandu* is used as an abusive word in Hindi and Marathi language. The park has been the subject of disgust. As described by Ketkar, it is a park where the Hijra (transgender) community gathers to carry out rituals such as nirvana or the castration of men to make them eunuchs (Majumdar, 2009, cited in Ketkar, 2016). He further describes, “the park was also a place where Hijras and gay men engaged in sexual activity”. Ketkar translates *Gandu Bagicha* as “Arsefucker’s park”.

Here, we present the translated version of “Gandu Bagicha” by Ketkar (2016).

It is no longer the garden we know
Mere dost
Jara bhunke de mera fata hua sa hriday...
 ... The worm of *karmanyewadhikaraste*
 has started nibbling at the silence
 the crippled cockroach of *karma yoga*
 Needlessly keeps digging up the soil
 it has already torn
 The condom of delusion
 To tatters.

The English translation of some phrases presented here was originally in the Marathi dialect. Hindi and Sanskrit phrases, sentences, and words have not been translated in the given stanzas above. A non-literary language is a tactical approach to such poetry. As noticed, Dhasal’s poems in Marathi are marked by the local dialect of Marathi. Even when using Hindi words, he preferred non-standard words. The use of everyday language like *mere dost* (my friend), *mera fata hua sa hriday* (my torn heart) indicates his rootedness and his effort to make art accessible. Phrases such as *fata hua hriday*, where the verb phrase *fata hua* (torn) is colloquial and *hriday* (heart) as a standard word are used together in a single phrase. In Bakhtin’s terms, this marks an effort to dialogize

the standard discourse of language. It becomes political when written and read with a specific purpose, as is the case here. A close examination of the words and phrases highlights the rigid separation between Dalits and non-Dalits, as well as the cry and hope for amalgamation. However, multilingualism as a way of communication is common in India, which houses more than 1300 languages. Most Indians are multilingual and exercise multilingualism every day. Kumar (2023) observes the discursive linguistic practice of the Magahi speech community and argues that languaging is a way of becoming in cross-gendered discourse. However, the becoming is in constant flux, a process of semiotic indexation.

Another such example is “the worm of *karmanyewadhikaraste*”. The Sanskrit word is taken from a verse of Gita, a holy book of Hindus. Dhasal, by writing the first word of the verse, indicates the meaning of the entire verse, which is: “*Karmanye vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhur Ma Te Sango Stv Akarmani*,”. This verse is popularly translated in general discourse as “you are entitled to work without expecting rewards. Emphasise the work itself, stay active, and don’t dwell on the outcomes”. In Dalit politics, this verse is highlighted for its interpretation as a philosophy promoting caste as a closed category, urging Dalits to engage in their work without anticipating any reward in the form of social and political upliftment. Using the word (*karmanyewadhikaraste*) evokes the whole theological underpinning of Hindu scriptures, with the word “worm”, which is connotationally used to denote disgust, implying a deliberate attempt to attack the idea of purity and the philosophy of Varnas. How Dalit poems are written and received opens a whole dialogue of how everydayness, characteristic of Dhasal’s poetry, is a subject of aversion in the canonical world. The linguistic contestation in the above stanza reflects the socio-political reality. The multilingual poem using Sanskrit words with a locally polluted Bombay Hindi itself is an insult to Brahmanical aptitude. It is also an effort to bring art to a common populace’s level, a language lacking hierarchy. He also makes his stand clear and critical to the extent that he is not afraid of being impolite and offensive. In the next line, when he says

the crippled cockroach of Karma Yoga

Needlessly keeps digging up the soil

He again compares the “Karma Yoga” (essentially, it means the same thing as described above regarding the philosophy of work and reward) with a crippled cockroach. A cockroach is an insect that is the target of human disgust; in particular, it implies impurity, especially in Brahmin kitchens. The notion of purity and impurity is very central to the politics of Dalits. Dalits are regarded as impure in the Brahmanical philosophy of Hinduism. Thus, the way Dhasal attacked the establishment was courageous and, at the same time, creative. Moreover, the usage of condoms, as in “torn the condom of delusion”, defines the

new aesthetic of Dalit literature, which tries to incorporate characteristics such as being provocative, using profane language, challenging the establishment, harsh criticism, self-narrative in unhinged words, and representing the common everyday discourse in the everyday local dialects.

Challapalli Swaroopa Rani

If there is any soul that is subjected to all kinds of oppression and exploitation in this country (India), she is a Dalit woman. A Dalit woman is doubly marginalized, as she is oppressed by the caste system as well as gender and class oppression. One such woman Dalit writer from the Telugu heartland is Challapalli Swaroopa Rani. She is one of Telugu's most widely published and translated women Dalit writers. In her writing, she discusses the women-centric societies of the lower castes. She has been conferred the title of *Kaviyatri Tilaka* ("Eminent poetess"). She observes that a Dalit woman faces three kinds of oppression: caste, class and gender. Her writings address Dalit women, as she describes Dalit women as Dalit among Dalits.

When has my life been truly mine
In the home male arrogance
sets my cheek stinging
while in the street caste arrogance
splits the other cheek open

Originally, the poem was written in Telugu language and appears in her collection *Mankenapuvvu*. The translated part of the poem is taken from her work *Dalit Women's Writing in Telugu* (Rani, 1998, p. ws-22). It represents the twin evils of casteism and male chauvinism. Here, the translated version of the poem is presented. However, one can notice the emotive use of language. The way the author starts with a rhetorical question resembles Sonia's poetry. She does not use poetic language, such as metaphors and idioms. She uses language that can directly represent her experience as a woman and a Dalit. In the first three lines, there is a manifestation of patriarchy and violence, referring to patriarchy within Dalits. The next two lines represent the realities of caste. The use of words such as "cheek" and "stinging" are so vivid and raw.

The next poem, written by Challapalli Swaroopa Rani (2012) and translated by T.S. Chandra Mouli, discusses a crude social exploitative practice. A footnote is provided with the translated text "In some parts of Karnataka state, there is the practice of tender aged girl children from Dalit family becoming '*Basivis*' pleasure givers to village men".

As a babe in the womb
depicted as an untouchable
stamped with a low caste, I was born.
That day itself branded a slut
amidst senseless rules
in the cesspools of superstitions
cast away, I became forbidden woman.

.....

The poem, which was originally written in Telugu, expresses the harsh social reality of Dalit families. The use of words such as “slut”, “babe”, and “forbidden woman” are challenging words for the established aesthetics. Moreover, from the perspective of a woman writer who is doubly oppressed, these words show courage, uncompromising attitude, and tenacity to speak the truth. In the distributed language framework, a subaltern communicates about their world using their own language to convey the emotion that they felt through words and action. They employ the language they think in, feel, and experience insult, abuse, and rejection.

Conclusion

The analysis of Black and Dalit literature, employing theoretical frameworks such as subaltern studies and distributed language, has provided valuable insights into the linguistic and social implications embedded in the poetry of these marginalised communities. By delving into Namdeo Dhasal’s and Swaroopa Rani’s poignant verses representing Dalit literature and Amiri Baraka’s and Sonia’s powerful poems within the context of Black literature, it becomes evident that these literary works employ a remarkable creative use of language. It must be received not only as a language of protest but also as their natural way of expression.

The poetry studied reflects a spectrum of emotions, from anger and frustration to hope and resilience, mirroring Dalits and Blacks’ multifaceted struggles and experiences. Dhasal’s choice to incorporate the local dialect and profane so-called street language, paralleled by Sonia’s and Baraka’s linguistic choices, underscores a deliberate departure from standardized language and prevalent aesthetic norms. This departure serves a dual purpose: firstly, to address the inadequacy of European/ American standards in capturing the essence of the Dalit and Black experiences, and secondly, as a form of resistance against hegemony. The Dalit and Black literature poets recognize that reclaiming and using their languages is crucial for building a common consciousness within their communities. It is a language that resonates with the lived experiences of caste and race, fostering unity and distinctiveness simultaneously. In essence,

these poets strive to construct a linguistic and social space that reflects their identity and serves as a powerful instrument in the ongoing struggles for social justice and equality. Through their poetry, they articulate a nuanced and authentic narrative, challenging existing norms and contributing to the broader discourse on representation and resistance within the realms of Dalit and Black literature. Their use of linguistic patterns, forms, and mixed texts index their experience of oppression. In doing so, these poets amplify the marginalised voices, move in new directions and redefine the Dalit and Black literary landscapes.

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SPACES AND PLACES OF MODERNITY AND THE MODERN ARTIST IN OĞUZ ATAY'S "RAILROAD STORYTELLERS - A DREAM"

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Abstract: This paper examines Atay's "Railroad Storytellers - A Dream" in terms of Atay's modernist experimentation in his depiction of space and spatiality, emphasising his contribution to Turkish literature as a pioneer modernist author. Oğuz Atay's distinctive and innovative style, which forms his affinities with the early Western modernists such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, establishes his significant place as a pioneer modernist author in Turkish literature in the 1970s. The concept of 'house/home' by Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* (1957, 2014) is instrumental for me as it pertains to the predicament of three storytellers as artists in the nameless and remote railroad station. The narrator of the story and his fellow storytellers gradually sink into disconnection, confusion, misery and poverty in an environment that represents the cold and unwelcoming face of technological modernisation symbolised by the space of the train station. The narrator's quest for finding a 'home' to connect him to his readers and where he could exist as an artist comes to life in his attempt to write a letter to his readers, telling them he is still 'here' and asking them where they are. No matter how blighted that effort is since the narrator has no address to send the letters to, the endings for Atay's story imply a need for connection with his readers expressed in the impossible meeting of the 'here' with the 'where' in spite or because of the estrangement and alienation of the artist/author in the modern world. Hence, the possibility of space as a 'home' for the author/narrator dwindles in the not forthcoming answer to the letter that will never reach its destination.

Keywords: Oğuz Atay, modernism, space, place, home

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Introduction: Oğuz Atay's life and unique literary output

Oğuz Atay (1934-1977) has a unique place in the Turkish literary and cultural polysystem, a position that was fully recognised nearly 30 years after his death. His literary rebirth began in 1984 with the discovery of his diaries by two literary critics and authors working in the culture department of a daily Turkish newspaper (see Ecevit, 2023). Since then, the reprints of his novels and stories have firmly established him as a pioneering and innovative author in modern Turkish literature, thanks to the current extensive studies and research on his art and oeuvre. Ecevit, who has published a book on Atay, concludes that Atay's influence extends beyond his readers, shaping the future of Turkish literature. Turkish literature encounters modernist formalism through Atay (Ecevit, 2023, p. 577, trans. mine). A Turkish publisher, author, and critic, Hasip Akgül, similarly underscores this fact in his study on Atay, stating that "the ideas Oğuz Atay brought to our societal life and experience, the new form, emotions, and sensitivities he brought to our literature, have a firm place now" (Akgül, 2023, p. 20, trans. mine).

Atay lived and wrote at a time after the Second World War when Türkiye, as a young republic, was experiencing social and cultural change into a modern, westernised nation. This landscape in which Atay lived had influenced him, sometimes to the degree of confusion, estrangement and disillusionment as an artist. This framework in which Atay produced his work, inspired mainly by Western modernists, motivated him to voice the artist's concerns in a highly distinctive and innovative way. A leading critic and world-renowned scholar at Stanford University, Marjorie Perloff describes some significant qualities of literary modernism:

the replacement of the representation of the external world by an imaginative symbol, an alogical structure and a spatial form, a term she borrows from Joseph Frank, verbal ambiguity and complexity; the fluidity of consciousness; the important attachment to Freudian notion of unconscious and the place and function of dreams, the concrete as opposed to the abstract, the particular as opposed to the general, the perceptual as opposed to the conceptual; the emphasis on the divided self, the alienated self in the urban life or among the crowd (Perloff, 1992, p.158).

For Peter Childs, "modernism is associated with attempts to render human subjectivity in ways more real than realism: to represent consciousness, tunnelling, defamiliarisation, rhythm, irresolution... and thus the modernists tried to express the new sensibilities of their time: in a compressed, condensed, complex literature of the city, of industry and technology, war, machinery and speed..." (Childs, 2017, introduction). Within this scope, space and place, and their connection in modernist fiction, are essential for the characters who live in it; since, as stated in the "Introduction" to *Literary Landscapes* (De Lange et

al., 2008) “place is an element of space. It is linked to identity, and not only to identity formation but also, under given circumstances, to a sense of threatened identity” (ibid., p. xiii).

One characteristic feature of Atay’s work that forms his affinity with Western modernists is his specific attention to the representation and construction of space and place. Manifestly, he is preoccupied with the spatial dimensions of the fictional world he creates. Hence, this study examines his depiction and use of space and spatiality in one of his works, contributing to his becoming the earliest modernist author of modern Turkish literature. How Atay’s story oscillates between a sense of place and a sense of space, in other words, a sense of location as depicted in the remote railroad station, and a sense of movement and mobility as represented by the passing trains in the story, may be regarded as an essential feature of modernist literature. I argue that Atay’s story “Railroad Storytellers-A Dream” (1976-77) shows this oscillation on the part of the first person narrator by way of creating the spatial and temporal dimension which is possibly taking place during the Second World War and illustrates Atay’s complex response to literary modernism, a response that is embodied in the oscillation between space and place. Andrew Thacker (2009) explains his views on “the opposition between space and place” in modernist literature as follows: “To several geographical theorists, *space* indicates a sense of movement, of history of becoming, while *place* is often thought to imply a static sense of location, of being, or of dwelling. Much modernist writing oscillates between these twin spatial visions, often in ways that complicate any sharp division between a conservative sense of place and a revolutionary sense of space” (ibid., p. 13).

Hence, in this paper, Atay’s last short story, “Railroad Storytellers-A Dream”, will be examined and interpreted in light of the abovementioned views. About the opposition between space and place as demonstrated in this story, Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) interpretation of space, mainly a ‘social space’, and George Bachelard’s (2014) concept of ‘home’ and ‘intimate space’, which will be discussed by and large further in this paper are also the fundamental theoretical inspirations for the examination of place and space in the story.

A contextual approach to the story “Railroad Storytellers – A Dream” given its affinities with Western literary modernism

Before delving into the discussion of this paper, it may be worthwhile to provide information on the story, Atay’s last, before his untimely death. The story appeared in the 1987 edition of the book *Korkuyu Beklerken*, a compilation of his stories (Ecevit, 2023, p. 506). Its appearance in translation came late. Finally, in 2021, *Korkuyu Beklerken* came out under *Waiting for Fear*, translated by Fulya Peker and published by Contra Mundum Press. The story appeared in this

translation, titled “Railroad Storytellers – A Dream”. Sadly, after the 1st edition, the book became out of print and inaccessible due to some publication issues. Nevertheless, although the assessment of the translation’s quality is outside this paper’s scope, I take the liberty to say that the translation was materialised with great care, devotion and attention, recreating Atay’s unique style in English as closely as possible.

The story takes place in an unnamed railroad station on a mountaintop in a remote town. The story’s background is assumed to be the first half of the 20th century, with unprecedented developments in the global capitalist societies happening economically, socially and technologically. Geographically, the town and the story’s location are unnamed, just as all the three storytellers who live in this station make a living by writing stories and selling them to the passengers on the trains that seldom pass that station. The story also includes the stationmaster, a peddler, and a few more insignificant characters. The three storytellers live in dire conditions and must comply with the condescending attitude of the stationmaster and the passengers, who scornfully undermine their art and stories. Gradually, as time indefinitely moves on, trains stop passing by that station, and conditions become unbearable for the three storytellers. One of them, the poorly young Jew, dies, the young woman leaves, and the third one, the unnamed narrator, sinks into a state of total loneliness, disillusionment, foggy-mindedness and despair. His feelings of estrangement from the place he lives in and the space he exists in finally make him incapable of producing stories. Additionally, no one can buy these stories and read them. Thus, the narrator rambles not only into physical loneliness but as a writer; he is also cut off from readers. Although the significance of the ending of the story will be discussed later in this paper, to summarise briefly, tired of being unappreciated as an artist and writer in his physical environment, the narrator clings to his art eventually by way of trying to send his imaginary readers a letter, which is ironic, devoid of an address. Towards the end, although he has sunk into total immobility and isolation in that remote and deserted railroad station, which is ironically and metaphorically a representation of 20th-century mobility and movement, in other words, an ‘oscillation between place and space’, he takes action by deciding to write and send a letter to his readers, asking them where they are. The irony in the end is that in that unspecified deserted railroad station, the letter, symbolically an act of connection for the narrator, has nowhere to go, no address whatsoever.

In the story, there are innumerable themes and stylistic devices that Atay unconventionally uses for the first time in Turkish literature to foreground the artist’s alienation amid a capitalist and technologically advancing society. The title “The Railroad Storytellers – A Dream” is essential. The dream is what Oğuz Atay saw before writing this story, and he said that the story was inspired by an earlier dream (Ecevit, 2023, p.507). The dream motive symbolically

implies the confusion the narrator experiences in the course of the plot. The space where the story occurs and where he lives no longer offers him shelter, security or warmth. This theme of insecurity and confusion may be interpreted from the perspective of one of the modernist literary critics, Gaston Bachelard's concept of 'home' as a place of affirmation, which is expressed as the following in his own words: "Indeed here we touch upon a converse whose images we shall have to explore; all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home... He experiences the house in its reality and in its virtuality, by means of thoughts and dreams" (Bachelard, 2014, p. 27).

In the story, the railroad station fails to sustain the narrator and his fellow storytellers as an affirmative home, leaving all three of them in a vast and hostile space where survival becomes challenging. The deprivation of the 'home', which signifies the warmth, connection and security filled with dreams and good memories, does not exist for the characters in the story (Bachelard, 2014). The narrator in the story expresses his feelings and his sense of loss in the following manner:

What kind of wind had brought us here to this town? We were working in such terrible circumstances. Dealing with food sellers, train attendants, hunger and poverty, we weren't able to perform our art properly. Above all, we didn't even have the proper amount of books. We didn't even have the money to get train tickets to go to the big city to buy books. What could be expected from us under such circumstances? The more I contemplated, the more I comprehended the desperation and wretchedness of our situation: Actually, by giving us these box-like rooms attached to the station building, the railroad administration hadn't done something for the benefit of us. (Atay, 2021, pp. 251-252)

Atay's presentation of the struggles of the modern artist amid this deprivation is the dilemma and the confusion of the artist facing the challenges of modernity. This predicament of the artist and its being taken up in the story through metaphors of space, place, and time is as personal as societal for Atay (Şahin, 2018). The attributes that make him so unique in Turkish literature are also expressed by the Turkish author Füsun Akatlı, underlining her observations that Atay has been an author preoccupied with characters who are disconnected and estranged and that he brings forth a social criticism conspicuously embellished with the portrayal of the disconnected. Akatlı says that "his subjects are the defects caused by the disruptive relationship of the individual with his community. Economic conditions, political climate, subjective and societal opportunities or shortcomings, the society is the gist of his stories" (Akatlı, 2018, p. 44, trans. mine).

As highlighted by the critics, researchers and reviewers of his works, this use of modernist concepts to voice personal and collective challenges is, among others,

Atay's contribution to the development of modern Turkish literature. Although later than the high modernists of the early 20th century, Atay's new style and his perception of the individual as an alienated and traumatic being estranged from society and himself have been taken up from a modernist perspective. His place as a modernist author in the Western tradition has been questioned and explored in some significant works by academics and researchers in Turkey, among whom Berna Moran (1991), Hasan Baktır, Yiğit Sümbül (2015), Yıldız Ecevit (2023) become prominent in terms of the extent and spectra of their studies. Sümbül and Baktır write the following:

He is in search for a new and powerful narrative to excavate and write about the current political turmoil of Turkey. This search for and experimentation of the Western modernism in literature becomes the most remarkable achievement with Atay's publication of *The Disconnected*. Influenced by Joyce, Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Nabokov and Proust, Atay develops his unique style and becomes one of the forerunners of the stream of consciousness technique in Turkish literature (Sümbül & Baktır, 2015, pp. 856-857).

Berna Moran (1991), an eminent Turkish literary critic and scholar, comments on the modernist Turkish novel and Atay's place in it, saying: "Atay is the earliest Turkish author who left behind the conventional Turkish novel and tried a brand new one" (ibid., p.197, trans. mine).

What he means by a brand new novel is the modernist novel, having affinities with the Western models in terms of themes and technique. Moran, in his book *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış II (A Critical Look at the Turkish Novel, 1991)*, gives an account of the social, political and technological changes in the West and their effects on the perception of art and the individual, drawing similarities with the case of Turkish modernity following the founding of the Republic which brought along sweeping social and political as well as economic and technological changes leaving their mark on the artist and the individual. The novelist who, on a personal scale, assumed a doubtful look on these changes no longer felt the traditional realist fiction writing satisfactory in voicing these personal doubts similar to their counterparts in the West, and Atay becomes the earliest novelist to try his hand in a new genre and style, thus paving the way for the modernist Turkish novel which was to be developed and carried over to a new level with the advent of postmodernist and other experimental fiction techniques (Moran, 1991, pp.198-199).

Modernist approaches to place and space manifested in "Railroad Storytellers – A Dream"

Modernist writing evolved to its indisputable stand in the first half of the 20th century. The century following the First World War was mainly concerned with space, place, and movement, and it was influenced by the new concept of

Bergsonian time and the Jungian notion of memory and consciousness. Space and place were regarded as symbolic representations that signified a connection, a link with the social, material and individual space and place in the modern daily life of persons and societies. Wesley A. Kort writes in his book *Place and Space in Modern Fiction* (2004) that nineteenth and twentieth-century cultural history, while it gave a temporal orientation to modernity, was also a history of changing places, relations to place, and spatial understandings (ibid., p.2). He asserts that history must also be understood as marked by place changes, spatial dislocations, and reorientations (Kort, 2004, p.4). From a historical perspective, Kort (2004) puts forward that while much on the surface spoke of confidence and optimism, there was also a growing sense of foreboding. It became difficult for some to read this history as a story of progress... (ibid., p.4).

Like Western modernists, Atay also creates characters who question and challenge the norms and conventions of their society and thus fail to develop affinities and closeness to his physical environment. Our narrator in the story, who rejects and defies the conventionality of the stationmaster or the passengers who expect of him traditional stories and conventional themes, voices his feelings as such:

For some reason, these long stories of mine were not selling at all. I was hoping for more sales probably because I was out to sell stories only once a week. It couldn't be said that the stories were pellucid... One day-I mean sometime after- a passenger heavily criticized one of the stories I had sold to him before-some time before. The page numbers were mixed up as well... He wasn't listening to my stories which I was trying to read out loud to him. Yet still I had a sense that they were progressively becoming more valuable, from a point of view that was progressively becoming more difficult to express (Atay, 2021, p.257).

For Sümbül and Baktır (2015), "The current situation leaves the artists in a state of complete hopelessness... Thus, contemporary writers celebrate this situation using alienation, social isolation, depression, spiritual paralysis, lack of communication and search for meaning" (ibid., p. 6).

This is precisely how, in Atay's story, place and space manifest themselves as the symbolic representations signifying the complex interrelation between these situations and the individual and how personal and social discontent and disillusionment are voiced and dealt with under the prism of modernist use of space, place and time. (Ecevit, 2023). *Railroad Storytellers* ... possess a more modernist structure than his novels... They carry the estrangement and the chilly world of loneliness to a landscape of images (ibid., p. 488, trans. mine). Sümbül and Baktır (2015) go on to explain Atay's proximity to 20th-century modernist writers as such:

Modernist authors like Joyce and Atay write about subjects and themes with a strong emphasis on individuals' spiritual paralysis, isolation from society, feeling of 'nothingness', existential questionings, lack of communication and consequences of urbanization. In particular, such themes are also celebrated by Woolf, Proust, Faulkner, Kafka and Dostoyevsky despite the geographical and cultural differences. Joyce has been a leading figure of influence on many modernist authors from different nations. For instance, Oğuz Atay, much under the influence of Joyce, creates intellectual characters with an emphasis on the intellectuals' isolation from society and social institutions, though with different preoccupations (ibid., p. 853).

Conclusively, Atay's "Railroad Storytellers – A Dream" metaphorically materialises space as an unnamed railway station on an unnamed town's mountaintop in an indefinite time. Thus, this symbolic space becomes a modernist space employed to voice Atay's themes, which all modernist writers share.

Lefebvre and Bachelard: Social space and intimate space manifested in "Railroad Storytellers – A Dream"

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the dichotomy between movement and immobility, as well as place and space, is interpreted in terms of the modernist tendencies in Atay's writings. Atay uses the moving train and the static train station metaphors to express his concern about the modern author facing the challenges and problems of the modernity of his times and the ensuing loneliness, estrangement and traumas of the artist as a modern man in an indifferent environment and society. At this point, it may be necessary to refer to Henri Lefebvre and his interpretation of space. To him, "any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships – and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)" (Lefebvre, 1991 p.83). Thus, Lefebvre underlines social space as opposed to Bachelard's intimate space (Thacker, 2009, p.16). According to Lefebvre, there are three dimensions of social space, among which "representational spaces embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (Lefebvre, 1991, p.33). For Lefebvre, representational space refers to space directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" and "users", but also of some artists... the "dominated... space which imagination seeks to change or appropriate" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.39). The focus on the symbolic qualities of representational spaces can be directly applied to modernist writers who attempted to capture the new spaces of modernity in their works and "thus emphasises how a spatialised reading of modernism must always

consider relations of power and geopolitics” (Thacker, 2009, p. 20). In Atay, the manifestation of the symbolic social space is depicted in the train station with all its cabins, sheds and rooms, as well as in the person of the stationmaster, who represents authority and the train passengers. It must also be noted that although the station is unspecific, it is administered by rules and regulations as well as a stationmaster who works there as a civil servant:

The stationmaster wouldn't care about the things we had written; but for some reason, he would certainly take a copy of each one of our stories, file them with care and hide them in a separate cabinet; It was required by regulations, apparently. And apparently, since they were written on the property of the railroad administration, our case was covered by article 248. Whenever he spoke of the articles in law, I would get angry despite myself: Weren't there any laws that would fix our case; that would give an honorable status to us in the property of the railroads. (Atay, 2021, pp. 249-250)

The narrator's critical attitude towards the established bureaucratic order and the stationmaster's unappreciative and undermining attitude expected from an authority who always follows the book are other features of the storytellers' further estrangement and discontent within that social space.

The critical position of railroads for the modernist writer is a suitable device to voice modernist concerns. In *Moving Through Modernity* (2009), according to Andrew Thacker, “the significance of railroads and train stations and movement between various spaces is a key feature of modernism, and one significant way of interpreting this is via the emergence of modern means and systems of transport such as the motorcar, the electric train or bus, or the underground railway or the railways on the ground” (Thacker, 2009, p. 7).

Spalding (2012) also talks about how the development of transport systems enabled man to experience the freedom of moving around, which resulted in a change in the perception of time and space and “ways of knowing and experiencing the world” (ibid., p.193) which provided the author with new and experimental forms of reflections of those concepts in writings, leading the way to modernist tendencies and sensibilities. “Modernist writing, ...is about living and experiencing ‘new times’, not in the abstracted location of literary history, but in specific spatial histories: rooms, cities, buildings, countries and landscapes” (Thacker, 2009, p.13).

In Atay, the significance of railroads and train stations parallels this new perception of movement, mobility and immobility. It subtly reveals the modern man's dilemmas and confusion in the face of contemporary society, which becomes increasingly estranged from the individual and the artist. The railroad station at the beginning of the story manages to provide the storytellers with a meagre amount of money to keep them alive since few trains come and go and the passengers are not too keen on reading; however, this mobility and

movement gradually declines; bringing along a sharp deterioration in the lives of the fellow storytellers and the narrator, leading him eventually to a total confusion of identity:

Trains don't pass by here any longer. Lately for some reason, I haven't been seeing the stationmaster around, either. He's on leave I guess-because he hasn't been taking a vacation for years. His outfit is on me now. He must've left me behind to cover for him. For some reason, trains don't stop by, either. Whatever, these are insignificant details (Atay, 2021, p. 258).

As mentioned previously in this paper, the story's location, the space it occupies, and the narrator's conception of this situation are indefinite but not in the least insignificant in the structure of the story. The opening paragraph, which focuses on this indefinite but significant space in detail, is as follows:

In a mountaintop town, far away from the big cities of the country, we were three storytellers working at a railroad station. We had three cabins side by side attached to the main building. A young Jew, a young woman, and I. We were working as itinerant storytellers. It couldn't be said that our sales were great, because the trains would seldom stop by at our station (Atay, 2021, p. 244).

Against the outer space of the mountain top, the inner place where they stay is created as a problematic space vs place dichotomy since both terms represent imagined and metaphorical entities and fail to provide the storytellers with a home of the Bachelardian sense. In Atay's terms, the storytellers live at a train station where there are somehow and curiously enough, writing cabins for residing storytellers: "If we were to be thrown out of here, where were we to find a train station like this, with storywriting cabins?" (Atay, 2021, p. 253) says the narrator, while describing the enforced and confined living space they were permitted to live in, within the outer space of the railway station which does not offer them any solace, warmth or security, contrary to what is expected from a "home" or a "house" in the Bachelardian sense. As already mentioned in this paper, Bachelard, in his *The Poetics of Space* (2014), equates place with the house, where people are born and grow up, comprising several components such as rooms, kitchens, cellars, attics and argues that inhabiting means being located in the house. He suggests that "all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home" (Bachelard, 2014, p. 27). However, as observed in the "Introduction" to *Literary Landscapes* (De Lange et al., 2008), "if your characters are deeply alienated from other people and from the places where they find themselves, then all places share the quality of 'not home' for you" (ibid., p. xi). Hence, "Those boundaries between the self and the world, those boundaries that reduce all spaces to 'not us' and thus homogenize them, have often served as one of our litmus tests of modernism" (ibid., p. xi).

On the other hand, Zehra Zambak observes that during war times, which is the implied time in the story, the living space, which was functioning as an economic space to survive, had its toll on daily life as well as on the artistic space (Zambak, 2017, p. 337). In outer space, the events in the railway station in Atay's story touch upon the challenges of art in the face of social realities and the artist's alienation due to the struggles to overcome these challenges (Zambak, 2017, p. 336). Consequently, the narrator in the story and his fellow storytellers are deprived of that intimate space in Bachelard's terms and move into the abyss of topographic uprootedness, which leads to each of them's gradual mental and physical dismal and eventual outward journey towards disappearance and being wasted away. The irony is that trains and railways are modernist symbols of development and movement. Also, the freedom they brought to the 20th-century man becomes the prison of the characters in the story and symbolises their immobility. The ensuing mental and physical decline and confusion of the narrator is expressed in his own words:

I was spending my days half hungry, half full. One day- I mean some time after- a passenger heavily criticized one of the stories I had sold to him before- some time before. The page numbers were mixed up as well. I told him that I had been hungry for a week. No, I didn't tell him. I told this –some time after- to another passenger. I tried to tell the passenger from sometime before that I had done everything on purpose. I was forgetting a lot of things (Atay, 2021, p. 257).

Similar to those modernist writers in the West, as mentioned by Sümbül and Baktır (2015), the artist's dilemma accounts for Atay's restlessness in his life and career, moving around from one place to another and feeling dissatisfied with the society of those times in the face of rapid modernisation, and artistic and literary climate. Turkish author and literary critic Sadık Yalsızuçanlar in *Oğuz Atay İçin Bir Sempozyum* (2018) describes Atay's concept of authorship in the following manner: "Eshrefoglu Rumi, an important name in our traditional literature says 'I talk about my troubles and nothing else', similarly Atay is an author who talks about his own, personal truth..." (ibid., p. 94, trans. mine). Consequently, it may be argued that the predicament of the nameless narrator and his fellow storytellers represent what Oğuz Atay knew in his life and how he felt about it. Yıldız Ecevit, in her review of "Railroad Storytellers", writes the following:

This is a story that significantly alludes to the existence of an artist. In this imagined world which is confined to a train station, the storyteller sinks deep into the problem of being an artist: he consumedly experiences the conflict between artistic creativity and the material world; he can't write correctly because of his financial issues; he profoundly feels the pressures of the system that is embodied in the stationmaster, he is worried about

his creativity, he does not get the attention he expects, of the reader, at the grasp of desperation, he hits bottom, he is lonely. This story of Atay is one of the most beautiful stories in world literature, and it deals with the problematic place of the artist. (Ecevit, 2023, p. 509, trans. mine)

Hence, in the story, his delving into the exploration of the complex relationships among his characters and between particular spaces and places pertain to Atay's own experience of pangs of modernism as an artist and a deep sense of homelessness, which deters him from the articulation of "the topography of his intimate being" (Bachelard, 1994, p. XXXVI). This idea is created in the story by the characters' inability to write and produce short stories that could sell and be an outlet for their own "intimate being" in that particular space and time. In the story, the narrator writes,

I was feeling that I was exhausted deep inside. My sleep being cut halfway through every midnight, the whistles of the trains, the necessity to find new stories for the inconsiderate and ignorant or comfortable and arrogant crowd of customers, the young Jew progressively becoming worse, and our stationmaster progressively becoming more peevish... I didn't know which demands to meet (Atay, 2021, p. 254).

The modernist concept of time in "Railroad Storytellers – A Dream"

Kearney says, "Bachelard's poetics of space entails a poetics of time" (Kearney, 2014, p. XXII). He adds, "Bachelard, the temporality of an image is dependent on the instant" (ibid.). Kearney goes on to say that "Confronted by the successive antithesis of ordinary time, the poet refuses to comply, resisting the habit of chronological sequencing by transmuting opposition into instantaneous 'ambivalence' (where contraries coexist)" (Kearney, 2014, p. XXIII). He concludes, "The poetic imagination thus substitutes simultaneity for succession" (ibid.). Memory also becomes very important in the modernist conception of space, in its conception of time, where many simultaneous time flows occur.

A similar notion of time is present in Atay's story. His creativity and experimentalism in his stories evolve around the problematic notion of identity and estrangement as time and space move in flux, and this attitude brings him forth to the modernists of the early and mid-20th-century Western writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and many others. In "Railroad Storytellers", time is intertwined into the movement and immobility dichotomy in the story, which encircles the train station space as confusing as the memory and mind of the character. Time does not flow chronologically, echoing Bachelardian and the modernists' concept of time, and sometimes becomes the foundation where the narrator experiences his flashbacks, troubled inner dialogues and gradual

confusion, which is apparent in the narrator's words towards the end of the story:

I had a sense that my thoughts were becoming blurry. My relation with the world outside the station was weakening too. I wasn't any longer able to keep track of how the days were passing. My old aptitude in finding current topics for my stories, in connecting people and adventures, was no more. Most of the time, I wasn't able to hear the significant news. Yes, I knew some of it: The war was over. Trains full of homecoming soldiers flooding from the front lines were passing by. Collecting some ramshackle information from them, I had written war stories for a while. In the meantime, I was not able to remember many things: Had the war taken place in our country? Or had they battled in far away deserts? Had our lands expanded or narrowed? The young Jew was responding with his weary smile: Given that our station remained where it was, did such matters have any significance? (Atay, 2021, p. 254)

Structural and experimental innovations about modernism in "Railroad Storytellers – A Dream"

Atay's similarity with the modernists is not confined only to his conception of space and time; his use of symbols and metaphors to signal the deeper meanings of modern man's dilemmatic relations with his environment and his experimental and unique narrative technique are among many other elements that bring him closer to the modernists.

Moving on to the story's structure, similar to Hemingway's "iceberg principle" in his stories, Atay's story has an "iceberg principle" where the underlying meanings are left to the reader to understand. Although Atay's narrative technique and his choice of writing style are not as economical as Hemingway's, the story operates on many levels in the subtext. The indefiniteness of the space in which they exist and lead a miserable life and the absence of a specific place without an address (the readers can not answer the narrator's letter) along with a moving but uncertain time both as a spatial metaphor and as a moving sequence as the trains come and go, require a modernist reading in order to find out what lies beneath the iceberg of the narration. In *Moving Through Modernity* (2009), Thacker argues, "The focus on the symbolic representational spaces can be directly applied to modernist writers who attempted to capture the new spaces of modernity" (ibid., p. 20). In terms of Hemingway's "iceberg principle", the indefiniteness of time and place and the nameless characters create a space of uncertainty and point out Atay's search for a metaphorical sense of belonging which will link the characters to reality and to life itself. The railway station is a significant metaphor for modernity on several levels. First, it signals the advent of technological development that reaches even the remotest place.

Second, the railway is where mobility is most felt by the trains arriving and leaving. Third, the railway station's turning into a gradually deserted place is metaphorically a symbol of the desertedness and gradual decline of the storytellers and, principally, the narrator himself. Bachelard's concept of home may help to interpret the choice of the railroad station as the space for the story. For Bachelard, the primary function of inhabiting is located in the house." All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home" (2014, p. 27). According to Thacker, "It is a kind of 'place-world or a world of places' where the exploration is not so much geometrical or architectural as imaginative or poetic" (2009, p. 15). For Bachelard (2014, p. 30), "of course thanks to the house, a great many of our memories are housed". Thacker (2009) highlights Bachelard's argument that "this imaginative realm is the closest, to that of dreams and the unconscious, where our most intimate memories of inhabiting early childhood places are stored, or 'housed'" (ibid., p. 15).

Bachelard's view is "to illustrate the metaphysics of consciousness we should have to wait for the experiences during which being is cast out, that is to say, thrown out, outside the being of the house, a circumstance in which the hostility of men and universe accumulates" (Bachelard, 2014, p. 29) and corresponds to what Atay's narrator goes through; when he finds himself deserted, in a way cut off from the "house" he endeavoured to integrate himself in, his downfall begins. As Bachelard states, "The house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind" (2014, p. 28). Atay's calling the story title "A Dream" suggests a Bachelardian explanation of the space where they live, correspond, or fail to correspond to the 'house' they search for but cannot find.

Metaphorically, the railway station's other essential function in the story is twofold: One is it is a metaphor for a Bachelardian sense of home, and secondly, it is a place of travelling and making journeys outwardly in the physical and materialised sense; hence serving as the Lefebvrian social space, as well as inwardly as a spiritual journey the narrator makes, in search of giving and finding answers for his existence, thus creating the Bachelardian intimate space. The first function fails to be materialised; the narrator and his peers are never blessed with a home in the Bachelardian sense; they do not even have an address in the railway station; the second function of outward physical travelling has not been realised since the station stops functioning, while the inward journey of the narrator ends in his traumatic confusion and decline, stripped of his memory and creative imagination. Atay's occupation for his restless quest for identity and belonging amid the facts of modern life, such as economic and bureaucratic workings, are conspicuous in his description of how they were producing their stories:

Yes, in a way we could've been regarded as the civil servants of the railroad administration. Our cabins had been constructed on the area allotted for the station building; moreover, they were identical to each other and had the same architectural properties as the main building. The stationmaster was sarcastically calling us 'civil servant storytellers'. Then would begin that everlasting argument: No, we couldn't have been considered for civil servant positions... Actually I wanted to be regarded neither as a civil servant nor as a tradesman; we were artists. (Atay, 2021, pp. 245-246)

This, in a way, symbolises the struggles of an artist in an unappreciative environment, voicing the artistic incapacity due to harsh living conditions and lack of enough stimulus for the artist to produce works that will be lucrative and worthy. As the story advances, an inner journey of the narrator's life starts for the reader. The place of art and the artist in society, a criticism of the disregard for the storyteller's efforts and output reflected by the stationmaster's jokes, form another layer in the story's subtext. The modernist writers have discussed and inquired about the place of art and the artist's role in modern and disenchanted society. The relation between art, the artist and the new realities of social life, such as economic conditions, technological advancements and the isolation and disillusionment of the individual in a mechanised and technology-driven world as modernist themes and concepts are also in Atay's story. The stories that are not sold, having to compete with apple and cold beverages sellers on the train, and trying to write according to the expectations of the train passengers are the realities that contribute to the deterioration of the characters in the story. These are some of the issues the storytellers have to deal with. The space where the stories are written that is, the cabins in the train station as the earliest loci of the story, gradually enlarges and expands into a loci of the destinations of the trains and in tandem with the physical journeys of the trains and the passengers, the inner journey of the narrator also expands into a space of vast loneliness and search. Hence, the link between place and identity is symbolised in the story as identity-search, estrangement, and disconnection between place and the space the place occupies.

Concluding Remarks

What is described as "the difference between a relatively fixed term 'place' and the more indeterminate 'space'" (De Lange et al., 2008, p. XV) is seen in the story as the railway station and the small cabins being the place where characters stay, and from where the trains leave for open and unknown spaces. The gradual physical and mental decline of the living conditions of the narrator and his fellow storytellers and his confusion of place, space and time leads the narrator to the inevitable identity crisis and total disconnection with the

environment: “I had a sense that my thoughts were becoming blurry. My relation with the world outside the station was weakening too” (Atay, 2021, p. 254).

Trains stop coming to the station now or maybe long before, but the narrator has become cut off from time and place and seems lost in space; he does not know its address. However, his determination to connect or survive through writing leads him to yearn to write a letter to an address he does not know. What is more, he does not know his own address. Hence, he can neither send nor receive a letter.

I wanted to write a letter, however I didn't know an address. I mean I didn't know any addresses. They wouldn't have believed this, for that reason I was feeling embarrassed to ask. Could you tell me an address, any address? I couldn't have said that. Yet still any address would be enough for me. There was another hardship back then. There still is-I mean although it has been some time now. The issue of writing my own address on the letter makes me ponder, as well. Even if the express or mail trains are not passing by any longer- or may be just for a certain period of time- if I could still find a way to deliver this story of mine to my readers- I've no customers left any longer- how would I say where I am? This issue makes me ponder, as well. Yet still, I want to write to, always write for, keep telling, keep informing my reader of where I am.

I am here my dear reader, I wonder where you are? (Atay, 2021, pp. 258-259)

Here, the concept of “home” in Bachelard's view may also help clarify the story's address motif. Thacker writes that Bachelard sees the house as a kind of body or body space (Thacker, 2009, p. 15). Hence, the address the narrator tries to find is his self and his space. The narrator is physically stuck between the station and his confused body or being. Similarly, and in parallel with this situation, his cabin is also stuck between other cabins and the railroad tracks. He cannot free himself, such as jumping on a train to a new place where he can start a new life. As the story title suggests, it is “a dream”; the spatial relation between the characters and the railway station no longer encompasses a “home” for the characters. The eventual desertedness and the disruptive amnesia of the narrator, however, do not lead him altogether to his devastation or give up writing. He longs to connect to his readers despite the lack of addresses to share. This is not impossible for the writer and his readers, where his call is indeed an intellectual invitation rather than an actual correspondence. According to Ecevit's interpretation, “He is desperately lonely, his yearning for correspondence is at its height, and no one could have expressed these emotions as lucid and as sincerely as Atay's narrator has done” (Ecevit, 2023, p.511).

Writing has become the narrator's Bachelardian "home", the only place he can regain his existence. Consequently, we can witness in Atay's story a new space consisting of an imaginative place where he waits, as if staying put in the modernist sense, for his readers to reach him and read his stories: I am here, my dear reader. I wonder where you are?

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CREATING CREATIVE BLENDS IN 21 CENTURY (A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN)¹

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Abstract: *This article studies blending as a word-formative strategy used in newly coined vocabulary in English and English borrowings in Bulgarian. It involves merging parts of two or more words to create a new lexical unit and typically occurs when the beginning of the first is combined with the end of the second to form a new word that represents a combination of their meanings. Blending is commonly used to create new words for technological advancements, brand names, and other contemporary concepts. For this study we constructed two databases containing vocabulary which has already been included in the dictionaries of Standard English and some of them in the Dictionary of New Bulgarian Words. Additionally, we try to determine the processes of adaptation the English borrowings are subject to when they are adopted in the target language and their assimilation. The article also explores morphological differences in the construction of English and Bulgarian blends.*

Keywords: *new words/neologisms, blends, English vs. Bulgarian, borrowings, assimilation*

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Introduction

Language and human society are in a close relationship which causes language changes over time due to society's development. These changes reflect the shift of meaning of certain phrases in the context of language use. Therefore, language is not a static system, but it changes and develops together with society (Nabila & Abdulrahman, 2021). In any case, there could be a number of possible reasons that can provoke language changes. They can happen due to some transformations and adjustments in the social life system, as in education, culture, or technologies (Harya, 2016). For instance, the word *selfie* meaning "taking a picture of yourself" was accepted by people and spread very quickly in 2013 (Shin, Kim, Im & Chong, 2017). This is just one example of a language change due to technological development, and many other new words are also invented to describe things that did not exist before, e.g., *podcasting*, *webcasting*, *blogging*, *filmstock*, *webcams*, etc. (Yasin, Mustafa & Faysal, 2010).

Language can also change because of current social phenomena. Recently, the new collocation *Second gentleman* entered the American English with the meaning "the husband of the U.S. vice president, or the husband of a current state or local official ranking immediately below the governor or mayor" due to the fact that since 2020 the vice president of the United States is Kamala Harris, who is married to Douglas Emhoff, the first second gentleman in American history. No doubt we should mention the pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019, commonly known as COVID-19, which reshaped our daily lives very quickly. Our languages followed the tendency in terms of change and new words and expressions were coined in many languages along with the increased use of less usual ones. Here are some examples: *COVID-19*², *Coronavirus*³, *lockdown*⁴, *social distancing*⁵, *pandemic*⁶, *vaccine hesitancy*⁷, *herd immunity*⁸, *antibody testing*⁹. All these could be defined as neologisms as they were invented or constructed to name a new entity or represent new senses of already existing words. A variety of methods are used to create neologisms, but the most productive ones are compounding, derivation, analogy, abbreviation, and

2. "CO" stands for corona, "VI" for virus, "D" for disease, and "19" for the year it was discovered (2019).

3. This term existed before the pandemic but it became widely recognized and used during the COVID-19 outbreak.

4. The restriction of movement and activities imposed by governments to slow the spread of the virus.

5. The practice of maintaining physical distance from others to reduce the risk of transmission.

6. Though not a new word, it was used much more frequently and widely in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

7. The reluctance or refusal to get vaccinated, which became a significant public health concern during the pandemic.

8. The concept of a population becoming immune to a virus when a sufficient percentage of individuals have been vaccinated or have developed immunity through infection.

9. Testing to determine if a person has antibodies against the coronavirus, indicating a prior infection or vaccination.

meaning transfer (Zhou, 2016, p. 292). Some neologisms are short lived and disappear fairly quickly before becoming part of the standard language, others gradually lose their novelty. Mostly neologisms are found in the social and mass media, where changes in today's social, political, and economic life emerge and gain prominence most quickly. Language is continually evolving, and global events often play a role in shaping its development. The data this study is based on, however, contains only newly coined units which have already been included in the dictionaries of Standard English and some of them have found their places in the Dictionary of New Bulgarian Words (Rechnik na novite dumi v bulgarskiya ezik, 2021).

Theoretical framework

Defining a word as an archaism or a neologism depends on the historical period. Only by referring to a particular period of language development could a word be considered as newly coined or treated as obsolete. Words such as *cable television*, *flashback* or *sitcom* were new words in the 1960s, similarly to *CD-ROM* and *hip-hop* in the 1980s, but nowadays, they are only familiar to the people in their 40s and over.

Neologisms are called “nonce words” by Crystal (2008, p. 329) because very few of them survive. However, in this study we do not use the two terms interchangeably because a *nonce word* is created either intentionally or unintentionally by a speaker to be used just once. Unlike a *neologism*, which by definition is not yet widely accepted (Durham, 2018, p. 1), but is intended to be, nonce formations are not meant to be adopted by the community. The databases of this research contain lexical units which have survived their infancy for they are associated with a lasting, meaningful concept and a significant term or usage for it.

In linguistics different parts of speech are studied as neologisms, however, the question of classification of neologisms has not been solved yet as there are different ways of classifying them (Usevičs, 2012, p. 2). What is more, in different studies of neologisms different aspects are taken into account. *Blending* as a word-formative strategy involves merging parts of two or more words to create a new lexical unit and typically the beginning of the first is combined with the end of the second to form a new word that represents a combination of their meanings, e.g., *relfie* (relationship + selfie).

Since the middle of the 20th century, the role of *blending* as a word formative process of neologisms has constantly increased. Comparing earlier research on blends, Gao (2023) has pointed out that in the 1960s blend words comprised approximately 3% of new English words, in the 1990s about 5% of the neologisms were blends, while in 2010s 43% of the analyzed 1,186 new words turned out to be blends. Contemporary research on blends applies different approaches,

such as the lexicographical approach (Gao, 2023), the descriptive approach (Hosseinzadeh, 2014)¹⁰, the psycholinguistic approach (Al-Salman & Haider, 2021; Hundt, Mollin & Pfenninger, 2017), the interdisciplinary approach (Bauer, 2012), the contrastive approach (Renner, 2018, 2020), the cognitive approach (Bagasheva, 2022; Schmid, 2011, 2020; Handl & Schmid, 2011), etc.

The growing number of new blends in the English vocabulary leads to inclusion of more such words in English dictionaries. This paper intends to study new blends organized in two databases, English and Bulgarian, compiled for the purposes of the study. The sources of the English database are the annual online updates of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Oxford English Dictionary and Collins Dictionary over a period of three years (2020-2022). The Bulgarian database contains excerpts from the paper edition of Dictionary of New Bulgarian Words (Rechnik na novite dumi v bulgarskiya ezik, 2021)¹¹, as well as some online sources such as the website of the Institute of Bulgarian Language of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences¹². The blends in these two databases are classified according to their word classes, morphological structure and genre. The research design of this study is exploratory-interpretative to both English and Bulgarian blends. The English database contains 370 new words, while the Bulgarian one comprises 320 new lexemes.

Unlike “regular” words, new blends which are borrowed present a double challenge. First of all, since it is a new word without an existing counterpart in the dictionary, translating blends is more challenging for the translator. Second, the translator must choose how to approach the challenge of translating a newly created word after learning the meaning of the blend. The original word, or the blend’s original form, will either be retained as in the source language, or the new word will be modified for the target language. Both options are viable, but the second one is far more delicate and requires paying much more attention to the entire (con)text rather than just the new word alone. The translator once more has at least two possibilities when it comes to the second solution: either to translate the blend or adapt it to the best alternative in the target language.

Since the focus of this paper is on English as a source language and Bulgarian as a target language, it is important to note that English has proven to be rich in scope when dealing with global events and technological innovations (Hundt, Mollin & Pfenninger, 2017, p. 21). It serves the purpose of lingua franca and a global language in order to maintain the international relationship in business, education, science, technology, travel, tourism, etc. Semantic changes in the

10. Hosseinzadeh (2014) investigates blending as one of the word-formation processes in English: compounding, clipping, backformation, acronym, derivation, clipping, conversion, etc. She analyses quantitatively her database and the obtained results show that most of the blends are made by clipping. Some of the examples in her research are part of my English database.

11. The Dictionary of New Bulgarian Words (2021) contains new words of the first two decades of 21 century.

12. https://ibl.bas.bg/ezikov_i_spravki/category/leksika/

system caused by any kind of linguistic interactions between languages are manifestations of “semantic interference”. Undoubtedly, semantics is the main prerequisite for borrowing a lexical unit at all; therefore, for any transfer to take place further down the levels of the receiving language system.

Data Analysis

This article aims to study the English blends from a linguistic perspective, focusing both on their structure and meaning. We also compare and contrast blends which are borrowed in Bulgarian, and what changes they undergo in the process of their adaptation. We explore the new English loan words in Bulgarian, considering their phonetic, morphological and semantic characteristics. We try to prove that the process of borrowing is a dynamic one, because the new word changes some of its phonetic and morphological characteristics, and advances in different spheres of life.

Blends by lexical categories

The method by which the structure of the bases is modeled is carried out by correlating each of the root morphemes to the corresponding part of speech; for the structural analysis we use the following abbreviations for the parts of speech: N (noun), Adj. (adjective), V (verb), e.g.,

N + N = N EN. *stan* “an excessively enthusiastic fan” (stalker + fan); *maskne* “acne caused by wearing a face mask” (mask + acne); BG. *ботел* EN. *botel* “a hotel on a boat” (boat + hotel); *инфотейнмънт* EN. *infotainment* “providing serious information in an entertaining way” (information + entertainment);

Less frequent combinations are the following:

V + V = V EN. *chillax* “calm down, take it easy” (chill + relax); No Bulgarian examples of this type have been attested.

V + N = N EN. *shrinkflation* “reducing a product’s amount or volume per unit while keeping the same price” (shrink + inflation); No Bulgarian examples of this group have been found in the database.

Adj. + N = N EN. *altcoin* “any alternative cryptocurrency, especially to Bitcoin” (alternative + coin); BG. *глемтинг* EN. *glamping* “a form of luxurious camping” (glamorous + camping); *флотел* EN. *flotel* “a ship used as a hotel” (floating + hotel);

N + Adj. = Adj. EN. *hellacious* “an awful experience” (hell + bodacious);

Adj. + Adj. = Adj. BG. *Мултикултури* is a clipped version of *multicultural*, often used as a shorter and more casual way to refer to matters related to cultural diversity or the coexistence of multiple cultures within a society. In both English

and Bulgarian, the term *multiculti* is employed when discussing a multicultural event, community, or perspective, for example: Университетът е известен със своя мултикулти кампус, който привлича студенти от цял свят. “The university is known for its multicultural campus, which attracts students from all over the world”.

The database shows that English neologisms formed via blending are almost entirely nominal (the most frequent combination is the juxtaposition of two nouns N + N), which can be explained by the necessity of naming new entities. The same reason applies to the blends borrowed in Bulgarian as nominal blends are often more easily adopted into everyday language because they fit seamlessly into noun structures. This facilitates their integration into common usage and their understanding is more efficient and clearer due to the fact that the intended concept is primarily a thing or an object. What is more, nominal blends often maintain a semantic unity by combining words with related meanings and as the Bulgarian examples reveal the assimilation they undergo is limited to transliteration or transcription of the source word during which English letters or phonemes, respectively, are replaced by Bulgarian ones. In this process some non-existent English vowels are changed in Bulgarian, e.g., examples of transliteration are *фlотел* En. *flotel* /fləʊ'tel/ and *ботел* En. *botel* /bəʊ'tel/, which are pronounced as /flɔ'tel/ and /bɔ'tel/ due to the absence of the diphthong /əʊ/ in Bulgarian; as an example of transcription, we can regard *глемпинг* En. *glamping*, where the English phoneme /æ/ is transferred into the Bulgarian /e/.

Structural patterns of blends

Blends do not exhibit fixed word-formative rules, but the analysis of the databases shows some structural patterns in both languages (Grlj, 2022). Blends combine parts of source words, rather than the whole source words (Enarsson, 2006, p. 4); this distinguishes them from compounds. Some authors (cf. Marchand, 1969, p. 451) do not consider as blends words created by joining together the front parts of two or more source words, e.g., *sponcon* (sponsored + content). These coinages are regarded as a subtype of acronyms or complex clippings rather than blends. In the present research, however, we include them in the group of blends.

Regarding what has already been mentioned, blends show a variety of structural patterns. The source words can be shortened or not, they can be put together or inserted or they can even be kept whole and overlap in the middle part of the blend they form (cf. Fandrych, 2008).

Blends formed by shortening

In the blends with shortening one part or more are omitted. The different patterns that are used include subtypes concerning the number and location of the clipping:

- The first part of the first source word is combined with the last part of the second source word, e.g., AB + CD = AD

EN. *chexting* ‘che(ating) + (te)xting’ “a new form of betrayal that combines cheating and texting”; *bleen* ‘b(lue) + (g)reen’ “the mixture of two colors”; *abilitude* ‘abili(ty) + (apti)tude’ “competence, capacity, aptitude”; *duppie* ‘d(epressed) + (y)uppie’ “an urban professional suffering from depression, especially one who has lost a high-paying job”; *family* ‘fr(iend) + (f)amily’ “a group of friends, who are close like a family”; *girus* ‘giant + virus’ “a type of giant virus”; *snirt* ‘sn(ow) + (d)irt’ “dirty snow, often seen by the side of roads”; *bromance* ‘bro(ther) + (ro)mance’ “a close but non-intimate relationship between two men”;

BG. *кобот* ‘co(laborative) + (ro)bot’ “a robot used in manufacturing small objects”; *косметевтика* ‘cosme(tics) + (pharma)ceutics’ “cosmetic products that have medicinal or drug-like benefits”; *чатбом* ‘chat(ter) + (ro)bot’ “a software application that aims to mimic human conversation online”; *алкорексия* ‘alco(hol) + (ano)rexia’ “a diet in which meals are replaced by alcoholic beverages”; *хакатон* “an event at which participants aim to create functioning software or hardware” (hacker + marathon).

- The entire first source word is brought together with the last part of the second source word, e.g., AB + CD = ABD

EN. *mocktail* ‘mock + (cock)tail’ “a non-alcoholic drink consisting of a mixture of fruit juices or other soft drinks”; *foodoholic* ‘food + (alc)oholic’ “a person craving excessively for food”; *sunbrella* ‘sun + (um)brella’ “a parasol”; *blacktress* ‘black + (ac)tress’ “an African-American woman who is a pioneer of the film industry”¹³; *boomburb* ‘boom + (su)burb’ “a rapidly expanding suburb”¹⁴; *bluenette* ‘blue + (bru)nette’ “a person with blue hair”; *bookazine* ‘book + (mag)azine’ “a publication combining elements of books and magazines”; *staycation* ‘stay + (vo)cation’ “a vacation spent at home, rather than traveling”;

BG. *кучемат* ‘куче lit. ‘dog’ + (auto)mat’ “dog feeder”; *слагини* ‘slash + (bi)kini’ “bikini with a lot of strips”; *флатформи* ‘flat + (plat)forms’ “shoes on flat platforms”; *фолксонмия* ‘folk + (ta)xonomy’ “the means by which people organize various elements according to their own systems”¹⁵; *йогалатес* ‘yoga

13. <https://www.powerthesaurus.org/blacktress/definitions>

14. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/boomburb>

15. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/folksonomy-tagging-social-media>

+ (pi)lates¹⁶ “a fitness routine that combines yoga and Pilates exercises¹⁷ with the postures and breathing techniques of yoga”; *mockтейл* ‘mock + (cock)tail’ “a non-alcoholic drink consisting of a mixture of fruit juices or other soft drinks”; *дрънкорексия* ‘drunk + (an)orexia’ “missing or skipping meals to conserve calories in order to consume alcoholic beverages”;

- The first part of the first source word is brought together with the entire second source word, e.g., AB + CD = ACD

EN. *Cheaster* ‘Ch(ristmas) + Easter’ “a person who attends religious services only at Christmas or Easter”; *testlying* ‘test(ify) + lying’ “the act of a police officer giving false testimony”; *architourism* ‘archi(tecture) + tourism’ “sightseeing buildings and other architectural works”; *dup* ‘d(o) + up’ “to open”;

BG. *робохеликоптер* ‘robo(t) + helicopter’; *орнитотурист* ‘ornitho(logist) + tourist’ “a tourist who is interested in ornithology”; *културжурналист* ‘cultur(e) + journalist’ “a journalist who writes about culture”; *апартхотел* ‘apart(ment) + hotel’; *глокален* ‘g(lobal) + local’ “relating to the interconnection of global and local issues”.

When the borrowed word is an adjective, e.g., *глокален* ‘glocal’, in the process of assimilation it acquires the suffix corresponding to the part of speech, e.g. *-ен*.

- The last part of both source words is shortened and they are put together, e.g., AB + CD = AC

Following Renner (2018), we include blends which are formed from the front parts of source words. Some authors (Arndt-Lappe & Plag, 2013, p. 5) classify these coinages as complex clippings they treat as patterns distinct from blending.

EN. *famicom* ‘fami(ly) + com(puter)’ “an 8-bit video game console that was developed and manufactured by Nintendo”; *avgas* ‘av(iation) + gas(oline)’ “gasoline fuel for aircraft”; *zedonk*, *zonkey* “a hybrid”, respectively ‘ze(bra) + donk(ey)’ and ‘z(ebra) + (d)onkey”;

BG. *кросфит* ‘cross(-discipline) + fit(ness)’ “a high-intensity fitness program incorporating elements from several sports and types of exercise”; *сисадмин* ‘sys(tem) + admin(istrator)’ “a system administrator”.

16. <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/yogalates>

17. Pilates is a physical fitness system that focuses on the development of core strength, flexibility, and overall body awareness.

Blends formed by overlapping

The most typical pattern of overlapping is the one where the final part of the first word overlaps the first part of the second word. The overlap can be one phoneme or two, or a syllable (Enarsson, 2006, p. 14). Blends with overlapping may also include the entire first word and the first or last part of the other word. In those cases, it is the spelling of the word that tells us it is a blend.

- None of the source words is shortened, but they overlap in the middle, e.g., AB + BC = ABC

EN. *alcoholiday* ‘**alcohol** + **holiday**’ “a holiday which is more about parties and getting drunk”; *playbore* ‘**playboy** + **bore**’ “a boresome playboy”; *anecdotalage* ‘**anecdote** + **dotage**’ “anecdotes collectively”; *cartune* ‘**cartoon** + **tune**’ “musical cartoon”; *deskfast* ‘**desk** + (brea)**kfast**’ “breakfast eaten at work”; *slanguage* ‘**slang** + **language**’ “language characterized by excessive use of slang”; *sexpert* ‘**sex** + **expert**’ “an expert in sexual affairs”; *Yahooligan* (**Yahoo** + **hooligan**); *covidiot* ‘**covid** + **idiot**’ “a person who does not observe regulations or guidelines designed to prevent the spread of disease (e.g., COVID-19)”;

BG. *peλφu* ‘**rel**(ationship) + (s)**elfie**’ “a self-taken photograph of a couple in a relationship”.

- The second source word is inserted into the first one, i.e., the term *infixation* applies to this group, e.g., AB + CD = ACDB.

EN. *Armachillo* ‘**armadillo** + **chill**’ “workwear made of special fabric”; *adorkable* ‘**adorable** + **dork**’ “someone who is socially awkward in an endearing way”;

The word *cutensil* ‘**cute** + **utensil**’ represents full overlap. No Bulgarian examples are attested in this group.

Blends with both shortening and overlapping

This group of blends combines both word-formative techniques: one or both source words are shortened and they overlap in one or two phonemes, or a syllable.

En. *suspose* ‘**susp**(ect) + (sup)**pose**’ “suppose and suspect”; *traficator* ‘**trafic** + (ind)**icator**’ “a blinking light on a motor vehicle”; *feminazi* ‘**femin**(ist) + **Nazi**’ “a committed feminist or a strong-willed woman”; *fugly* ‘**fu**(cking) + **ugly**’ “very ugly or unattractive”; *foolosopher* ‘**fool** + (phi)**losopher**’ “a foolish philosopher”; *mockumentary* ‘**mock** + (do)**cumentary**’ “a television programme or film which takes the form of a serious documentary”; *faitheist* ‘**faith** + (a)**theist**’ “an atheist who thinks faith should not be criticized”; *glamazon* ‘**glam**(orous) + **amazon**’ “a glamorous woman”; *automagic* ‘**auto**(matic) + **magic**’ “magic results achieved through an automatic process”; *civilogue* ‘**civil** + (dia)**logue**’ “a civil discussion”

without insults and hostility”; *hectivity* ‘*hecti(c)* + (*a*)*ctivity*’ “frenzied and stressful activity”.

BG. *твиттервю* ‘*twitter* + (*in*)*terview*’ “an online interview via Twitter”; *драмедия* ‘*dram(a)* + (*co*)*medy*’ “a genre of dramatic works that combines elements of comedy and drama”; *социономика* ‘*socio(logy)* + (*econ*)*omics*’ “the study of social mood and its influence over social attitudes and actions”; *флотел* ‘*flo(ating)* + (*h*)*otel*’ “a floating hotel”; *ботел* ‘*bo(at)* + (*h*)*otel*’ “a hotel on a boat”. The verb *въществувам* – ‘*въщ(и)* lit. home + (*c*)*ъществувам*’ lit. exist – can be interpreted as a calque of the English *staycation* ‘*stay* + (*vo*)*cation*’ as it literally means staying at home rather than going out or travelling.

The example *nomophobia* “fear of being without your phone or unable to use it” is a special case as it combines four words “no-mobile-phone phobia”. In this case we observe two words which have preserved their entirety, *no* and *phobia*, and two which have been shortened, *mobile* and *phone*; they have preserved their first syllables but their last ones have been clipped. The technique of overlapping is also applied as *phone* and *phobia* share the syllable *pho-*. This could be interpreted as an instance of *univerbation*, the diachronic process by which a fixed collocation of words becomes a single word, in the way that *goodbye* evolved from “God be with you”.

From a quantitative point of view about two thirds of all the blends in the English database include shortening of one source word, whereas the other one third displays shortening of both source words. Less than one percent of the examples exhibit an overlap of the source words in the middle.

Distribution of blends by genres

If we need to classify the areas in which *blends* as a group of *neologisms* generally occur, the richest groups, according to our two databases, are:

- a. Technology and business;
- b. Education and science;
- c. Slang and informal language;
- d. Health care;
- e. Food and beverage

In group (a) Business and technology, we can include some new terms related to economics, bank system, trade, investments, etc.

- *skimpflation* “reducing the quality of a product while keeping the price the same” (skimping + inflation); *excuseflation* “raising prices and blaming it on inflation, even when inflation is not the main cause of the price increase” (excuse

+ inflation); *mockumentary*/мокументари “a film or television show made in the style of a documentary”¹⁸ (mock + documentary);

- *фаблет* (EN. *phablet*) “a smartphone having a screen which is intermediate in size between that of a typical smartphone and a tablet computer” (phone + tablet).

This group also comprises words related to the virtual world such as *netiquette* “the correct way or etiquette of using the internet”; *sponcon* “sponsored content posted by an influencer on social media made to look like an ordinary post but is actually an advertisement”. The noun *metaverse*, created in correlation to universe, refers in computing to a number of individual virtual environments and also, in cosmology, the hypothetical combination of all co-existing *universes*, motivated by the meaning of the prefix *meta*- “higher, beyond”.

Category (b) Education and science contains examples related to human knowledge about our environment, for instance: *travelogue* “a film, book, or illustrated lecture about the places visited by or experiences of a traveller” (travel + catalogue); *edutainment* “material, intended to be both educational and enjoyable” (education + entertainment).

Slang and informal language (group c) is the most numerous category but very few of those words become part of the standard language. Nowadays the internet shortens the time period of adoption of slang words and informal language. This group stands out with its diversity of word classes as it includes not only nouns but also adjectives and verbs.

- *cosplay* (verb, informal) “to dress up as a character from a film, book, or video game” (costume + play);

- *dumbphone* (noun, informal) “the opposite of smartphone” (dumb + telephone);

- *pictionary* “a fun game where players try to guess what other players are drawing” (picture + dictionary);

- *frenemy* (noun, slang) “a person with whom one is friendly despite a fundamental dislike or rivalry” (friend + enemy);

- *sheeple* (noun, derogatory) “people compared to sheep in being docile, foolish, or easily led” (sheep + people);

- *глупомер* (noun, informal) “a tool measuring stupidity” (глупост + измервателен уред).

Still prominent is the category (d) Health care due to COVID-19 although four years have passed since its outbreak. Usually when a word is used frequently

18. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mockumentary>

by many speakers and writers in a few years it enters the dictionary. However, in some extraordinary cases, such as COVID-19, a new term immediately becomes part of common daily vocabulary and in a shorter period of time than the normal practice it enters the dictionary. The word COVID-19, however, holds the record of having gone from coinage to dictionary entry; it happened in only 34 days. New words related to the pandemic are still coined to respond to the necessity for more vocabulary to describe the policy and research developments connected to COVID-19. Being essential to communication, these new words became part of the dictionary updates in the last two years.

- *infodemic* “an overabundance of unreliable information” (information + pandemic);
- *quarantini* “during quarantine a cocktail or alcoholic drink made at home” (quarantine + martini);
- *coronacation* “a prolonged period at home away from work, study, etc. due to the pandemic” (corona + vocation);
- *маскне* (EN. *maskne*) “acne and other rashes of the face caused by wearing a face mask” (mask + akne);
- *панденомика* (EN. *pandenomics*) “economics in pandemic times” (pandemics + economics).

The last category (e) is the most diverse in English. Names of drinks and food become familiar around the world through cooking shows and blogs, menus and recipes on the internet. But borrowings are not the only sources of neologisms, native new words also take part in this group.

- *fluffernutter* “a sandwich of white bread made with peanut butter and marshmallow crème” (marshmallow fluff + peanut butter);
- *hangry* “bad-tempered or irritable as a result of hunger” (hungry + angry);

As the sources of the two databases are the annual online updates of several English dictionaries in the last three years and the Dictionary of New Bulgarian Words (2021), we consider them representative, as well as the categories defined above. They illustrate the spheres in which new blends are created in English and Bulgarian.

Conclusion

In this analysis we have made an effort to highlight the word formative patterns of blending and the processes of adapting the newly borrowed words in Bulgarian. The research has demonstrated that most of the borrowed words are transliterated or transcribed and then adapted using the grammatical markers of the target language. The two databases show that the investigated blends are

mostly nominal, more specifically N + N combinations, which we relate to the necessity of naming new entities. The study has revealed how the two compared languages – English and Bulgarian – show similarities in the construction of blends. Both languages exhibit the same structural patterns (e.g., AD, ABD, ACD, AC, ABC, ACDB, etc.); the differences, however, originate in the more varied grammatical morphemes in Bulgarian.

The use of blends allows expressing many concepts in the shortest possible way, as this research shows they are mainly found in the fields of Technology and business; Education and science; Slang and informal language; Health care; Food and beverage. In this article we discuss only blends as representatives of neologisms, while clippings, abbreviations/acronyms and compounds are the focus of another study. Further research on all neologisms is indispensable for linguists, lexicographers and sociolinguists to acknowledge that new words are systematically accounted for and registered and to show how languages evolve, adapt, and sometimes decline.

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A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF FREQUENTLY USED IDIOMS IN ENGLISH AND ALBANIAN

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Abstract: Idioms constitute one of the most fascinating elements of a language, therefore, there is an extensive body of research concerning their use and function, particularly from a cross-linguistic perspective. The present study aims at providing a picture of frequently used idioms in English and Albanian, thus helping non-native speakers of the respective languages to understand them better and use them accurately in any communicative situation. It presents a contrastive analysis based on three types of equivalence, namely full equivalence, partial equivalence, and non-equivalence. The corpus of idioms used for analysis derives from the main dictionaries of idioms in both English and Albanian. Common European heritage, as well as the impact of English as the lingua franca of our days, accounts for a considerable number of idioms in both languages that display full (semantic and lexical) equivalence. There are also many frequently used idioms that display partial equivalence, most likely because of specific features of each of the languages with regard to their grammatical and lexical systems as well as the different cultural and social backgrounds. Consequently, both English and Albanian also make use of idioms that are not lexicalized in the respective languages precisely because of the different mindsets resulting from the impact of the said cultural, social, and linguistic factors.

Keywords: idioms, equivalence, cross-linguistic, English, Albanian

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Introduction

Idioms represent that element of a language that foreign speakers often find the most difficult part to master, and this occurs for various reasons, mainly because they go beyond the simple understanding of random words of a language and encompass a range of social and cultural factors. Therefore, a decent knowledge of idioms is not only a necessity, it is rather “*essential to a successful communication*” (Dixon, 2003, p. 1).

In English, according to Crystal (2008), the term idiom is used to refer to “*a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit*” (p. 236). In Albanian, according to Thomai (2002), idioms, commonly referred to as *phraseological units*, are phrases in which syntactic relations of their constituents are not as clear as in random phrases because they are already formed units like words, and that is how they enter the discourse. Jackendoff (1995) also argues that idioms are part of our mental lexicon just like words, but Glucksberg (2001), on the other hand, disagrees and claims that idioms do not behave like words because of “their nonlogical nature”. Combining several definitions of idioms by distinguished linguists, Everaert (2010) defines idioms as “*conventionalized linguistic expressions which can be decomposed into potentially meaningful components and exhibit co-occurrence restrictions that cannot be explained in terms of rule-governed morphosyntactic or semantic restrictions*” (p. 4). We can say that they are generally defined as expressions whose meaning is not that easy to discern as it does not often derive from the meaning of their constituent parts, consequently, they do not usually allow literal translation as it affects their meaning. Furthermore, according to Everaert (2010), they can only be realistically defined and exist in a language community. Therefore, they continuously pose a challenge for translators who are required to be updated in regard to their use in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

English and Albanian are two Indo-European languages that make an extensive use of a very high number of idioms, and they are an indispensable part of these languages. Both languages include a relatively high number of idioms in their dictionaries. *The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* presents about 5000 idioms (Siefring, 2004), whereas the *Cambridge International dictionary of Idioms* (2002) contains around 7000 idioms. It is estimated that today English has about 25000 idioms, and Clarke (2010) argues that at least 5500 idioms are in regular use. According to Thomai (1999), Albanian is estimated to have about 11000 idioms, even though this number may have increased in recent years mainly due to language contact.

There are idioms for all fields of life in both English and Albanian, and native speakers of the respective languages know them and, of course, use them in their everyday communication. Some of these idioms can be used formally and

others can be used informally, but to native speakers using them correctly in the right situations comes naturally. Foreign speakers, on the other hand, may sometimes struggle to understand them, therefore, mastering the idioms of the target language is necessary because it can help them to understand the native speakers and express themselves better, and also make their conversations more colorful. Furthermore, if they manage to get a solid grasp of idioms, they may sound like they have attained a native-like proficiency, and thus display a whole new level of confidence. According to Tali (2022), understanding figurative language as an element of the national culture that contributes to culture-specific and emotional communication with native speakers of a certain language is essential for intercultural communication in the 21st century.

Nevertheless, foreign speakers of English and Albanian, may not always struggle to understand the native speakers because there are many idioms that can be translated literally and used as semantic equivalents in the respective languages. But this is not an exclusivity of these two languages as many idioms have now become “international”, and they are used across languages.

Since English, as a major language, exercises a certain influence on smaller languages including Albanian, it is not uncommon to notice cases of literal translations of English idioms into Albanian. This has become increasingly common in recent years because of a more frequent contact between the Kosovan population and international organizations, whose official language is English, situated in the country since the end of the war in 1999, but the Internet as the “superpower” of information has certainly also played a significant role.

In English, idioms are mainly classified into three subgroups: pure idioms that are non-literal; semi-idioms that have one or more literal constituents; and literal idioms whose meaning can be easily determined from the meaning of their constituent parts (Strakšiene, 2009, as cited in Kovács, 2016). Based precisely on the degree of transparency, namely the meaning that can derive from the meaning of the constituent parts, Glucksberg (2001) classifies idioms into opaque and transparent.

In Albanian, on the other hand, idioms are classified based on several criteria such as construction (phrases and sentences), the degree of motivation (unmotivated and motivated), lexical-grammatical value (nominal, adjectival, verbal, adverbial); and there are also some other small groups such as, for example, interjectional phraseological units - *Punë e madhe!* (Big deal!), *T'u thaftë gjuha!* (May your tongue dry!), etc. (Thomai, 2002).

In terms of meaning, idioms are classified into two types: universal, whose meaning is common to many languages, and language or culture-specific, whose meaning is specific and because of linguistics and/or cultural restrictions, they cannot be easily understood by non-native speakers of that language (Aldahesh,

2013). Idioms are compared to a “mixed bag” that includes metaphors, metonymies, pairs of words, idioms with it, similes, sayings, phrasal verbs, grammatical idioms, and others (Kövecses, 2010, as cited in Kovács, 2016), and it is important to classify them in order to understand them properly.

According to Ionescu (2017), idioms have four main features: 1) Conventionality – their meaning derives from the context and it cannot be predicted; 2) Inflexibility – their syntactic constructions are limited; 3) Figuration – they involve figures of speech such as metaphors, metonymies, hyperboles; 4) Proverbiality – they describe repetitive situations that are of a particular interest.

In light of the abovementioned considerations, the present study addresses the following research questions:

- What types of cross-linguistic equivalence do English and Albanian idioms display?
- What factors influence the types of cross-linguistic equivalence displayed by English and Albanian idioms?

Methodology

This study presents a contrastive analysis of frequently used idioms in English and Albanian based on three types of cross-linguistic equivalence:

- a) full equivalence
- b) partial equivalence
- c) non-equivalence

Data collection

The corpus of idioms used for analysis derives mainly from two dictionaries of English idioms, *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* and *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* (4th edition), and the largest Albanian dictionary of idioms, *Fjalor Frazologjik i Gjuhës Shqipe (A Phraseological Dictionary of the Albanian Language)*, as well as some smaller dictionaries of idioms in both languages. Two online dictionaries, *Cambridge Dictionary* and *Collins English Dictionary*, have also served as very valuable sources with regard to updates on idioms and their use. The data comprises 404 frequently used English and Albanian idioms, of which 212 belong to English and 192 belong to Albanian.

Research procedure

The research procedure applied in this study was conducted in accordance with the following steps:

- Selecting idioms that are frequently used in both languages.

- Analyzing the said idioms in terms of cross-linguistic equivalence.
- Classifying them according to the type of cross-linguistic equivalence displayed.
- Emphasizing the differences and similarities between English and Albanian idioms in terms of the influences of social, cultural, and linguistic factors.

Analysis and Findings

Research findings indicate that English and Albanian idioms display three types of cross-linguistic equivalence, as presented below.

Full equivalence

The analysis of idiom dictionaries in English and Albanian have revealed that many of the frequently used idioms in both English and Albanian display full equivalence. This may be because of their shared characteristics as Indo-European languages, and their shared European heritage that accounts to a great extent to most of the similarities between the idioms in these languages. However, since the two languages are structurally different, word order as a specific feature differs in some of the idioms because, unlike English, Albanian, being a highly inflectional language, is more versatile in this regard. Therefore, minor discrepancies concerning mainly the word order are the result of the peculiarities of the grammatical systems of the respective languages. Khasanova et al. (2020) argue that some discrepancies are the result of the people's thinking process considering the fact that they belong to different nations and use different grammatical categories available in their languages.

Idioms that display full equivalence in English and Albanian concern different aspects of life.

According to Wierzbicka (2007), the human body is central to people's existence, and it is their reference point of orientation in the world even though she argues that categorization and conceptualization of body parts is different among different languages and cultures. Çakir (2016), on the other hand, argues that the relevance of body parts in certain languages depends on several factors such as geography, economy, and other factors. The examples below indicate the prevalence of English idioms and their Albanian equivalents that concern the body parts, and this similarity may be the result of their shared heritage, although there are variations, and the causes of variations are manifold as they include different social and cultural contexts that account for differences in the body parts or the domains used (Csábi, 2006).

The following English and Albanian body idioms display full equivalence:

(Be) on the tip of the tongue - (E ka) në majë të gjuhës (dikush); Bite your tongue - Kafsho gjuhën; Behind sb's back - (Ia punoi) pas shpine (diku); Clip your wings - Më preu krahët (dikush a diçka); Count them on the fingers of one hand - Numërohen me gishtat e dorës; Fall on deaf ears - Bie në veshë të shurdhër; Get out of hand - Më doli nga dora (diçka); Give sb a hand - Ia jap një dorë (diku); Have (someone's) blood on your hands - I ka (bërë) duart me gjak; (Have) a heart of gold - (Ka) zemër të artë (dikush); (Have) a thick skin - E ka lëkurën e trashë; My hands are tied - I kam duart e lidhura; Point the finger - E tregojnë me gisht (dikë); Two-faced - (Njeri) me dy fytyra/; Skin and bones - Kockë e lëkurë; Skin sb alive - E rrjep të gjallë; Stick your nose in - Fut hundët (hundën) (Gjevori, 1972); Wash your hands of something - Laj duart (nga diçka)

It is interesting to note that there are idioms that seemingly display full equivalence, but not in all their meanings, for example *Lay a hand on (someone/ something)* - *Vë dorë (mbi dikë, diçka)*. In English, this idiom has mainly a negative connotation because it means “to harm someone” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023) and, if used in plural (*Lay hands on*) “to seize or get possession of” (Collins, 2023), whereas in Albanian, in addition to the two negative meanings already explained in English, it also has a positive connotation because the main meaning of this idiom is “to put things in order, to help improve something” (Thomai, 1999).

Very few food idioms in English and Albanian display full equivalence:

A hard nut to crack - *Arrë e fortë (për t'u thyer)*; *Apple of discord* - *Mollë sherri*

Animal idioms are very popular in both English and Albanian, but even though these languages have a considerable number of animal idioms and their speakers seem to have very similar attitudes toward animals, only a few of them display full equivalence:

A barking dog never bites - *Qeni që leh (kurrë) nuk kafshon*; *Black sheep* - *Dele e zezë*; *Crocodile tears* - *Lot krokodili*; *Kill two birds with one stone* - *Me një gur vret dy zogj*; *Trojan horse* - *kali i Trojës*

Many English and Albanian idioms that convey actions also display full equivalence. Some of them are used informally either in English or Albanian, but that does not diminish their importance and their frequent use. Some of the following idioms have been presented in the dictionaries with the verbs in the past simple, and even though their use is flexible, we present them here in their original form as found in the dictionaries:

Break the ice - *Thyej akullin*; *Read between the lines* - *Lexoj në mes të rreshtave*; *Eat your words* - *E ha fjalën (dikush)*; *Fall on deaf ears* - *Bie në*

veshë të shurdhër; Follow in someone's footsteps - Ndjekë hapat e dikujt; Go off the rails - Del nga binarët; Hit the mark - I ra në shenjë; Kill time - Vret kohën; Leave a lot to be desired - Lë shumë për të dëshiruar; Leave no stone unturned - S'le gur pa lëvizur; Make a name for oneself - Bëri emër (dikush); Put (someone) on a pedestal - E vunë në pedestal; Play with fire - Luan me zjarrin (dikush); Roll up your sleeves - Përvesh mëngët; Spill blood - Derdh gjak; Strike while the iron is hot - E rreh hekurin sa është i nxehtë (dikush); Take off your hat to someone - I heq kapelën (dikujt); Tighten your belt - Shtrëngoi rripin (dikush)

Although not all English dictionaries of idioms include it, the idiom *Break (the) silence* – *Thyej heshtjen* is also very common in everyday conversations in both English and Albanian, but this idiom can be somewhat confusing in English. Thus, according to Spears (2007), there is a difference between *Break the silence* and *Break silence*, because merely the omission of the definite article *the* causes a change of meaning, namely, the first one means to make noise interrupting the silence, and the second one means to give information about a topic that was previously avoided.

Miscellanea:

Alpha and omega - Alfa dhe omega; A dead weight - Peshë e vdekur; Devil's advocate - Avokati i djallit; Green light - (Hap) dritën jeshile; Like father like son - Si i ati edhe i biri; Needle in a haystack - (Kërkon) gjilpërën në kashtë; Of the same mind - Të një mendjeje (Gjevori, 1972); Someone's/ something's days are numbered - I ka ditët të numëruara (dikush/diçka); To be broke - Është trokë; Walls have ears - Muret kanë veshë

Gjocaj (2008) argues that the conjunction “*si*” (“as/like”) in Albanian has become very productive in forming phraseological units of comparative character. Such units are known in English as similes. They are expressions which compare two things, include the words *as* or *like*, and make the language we use more colorful and powerful (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017). There are several similes in English and Albanian that display full equivalence, but in Albanian, they are mainly used informally:

As clear as crystal - I/e/të kthjellët si kristali; As cold as ice - I/e/të ftohtë si akulli; As smooth as silk - I/e/të butë si mëndafshi; As stubborn as a mule - Kokëfortë si mushkë; As sweet as honey - I/e/të ëmbël si mjalta; Like a headless chicken - Si pula pa kokë; Eat like a pig - Ha si derr; Eat like a bird - Ha si zog

A group of idioms that also display full equivalence in English and Albanian includes idioms with names of outstanding historical personalities and

mythological figures throughout the history of mankind, which are also present in many other Indo-European languages:

Achile's heel - Thembra e Akilit; Adam's apple - Molla e Adamit; (Be) more Catholic than the Pope - (Është) më katolik se Papa; Gordian knot - Një gordiane; Penelope's web - Pëlhura e Penelopes; Pandora's box - Kutia e Pandorës; The sword of Damocles - Shpata e Damokleut

English idioms that found their way into Albanian

There are some idioms that have become quite popular and frequently used in Albanian, but they cannot be found in the dictionaries of Albanian idioms because they are actually literal translations of English idioms. According to Gjocaj (2008), these expressions have entered the Albanian language as calques and the main reason is that they are considered “trendy”. The interesting thing is that they are used with the same semantic implication as in their original language, therefore full equivalence is in order. The use of these idioms is so widespread that they have become part of the vocabulary of both laymen and professionals in different fields of life:

A picture is worth 1000 words - Një fotografi vlen sa 1000 fjalë; At a crossroad - Në udhëkryq; Butterflies in the stomach - Fluturat në stomak; Father figure - Figurë atërore; It takes two to tango - Duhet dy (veta) për tango; Light at the end of the tunnel - Dritë në fund të tunelit; In seventh heaven - Në qiellin e shtatë; Over my dead body - Mbi trupin tim të vdekur; Throw the towel - Hedh peshqirin; White lie - Gënjeshtër e bardhë

Some of the English idioms that found their way into Albanian as calques are especially used in business and politics:

A domino effect - Efekti domino; Behind closed doors - Prapa dyerve të mbyllura; Big fish - Peshk i madh; Black Friday - E premtja e zezë; Below belt - (Goditje) nën brez; Have an ace up your sleeve - Kam asin nën mëngë; Hot potato - Patate e nxehtë; Money laundering - Shpërlarje parash; On the table - Në (mbi) tavolinë; Under the table - Nën tavolinë; Zero tolerance - Zero tolerancë

Partial equivalence

Geeraerts (2006) argues that the meaning we construct in and through language is not a separate and independent module of mind because it involves our knowledge of the world, and it reflects human overall experience, therefore it is experientially grounded. However, concerning idioms, meaning is not the only element worth researching, and although it is the most fascinating and at the same time confusing feature, it is quite closely linked to their structure, and one cannot study one aspect without considering the other. A considerable

number of idioms in English and Albanian used in this study display partial equivalence and this refers precisely to the differences in their compositional structure (lexical and syntactic) and mental imagery.

Lexical differences

Some frequently used idioms in English and Albanian show differences in the lexical items employed in forming them. In some cases, the different lexical item is a verb, or a noun, in some others, they share only a noun, a verb, or an adverb, but not the rest of the items that make up the idioms, and in still others, they share more than one lexical item.

Different nouns: *Apple of the eye* - **Drita** (light) *e syrit*; *A thorn in someone's side* - (*E ka*) *gjëmbë në sy* (eye); *Born with a silverspoon* - *Ka lindur me këmishë* (shirt); *Castles in the air/Spain* - *Kështjellë në rërë* (sand); *Change your tune* - *E ndërron këngën* (song) (informal in Albanian); *Feet of clay* - (*Me*) *këmbë (prej) balte* (mud); *Get your ducks in a row* - *Vë punët* (work) *në radhë* (Gjevari, 1972); *Hold your tongue* - *Mbaj gojën* (mouth); *Sell like hotcakes* - *Shitet si hallvë* (halwa); *Show your true colours* - *Tregon fytyrën* (face) *e vërtetë*; *The icing on the cake* - *Qershia* (cherry) *mbi tortë*; *The other side of the coin* - *Ana tjetër e medaljes* (medal); *Walk/tread on eggshells* - *Ecën (si) mbi vezë* (eggs) (*dikush*); *Up to your ears* - (*Jam*) *deri në fyt* (throat)

Different verbs: *Air your dirty laundry in public* - *Ia nxjerr* (reveal) *të palarat në shesh* (*dikujt*); *Burn the bridges* - *I preu* (cut) *urat*; *Feel at home* - **Rri** (stay) *si në shtëpinë tënde*; *Give me a hand* - *I shtrij* (*zgjat*) (extend) *dorën* (*dikujt*); *Live in the ivory tower* - (*Është*) **mbyllur** (closed) *në kullën e fildishtë*; *Lose sleep over (something)* - *Më ikën* (escapes) *gjumi (për diçka)*; *Packed (squashed) like sardines* - *U bëmë* (became) *sardele*; *Turn a blind eye* - *E bën* (make) *një sy të verbër*

Same nouns: *A wolf in sheep's clothing* - **Ujku** *me lëkurë qengji* (with a lamb's skin); *Out of sight, out of mind* - *Larg syve* (away from the eyes), *larg mendjes* - This idiom is used in many Indo-European languages and the only difference is the choice of the lexical items *mind* and *heart*, some languages, including Albanian, sometimes use *heart*, and some others use *mind*. The idiom was used as early as about 850 B.C. by Homer in his famous epic *the Odyssey* (Terban, 1996).

Same verbs: *Caught with your pants/trousers down* - (*E kapi, e zuri*) *me presh në dorë* (*dikë*) (with leeks in his/her hand); *Come out smelling like a rose* - **Dola** *i larë* (washed); *Have a bee in your bonnet* - **Ka** *mizën nën kësulë* (the fly under the cap); *Kill with kindness* - *Të vret me pambuk* (with cotton); *Know sb through and through* - *E njoh* (*dikë*) *si paranë e kuqe* (like red money)

Same adverbs: **Between** the rock and a hard blue sea - **Ndërmjet** dy zjarresh (between two fires); **When** it rains it pours - **Kur** vijnë të këqijat, hapjau derën (When the evil things come, open the door); **When** pigs fly - **Kur** të zbardhet penda e korbit (When the raven's feather turns white); **Where** there's smoke, there's fire - **Ku** ka zë, s'është pa gjë (Where there is voice, there is action); **Why** keep a dog and bark yourself? - **Pse** t'i djeg gishtat kur kam mashën? (Why burn my fingers when I have a poker)

There are some proverbs in English and Albanian that also display differences in the lexical items used to form them, e.g. *Actions speak louder than words* - *Veprat flasin më shumë se fjalët* (Actions speak more than words); *A friend in need is a friend indeed* - *Miku i mirë njihet në ditë të vështira* (A good friend is known in difficult days); *Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today* - *Punën e sotme mos e lër për nesër* (Don't put today's work off until tomorrow)

Totally different lexical implementation

People are not only biological entities, they rather have a cultural and social identity that is revealed by the languages they speak because they embody their cultural and social experience, and since these experiences vary from culture to culture, that affects the people's knowledge of the world (Geeraerts, 2006). Consequently, it affects the understanding of the meanings attached to idiomatic expressions used in different circumstances of everyday communication.

When speakers of Albanian hear an idiom in English, they often tend to guess its meaning by focusing on one or more constituents of that idiom that are also found in an idiom in their own language, or that are familiar to them (see the examples above). English speakers do the same. They all try to find common lexical items because they contribute to a better understanding of idiomatic expressions, but this can become a difficult feat when there is no lexical resemblance to facilitate the process. Hence, there is a group of idioms in English that have their semantic equivalents in Albanian, but they do not employ equivalent lexical items. You will find the (literal) translation of Albanian idioms in brackets in order to notice the lexical differences:

Add insult to injury - *I hedh benzinë zjarrit* (throw oil on the fire); *A cock and bull story* - *Përralla me mbret* (fairy tales with a king); *A match made in heaven* - *Gjeti tenxherja kapakun* (the pot found its lid); *A storm in a teacup* - *E bën mizën buall* (turn a fly into an ox); *Barking up the wrong tree* - *S'ka ç'i bën gomarit e i bie samarit* (he/she can't do anything to the donkey, so he/she strikes the saddle); *Beat around the bush* - *Ia sjell rrotull (dikujt)* (he/she talks in circles); *Bite the bullet* - *Shtrëngoja dhëmbët* (buckle my teeth); *Birds of a feather flock together* - *Më thuaj me kë rri, të të them kush je* (tell me who you spend time with, and I'll tell you who you are); *Bring sb down a peg or two* - *Ia ul bishtin (dikujt)* (lower sb's tail);

Can't hold a candle to - Nuk i vjen (nuk i afrohet) as te gishti i këmbës (he/she doesn't even come to sb's toe); Catch more flies with honey than with vinegar - Fjala e mirë e thyen gurin (a good word breaks the stone); Drop you like a hot potato - E hoqi qafe (dikë a diçka) (got rid of sb/sth); Fit as a fiddle - Shëndoshë si molla (healthy like an apple); Footloose and fancy-free - Ku rafsha, mos u vrafsha (may I be unharmed if (where) I fall); Give the devil his/her due - Armikun vraje, por hakun mos ia ha (kill the enemy, but don't take his/her credit); Give someone the cold shoulder - S'e bëj hesap (I don't count him); Hit the roof - I iku petlla (his /her pancake escaped); Jump on the bandwagon - E mori vala (the wave took him/her); Let sleeping dogs lie - Mos i fryej zjarrit (don't blow the fire); Let the cat out of the bag - E nxjerr në lëndinë (diçka) (reveal something); Miss the boat - I iku zogu nga dora (the bird escaped from his/her hands); Live in a dream world - (Sheh) ëndrra me sy hapur (sb dreams with open eyes); On the same wavelength - Një kokë kanë (they have one head); Out of the frying pan and into the fire - Iku nga shiu në breshër (escaped from rain to hail); Pot calling the cattle black - I keshni të kesh (informal) (the mocked one will mock you); Pull the wool over someone's eyes - Ia shiti sapunin për djathë (sold sb soap as cheese); Split hairs - Kërkon qimen në vezë (looks for hair on an egg); Spitting image - (Sikur) i ka prerë kokën (dikujt) (it's like he/she cut sb's head); Tar sb with the same brush - E fut në një thes (puts sb in one (same) sack); The apple does not fall far from the tree - Dardha pikë nën dardhë (the pear falls under the pear); The grass is greener on the other side of the fence - Pula e fqinjes i duket më e majme (the neighbour's chicken seems fatter); The last straw - U mbush kupa (the cup is full); Two peas in a pod - (Janë) motër e vëlla (they are like sister and brother); Wet behind the ears - I ka buzët me qumësht (his/her lips are with milk); What goes around comes around - Çfarë të mbjellësh, do të korrësh (you will reap what you sow); When in Rome do as the Romans do - Sipas vendit bën kuvendin (dikush)(act in accordance with the place); You can say that again - S'e luan topi (diçka) (the cannon cannot move it).

Syntactic differences

Ionescu (2017) argues that the most frequent syntactic pattern of idioms across languages is V+NP (Object). This pattern is also observed in a considerable number of frequently used English and Albanian idioms analyzed in this study, namely 64 out of 168 idioms that display full equivalence, 60 out of 164 idioms that display partial equivalence, and 25 out of 72 idioms that do not have equivalents in the respective languages, as can be seen in the presented examples. Nevertheless, a number of these frequently used idioms in both English and Albanian also demonstrate significant differences in their syntactic

structure. They concern mainly the additional constituents, even though a syntactic analysis of English and Albanian idioms can be quite challenging because of the discrepancy in the structure of idiomatic counterparts in the respective languages, and also because of the broad spectrum of expressions that are labeled as idioms in both languages. Therefore, some idioms are analyzed at the phrase level, while others are analyzed at the clause level. Since the above-mentioned differences in syntactic structure are more noticeable in idioms that display partial equivalence, we have selected 16 examples that illustrate them most effectively: *Be all ears* - (*Jam gjithë (tërë) sy e veshë*) - in English we have the pattern V+NP, whereas in its Albanian counterpart, we have the coordination *gjithë sy e veshë* (all eyes and ears) because of the additional constituent *sy* (eyes); *Blood is thicker than water* - *Gjaku ujë nuk bahet* (Gjevari, 1972) – both idioms are independent clauses, but in the English version the structure is S-P-SC, whereas its Albanian counterpart has the following structure S-P-O (Blood doesn't become water); *Hand over the reigns* - *I lë në dorë (dikujt)* – in the English idiom we have the syntactic pattern V+NP because of the additional noun constituent – the object *reigns* which in Albanian is implied rather than stated; *In the blink of an eye* - *Sa hap e mbyll sytë* - the verb *blink* used in the English version is translated into Albanian by using two verbs *hap* (open) and *mbyll* (close) and also the noun *sytë* (eyes), because only in this combination it becomes the semantic equivalent of *blink*; *On pins and needles* - *Rri (si) mbi gjilpëra* – the English idiom involves the coordination of two nouns *pins* and *needles* whose meaning in Albanian is *gjilpëra*, but the Albanian idiom also has an additional constituent that is the verb *rri* (stay), whereas in the English version the verb is absent; *Once in a blue moon* – *Një herë në hënë* – in English, we have one additional constituent, the adjective *blue* that modifies the noun *moon* and it is absent in its Albanian counterpart; *Open old wounds* - *I hap plagën (dikujt)* – in English we have one additional constituent, namely the adjective *old* that modifies the noun, whereas in the Albanian counterpart the noun is used in the singular number; *Stab someone in the back* - *I ngul thikën pas shpine* – the Albanian idiom contains the noun constituent *thikën* (the knife) that the English equivalent lacks because the verb *stab* itself implies the action and the instrument used to perform the action, and its pattern is V+X+PP (Bruening, 2019).

In this regard, it is also of great importance to note that the notion of syntactic *frozenness* (Fraser, 1970), or *fixedness* as Langlotz (2006) calls it, is generally acknowledged by researchers as one of the main features of idiomaticity, and even though they are reluctant to admit it, there are idioms that do not adhere to this concept, especially in Albanian.

Differences in the mental imagery

Some English and Albanian idioms display certain differences in the mental images associated with them. The mental image can elicit an element from the same lexical domain or from a different domain. Examples of English and Albanian idioms that elicit images from the same domain:

– Body images: *Hold your tongue* - *Mbaj gojën*

– Animal images: *Have a bee in your bonnet* - *Ka mizën nën kësulë*; *When pigs fly* - *Kur të zbardhet penda e korbit*

– Food images: *The icing on the cake* - *Qershia mbi tortë*; *Walk/tread on eggshells* - *Ecën (si) mbi vezë (dikush)*; *The apple does not fall far from the tree* - *Dardha pikë nën dardhë*

– Miscellaneous: *Feet of clay* - *Këmbë (prej) balte*; *The other side of the coin* - *Ana tjetër e medaljes*; *Change your tune* - *E ndërron këngën*

Examples of English and Albanian idioms that elicit images from different domains: *A storm in a teacup* - *E bën mizën buall*; *Fit as a fiddle* - *Shëndoshë si molla*; *Jump on the bandwagon* - *E mori vala*; *It's raining cats and dogs* - *Po bie shi me gjyma*; *Miss the boat* - *I iku zogu nga dora*

Non-equivalence

Idiomatic non-equivalence may occur because the concept conveyed by an idiom in one language is not lexicalized in another language (Negro Alosque, 2011). In spite of their common European heritage, English and Albanian idioms display differences that are culturally rooted, therefore both languages use idioms that do not have equivalents in the respective languages. According to Smirkou (2021), this phenomenon results from the impact of a range of cultural factors such as customs, beliefs, history, religion, etc., and analyses of idioms or phraseological units reveal that they tend to be culture-bound or culture-specific (Szczeszunowicz, 2012; Kovács, 2016). But Ionescu (2017) emphasizes they are not only bound by culture, but also by social context, within a pragmatic framework of human interaction, whereas Casadei (2020) also adds the linguistic factors as an important piece of the puzzle.

There are some frequently used idioms in English and Albanian that display non-equivalence, and of course the number is higher in English because of the higher number of idioms in this language. The following examples indicate frequently used idioms in English that do not have equivalents in Albanian:

Body parts: *Break a leg*; *Pull someone's leg*; *We see eye to eye*; *Vote with your feet*

Animals: *Monkey suit*; *The birds and the bees*; *The elephant in the room*

Food: *A piece of cake; Cut the cheese; Eat the humble pie; Have a bun in the oven*

Things: *A penny saved is a penny earned; Cook the book; It's not rocket science*

Miscellaneous: *Face the music; Fish for a compliment; Off the record; Take a rain check; Turn king's/queen's evidence; The whole nine yards; Mr. & Mrs. Right; Wedding jitters*

There are also some idioms that are commonly used in American English such as *The big apple; The almighty dollar; Rob Peter to pay Paul; A shotgun wedding* (Spears, 2000), then *Take the fifth (amendment)* (Spears, 2007), also *Plain Jane* (Gillet, 2012), that do not have equivalent counterparts in Albanian. The same applies to some expressions that Whitmell (2015) refers to as business idioms, but they are not included in the large dictionaries of English idioms even though she argues that they are a significant part of the business English vocabulary and very frequently used in spoken English, e.g. *Double-dip recession; Credit crunch; Fiscal cliff; Funny money; Market jitters; Ring-fencing; Robin Hood tax*

Some of the most popular idioms in English were coined, or at least introduced in English by the greatest playwright of all time, William Shakespeare, and some of them also do not have equivalents in Albanian, e.g.

A blessing in disguise; A penny for your thought; Back to the drawing board; Give the benefit of the doubt; Green-eyed monster; Ignorance is bliss; I will wear my heart upon a sleeve; Pound of flesh; Salad days; Steal someone's thunder; The world's your oyster

Compared to English, Albanian is a relatively small language, however, the following examples indicate some frequently used idioms in Albanian that do not have equivalents in English. For the sake of clarity, we have provided their literal translation as well as their meaning.

Body parts: *S'ka sy e faqe (dikush)* - (Sb) doesn't have eyes and cheeks - a person who cannot go out and face people or ask for favors because he/she has done something wrong and disgraceful; *Vë duart (dorën) në zjarr (për dikë)* - Put hands (hand) in the fire (for sb) - you trust someone completely; you can vouch for him/her.

Body parts and animals: *(U bëmë) si këmbët e dhisë* - (We became) like the goat's legs - people don't respect seniority anymore, nobody knows who is the oldest and who is the youngest, they don't appreciate the seniors; *Dhi e zgjebosur, bishtin përpetjetë* - a scabby goat with its tail up - a worthless person who is also very conceited and arrogant.

Animals: *E shtien miza e s'e nxjerr bualli* - A fly puts something somewhere and a buffalo cannot get it out - when you start something casually, without thinking things through, and then in spite of hard work, you fail to make it work; *Nxjerr dhjamë nga pleshti (dikush)* - (Sb) gets fat from a flea - gets benefits from something even when it seems impossible; *Prit gomar të mbijë bar!* - Donkey, wait till the grass grows! - when you wait for something in vain, when something is uncertain and it will probably never happen; *Ra prej kalit në gomar (dikush)* - Sb fell off a horse onto a donkey - sb was given a lower rank, also sb married beneath him/her; *Si qeni i lëshuar nga zingjiri* - Like a dog off its leash - incontrollable, furious, hungry for something; *(Shkoi) si qeni në vreshtë (dikush)* - Sb went (died) like a dog in the vineyard - sb was killed/ hurt accidentally, without any reason; *Thes me pleshta* - A sack of fleas - a bunch of people who are unsuitable for a job; also something completely impossible.

Food: *E prish dasmën për një limon (dikush)* - (Sb) spoils the wedding for a lemon - destroys something great or important for something trivial, does not finish the work that is almost finished; *I bie bukës me shkelm* - Kicks the bread - to be ungrateful, to repay good with evil; *Peshku në det, tigani në zjarr* - The fish in the sea, the frying pan on the stove - work that is far from being finished, yet someone wants to prematurely enjoy its fruit; *Qumësht dallëndysheje* - swallow's milk - very rare food, extremely difficult to find; *S'është në tokë të bukës (dikush)* - (Sb) is not in the field of bread - sb has not started to work and earn his/her living yet; *Shto ujë e shto miell (dikush)* - Add water and add flour - to prolong something indefinitely by adding ingredients and exceeding the dimensions.

Miscellaneous: *Më çoi nëna të laj gojën* - My mother sent me to wash my mouth - to invite sb to an event just for appearances' sake; *Ca të nënës e ca të njerkës* - Some (are) of the mother and some of the stepmother - they are not treated equally, one is unjustly treated better than the other, one is loved more than the other; *E di Gjoni çfarë ka thesi* - Only John knows what's in the sack - every person knows his/her own worries, also only an insider knows the real situation; *E hedh gurin larg (dikush)* - Sb throws a stone far away - sb is very powerful and influential and can achieve what others cannot, also sb is aiming at something much higher than expressed by words; *E mban drejt timonin* - (Sb) keeps the steering wheel straight - sb has impeccable behavior and a strong sense of justice; *E mprehu lapsin (dikush)* - (Sb) sharpened the pencil - got ready to criticize someone and waited for them to make a mistake; *I bie po atij teli* - (Sb) hits the same string - repeats the same thing all over again, also acts in the same way; *Iu shua pragu (dikujt)* - Sb's threshold died out - all his/her family members died, and he/she is alone in the world; *S'kam bërë krushqi (me dikë)* - They are not my in-laws - I am not obliged to spend time with them and fulfill their requests or do them favors.

All this indicates that the description given to the term *idiom* by most of the dictionaries is inappropriate because they only suggest that an idiom consists of at least two words as its key feature, whereas its understanding is often taken for granted or simply implied (Szpila, 2007). However, research findings reveal that they are not simply “dead” metaphors with randomly determined meanings because, as seen from the examples above, their meanings stem from the speakers’ knowledge of conceptual metaphors (Gibbs & O’ Brien, 1990). Furthermore, according to Ionescu (2017), the main problem concerning the concept of equivalence in idiom analysis originates from the fact that most of the lexical terms that are used to form idioms are language specific, and that the meaning of idioms is affected by historic, cultural, and cognitive contexts that differ from one language community to another.

Conclusions

A contrastive analysis of English and Albanian idioms is not a piece of cake precisely because of the differences of approach to their defining and classifying by researchers in the respective languages. English is more flexible when it comes to all phraseological expressions it includes within the umbrella of the concept called “idiom”, whereas in Albanian, idioms are treated as internal language constructions that express the national specificity, and as such, they may be confusing to non-native speakers, therefore, they need to be translated either with an equivalent expression in the target language, or with an adequate expression that fulfills their stylistic function.

Nevertheless, this study indicates that in spite of the differences that derive from the impact of a range of factors, mainly social, cultural, and linguistic ones, most of the frequently used idioms in English and Albanian display full equivalence, furthermore, a considerable number of English idioms have found their way into Albanian as calques, thus contributing towards the language enrichment. It also shows that a lot of frequently used idioms in English and Albanian display partial equivalence, so they share the meaning, but not their compositional structure, and this refers to the differences in the lexical items employed in forming the idioms, and certain differences in syntactic patterns even though examples provided above in both languages also show similarities in this regard. Some frequently used idioms in English and Albanian that display partial equivalence also indicate differences with regard to the mental images associated with them and the domains they are drawn from.

Idioms are a reflection of the people’s mindsets created through their personal experience influenced by a range of factors, therefore, there is a group of frequently used idioms in English and Albanian that display non-equivalence in terms of both meaning and form as they do not have equivalents in the respective languages. Consequently, they must be translated adequately in order

to be comprehended by non-native speakers, and not be seen as obstacles to effective communication.

Nowadays, when the world has literally become *one* in terms of communication, and people are interacting more than ever, it is imperative that language barriers are removed, and this, among others, also implies the mastering of idioms, as a very specific element of a language, because disregarding them may cause misunderstandings and turn a completely random communicative situation into a disagreeable experience. Therefore, researchers need to work towards eradicating the said misunderstandings by orienting further research on idioms toward compilation of bilingual dictionaries of idioms because that would undoubtedly instigate a better understanding of idioms by non-native speakers, and thus broaden their horizons regarding language and its complexity.

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QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF CREATING INTERLINGUAL PRE-RECORDED SUBTITLES FOR THE DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING (SDH): THE LOT MODEL

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Abstract: *There is a lack of quality assessment models designed specifically for interlingual pre-recorded subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH), as existing models focus primarily on live subtitling and intralingual respeaking, highlighting the need to address the diverse linguistic, visual, and technical quality expectations of SDH viewers. This study aims to develop and validate a quality assessment model explicitly tailored for interlingual pre-recorded SDH by proposing the Linguistic, Orthotypographic, and Technical (LOT) model and empirically testing it against established assessment frameworks using a sample of 900 Arabic-English subtitles across diverse genres through quantitative comparative analysis examining intercoder reliability, average quality scores, and correlations between models. The findings demonstrate that the specialized LOT model designed for pre-recorded SDH yields markedly higher intercoder reliability and average quality scores compared to general subtitle assessment models, suggesting strong alignment with the multidimensional quality needs of the target SDH audience; the development and validation of this model represents a pivotal advancement toward comprehensive quality evaluation tailored to interlingual pre-recorded SDH, where adoption in professional subtitling and training practices may enhance accessibility, inclusion, and overall viewing experience for deaf and hard-of-hearing media consumers.*

Keywords: *translator training, subtitles for the deaf/hard-of-hearing (SDH), quality assessment model, interlingual pre-recorded subtitling, accessibility*

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Introduction¹

Developing interlingual pre-recorded subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) demands intricate expertise, a profound comprehension of both source and target languages, and sensitivity to the distinct requirements and preferences of deaf and hard of hearing audiences. SDH subtitling aspires to offer a textual depiction of the audio content in a video, enabling individuals with hearing impairments to access information on par with their hearing counterparts.

SDH subtitling training encompasses various theoretical frameworks and methodologies, such as project-based and task-based approaches. Project-based theories concentrate on the overarching objectives of the subtitling task, while task-based theories zero in on the tasks and subtasks involved in generating SDH subtitles. Furthermore, the socioconstructivist approach, which accentuates the influence of social interactions and collective experiences on the subtitling process, may also be integrated into the training.

Upon completion of training, SDH subtitlers are entrusted with the responsibility of crafting precise and effective subtitles that accurately encapsulate the meaning of the source audio. This necessitates a profound understanding of source and target languages and cognizance of the unique challenges and considerations intrinsic to subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). Furthermore, developing a rigorous quality assessment model is crucial for evaluating and refining the subtitling process to guarantee the quality of SDH subtitles. Therefore, this research proposes and empirically evaluates a new quality assessment model tailored for creating interlingual pre-recorded SDH subtitles.

Literature review

The Multimodal Nature of Interlingual SDH Subtitling

There are various methods applied in Audio-visual translation (AVT), which involves converting multimodal and multimedia materials from one language and culture to another (Pérez-González, 2009). Among the numerous AVT modes, subtitling is the most widespread due to its cost-effectiveness and efficiency (Díaz-Cintas, 2013). It entails replicating the original dialogue, sounds, and text on the screen as written text that conveys a target language version of the source speech (Pérez-González, 2014).

Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) categorized subtitles based on their linguistic dimension into intralingual, interlingual, and bilingual. Intralingual SDH subtitles provide viewers with written text that represents the audio content

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of the AV materials. While intralingual subtitles typically involve same-language transcription, intralingual SDH subtitles specifically provide viewers with written text that represents both the audio content and non-verbal audio information of the AV materials. Interlingual subtitling involves translating the source language into a target language, while bilingual subtitles display text in multiple languages. Interlingual SDH subtitling combines these challenges, requiring not only translation between languages but also the representation of auditory cues for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers. This study will focus on interlingual subtitling, as it represents a significant aspect of the subtitling field and is widely used by translation and streaming corporations, amateurs, and academics.

The semiotic texture of audio-visual texts has attracted academic interest with scholars like Taylor (2003, 2004, 2013, 2016), Pettit (2004), Chuang (2006), Pérez-González (2009, 2014, 2019), and Menezes (2022) theorizing subtitling within multimodality frameworks. Subtitling requires understanding the verbal and nonverbal information that coexists within the visual and acoustic communication channels (Bolaños-García-Escribano, 2020). This is particularly crucial in SDH, where subtitlers must not only translate dialogue but also convey non-verbal auditory information visually. Subtitling is not merely a combination of these channels and their signifying codes; its relevance stems from the interaction and cohesion of all the acoustic and visual elements (Sokoli, 2005).

Chaume (2001, 2004) lists eleven signifying codes with implications in AVT, divided between the acoustic and visual channels. The structure of subtitles and the meanings of all their components result in a semantic architecture that the viewer deconstructs to comprehend the subtitle's meaning. For SDH viewers, this deconstruction process is even more complex, as they must interpret additional visual cues that represent auditory information. Subtitlers and researchers are interested in deciphering the purpose and function of each code and the potential influence of all linguistic and non-linguistic signs on the translation process (Chaume, 2016). Díaz-Cintas (2019) argues that the audio-visual text's semiotic texture is defined by the interaction of the acoustic and visual channels and the verbal and non-verbal dimensions of communication.

A subtitler creating SDH must have a strong understanding of both audio and visual channels to accurately convey not only the content displayed on the screen but also the auditory information that deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers cannot access directly. This requires a specialized skill set beyond that of traditional subtitling. Furthermore, this study's focus on the didactic value of creating interlingual SDH using subtitling and training fields of view can also enhance the awareness of the significance of SDH creation among subtitlers and academics.

In conclusion, while subtitling plays a crucial role in AVT, with interlingual subtitling being a significant aspect, interlingual SDH subtitling presents unique challenges and requirements. Understanding the multimodality of subtitling, including the interaction of various signifying codes, is essential for professionals and researchers, particularly in the context of SDH where additional visual representations of auditory information are necessary. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion and provide valuable insights into subtitling practice by focusing on the specific demands and considerations of interlingual SDH.

Pedagogical Approaches for Didactic SDH Creation

Subtitle creation has emerged as a significant area of research in recent years, driven by technological advancements and the rise of sophisticated subtitling tools like OOONA. Talaván (2010) identifies two primary uses of subtitles: as support for individuals who struggle to understand audio content, such as the deaf and hard of hearing or non-native speakers, and as a standalone task involving transcription, translation, and formatting of text for on-screen display. Subtitlers convey meaning through verbal-linguistic and semiotic channels (Chaume, 2004) while managing spatial and temporal constraints (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014). In addition, they must be culturally competent (Orrego-Carmona et al., 2018) and technologically proficient, as subtitles are generated by using specialized software.

When introducing subtitling tasks to learners, they must follow specific guidelines regarding length, duration, synchrony, condensation, and segmentation (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007). These guidelines are standard for all types of subtitling and form the foundation of this translation practice. While the application of these guidelines may be adjusted based on the learners’ proficiency and familiarity with the AVT task, the core principles remain consistent across various subtitling contexts. Table 1 outlines these basic guidelines, which are suitable for beginners and professionals alike, though they can be adapted and reinforced as needed for specific projects or audiences.

Table 1. *Basic guidelines for subtitle creation*

GUIDELINE	DESCRIPTION
Length	Subtitles should not contain lengthy lines as they can be challenging to read. It is preferable to segment long lines into two shorter ones. Subtitle editors often specify a maximum number of characters per line that should be followed. Subtitles should consist of a single or double line only.
Duration	Subtitles should be on screen for at least one to two seconds and a maximum of six seconds per subtitle. Learners should adhere to the indicated maximum character per second (cps) in the subtitle editor.

GUIDELINE	DESCRIPTION
Synchrony	Subtitles must be synchronized with the corresponding dialogue and should never remain on screen during a change in shot.
Condensation	When necessary, dialogue information should be condensed by rephrasing or using synonyms to accommodate subtitle length and duration.
Segmentation	Dividing long lines into two should not impair or slow the reading process. Learners should avoid breaking crucial syntactic units.

Didactic SDH shares many pedagogical features with standard didactic subtitling but requires additional guidelines to accommodate unique content, such as character identification, sound effects, paralinguistic information, and music (Talaván, 2020). These guidelines ensure that SDH effectively supports vocabulary development, writing skills, and listening comprehension for L2-L2 users. Table 2 illustrates the SDH-specific guidelines proposed by Talaván (2020).

Table 2. *SDH-specific guidelines proposed by Talaván (2020)*

SDH GUIDELINES	DESCRIPTION
Character identification	When multiple characters speak in the same subtitle, the reader must be informed which one is speaking. In SDH, character identification can be indicated using dashes, colors, or name tags. Dashes are the most convenient option as they do not require technical adjustments in the subtitle editor.
Sound effects	It is preferable to nominalize sound effects and describe them within brackets whenever possible. Only the sound, not the listener's experience, should be described. Sound effects are typically shown at the top right corner of the screen, but they can also appear as a standalone subtitle or embedded inside a subtitle on one of the two lines.
Paralinguistic information	Information on mood, tone of voice, and pitch should be provided inside brackets, in capital letters, preferably nominalized, and in front of the appropriate text impacted by the described feature.
Music	Music that is relevant to the plot should be included in the subtitles. The description of the type of music follows the guidelines indicated for sound effects (top right corner, if possible). If the subtitles include song lyrics or need to indicate that a character is singing, a musical note or a hashtag (#) should be added at the beginning and end of each subtitle that includes the song.

In addition to discussing the creation of interlingual SDH, it is essential to understand the workflow and unique role of SDH subtitlers. These professionals undergo specialized training and use software designed for SDH subtitle creation, distinguishing them from traditional subtitlers.

The SDH Subtitler

SDH subtitling demands a different approach from traditional subtitling, focusing on conveying non-verbal and peculiar sounds to viewers with restricted or no access to the auditory channel. Therefore, the training of SDH subtitlers should encompass sociolinguistic requirements and standard subtitling skills. Professionals with academic training in SDH have an advantage in the industry. However, many SDH subtitlers come from subtitling backgrounds without translation training (Zárate, 2021), necessitating in-house or professional SDH courses.

SDH subtitlers may use cloud-based subtitling suites provided by companies like Netflix or purchase specialized subtitling software such as EZTitles, Lemony Subtitler, Wincaps Q4, Spot Software, CaptionHub, or OONA. The growth of SDH over the past two decades highlights the need for qualified and certified experts in this field. It is essential that SDH training be integrated with broader theories of translator training to ensure a comprehensive understanding of translators' professional development, ultimately producing competent professionals in subtitling for DHH.

SDH Training

Over the past three decades, translator training theories have become increasingly applicable and adaptable to the audio-visual translation (AVT) field, with notable contributions from Kiraly (1995, 2000), Pym (2009), and Kelly (2014). A specific focus on SDH training emerged nearly two decades ago (see Neves, 2008b; Remael and Van der Veer, 2006; Romero-Fresco, 2012; Talaván, 2019). The researcher posits that project-based (Vienne, 1994), task-based (González-Davies, 2004) and socioconstructivist (Király, 2000) approaches are the most effective for interlingual SDH training due to their inherent characteristics and relevance to AVT didactics. As a result, exposing learners to semi-real and quasi-professional tasks and projects based on learning outcomes can help them acquire the necessary skills for translating or creating AV content (Bolaños-García-Escribano, 2020).

Project-based learning fosters long-term, multidisciplinary, student-centered learning through technology, driving questions, group work, in-depth investigation, feedback, decision-making, and presentations (Li et al., 2015). González-Davies (2004, p. 28) defines *projects* in the translation classroom as “multicompetence assignments that enable students to engage in pedagogic and

professional activities and tasks and work together towards an end product”. Accordingly, Kirlay (2000) asserts that project-based learning for translation requires the collaborative execution of translation tasks under the guidance of a professional translator. By adopting a holistic view of SDH creation, interlingual SDH training can be achieved by preparing suitable technical tools, providing customized guidelines, and promoting teamwork in a conducive learning environment.

Task-based learning for interlingual SDH (Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing) creation should include essential competencies, specific objectives, expected outcomes, procedures assigned to trainees, grading scales, and a bibliography (González-Davies, 2017). This approach transforms the classroom into a forum for guided social and cultural experiences that replicate real-world translation industry projects. While emphasizing self-learning and teamwork (Colina & Venuti, 2016), it is most effective when trainees feel in control of their learning process. Furthermore, interlingual SDH creation is well-suited for developing activities that can serve as both training exercises and services for specific groups. Carefully planned activities, including practical action research projects with SDH trainees, can benefit all parties involved (Neves, 2008b).

Neves (2008b), building on Gambier (2003), contends that SDH training should aim to develop the full range of competencies required of screen translators, who must master all the competencies expected of any translator. According to Neves (2008a), subtitlers working on SDH must be aware of several aspects to provide an effective accessibility service. These include a deep understanding of the target audience’s profile and needs, knowledge of filmic composition and the role of sound, comprehension of redundancy, relevance, adequacy, cohesion, and coherence, and the ability to make difficult choices based on sense and sensibility.

Subtitling Quality Assessments

Quality assessment in AVT, particularly subtitling, has gained significant attention in academic and industrial contexts due to the importance of delivering satisfactory final output to viewers. Consequently, the study of quality must be integrated into AVT training. However, Pedersen (2017, p. 210) points out, “quality in the translated output itself is often kept purposefully ambiguous – especially for subtitling”. Furthermore, different perspectives influence how quality is perceived, ranging from translation management’s focus on processes and workflows to academics’ concerns about equivalence and language use.

Traditional research on translation quality has primarily focused on the linguistic dimension of translating texts, often neglecting the paratextual and paralinguistic aspects found in AVT (Kuo, 2020). House (2014, p. 241) argues that “any statement about the quality of a translation implies a conception of

the nature and goals of translation; in other words, it presupposes a theory of translation". Given its multimodal nature, subtitling challenges conventional approaches to assessing translation quality, predominantly concentrating on the linguistic dimension. Consequently, interlingual SDH subtitling, as a multisemiotic process, complicates the application of quality assessment models like House's (1977, 2014).

One fundamental issue with traditional translation quality assessment models in subtitling is their inability to adapt to the medium's specific conditions. For example, these models often treat paraphrases and omissions as errors, whereas, in subtitling, they are necessary and effective strategies for condensation (Pedersen, 2017). Furthermore, Bolaños-García-Escribano (2020) adds that generalist quality models do not acknowledge the impact of synchronization between utterances and soundtrack or the interconnectedness between text and image. In response, researchers have developed specific models to evaluate subtitled products, such as the NER (Number, Edition, and Recognition) model (Romero-Fresco & Pérez, 2015), the NTR model (Romero-Fresco & Pöchhacker, 2017), and the FAR model (Pedersen, 2017). However, these models still need to address the process of creating subtitles and consider factors beyond linguistic aspects, especially for SDH.

The NER and NTR models were designed to assess the quality of intralingual and interlingual respelling, incorporating recognition and edition errors to account for technical and linguistic dimensions. The FAR model, meanwhile, is an attempt to categorize pre-recorded interlingual subtitling errors based on functional equivalence, acceptability, and readability. Despite its usefulness, Pedersen (2017) acknowledges that the FAR model is not specifically tailored for assessing the quality of SDH. The field still requires more advanced models to address SDH interlingual subtitling's unique aspects and effectively assess students' coursework. These models should consider the final subtitled product and the subtitle creation process.

Methods

Experimental design

A quantitative comparative analysis was conducted by applying the LOT (Linguistic, Orthotypographic, and Technical) model and three established assessment models. Expert raters scored a sample of 900 Arabic-English interlingual subtitles across the four models. Intercoder reliability, average quality scores, and model correlations were examined to evaluate the LOT model's efficacy and suitability for quality assessment of pre-recorded SDH. This between-subjects experimental design enabled direct comparisons to

determine if the LOT model designed explicitly for pre-recorded interlingual SDH would outperform general models not specialized for this context.

Data collection

Stratified random sampling was utilized to select a diverse corpus of subtitles across three genres intended to represent a spectrum of linguistic styles. The colloquial Arabic dialogues in the TV series “AlRawabi School for Girls” contain informal vocabulary and dialectical variations. The movie “Sand Storm” purposefully includes regional Arabic dialects in its script. Finally, the documentary “The Square” features sophisticated formal Arabic vocabulary. This sampling approach enabled testing of the quality assessment models across diverse linguistic factors that can impact interlingual subtitling quality. The sampled subtitles amounted to 7-8 hours of total content, providing sufficient data points for quantitative analysis.

Assessment models

Four evidence-based models were leveraged for comparative analysis:

- LOT: Developed in this study for interlingual pre-recorded SDH
 - NER: Designed for live intralingual/interlingual subtitles (Romero-Fresco & Pérez, 2015)
 - NTR: Designed for live interlingual subtitles (Romero-Fresco & Pöchhacker, 2017)
 - FAR: Developed for general interlingual subtitles (Pedersen, 2017)
- The LOT model incorporated linguistic, orthotypographic, and technical parameters tailored to pre-recorded SDH.

Raters

Two bilingual subject matter experts with specialized background in Arabic, English, and SDH subtitling were recruited as raters. These experts evaluated all 900 subtitles across each model. Using two raters helped control individual bias and subjectivity. Intercoder reliability analysis further examined consistency between raters, providing a measure of standardized judgment and agreement on the quality scoring. Raters underwent training on applying each model to improve accuracy and calibrate their scoring approaches.

Analysis

Interrater reliability was examined per model using Cohen’s kappa statistic. Subtitle quality scores were compared between models using descriptive statistics. Correlation matrix visualizations revealed scoring patterns. The

analysis focused on evaluating LOT model efficacy versus the three established models.

Based on the LOT model's specific design for interlingual pre-recorded SDH, we hypothesized that:

1. The LOT model would demonstrate higher interrater reliability compared to the NER, NTR, and FAR models.
2. The LOT model would yield higher average quality scores for the SDH subtitles compared to the other models.
3. There would be a moderate positive correlation between the LOT model scores and those of the other models, reflecting some shared quality assessment principles.

We expected the LOT model to outperform the other models in assessing pre-recorded interlingual SDH due to its tailored approach incorporating linguistic, orthotypographic, and technical parameters specific to SDH. The NER and NTR models, being designed for live subtitling, were expected to be less effective for pre-recorded content. The FAR model, while suitable for interlingual subtitling, was anticipated to lack some of the specialized criteria necessary for comprehensive SDH quality assessment.

Analysis

Although there are three generalized models for assessing subtitling quality – the NER model (Romero-Fresco & Pérez, 2015), the NTR model (Romero-Fresco & Pöschhacker, 2017), and the FAR model (Pedersen, 2017) – none are explicitly designed for pre-recorded interlingual SDH. The NER and NTR models focus on intralingual and interlingual respeaking (live subtitling), while the FAR model offers a general approach to evaluating interlingual subtitling quality. Since these models primarily rely on error rate analysis, a specialized model for pre-recorded interlingual SDH creation is needed. The researcher proposes the LOT model, developed by using previous models, empirical data, industry standards, and viewer feedback, to provide SDH training assessors with a localized and customizable model incorporating general norms from guidelines, commissioner specifications, and viewer experiences. Our analysis of the data revealed several key findings that support the efficacy of the LOT model for assessing interlingual pre-recorded SDH quality, aligning with our initial hypotheses and demonstrating the model's potential to address the unique challenges of SDH subtitling.

In contrast to WER (word error rate) models that focus on the ratio of errors to the number of words in a text, the LOT model emphasizes the idea unit of whole subtitle lines. Pedersen (2017, p. 216) asserts that “the most natural unit to use in subtitling is the (one or two-line) subtitle itself.” Using the subtitle

as the assessment unit for interlingually pre-recorded subtitles is intuitive and offers several advantages. Firstly, the subtitle unit is well-defined and ideally semantically and syntactically self-contained. Secondly, an error in a subtitle disrupts the relationship between the subtitles and the end consumer, potentially affecting their processing of individual words or phrases and the entire subtitle (Pedersen, 2017). Therefore, interlingually pre-recorded SDH quality assessment should employ the subtitle unit. The analysis confirmed that this approach leads to more consistent and comprehensive quality assessments, with the LOT model's focus on whole subtitle units allowing for a more nuanced evaluation of linguistic, orthotypographic, and technical aspects specific to SDH.

Zárate (2021) discusses various guidelines applicable to captioning and subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing population, encompassing linguistic, paralinguistic, orthotypic, technical, and speaker identification features. These features inspire the development of the LOT model, an acronym representing the three key considerations it evaluates: Linguistic, Orthotypographic, and Technical. The linguistic aspect examines the SDH subtitler's adherence to text reduction and segmentation guidelines. The orthotypographic aspect assesses the subtitler's commitment to capitalization, italics, and color coding. Finally, the technical aspect focuses on the subtitler's ability to synchronize, layout, and position subtitles on the screen (see Table 3). The empirical validation of the LOT model demonstrated its superiority in assessing these multifaceted aspects of SDH subtitling, with its comprehensive approach proving more effective in capturing the unique requirements of SDH subtitling compared to the more generalized NER, NTR, and FAR models.

Table 3. *LOT Model for Assessing Interlingual Pre-recorded SDH Creation*

PARAMETER	ERROR	WEIGHT
Linguistic	Omission	15
	Addition	15
	Segmentation	10
Orthotypographic	Capitalization	15
	Italics	5
	Color coding	10
Technical	Synchronization	15
	Layout	10
	Position	5

The weights assigned to each error type in the LOT model reflect their relative impact on the overall quality and comprehensibility of SDH subtitles, based on expert judgment, existing literature, and the specific needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing audience. Errors that significantly impair meaning or accessibility, such as omissions, additions, and synchronization issues, are assigned higher

weights (15). Moderate impact errors, like segmentation problems, color coding mistakes, and layout issues, receive medium weights (10), while lower impact errors, such as minor positioning discrepancies or inconsistent use of italics, are given lower weights (5). This weighted scoring system allows for a nuanced evaluation of subtitle quality, accounting for the varying degrees of importance of different error types in interlingual pre-recorded SDH. The total quality score for a subtitle is calculated by summing these weighted error scores, providing a comprehensive assessment that prioritizes the most critical aspects of SDH subtitle creation.

Linguistic Errors

Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) define *reduction* in interlingual subtitling as omitting irrelevant content for message comprehension and reformulating the text. Reduction involves omission due to faster speech processing through hearing compared to reading, the combination of reading and watching visuals, and subtitles constrained by time and space (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007). Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) argue that reduction in the context of SDH is optimal since it is less intrusive and less bothersome for viewers who can lip-read. Factors influencing reduction choices include the original program's speech rate, age group, lexical and syntactic complexity, non-verbal visual channel information, and program type (Zárate, 2021).

Accommodating other non-linguistic aspects by minimizing linguistic content is vital yet challenging without compromising viewer comprehension. Therefore, the SDH subtitler must be attentive to every detail in the subtitle's body and consider possible deletions or additions. Text segmentation is another critical aspect, involving dividing dialogues into text chunks constrained by the maximum number of characters per line and maximum lines per subtitle or caption. The primary objective of segmentation is to incorporate a complete idea in each subtitle, enhancing readability while maintaining the established maximum reading speed and ensuring synchronization between the subtitle, soundtrack, and images. The researcher assigns a 40% error weight to linguistic characteristics, representing the most challenging aspect of the SDH subtitler's translation task.

Orthotypographic Errors

In SDH, orthotypographical conventions such as capitalization, italics, and color coding convey acoustic information like intonation, pauses, interruptions, accents, emphasis, and singing. Zárate (2021, p. 51) concisely summarizes essential SDH cues and their potential applications (see Table 4). These cues are crucial for representing sounds and their meanings using symbols that occupy minimal screen space.

Table 4. *Orthotypographical cues in SDH illustrated by (Zárate, 2021, pp. 51 and 52)*

ORTHOTYPOGRAPHIC CUE	USED FOR
Upper case	Loud speech Emphasis
Italics	Off-screen voices, sound effects, and music Inner thoughts Foreign words Accents and pronunciations Titles
Quote marks quotation (spans more than two subtitles; repeat the opening quote at the beginning of each subtitle)	Quotations Song titles Quotations within quotations
Round brackets (enclosing the phrase)	Whispering Asides
Round brackets (enclosing the phrase)	
Suspension dots	
	Interruptions Pauses
Dash (at the beginning of the line, followed by a space)	Speech that starts in mid-sentence
	Continuation of interrupted speech
Hyphens (between letters)	Continuation after a prolonged pause Speaker identification
Symbols: (?) (at the end of the sentence, following a space)	Stammering lengthened
(!) (at the end of the sentence, following a space)	vocal sounds
♪ (at the beginning of each subtitle, followed by a space, and at the end of the last subtitle, preceded by a space)	Sarcasm or irony in interrogative sentences Sarcasm or irony in declarative sentences Lyrics

Different guidelines for orthotypographical cues usage across countries and companies lead to inconsistent practices, such as the varying use of dashes. The primary functions of dashes are to indicate the speaker, continue an idea between subtitles, and show when the speaker has switched to a new addressee. Many of these conventions are stylistic. For instance, Danish television norms

require a blank space following the “speaker dash”, while Swedish television norms do not (Pedersen 2007, 86). Thus, the severity of these errors depends on the guidelines used to inform the model.

Technical Errors

Unlike linguistic or orthotypographic errors, which may cause significant misunderstandings, stylistic features related to technical errors are more likely to upset the viewer than to alter the subtitle’s meaning. Synchronicity between subtitles, images, and dialogues is crucial for an enjoyable viewing experience. Synchronicity for pre-recorded AV materials is primarily under the subtitler’s control. The subtitle’s in-time should always match the beginning of a speech segment, and its out-time should always match the end of that segment. It is important to note that broadcasters, DVD publishers, video streaming operators, filmmakers, and subtitling companies all play a role in determining how subtitles are displayed on the screen. The subtitle layout consists of font, size, number of lines, and length.

Moreover, subtitles are typically positioned at the bottom of the screen (Ivarsson and Carroll 1998). This convention is adopted in most regions globally. In addition, it has been extended to Chinese, Korean, and Japanese languages, originally written in vertical columns and read from top to bottom, right to left (Kuo, 2017).

The LOT model calculates a penalty score based on the three parameters to determine which errors should be extracted from the subtitles. The next step is to divide the penalty score by the number of subtitles to obtain a score for each parameter that indicates the level of viewer satisfaction with the interlingual SDH translation. Finally, the overall subtitle score is calculated by adding the penalty scores and by dividing the total number of subtitles.

The model’s main advantage is that it provides individual scores for the three parameters, which can be used as SDH subtitler feedback and a didactic tool. Another advantage is that it can be localized by using guidelines and best practices, indicating flexibility. On the other hand, one disadvantage is that it relies on error analysis, which means it does not reward excellent SDH creation. Additionally, there is some ambiguity when assessing the severity of errors and assigning them a numerical penalty score.

In conclusion, the LOT model offers a comprehensive and adaptable approach for assessing interlingual pre-recorded SDH creation. By considering linguistic, orthotypographic, and technical errors, it provides valuable feedback to SDH subtitlers and supports the development of improved subtitle quality. Our analysis supports the initial hypotheses regarding the LOT model’s effectiveness, demonstrating higher interrater reliability and yielding higher average quality

scores compared to existing models. The moderate positive correlations observed between the LOT model and other models suggest that while it captures unique aspects of SDH quality, it still aligns with established subtitling quality principles. These findings underscore the importance of specialized assessment tools in the field of SDH subtitling and highlight the potential of the LOT model to advance quality standards in this domain. However, future research can address the model's limitations, such as the lack of reward for excellent SDH creation and ambiguity in error severity assessment, to further enhance its effectiveness as an evaluation tool in subtitling for DHH.

Empirical Validation of the LOT Model

A comparative analysis validated the efficacy of the LOT model for assessing interlingual pre-recorded SDH quality against established models, including NER, NTR, and FAR. The study utilized a diverse sample of 900 Arabic-to-English subtitles across three AV genres with distinct linguistic properties.

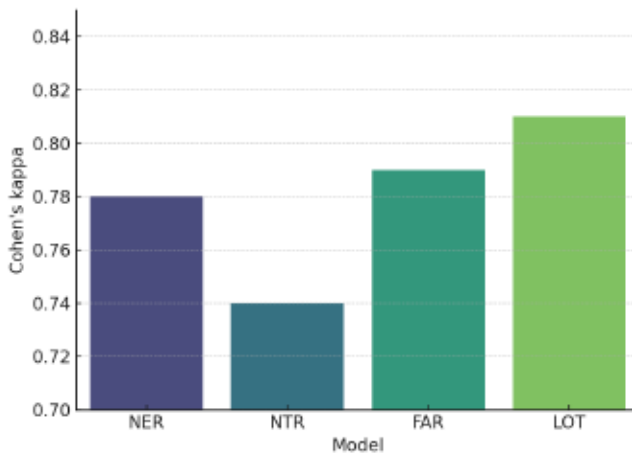


Figure 1. *Inter-coder reliability values (Cohen's kappa) for each model*

As illustrated in Figure 1, the LOT model explicitly designed for pre-recorded interlingual SDH achieved markedly higher inter-coder reliability ($\kappa = 0.81$) compared to the general interlingual FAR model (0.79) and the live subtitling NER (0.78) and NTR (0.74) models. This superior reliability stems from the LOT model's extensive inclusion of textual, visual, and technical parameters that enable unified judgment between raters. The high inter-coder reliability provides quantitative evidence that the LOT model's multidimensional criteria effectively standardize quality assessments of pre-recorded interlingual SDH. In addition to inter-coder reliability, the average overall subtitle quality scores were compared between models on a 0-100 scale.

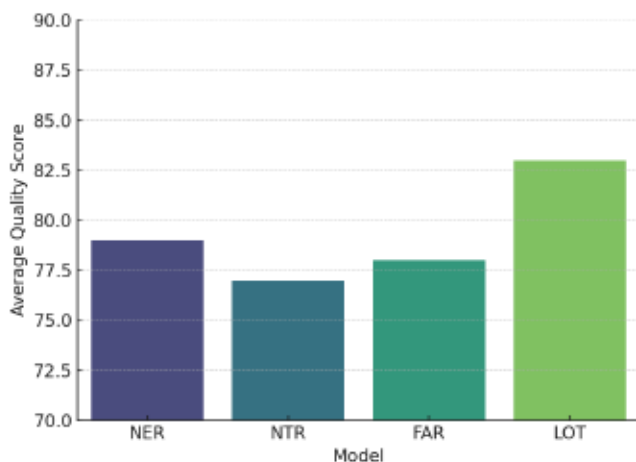


Figure 2. Average subtitle quality scores for each model (scale of 0-100)

As depicted in Figure 2, the specialized LOT model designed for pre-recorded interlingual SDH attained the highest average quality score of 83/100, followed distantly by the other models. The NER model (Number, Edition, and Recognition), developed for live intralingual and interlingual subtitling, scored 79/100. This model focuses on accuracy in terms of number of words, correct editions, and speech recognition, which may not fully capture the nuances of pre-recorded SDH. The FAR model (Functional equivalence, Acceptability, and Readability), designed for general interlingual subtitling, scored 78/100. While it considers important aspects of subtitling quality, it lacks specific parameters for SDH viewers' needs. The NTR model (Number, Translation, and Recognition), created for live interlingual subtitling, achieved the lowest score of 77/100, possibly due to its emphasis on real-time translation aspects that are less relevant in pre-recorded contexts.

This considerable score gap implies a mismatch between the NER, NTR, and FAR models' evaluation criteria and the multifaceted quality expectations of the target pre-recorded SDH audience. It suggests that the LOT model's inclusion of linguistic, orthotypographic, and technical elements better aligns with assessing SDH viewers' complex real-world quality needs, which encompass not only accurate translation but also proper formatting and presentation of non-verbal audio information crucial for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers.

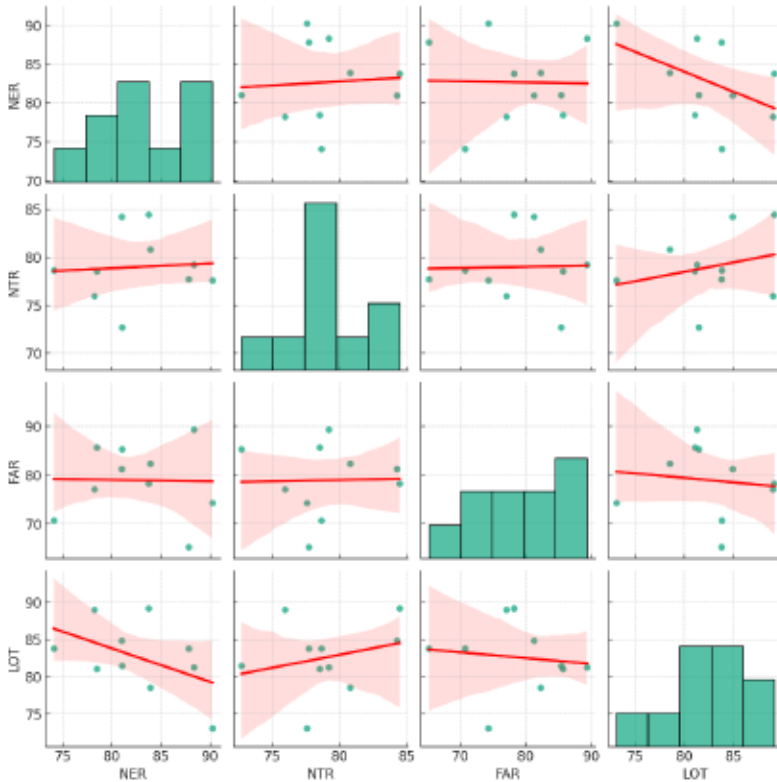


Figure 3. *Correlation matrix between model scores*

The correlation matrix in Figure 3 shows that the NER model exhibited a relatively consistent score distribution, indicating potentially weak correlations with the other models. In contrast, the NTR, FAR, and LOT models demonstrated stronger positive correlations. The scatter plot trends, and histogram peaks reveal the specific score ranges where each model operates optimally. This comparative visualization offers insights into the intersections and relationships between the models.

While expanded research across languages, content types, and larger sample sizes would further substantiate the generalizability of these conclusions, this study provides a substantive foundation indicating the potential of the LOT model to serve as an effective quality assessment instrument for the professional pre-recorded interlingual SDH domain. Further development and critical analysis of the LOT model are warranted to address limitations and capitalize on its evident promise as a comprehensive quality standard.

Conclusion

This study has embarked on an essential quest to enhance the quality and accessibility of pre-recorded interlingual subtitles for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (SDH) audience. This demographic relies heavily on the accuracy and clarity of subtitles for an equitable media experience. Recognizing the gap in quality evaluation for pre-recorded SDH subtitles, the research introduced the LOT model, an assessment framework designed to address this need comprehensively. The LOT model, grounded in linguistic, orthotypographic, and technical factors, is a testament to the specialized requirements of SDH viewers that traditional models may overlook.

An empirical analysis compared the LOT model with existing general quality models across a diverse corpus of Arabic-to-English subtitles spanning various genres. The results showcased the LOT model's effectiveness, yielding higher reliability and quality scores than its counterparts. These findings suggest that the LOT model more accurately aligns with the complex quality demands of the SDH audience, capturing the nuances of linguistic translation, visual presentation, and technical synchronization.

Despite these encouraging outcomes, the study encountered limitations, notably in treating errors and grading their severity. Such insights underscore the necessity for continuous refinement of the model, acknowledging that the journey to perfection is iterative and must accommodate the evolving nature of language and media consumption.

The implications of this research are multifaceted and far-reaching. By enhancing SDH subtitle quality, we bolster the translation field and take significant strides toward inclusion and equality in media access. The potential of the LOT model to revolutionize subtitling practices and training is immense, promising a future where the DHH audience can enjoy a richer, more subtle watching experience.

However, realizing this potential is not without its challenges. Further research is required to validate the LOT model across different languages and cultural contexts, fine-tune its mechanisms, and overcome the highlighted limitations. Additionally, ethical considerations must guide this exploration to ensure that the pursuit of quality does not impinge on the integrity of the content or the dignity of the DHH community.

In conclusion, developing and empirically validating specialized pre-recorded SDH assessment models like LOT open new horizons for translation practices' inclusion and evolution. As this research has shown, there is a clear path forward to elevate the media experience for the DHH audience. However, fully realizing this vision will necessitate a collaborative and sustained effort within the academic and professional spheres to expand research and encourage ethical implementation.

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BOOK REVIEW: LEGITIMATION AND PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN SPEECHES: DISCURSIVE AND PRAGMATIC ASPECTS [ЛЕГИТИМАЦИЯ И ПРЕДИЗБОРНИ РЕЧИ: ДИСКУРСИВНИ И ПРАГМАТИЧНИ АСПЕКТИ] BY BORYANA KOSTOVA-STAMBOLIYSKA

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Whenever studies focus on discourse, they invariably mention the fact that it is a conveyor of power and ideology. The definition frequently reiterated and commonly referred to is the one presented by Fairclough (1995) in which he defines discourse as a social activity and a type of social interaction, a kind of knowledge and a creation of reality, mostly due to the fact that we create our understanding of the world based on our interactions with the surrounding world. The link between knowledge and power is also supported by Foucault who claims that it is in discourse that objects acquire meaning and that power “produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (1975). These characteristics make discourse an interesting object of analysis, especially when it comes to studies focused on the way different individuals express their ideas and in particular when these people also happen to be endowed with political power.

Elections, especially those of presidents, mark important occasions in the life of people in general and when they are related to one of the super powers, they invariably affect life worldwide. That is the reason why scholars pay special attention to political speeches, especially those uttered by highest tribune possible and look into the effects they have on the people they target. The pragmatic function of political speeches has been observed in a very nasty way recently (January, 2021) when Trump willingly or not stirred his supporters into storming the Capitol – an unprecedented event in US history which unequivocally shows the power of words in general. “Our President wants us here” used as the headline by The New York Times (Barry et al., 2021) clearly summarizes the effect the speech uttered by Trump has had on his supporters. Lord Acton has stated that “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. For this and other reasons political speeches have been an object of analysis in different studies with focus on different discursive strategies or pragmatic functions employed in their construal.

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Legitimation, defined as the act or result of making something legitimate, therefore, considered reasonable and acceptable, on the one hand, while on the other, with the “process of collective recognition of an authority under the substantial profile” (Lippi, 2024), is invariably linked to the acumen of political leaders and the way they house their discourse and proves a fertile ground for exploration. The book *Legitimation and presidential campaign speeches: Discursive and pragmatic aspects* [Легитимация и предизборни речи: Дискурсивни и прагматични аспекти] by Boryana Kostova-Stamboliyska encompasses all aspects mentioned above and positively contributes to the host of research in this direction by providing a comprehensive account of the speeches of American presidential candidates over the span of 120 years.

In her book Boryana Kostova-Stamboliyska uses a very broad theoretical, as well as sociological and political base for an in-depth exploration of the problem of legitimation as reflected in the political speeches by presidential candidates. The focus of the book is on political discourse and as such it follows in the steps of an array of other recent studies analysing political discourse, and strategies of legitimation, such as the one by Zorica Trajkova and Silvana Neshkovska (2019), which is on a smaller scale, however, analysing both legitimation and deligitimation strategies in the speeches of Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump during the elections in 2016. Another analysis of Trump’s speeches focuses on the intermingling of legitimation and manipulation (Abuelwafa, 2021) in the way Trump incited his supporters into storming the Capitol. In a study published in May 2022, Wang (2022) yet again analyses the speeches delivered by Donald Trump, this time compared to those by the president of China, Xi Jinping, in order to explore the legitimation strategies used to justify the decisions and actions undertaken by the two presidents in order to control the spread of the Corona virus. A similar topic has been undertaken as a subject of analysis in presidential speeches, however, in Tanzania by Seleniya (2023) in terms of the political discourse around vaccination.

As could be seen Trump is one of the main actors who have piqued scholars’ interest when it comes to presidential speeches. Compared to the above mentioned case studies, Kostova-Stamboliyska’s book provides a more comprehensive account of the legitimation strategies employed by presidential candidates over the span of 120 years, i.e. from 1900 to 2020, covering 53 speeches in total. As such the analysis stands out with its diachronic nature and wider scope.

In four successive chapters Boryana Kostova-Stamboliyska builds her analysis up, starting first with the main concepts such as discourse as the basis of the modern linguistic toolkit, the link between discourse, context, political discourse and its critical analysis, as well as reviewing the relationship between politics and language, with focus on expression of ideological beliefs, expression of political position and evaluation, manipulative influence and persuasion.

The second chapter examines the generic variety within political discourse, the campaign speech as a genre of political discourse, genre characteristics, compositional structure, trends in the production and reception of contemporary political speeches, medialization, profanization, the problem of authorship and intertextuality, as well as approaches and methods for the study of political speeches.

In Chapter Three, the author dwells on political discourse as a strategic action, the communicative-speech strategies in political discourse, the concept of legitimation in political discourse, the socio-political dimensions of legitimation, the difference between legitimation and legitimization, as well as the discursive dimensions of legitimation.

Kostova-Stamboliyska then continues on with the specificities of epistemic legitimation as a strategy and the ability of the actors to employ epistemic modality and evidentiality, lexical means and personal deixis, among other means of expression in their speeches.

Intertextuality is the focus of attention in chapter 5 and political myths as a narrative strategy are analysed in chapter 6. Boryana Kostova-Stamboliyska outlines the etymology, structure and functions of ten political myths and proves that this culturally specific characteristic is a part of the macro-argumentative structure of the political speeches comprising the corpus of the book.

The conclusion of the book outlines the main findings of the research and provides a classification of the verbal strategies used for legitimation and the way they have been applied.

I really find *Legitimation and presidential campaign speeches: Discursive and pragmatic aspects* [Легитимация и предизборни речи: Дискурсивни и прагматични аспекти] by Boryana Kostova-Stamboliyska an interesting and commendable read as it sets a frame for future big scale analyses which could be conducted even on a comparative basis. The book can be used both by scholars working in the field of media studies, political discourse, CDA and students making their first steps in political discourse analysis, as it provides a comprehensive methodology which is widely applicable to further research, a fact which has been proven by the similar theoretical bases employed in the book as well as in the analyses quoted at the beginning of this review.

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BOOK REVIEW: THE ANALYSIS OF GESTURES. A PROPAEDEUTIC BY BRÎNDUȘA-MARIANA AMĂLĂNCEI

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Having as a starting point the axioms of communication established by the Palo Alto School, which are also confirmed in the case of nonverbal communication, the author highlights, right from the beginning, the importance of cultural differences and of verbalization upon reception, in the decoding of gestuality. This includes, from the perspective of the present study, everything that could transmit a message in a manner which is different from verbal expression (facial expression/mimicry, body movements, touch, position in relation to others). After giving an overview of the different meanings attributed to gestures in the specialized literature, in her study the author adheres to the meaning attributed to the concept by Quintilian (1974; movements of the hands, arms and of the entire body, postures, actions of the head and face, the look) and mentions the foundations of the gestural act (metaphysical, psychological, cultural, gnoseological, praxeological), as described by Constantin Sălăvăștru in his work *Mic tratat de oratorie* (A Short Treatise on Oratory, 2006). The author continues with a discussion on the complexity of gestures in communication and the necessity of interpreting them depending on the context and communicational sequence, also mentioning the impossibility of generalization with regard to their meaning, which is rather difficult to determine. In connection with the manner in which gestuality is involved in communication, it is mentioned that this often occurs involuntarily but, in the case of hand gestures and head signs, we can speak of an obvious communicative intentionality.

The author continues with a presentation – without claiming it to be exhaustive – of the most important classifications of gestures, considering that it is necessary to group them into certain classes, on the basis of clearly established criteria and depending more on what they have in common rather than on what individualizes them. These classes are useful both for the comparative examination and understanding of different cultures and for the correct analysis of gestural practices. However, beyond these attempts made to systematize gestures, the theorization of nonverbal communication seems insufficient, requiring a classification based on much more rigorous criteria that would contribute to a better understanding of the categories of gestures and their functions in communication, as well as to their appropriate and efficient use in dialogic relations. The author observes that many of the classifications of gestures were made based on the relations between gestures and words, and that the one proposed by Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen (1969), determined by intentionality (Illustrators, Regulators, Adaptors, Affect Displays, Emblems), is one of the most pertinent, as it is often cited, and the types of gestures it contains are frequently referred to in systematization endeavours.

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The author continues the study by insisting on the functions of gestures in communication, stressing the importance of correlating them with the verbal messages even though, in some cases, nonverbal communication functions independently of the verbal one. In addition, the author shares the view of the theoreticians who support the essential role of eye-contact in nonverbal communication which serves, in its turn, a series of important functions, pointed out, among others, by Michael Argyle and Janet Dean (1965): information-seeking, signalling that the channel is open, concealment/ exhibitionism, establishment and recognition of social relationship, and affiliative conflict. However, these functions are not universally valid and lead to the conclusion that the interpretation of an isolated gesture outside the context in which it is produced constitutes an error.

In the chapter dedicated to the pragma-semantics of gestures, the highlighting of the relationships between gesture and action starts from Habermas' distinction between communicative action (interaction) – materialized by “speech” games – and discourse, in order to signal two important roles of gestures in relation to the verbal one (the roles of addition and substitution), as well as their intentional nature. The author restates the idea of giving meaning to a gesture only in correlation with other signs, given that gestures, taken separately, constitute partial utterances which desemanticize when integrated in longer syntagms. Those involved in the interaction must attribute the same meaning to gestures in order for them to be significant. Additionally, gestures contribute to the image the others build regarding the feelings, attitudes or emotional states of the speaker. When comparing the authenticity of the bodily “metonymic actors” with their appearance, the author mentions that facial expression, the look, gestures, postures, body movements, the use of space and the imposition of social distances fall in the category of indices, which constitute manifestations, parts, effects, etc., of an object, phenomenon or process, the designation being understood in terms of metonymic relations. However, the significance of behavioural indices is not certain, as they can have multiple interpretations, can be false or can vary from one culture to another or even from one period to another in the same culture, even if some authors bring arguments supporting their universal character. The author continues her study with a synthesis of possible meanings attributed to a series of gestures, grouped depending on the different body parts with which they are made, as presented especially by Quintilian (1974), Desmond Morris (1977/1978; 1994/2005), Allan and Barbara Pease (2005/2008), or Joseph and Caroline Messinger (2013/2014). Further on, the author attempts to observe the extent to which these meanings are confirmed in different contexts of the French presidential debates, between 1974–2012, admitting that some of the interpretations given can be qualified as “pseudo-theories”, having no scientific character, written for the general public; however, they are pertinent and terminologically ingenious.

In the end, the author stresses the importance of examining gestures not simply by limiting the study to an empirical description, but by means of a functional-pragmatic approach, grounded in communicational strategies and, most of all, on the complementarity gestural-speech.

The book is a useful guide for postgraduate students and researchers who want to understand the complex nature of gestures, their roles in communication, and the connection between gestures and speech. Together with similar studies, the book brings its own contribution to the examination of the universality of gestures, as well as of their context-based and culture-specific meanings and roles.

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