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Editorial

"Crossing Boundaries in Culture and Communication"*, the journal of the Department of Foreign Languages of the Romanian-American University in Bucharest, is a professional publication meant to bring together the preoccupations and contributions of those interested in human communication and cultural phenomena in the global context: foreign language educators, academic researchers, journalists and other specialists, from schools, universities or alternative areas of humanistic approach around this country and abroad.*

The 15th international conference with the same name facilitated the issuing of this journal. The articles published here represent a selection of the Conference presentations; they reflect a variety of perspectives and innovative ideas on topics such as Literature and Cultural Studies, Foreign Language Teaching and Teaching Methodologies, Linguistics, Translation Studies, Communication, Arts and Media, and their related fields, providing opportunities for professional development and research.

The editorial board considers that the personal contributions included in this issue as well as in the next ones, come in support of multilingualism and multiculturalism due to their variety of topics and linguistic diversity. This would be, in fact, the challenge we are faced with: to put forth a journal which, in spite of its heterogeneous blend, should serve the goal of gathering under its covers the results of the pursuits and concerns of those interested in the ongoing development of culture and in the interpersonal communication which have been subject to various mutations as an effect of an ever-changing globalized world.

This unity in diversity should be achieved by connections established within and among a variety of fields, which often blend into each other, proving the interdisciplinarity of modern research: education, teaching, literature, etc., which also allow complementary approaches in linguistics, rhetoric, sociology, etc.

The present issue includes four sections: Literature and Cultural Studies, Communication, Arts and Media, Foreign Language Teaching and Teaching Methodologies and Translation Studies. All the contributions published here share their authors' ideas in what we hope to become a large cross-boundaries "forum" of communication, debate and mutual cultural interests.

As we don't want to reveal too much right from the beginning, and in the hope that we have stirred your curiosity, we are inviting you to discover the universe the authors have shaped and described, the view upon life that they are imagining, which might be considered, in fact, the overall desideratum of our Journal.

Thanking all contributors, the Editorial Board welcomes your presence in this volume and invites the interested ones to unravel the various topics, which put forward the concerns and the findings of a challenging professional community.

♦LITERATURE
AND CULTURAL STUDIES♦

The Connection between Anthropology and Science Fiction in Octavia Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Nnedi Okorafor's Fiction

Orsolya DEJI-NAGYLAKI
George Emil Palade University

Abstract

Matthew Wolf-Meyer discusses the tension between science fiction and anthropology, arguing that both fields are influenced by the genre's ability to create counterfactuals and imaginative ideas. He argues that science fiction provides anthropologists with a natural laboratory, serving as the foundation for cross-cultural ethnographic research. However, critics say that anthropology and science fiction diverge when science fiction employs idioms such as extrapolation, intensification, and mutation. The Parable of the Sower (1993) by Octavia E. Butler examines how economic disparity and environmental degradation contribute to societal collapse. Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed (1974) analyzes societal systems and cultural differences in a world characterized by divergent political philosophies. In Nnedi Okorafor's Who Fears Death (2010), identity, ethnic conflict, and female empowerment are explored through a fusion of science fiction, fantasy, and African cultural traditions. Many modern fiction writers have explored anthropological topics, offering fresh perspectives on societies, cultures, and human behavior. Writers such as Octavia E. Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Nnedi Okorafor have crafted fantastical worlds that focus on issues of gender roles, power dynamics, ecology, and the posthuman condition.

Keywords

science fiction, anthropology, speculative anthropology, feminism, gender

1. Introduction

In his article "The Necessary Tension between Science Fiction and Anthropology," Matthew Wolf-Meyer asserts that science fiction enthusiasts surround anthropology. "Anthropologists struck me as profoundly interested in the kinds of counterfactuals and sheer flights of fancy that science fiction made possible. Everyone wanted to tell me that Ursula Le Guin was the daughter of anthropologists." (Wolf-Meyer 2018).

He asserts that science fiction is just another genre in literary studies, and like other genres of fiction, it is tainted by its past popularity. As a result, science fiction provides anthropologists with a natural laboratory, which has served as the foundation for cross-cultural ethnographic research. Similarly, Wolf-Meyer concludes that

anthropologists inquire about the types of life that occur in such a cultural and historical setting-which serves as the foundation for the anthropological imagination.

Nevertheless, when science fiction employs three idioms —extrapolation, intensification, and mutation —anthropology and science fiction diverge, according to the same critic. Extrapolation signifies imagining what would occur if a current entity—such as a group of people, an institution, or a practice—endures into the future unaltered, as in the series of *Parables* by Octavia Butler. She extrapolates what would occur if the racist, patriarchal, neoliberal system that ruled the United States in the 1990s persists. The outcomes are appalling, and Butler's capacity for imaginative thought shines through in her ability to extrapolate the United States that appeals to readers' senses.

Anthropologists' desire to use science fiction to prove the existence of other life forms and alternate everyday orders, even employing Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) in a cross-cultural study of gender and class, creates necessary friction between anthropology and science fiction. Nevertheless, critics argue that anthropology should eschew science fiction because it is not a social science.

According to some, feminists utilize science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction genres to express their beliefs about gender. (Westfahl 2005: 291). These genres allow authors to imagine and “grow” new planets with distinct political systems, societal structures, philosophies, and sexual orientations. In certain instances, those worlds may be devoid of sexism and inequality, where women enjoy a status quo that is comparable to that of men. Feminist writers are occasionally drawn to writing about other persecuted minorities, such as members of the LGBTQ+ community or individuals from marginalized ethnic backgrounds.

2. The Confrontation

African-American novelist Octavia Estelle Butler, known by her pen name Octavia E. Butler, is best known for her science fiction books that explore superhuman abilities and futuristic societies, combining elements of mythology, science fiction, mysticism, and African-American spiritualism. Moreover, Jim Miller posits that she is more class-conscious than many other utopian feminist science fiction writers, her fiction challenging not only patriarchal myths but also capitalist, racist, and feminist-utopian myths. “Her Xenogenesis trilogy and Parable of the Sower (1993) are critical dystopias motivated out of a utopian pessimism in that they force us to confront the dystopian elements of postmodern culture so that we can work through them and begin again.” (Miller 1998: 337).

The 2020s (2024, to be more exact) are the setting for the novels Parable of the Sower (1993) and its sequel, Parable of the Talents (1998), which foretell a religious and neoliberal end of times, naming these warnings after a biblical legend. The 1990s in California were a time of economic hardship, anti-immigrant ballot measures,

spreading tales of “stranger danger,” and urban disengagement in colored communities. Butler was significantly impacted by the police beating of Rodney King, which was caught on camera in 1991, sparking widespread racial riots in Los Angeles. In her dystopian future, driven by a totalitarian government and a violent society, Butler's adolescent black female protagonist, Lauren Olamina, conceives and propagates the Earthseed religion despite not knowing, as in the Synoptic Gospels, whether it will find fertile ground.

Butler's work could be considered a radical social analysis, even though there is disagreement about whether it transcends the diversity and entrepreneurship of neoliberal ideology to offer a revolutionary political theology (Lloyd 2016). She is an interlocutor who creates opportunities for reflection, writing, and exploring some of anthropology's critical issues.

As has often been the case for anthropologists studying power, political economy, imperialism, and representation, time plays a crucial role in the parables and is intricately intertwined with ethical dilemmas. Time is also relational in the myths, shaped by social interactions and the physical environment, just as Lauren Olamina's God is. As claimed by Jerry Philips in his article “The Intuition of the Future: Utopia and Catastrophe in Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower:” “By dramatizing historical times, as moving in the direction of the disastrous end of the world, the apocaliptic narrative throws into relief its dialectical opposite, the historical time as the renewal of life, the journey towards utopia.” (Philips 2002: 301).

As contextualized in the essay “Thinking Parabolically: Time Matters in Octavia Butler's Parables” by Priya Chandrasekaran, this dialectical relationship can be visualized as a geometric parabola, a symmetrical curve, or a conic section presented in elementary school mathematics. A parabola has many nonarbitrary interactions between its tangents (lines that pass through a single point) and secants (tubes that connect two locations) because every end on a parabola is equally spaced from a focus point and a fixed straight line. (Chandrasekaran 2018).

Similarly, the parables depict overlapping, crossing triangles that signify the passage of time and social life for readers simultaneously engrossed in Butler's worlds. This movement cannot be described as inevitable, progressive, spiral, circular, or random. Instead, it creates a transition connecting people and places by switching between the past, present, and future, or between the future-past, future-present, and future-future.

In the first parable, the verb tenses change to reflect Lauren's circumstances, behavior, and mental state. From this, we can infer that Lauren's hyper-empathy, a condition in which she feels the pain of others, is probably the result of her mother's drug addiction. She is torn from societal norms far enough by this psychosocial vulnerability to recognize the wisdom that “God is Change.” In the second story, the experiences of Lauren's daughter and her young adulthood are woven together,

connecting national politics, their strained relationship, and Earthseed philosophy and practices.

Butler offers a view of individual and social community through his parables, which resemble the parabolic curve extending out to endless, yet not limitless, possibilities. The Earthseed poetry, written or understood at particular times by people, in places, for causes, and with consequences, is the central theme of Butler's novels. The Gregorian calendar has changed to the year that begins with the Sower, 2024. As the time-traveling author "predicted," wildfires spread across the western United States with ever-increasing intensity, and natural disasters were clashing with authoritarian politics. "Crazy to live without a wall to protect you. Even in Robledo, most of the street poor—squatters, winos, junkies, homeless people in general—are dangerous. They're desperate, crazy, or both. That's enough to make anyone dangerous." (Butler 1993: 2.20)

There's a big, early-season storm blowing itself out in the Gulf of Mexico. [...] There are over 700 known dead so far. [...] That's nature. Is it God? Most of the dead are the street poor who have nowhere to go and who don't hear the warnings until it's too late for their feet to take them to safety. Where's safety for them anyway? Is it a sin against God to be poor? We're almost poor ourselves. There are fewer and fewer jobs available, while more people are being born, and more kids are growing up with nothing to look forward to. One way or another, we'll all be poor someday. The adults say things will get better, but they never have. How will God—my father's God—behave toward us when we're poor? (Butler 1993: 2.45)

Most upsetting to me, though, there were a few more rag, stick, cardboard, and palm frond shacks along the way into the hills along River Street. There always seems to be more. They've never bothered us beyond begging and cursing, but they always stare so. It gets harder to ride past them. They're living skeletons, some of them. Skin and bones and a few teeth. They eat whatever they can find up there. (Butler 1993: 8.20)

Born in 1929, Ursula Kroeber was raised by her family in Berkeley, California. Her parents were Theodora Kroeber, author of Ishi, and Alfred Kroeber, a renowned anthropologist. She completed her graduate studies at Columbia University after attending Radcliffe College.

Although not featured in Matthew Wolf-Meyer's series, Ursula Le Guin's work is unmistakably influenced by anthropology and could be classified as "speculative anthropology." (Wolf-Meyer 2018). Anthropology has influenced Le Guin's work, which is not surprising given that Le Guin's mother, Theodora Kroeber, studied anthropology at graduate school, co-authored a journal article on cultural anthropology methodologies, participated in an archaeological dig in Peru's Nazca Valley, and later

married Alfred Louis (A.L.) Kroeber, one of the most significant American cultural anthropologists of the first half of the 20th century. Franz Boas served as Alfred's thesis supervisor at Columbia University, where he earned his Ph.D. in anthropology in 1901. He then joined the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, where he lectured until his retirement. Thus, Ursula Le Guin's parents' involvement in anthropology significantly influenced her childhood, education, and intellectual development.

As a fervent historicist, Fredric Jameson is committed to rejecting the idea that the inhabitants of the planet Gethen, where The Left Hand of Darkness (1969) is set, are trying to remove many of the characteristics and historical traces of modern humanity to preserve what he terms the "essential" human nature (Jameson 2005: 269). The Gethenians, a race of ambisexual beings that spend the majority of their lives in an androgynous state and only sometimes change into male or female during a period of sexual activity known as "kemmer," are the subject of The Left Hand of Darkness, published in 1969.

The Dispossessed concentrates on the interaction between two adjoining worlds: Urras and Anarres. While Anarres is organized along anarcho-syndicalist lines, Urras is home to a patriarchal capitalist society that resembles 20th-century America. Jameson notes similarities between the novel and The Left Hand of Darkness (1969), as well as constraints on the novel's attempt to think beyond capitalism in Anarres.

In contrast to Jameson's criticism, Le Guin's work outlines an implicit theory of speculative anthropology, simplifying the connections between science fiction and anthropology. Le Guin effectively combines the benefits of Geertzian "thick description" and Jamesonian historicist formalism to examine symbolic practices, overcoming some drawbacks through the lens of science fiction.

Similar to Geertz, Le Guin employs "thick description" to help readers or writers understand countries whose customs are very different from their own. In Geertz's instance, the societies being examined are those of actual human tribes that social scientists have investigated. These are fictional societies usually viewed by an outsider acting as a counterfeit anthropologist in Le Guin's speculative anthropology. Le Guin claims that she decided to write The Dispossessed (1974) as a novel instead of an essay because it allowed the narrative to have "the inherent self-contradictions of novelistic narrative that prevent simplistic, single-theme interpretation, the novelistic 'thickness of description'"(Le Guin 2005: 306)

Some of Le Guin's other science fiction books have a similar "thickness of description." The protagonist of The Left Hand of Darkness (1969), Genly Ai, is not an official anthropologist; over several years, he has assumed the role of participant-observer in an alien culture, gradually understanding the significance of its customs. When Ai is on Gethen/Winter, he frequently needs help deciphering the cryptic symbols and actions of the people he meets. The Gethenian gender system is the core

of these issues, as Le Guin demonstrates, with implications for many facets of their lives.

Le Guin employs thick descriptions for multiple purposes, not just to help the participant-observer comprehend the epistemic crises that fieldwork can entail. A thick description is used in The Dispossessed (1974) to create a more detailed picture of an alien culture's customs and way of life. Shevek, the novel's main character, is a physicist from the anarcho-syndicalist Anarealist community in Arares. Shevek, unlike Ai, has no training in anthropology. Still, because of his open-mindedness and intellectual curiosity, he treats life on Urras with all the care and interest of an ardent ethnographer.

But Le Guin's portrayal of life on Anarres most closely resembles Geertzian thick description in the novel. In these sections of the book, we see a decidedly unfamiliar society in which the concept of private property is not only absent but nearly unthinkable, for example, through the eyes of someone who has become accustomed to and can accept its customs as given, as opposed to seeing a familiar society through the eyes of an alien observer. This method of incorporating the absence of patriarchy, private property, social hierarchy, and law into the story compels the reader to actively construct logical interpretations of how such a society would function.

Thus, a comprehensive aerial view of Anarres is not provided; instead, the reader is encouraged to create a cohesive narrative from the given information. Instead, we are given evocative descriptions of commonplace events on Anarres, devoid of footnotes outlining the guiding principles. These illustrations demonstrate how Le Guin's emotionally and symbolically engrossing experiences with fictional anthropological “others” encourage introspection in both her viewers and her characters.

“The magnificent epic of an ambiguous utopia!” was how The Dispossessed’s initial paperback version was described on its cover. An “Ambiguous Utopia” was considered the work's subtitle after so many readers found this description so suitable that it was officially accepted in later printings. According to Le Guin, she was imagining how an anarchist society would operate, being significantly influenced by the writings of American pacifist, anarchist, and reformer Paul Goodman.

The theory of anarchism, which originated in 18th-century French social thought, posits that many human issues stem from living under a strict government. Many communists and socialists maintained that collective ownership of the means of production would eliminate wealth disparities, thereby paving the way for reform. A centralized, all-powerful administration would oversee the shift to true economic democracy. Anarchists maintained that this kind of centralization could never result in the desired decentralized egalitarian society because centralization serves to increase it. Annares is, in many respects, an idealized hippy community.

Le Guin purposefully portrayed Annares as imperfect to provide credibility to her work. She emphasized Anarres's imperfections and had everyone object to the old-fashioned utopias' insistence on perfection. Le Guin frequently illustrates the bounds of an Anarran value, claiming that human predispositions may prevent these values from being fully realized and unachievable.

Nnedi Okorafor, full name Nnedimma Nkemdili Okorafor, is a Nigerian-American author of science fiction and fantasy books, short tales, and comics for readers of all ages. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1974, her works explore Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism, delving into racial inequity, sexual violence, and other societal issues while frequently elevating young Black girls to the status of superheroes.

Okorafor draws inspiration for her writing from African myths and stories and has developed her ideas of African futurism and Africanjujuism through her writing. She has expressly disapproved of the term "Afrofuturism.", stating, "Media sources, I appreciate and am honored by your interest in my work, but please STOP CALLING MY WORK AFROFUTURIST. IT IS NOT." (Okorafor 2020).

The feminist imagination of Okorafor creates a radical counter-story to the stereotypes of Africa by breaking and dismantling the opposites of modernity and tradition, superstition and reason, magic and science, and delving into some of the most debatable topics in modern African history, including ethnic cleansing and female genital mutilation. This part of the paper examines Bloch's ideological anarchist-utopian beliefs in the context of Who Fears Death.

Ernst Bloch (1885–1977) was a German philosopher and cultural critic who is primarily recognized for mediating between non-dogmatic religious thought, new aesthetic forms, particularly Expressionism, and the radical philosophy of emancipation; also recognized for reviving the interest in utopia. His writings, notably The Principle of Hope (1954–1959), helped shape a specific critical theory and gained him popularity in academic and popular circles due to his unusual writing style.

The anarchist religious movements that aimed to liberate themselves from the power of the state and the church and to create new forms of democratic solidarity served as Bloch's medium of utopia. All utopian art and writing, regardless of origin, share the universal qualities of hope and anticipation outlined by Bloch, despite the significant challenge of applying theories rooted in Western traditions to African literature. Okorafor explains this in a blog post: "Few science fiction classics and contemporary works feature main characters of African descent, mythologies, African locales, or address issues endemic to Africa. And until recently, next to none were written by African writers." (Okorafor 2014.)

In "La Vie et Demie", Moudileno argues that magical realism and the "idea of Africa" are superseded by "science fiction [which] provides for a historicized Africa anchored in rationality and participating in the movement of modernity." (Moudileno

1979). By fusing these two literary forms — magical realism and science fiction — Okorafor raises questions about Africa's ahistoricity and the possibility of progress over time.

In Who Fears Death, Nnedi Okorafor investigates how identity is constructed as a node in a multidirectional network that crosses geographical boundaries and integrates relationships to the past, present, and future. As a result, the novel challenges the notion that history is the sole source of identity and that time and progress unfold in a linear manner.

Born of violence, Onyesonwu (whose Igbo name means "who fears death") is the daughter of Najeeba, an Okeke lady whom Daib, a formidable Nuru sorcerer, sexually assaulted. Leading a militant gang dedicated to raping and impregnating women, killing men, and setting communities on fire, Daib wants to eradicate the Okeke people. In reconstructing the crime of rape as a kind of genocide (committed in Rwanda in 1994, Sudan in 2003, and Bosnia in 1992–1995), Okorafor highlights the crucial position that women play in African communities.

Rapegenocide has historically been used to dehumanize and degrade specific groups of people. In addition to the risk of developing HIV/AIDS, STDs, and chronic illnesses, including obstetric fistula, victims of rape also experience psychological and social trauma. They have been shunned by society, seen to be unfit for marriage, and charged with working with the militias who massacred their relatives and friends to survive. Babies born to raped mothers in Bosnia were sometimes referred to as "little killers," and their mothers would dispose of them or place them for adoption. (Mukamana and Bryziewicz 2008: 383)

Onyesonwu is the child of a Nuru man and an Okeke woman. In Igbo, "Ewu" means "goat," and she is identified as a victim of rape by her light skin and hair, which contrast with the dark complexion of the Okeke and the brown of the Nuru. The majority of her people avoid her, and they expect her to have a violent and shameful life. Nevertheless, Onyesonwu finally uses her otherness and difference to create a means of resistance that opposes the stigma attached to rape victims' children and fundamentally rejects the false pretexts of the genocide that women should be made to disappear through suffering and that resistance should be eliminated.

Her mother, who finds meaning in life and refuses to be a victim, is the source of her strength. As the story develops, we learn that Onyesonwu's magical skills are derived from her father's sorcerer and her mother's spiritual abilities. Najeeba flees to the desert after the rape to give birth to Onyesonwu. The mother and daughter lived alone for years, only visiting the town when they needed supplies. But Najeeba understands that her daughter needs companionship, so finally, they move to the Okeke village in Jwahir, where Onyesonwu discovers what it means to be an Ewu for the first time.

Onyesonwu has no friends until she becomes eleven and undertakes the Eleventh Year Rite, a female circumcision ceremony, even though Najeeba remarries and has a good relationship with her stepfather, Fadil. Onyesonwu makes friends with Luyu, Binta, and Diti, the three other girls who participate in the ritual for the first time. This is one of the most painful sequences in the book, and Okorafor highlights the nuanced interplay of customs, ideologies, and emotions that underlie female genital mutilation. About 25% of the 13 million victims worldwide of female genital mutilation are in Nigeria, the country with the most significant number of instances, according to UNICEF. Onyesonwu participates in the ceremony for the same reasons many young Nigerian girls do: she succumbs to peer pressure, an inevitable consequence of adolescent desire and cultural tradition.

However, times are changing, and Who Fears Death (2010) portrays a society in transition while honoring the tenacious efforts of women. Women are potent healers, camel drivers, spiritual mentors, gatekeepers in the traditional sense, devoted moms, and much more. They utilize their abilities to create their own forms of agency through intricate, team-based, and often multifaceted approaches.

3. Conclusions

The article provides a comparative review of three female authors of speculative fiction: Octavia E. Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Nnedi Okorafor, whose books engage with the discourses of anthropology, politics, and philosophy through the lens of science fiction. Both authors utilize speculative structures to question social structures, including the issue of gender, as well as the forces of change and transition.

Parable of the Sower (1993) and Parable of the Talents (1998) by Octavia E. Butler are statements of dystopian futures based on the socio-political fears of 1990s America, which were exacerbated by neoliberalism, racial violence, and environmental degradation. Some have seen Butler's fiction as a critical dystopia that highlights the hypocrisies of postmodern capitalism and patriarchy (and one such parabolic reading of temporality by Priya Chandrasekaran places the disciplinary structure of the narrative of Butler in the non-linear, relational notion of time). Butler incorporates mythology, spirituality, and sociopolitical criticism through the Earthseed philosophy, Lauren Olamina, and suggests a radical theology that is more focused on the importance of change-"God is Change."

Having a background in anthropology as the daughter of anthropologists, Ursula K. Le Guin constructs what she refers to as speculative anthropology in The Left Hand of Darkness (1969) and The Dispossessed (1974), where she uses the concept of thick description of Clifford Geertz to create detailed cultures that are alien to humanity. Le Guin portrays gender fluidity, anarcho-syndicalism, and collective living to challenge the boundaries of utopian thinking, making a reality what she describes as an ambiguous utopia. Her approach to the narrative encourages readers to critically

recreate other forms of social systems, beyond the capitalist and patriarchal paradigmatic narratives.

Nnedi Okorafor in Who Fears Death (2010), reshapes the Western discourse of utopia by reinventing African cosmologies and postcolonial realities, blending African futurism with African jujuism. Based on the utopian theory proposed by Ernst Bloch, Okorafor reinstates the use of myth and magic to feminist resistance. In response to gendered violence and genocide and spiritual change, Okorafor provides a hopeful and empowered vision using African epistemologies. Together, these authors reshape dystopia and utopia as mutually sustaining forms of critique by positioning speculative fiction as a powerful tool to bring a new sociocultural perspective.

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Free Associations in the Short Story Chocolate by Graham Swift

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how the short story Chocolate from the volume Twelve Post-War Tales by British author Graham Swift is built by relying on free associations centered on the word in the title. Dermot begins telling a story to his friends at the Skinners' Arms over their drinks about a girl he had known and whose job had to do with chocolate. The word chocolate leads him to play upon words based on his free associations with chocolate, including the image of the girl coated in chocolate, the girl being sweet just like chocolate, and the way he had met her as a waitress when he ordered a cup of tea and how she offered him a slice of chocolate cake. Free associations mean that the story is not told in chronological order, a usual way of storytelling in Modernist, Postmodernist, and after Postmodernist times.

Keywords

active reader, psychoanalysis, daydreams, stream of consciousness

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the short story Chocolate, from the most recently published short stories volume Twelve Post-War Tales by contemporary, and successful, British author Graham Swift, born in 1949 in South London, Catford (Malcolm 2003: 16). The volume was published in 2025 and it includes some short stories which had been previously published in The New Yorker.

All of these short stories rely on the usual structure of the story in his previous works, namely on the way in which the external world is only a pretext for him to explore the feelings and reflections of his characters. In addition, each and every character is faced, at the present moment, with a psychological dilemma, or reflects back to significant moments in their lives. Furthermore, Swift's characters have been described as relying on the image of the common man (O'Mahony 2003). Readers can consider that this description is not necessarily true, since, while his stories being about everyday life and people that are possible to be encountered in reality, each and every character has his or her distinctive personality traits, making him or her unique. What makes each character unique is, in fact, his or her inner universe and the way he or she explores it.

The self-analyses, or explorations of the inner world, represent what makes up the story in Swift's works. Since readers are introduced to the interior worlds of the characters, they can make analogies with hearing in real life a person confessing to them by telling them their life story or, at least, a story from their life which preoccupies them at the moment. Readers can also make analogies with the way in which patients tell various incidents in their lives to their psychotherapists in psychoanalytic sessions. During psychoanalytic sessions, only those incidents which are meaningful, consciously and most of all, unconsciously, to the patient are present and the analyst encourages the patient to further elaborate on the details which preoccupy him or her the most. We can find, in Swift's works, an equivalent of this way in which the psychoanalytic sessions go on, as meaningful details can be identified by the readers through repetition or through the high emotional intensity accompanying them.

The short story Chocolate is about a group of friends telling stories at The Skinners' Arms over drinks. This time it is Dermot's turn – a character whose physical description is missing, as a sign that it is his inner world which matters and which is the focus of this short story. His story is about a girl he had known and whose job had to do with chocolate. The word in the title becomes the nucleus of his story, with all connotations it triggers for the storyteller through free associations.

2. Materials and Methods

The setting for the short story Chocolate is described in a minimal way, reminding readers of stage directions for drama and films. The only detail given to readers is, in the beginning of the story, the following: "The Skinners' Arms. Outside, a cold dank darkness" (Swift 2025: 55). With what follows immediately afterwards, Swift deviates from the usual external setting associated by readers with stage directions and description of the setting for a drama acted on stage as follows: "But never mind the world out there" (Swift 2025: 55). The turning away from external reality is clear. Readers are given a first clue about what this short story will focus on. The entire story is summarized immediately after the sentence introducing readers into the inner world of Dermot: "Dermot took a sip. 'I knew a girl once,' he said, 'who worked in chocolate'" (Swift 2025: 55). In this way, readers are given to understand that the significant episode of high emotional impact for Dermot took place in the past. Readers are invited to leave behind, together with Dermot, the external setting and the preoccupation for the present time with it, and go back to the past, where what matters can be found. By going back to the past, Dermot retreats into his inner world, which is a world of once upon a time, of the storytelling practice associated with the cold weather and the coziness of the interior, where people take refuge. The physical interior is doubled and accentuated by the psychological inner world, which both work together to take readers and listeners to the past and to a what makes up the fantasy

world of the characters telling stories to his friends about his past. By going back to the past, Dermot retreats into a world of daydreams and fantasies, and once he tells this story he can feel that he can bring the past to life. Readers notice the intensity of the emotions associated by Dermot with this story about the girl working in the chocolate business. The emotions about this story are so intense that the outside world fades away.

The stream of consciousness narrative technique in novels and short stories not only resembles free associations, but was inspired by them (Azis 2022; Sang 2010), at least in the case of some authors such as Virginia Woolf, who was familiar with Freud's works. In the case of Swift's short story Chocolate, knowledgeable readers notice how the entire story is made up of the reflections of Dermot, which are based on the process of free associations.

Freud (1900), in his work The Interpretation of Dreams, developed free associations as a psychoanalytic method allowing the unconscious to surface through spontaneous connections between ideas. How does he define this method? From another work, A Short Account of Psycho-Analysis, we find out that Freud (1961:) told "his patients to refrain from any conscious reflection and to abandon themselves, in a state of quiet concentration, to following the ideas which occurred to them spontaneously (involuntarily) […]." In addition, patients have, according to Freud (1961:), "to communicate these ideas to the physician even if they felt objections to doing so, if, for instance, the thoughts seemed too disagreeable, too senseless, too unimportant or irrelevant."

For the narrative structure based on the process of free associations, readers can expect frequent movements backwards and forwards in time and from one idea to another, thus escaping the traditional structure of the plot focused on beginning, middle, and end, as well as on telling the story in chronological order. However, a short story written by an author cannot be expected to preserve the raw form in which free associations lead to the patient's talk during psychoanalytic sessions or any person going through self-analysis by writing freely and in a relaxed manner in his or her diary. The author can be included in the category of the artist, who polished and gives artistic shape to dreams, daydreams (Freud 1983), free associations, and all raw psychoanalytic material coming from the unconscious. While readers cannot expect to have access to the genuine process of free associations in the short story Chocolate, the use and identification of free associations contribute to the realistic aspect of the fictional world. The suspension of disbelief (Schaper 1978: 31-44) as we enter, as readers, the fictional world of Chocolate can rely on the realistic aspect in which the human mind works. Thoughts do not occur to us in an orderly, coherent manner, or, at least, not at all times.

While apparently incoherent and while expected to make the short story's structure incoherent and difficult to follow, free associations have, in fact, the opposite

effect in this short story. With respect to the narrative structure, free associations can be identified by readers as giving coherence to the short story and as allowing Dermot to reflect on an episode in his past, not only based on the way in actually happened and the way he felt about it, but also on the way he would have liked it to happen. Daydreaming is part of everyone's lives. Daydreaming, just like storytelling, can become a means of comfort in the face of the harsh reality, bringing about a compensation for what Dermot lacks in his real life. Readers cannot tell for sure what is real and what is a daydream in Dermot's story, as they witness the reactions of Dermot's audience in Skinners' Arms, whose gestures, remarks, and facial expressions suggest doubt as to the truth of the story they are hearing. His audience faces at times some difficulties in order to achieve suspension of disbelief, but eventually they do so as they wish to follow the story.

However, regardless of the story's reality, any detail is significant in Dermot's story so that readers can have access to his inner world. Swift's works focus on a deep exploration of the inner world, and this short story makes no exception. It brings to our attention the way the inner world becomes very vivid and accessible to readers based on the use of free associations created around chocolate, which help us follow Dermot's train of thoughts. Chocolate becomes a vivid image and readers do not lose track of his reflections due to its presence. Perhaps this is why, now and then, Dermot repeats the word chocolate and suggestions carried on by this word, as well as new ideas and emotions he associates with it.

The Skinners' Arms becomes like a psychoanalytic setting, although the story is told before a whole group of friends. Readers are introduced directly into the setting of the Skinners' Arms. They need to rely on their background knowledge in order to understand what this minimally described setting is about, next to the clues which are offered to them directly as it being a place where friends gather to have a drink, which suggests to them a pub. However, it is not just any pub, since it can be related to the culture of Great Britain, due to the second part of its name, Arms. Arms in this context designates a coat of arms, which is the heraldic shield belonging to noble families, royalty, trade (referring to how a specific trade or craft is thus being honoured) or town guilds. These heraldic shields are displayed on the pub's sign in order to show patronage or association (Trust Inns, 2022). If readers check the name of the pub mentioned in Swift's short story Chocolate, they can find out that it designates a real pub, placed in King Cross area in London. If readers also look at the About section of the Skinners' Arms site, they find out that it is described as "a friendly traditional London" and that it is "Frequented regularly by London's working commuters and visitors on exploratory sorties around our capital" (The Skinners Arms, 2025). The reference to the real place of the pub can suggest to readers a traditional British atmosphere, where everyday life characters can meet and discuss various happenings from their lives. Without the background knowledge on The Skinners' Arms, readers

can identify it anyway as a pub, café or restaurant where the characters gather in a way which reminds them to the pubs in the novel Last Orders by Graham Swift, where a group of friends discusses about memories of their friend Jack who has died and whose ashes they carry in a jar, so that they can fulfil his last wish, namely to have his ashes scattered over the pier at Margate, a seaside resort where he enjoyed spending his holidays. Here we notice how readers themselves can start on the process of using free associations, starting from their previous readings. The associations with the novel Last Orders can add to the readers' imagining a specific, traditionally British atmosphere, while other associations, such as with the inns in Canterbury Tales by Chaucer can allow readers to think about a place where people gather in order to tell stories which can be more or less real.

The café setting where Dermot meets the girl he talks about in his story suggests a similar setting to The Skinners' Arms. However, the café where he is served by the girl is a setting focused only on the two of them, and not on a group of people or other people. However, mostly indirect communication happens between the two of them, while with the group in the pub Dermot also uses direct communication. The indirect communication between Dermot and the girl relies on allusions and implied suggestions based on the connotations of words, and, what is most significant, every word and piece of information given is not there by chance. It suggests something further and, overall, it suggests the mutual interest of Dermot and the girl about each other.

Once the setting is minimally described, suggesting to readers that it is inner reality that matters not the external one, readers also become aware of the fact that The Skinners' Arms becomes a place of storytelling, which can be realistic or fantasy-like, or even both at the same time. The fantasy aspect suggests the way in which Dermot had felt about his meeting with the girl. The Skinners' Arms as a place of storytelling comes from its association with similar places where storytelling takes place, such as the pubs in the novel Last Orders and the inns in the novel Canterbury Tales. References to other texts, which are called intertextual references (Bazerman 2003) in literary criticism, rely on the free associations of the readers, based on which they can underline a significant aspect of an element in the text they are currently reading. Here it is the process of storytelling. The setting of the pub has as a role to immerse readers into an atmosphere of storytelling, shaping their expectations to become listeners together with the characters surrounding Dermot in the pub.

The story told by Dermot could be considered as representing half-reality, half-fiction, once he includes elements of his day-dreaming process about the girl "who worked in chocolate" (Swift 2025: 55). Free associations and storytelling intertwine. Chocolate becomes an occasion for him to expose his daydreams, his fantasies about her. Chocolate, after all, is a food item which strongly suggests pleasure. It is considered to have an effect which is similar to that of a drug on someone's brain. In

this sense, chocolate brings happiness, a happiness which is comparable with the feeling of being in love. Some studies readers have likely already come across in online articles claim that chocolate contains chemicals such as phenylethylamine, which leads to a boost in dopamine (bringing pleasure) and tryptophan, which in turn leads to the production of serotonin - having as an effect lifting our moods (Totally Chocolate, 2025). These chemicals lead to a feeling of euphoria and happiness, an effect similar to the way in which the human brain reacts to romantic feelings. Chocolate and the romantic love relationship Dermot hopes for in his story are intertwined, in a perfect, coincidental way, not just in his process of free associations, but also in the way in which the girl interacts with him by bringing chocolate into their first discussions.

With respect to the process of free associations in Swift's story, we can identify the following sentences as marking the beginning of the free associations chain: "Dermot took a sip. 'I knew a girl once,' he said, 'who worked in chocolate'" (Swift 2025: 55). Thoughts are presented, apparently, in a natural, non-ordered, a bit incoherent manner to mimic the free associations process, as we can see in the quotation presented below:

> ...it wasn't so much what she said, but the thought that she put in my head. The thought of her – why should I have thought it? – covered in chocolate. That's what got me going. And I bet that's what you was all thinking too, soon as I said what I said. All dipped in chocolate. That's what you was all thinking.
> (Swift 2025: 56)

From the girl 'who worked in chocolate" (Swift 2025: 55), Dermot arrives to telling his friends about how the way in which she introduced himself has a high emotional effect on him, due to the thoughts that come to him when considering a girl and chocolate, and the fact that she works in a business having to do with chocolate. He pictures her "covered in chocolate" (Swift 2025: 56), an image which has further implied free associations for readers, such as a delicious girl, or various imagined scenes where he might figuratively eat her and savour her just like chocolate, or even further, where he may be involved in erotic scenes where lovers bathe in chocolate or cover themselves in chocolate, which are present in the imaginary universe related to love and romantic relationships.

The various ways in which wording can be used leads to both figurative and literal meaning, which is why Dermot may arrive at the literal image of a girl covered entirely in chocolate:

Come to think of it now, that's how she might have put it herself – I mean, when she was working in chocolate. She might have said, 'I'm in chocolate.' That's how she

might have put it. The way people do when they talk about their line of business. (Swift 2025: 56)

In the English language, expressing that some is working in a certain domain or business can be colloquially expressed as to be in followed by the exact domain, without further explanations as to be working in the domain of. This is what allows for the play upon words considered by Dermot, which leads him to arrive at the image of a girl covered completely in chocolate, which expresses, as readers can identify, his unconscious wishes about her and his impressions of her. What is not directly mentioned about his feelings for her can be identified by the readers due to the change of the figurative meaning to literal meaning and the other way round. They can think of the phrase sweetie or sweetheart, together as the phrase a delicious girl, a girl whom Dermot would like to taste both figuratively and literally, by touching her and kissing her. We can also think of the expression I love you so much or you are so dear to me that I could eat you in relation to the girl in chocolate, which suggests to readers both a girl covered in chocolate and one made completely of chocolate. Due to the way in which Dermot tells his story, "the image of a girl coated in chocolate" (Swift 2025: 57) becomes very vivid for readers and, it is implied, for the audience in the pub as well. Chocolate, as well as love, can bring some sweetness and comfort in someone's life – this is another thought to which readers can arrive through the process of free associations.

Dermot then moves on with his story, introducing his audience made up of his friends in the pub and of his readers, to the setting of a city. It was in the city that he had met the girl now know to his audience as the girl "in chocolate" (Swift 2025: 56). Chocolate connects the girl and the city based on the common element of chocolate. Dermot speaks about two chocolate factories in York in the 70s. He describes the city as follows: "It was chocolate city" (Swift 2025: 57). Readers find out that in the city of York there were two rival chocolate companies, Terry's and Rowntree's. The company the girl had worked for was Rowntree's. Dermot describes this rivalry between companies as follows: "it must have been chocolate wars" (Swift 2025: 57). Readers notice how the entire external reality has something to do with chocolate, as what retains Dermot's attention is the way the city has two chocolate factories which are in a relationship of rivalry. The aspect retaining his attention about the girl is projected over the entire city. His perception of the city is, by implication, a sweet and pleasant one, just as his perception of the girl is. He associates the entire city with the girl, in fact, since she has left such a strong impression over him.

The reason why came to York was to bet on horse races. He remembers vaguely that he had won a good sum of money. On this occasion, Dermot reflects on memory and how we remember some things, while we forget others (Swift 2025: 59). Winning while betting on horse races includes references to winning the heart of "The lady in chocolate" (Swift 2025: 60). The entire idea of betting is associated by readers and also

by the audience, as is suggested in the short story, with possibilities to win, as well as with possibilities to lose. There is nothing certain about betting and winning is not necessarily the outcome. On the contrary, betting involves risk. It can involve both winning and losing. Readers can imply that, on the one hand, at least temporarily, Dermot had won the girl's heart, while on long term their relationship did not last, which means that he had lost her. Relationships, readers can reflect, based on the process of free associations, involve actions similar to those of betting: Dermot starts off being attracted to the girl and he seems to have won her heart too, yet he cannot know for sure what can happen in time with their relationship. Readers are not given any further details about how and why Dermot and the girl are no longer together, and neither are his friends in the pub. Readers may also think that, based on the skepticism of his friends at the pub when they hear the story, Dermot may simply be making the story up. He may have met the girl, she may have talked to him and served him chocolate cake with his cup of tea, yet maybe he did not actually spend the night with her in the city. Maybe, readers can hypothesize, he had simply hoped for the girl to agree to start a romantic relationship with him. Maybe she had only been nice to him while serving him in the café, and nothing more. Maybe they had not grown to actually know each other personally. Maybe Dermot had daydreamed about it all, since during the present time he regrets not having gone further in his relationship with the girl.

However, even if the romantic relationship had happened, readers can hypothesize that he had only remembered the beautiful moments, while he had erased the negative moments from his mind. This is why the moment when he had lost the girl is missing from the story. In psychoanalytic terms, Dermot may be repressing these negative memories, and he may also be in the stage of denial of his loss. Loss after a romantic relationship breakup leads to grief work similar to the loss of a dear person who has died. Grief work (Clewell 2004; Freud 1917) takes various forms and stages which vary from one individual to another. In the case of Dermot, readers who are familiar with psychoanalytic theories can consider that he is going through the stage of denial while he is also aware that he has lost the girl, since he claims, from the beginning of the story, that he knew a girl who worked for a chocolate company once. The past tense and the adverb once suggest that he is aware of the loss, while he is also in denial of it, by trying to live again the story and to preserve it alive in his memories. The fact that this is a story he had never told his friends at the pub before shows that he has ran away from it, or avoided it, due to the negative feelings related to the loss of the girl and of their romantic relationship. Everything that is left is a story, which in itself suggests that it is not real, or, at least, no longer real. By telling this story from his life, Dermot tries to come to terms with the implied loss of the girl who had worked in a chocolate company.

We notice that the external settings in this short story are pushed aside or contaminated by elements suggesting the psychological reality attached to them. The

Skinners' Arms only suggest a place where stories are told, while the setting where Dermot met the girl is not clear in his memory: it may have been a café, or it may have been a hotel. Readers imply that Dermot may have met her in the restaurant of the hotel where he was staying in York. This uncertainty suggests that the setting is not important, since what matters is how the girl had talked to him and had offered him a slice of chocolate cake with his tea. The chocolate cake can be freely associated by knowledgeable readers with sweet words or sweet behaviour on the part of the girl. She had, thus, treated him nicely.

After winning a good sum at the races, Dermot confesses to his friends at the pub that he wanted "a nice cup of tea, a proper cup of tea served nice and proper. Not another pint in a pub. A nice cup of tea" (Swift 2025: 61). The inanimate objects suggest an emotional, affective need of the storyteller. The pint he could drink in a pub can be understood by readers as suggesting a night out with friends, or time spent with friends, in a pub, for entertainment. However, Dermot needed much more than the company of his friends. The cup of tea can suggest a nice girl, such as the girl who had worked for a chocolate company and was working as a waitress when he met her. He may have been in need of a romantic relationship, an idea which is confirmed for readers by the mention that "it was the right decision" (Swift 2025: 61). The decision was related, thinking at a surface, first level layer of meaning, to stop to have a cup of tea in a place in the city. At a deeper level, readers infer that it was the right decision to start looking for a romantic love relationship at the time. Afterwards, Dermot presents, in his story, the meeting with the girl, who is a waitress.

The indirect communication which is noticed in their communication brings further suggestions and implications on the word chocolate.

The waitress asks him if he would like anything else with his tea, and right away proposed to him one slice of a very good chocolate. He does not have time to answer and say yes or no, but he confesses that he would not say no. The girl takes this opportunity to tell him "that she used to work in chocolate herself" (Swift 2025: 62). Dermot mentions to his audience that she did not have to tell him this, which means that the very fact that she did, readers imply, suggests that she liked him and this was, in his opinion, a reason for her to become "chatty" (Swift 2025: 62) by talking about chocolate. Dermot mentions to his audience that he believed that the girl was actually aware of how he pictured her "coated in chocolate" (Swift 2025: 62), suggesting that the attraction was mutual. The girl also mentions to Dermot that he was lucky for he could have the last slice of cake. He confesses to his audience that he already knew he was lucky, referring to meeting the girl. The girl also told him, and he finds this inviting, that "it was her last half hour too" (Swift 2025: 63), referring to her shift, which again she did not have to mention, as Dermot believes. Here readers are witnesses to various allusions and suggestions beyond the actual meaning of words, as if Dermot and the girl were seeking confirmation from the other or as if the girl were

launching an invitation to Dermot for them to spend some time together. Readers understand in this way that they both liked each other.

In real-life conversations, we rely on both verbal and non-verbal communication to understand our interlocutor. In the case of the dialogue presented in Swift's short story, we notice how Dermot relies on what is implied and not said directly. In addition, he relies on the connotations and free associations we all make when it comes to chocolate, chocolate cake, and cup of tea. These all point to what we prefer and what we find sweet. When Dermot mentions that he did not take the train back home that evening, readers notice an indirect way of saying that he spent the night together with the girl.

Readers then witness the final free associations belonging to Dermot and his return to reality.

Dermot reflects on another example of free associations having to do with chocolate, namely on how "sometimes life can be very sweet" (Swift 2025: 64). Afterwards, he reflects on how the girl he had met was also very sweet.

While telling his story and reflecting on it, Dermot had forgotten about the outside, showing how absorbed he was in his inner world. At the end of his storytelling and reflections, he mentions that the outside setting is still there. This is a sign of returning to reality, and to the present-day setting. Frequently, in this short story, we witness intrusions of reality under the form of the comments of Dermot's friends. At some point, he present-day cold evening intrudes in the process of storytelling, marking a break with the reality presented by the world of the story. The story is told by Dermot with interruptions and reflections.

Readers are invited, indirectly, to reflect on how storytelling intersects with a sense of identity. If we, knowledgeable readers, consider the work Time and Narrative by Ricoeur (1984-88), we notice how Ricoeur theorizes that we understand ourselves through the stories we tell. The story of the girl working in a chocolate company is part of Dermot"s identity. He tries to integrate his past and present self through the process of storytelling. At the end he explicitly mentions who he is and where he is from, which he had also told the girl.

With respect to metaphor and cognitive theory, we can identify the use of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) in this short story written by Swift. “Life is a box of chocolates” can be a conceptual metaphor suggested, indirectly, to the readers by this story, as they are invited to follow the process of free associations themselves. This metaphor means that we do not know what life can offer us until we try it, and Dermot did try to enter a romantic relationship with the girl in his story, as we understand through indirect language and various allusions.

3. Results

The analysis of the short story Chocolate presented in this paper has shown how free associations, non-verbal language and the symbolic meaning of various elements

in the fictional world can intersect. In addition, the analysis has shown how the nucleus of free associations, represented by the word and designated reality in the title, Chocolate, can in fact keep the short story together and tie in each of the elements in the story into a harmonious whole. The word chocolate can be associate with a sweetheart in romantic relationship terms, with a sweet girl, with a girl made of chocolate, with sweet moments in life, etc. The sweetness of chocolate can become a means of comfort and of compensation for a life that is not so sweet – but, on the contrary, for a life that is bitter and harsh. Daydreaming can be associated with the sweetness of chocolate and with a means of finding comfort, while reality can prove to be a completely opposite impression, of discomfort and bitter sense of reality.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

We cannot expect a short story created by a writer to faithfully reflect the process of free association as it is done in its raw form in therapy or in the process of self-analysis. Writers, according to Freudian theories (Freud 1983), daydream just like all of us, but they move on from the raw material, giving it artistic shape and value. The work of the writer is clearly felt, as all details have a high impact on us readers, while he preserves the apparent naturalness and incoherence of the free associations. It is the work of the therapist to put together the free associations and identify repeated motifs. Swift shortens the process and also includes the reader in discovering it, like the therapist.

Listening is an active process for therapists, just as reading is for readers. Readers listen to the confession of the character called Dermot and borrow his perspective even if the story is told from a third person perspective.

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"Parts of the times": history, politics and contemporary culture as coordinates of Herman Melville's artistic universe

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Abstract

As Herman Melville observed in his 1850 essay Hawthorne and His Mosses, "great geniuses are parts of the times, they themselves are the times, and possess a corresponding coloring". Although Melville's vision bears the seal of the mythical, the indeterminate and the universal, his works seem to have absorbed and transfigured the essence of his contemporary world. The present paper offers a glimpse into that segment of the Melvillean studies which engage the dynamics of the relationship between text and context and address the question of cultural, social and historical embeddedness by referencing a few notable pieces of literary and cultural criticism meant to foreground the cultural, social, political and historical coordinates of the writings of this illustrious representative of the American Renaissance. Melville's artistic universe is explored through the lenses of historicism, new historicism, cultural criticism, postcolonial criticism and various other critical tools, an enterprise apt to raise and possibly provide answers to enquiries related to the plurality of meanings which can be derived by applying various reading strategies to that kind of literature which probes at "the very axis of reality".

Keywords

Americanness, criticism, context, embeddedness, culture, politics

1. Introduction

Recent criticism has been concerned with anchoring Melville's vision in 19th century America, although it does not deny the mythic, indeterminate nature of much of his work. This view is supported by Melville's own thoughts expressed in his essay *Hawthorne and His Mosses* that "great geniuses are parts of the times, they themselves are the times, and possess a corresponding coloring" (Melville 1850:25).

The myth of Melville's alienation lies at the center of a critical trend originating in the 1920s when disaffected critics, following the lines of the cynical bitterness of the Lost Generation, looked upon him as a fellow nay-sayer whose somber outlook and artistic insight reaching down to "the very axis of reality", to use his own words from the essay quoted above, stood in decided contrast to the cultural background of facile optimism and smug philistinism. Along came the New Critics, who constructed a new Melville who stood out as a singular master of irony and paradox. In the wake of New Criticism there emerged the myth-and-symbol theorists who insisted that Melville

projected what Richard Poirier referred to as a mythic "world elsewhere" (Poirier 1966) because of the dearth of materials for great literature provided by the cultural context of his time.

The deconstructionists hailed Melville as an unparalleled master of *aporia* and indeterminacy which he handled with intellectual ease – a quality which singled him out, distancing him from his unsophisticated contemporaries. All these schools of literary criticism fail to devote any attention to what Hans Bertens calls "the *historical situatedness* and the *politics"* (Bertens 2014:67) of the Melvillean texts.

Before the late 1960s the question of the extent to which the literary text represents "the product of the historical period in which it was written" was considered "irrelevant or even detrimental to reading and interpretation" (Bertens 2014:67-68).

Maurice Mandelbaum proposes an overarching definition of historicism as the belief that an adequate understanding of the nature of any phenomenon and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained through considering it in terms of the place which it occupied and the role which it played within a process of development (Mandelbaum 1971:42).

Paul Hamilton narrows the definition down and describes historicism as "a critical movement insisting on the prime importance of historical context to the interpretation of texts of all kinds" (Hamilton 1996:3).

Historicist principles can be effectively applied to literary studies in a variety of ways, the underlying assumption of all being that the work is determined by and in turn determines its context in history and can be understood only historically. Therefore, from a historicist perspective, the meaning of a literary work is revealed only if placed in its cultural and historical context and not by reference to a set of transcendental, immovable values.

The recent reconstruction of Melville's contexts has brought about a complete reappraisal of his work from the perspective of politics, cultural imperialism, slavery debate, urban life, production means and many others. For instance, Robert Milder identifies Melville's "response to contemporary social and political developments" as one of the areas of his work holding promising potential for "future investigation" (Milder 2002: 95). The scholarship devoted to Melville's work includes a wide range of historicist interpretations meant to cast light upon some aspects of his writings which have yet to be explored in depth.

A case in point is Bruce Harvey's study in which he claims that *Typee* can be understood "properly in a way which is unique with respect to its genre – autobiographical travelogue and a comparative social treatise – only by focusing on those patterns of meaning that derive from Melville's concerns and those patterns that derive from actual historical transactions" (Harvey 1993:421).

He insists that while in the symbolic and allegorical works that followed *Typee* – *Omoo* in 1847 and *Mardi* in 1849 – factual United States relations to Polynesia may be

largely irrelevant to interpretation, in the case of *Typee* those relations simply cannot be ignored. *Typee* should be read with an appreciation of the historical context and the socio-political reflections growing out of that context. Harvey examines the ways in which the exportation of American law to Hawaii in the early 1840s is relevant to the legal rhetoric and social conflicts that characterize turning points in Tommo's story. *Typee* represents a real encounter with mid-19th century Typees, however filtered through the semi-fictitious Tommo. The essayist also argues that the novel represents their society in order to investigate a rhetoric of natural legalism, a rhetoric that "although increasingly obsolete when it came to the pragmatics of legal practice, nonetheless still informed social and political theorizing during the antebellum period" (Harvey 1993: 403). Harvey also proposes to show that the protagonist's ambivalent attitude towards Typeean law reflects not only the contradictory attitude that many Americans who visited the Polynesian islands had when appraising the native customs but, more importantly, Tommo's and his culture's fundamental uncertainty about what best grounds authority – an explicit and historically determined set of positive law codes or a trans-historical law of the heart which Tommo refers to as "the precepts graven on every breast." Harvey concludes by noting that Melville's Polynesian travels enabled him to adopt a detached standpoint from which he could critique the coerciveness and, at times, the inhumanity of his own culture's law and legal institutions. However, the author eschews the challenge of resolving whether or not natural legalism, "the precepts graven on every breast", constitutes a less or more coercive form of social rule than that which is based upon written law codes.

John Samson offers an insightful analysis of the interconnectedness of text and context, that is, of narrative and history in *Typee*. He contends that the dynamics of history and fiction in Melville's first novel form a vital aspect of the narrative itself. Furthermore, he argues, it is certain that "the history Melville read and lived influenced the fiction he created and the history Tommo reads influences the actions and the narrative he presents" (Samson 1984:187).

Through Tommo, Melville questions both the naïve and indiscriminate application of the histories Tommo and the Western civilization have founded their beliefs upon and the historicity of the works themselves. Samson makes the claim that the history of the white culture's exploration, grounded in the concepts of progress and primitivism is itself fiction just as Tommo's *Typee*, while Melville's *Typee*, by exposing these fictions, is more than a fiction drawn from history. In the essayist's terms, "it is an account of the collective fiction that is the white culture's history and a plea for a tolerant, relativistic perception of this historical reality" (Samson 1984:196).

Robert Levine engages Melville's novella *Benito Cereno* from the perspective of historicist and cultural criticism. He argues that the novella "powerfully and problematically addresses the politics of slavery and race in antebellum America" (Levine 1994:111) and he pronounces it to be "*the* pre-Civil War antislavery

masterpiece" (Levine 1994:112). He discusses "the historicity or the cultural embeddedness" (Levine 1994:113) of this antislavery narrative which attempts to implicate the readers in the racist world view of an American sea captain with limited perceptions only to expose "the mendacity, immorality and dangers" of that world view. Levine also insists upon the story's "trans-historical power as a work of cultural criticism" which challenges the readers to consider their "implication in the dominant modes of cultural power" (Levine 1994:113). Levine critiques Delano's "smug multiculturalism" and the way he expresses his "fondness" for the African slave women with their children, in the terms of the "anthropological, colonizing" discourse of the day. Levine draws a disquieting parallel between Delano's confident colonizing perspective and the "politically correct" attitude of white American professors towards their non-white students based upon their "knowledge" of where the respective students are coming from. He also expresses his hope that awareness of the cultural engagements of literary texts will help "to make America into a better nation where there's less inequality, less domination, less blindness" (Levine 1994:120).

Marvin Fisher's analysis of Melville's short fiction is described by the author himself as "an exercise" in both "cultural history and literary criticism" (Fisher 1977: ii). In the *Preface* to his study *Going Under: Melville's Short Fiction and the American 1850s*, Fisher clearly states his intention to stress the relation between Melville's stories and the cultural context in which they were written. The critic remarks that "Melville (…) was concerned with the moral and spiritual paralysis of his time and place and the fifteen stories which he wrote in the space of a few years (…) explore a series of social, intellectual and spiritual crises" (Fisher 1977: xi).

He explains the title of his book – *Going Under* – by submitting that the stories suggest that "the social and political ideas of American life (…) – rather than Melville's talent or intellect – were going under" (Fisher 1977: xi). The critic offers further explanation for the phrase in the title, contending that Melville's social criticism was so mordant that to convey his ideas covertly would have meant discouraging publishers and his daring views would have struck the largest segment of the reading audience as outrageous. According to Fisher, Melville had to resort to a strategy of obliqueness by means of which he could "publish some unpopular truths through the indirection of symbolism, allusion and analogy (…). He chose to *go under* as a literary strategy" thus becoming the first major American "underground writer" (Fisher 1977: xii).

Fisher advances a reading of Melville's short fiction that is more relevant to cultural history than to literary criticism. In the concluding remarks of his book, Fisher rounds off the argument of *Going Under*, making the contention that both the theme and technique of Melville's short fiction are meant to "project the other side" of the American "assumptions and hopes", "to deflate the [American] vaunted superiority to Europe and to assert [the] partiality and imperfection in what is from the start a fallen

world of inevitable duplicity and recurrent deceptions" (Fisher 1977: 212-213). Moreover, the critic identifies Melville's ability to handle recurrent themes relevant to the "collective American psyche" as the reason for "the increasing interest" in the Melvillean short fiction (Fisher 1977: 213).

Beryl Rowland shares the assessment that Melville resorted to the medium of short fiction as a form of "underground" writing that "seems to have provided experimental answers to the problem"(Rowland 1988:157) he raised in the famous "dollars damn me" letter to Hawthorne, namely, that of encoding his message in works that "will pay" (*The Letters of Herman Melville:* 129).

Likewise, William Wasserstrom observes that the irregularity of the tales reflects "the irregularity in the very fabric of national culture" (Wasserstrom 1984: 140).

Wyn Kelley's work *Melville's City: Literary and Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century New York* (1996) offers a complex perspective upon Melville's relationship with New York City early in his career. This effective analysis of the Melvillean cityscape may be subsumed to the same kind of historicist approach. The author investigates the influence of the city on Melville and discloses new aspects of Melville's links to 19th century society. The critic shows that Melville was deeply immersed in the culture of New York where he spent much of his adult life and that even his sea novels teem with urban imagery. Kelley sets up an original typology – based on the popular literature of the time – which sheds a new light on the urban context of Melville's fiction. She proves that Melville transfigured all the representations of New York as capital, labyrinth, City of Man and City of God, encompassing both the positive and negative attitudes toward it

The radicalism in the 1930s and 1940s had its counterpart in the Melvillean scholarship. The politically engaged scholarship was based upon an awareness of the pernicious impact of industrial capitalism and stemmed from a desire to address the issue of class divisions cutting across the American society. A large number of the early representatives of American Studies scholarship – a field of enquiry shaped by academic and political radicalism were "what might be called 'public intellectuals'". That is, they were involved in the politics and social movements of their day, supporters of The New Deal or activists of the left who identified with a socialist tradition" (May 1996: 182).

F. O. Matthiessen is the brilliant author of *American Renaissance*, a work used by Frederick Crews as the "the established mastertext in American Studies against which to assess the New Americanists' work" (Pease 1994: 30), a text which, as Leo Marx points out, illustrates a methodology far more sophisticated than "the shallow mechanistic Marxism that prevailed during the 1930s"(Marx 1964:49). Positioned "between the 30's radicalism and the Cold War consensus" (Irr 1998: 26), F. O. Matthiessen foregrounds aesthetic concerns, which represents a parting point from the leftist critics of the 1930's who were preoccupied with underlining the utilitarian,

mechanistic aspect of literature. As he declares in the opening section of the *American Renaissance*, his aim is to reveal how "literature illuminates" the age which represents a step beyond the project of his predecessors meant to demonstrate how "literature reflects an age" (Matthiessen 1941:x). In fact, F. O. Matthiessen conflates the historical – which proposes a view of literature as a reflex of society – and the literary – for which society and history are nothing but a thematic component in literature, and the result is a reading of American literature which has not only "established a canon of American authors" but has also set "the methodology with which those authors' works have been treated in subsequent criticism" (Irr 1998: 25). John Carlos Rowe identifies the huge moral and political significance of the *American Renaissance* in the troubled global context in which it was written:

What Matthiessen accomplished was the translation of Puritan spiritual values into the secular philosophy and aesthetic values of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Melville and Walt Whitman – heirs to the cultural legacy of New England Puritanism (…). In his own time, Matthiessen worked for the rebirth of such American values at the very moment totalitarianism challenged democracy. He knew how important it was in 1941 to distinguish between democratic individualism, of the sort he identifies with Ishmael, and tyrannical will, of the sort he recognizes in Ahab's madness (Rowe 1994:25).

Matthiessen emphasized the inextricable connection between Melville's vision and his contemporary world, or, as he puts it, "Melville made his great attempt to unmask himself and his age" (Matthiessen 1941:376). The writer's concern, Matthiessen goes on to argue, was not with the oppressive economic system but with "the human suffering" (401) inflicted by it: "Melville was stirred by the age's growing manifestation of greed", the characters in *The Confidence Man* being "made fools or knaves by money" (408). He identifies the greatest weakness of American culture in the fact that "the so-called educated class knows so little of the country and the people of which it is nominally part" (511).

The scholar also foregrounds Melville's "assumption of democratic justice" (402) which found one expression in his question advanced in *White Jacket*: "Who put this great gulf between the American Captain and the American sailor?" which is emblematic for "the incurable antagonism of two classes (…) in perpetual conflict" (Matthiessen 1941:403).

An insightful piece of "literary-political critique" (Nielsen 1997:172*)* is C. L. R. James's seminal work *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways – the Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* originally published in 1953. This book stands out as a landmark of literary and cultural criticism prefiguring a significant number of concerns which are currently central to the contemporary field of Postcolonial Studies such as: the language/experiences of ordinary black people and their capacity for self-emancipation; the relationship between race and class; the possibility of destabilizing

oppressive regimes from within; a critical negotiation with powerful ideologies (imperialism, Marxism, and black nationalism); a complex, if not universalizing, vision of the dialectical interrelatedness of past/present, global/local, and metropolis/periphery (Adams 2001: 258).

James, described as "an early postcolonial critic" submits a politicized version of literary scholarship "in a way that is praised by postcolonial theorists, particularly Edward Said and Henry Louis Gates" (Adams 2001:257). In *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* the Trinidadian critic performs an analysis of the American culture through a challenging interpretation of *Moby Dick* and concludes that Herman Melville is essentially American and second only to Shakespeare in respect to his mastery of the English language. James primarily intended his Melville book as a means of protest against McCarthyism of which he was a victim "insofar as he was imprisoned [on Ellis Island] and deported for un-American activities" (Paget & Buhle 1992: 14). Yet, he reminds the readers that Melville is an artist and that he "did not write political treatises" (Grimshaw 1992: 214) thus drawing the readers' attention to the dividing line between the Melvillean text – which is and stays literary – and James's politically-charged reading of it. *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways* emerges as "a form of personal political testament joined to criticism" (Nielsen 1997:185) in which the author reveals the significance of his reading of Moby Dick "as a transformative, perhaps even Americanizing experience" (Nielsen 1997:38). When discussing Melville's role in nineteenth-century American intellectual life, James locates the writer's relevance to his age in his ability "to pose unanswered questions about his historic moment" (Nielsen 1997: 40) and contends that "behind this marvelous sea story [Moby Dick] this writer was digging into problems of far greater social significance for us today than were Flaubert, Dostoyevsky and Rimbaud" (Nielsen 1997:45). As C.L.R. James sees it, the value of a cultural or aesthetic product is contingent upon the "condensation of historical forces" (Paget & Buhle:15) within the context of which it was produced. In Melville's case it was "the rise and formation of American civilization with all its contradictions" (Paget & Buhle:16) that represented the historical background of his art. The critic borrowed the title for his work from *Moby Dick* which he perceives as a narration of the dreams and aspirations of the "mariners, renegades and castaways" by whom he was surrounded during his internment on Ellis Island. The resulting book – a hybrid of cultural and literary criticism – was intended as a token of the critic's profound knowledge and understanding of the American culture which he attempted to present "as testimony to the fact that he was a much better American than the immigration authorities" (Paget & Buhle 1992: 12). In *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways* James decodes the role and significance of the characters in *Moby Dick* interpreting them according to a pattern of cold war imagery which is meant to suggest that totalitarianism was not necessarily a foreign threat but it was consubstantial with the mid-twentieth-century American social and political arena: the *Pequod* stands for

the arena which witnesses the complex clash of antagonistic forces represented by the masses, whose literary epitome is the crew – on the one hand – and Ahab, the totalitarian figure towering over all and crushing the values of democracy and civilization, on the other hand:

Nobody, not a single soul, thought that in the managers, the superintendents, the executives, the administrators would arise such loathing and bitterness against the society of free enterprise, the market and democracy, that they would try to reorganize it to suit themselves and, if need be, destroy civilization in the process... It is the unique and solitary greatness of Melville that he saw and understood the type to the last degree and the relation to it of all other social types. How he was able to do this a hundred years ago, we shall also show but the first point is to understand the totalitarian type itself (James 2001:9).

James's interpretation of the novel revolves around the similarity between the structure of a factory and the organization of the *Pequod* human microcosm perceived as "a microcosm of labor" (Paget & Buhle 1992:11-12):

Ahab is the American Prospero, determined to conquer both nature and history and to subject all to the demands and logic of capitalist industry (…). Consequently, the harmony that James seeks in socialism is one that will overcome the totalitarian tendencies of (…) Prospero/Ahab/Ford and reintegrate the individual into society (Paget 2000: 53-54).

James levels searing criticism at Ahab's excesses arising out of his own experiences with cold war ideology; he also criticizes the labeling of *Moby Dick* as a political allegory of democratic America – a view proposed by Richard Chase, for instance, who postulates the clear-cut distinction between Ahab's totalitarian "otherness" and Ishmael's Americanness. In contradistinction, James offers an alternative reading of the novel as an analysis of the transnational identity of the United States, foregrounding the *Pequod* crew members as the genuine heroes of the novel, arguing that the element which provides cohesion to their group is "the fact that they work together on a whaling-ship" (James 2001: 20), action being prevalent over the national background as a defining identity. Besides, "James's interest in this labor-based, multinational community dovetails perfectly with Melville's assertion that the best whale-men come from tropical islands" (Boyagoda 2003: 70). James's insightful critical exercise is an illustration of how literature can be projected into the very center of the political arena.

Another instance of politically-oriented interpretation of Melville's work is embodied in Clare Spark's book *Hunting Captain Ahab: Psychological Warfare and the Melville Revival*, a study of the multiple facets and multivalent impact of the Melville Revival and the Protean reception of Melville's work. Her study offers a sweeping view of the politics of American literature and of literary criticism. In the author's opinion, Melville emerges as a complex personality, defying any attempt at

categorizing. Since Melville's political orientation is a question still open to debate – some argue that he was an ultraconservative, others that he was a centrist or even a left-wing radical – Spark is in favor of no definitive answers which are still to be "hunted for" as the title of the book announces. She contends that Melville's politics are informed by the same ambiguity displayed by politics in the United States and in any other industrial democracy, and, in support of this assertion, she offers an overview of some of the most prominent critical perspectives on Melville's political orientation. As a matter of fact, her study focuses on the clash between the ways in which radical and conservative modernists "appropriat[ed] Melville's social philosophy", simultaneously mapping the kaleidoscopic transformations of Melville's images: "Underneath the mixed, ever-ambiguous reception to Melville's art is a larger impulse: the subliminal blue penciling of natural rights" (Spark 2001: 432). Furthermore, she contends that the Melville Revival was a political phenomenon rather than an aesthetic one:

The Melville Revival, then, is only tangentially about the author of *Moby-Dick*. It is but one telling episode in a long-standing global effort to maintain authoritarian social relations in an age of democratic aspirations (Spark 2001: 11).

The author openly states that she is challenging the "New Historicist approach" in her discussion of Melville's context by announcing her intention not to "merge Melville's choices with institutional pressures that molded his choices" (Spark 2001: 602); rather, she proposes to delineate the "hard choices" (Spark 2001: 602) autonomous intellectuals – such as Milton or Melville – are faced with.

Carolyn Karcher, in her mapping of the strategies employed in teaching Melville, identifies his "prescient insight" into the central problems of contemporary American culture as a source of his enduring power: alienation, racism, an "unbridled militarism that threatens our very existence while demanding that we resign our civil liberties and human rights in the name of national security", "the widening gap between the ruling class and the workers it immiserates" (Karcher 2006:420). Karcher outlines the main themes which inform Melville's writing. For instance, she recognizes in *Billy Budd* foreshadowings of the nuclear war and its strategy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), while Vere's and Claggart's disguised homosexual drives are relevant to the present-day controversy regarding the ban against the practitioners of alternative-life styles in the Force.

In *Benito Cereno*, Karcher further contends, Delano's racist biases blind him with respect to the slave revolt aboard the ship while *Bartleby the Scrivener,* as well as *The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids,* foregrounds Melville's critique of capitalism and alienation as an outgrowth of the capitalist social and economic system.

Coming from the diametrically opposite area of the critical spectrum, Peter Shaw, the author of *Recovering American Literature* (1994), launches fervent criticism

at the "politically correct" teachers of literature expressing his concern about how "teachers in the 1990s have shifted their basis of judgment from literary excellence to political correctness"(Shaw 1994:19), thus abandoning their status as educators and champions of aesthetic values in order to assume the role of pursuers of political agendas and spokespersons for minority groups.

In order to illustrate the process through which American literary masterpieces are twisted to serve the interests of various waves of social movements, Shaw examines the way in which "*Moby Dick*, by most accounts the greatest single work produced by an American author in the 19th century", has been misused as "a vehicle for attacks on America" by politically correct teachers and critics alike. He contends that *Moby Dick* "should be understood in its own complexities" and not in a politicized manner, taking issue with the ideas of those scholars who see Melville's work as an ideological vehicle. For instance, Shaw notes, Carolyn Karcher found in Melville's writings "prophetic warnings about nuclear weapons and a critique of the American patriarchal society" (Shaw 1994:42), while Elizabeth Schultz believes that "he wrote indictments of American and European imperialism, slavery, militarism" (Shaw 1994:102). Shaw quotes another example from the list of scholars with a marked proclivity towards the politicized study of American literature, namely Michael Rogin, who attributes to Melville his own political concerns such as "class conflict, the fate of the poor and exposing the essence of capitalist society" (Shaw 1994:81).

The politically-charged literature courses display total disregard for the artistic richness of national literature with the result that "complexities are flattened, adventure and romance tossed out of the window; each of the American classics is left sounding something like a radical student manifesto of the 1960s" (Shaw 1994: 124).

The author of *Recovering American Literature* concludes with the poignant observation that "the politicizing of American classics has been a cultural disaster" (Shaw 1994:201) and he exhorts that the young "be given back their heritage." John Carlos Rowe proposes a discussion of Shaw's somewhat paradoxical stance in *Recovering American Literature* (1994). On the one hand, Shaw argues that "political correctness has sabotaged the study of American literature" (Shaw 93:70) and undertakes to save five American classic works "from the trivializing gestures of those 'Lilliputians' who insist on cutting our greatest treasures 'down to their own size'" (Shaw 93:75). On the other hand, he advances a politicized reading of *Moby Dick* as an illustration of the "'democratic possibilities' explored in our greatest literature" (Rowe 1984*:* 25). In order to differentiate his reading from the politicized interpretations he criticizes, Shaw highlights the fact that 'the democratic element' in the novel 'was spiritual before it was political'" and supports his arguments with F.O. Matthiessen's 1941 study *American Renaissance* and Henry Nash Smith's 1951 essay "The Image of Society in Moby-Dick". In spite of all that, Rowe notes that Shaw's attempt to conflate the Christian and democratic system of values "by no means enables Shaw to transcend

polities. Rather, it locates him firmly in an identifiable political tradition" (Rowe 1984: 21), represented by those intellectuals who uphold the theory of the Puritan roots of American democracy.

Rowe concludes his essay launching a question relevant to his own experience as a student, namely, how it was possible for *Moby Dick* to have been taught at the height of the political turmoil of the 1960's without paying appropriate attention to "the great social and political events of America in the 1850s" (Rowe 1984:19); furthermore, he expresses his favorable view of a politicized study of Melville which "has helped historicize [*Moby Dick*] within its own time and confirm judgments of its literary value" (Rowe 1984: 21).

Irrespective of the variety of the critical theories and perspectives that have been employed to explore Herman Melville's work, his status as a universal writer is firmly underpinned by his value as a "national novelist", for he remains "the novelist of the nation in many senses" as Robert K. Martin most felicitously calls him.

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Kadare as a unique Tourist Attraction

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Abstract

Ismail Kadare is the most emblematic figure of Albanian literature and one of the most distinguished figures in world literature. He represents a rare combination of art, history, and tourism, making him a "cultural ambassador" of Albania. His works, translated into numerous languages worldwide, have served as a window into Albanian culture and history. Through his literary creations, he has placed Albania on the global cultural map as a country not only with a rich spiritual heritage but also with a profound literary tradition. This theoretical study aims to highlight how the life, works, heritage, and birthplace of the writer have been transformed into points of interest for both domestic and international tourists. In its second and most significant part, the paper seeks to emphasize the impact that literature and great personalities have on the development of sustainable tourism in Albania. The study focuses on the city of Gjirokastër, the writer's birthplace. His house museum in Gjirokastër, declared a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO, serves as a reference point for visitors from Albania and abroad. This study examines the role of Kadare's museum, the house museum, tourist itineraries related to his life and works, as well as the impact this promotion has on increasing tourist interest. The research aims to analyze Kadare as a unique phenomenon, where art, history, and tourism merge to create a singular attraction of national and international significance. Through this analysis, it is suggested that promoting figures like Kadare can be an effective strategy to enhance tourist interest and strengthen the Albanian cultural identity.

Keywords

emblematic figure, unique tourist attraction, sustainable tourism, tourist itineraries, tourist interest, cultural identity, promotion



Figure 1. Image of the author Ismail Kadare

1. Introduction

The colossus of Albanian letters-this is how the great writer of worldwide fame, Ismail Kadare, has been described.

Kadare was born in 1936 in the Palorto neighborhood of Gjirokastër, into a Bektashi urban family. In his childhood he spent a great deal of time in the library of his maternal grandfather, who was a judge educated in Istanbul. At the age of 13, he discovered Shakespeare's Macbeth, and from that moment his love for literature was born. From that period until the end of his life, he never ceased writing.

Ismail Kadare was an academic, a politician, a former deputy of the People's Assembly (1970–1982), deputy chairman of the Democratic Front, and one of the greatest contemporary writers. As a writer, he is distinguished primarily for prose, but his contribution also extends to dramaturgy, poetry, and translation. To date, his works have been translated into around 45 different languages, making him the principal representative of Albanian literature throughout the world.

In 1996, Kadare became a permanent member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in France. He has been honored with numerous international awards, among them the Man Booker International Prize in 2005, the Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts in 2009, and the Jerusalem Prize in 2015 (Redaksia Teren Art 2024). His work is translated and studied as European and world literature on all continents, from Australia, Japan, and the USA to European metropolises. Now read in more than 50 languages worldwide, this body of work is considered a contemporary global literary phenomenon and has won the most important national and international literary awards in France, Great Britain, Spain and Italy, Israel, and South Korea; it has also been honored with acknowledgments and honorary titles (doctor honoris causa) in almost all Balkan countries (Akademia e Shkencave te Shqiperise 2024).

He is a laureate of many national and international literary awards. In 1992 he was awarded the Prix Mondial Cino Del Duca. In 2005 he won the Man Booker Prize, being nominated alongside Nobel laureates such as Günter Grass, Gabriel García Márquez, and Kenzaburō Ōe, among others. The chairman of the jury justified the decision to award the prize to Kadare with the words: "Ismail Kadare is a writer who places an entire culture on the map: its history, its desires, folklore, politics, and tragedies. He is a universal writer with a narrative tradition that goes back to Homer."

In 2009, he was honored with the Spanish Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts-the most important literary prize in Spanish-speaking countries and one of the most prestigious literary awards in the world. In 2010, Ismail Kadare was honored in Italy with the Lerici Pea Prize. In 1996, Kadare became a lifelong member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in France. He also became a member of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, a member of the Academy of Sciences of Kosovo, and since 2018 an external member of the Academy of Sciences of Montenegro. Ismail Kadare has been decorated by the President of the Republic of Albania with the Order "Honor

of the Nation" and by the French state with the orders "Cross of the Legion of Honor" and "Officer of the Legion of Honor." The study of Kadare's work has been undertaken by foreign authors in their respective native languages, such as Éric Faye and Jean-Paul Champseix in French, Piet de Moor in Dutch, Peter Morgan in English, Bernardo Joffily in Portuguese, José Carlos Rodrigo Bretó in Spanish, and Ece Dillioğlu in Turkish (Redaksia Teren Art 2024). Personalities of worldwide renown have elevated and continue to elevate Kadare because they recognized in him a dominant national desire to affirm the Albanian nation on the most important international stages-a writer of global stature, and even a distinguished diplomat and ambassador of Albanian culture (Ademi 2024).

He is the only Albanian writer whose works have been translated into more than 45 foreign languages, a fact that has enabled Albania and the history of our country to become known throughout the world. "Poet of the Balkans, rhapsode of Europe" is how the French President Emmanuel Macron described the writer Ismail Kadare, when he bestowed upon him the highest decoration of the Republic of France, the "Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor" (Myftari 2024). According to Rusi, the writer Kadare is timeless; he is not closely bound to any single era and speaks to all times. Through his literature, the shadows of the past are transformed into reality and resonate endlessly with timelessness. Kadare's literature represents precisely the achievement of such a dimension, where art becomes sublime and it is of little importance to define clear boundaries between the real and that which goes beyond it. We encounter the real, the surreal, magical realism, and psychological realism; the author treats a specific time while addressing all epochs (Rusi 2015). Kadare is not merely a writer. He is a phenomenon, a style, a spokesperson and counter-spokesperson, a narrator and a visionary, perhaps even a difficult man. Yes, he is undoubtedly also a great writer-an Albanian, Balkan, European, and world writer. So many names and descriptions have been used and still should be used for this curiously unique identity (Kosta 2010: 11).

On the first anniversary of the passing of the great writer and academician Ismail Kadare, the Academy of Sciences and the Assembly of Albania held a commemorative event in his honor. The President of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, Academician Skënder Gjinushi, stated in his address that: "The physical loss of Kadare is undoubtedly the greatest loss in our literature; it is a very great loss for European and world culture and literature, and for both Albanian and European academic life. Kadare's work will be preserved as one of the treasures of our culture and of Albanological studies."

He further emphasized: "Kadare is a compass for Albania's European orientation, the most influential advocate for Albania's admission into the European family, and a supporter of the resolution of the Kosovo issue and its independence. Kadare's contribution as a cultivator of the language is as valuable as that of Çabej and his generation as scholars" (Akademia e Shkencave 2025).

The icon of Albanian literature, although no longer among us today, continues to attract both domestic and foreign tourists who are interested not only in his life but also

in his literary creativity. The writer's detailed depiction of his hometown has enabled many tourists to become acquainted with Gjirokastër through his works. The writer's birthplace has been transformed into a literary museum; it has been carefully restored with particular attention to preserving the traditional style of Gjirokastër architecture and offers visitors a fully authentic experience of Kadare's life and work as a writer.

The writer Ismail Kadare has left a remarkably rich legacy for future generations. His books are read by people of all age groups and have now become part of school curricula. His most distinguished works, such as The General of the Dead Army (1963), Broken April (1978), The Palace of Dreams, Chronicle in Stone (1971), and others, serve as a historical and cultural window through which Albania is made known to the world.

Kadare is, above all, our person. We are bound to him and he to us. For nearly fifty years, he has been embedded in our psyche. He appears before us whenever we remember, write, or think—ever-present. He constantly reminds us of the beauty of our language and the great potential of modern Albanian, and this fills us with pride (Kosta 2010: 12).

According to Bruno Pjetri, one of the guides at the Kadare Museum in Gjirokastër, tourists say that they come to know Gjirokastër through works such as Chronicle in Stone, Princess Argjiro, and The Fall of the Stone City (The Wrong Dinner). According to Pjetri, these books are wonderful guides for those who wish to discover the history and culture of Gjirokastër.

Even after his death, it is clear that he continues to attract people in many different ways. Below are some of the main elements that make Kadare a unique tourist attraction today:

1. His birthplace in Gjirokastër – the Kadare Museum
2. The Kadare House–Studio, Tirana
3. His literary and cultural heritage

2. The research methodology:

For the preparation of this paper, I have relied on the author's literary works, published academic studies and scientific articles, existing literature in the field of cultural heritage, interviews with tourists and experts, electronic sources, as well as the analysis of tourist itineraries.

The methodology employed highlights, through the identification, determination, and analysis of tangible and intangible values, their importance in increasing tourist interest and in strengthening Albanian cultural identity.

3. The Figure of Ismail Kadare as a Tourist Attraction: His Birthplace in Gjirokastër, The Kadare Museum

Ismail Kadare has two house museums, one in Gjirokastër and the other in Tirana—each more interesting than the other, and both a great source of inspiration. If

one has read Chronicle in Stone, it may feel as though one has already visited the writer's stone house in Gjirokastër, as the author's description of his birthplace is exceptionally vivid; therefore, the curiosity to visit it is very strong. Kadare's house in Gjirokastër is one of the most unique houses in the city (Cri online 2021). In 1994, Ismail Kadare himself placed his birthplace in Gjirokastër at the service of the city through a public letter addressed to the then mayor (BalkanWeb 2015).

The house was renovated and reopened as a museum on January 28, 2016, on the occasion of the writer's 80th birthday. The house is not the original one, which burned down in 1999, but has been rebuilt on the original structure. Inside, three authentic objects are preserved: the writer's cradle, a chest dating from 1889 that belonged to his mother, and a brazier. Beyond its literary significance, the house is also a very interesting building from an architectural point of view. Built in 1799, it represents a reference model of the typical features of Gjirokastër houses, where the structure relies mainly on stone and wood and is characterized by hand-crafted interior ornaments (Erkoci 2015: 6).

The residence is located within the historic center, in the "Palorto" neighborhood. It holds the status of a "Cultural Monument" of the first category and also serves as a cultural center where numerous activities are held.

The restoration fully adhered to the original design of the building, which consists of two floors, including a cellar on the ground floor where food reserves for the winter were stored. This floor also served as a shelter during the bombings of the Second World War. In the foundations of the house there is an original water cistern that collects rainwater from the roof gutters. On the first floor "nëndivan" are the open galleries "hajatet", which were used for animals and work tools.

The second floor contains the living quarters of the house: two large rooms where guests were received and two smaller "winter rooms" used by the family. Inside the house, several original family items are preserved. "The Kadare House" became widely known to visitors thanks to the novel Chronicle in Stone, in which the writer describes every detail of it (Wikipedia 2025).

The cultural heritage specialist and architect Agron Doraci (2017) recounts for the first time the history of the house of the writer Ismail Kadare. He focuses on particular architectural details and considers this residence a pearl of traditional and cultural values preserved in the field of Gjirokastër architecture. Doraci discusses the values of the residence, which dates back to 1770 according to an inscription found on the building's stone plaque, values that go far beyond the writer's emotional descriptions in Chronicle in Stone. Doraci reveals for the first time an unknown history of the building. According to him, the Kadare House has become well known not only within the country but also abroad for two main reasons, which is why it is constantly visited by both local and foreign tourists.

As stated, these reasons are twofold: first, the extraordinary artistic and literary description provided by Kadare in the pages of his books, such as Chronicle in Stone, where in addition to portraying human life in Gjirokastër, he also describes the architecture of the house, the neighborhood, and the entire city. Second, the fact that this residence possesses special architectural values (Cri Online 2024).

Gjirokastër is considered one of the oldest cities in the country, established around the 6th century along the route connecting southern Albania with Ioannina and Thessaloniki. The city's main distinctive feature, which amazes all its visitors, lies in the characteristic style of its constructions, where everything is built entirely of stone, giving the city the name "The Stone City." In this way, the city reflects true mastery in stone craftsmanship, creating a very special and highly attractive atmosphere for tourists. In addition to the external appearance of the city's houses, their interior atmosphere-rich in motifs carved in stone and wood-further enhances the city's importance as a destination to be visited (Doka & Draci 2002).

In his work Chronicle in Stone, Kadare describes the city as follows:

> "This was a sloping city, perhaps the most sloping in the world, which had broken all the laws of urban planning. Because of the steep slope, it happened that at the level of one house's roof there were the foundations of another, and surely this was the only place in the world where a passerby, if he fell, instead of collapsing into the ditch by the road, might fall onto the roof of a tall house. It was truly an astonishing city." (Kadare 2015: 37, 38).

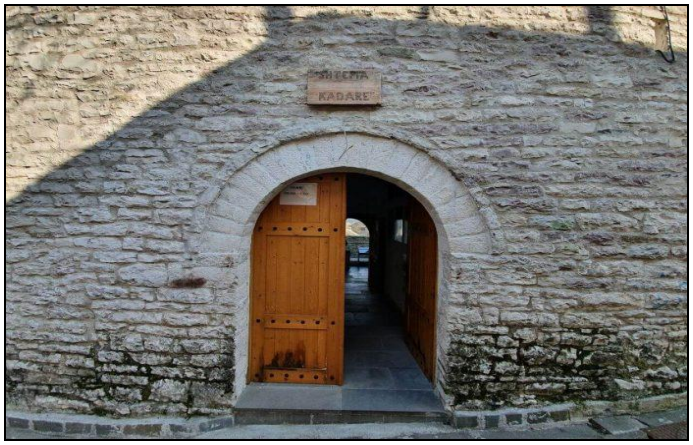


Figure 2. The "House of Kadare" Museum in Gjirokastra

Under the management of the Ministry of Culture, the Kadare House is a well-known destination for every visitor to Gjirokastër. Located within the city's historic center, the building was declared a first-category Cultural Monument on July 5, 1991, and was restored by UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture (Malaj 2025).

The house museum of the writer Ismail Kadare is one of the preferred stops for those visiting Gjirokastër. The reconceptualization of the content inside the Kadare residence ensures an interactive journey for visitors through the writer's childhood and youth, materializing the author's experiences and passages from his books through objects and video messages. Visitors can spend time reading a book inside the house or experiencing the effects of bomber aircraft in the protective shelter.

The year 2023 was the most successful in terms of visitor numbers at the Kadare Museum. More than 8,000 visitors-both foreigners and Albanians-were recorded. Digitalization had a positive impact on visitation. Visitors are interested not only in the writer's work but also in his life in Gjirokastër, and they wish to experience firsthand what they have read, mainly in the novel Chronicle in Stone, in which he vividly describes the house where he was born," states Bruno Pjetri, a tour guide, in an interview with Top Channel (Top Chanel 2024).

Those who choose to visit Gjirokastër do not leave without stopping at the Kadare Museum. The museum is one of the most visited sites in the city. Both local and foreign visitors stop to see the house where the writer was born. A notable difference is made by French visitors, many of whom are familiar with Kadare's literary work. Compared to the same period of the previous year, the number of visitors to this museum has increased by 30% (abcnews 2025).

From the beginning of 2024 until December, the Kadare Museum welcomed around eight thousand domestic and foreign tourists, turning it into one of the most frequented destinations in Gjirokastër (Xhajanka 2024).

According to Albanian Times, more than 125,000 tourists visited Gjirokastër during the first six months of 2025, mainly foreigners drawn by interest in UNESCO World Heritage sites. Officials report that weekend arrivals reach their highest peaks. Argjiro Castle remains the city's main attraction, offering panoramic views of the Drino Valley. The Kadare Museum also attracts many visitors seeking to learn about the life of the distinguished Albanian writer. After daytime visits, tourists can enjoy a vibrant nightlife and a calendar of cultural and artistic events held throughout the season (Albanian Times 2025).

Year	Number of visitors (foreign + domestic)
Year 2023	Over 8000 tourists
Year 2024	Around 8000 tourists
Year 2025 (first half of the year)	Over 125,000 visitors to Gjirokastër (all attractions) — the Kadare Museum is part of this total, but without specific figures



Figure 3. The "House of Kadare" Museum in Gjirokastra

In this way, the "Kadarean" tourist may wish to discover the place where the genius was born, walking along the same cobbled streets he once walked, seeing what his eyes once saw. It has been mentioned before that the writer's house is perhaps the most sacred site of literary tourism. It is the typical place where great works are created. What the house offers is a fragment of the private space in which the writer lived during the process of writing, satisfying the visitor's curiosity. The writer's house helps one better understand his life itself and its influence on his artistic creativity. It seems to strengthen the emotional connection between the tourist and the artist and his work (Erkoci 2015: 122, 123). A very significant impact on the revitalization of the city of Gjirokastër was also made by the initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Gjirokastër for the "Kadare Year." "Kadare Year" has also become a favored incentive for promoting tourism. Artisans in Gjirokastër have turned Kadare's image into a preferred motif for tourist souvenirs and characteristic handicrafts. The stone sculptor Muhedin Makri carved Kadare's portrait in stone as a symbol of dedication to him.



Figure 4. The "House of Kadare" Museum in Gjirokastra from the inside

"By now, Kadare is a writer who no longer belongs only to Gjirokastër and Albania, but to the entire world. This stone work is a gesture of human respect that I, as a stone craftsman and a native of Gjirokastër, show for Kadare," says the master stone carver. To create this work, he relied on several photographs of Kadare as well as images preserved in his memory from conversations with him. "I have also created several other stone works depicting Kadare, which have attracted the attention of tourists, but this portrait, created on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of his birth, is special," says Muhedin. "I would like to offer it not simply in my own name, but in the name of that stone Gjirokastër which Kadare made immortal through his literary work," the master stone carver concludes (Koha jone 2021).

Throughout this year, around 60,000 domestic and foreign tourists visited the museums of the stone city of Gjirokastër. Museums are considered important elements for the development of tourism in the city of Gjirokastër. Tourists who visit the museums in Gjirokastër come from various cities within the country as well as from countries such as Germany, Italy, Greece, and the United States of America, among others, becoming acquainted with the history and traditions of the stone city (Euronews Albania 2025).

4. The Museum House in Tirana

The "Kadare Studio House," originally planned as a museum, is in fact a cultural space developed within the apartment where the writer Ismail Kadare lived from 1974 until the beginning of 1990.

This apartment was not only Kadare's residence, but also his place of work, meditation, and creation, and as such it represents a gateway into the cultural audience of the postwar period (Visit Albania).

The great Albanian writer of worldwide renown donated the house in which he lived with his family and daughters in Tirana to be turned into a museum for all those who wish to learn about his life. This old building has typical communist-era architecture and is located just a few meters behind the Palace of Culture or the Tirana International Hotel, on the former "Broadway Street," now Rruga e Dibrës. The door is old, painted white, similar to all other doors of that period. At that time, only two writers lived in this building-Ismail Kadare and Dritëro Agolli-both of whom had the largest apartments, consisting of four bedrooms. This was very rare at the time, as all other apartments consisted of one or two bedrooms (Visit Tirana).

The first rooms make up the "theatre of memory," where objects, manuscripts, books, and photographs narrate the cities of Kadare: Gjirokastër, his childhood city during the war; Moscow, as the stage of his formation as a writer; and Paris, where his first translations were published and which became his home in exile after 1990.

The Kadare House-Studio is a place full of contrasts. An ordinary place-an apartment at first glance-located in an extraordinary city, the capital of the most

isolated dictatorship in Europe during the Cold War, which is now open to visitors, nearly thirty years after it was abandoned. The arrangement of the silent rooms that "speak" through the black and white of writing narrates the contrasts of this place. A place as unique and mysterious as its inhabitant. (Baxhaku, Gatt 2019)

According to the newspaper Shqiptarja.com, in the house where he once lived, today we find the manuscripts of masterpieces that over the years have crossed the boundaries of readers.

Transformed into a museum, the apartment preserves its original condition with Kadare's furniture, books, and personal objects; it preserves the library and the archives.

Kadare's personal library contains a collection of books that reflect his intellectual interests and influences; it preserves the creative atmosphere, including his work desk and other elements.

Meanwhile, the literary exhibition conveys to visitors of different backgrounds original materials: letters, manuscripts, and other documents that offer a detailed insight into Kadare's creative process and life.

In this house-studio there is much to discover, and it has now become a reference point for Albanian culture and literature, inviting visitors to explore his extraordinary influence on national and international literature (Goce 2024).

The apartment where the great figure of Albanian literature, Ismail Kadare, worked and lived has been opened as a museum to be visited by both local and foreign tourists. This museum presents to visitors a part of the history and material and spiritual culture of the communist period. This is reflected through the way the writer lived. Inside this apartment are exhibited the reading corner, original documents, manuscripts, objects, books published in many languages, souvenirs, furniture, and the rest of the residence, through which visitors gain knowledge about the writer's work.

Journalist Florence Noiville of the prestigious newspaper, *Le Monde* has also devoted a special article to this house-museum, describing it in detail.

> *In May, the 'Kadare' house-museum was inaugurated. It is an apartment furnished in the typical style of the 1960s, where he lived and wrote during the darkest hours of the communist regime (1944–1991). A house with two doors to the outside—one to enter, the other to escape… (one is never too cautious under a dictatorship)—which has just been opened to the public. We visit Ismail Kadare's study, whose walls are painted green. There we notice a fireplace, in the corner of which he would sit every morning to work, accompanied by the sparks of the fire in the hearth. We also see the Hermes Baby typewriter on which his major novels of that period were typed, such as The Great Winter of Loneliness, Broken April, and The Palace of Dreams. In the library, his considerable body of work, translated into more than 40 languages, bears witness to his enduring passions—Balkan legends and Greek antiquity—which*

greatly helped him oppose the dictatorship, from works by Jean-Pierre Vernant or Pierre Vidal-Naquet to those of William Shakespeare or Balzac, and even the Russian classics…

This is only a short excerpt from the French article written by journalist Florence Noiville, who appears not only to have visited Kadare's house-museum, but also to have taken away many impressions. We are pleased that tourist attractions in Albania are succeeding in capturing the attention of foreigners as well (News-31 2019).

The opening of this destination of literary and cultural interest aims to attract international tourists, create added value for the capital, and at the same time educate younger generations about the literary works of the author.



Figure 5. (Kadare-StudioHouse) in the "Building with Cubes" in Tirana



Figure 6. (Kadare- StudioHouse) in Tirana, from the inside

5. Literary and cultural Heritage

Kadare has left behind a monumental literary and cultural heritage that extends beyond the borders of Albania. He bequeathed to future generations a body of literature with universal dimensions, drawing on history, myth, and reality. This literature has profoundly influenced Albanian national culture, world literature, and the European identity of the country. His creative work elevated Albanian literature to an international level, enabling it to be represented with dignity on the global stage. Through Kadare's work, Albanian culture was presented as a culture worthy of standing in the world's major metropolises. It should be recalled that international recognition of his work began with Western publications, mainly in France, and later, through the French language, in other countries as well (Sinanj 2009).

Beyond Kadare's international fame and personality, his works attract readers through their intrinsic literary value. Although his birthplace occupies a relatively modest place in his overall output-considering how prolific the writer was-he wrote primarily about it in Chronicle in Stone (1971), A Climate of Madness (2005), and The Fall of the Stone City (2008), even though other elements connected to the city appear indirectly in his other works (Erkoci 2016: 16). For example, Ismail Kadare's Chronicle in Stone stands as a "literary monument" to the ancient city of southern Albania, Gjirokastër. In this work, world history, ancient myths, and a childlike perception are masterfully interwoven, all placed within a specific city and a specific historical period that together form the realistic foundation of the novel (Likaj, Shijaku 2022)

The manuscripts of writer Ismail Kadare will be preserved in a special environment at the General Directorate of Archives (GDA). The family of the great writer has submitted the entire literary collection of Ismail Kadare to the GDA for preservation, administration, restoration, and digitization, including manuscripts, conceptual sketches of works, unpublished handwritten texts, as well as early drafts of his writings-documents that will remain forever, stated the Director General of Archives, Ardit Bido. This is of major importance when it comes to figures who live on as long as national collective memory exists. Among the submitted materials are the manuscripts of the works: Spiritus, The Wrong Dinner, When This Death Fell Upon Us, The Life, the Game, and the Death of Lul Mazrek, The Time of Money, The History of the Writers' Union, A Boring Season on Olympus, Hamlet, Shadows, The Monster, and The Dispute. Also submitted were the typescripts of the works Frightened Does, The Accident, Invitation to the Studio, Dreamings, and Mornings at Café Rostand. Alongside these are notebooks containing notes made by Kadare during his creative process, albums with family photographs, albums from numerous cultural activities, as well as the decree granting him citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo (Akademia e Shkencave te Shqiperise 2024).

Kadare's literary and cultural heritage includes short stories and novellas, poetry, novels, literary criticism, and more. Through this body of work, he helped shape a modern cultural identity in which nation and literature progress side by side. His work has been, is, and will remain an object of study not only in Albanian universities but also in universities worldwide. It has been widely adapted for cinema, theatre, and other artistic forms, gradually expanding his cultural influence.

Kadare also cultivated poetry extensively, among his most preferred works being:

Në parkun q'ë mbuluan fletët

Të dy ne ecim qetësisht,
Pas shijes saj ka shtruar vjeshta
Qilim të verdhë natyrisht.

Dhe ndoshta si një ëndërr e zbehtë
Ju fanit një muzg i vonë
Ky park q'ë kan' mbuluar fletët
Ku pas kaq shekujsh ti po shkon.

Nga vagabondët me cigare
Ti mos u tremb e dashur kot
Imazhin tënd as dinosaurët
Shekuj më parë s'e shtypën dot.

Që ti të vije kaq e bukur
Me këta flokë, me këtë hap
Toka të egrën klimë e zbuti
Dhe akullnajat ktheu mbrapsht.

Dhe s'kish se si të ndodhte ndryshe
Të ndodhte ndryshe s'kish se si.
U desh të zhdukeshin përbindshat
Që te kjo botë të vije ti… (kultplus 2018)

Nevertheless, Kadare secured the authority to create and defend his literature; he succeeded, and this is a stroke of good fortune for Albania. What is known is that Kadare clothed his values with strength, survived the dictatorship, and bore witness to it. This survival is of historical importance for Albania (Kosta 2010: 57, 58).

6. The Role of Tourist Itineraries Based on His Life and Works

Tourist itineraries planned and organized with the aim of introducing the life and work of Ismail Kadare represent a distinctive and meaningful form within the field of cultural and literary tourism. They serve not only as instruments for transmitting collective memory, but also for promoting national cultural heritage and affirming Albanian identity on the international stage.

Through these itineraries, visitors have the opportunity to explore the cities and spaces that influenced his formation, such as Gjirokastër-his birthplace and a UNESCO World Heritage site-as well as Tirana, the capital where Kadare lived and created most of his literary work. On these journeys, visitors can become acquainted not only with the environment in which the writer's world was shaped, but also with the building in central Tirana where he lived, which has now become a reference point for readers and scholars alike. Each stop along these itineraries is a combination of history, architecture, and literary narratives that bring Kadare's work to life, placing Albania at the center of the European map of literary tourism.

Marko Nurçe, a professional tour guide, stated in an interview with euronews.al that the "Kadare" tour includes cobblestone streets, characteristic houses, and neighborhoods of the city where the renowned writer lived as a child or which he described in his books.

Today, tours incorporating elements of Kadare's life and literary activity are regarded with great interest by tourists, especially foreign visitors to Gjirokastër. "This tour is preferred by French tourists, but also by others who have read Kadare. They discover more, they experience firsthand what they have read in Kadare's books by choosing this tour," Nurçe explains.

Kadare has erected a literary monument to his hometown. These are genuine models of literary tourism, in which the reader embarks on a search for the materialization and completion of the reading experience. With a book in hand as a travel guide, Kadare's tourist strolls through Varosh, the Old Bazaar, the Castle, Lower Dunavat, Palorto, Gjobek, Çfakë, the Hazmurat neighborhood, or the Street of the Madmen, carrying in mind the images of characters already familiar, as if they were old friends. The grey city is there, awaiting the next visitors (Erkoci 2015).

Tourist itineraries intertwine history, architecture, and literary narratives, making it possible for cities such as Gjirokastër and Tirana to become literary and cultural destinations. The role of these itineraries is multidimensional: they promote Albanian literature internationally, contribute to the development of tourism, provide valuable opportunities for readers, students, and scholars to better understand the context of Kadare's works, and strengthen Albania's image as a country with a rich literary and artistic heritage.

7. Conclusions

In recent years, Albania has made efforts not only to develop but also to promote all types of tourism, and particularly cultural tourism. This effort at promotion has been clearly reflected in the growing flow of tourists arriving from all over the world.

This increased and highly interested influx creates the need for planning on the part of local authorities in order to better highlight the diversity of our cultural heritage.

Despite the investments made in recent years in the cultural sector, problems and challenges have been identified that must be addressed as a priority, with the aim of creating a successful model for the revitalization of cultural heritage.

Priority should be given to the rehabilitation of historic centers, the continuous maintenance and conservation of sites with "Cultural Monument" status, the preservation and improvement of quality standards in cultural products, and the intensification of investments in this sector, with the goal of education through the values of intangible cultural heritage, especially for children and young people.

The role of authorities in this regard is irreplaceable; they must interact with tourism agencies to ensure better promotion of the region's tourism values. Just as Kadare's house-museum, the homes of writers who have shaped history should also be considered cultural monuments and transformed into museums, with dedicated funds for their preservation.

Taking into account the growing demands of tourists, the training of tour guides is equally important. The internet also has undeniable value in creating necessary connections and attracting tourists. Through dedicated websites, it becomes possible to promote the cultural values of specific destinations.

The great curiosity of tourists for literary heritage, as in the case of Kadare's works, should serve as a point of reflection and understanding that literary tourism can be used to strengthen and expand the links between the tourism industry and the cultural sector

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Messianic Hope and Apocalyptic Dread: Benjamin and Yeats on Modernity's Crisis

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Abstract

This article examines Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" (1921) and W. B. Yeats's "The Second Coming" (1920) as responses to the crisis of Western modernity after the First World War. Both works emerge from a landscape marked by political collapse, social upheaval, and the erosion of imperial authority. The analysis proceeds through close reading and conceptual comparison. Benjamin exposes the entanglement of law and violence revealed by the instability of the Weimar Republic. Against the cycles of Lawmaking and Law-Preserving Violence, he posits Divine Violence as a non-instrumental interruption that suspends legal authority and gestures toward a messianic horizon of justice. Yeats, writing amid the Irish War of Independence, portrays civilisational disintegration through apocalyptic imagery. His vision of a creature advancing toward Bethlehem inverts the Christian Messiah, signalling an epochal shift defined by dread rather than redemption. Placing these works in dialogue shows how philosophical and poetic forms register crisis through distinct yet converging idioms. Both foreground the fragility of historical order and the ambiguous role of violence as destructive and potentially transformative. Their insights illuminate not only the contradictions of their moment but also the enduring tension between hope and dread that continues to shape modern crises.

Keywords

Walter Benjamin, W. B. Yeats, "Critique of Violence", "The Second Coming", modernity's crisis

1. Introduction

In 1921, Walter Benjamin interrogated the foundations of modern state authority in his essay "Zur Kritik der Gewalt" ("Critique of Violence"). Written in the turbulent aftermath of the First World War, the essay responds directly to the volatile conditions of the early Weimar Republic—marked by the failed Kapp Putsch of 1920, widespread workers' mobilisations, and intensifying police repression. The coup attempt itself revealed the alarming fragility of the new democratic order: although the legitimate government fled Berlin, the putsch collapsed within days when a massive general strike paralysed the country. Crucially, as Peukert recalls:

> those units of the Reichswehr which did not support the putsch nevertheless refused to use arms against its perpetrators, obeying a decision by General von Seeckt (and defying the orders of the head of the Army Command, Walter Reinhardt, who remained loyal to the government).
>
> (Peukert 2001: 68–69)

The law's apparent guardians thus disclosed their own complicity in the very violence they were meant to restrain.

The deeper roots of this instability lay in the revolutionary upheavals of 1918–19, when imperial Germany disintegrated amid strikes, mutinies, and mass protest. As Weitz observes:

> The revolution of 1918–19 spread from Kiel by railroad […] From the factories, mines, and barracks, striking workers and soldiers streamed into city centers. Everywhere they elected workers and soldiers' councils.
>
> (Weitz 2013: 18)

This moment, which gave rise to the Weimar Republic, revealed that political authority in modernity does not emerge through seamless legal continuity but through collective acts of defiance—often forceful and frequently extra-legal. Against this backdrop, Benjamin's essay appears as both a philosophical and political intervention, revealing how law is bound to violence in its very inception and ongoing preservation.

For Benjamin, such events illustrated the distinction between *mythic violence*—the force that founds and sustains legal order—and *divine violence*, which interrupts and annuls law without instituting a new one. In this light, the failure of the Kapp Putsch becomes especially instructive. The restoration of legality did not result from state-sanctioned coercion but from a withdrawal of labour operating outside any legal mechanism. The general strike—neither legislative nor conquering—halted the state's functioning and exposed the extent to which legal authority depends upon the very force it claims to regulate and transcend. Although Benjamin never explicitly cites the strike, the event resonates strongly with his notion of divine violence: a non-institutional force capable of unsettling the cycle of lawmaking and law-preserving power, opening a horizon for imagining justice otherwise.

In 1919, W. B. Yeats captured a parallel sense of historical unravelling in "The Second Coming," published the following year. The line "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold"[1] (Yeats 1965: l. 3) has become emblematic of the cultural and political fragmentation of early twentieth-century Europe. The poem reflects a world scarred by

[1] Citations from Yeats's "The Second Coming" refer to the line numbers from *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, Macmillan, 1965.

the First World War, the dissolution of empires, and the outbreak of the Irish War of Independence. In Ireland, British authority was visibly weakening:

> Most destruction of British barracks occurred once the premises had been safely evacuated. Such attacks did, however, have symbolic importance, underlining the collapse of British administration.
>
> (Hopkinson 2002: 119)

The ensuing violence fractured local communities and blurred moral boundaries. As Hart notes, the guerrilla conflict in Cork became "a civil war, fought not just between Irish people, but between rival visions of Ireland," where "murder was more common than battle" (Hart 1999: 17–18). Against this backdrop, Yeats grotesquely inverts the Christian Messiah: the "rough beast" (Yeats 1957: 824–825) heralds not redemption but dread. Global catastrophes such as the Spanish flu pandemic deepened the apocalyptic tenor (Brooker 1986: 245). Rooted in his philosophy of "gyres" (Yeats 1957: 824–825), which envisions civilisations rising and falling in cyclical patterns, the poem anticipates the waning of the Christian era and the terrifying emergence of a new epoch, as "the ceremony of innocence is drowned" (l. 6). Thus, "The Second Coming" crystallises Yeats's vision of a world at the threshold of historical transformation, where the dissolution of moral and political structures gives rise to an ominous new cycle.

This article argues that Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" and Yeats's "The Second Coming" offer two distinct yet complementary responses to the breakdown of Western civilisation in the early twentieth century. Both emerge from a landscape of war, revolution, and political turmoil, but they diverge in their visions of what follows: Benjamin anticipates a messianic interruption in which justice may appear beyond law through divine violence, while Yeats imagines the horror of a dawning epoch through the birth of a grotesque "rough beast" (l. 21). Juxtaposing Benjamin's political theology with Yeats's poetic prophecy highlights the dual register of modernity's violence—as at once apocalyptic and potentially redemptive, destructive and transformative.

2. Divine Violence in Walter Benjamin

Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" is not a detached philosophical meditation but an intervention shaped by the volatile early Weimar Republic. Founded in the aftermath of the First World War, the new Republic was marked by political instability, economic strain, and recurrent force. As Stuart (2021) notes, Benjamin wrote his essay amid the 1920 right-wing coup attempt, street unrest, and a state increasingly reliant on coercion—conditions that exposed the fragility of democratic authority and divisions within the left. Although the general strike that defeated the

coup revealed the autonomous energy of organised labour, its failure to generate sustained socialist transformation prompted Benjamin to reflect on deeper issues of political legitimacy. His essay thus examines how law originates in violence and how revolutionary impulses risk absorption into the very structures they seek to overturn.

The general strike is central to this analysis because it exemplifies what Benjamin calls extra-legal action. Extra-legal does not mean unlawful; rather, it refers to collective force that operates outside the state's normative framework without instituting a new legal order. Such action lies in a zone the law neither fully prohibits nor governs: the 1920 strike lacked legal sanction yet decisively undermined state authority. Likewise, police power often occupies a similarly indeterminate realm, hovering between authorised coercion and arbitrary intervention. These phenomena reveal the precariousness of the state's claim to monopolise legitimate force and function as preliminary analogues of what Benjamin calls divine violence.

To clarify this terrain, Benjamin contrasts natural and positive law. Natural law treats violence as a "natural datum" to be judged by the justice of its ends, a logic that historically legitimised both revolutionary "terror" and social-Darwinist appeals to nature (Benjamin 2004a: 236–237). Positive law, by contrast, grounds violence in historical development and authorises it in defence of socially constituted norms. Though apparently opposed, both traditions maintain that just ends can be pursued by justified means (Benjamin 2004a: 237). Benjamin challenges this tautology by suspending the question of ends altogether and analysing the nature and justification of means.

This distinction allows him to differentiate between lawmaking violence, which founds new legal orders, and law-preserving violence, which maintains them. The state fears violence in private hands because of its law-creating potential: the strike or crime threatens to inaugurate new norms, even if ultimately ineffective (Benjamin 2004a: 240–241). Militarism epitomises law-preserving violence, particularly in compulsory conscription (Benjamin 2004a: 241). Its most extreme expression is the death penalty, where the law asserts ultimate authority over life: "in the exercise of violence over life and death, more than in any other legal act, the law reaffirms itself" (Benjamin 2004a: 242). In this way, legal authority continually justifies itself through acts of force.

This dynamic reveals the mythic character of law. Mythic violence, entangled with fate and guilt, appears in Greek legend—figures such as Niobe or Prometheus exemplify force imposed not as justice but as arbitrary divine power (Benjamin 2004a: 248). Such violence threatens, punishes, and stains with blood, binding law to cycles of guilt and retribution. Every new legal order is inseparable from the violence that inaugurates it (Benjamin 2004a: 248–249). Benjamin's earlier essay "Fate and Character" anticipates this critique by describing fate as a "guilt context" in which law condemns life prior to action (Benjamin 2004b: 202–204). This framework foreshadows his later distinction between mythic and divine violence: the former perpetuates guilt, whereas the latter breaks it to open a sphere of justice beyond law.

Benjamin's 1920–1921 fragment "The Right to Use Force" extends this analysis to the state's monopoly on coercion. He argues that the law's concern with justice is "only apparent," concealing its deeper drive toward self-preservation (Benjamin 2004c: 232–233). The legal order reacts to challenges with escalating coercion—"the violent rhythm of impatience in which the law exists" (Benjamin 2004c: 231). Yet Benjamin also gestures toward an ethic he calls ethical anarchism: a refusal to claim a moral right to violence. Such non-resistance may elevate moral action "to the greatest heights" when individuals endure suffering without divine sanction for force (Benjamin 2004c: 234). This anticipates the notion of divine violence as a force outside both legal and moral orders.

Against mythic violence, Benjamin sets divine violence. Mythic violence creates law through blood and sacrifice, whereas divine violence annihilates law without establishing new norms. It expiates rather than punishes and operates without bloodshed: "mythic violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake; divine violence is pure power over all life for the sake of the living" (Benjamin 2004a: 249–250). Rejecting the modern doctrine of the sacredness of life, Benjamin conceptualises divine violence as a radical interruption that frees life from law's arbitrary dominion. Because lawmaking and law-preserving violence inevitably deteriorate, only such an interruption can break the mythic cycle and open the space for a new historical form (Benjamin 2004a: 252). In this sense, divine violence names a moment in which justice becomes thinkable beyond the very categories—law, guilt, and sovereignty—that mythic violence seeks to preserve. This insight would, in turn, prompt later thinkers to explore how Benjamin's distinction unsettles the very foundations of modern legal and political thought.

Among these later readers Derrida (1992), reinterprets divine violence as "unrepresentable justice," a moment that destabilises the calculable structure of law. Mythic violence sheds blood to establish limits, whereas divine violence "kills without bloodshed" (Derrida 1992: 52), marking a mystical moment—*mystique*—in which the founding or suspension of law becomes possible. Through this aporetic structure, Derrida shows that divine violence exposes a tension between law as a determinate, deconstructable system and justice as an incalculable demand that exceeds it.

Butler (2004, 2020) approaches Benjamin from the standpoint of vulnerability and nonviolence. She describes violence as the extreme exposure of one life to the power of another—the condition of being at another's mercy, where life may be erased at another's will (Butler 2004: 28–29). This exposure becomes most acute in political contexts where violence saturates daily life and protection is scarce. Benjamin is unsettling, she argues, because he suspends the question of justification altogether (Butler 2020: 19, 122–125). Violence is never neutral but reproduces the social worlds in which it operates, while law legitimises its own coercive structure. Departing from

Benjamin, Butler reframes justice through an ethics of nonviolence grounded in shared vulnerability and the recognition of life as equally precarious and grievable.

Agamben (2005) situates divine violence within the paradigm of the state of exception. Mythico-juridical violence is always instrumental, embedded in a means–ends relation that structures modern sovereignty; pure or divine violence, by contrast, suspends the very logic of instrumentality itself (Agamben 2005: 60–61). In breaking the continuum of legal temporality, pure violence reveals the emptiness of sovereign power and gestures toward a politics beyond juridical inscription. Whereas mythic violence binds life to guilt and obligation, pure violence exposes a zone of potentiality in which law no longer functions as the measure of human action.

Žižek (2008) interprets divine violence as the moment of radical negativity in which the existing order is shattered without instituting a new one. For him, divine violence is a blind, non-instrumental strike from those excluded from the social order—a blow that embodies justice by refusing reconciliation with structural injustice. Unlike mythic violence, which sustains law through sacrifice and ritualised punishment, divine violence intervenes without mediation, without founding new norms, and without relying on the logic of sovereignty. In this sense, it represents the pure negativity of revolutionary justice.

Despite their differences, these interpretations underscore the indeterminacy of divine violence. Derrida reads it through the aporia between law and justice; Butler through vulnerability and nonviolence; Agamben through the suspension of means and ends; and Žižek through revolutionary rupture. Together, they demonstrate that divine violence cannot be reduced to a single political programme but instead marks a conceptual limit through which the foundations of legal and political order are rendered open to critique.

Ultimately, Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" is a theoretical intervention against state-sanctioned force under Weimar crisis conditions. By diagnosing how legal authority legitimises coercion, the essay exposes the entanglement of lawmaking and law-preserving force and reveals that the modern state grounds its authority not in justice but in the continual reproduction of violence. Benjamin's notion of divine violence gestures toward a messianic possibility that disrupts this logic: an action that neither posits nor preserves law, but interrupts the mythic structures binding life to guilt, punishment, and sovereign power. Read alongside later interpreters such as Derrida, Butler, Agamben, and Žižek, divine violence emerges not as a programmatic solution but as a critical standpoint from which the violent foundations of political order can be exposed and imagined otherwise.

3. Apocalyptic Vision and Historical Crisis in Yeats's "The Second Coming"

Before turning to the poem itself, it is useful to distinguish between two modes of meaning: exoteric and esoteric. Exoteric designates what is outward, accessible, and widely

shared meanings that circulate in the public spheres of religion, politics, and history. Esoteric, by contrast, refers to hidden, symbolic, or initiatory dimensions available only to the initiated or to readers attuned to mystical or philosophical undercurrents. This distinction is especially relevant to Yeats, whose work deliberately moves between public prophecy and occult symbolism. "The Second Coming" derives much of its force from this dual operation: it can be read as an apocalyptic commentary on post-war crisis and as an expression of Yeats's mystical philosophy of history. This framework becomes even more salient when the poem's historical moment is considered, for Yeats's text emerges at the intersection of public catastrophe and occult cosmology.

It is within this dual horizon that W. B. Yeats's "The Second Coming" takes shape. Written in January 1919, first published in *The Dial* (1920), and later included in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921), the poem has become one of the most frequently cited texts of the twentieth century (Vannini 1999: 335; Weeks 1948: 285–286). On its historical surface, it reflects the devastation of the First World War, the upheavals of the Irish War of Independence, the Russian Revolution, and broader global unrest (Brooker 1986: 245; Preston 2020: 6). Its prophetic aura resonated across political and religious contexts, earning it the designation of "the prophetic text of our time" (Keane and Yeats 2012: 37). At the same time, the poem participates in Yeats's philosophy of cyclical history, embedding contemporary turmoil within a broader occult vision of cosmic transformation.

From an exoteric perspective, Yeats's apocalyptic vision mirrors the visible breakdown of social order: "things fall apart; the centre cannot hold" (Yeats 1965: l. 3). Composed amid Ireland's violence and the "blood-dimmed tide" (l. 5) of war and revolution, the poem voices his conviction that civilisation is approaching a point of collapse (Brooker 1986: 245; Jeffares 1984: 204). Esoterically, this collapse aligns with the philosophy of gyres—two-thousand-year cycles of rise and decline, articulated in *A Vision* (Yeats 1962). Within this schema, the Christian era, inaugurated with Christ's birth, was nearing its terminal point. Images such as "The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere" (l. 5) render this cultural disintegration almost palpable.

The opening stanza dramatises this dislocation with striking imagery: the falcon that "cannot hear the falconer" (l. 2) evokes ruptured authority; the "blood-dimmed tide" signifies large-scale slaughter (Bloom 1970: 321; Quinn 2020: 64); and the drowning of the "ceremony of innocence" (l. 6) marks moral collapse. Taken esoterically, these images symbolise the widening gyre—centrifugal forces pulling away from the centre, emblematic of spiritual disintegration (Vannini 1999: 327). As McDonald (2020: 30) notes, this layered resonance helps explain the poem's pertinence to modern crises of populism and political extremism.

The second stanza introduces "the rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards Bethlehem to be born" (ll. 21–22), an inversion of Christian eschatology where an anti-Messiah replaces salvation with dread (Jeffares 1984: 201;

McDonald 2020: 37). Brooker (1986: 246) links the creature to the Anti-Christ, a "pitiless" god devoid of love. More esoterically, Yeats fuses biblical prophecy with occult and Nietzschean imagery, creating a hybrid emblem of destruction and renewal (Vannini 1999: 323–324). For Bloom (1970: 318), it represents a "second birth of the Sphinx," an antithetical divinity presiding over history's cyclical transformations. The final question—"What rough beast […?]"—encapsulates this vision of apocalyptic reversal, where divine order gives way to its monstrous double.

The beast's power lies partly in its ambiguity. Yeats removed specific references from early drafts, crafting an archetype adaptable to "any and all crises" (Keane and Yeats 2012: 60). This universality explains its invocation in contexts ranging from fascism to the Iraq War and contemporary polarisation. Such indeterminacy also reinforces Yeats's mystical philosophy, in which prophecy is symbolic rather than literal, pointing to epochal transition (McDonald 2020: 34).

Christian imagery intensifies the dread by subverting familiar eschatology. Here, the "Second Coming" does not announce Christ's return but signals the exhaustion of Christianity as a civilisational order (Aman 2021; Silagi 2023: 55). Bloom (1970: 324) reads the poem as a Gnostic oracle of disaster, while Wheeler (1974: 234) casts Yeats as poet-prophet offering esoteric insight into hidden historical forces. Apocalypse, then, becomes violent metamorphosis rather than fulfilment.

Formally, "The Second Coming" embodies modernist fragmentation, ambiguity, and interruption; its jagged syntax and oracular tone enact the very dislocation it describes (Akbay 2025: 15; McDonald 2020: 31). Its stylistic uncertainty mirrors the cryptic quality of occult prophecy, aligning with Yeats's belief that symbolic language is required to express historical transition. This combination ensures the poem's continuing resonance, as it recurs in postcolonial writing, Cold War discourse, environmental debates, and reflections on religious extremism (Keane and Yeats 2012: 39, 54). Yeats's fusion of prophetic vision and modernist technique thus transforms "The Second Coming" into a meditation on cyclical crisis, where poetic indeterminacy becomes a medium for apprehending historical renewal.

In sum, the poem operates through a sustained duality. Exoterically, it registers the visible breakdown of civilisation in 1919 and continues to be reinterpreted in successive crises. Esoterically, it encodes Yeats's mystical philosophy of gyres, presenting history as a rhythm of collapse and rebirth. The "rough beast" functions both as an anti-Messianic figure in the modern imagination and as an esoteric symbol of transition. Through this prophetic ambiguity, Yeats captures modernism's engagement with uncertainty, fragmentation, and the forces driving historical change.

4. Comparative Analysis: Divine Violence and Apocalyptic Crisis

Walter Benjamin's notion of divine violence, articulated in "Critique of Violence", offers a productive conceptual lens through which W. B. Yeats's "The

Second Coming" may be examined. Although the works belong to different genres—a philosophical essay and a modernist poem—they respond to the same historical convulsions of post–World War I Europe and interrogate the foundations of Western civilisation at a moment of profound instability. Each, in its own idiom, depicts the sense of a world whose structures have given way, where the future can be imagined only through figures of upheaval.

Benjamin distinguishes between *mythic violence*, which institutes and upholds law, and *divine violence*, which suspends the juridical order altogether. Mythic violence perpetuates cycles of force in the name of stability; divine violence, by contrast, marks a decisive break—unpredictable, unrepresentable, and resistant to legal codification—that gestures toward a messianic possibility of justice (Derrida 1992; Žižek 2008). Although Benjamin does not theorise divine violence through poetic imagery, its emphasis on sudden interruption, radical transformation, and indeterminacy resonates with the cataclysmic symbolism of Yeats's poem, in which history appears to buckle under the weight of catastrophe.

Yeats's evocation of a monstrous figure advancing toward Bethlehem may thus be read as a symbolic analogue to Benjamin's theorisation of a messianic discontinuity: the beast appears as an event that shatters continuity and inaugurates a new historical trajectory. Both figures are enveloped in ambiguity: the beast's identity remains opaque, just as the subject of divine violence cannot be fully known. Each represents a threshold in which history is violently severed from its prior course and redirected toward an uncertain horizon. In this regard, Yeats's poem and Benjamin's essay converge in presenting violence not merely as destruction but as an event that reconfigures temporal order itself. Yeats frames this moment with prophetic urgency—"Surely some revelation is at hand; / Surely the Second Coming is at hand" (ll. 9–10). Yet where Benjamin's divine violence is described as "pure power over all life for the sake of the living" (Benjamin 2004a: 250), Yeats's creature bears "a gaze blank and pitiless as the sun" (l. 15), embodying not liberation but dread. This contrast reveals how Benjamin's intervention opens the possibility of renewal, while Yeats's imagery forecloses hope by envisioning terror as the sole horizon.

The divergence between them is instructive. For Benjamin, radical interruption carries the promise of justice beyond the law; for Yeats, the same kind of historical upheaval signals catastrophe—the grotesque inversion of Christian redemption. Juxtaposing the two illuminates not only the ambivalence of violence but also the distinct ways theology and literature address modernity's breaking points. Benjamin understands crisis as an opening toward messianic hope; Yeats frames it as the onset of apocalyptic terror. As Bloom argues, Yeats transforms prophecy into a "fiction of disaster" (Bloom 1970: 324) that offers no deliverance. This divergence resonates with what Agamben (2005: 62) calls the paradox of messianic time: a temporality that interrupts chronological progression but can be interpreted as either renewal or catastrophe.

At the centre of both works lies the theme of disintegration. Benjamin uncovers the cycle of force embedded within law, revealing that political order is upheld not by justice but by coercion. Yeats renders this fragmentation through poetic imagery: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." (Yl. 3). In their respective vocabularies, both articulate a world whose stabilising principles—legal, political, or cultural—have given way. This shared perception links philosophy and poetry in a mutual recognition that early twentieth-century modernity rested on fragile and unstable foundations.

For both thinkers, then, historical upheaval signals a turning point, yet it leads to radically different conclusions. Benjamin's break disrupts history, opening a space where redemption becomes thinkable; Yeats's upheaval inaugurates a new cycle of violence and dread. Both leave the future unresolved: for Benjamin, indeterminacy carries salvific potential; for Yeats, it obscures hope.

As Agamben observes, Benjamin's divine violence "neither posits nor preserves law, but rather 'deposes' (entsetzt) it" (Agamben 2010: 64), thereby destabilising the foundations of sovereignty itself. In this suspension lies the radical potential of Benjamin's messianic thought: justice does not arise through reforming the legal order but through its complete interruption. Agamben further notes that in modernity "law begins to coincide with life once it has become the pure form of law, law's mere being in force without significance." Confronted with this condition—an empty law persisting as sheer force—Benjamin proposes a "messianic nihilism that nullifies even the Nothing and lets no form of law remain in force beyond its own content" (Agamben 2010: 54). Divine violence thus becomes a form of pure means—an action freed from instrumental purpose—that exposes the limits of every juridical system and opens the horizon of justice beyond sovereignty.

McDonald (2020: 37) similarly interprets Yeats's rough beast as an archetype of cultural collapse and renewal. Taken together, these readings show how historical discontinuity, though shared as a structural form, bifurcates into competing trajectories—one opening toward messianic restoration, the other circling back into catastrophe.

Both texts also unsettle their audiences. Benjamin's divine violence, with its indeterminacy, places readers within ethical uncertainty, leaving the question of justice unresolved (Derrida 1992). Yeats's beast, by contrast, confronts us with dread, "troubling our sight" (Keane and Yeats 2012: 51). This shared effect reflects a defining feature of modernism: uncertainty, disjunction, and the impossibility of definitive solutions. Their disruptive force lies not in offering reassurance but in dramatising the suspension of certainty itself—an experience both disturbing and generative.

Thus, Benjamin's concept of divine violence not only clarifies aspects of Yeats's poem but situates it within a broader discourse of theological–political crisis. Read together, the two works reveal the dual face of modernity's violence: both destructive and potentially transformative. If Benjamin gestures toward the possibility embedded in historical dislocation, Yeats articulates the terror of that same upheaval. The juxtaposition

of divine violence and the rough beast demonstrates how a single historical break can produce radically opposed imaginaries—messianic renewal or apocalypse—reminding us that modernity's crises are always suspended between dread and hope.

5. Conclusions

The juxtaposition of Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" and Yeats's "The Second Coming" reveals two distinct yet complementary responses to the crisis of modernity in the aftermath of the First World War. Both works arise from a shared moment of historical upheaval, marked by political turbulence, social fragmentation, and the erosion of established forms of authority. Yet their trajectories diverge sharply: Benjamin envisions the possibility of justice through a messianic interruption that suspends the legal order, whereas Yeats foresees only catastrophe, crystallised in the unsettling figure advancing toward Bethlehem.

Read together, the two texts illuminate how literature and philosophy register crisis through different idioms. Benjamin dismantles the presumed unity of law and justice, pointing toward a vision of redemption beyond juridical and institutional structures. Yeats, by contrast, stages an apocalypse through prophetic imagery, confronting readers with foreboding rather than consolation. Both underscore the instability of historical orders and the vulnerability of political structures to disruption.

The dialogue between essay and poem also offers a wider reflection on the ambiguous role of violence in modernity. It may function as an instrument of destruction or as the catalyst for transformation, opening the possibility of justice or unleashing the threat of terror. This duality—messianic hope and apocalyptic dread—shaped the early twentieth century, yet it also resonates powerfully with the dilemmas of the twenty-first. Whether in the erosion of democratic norms, the escalating pressures of ecological crisis, or the accelerating reach of technological systems, our own moment is similarly defined by an oscillation between prospects of renewal and anxieties of irreversible decline. Reading Benjamin and Yeats together thus provides not only a historical vantage point but also a conceptual vocabulary for interpreting contemporary uncertainty, making their insights uncannily pertinent to the crises that continue to shape our present.

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The Fluid Identity of the Diasporic Self: Conflict and Reconfiguration in Recent Literature

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Abstract

Recent Romanian literature written from outside the national territory articulates a form of identity shaped by mobility, linguistic loyalty, and symbolic negotiation of belonging. This paper examines the fluid identity of the diasporean self, focusing on conflict as a generative principle rather than a deficit. Drawing on autobiographical fragments, testimonial prose, and hybrid literary forms, the study argues that home (acasă) functions primarily as a linguistic, ethical, and relational construct. Through the analysis of contemporary texts by Anca Mizumschi, Bogdan Perțache, and Cristina Hermeziu, the paper situates recent diasporean writing within a post-exilic paradigm that reconfigures exile without neutralizing its inner tensions.

Keywords

diaspora literature; diasporean identity; home; testimonial writing; contemporary Romanian literature; identity fluidity

1. Introduction

In recent Romanian cultural discourse, diaspora has often been reduced to a civic or political category. In literary terms, however, it designates a condition of lived displacement, articulated through narrative, memory, and language.

The contemporary diasporean writer typically inhabits a transnational space: living abroad, writing in Romanian, and publishing for a readership situated primarily in the country of origin. This configuration produces neither rupture nor assimilation, but a continuum of belonging, in which identity remains mobile and reflexive.

The classical model of Romanian exile was shaped by political constraint, censorship, and linguistic fracture. Writing from abroad often implied a radical separation from the national literary field.

By contrast, contemporary diasporean literature unfolds within a post-exilic paradigm defined by freedom of movement, absence of censorship, and constant symbolic circulation. Yet this freedom does not dissolve tension; it relocates it inward, transforming displacement into a permanent condition of self-reflection.

Although most contemporary authors correspond sociologically to the figure of the emigrant, their texts frequently retain the mental grammar of exile. Nostalgia,

ethical attachment, and defensive loyalty to language persist even when departure is voluntary.

Before analyzing the concrete literary expressions of diasporic identity, it is necessary to clarify the conceptual framework of the term diaspora, as defined and nuanced in key theoretical studies of recent decades.

2. Who is "Diaspora"?

In Conceptual Analysis of the Term Diaspora (Chirvas 2022) emphasizes the dynamic and non-essentialist nature of the concept, arguing that diaspora can no longer be reduced to mere geographical dispersion or to an originating trauma, but rather designates "a condition defined less by territorial rupture than by ongoing processes of negotiation, memory, and symbolic affiliation." This perspective shifts the focus from loss and irreversible exile toward the continuous construction of belonging—an essential aspect for understanding contemporary diasporic literature.

A complementary approach is proposed in Diaspora: Changing Meanings and Limits (Cohen 2003), which insists on the semantic expansion of the term in the context of current global mobility. Here, diaspora is defined as "a flexible social and cultural formation, whose boundaries are constantly redefined by transnational practices, linguistic choices, and ethical positioning." At the same time, the author warns against the risk of conceptual dilution, stressing the need to preserve the conflictual and reflexive dimension of the diasporic experience.

Together, these two theoretical frameworks provide the necessary background for reading contemporary Romanian literature written outside national borders, in which identity is neither abandoned nor definitively stabilized, but continuously reconfigured through language, memory, and relational experience.

This discrepancy confirms that diasporean identity is shaped less by the cause of migration than by the symbolic management of loss and continuity of one's identity.

3. "Acasă" Reconfigured: Language and Ethical Belonging

In contemporary diasporean writing, acasă (home) is rarely represented as a recoverable place. Instead, it is displaced into language and ethical stance.

In Țara mea suspendată (Mizumschi 2018), belonging is articulated as a conscious act of responsibility rather than inherited attachment. Loving Romania from afar becomes an ethical decision, stripped of sentimentalism but sustained by loyalty.

Similarly, the poetic formulations circulating in contemporary diasporean discourse foreground the fragility of the stranger and the reduction of presence to gesture, voice, and word. Writing functions here as a space of minimal survival, rather than affirmation.

A defining trait of recent diasporean literature is its preference for testimonial and hybrid forms. Visul canadian (Perțache 2023), situated between confession, observation, and self-narration, resist literary monumentalization in favor of experiential immediacy.

Often relegated to the margins of canon formation, such writings nonetheless constitute a primary archive of diasporean experience, documenting everyday displacement rather than exceptional destinies.

Therefore, conflict structures the diasporean self not as crisis but as condition. Contemporary literature articulates a series of mediating bridges through which identity is continuously reconfigured.

- Linguistic bridges: Romanian language remains the principal medium of self-coherence, even as it absorbs interference and contamination. Language mediates fidelity and transformation.

- Spatial bridges: Rather than opposing "here" and "there," contemporary texts construct a mobile spatiality. Home is distributed across routes, stations, and moments of attention.

- Temporal bridges: Memory and projection coexist. The past is reinterpreted through present displacement, while the future remains open and undecidable.

- Ethical bridges: Attachment to the country of origin is reframed as responsibility rather than possession, allowing critique without detachment.

- Generic bridges: Hybrid genres mediate between private experience and public narrative, legitimizing subjectivity as knowledge.

- Ontological bridges: The diasporean self exists between presence and absence, transforming suspension into a viable mode of being.

4. Cristina Hermeziu's Nickel: The Ethics of Attention

The puzzle roman Nickel (Hermeziu 2024) offers a paradigmatic articulation of the contemporary diasporean condition. Structured as a sequence of observations, encounters, and narrative fragments, the text foregrounds ordinary lives shaped by labor migration, linguistic negotiation, and everyday dignity.

The recurring image of the train window functions as a symbolic interface between self and other, movement and pause, Europe as abstraction and Europe as lived experience. Writing becomes an act of attention— "crocheting at Europe's window" —in which stories are assembled from gestures, accents, and shared vulnerability.

In Nickel, home is not recovered but replaced by relation. Belonging emerges through recognition, care, and ethical proximity rather than territorial rootedness. The diasporean self is thus reconfigured not through identity claims, but through narrative hospitality.

5. Conclusion

Contemporary Romanian diasporean literature reveals a profound reconfiguration of identity paradigms traditionally associated with exile and migration. No longer structured primarily by political coercion or irreversible rupture with the home country,

the diasporean condition examined in this study emerges as a reflective and negotiated mode of being, shaped by mobility, ethical choice, and narrative articulation.

The analysis demonstrates that conflict does not function as a symptom of incompleteness or loss. On the contrary, conflict operates as a generative principle, enabling the construction of mediating bridges—linguistic, spatial, temporal, ethical, generic, and ontological—through which the diasporean self sustains coherence without demanding fixity. Identity is not stabilized by return or assimilation, but continuously reconfigured through lived contradiction.

The motif of home (acasă) undergoes a decisive transformation in recent literature. Displaced from geography to language and relational ethics, home becomes a symbolic and affective construct, maintained through writing, memory, and attention to the other. In this sense, language functions not merely as a medium of expression, but as a substitute territory, capable of preserving continuity across fragmented spaces.

The examination of testimonial and hybrid forms further indicates a shift in literary legitimacy. Autobiographical fragments, confessional narratives, and marginal genres—often relegated to the periphery of canon formation—prove essential for understanding the lived realities of displacement. These texts expand the epistemic scope of literature, positioning subjective experience as a valid mode of knowledge production.

Cristina Hermeziu's Nickel exemplifies this reorientation. By foregrounding ordinary lives, labor migration, and everyday gestures of care, the text articulates an ethics of attention that replaces identity assertion with relational proximity. Belonging, in this context, is no longer claimed but practiced, emerging through narrative hospitality and mutual recognition.

Ultimately, contemporary diasporean literature does not seek closure, reconciliation, or return. It proposes instead a model of inhabited instability, in which fluidity becomes the condition of coherence. By articulating identity as process rather than essence, recent diasporean writing contributes decisively to the redefinition of national literature in a transnational, multilingual, and ethically grounded cultural space.

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♦COMMUNICATION, ARTS AND MEDIA♦

The *Barbenheimer* Phenomenon, Or, On the Human Condition on Screen: Ethics, Power, and Gender

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Abstract

Contemporary cinema offers a unique lens through which to examine the social, ethical, and existential dimensions of human experience. This paper provides a comparative analysis of two 2023 films – Greta Gerwig's Barbie and Christopher Nolan's Oppenheimer – in order to explore the ways in which live-action cinema negotiates themes of gender, power, and the pursuit of meaning within late-modern cultural contexts. Drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks from feminist theory, masculinity studies, sociology, philosophy, and film studies, the analysis investigates the aesthetic and narrative strategies which shape ideological engagement. In Barbie, the interplay of hyperreal visuals, meta-narrative humor, and performative gender constructs interrogates femininity, masculinity, and inter-gender relationships, highlighting both the liberatory potentials and limitations of social and cultural expectations. Conversely, Oppenheimer employs nonlinear storytelling, immersive practical effects, and nuanced performances to examine the ethical, political, and existential ramifications of scientific power, portraying masculinity as a site of vulnerability, ambition, and moral complexity. Together, these films illustrate the capacity of cinema to reflect societal norms, critique systemic structures, and foster critical reflection across diverse audiences. The study concludes by emphasizing cinema's dual function as artistic expression and cultural commentary, offering insights into the interplay between aesthetic form, ideological content, and social impact. Implications for future research include cross-cultural audience reception, transmedia engagement, and interdisciplinary approaches to film as both a reflective and a transformative medium.

Keywords

masculinity; femininity; power dynamics; ethical responsibility; cultural critique

1. Introduction: Leaning in to Blockbusters

Cinema has long operated as a mirror and a mediator of societal values, capturing the tensions, aspirations, and anxieties of its era, as beyond mere entertainment, films provide a complex interplay of aesthetics and ideology, offering audiences a lens through which to examine cultural norms, power structures, and human behavior. In contemporary scholarship, cinema is increasingly recognized not only as an artistic medium but also as a pedagogical and sociocultural tool, capable of interrogating identity, ethics, and relationships in ways which transcend disciplinary boundaries.

Live-action cinema, in particular, combines narrative depth, visual composition, and performative expression to illuminate human experience, making it a fertile site for interdisciplinary inquiry across gender studies, sociology, philosophy, and popular entertainment research.

This paper examines two landmark films of 2023 – Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* and Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* – as complementary case studies in the aesthetics and ideology of contemporary cinema. *Barbie* engages with femininity, masculinity, and inter-gender dynamics, juxtaposing a hyperreal utopia with the complexities of real-world gendered experience, while interrogating the sociopolitical and economic frameworks shaping late-modern cultural narratives. *Oppenheimer*, in contrast, explores masculinity, power, and ethical responsibility through the historical lens of the Manhattan Project (1942-1945), emphasizing the moral dilemmas inherent in scientific progress and human ambition. By examining these films together, the paper interrogates live-action cinema's mediation of cultural reflection and social critique, illustrating the ways in which aesthetic choices, narrative architecture, and performance styles articulate both individual subjectivity and collective ideology. These films, despite their divergent genres and contexts, share a concern with human agency, societal norms, and the ethical dimensions of progress, making them ideal interlocutors for a comparative analysis.

In the scholarly landscape, discussions of contemporary cinema frequently engage with the intersection of aesthetics, ideology, and social commentary. Existing research highlights cinema's capacity to both reflect and influence discourses on gender, power, and ethics. In gender studies, for instance, works such as Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) and bell hooks' *The Will to Change* (2004) examine the performativity of gender and the societal constraints forming masculinity and femininity, providing critical frameworks for analyzing *Barbie*'s self-reflexive interrogation of gender norms. Similarly, studies in film theory, including Laura Mulvey's *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989), have established the role of visual and narrative strategies in producing ideological meaning and engaging spectators emotionally and cognitively. In parallel, research on historical and biographical cinema emphasizes the ethical and educational potential of live-action films: Christopher Nolan's works have been examined as exemplars of narrative complexity, temporal experimentation, and aesthetic rigor, offering audiences tools for grappling with moral and existential questions (Elsaesser 2005; Bordwell 2019). Interdisciplinary scholarship further situates films within socio-political and economic contexts, addressing the ways in which neoliberal capitalism, consumer culture, and globalized media systems carve the production, reception, and meaning-making processes surrounding cinema (Fuller 2007; Giddens 1990). By synthesizing these perspectives, the literature underscores a dual understanding of cinema as both a reflective mirror

and a projective instrument, capable of questioning contemporary social realities while imagining alternative cultural futures.

Methodologically, this paper adopts a comparative, interdisciplinary approach, drawing on film studies, sociology, gender theory, philosophy, and history to analyze the aesthetic and ideological dimensions of *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*. The analysis combines textual and visual examination with contextual interpretation, exploring the convergence of narrative structure, cinematography, production design, and performance towards the production of meaning. Informed by close reading techniques, the study examines recurring motifs, color palettes, and performative choices, taking into account these elements' articulation of themes such as gender, power, and ethics. Additionally, the paper situates each film within its sociocultural and historical framework, attending to global late-modern dynamics, neoliberal economic structures, and technological innovations informing cinematic production and reception. By employing cross-disciplinary insights, this methodology enables a nuanced understanding of cinema's strategies to mediate individual subjectivity, societal norms, and collective ideologies, revealing the interplay between aesthetic form and sociopolitical content. The approach equally emphasizes the pedagogical potential of live-action cinema, analyzing these films' ability to engage audiences intellectually, ethically, and emotionally, providing both reflective and projective capacities.

The structure of the paper follows a comparative framework organized into two main chapters, each devoted to one of the films under study. The first chapter focuses on *Barbie*, examining its aesthetic strategies, ideological content, and sociocultural significance, exploring its construction of hyperreal visual worlds while deconstructing gender norms, interrogating inter-gender power dynamics, and delving into late-modern cultural and economic contexts. It additionally considers the pedagogical potential of the film as a tool for fostering critical reflection on contemporary femininity, masculinity, and relational ethics. The second chapter centers on *Oppenheimer*, analyzing Nolan's narrative and aesthetic choices, the portrayal of masculinity and ethical responsibility, and the film's engagement with historical and philosophical discourses. Particular attention is given to the film's negotiation of the ethical dilemmas of scientific progress, the fragility of power, and the existential quest for meaning, highlighting the interplay between individual subjectivity and systemic imperatives. Each chapter integrates interdisciplinary insights, situating cinematic techniques alongside social theory, philosophy, and historical context, thus providing a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which aesthetics and ideology coalesce in contemporary cinema.

This comparative structure sets the stage for an in-depth analysis of *Barbie*, foregrounding its vibrant aesthetic palette, ideological interrogation of gender norms, and nuanced exploration of inter-gender relationships. By transitioning from the

general conceptual framing to a detailed textual analysis, the paper begins with *Barbie* as a site where late-modern cultural anxieties, performative femininity, and the commodification of empowerment converge, providing a bridge into the broader discussion of aesthetics, ideology, and social critique.

2. *Barbie* (2023): Femininity, Masculinity, and Inter-Gender Relationships in Global Late Modernity

Even at first sight, Greta Gerwig's 2023 *Barbie* emerges as a vibrant cultural artifact which synthesizes aesthetics and ideology in order to interrogate the complexities of femininity, masculinity, and inter-gender dynamics: against the backdrop of global late modernity – a period characterized by shifting power dynamics, increasing individualization, and the intersection of global capitalism with local evolving cultural norms –, *Barbie* serves as both a compelling case study in exploring cinema's reflection and critique of social constructs and a medium for socio-political discourse. As a live-action re-interpretation of an iconic toy, *Barbie* carries the weight of decades of sociopolitical discourse while offering an exuberantly meta-textual commentary on contemporary gender politics. By employing an interdisciplinary approach – drawing from feminist theory, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, and technological critiques –, the forthcoming lines outline the ways in which the film constructs and displays gendered power structures, while emphasizing the role of cinema as a pedagogical medium in its engagement with the broader sociocultural and economic realities of late modernity.

Aesthetic Foundations of Color, Space, and Symbolism: From Plastic Perfection to Human Complexity

Gerwig's *Barbie* is marked by an unmistakable aesthetic language, as its production design leverages hyperreal colors, particularly the iconic pinks associated with the Barbie brand, aiming at evoking both nostalgia and (self-)ironic critique. Barbieland's utopian landscape is saturated with an idealized femininity, reminiscent of the plastic perfection of the toy itself – but this aesthetic functions as a double-edged sword: it celebrates the playful exuberance of Barbie while interrogating the impossibility of such perfection in real life. Furthermore, the juxtaposition between Barbieland and the "real world" creates a narrative dialectic which questions patriarchal hegemony, as Barbieland is a matriarchy in which Barbies hold every significant societal role, from president to Nobel laureates, symbolizing feminist aspirations for gender equality. Nonetheless, when Ken's exposure to real-world patriarchy disrupts this equilibrium, the aesthetic shifts, with his assimilation of so-called "toxic masculinity" – represented through hyper-masculine imagery like cowboy attire and gym equipment – rendering Barbieland into a caricature of patriarchal

excess, a visual transition underscoring gender ideologies' cultural construction and perpetuation resulting in inter-generational accumulation and sedimentation.

From its visual design to narrative architecture, *Barbie* adopts an aesthetic pairing hyperreal artificiality with the messiness of human existence: thus, the film's aesthetic choices – such as the vibrant pink-hued palette, meticulously crafted sets resembling Mattel's iconic dolls, and the cartoonish yet self-aware performances – signal a deliberate engagement with artifice, which simultaneously commemorates the doll's cultural legacy and subtly dissolves it, inviting audiences to interrogate the perfection associated with Barbie as an unattainable ideal of femininity (Flax 1990; Friedman 2003). Moreover, Gerwig employs this aesthetic framework to explore femininity's performative nature: drawing from Judith Butler's (1990; 2024) theory of gender performativity, *Barbie* deconstructs the hyper-feminine world of Barbieland with the goal to expose the ways in which femininity is socially constructed and commodified: indeed, the film's transitions between Barbieland and the real world reinforce this duality, bringing into the foreground the tension between fantasy and reality, as the vibrancy and control of Barbieland stand in stark contrast to the imperfect, unpredictable dynamics of the real world, mirroring broader societal tensions between aspirational ideals and lived experience.

Ideological Interrogations: Femininity and Masculinity, Liberation, Empowerment, and Their Mutual Contradictions

At its core, *Barbie* is a feminist exploration of the female experience, as the film's protagonist, Stereotypical Barbie (Margot Robbie), embarks on a journey of self-discovery which gradually annihilates the notion of an idealized, monolithic femininity. Her existential crisis – manifested in sudden thoughts of mortality and dissatisfaction with perfection – mirrors Simone de Beauvoir's assertion in *The Second Sex* (1949) that women are conditioned to seek fulfillment through externally imposed ideals. Furthermore, the film's dialogue engages with second-wave feminist critiques of gender roles and third-wave feminist calls for intersectionality (Rosenstock 2022; Rich 1976; respectively, hooks 2014; Evans 2015): one of *Barbie*'s pivotal scenes, in which America Ferrera's character delivers an unusually long monologue articulating the paradoxes of modern womanhood with its concurrent demands for strength and softness, ambition and humility, belonging and independence, resonates with global audiences precisely because it encapsulates the lived contradictions of contemporary femininity, offering a rallying cry for collective empowerment.

At the same time, *Barbie* openly questions the evolving concept of femininity: since her debut in 1959, Barbie has been both celebrated as a feminist icon and criticized as a perpetuator of unattainable beauty standards – and the film reflects this duality, portraying Margot Robbie's Barbie as an emblem of liberation and empowerment while also confronting the ways in which her image has constrained

women. Barbie's existential crisis in the film – the transition from "Stereotypical Barbie" to a more complex, self-aware individual – brings into foreground broader societal shifts in late-modern era, as feminism's progression from second-wave calls for equality to fourth-wave critiques of intersectionality and neoliberal co-optation is embedded in Barbie's journey (Chamberlain 2017; Rivers 2017). By including diverse representations of femininity in Barbieland – such as President Barbie and Doctor Barbie – the film acknowledges the multiplicity of female experiences, yet it also critiques the pressures of aspirational perfection, aligning with theories by feminist scholars like bell hooks (2000, 2014), who emphasize the need to dismantle patriarchal structures rather than simply thrive within them.

On the other hand, Ken (Ryan Gosling) serves as a foil to Barbie, embodying the complexities of contemporary masculinity: initially defined solely by his relationship to Barbie, Ken's exposure to patriarchy instills in him a misguided sense of self-worth derived from dominance. His arc unveils the fragile foundations of the so-called "toxic masculinity", laying bare the multilayered harm inflicted by patriarchal structures on men by reducing their value to power and control. Ken's eventual acknowledgment of his intrinsic worth independent of societal roles affiliate with bell hooks's assertion in *The Will to Change* (2004) that men, too, require liberation from patriarchal expectations: by presenting Ken's evolution alongside Barbie's, the film advocates for a reimagining of gender dynamics as mutually liberatory rather than adversarial.

In this train of thought, while Barbie's journey explores femininity, Ken's arc interrogates masculinity: by advancing from a peripheral figure in Barbieland, defined solely by his relationship to Barbie, Ken's eventual discovery of patriarchy in the real world and his attempt to impose it on Barbieland offer a satirical yet poignant critique of contemporary masculinity. Indeed, Ken's exaggerated embrace of patriarchal symbols, such as horses and macho bravado, underscores the performative absurdity of hegemonic masculinity, with his eventual realization that his value need not depend on Barbie paralleling a broader cultural reckoning with the crisis of masculinity in late modernity. Sociological studies, such as Michael Kimmel's *Angry White Men* (2018) and DiAngelo's *White Fragility* (2018), explore this erosion of traditional gender roles and the ways it has left many men grappling with identity, with the film echoing these insights and promoting a more inclusive and emotionally intelligent vision of masculinity.

Power Dynamics

The relationship between Barbie and Ken encapsulates the complexities of inter-gender dialectics in the 21st century as *Barbie* rejects the binary of dependency, dominance and subservience, instead encouraging for relationships to be built on equality, mutual respect, and individual self-realization. By the film's conclusion, both Barbie and Ken both on separate journeys of self-discovery, symbolizing a move away

from co-dependence towards personal growth: such a narrative reflects the broader societal shift towards egalitarian relationships, as explored in works like Anthony Giddens' *The Transformation of Intimacy* (1992) and reminding of Julia Kristeva's *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* (1989), which argue that relationships in late modernity are increasingly defined by emotional communication and reciprocal support rather than traditional power dynamics – *Barbie* embodies this ethos, presenting a hopeful vision for inter-gender relationships grounded in self-actualization and collaboration.

On the other hand, *Barbie* examines the fluidity of hierarchical positioning between genders: the initial matriarchal utopia of Barbieland, while idealized, is not without critique, visible in the Barbies' lack of awareness about Ken's dissatisfaction, which, in its turn, underscores the ways in which power imbalances can persist even in ostensibly egalitarian systems. The film's resolution – a recalibration rather than a reversal of power – suggests that true equity requires ongoing negotiation and self-awareness. Equally relevant, *Barbie*'s conclusion emphasizes collaboration and mutual respect as foundations for healthy inter-gender relationships: Barbie's decision to forge her own pathway – leaving Barbieland towards the exploration of her identity in the real world – symbolizes the importance of individual agency within collective progress; similarly, Ken's newfound acceptance of his individuality underscores the necessity of self-discovery in fostering authentic connections.

Socioeconomic and Political-Cultural Context: Late Capitalism's and Consumer Culture's Global Implications

Barbie emerged within a global context shaped by neoliberal capitalism, cultural globalization, and the rise of fragmented social movements. Nonetheless, as a Mattel-produced film, it is inextricably tied and operates within a capitalist framework, yet it critiques the very system sustaining it – this paradox brings into the spotlight the complexities of cultural production in late modernity, in which media often straddles the line between commerce and critical misalignment. *Barbie*'s self-referential humor – including allusions to the brand's own problematic history – exemplifies the paradoxical relationship between art and commerce in modern cinema: while it indeed challenges consumerist ideals by deconstructing Barbie's mythos, it simultaneously reinforces them through its commercial success and merchandising. Additionally, *Barbie*'s portrayal of Barbieland as a matriarchal utopia serves as a critique of the limitations of symbolic empowerment in a capitalist society, as, while Barbieland appears to embody feminist ideals, its utopianism is ultimately fragile, mirroring the broader limitations of "girl-boss feminism" and similar neoliberal appropriations of feminist rhetoric. Such a critique reminds of the work of Nancy Fraser (2022; Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser 2019), who argues that feminism must move beyond individual empowerment to address systemic inequalities – a tension reflecting broader critiques of neoliberalism, wherein feminist rhetoric is often co-opted for profit: the

commodification of empowerment in *Barbie* serves as a cautionary tale, urging viewers to remain critical of corporate motives even as they celebrate progressive messaging.

In the context of globalization, *Barbie* addresses the universality and specificity of gender struggles: certainly, Barbieland represents a Western feminist ideal, but the film likewise acknowledges the diverse experiences of womanhood through its ensemble cast, e.g., with characters like President Barbie (Issa Rae) and Physicist Barbie (Emma Mackey) addressing the priority of representation and fortifying Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's (2014) argument for diverse feminist narratives.

The Pedagogy of Cinema as a Reflective yet Projective Medium

The power of cinema lies in its dual role as both a mirror of contemporary realities and a tool for imagining alternative futures: *Barbie* brings this forth by incorporating present-day concerns such as gender inequality, identity crises, and consumer culture, while offering a vision of progress, and blending humor, nostalgia, and critique as a strategy to reverberate across generational and cultural divides, fostering dialogue about the societal norms it portrays. Moreover, *Barbie*'s impact extends beyond its narrative: Margot Robbie's and Ryan Gosling's performances, alongside Gerwig's direction, demonstrate the role of stunning actors and film-makers in shaping cultural discourse: by leveraging the global popularity of the Barbie brand, the film reaches wide audiences, keenly addressing the importance of accessible storytelling in driving social reflection: in fostering reflection and dialogue through its layered narrative, *Barbie* invites audiences to interrogate their own assumptions about gender, power, and identity; in blending humor, pathos, and self-critical reflections, it creates an accessible entry point for complex discussions, particularly among younger viewers, while also opening safe spaces for collaborative further developments.

The production and reception of *Barbie* were enveloped by advancements in technology, storytelling and media literacy, with the film's visual effects and meticulous set design underscoring the role of technological progress in generating immersive cinematic experiences: from its seamless integration of practical effects and CGI to its self-referential humor and meta-commentary on its own artifice, *Barbie* exemplifies the potential of cinema to push creative boundaries – its technical sophistication brings forth the medium's capacity to engage media-savvy audiences accustomed to deconstructing cultural texts on intellectual and emotional levels. Educationally, *Barbie* functions as a tool for nurturing critical thinking, as its layered narrative encourages viewers to question societal norms and reflect on their own beliefs (Butler 2024; Kimmel 2018). Lastly, the film's engagement with feminist and sociological theories turns it into a valuable resource for interdisciplinary education, bridging humanities and social sciences, as it offers a multidisciplinary case study: its themes intersect with psychology in its approach to identity formation, with sociology and gender roles, and with economics in relation to consumer culture. By analyzing the

film in classrooms, educators can promote critical thinking and interdisciplinary learning, empowering students to engage with media critically and constructively.

For future generations, *Barbie* serves as a cultural time capsule, as it captures the Zeitgeist of the early to mid-2020s, encompassing societal anxieties and aspirations amid rapid technological and social change: as a cultural artifact, it palatably delivers insights into popular media's mechanisms of shaping and documenting progress, providing a lens through which historians and sociologists can analyze evolving gender norms and through which forthcoming generations can understand the gender dynamics and cultural debates of the early 21st century, as its nuanced exploration of power, identity, and relationships provides a roadmap for navigating similar challenges in times yet to come, as much as its commercial success at the box-office unabashedly proves the enduring power of cinema to inspire reflection and drive social progress. Ultimately, Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* is a cinematic milestone fusing aesthetics and ideology to navigate, interrogate, and reveal the complexities of femininity, masculinity, and inter-gender relationships in late modernity: through its aesthetic brilliance and ideological depth materializing in vibrant visuals, incisive critique, and heartfelt storytelling, the film invites audiences to reflect on the sociocultural and economic forces which shape gendered experiences, but as both a product and critique of late capitalism. *Barbie* archetypically exemplifies the dual role of cinema as art and commerce, urging viewers to embrace nuanced perspectives on progress: for contemporary audiences, it presents a mirror to their present; for future generations, it provides a blueprint for approaching the cultural and ideological evolution of the early 21st century. Last but not least, *Barbie* epitomizes the potential of live-action cinema to engage with complex social issues while entertaining diverse audiences: by critiquing societal norms and imagining alternative futures, *Barbie* not only reflects contemporary realities but also contributes to the ongoing project of cultural and social transformation, reminding us of the enduring capacity of art to shape our understanding of the world and to inspire progress for generations to come.

3. *Oppenheimer* (2023): Masculinity, Power, and the Pursuit of a Meaningful Life

The aesthetics and ideology of live-action cinema possess a unique capacity to reflect and interrogate society's most complex questions: Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* (2023) appears as a compelling insight into the intricate interplay of identity and men's pursuit of meaningful lives. The film's narrative and visual techniques serve as a poignant canvas facilitating the exploration of the internal and external conflicts of J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967), the enigmatic physicist who spearheaded the Manhattan Project, remembered by history as the "father of the atomic bomb" (Goodchild 1985; Rhodes 2012): through the performance of Cillian Murphy as the titular character, Nolan crafts an ambitious yet intimate portrait of human

aspiration, moral dilemmas, and the societal repercussions of scientific progress. By observing *Oppenheimer*'s aesthetics and ideological underpinnings, the forthcoming analysis equally addresses the various layers of live-action cinema's potential to encompass universal themes while reflecting on the historical, socioeconomic, and technological contexts shaping its creation and reception, in parallel with a focus on Nolan's directorial approach and Cillian Murphy's compelling performance enabling audiences to engage with pressing contemporary issues by employing cross-disciplinary insights from humanities and sciences.

***Oppenheimer*'s Aesthetics as Ideological Tool**

Nolan's *Oppenheimer* showcases the director's mastery in immersive storytelling through the synthesis of visual, auditory, and narrative elements: the film's aesthetic choices – from its reliance on IMAX photography to the intricate combination of color and black-and-white sequences as well as practical effects, as well as the nonlinear narrative evoking a sense of historical gravitas while maintaining Oppenheimer's internal struggle as the central focal point – underscore the protagonist's inner conflict and the broader sociopolitical tensions of his era. Thus, the black-and-white scenes, representing objectivity and institutional judgment, contrast sharply with the vibrant, subjective color sequences which delve into Oppenheimer's psyche: such a duality reinforces the thematic tension between individual agency and societal responsibility. Christopher Nolan's filmography is characterized by a meticulous attention to visual and narrative detail: shot in a combination of black-and-white and color sequences, the film creates a dual aesthetic, with the black-and-white portions, often aligned with Lewis Strauss' (Robert Downey Jr.) perspective, symbolizing objectivity and political machinations, while the color sequences penetrate into Oppenheimer's subjective experience, portraying his ambition, guilt, and eventual isolation.

The practical use of special effects – eschewing computer-generated imagery for real explosions and intricate set designs – enhances the film's visceral impact: as Laura Mulvey's seminal work *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989) on visual pleasure in cinema suggests, the materiality of live-action imagery fosters a sense of realism which can, and mostly does, heighten emotional engagement. Nolan's dedication to physical effects aligns with this principle, grounding the abstract horrors of nuclear power in tangible, visual experiences. Moreover, Ludwig Göransson's musical score mirrors the protagonist's emotional arc, utilizing oscillating tempos and dissonant harmonics to evoke tension and anticipation: music, as a narrative tool, enhances live-action cinema's capacity to communicate unspoken ideologies, echoing Peter Kivy's insights into the emotive power of film scores, detailed in *The Corded Shell* (1981). Cinematographically, *Oppenheimer* uses close-ups and shallow focus to accentuate Oppenheimer's psychological turmoil; for instance, the recurring motif of fire – a nod to both Prometheus and nuclear fission – serves as a visual metaphor for destruction

and creation; in addition, practical effects are employed to recreate the Trinity test explosion without CGI, underscoring Nolan's commitment to authenticity, as the aesthetics amplify the existential tension of scientific discovery: the beauty of creation juxtaposed with the devastation it enables.

Masculinity in Crisis: The Paradox of Power and the Complex Portrait of J. Robert Oppenheimer

A central theme in *Oppenheimer* is the depiction of masculinity, particularly as it intersects with ambition, vulnerability, and moral responsibility: J. Robert Oppenheimer embodies a complex masculine archetype – a visionary intellectual whose pursuit of greatness is both his strength and his undoing. This portrayal challenges traditional notions of stoic, unassailable masculinity, instead presenting a protagonist who is deeply introspective and haunted by his decisions. Cillian Murphy's nuanced performance captures Oppenheimer's duality as both a celebrated scientist and a man burdened by the ethical ramifications of his work. Judith Butler's theories on performative identity as explored in *Gender Trouble* (1990) are particularly relevant here, as Murphy's acting underscores the ways in which Oppenheimer navigates societal expectations of masculinity while grappling with his own vulnerabilities, with the character's fragile confidence as his moments of doubt highlight the ideological cost of embodying a figure of power.

Furthermore, the film's exploration of male camaraderie – as seen in Oppenheimer's interactions with figures like General Leslie Groves (played by Matt Damon) – additionally complicates the narrative, as their dynamic reflects a hierarchical yet interdependent relationship, emblematic of mid-20th-century professional masculinity: drawing on R. W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity from *Masculinities* (2005), *Oppenheimer* juxtaposes Oppenheimer's intellectual authority with the militarized masculinity of Matt Damon's General Leslie Groves – while Groves represents the pragmatic, action-oriented archetype, Oppenheimer embodies a more nuanced masculinity, characterized by vulnerability and moral ambiguity. Such a dynamic brings into the foreground the tension between scientific innovation and its militaristic application, exposing the fragility of traditional masculine ideals when confronted with ethical dilemmas in the real world. These relationships are not devoid of warmth but are framed within a broader context of institutional objectives and competitive pressures, echoing sociological studies on male bonding in high-stakes environments, as observed by Connell (2005), Kimmel (2018), DiAngelo (2018): indeed, Oppenheimer's masculinity is central to the film's exploration of power and identity in an era defined by rigid gender roles as his intellectual prowess is both celebrated and weaponized. Unlike traditional cinematic portrayals of masculine heroes, Oppenheimer is depicted as frail, introspective, and deeply conflicted, and Cillian Murphy's gaunt visage and subdued demeanor credibly

embody a man consumed by the weight of his choices, challenging dominant ideals of stoic masculinity with roots in ancient tales of heroism and domination.

Equally important, *Oppenheimer* explores the main character's relationships with women, particularly his wife, Kitty (Emily Blunt) and his lover, Jean Tatlock (Florence Pugh): these interactions reveal the limitations of Oppenheimer's emotional expression as well as his struggle to reconcile personal desires with professional obligations. Kitty, a figure of resilience, provides a counterpoint to Oppenheimer's introspection, challenging his self-absorption and urging him to confront the consequences of his actions: through these interactions, the film critiques the gendered dynamics of power and the sacrifices demanded by patriarchal systems.

Power and Its Discontents: Ethical Dimensions of Scientific Progress and the Burden of Responsibility

Power, in *Oppenheimer,* is depicted as both a driving force and a corrupting influence: the Manhattan Project's race to develop nuclear weapons symbolizes humanity's potential for technological mastery, while simultaneously exposing the moral ambiguities inherent in wielding such power. Nolan's script does not shy away from these contradictions, presenting Oppenheimer as a tragic figure caught between his scientific ambitions and the devastating consequences of their realization. In this train of thought, *Oppenheimer*'s narrative resonates with Hannah Arendt's concept of the "banality of evil" as critically explained *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (2006 [1963]), particularly in its depiction of bureaucratic indifference to the human cost of scientific advancement: thus, while Oppenheimer is portrayed as deeply conflicted about his role, the institutional machinery surrounding him – embodied by figures like Robert Downey Jr.'s Lewis Strauss – seems primarily concerned with geopolitical dominance. This juxtaposition brings into the spotlight the tension between individual ethics and systemic imperatives, as does the cinematic investigation of the atomic bomb's cultural and political legacy, with both serving as stark reminders of power's dual nature: simultaneously a catalyst for progress and a harbinger of destruction, its duality aligns with the philosophical frameworks of thinkers like Michel Foucault, who, in *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (1975) examined the relationship between knowledge, power, and societal control – Oppenheimer's journey reflects the ethical dilemmas faced by scientists whose discoveries hold transformative potential but carry profound societal consequences, mostly lethal.

As it comes, the pursuit of power – scientific, political, and personal – is a recurring theme in *Oppenheimer*, which situates the central character and the real-life persona within a network of competing interests, from the U.S. government's wartime agenda to the ideological tensions of the Cold War. Through its depiction of the Manhattan Project, the film interrogates the ethics of scientific progress and the complicity of intellectuals in systems of power: Oppenheimer's collaboration with the

military-industrial complex underscores the Faustian bargain inherent in his work. While his contributions elevate him to a position of unparalleled influence, they also render him a pawn in geopolitical power struggles. The film's climax – the Trinity test (16. July 1945) – is a moment of profound ambivalence: as the explosion illuminates the desert sky, Oppenheimer's awe is tinged with dread, encapsulated in his recitation of the Bhagavad Gita: "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." This moment epitomizes the paradox of power: its capacity to achieve greatness and its potential to wreak devastation.

The subsequent political fallout, including Oppenheimer's vilification during the Red Scare, reminds once again of the precariousness of power in a volatile sociopolitical landscape, as the hearings depicted in the film reveal the erosion of Oppenheimer's influence, with his earlier triumphs overshadowed by accusations of disloyalty, a trajectory indiscriminately laying bare the fleeting nature of power and its dependence on broader institutional forces.

Cinema and the Pursuit of a Meaningful Life: Science, Art, and Ethics as Redemption

At its core, *Oppenheimer* interrogates the very significance of the pursuit of a meaningful life, particularly through the lens of legacy, as Oppenheimer's drive to achieve scientific breakthroughs is portrayed as a quest for purpose, yet the film questions whether such ambitions can ultimately provide fulfillment – individually and collectively. The protagonist's post-WWII disillusionment – marked by public denigration and internal guilt – suggests that the quest for greatness often entails personal sacrifices and unresolved ethical conflicts. This thematic exploration resonates with existentialist philosophy, particularly the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus: Oppenheimer's journey mirrors the existentialist longing for meaning in an absurd world and his moral struggle parallels Sartre's concept of freedom as inherently tragic in *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (1970) and Camus' notion of the absurd in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942), wherein individuals must confront the dissonance between their actions and the broader consequences – thus, the film's final scenes, depicting Oppenheimer's reflections on the atomic bomb's legacy, reveal a poignant sense of existential reckoning. For Oppenheimer, the pursuit of knowledge is both a source of fulfillment and a path to ruin, as the film situates his scientific achievements within a more encompassing philosophical framework, exploring the interplay between individual ambition and collective responsibility. His ultimate realization – that his discoveries have unleashed forces beyond his, or anyone's, control – echoes Camus's notion of the absurd hero, who must confront the indifference of the universe and find meaning through his actions.

Inadvertently, the tension between scientific curiosity and ethical accountability is central to the film's narrative: Oppenheimer's passion for quantum mechanics and

theoretical physics drives him to push the boundaries of human understanding, but this quest is complicated by the moral implications of his work. *Oppenheimer* draws on historical and philosophical texts, including the writings of Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr, to contextualize Oppenheimer's ethical dilemmas: in doing so, it invites audiences to reflect on the responsibilities of scientists and the potential consequences of unchecked innovation, thus revealing live-action cinema's unique ability to engage contemporary media-consumers while shaping future understandings of history and culture. By blending historical fidelity with artistic interpretation, Nolan's film serves as both a reflection of its time and a tool for critical inquiry, as its focus on themes like masculinity, power, and ethical responsibility invites viewers to grapple with questions which transcend historical boundaries.

On the one hand, for contemporary audiences, *Oppenheimer* provides a tool to reflect on the implications of technological advancement in an age of rapid innovation: the parallels between the atomic bomb's development and modern challenges, such as artificial intelligence and climate change, are implicit yet profound. This capacity for historical allegory aligns with Siegfried Kracauer's assertion in *Theory of Film* (1960) that cinema can serve as a collective mirror, reflecting societal anxieties and aspirations. From a sociopolitical perspective, *Oppenheimer*'s emphasis on institutional dynamics and individual agency resonates with ongoing debates about the role of scientists and technologists in shaping public policy: the Manhattan Project's legacy – as depicted in *Oppenheimer* – highlights the ethical dilemmas inherent in aligning scientific innovation with national interests, a topic of enduring relevance in an era marked by global challenges. On the other hand, *Oppenheimer* exemplifies the capacity of live-action cinema to serve as both a mirror and a catalyst for societal reflection: through its intricate storytelling and compelling acting performances, the film engages contemporary audiences in a dialogue about the ethical dimensions of progress, and by examining the intersection of science, politics, and morality, it prompts viewers to consider the implications of their own choices and the systems they inhabit. Moreover, *Oppenheimer*'s resonance is amplified by its release in a period of renewed global tensions and technological upheaval, as the combined specter of nuclear proliferation, climate change, and artificial intelligence underscores the relevance of Oppenheimer's story: in drawing parallels between historical and contemporary challenges, *Oppenheimer* bridges the gap between past and present, offering insights into the enduring complexities of progress.

The Intersection of Cinema, Education, and Technology

In the broader scheme of things, *Oppenheimer* draws on interdisciplinary insights to illuminate the ethical and cultural ramifications of scientific innovation, bringing together sciences and humanities by contextualizing the Manhattan Project as an example of the tensions between discovery and destruction debates in the philosophy

of science, particularly as articulated by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962): Kuhn's notion of paradigm shifts, in which scientific breakthroughs disrupt established norms – resonates with *Oppenheimer*'s description of nuclear physics as a double-edged sword. More closely to our times, the ethical dilemmas faced by Oppenheimer and his colleagues invite comparisons to contemporary bioethical debates, such as the use of CRISPR gene-editing technology, as both fields illustrate the ways in which innovation can outpace the moral frameworks needed to govern it, a concern echoed in the work of ethicists like Hans Jonas' *The Imperative of Responsibility* (1985): by dramatizing these issues, *Oppenheimer* positions itself as a vital text for fostering dialogue across disciplines, while bringing into the foreground the sociocultural impact of science, and highlighting the Manhattan Project's re-configuration of global geopolitics and cultural consciousness. The post-war period's cultural artifacts, from literature to cinema, reflect the profound anxieties induced by nuclear weapons – a cultural resonance evident in works like John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1946) and Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), which interrogate the ethical and existential implications of atomic power. *Oppenheimer* extends this tradition, offering a 21st-century perspective on the enduring legacy of nuclear technology, as its depiction of the Manhattan Project draws on historical accounts, such as Richard Rhodes's *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (2012), while its ethical inquiries resonate with Hannah Arendt's analysis of responsibility and authority, particularly in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1976): the interplay between science and philosophy urges viewers to seriously consider the less visible yet possibly more impactful implications of technological advancements, fostering a deeper appreciation for the complexities of human progress.

Last but not least, the technological advancements in cinema, exemplified by *Oppenheimer's* use of IMAX and practical effects, bring into the spotlight the medium's capacity to convey complex narratives with unprecedented realism: Nolan's insistence on physical effects over CGI enhances the authenticity of the film's visual language, aligning with Walter Benjamin's concept of the "aura" in art, as detailed in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1969 [1935]): this tactile realism immerses audiences in the historical and emotional gravity of the story, allowing for a deeper engagement with its themes, while demonstrating the educational potential of cinema, serving as a tool for historical and scientific literacy: by dramatizing pivotal moments in 20th-century history, the film invites viewers to grapple with the ethical and social dimensions of scientific innovation, aligning with the pedagogical theories of John Dewey, who advocated for experiential learning as a means of fostering critical thinking in *Experience and Education* (1997): *Oppenheimer*'s ability to synthesize entertainment and education exemplifies cinema's role as a medium for both personal and collective reflection.

Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* stands as a testament to the enduring power of live-action cinema to interrogate humanity's most pressing questions: through its exploration of masculinity, power, and the pursuit of a meaningful life, it transcends its historical subject matter to engage with universal themes, and by blending aesthetic innovation with philosophical inquiry, it exemplifies the unique potential of cinema to bridge the sciences and humanities, fostering dialogue across disciplines and generations. For contemporary audiences, *Oppenheimer* serves as a mirror, reflecting the ethical dilemmas and existential questions of our time, providing a cautionary tale about the perils of unbridled ambition and the ethical responsibilities of leadership. For future generations, it offers a cinematic blueprint for understanding the profound implications of technological and scientific advancements, emphasizing the need for critical reflection and interdisciplinary engagement, as well as the complexities of progress and the human condition. In its ambition and execution, *Oppenheimer* re-affirms the role of visionary directors and transformative actors in shaping cinema as a medium of cultural and intellectual legacy, pointing out that the stories we tell – and the way we tell them – hold the power to illuminate the past, critique the present, and inspire the future. A poignant reminder of cinema's capacity to illuminate the human condition and to provoke critical inquiry, Nolan's film explores the intricate interplay of masculinity, power, and the search for meaning, offering a multifaceted portrait of a man caught in the crosscurrents of history, redefining, through its aesthetic innovation and narrative depth, the boundaries of historical drama, engaging audiences in a timeless dialogue about the ethical dimensions of progress.

4. Conclusion: Learning With and From Blockbusters

Having analyzed the intricate aesthetics and ideological dimensions of *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, the discussion now transitions from the historical and ethical reflections a more comprehensive consideration of the ways in which live-action cinema operates as a medium for social critique and cultural reflection, delivering a versatile platform for engaging audiences with questions of identity, power, ethics, and meaning, therefore bridging narrative artistry with philosophical inquiry.

In the first segment, the analysis of Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* demonstrated the film's negotiation of femininity, masculinity, and inter-gender dynamics within a hyperreal, self-reflexive universe: through its vibrant visual palette, playful yet incisive narrative, and self-conscious commentary on consumer culture and late-modern social norms, *Barbie* interrogates prevailing gender expectations while offering audiences tools for critical reflection. Barbie's journey from utopian perfection to the complexities of human reality illustrates the relation between individual agency and sociocultural structures, highlighting both the liberatory potential and the limitations of gendered performance. The film's engagement with humor, satire, and narrative inversion allows for a multifaceted exploration of power, relationality, and identity,

situating a seemingly lighthearted story within a serious discourse on ethics, societal expectation, and the ongoing recalibration of gender as phenomenon and of gender as discourse in the 21st century.

The second segment on Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* underscored a contrasting but complementary cinematic approach, emphasizing the historical, ethical, and existential dimensions of masculinity, power, and the pursuit of meaning: Nolan's meticulous use of IMAX cinematography, practical effects, non-linear narrative, and tonal duality between black-and-white objectivity and subjective color sequences amplifies the protagonist's moral and psychological dilemmas. Through Cillian Murphy's nuanced performance, the film portrays Oppenheimer's intellectual brilliance and ethical burden, overtly displaying the paradoxes inherent in wielding scientific and institutional authority. The analysis illustrated *Oppenheimer*'s interrogation of the tension between individual responsibility and systemic imperatives, employing historical and philosophical frameworks – from Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" to Camus' existentialist insights – to underscore the moral complexities of human ambition and technological progress. In doing so, Nolan's film exemplifies the capacity of live-action cinema to transform historical biography into a profound inquiry into ethics, power, and the human condition.

Despite these insights, the present study is subject to several limitations. The analysis is primarily qualitative and interpretative, relying on close readings of cinematic texts rather than empirical audience studies, which limits the ability to generalize findings to broader viewer reception. Moreover, the study focuses on two specific films from 2023, potentially constraining the applicability of conclusions to other cinematic works, genres, or cultural contexts. While cross-disciplinary frameworks were employed, certain areas – such as economic critique, media circulation, and reception theory – were addressed only tangentially, leaving room for more granular, data-driven investigations. Finally, the study emphasizes thematic and aesthetic dimensions over production or industrial analyses, meaning that institutional, budgetary, or marketing factors influencing the films' form and reception were not explored in depth.

Future research could build upon the insights generated here by expanding the comparative scope to include additional contemporary films exploring similar themes of gender, power, and ethics, across a wider array of cultural contexts and production systems. Empirical studies on audience reception, including cross-cultural analyses and longitudinal surveys, could illuminate the ways in which diverse viewers perceive, interpret, and respond to aesthetic and ideological elements in these – and similar – films. Furthermore, the integration of digital media studies could shed light on possible extensions towards the impact of cinematic narratives by involving marketing, fan engagement, and transmedia storytelling beyond the theater. Investigations of production conditions, technological innovation, and the economics of blockbuster

filmmaking could likewise complement thematic analyses, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the forces shaping contemporary cinema. By pursuing these avenues, scholars can continue to bridge humanities and sciences, aesthetics and ideology, theory and practice in film studies.

Ultimately, *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* together exemplify the enduring power of live-action cinema to engage audiences with the most pressing questions of human existence: both films, through their distinctive aesthetic strategies, narrative structures, and performance choices, illuminate the ethical, existential, and social dimensions of contemporary life. Cinema, as demonstrated by these works, operates not merely as entertainment but as a reflective and interpretative medium, offering insights into identity, power, morality, and humans' search for meaning. By situating the message and the visual style within broader cultural, technological, and philosophical contexts, these films reaffirm the capacity of cinema to bridge disciplines, provoke critical inquiry, and inspire reflection across generations. In doing so, they underscore the vital role of visionary directors, transformative actors, and attentive audiences in shaping both the intellectual and entertainment legacy of the cinematic medium.

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Comunicarea strategică - evoluție și confuzii teoretice în definirea conceptului

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Abstract

În actualul peisaj geopolitic, marcat de amenințări hibride, fragmentare socială și o încredere tot mai scăzută în instituțiile democratice, comunicarea strategică are un rol important, însă eficiența sa depinde de clarificarea și asumarea riguroasă a cadrului conceptual. Articolul, într-o primă etapă, analizează evoluția și problematizarea conceptului de comunicare strategică, pornind de la premisele generate de multiplele crize de securitate ale ultimelor decenii. Ulterior, lucrarea evidențiază modul în care comunicarea strategică a fost teoretizată și instituționalizată ca răspuns la transformările mediului de securitate, mai precis, unde a fost insuficientă comunicarea de criză. În continuare, articolul explorează abordările din spațiul academic, cu accent pe diversitatea perspectivelor disciplinare și lipsa unei paradigme unitare, ceea ce a condus la o extindere conceptuală dificil de delimitat. În acest context, ultima parte a analizei se concentrează asupra confuziei teoretice existente și evidențierea unor cauze. Articolul susține necesitatea unei clarificări conceptuale și metodologice, esențiale pentru consolidarea comunicării strategice ca instrument coerent și credibil în arhitectura securității contemporane, care trebuie să evolueze dincolo de reacție, să devină un pilon sistemic al securității naționale și transnaționale.

Keywords

comunicare strategică, comunicare de criză, securitate națională

1. Comunicarea strategică, teoretizată după multiple crize de securitate

La fel ca numeroase concepte din sfera comunicării, comunicarea strategică își are originea în practică, proces în urma căruia a fost sistematizată și aprofundată prin contribuțiile cercetării academice. Încă de la început, a trecut printr-un proces de dezbatere, ulterior, o perioadă de dezvoltare și în cele din urmă de adaptare la noile contexte geopolitice și de securitate, în încercarea de a o alinia unor concepte preexistente, precum diplomația publică, afacerile publice, operațiile informaționale și operațiile psihologice (Althuis, 2021: 71).

În anul 1997, Kofi Annan, secretarul general al Organizației Națiunilor Unite (ONU) aduce în atenția publică, într-un raport comandat și redactat de Mark Malloch-Brown către Națiunile Unite, o definiție a conceptului de comunicare strategică. Raportul arată complexitatea conceptului și subdomeniile pe care le înglobează, dezvoltate ulterior și în literatura de specialitate: „Tipul de comunicare care permite

unei organizații să fie eficientă în activitatea sa de fond, precum și în construirea electoratului poate fi caracterizat drept comunicare strategică (în engl. *strategic communications*[1]) [...] Comunicarea strategică este mai mult decât suma părților sale, care includ informarea publică, relația cu presa și construirea electoratului. Mai presus de toate, reprezintă o legătură esențială în elaborarea politicilor." (Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities, 1997: 9-10). Raportul amintit este încadrat în contextul anilor post-Război Rece, moment în care Consiliul de Securitate al ONU a adăugat în propria agendă, gestionarea conflictelor regionale și a războaielor civile, ceea ce a dus la o criză operațională și de legitimitate în interiorul organizației. Intervenția reușită din Irak în 1991, a generat un sentiment de optimism instituțional, contrazis la scurt timp de eșecurile misiunii *United Nations Operations* în Somalia (UNOSOM, 1993-1995), a misiunii *United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda* (UNAMIR, 1993) din Rwanda și a misiunii *United Nations Protection Force* (UNPROFOR, 1992-1995) în Bosnia. Vedem, astfel, un eșec - nu doar operațional, ci și comunicațional de a gestiona coerent crizele sub presiune mediatică - care a afectat percepția publică internațională asupra organizației și care s-a suprapus cu o schimbare globală a spațiului mediatic (Althuis, 2021: 84).Începe, în felul acesta, dezbaterea despre ce înseamnă comunicarea strategică, care sunt limitele și cine sunt responsabilii.

Un alt moment important în evoluția conceptului a fost reprezentat de nevoia unei culturi de comunicare strategică coordonată la nivel statal în Statele Unite ale Americii. Anul 2001 - la scurt timp după atentatele din 11 septembrie și seria de atacuri sinucigașe coordonate de Al-Qaeda împotriva SUA - consemnează apariția unui raport al Grupului de Lucru al *Defense Science Board* referitor la diseminarea coordonată a informațiilor, unde vedem că „în prezent, structurile Guvernului Statelor Unite responsabile de diseminarea informațiilor sunt subdimensionate din punct de vedere al personalului și insuficient finanțate. Acestea se confruntă cu o coordonare deficitară și nu sunt integrate în procesul de planificare și implementare a securității naționale" (Vitto, 2001: 3). Pe acest fond, se conturează tot mai clar nevoia imperativă de a depăși comunicarea de criză și de a adopta o comunicare strategică capabilă să integreze coerent diverse domenii de acțiune, care „utilizate în mod eficient - diplomația publică, afacerile publice și informarea militară internațională - pot mobiliza opiniile publice pentru a preveni sau a soluționa o criză pe termen scurt. Comunicarea strategică sofisticată poate stabili agenda și poate crea un context care să faciliteze atingerea obiectivelor politice, economice și militare. În timp, aceasta poate modela percepțiile externe în moduri care sprijină interesele Statelor Unite" (Defense Science Board Task Force, 2001: 1). La început de secol XXI, raportul aduce în atenție faptul că la nivel

[1] Utilizarea celor două variante, *strategic communication* și *strategic communications*, a produs confuzie de-a lungul timpului.

strategic comunicarea trebuie aliniată cu obiectivele de securitate națională și totodată trebuie integrată în procesul de planificare strategică, nu adăugată ulterior. Principalele forme prin care se realizează comunicarea strategică: materialele video, audio, tipărite și platformele online, iar mediul web - aflat atunci în expansiune și pe care guvernul SUA îl cataloghează ca fiind cheia principală a comunicării strategice - este esențial deoarece poate integra cele trei tipuri de produs (Defense Science Board Task Force, 2001: 57-59). Trebuie subliniat că Statele Unite ale Americii au fost primul stat care a utilizat platformele de social media în comunicarea guvernamentală. (Mergel, 2015: 456-468).

Crizele de securitate au demonstrat că reacția comunicațională post-factum este insuficientă. Astfel, comunicarea strategică este conceptualizată ca un proces proactiv, orientat spre modelarea mediului informațional înainte ca amenințările să se materializeze; scopul final nu este doar gestionarea unei crize punctuale, ci consolidarea capacității societății de a rezista, adapta și recupera în fața șocurilor informaționale și de securitate.

2. Comunicarea strategică în spațiul academic

Conform primei formulări din literatura de specialitate (Hallahan et al., 2007), comunicarea strategică nu se limitează la instrumente sau canale, fără a exclude însă rolul relațiilor și al rețelelor, ci vizează utilizarea deliberată a comunicării ca resursă strategică, precum și asumarea de către organizație a rolului de actor social implicat activ în promovarea propriei misiuni. Dimensiunea intențională reprezintă un element definitoriu al comunicării strategice, aceasta fiind orientată spre producerea unor efecte dorite asupra mediului intern și extern. (Hallahan et. al., 2007: 7).

În ceea ce privește existența conceptului de *comunicare strategică* în spațiul academic, în cercetare, conform Dimensions AI (*figura 1*), putem observa prin evoluția numărului de publicații, o creștere exponențială a interesului academic pentru comunicarea strategică, în special după 2013, pe fondul crizelor de securitate și al transformărilor mediului informațional. Această expansiune cantitativă confirmă relevanța conceptului, dar evidențiază totodată riscul unei diluări teoretice.

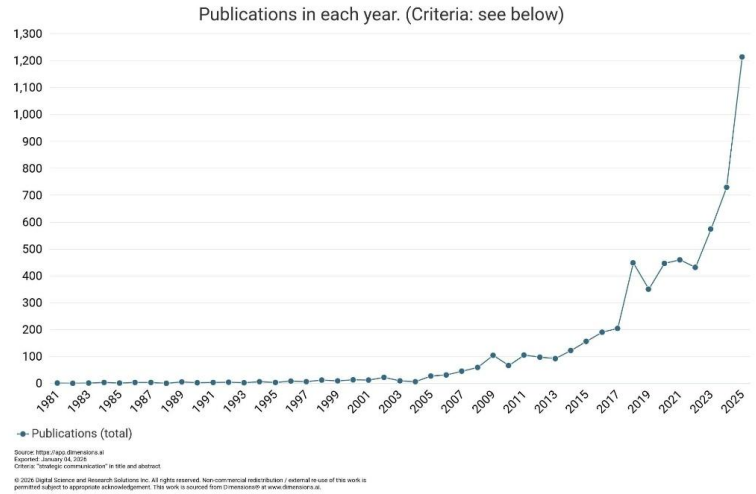


Figura 1. Rezultatele căutării în perioada 1981-2025 după „strategic communication”. Sursă: Dimensions AI

Dimensions AI este o platformă dezvoltată de Digital Science, o companie de tehnologie specializată în furnizarea de soluții inovatoare pentru comunitatea de cercetare; o platformă de analiză și informații bibliometrice care oferă acces integrat la o gamă largă de date academice și științifice. Dimensions AI permite o analiză rapidă a literaturii existente într-un anumit domeniu și oferă o viziune globală asupra impactului cercetării, inclusiv dincolo de mediul academic (de exemplu, impact asupra politicilor publice sau inovațiilor tehnologice).

În acest context, am utilizat platforma pentru a analiza literatura de specialitate, urmărind articolele relevante în baza de date digitală. Căutarea a fost realizată utilizând sintagma *strategic communication*, inclusă atât în titlu, cât și în rezumat, rezultând un total de 6.101 de articole publicate în perioada 1981-2025. Opțiunea pentru limba engleză a fost motivată de interesul pentru identificarea și analizarea tendințelor la nivel global. Graficul evidențiază o creștere exponențială a interesului academic pentru conceptul de comunicare strategică, măsurată prin numărul de publicații care includ termenul în titlu și rezumat. Astfel, am determinat patru faze în evoluția și utilizarea conceptului:

1. Faza incipientă (1981–2000) , numărul publicațiilor este extrem de redus și relativ constant, cu valori apropiate de zero sau de ordinul unităților.

2. Faza de consolidare timpurie și creștere graduală (2000–2013) care reflectă începutul instituționalizării academice a comunicării strategice, în special în domeniul securității, apărării, în sectorul guvernamental și al politicilor publice. Începând cu 2005, se observă o creștere progresivă, dar încă moderată, a numărului de publicații. Această perioadă corespunde: a) contextului post-11 septembrie 2001; b) intensificării operațiilor militare occidentale; c) apariției discursului despre *war of ideas* și

information environment; d) utilizarea conceptului în spațiul guvernamental al SUA; e) preluare în terminologia NATO.

3. Faza de expansiune accelerată, validare și extindere (2014–2018). După 2014, curba de creștere devine mult mai accentuată. Această etapă este corelată cu: a) anexarea Crimeei și intensificarea conflictelor hibride; b) apariția platformelor de social media ca vectori de influență; c) emergența conceptelor de dezinformare și influență strategică.

4. Faza de creștere explozivă și diluare conceptuală (2019–2025), intervalul marchează o creștere abruptă, culminând cu peste 1.200 de publicații într-un singur an (în 2022 au fost publicate 431 de articole, iar în 2025 numărul s-a triplat). Această explozie este asociată cu: a) pandemia COVID-19; b) războiul informațional și dezinformarea la scară globală; c) conflictul din Ucraina și securitizarea spațiului informațional. Totuși, această creștere cantitativă ridică și o problemă calitativă: utilizarea extensivă și adesea eterogenă a termenului sugerează o posibilă diluare conceptuală, confirmând existența unei confuzii teoretice în literatura de specialitate.

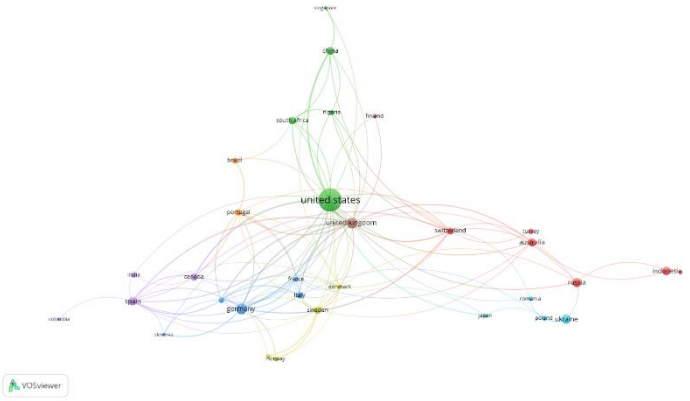


Figura 2. Distribuția cantitativă. Sursă: VOSviewer

Pentru a determina distribuția la nivel mondial a studiilor realizate în jurul conceptului de comunicare strategică, cu ajutorul datelor generate de baza de date digitală Dimensions AI și ulterior procesate în VOSviewer - un instrument software utilizat pentru construirea și vizualizarea rețelelor bibliometrice - am generat *Figura 2*. Confirmăm, astfel, utilizarea, teoretizarea și aplicarea conceptului cu precădere în Statele Unite ale Americii, ulterior în Marea Britanie.

În ceea ce privește dezvoltarea conceptului în Marea Britanie, Steve Tatham se raportează la comunicarea strategică și o definește ca fiind o „serie sistematică de activităţi susţinute şi coerente, conduse la nivel strategic, operaţional şi tactic, care permite înţelegerea audienţelor şi identifică o cale de a promova şi susţine anumite tipuri de comportament” (Tatham, 2008:3). Autorul pune un accent puternic pe

schimbarea comportamentelor și vede comunicarea strategică ca fiind un mijloc în influențarea comportamentelor. Totodată, un element important este modul în care este conceput mesajul și, la fel de important, în final, măsurarea efectelor în comunicarea strategică. De asemenea, într-un subcapitol intitulat *Ce nu este comunicarea strategică*, Steve Tatham (2008:6) menționează că nu este o simplă interacțiune cu media, nici publicitate sau marketing și nici un nou termen pentru Operații Informaționale (original în limba engleză: *Information Operations*), ci o astfel de percepție asupra comunicării strategice ar putea chiar limita efectele conceptului și puterea pe care o are la nivel global, cu răspândire rapidă a mesajului și cu efecte mult mai puternice, spre deosebire de o simplă reclamă, de exemplu. Comunicarea strategică reprezintă un sector mult mai amplu, cu elemente din toate domeniile pe care le înglobează și cu „sonor" mai puternic, mai extins.

Tot legat de definirea conceptului, acesta „trebuie văzut ca un proces, mai degrabă decât ca un set de capabilităţi, organizaţii sau activităţi distincte", așa cum a fost menționat în 2009, în *Raportul privind Comunicarea Strategică* al Departamentului Apărării al Statelor Unite ale Americii. În documentul oficial, este menționat că acest concept, într-un sens extins, este „procesul de integrare a aspectelor privind percepția publicului și a părților interesate în elaborarea politicilor, planificarea și operațiunile de la fiecare nivel.". În 2010, tot pentru a clarifica ce înseamnă comunicarea strategică și care sunt mijloacele, cine este responsabil și care este scopul final, pentru Statele Unite ale Americii la nivel guvernamental, regăsim în documentul emis de Casa Albă, *National Framework for Strategic Communication*s (2010:2): „Prin comunicare strategică ne referim la: (a) sincronizarea dintre cuvinte și acțiuni și modul în care acestea vor fi percepute de publicurile țintă, precum și (b) programele și activitățile desfășurate în mod deliberat pentru a comunica și a interacționa cu publicurile vizate, inclusiv cele implementate de profesioniști în relații publice, diplomație publică și operațiuni informaționale".

Un alt document oficial al Statelor Unite ale Americii, *Quadrennial Defense Review Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication* (2006: 3), definește comunicarea strategică ca fiind suma „proceselor și eforturilor concentrate ale Guvernului Statelor Unite pentru a înțelege și a angaja publicul cheie în scopul de a crea, consolida sau menține condiții favorabile pentru promovarea intereselor și obiectivelor naționale prin utilizarea coordonată a informațiilor, temelor, planurilor, programelor și acțiunilor sincronizate cu alte elemente ale puterii naționale." În 2011, specialistul american Paul Christopher evidenția dificultatea formulării unei definiții unanim acceptate a comunicării strategice, pe fondul unei dezbateri academice încă în desfășurare. Cu toate acestea, autorul contura o direcție clară de interpretare, subliniind legătura strânsă dintre comunicarea strategică și strategia națională: „Pentru mine, comunicarea strategică înseamnă coordonarea lucrurilor pe care le faci și le spui în sprijinul obiectivelor tale. Mai formal, definesc comunicarea strategică ca fiind acțiuni,

mesaje, imagini și alte forme de semnalizare sau interacțiune coordonate, menite să informeze, să influențeze sau să convingă publicuri selectate, în sprijinul obiectivelor naționale" (Paul, 2011: p.3).

Într-o analiză publicată în 2017 în *Gândirea militară românească*, colonelul Valentin Vasile subliniază că comunicarea are un caracter strategic atunci când este orientată către atingerea unor scopuri politico-militare, fiind planificată, coordonată și aplicată în mod sincronizat pentru susținerea obiectivelor strategice, atât la nivel național, cât și aliat. În această perspectivă, comunicarea strategică depășește sfera comunicării publice instituționale, transformându-se într-un instrument activ de sprijin al implementării politicilor statului și al realizării obiectivelor acestora în multiple domenii, de la cel politic și diplomatic până la cel informațional, cultural și militar (Vasile 2007: 56).

3. Confuzie teoretică - comunicarea strategică în domeniul securității

Evoluțiile recente din plan militar ne arată cum comunicarea a devenit un instrument cu o influență mare în spațiul public și în cel decizional guvernamental, în special în situații marcate de „confruntări de interese" între actori statali. Aceste contexte demonstrează capacitatea comunicării de a modela percepții la nivelul sistemului internațional, iar statele își formulează și își aplică strategiile naționale prin intermediul unor domenii distincte de acțiune - politic, economic și de apărare - în scopul susținerii sau atingerii unor obiective strategice (Castro, 2013: 27). Așa cum am arătat mai sus, diferite crize de securitate au generat noi abordări ale conceptului de comunicare strategică, au apărut rapoarte - cu precădere după anii 2000 - diferite studii și numeroase menționări ale elementelor care compun conceptul, iar evoluția definiției prin documentele guvernului SUA și ulterior în literatura de specialitate evidențiază o luptă persistentă pentru claritate. În urma atacurilor teroriste din 11 septembrie 2001, guvernul Statelor Unite a recunoscut necesitatea urgentă de a integra mai bine comunicarea în eforturile sale de securitate națională.

Voi aduce în atenție un demers de clarificare epistemologică a comunicării strategice în domeniul securității, demersul lui Cristian E. Guerrero-Castro - *Strategic Communication for Security & National Defense: Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Approach* - ca urmare a unei crize conceptuale. Comunicarea strategică este invocată frecvent în spațiul public - militar, politic, social - și privat, însă confundat cu alte practici ale domeniului. Guerrero-Castro observă că își pierde acest concept legătura cu dimensiunea strategică propriu-zisă a unui stat.

Înainte de a expune principalele aspecte ale confuziei teoretice care înconjoară conceptul de comunicare strategică, este esențială clarificarea unui principiu preliminar fundamental, formulat de James Farwell în lucrarea *Information Warfare*. Principiul *know your strategic situation* (trad. eng. cunoaște situația strategică) reprezintă un pilon central al comunicării strategice și al războiului informațional, fiind necesară o

înțelegere aprofundată a mediului strategic înainte de formularea și implementarea oricărui demers comunicațional. În acest sens, pe lângă evaluarea contextului operațional, este necesară identificarea audiențelor-țintă, a cadrului cultural și lingvistic, a canalelor de comunicare relevante și a narațiunilor dominante sau emergente. În absența unei asemenea analize preliminare, comunicarea riscă să devină incoerentă, inadecvată sau chiar contraproductivă (Farwell, 2020).

Prin contrast, o cunoaștere solidă a situației strategice permite alinierea mesajelor la realitățile din teren și constituie o condiție necesară pentru eficiența acțiunilor informaționale pe termen scurt și lung, deci un cadru analitic indispensabil pentru discutarea critică a limitelor și ambiguităților conceptuale ale comunicării strategice. Plasând discuția înapoi în cadrul problematicii centrale, Guerrero-Castro evidențiază migrarea comunicării strategice din domeniul apărării spre alte domenii, unde a fost aplicat incorect. Conceptul a fost utilizat agresiv în marketing, afaceri, relații publice și alte arii fără respectarea unei definiții riguroase. Totodată, demersul științific propune o delimitare fermă între comunicarea socială - care operează într-o proporție mare în registrul informării - și comunicarea strategică - cea care operează în dimensiunea politico-strategică. În viziunea autorului, securitatea nu este doar un domeniu de acțiune, ci un scenariu comunicațional complex unde percepția, narațiunea și interpretarea au un rol important.

În viziunea autorului Guerrero-Castro, există câteva aspecte importante ale confuziei conceptuale în ceea ce privește comunicarea strategică:

1. În perioada 2002-2004 se observă o migrație a conceptului din zona apărării spre domenii precum afacerile, relațiile publice și comunicarea socială, fapt ce a generat o disonanță în definiția conceptului;

2. Așa cum am arătat mai sus, confuzia se face și între comunicarea strategică și comunicarea socială;

3. Folosirea în mod eronat a termenului „strategic”, autorul consideră că termenul „strategic” nu poate fi aplicat decât acelor acțiuni care a) se situează la nivelul deciziei politico-strategice; b) sunt legate direct de interesele naționale vitale; c) implică utilizarea și coordonarea instrumentelor unui stat;

4. Confundarea simplei informări a publicului cu acțiunea strategică;

5. Lipsa unei definiții aliniate în fiecare departament și la nivel guvernamental.

O definiție clară și acceptată universal, pentru orice capacitate critică de securitate, nu reprezintă un simplu exercițiu academic, ci o necesitate strategică. Pentru a integra comunicare strategică într-o strategie națională, este necesară o înțelegere comună astfel încât eforturile să nu fie fragmentate și resursele să nu fie alocate și consumate fără rezultate. Cele aproximativ două decenii de folosire aleatoriu a conceptului de comunicare strategică în diverse domenii, au făcut ca acest proces să devină confuz.

În final, cercetătorul Guerrero-Castro formulează un cadru sintetizat și cuprinzător pentru comunicarea strategică în domeniul securității și apărării, o definiție care depășește ambiguitatea abordărilor anterioare: „managementul politico-strategic al comunicării unui stat care caută, analizează, planifică, coordonează şi activează resurse relevante prin «acţiuni logice» semnificative, cu un mesaj construit pe baza unor concepte diseminate pentru a atinge un obiectiv vital ca soluţie la o problemă de comunicare într-un anumit scenariu (război, criză sau pace) în care există voinţe conflictuale între alte state care interferează cu obiectivele permanente şi/sau cu interesele naţionale ale propriului stat" (Castro, 2013: 42).

Concluzie

Comunicarea strategică a apărut ca o reală necesitate de a îngloba toate eforturile unei organizații de a expune misiunea cât mai concis, de a crea un cadru pentru o comunicare intenționată, pe diverse canale, cu diverse instrumente și resurse, cu audiențe omogene, unde scopul final rămâne același: atingerea propriilor obiective. Comunicarea strategică este concepută ca un sistem adaptiv, bazat pe analiză și ajustare continuă, nu ca un proces de emitere unilaterală a mesajelor. Analiza evoluției comunicării strategice evidențiază faptul că acest concept s-a consolidat preponderent ca reacție la crizele de securitate ale mediului internațional contemporan, devenind treptat un instrument indispensabil în gestionarea percepțiilor, legitimității și libertății de acțiune a actorilor statali. Cu toate acestea, extinderea rapidă a utilizării sale, atât în plan operațional, cât și academic, nu a fost însoțită de o clarificare conceptuală proporțională, ceea ce a generat o fragmentare teoretică semnificativă. În același timp, așa cum am detaliat anterior, discrepanța dintre creșterea cantitativă a literaturii și lipsa unui consens definitoriu indică necesitatea unei clarificări conceptuale, a delimitării față de concepte adiacente și consolidarea unui cadru teoretic coerent, în special în domeniul securității, domeniu care revendică acest concept. În final, înțelegerea mediului de securitate este necesară în conturarea dimensiunii comunicării strategice.

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Title in English: ***Strategic communication – evolution and theoretical confusions in defining the concept***

Abstract in English: *In the current geopolitical landscape, marked by hybrid threats, social fragmentation, and a steadily declining level of trust in democratic institutions, strategic communication plays a significant role; however, its effectiveness depends on the clarification and rigorous adoption of a coherent conceptual framework. In its first stage, this article examines the evolution and problematization of the concept of strategic communication, starting from the premises generated by the multiple security crises of recent decades. Subsequently, the paper highlights the manner in which strategic communication has been theorized and institutionalized as a response to transformations in the security environment, contexts in which crisis*

communication alone proved insufficient. The article then explores academic approaches to the concept, emphasizing the diversity of disciplinary perspectives and the absence of a unified paradigm, which has led to a conceptual expansion that is difficult to delimit. Within this framework, the final part of the analysis focuses on the existing theoretical confusion and identifies several of its underlying causes. The article argues for the necessity of conceptual and methodological clarification, essential for consolidating strategic communication as a coherent and credible instrument within the architecture of contemporary security, one that must evolve beyond reactive practices and become a systemic pillar of national and transnational security.

Keywords in English: *strategic communication, crisis communication, national security*

A pragmatic analysis of a disaster. Volodymyr Zelensky's visit to the White House

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Abstract

Language is power. Through language, the future of everyone's life is determined. Wars are settled, conflicts and revolutions are stopped, and politics is defined through the use of language. This paper analyzes how the meeting between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky, in February 2025, revealed the Trump Administration's perspective on foreign policy, and, more precisely, on the Russian-Ukrainian war. I will apply the Critical Discourse Analysis theory postulated by Norman Fairclough, also utilizing concepts such as impoliteness superstrategies and metastrategies (Culpeper 1996, 2005), as well as analyzing the use of different words/ expressions that contributed to what was presented as a `diplomatic disaster` at the White House.

Keywords

pragmatics, impoliteness, cooperative principle, Trump, Zelensky, discourse analysis

1. Introduction

A `political disaster`, `diplomacy at its worst`, the `death of diplomacy`, a `collapse` or a `shouting match`, these are just some of the words and expressions used to describe the meeting between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky, on February 28th, at the White House. The conversation that took place in front of mostly US media reporters warrants a pragmatic analysis, as it illustrates how language can influence power, the future of different countries, or even the lives of soldiers, in this case, those on the battlefield in Ukraine. The context of the meeting is also important: it was the first meeting between President Donald Trump and President Volodymyr Zelensky since Trump took power in his second presidential mandate. As soon as he took power, Trump threatened to stop all military aid to Ukraine and also the intelligence sharing, as he did not agree with Biden's policy towards this war. Moreover, the Ukrainian president was being criticized by US leaders for supporting the Democrats in the previous presidential elections, something that Vice-President J.D. Vance also mentioned during the meeting.

More than that, the language used by both presidents and also Vice-President J.D. Vance shows how, through discourse, one can present dominance or vulnerability,

but also how Zelensky's words, as a non-native English speaker, can be interpreted as disrespectful by the American leaders.

2. Literature review

As Fairclough writes, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an `interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse which views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination is reproduced by text and talk` (1992, Fairclough). There are, however, three directions which have been developed during the years: Dialectical-relational approach (Norman Fairclough), Socio-cognitive approach (Teun A. van Dijk) and Discourse-historical approach (Ruth Wodak). CDA, then, addresses many aspects, such as social issues, how power relations are discursive, and also how speeches shape the culture and society. According to Fairclough and Wodak, `Discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people` (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 258). In CDA, context is also crucial, as it determines the relation between the speaker and the listener/ audience, how they address each other, the positions they have while discussing, but also their relations to the world. All these aspects influence the meaning-making process, the choice of words and the outcome of a conversation.

Important, however, for the analysis of that meeting's conversation are also the impoliteness superstrategies, as presented by Culpeper in 1996 and revised in 2005, as they can show why that meeting was interpreted as being a disaster.

- **bald-on-record impoliteness** – when the face-threatening act is direct, clear and unambiguous;

- **positive impoliteness** – strategies are used to damage the positive face of the addressee, through ignorance, exclusion, dissociation, disinterest, the use of secretive language (like jargon), disagreements, making the other feel uncomfortable etc.

- **negative impoliteness** – where strategies are used to damage the addressee's negative face, like ridicule, scorn, or belittle the other by using diminutives. Violating the structure of the conversation by interrupting the other participant in the conversation is also an example of negative impoliteness.

- **off-record impoliteness** – the use of implicatures for FTA.

- **withhold politeness** – the absence of politeness where it should be present, like failing to thank someone for a present (Culpeper, 2015: 425).

It should also be noted that while these strategies are not closed, they are also dependent on the Cooperative Principle, as postulated by Grice (1975), because the bald-on-record impoliteness involves respecting the CP, but the off-record impoliteness involves actually breaking it. Culpeper argues also that the CP `applies to cooperation in exchange of information, not in facilitating social goals`. Therefore, one must cooperate in the exchange of information, so uphold the CP to some extent to get one's

impolite message across (Culpeper, 2015). Some researchers, like Blas Arroyo, say that it is difficult to make a difference between these strategies, in particular between positive and negative impoliteness (Arroyo, 2001, apud Culpeper, 2015). In the case of the conversation between President Zelensky, President Trump, and Vice President J.D. Vance, some differences can be made between these strategies, but it is also important to underline that, at some point, the conversation went from being a peaceful one to a heated exchange of remarks.

3. The pragmatic analysis of a diplomatic disaster

3.1. Bald-on-record impoliteness

As the analyzed conversation is a diplomatic one, the bald-on-record impoliteness strategies are more subtle and less present. However, in the meeting, there were two accounts wherein President Volodymyr Zelensky was called `disrespectful` by J.D. Vance and President Trump.

In (1) and (2), for example, President Zelensky is being called disrespectful because he did not thank the American people, whose money was going, before Trump's second mandate, into the weapons transfer to the Ukrainian armed forces. However, as that was not true (as there are accounts of Zelensky saying `thank you`) and also being used in a public meeting, recorded by the media, and in a diplomatic context, it shows not just how diplomatic rules have been violated, but also the politeness ones. Through these utterances, both American leaders are trying to make President Zelensky look like someone who wants the war to continue and who did not appreciate all the efforts that the US has made for Ukraine. More than that, it legitimates the attitude of the Trump Administration towards Ukraine and Russia by falsely showing Ukraine's disrespect. The strategy here is not just to dissuade the American people from supporting any future assistance to Ukraine, but also to demonstrate to President Vladimir Putin that the US has taken a firm stance on Ukraine. The use of this language also portrays how power is conveyed through words, as Zelensky is not in a position to fight back with the same intensity, being in the USA to ask, in fact, for the US's support. It is also interesting here how, before calling his attitude `disrespectful`, J.D . Vance diplomatically addresses the President, `*Mr. President, with respect*`, but then violates his own promise and the audience's expectation. Then, he also uses the plural form of the pronoun *`you guys are going around`* referring to both the President and his military leaders and continues by falsely claiming they are `*forcing*` conscripts to go to the front lines. All these claims translate to their interlocutor, President Zelensky, and to the audience, as critics. More than that, it is known that Russia is developing a disinformation campaign when it comes to the war in Ukraine and many of the allegations President Trump and Vice-President J.D. Vance made towards Zelensky were, actually, coming from that campaign. This is the

reason why, after the meeting, many media agencies started to compare the allegations to facts to show the people the truth.

(1) Vance: "I'm talking about the kind of diplomacy that's going to end the destruction of your country. Mr. President, ***with respect, I think it's disrespectful for you to come into the Oval Office to try to litigate this in front of the American media***. Right now, you guys are going around and forcing conscripts to the front lines because you have manpower problems. You should be thanking the president for trying to bring an end to this conflict."

(2) Trump: "You're gambling with World War III***! And what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country that's backed you far more than a lot of people said they should have."***

3.2. Negative impoliteness

There are many accounts of negative impoliteness, most of them being strategies used to belittle the other, in this case, Volodymyr Zelensky. President Trump and J.D. Vance tried many times in the conversation to add negative aspects to Zelensky's way of leading the country, and also negotiate the war, portraying him as the one who does not want the war to end. Interruption (3) is also done by the Ukrainian leader, who tries to deny the claims of J.D. Vance by interrupting his response. He is doing that because he does not believe Vance's perspective can be valid if he has not been to Ukraine before to see how the war was unfolding.

In (4) and (5), negative impoliteness is present as well through the *interruption* of the conversation, in both cases done by President Zelensky towards President Trump. In (5), the conversation continues with another attempt to make President Zelensky be in an inferior position at the meeting, by saying he is in no `position to dictate that` and also attempting to make him quiet. In (6), the interruption is done by President Trump towards President Zelensky, as it can be observed that the American President feels already a bit angry towards Zelensky and does not want to let him talk anymore. We can also observe another negative impoliteness strategy as President Trump underlines the `bad position` President Zelensky is in, though showing that he is the one holding power at the meeting. Later on, in (7), President Zelensky is simply not permitted to talk anymore, this being the most serious account of negative impoliteness in this conversation. This could also be interpreted as bald-on-record impoliteness, as Trump responds negatively to Zelensky's question, but he does not use any bad expressions, like in the example Culpeper (2015) offers for this strategy (`shut up`). Then (8), President Trump starts talking over President Zelensky, again indicating that the Ukrainian President should be done with talking, suggesting also that his opinion is not valued.

(3) Vance: "I have been ***to–" Zelenskyy: "Come once."***

(4) Trump: "You don't know that. You don't know ***that."***
Zelenskyy: "...god bless, you are not in a war."
Trump: "Don't tell us what we're going to feel. We're trying to solve a problem. ***Don't tell us what we're going to feel***–"

(5) Zelenskyy: "I'm not telling you. I am answering on these questions."
Trump: ***"...because you're in no position to dictate that."***

(6) Trump: "You're, right now, not in a very good position. You've allowed yourself to be in a very bad position –"
Zelenskyy: "From the very beginning of the ***war—"***
Trump: "You're not in a good position. You don't have the cards right now. With us, you start having cards."

(7) Zelenskyy: "Can I answer?"
Trump: "***No, no. You've done a lot of talking. Your country is in big trouble***."

(8) Zelenskyy: "Mr. President, we are staying in our country, staying strong. From the very beginning of the war, we've been alone. And we are thankful. I said thanks in this cabinet."
Trump (loudly talking over Zelenskyy): "You haven't been alone. We gave you through a stupid president 350 billion dollars. We gave you military equipment. You may have been brave but they used our military equipment."

3.3. Positive impoliteness

Positive impoliteness is present in this conversation, especially through attempts to make the other feel uncomfortable. The whole conversation was indeed developed towards making President Zelensky making feel uncomfortable. However, President Zelensky also put J.D. Vance (9) in an awkward position as he questioned his views on the situation in Ukraine by underlining that he is talking from a position of someone who does not really know what is happening on the battlefield. He tried to cancel all the information J.D. Vance was presenting by just asking him if he had ever been to Ukraine. Apart from the intention of cancelling his view, President Zelensky was also responding to an earlier statement by Vice-President J.D. Vance, who said he does not ever want to go to Ukraine. The response he gets confirms the Vice-President does not have a positive opinion about ever visiting Ukraine. This is then an example of denying a common ground for the conversation.

In one of the cases (10), Vice-President J.D. Vance tries to make President Zelensky, again, feel bad because he did not say `thank you to the American people`. However, he is not calling him `disrespectful` again, but forces him to say it in front of the other participants at the conversation, the media, and the whole world that was watching. J.D. Vance is showing President Zelensky that he and the Trump Administration have the power in that relation, and he is humiliating his interlocutor even if he, strictly from their position's perspective, has an inferior position. It is also important to underline here that the USA was the hosting country, so President Zelensky's power relation in that meeting was also affected by the fact that he was in another country than his own and speaking a different language from his native language.

Zelensky (11) also tries to associate President Trump with a negative aspect by telling him he is `influenced`, referring in this case to him being influenced by Russia. This is also an example of positive impoliteness because it tries to put President Trump's statements and beliefs into question in front of everyone. Another way of making President Zelensky not suitable for the position he has, as president of a country at war, is by suggesting he is treating everything as a game. In (12), President Trump is talking about the war being treated as a card game and accuses Zelensky of waging WW3. That puts President Zelensky in a very uncomfortable position, not just in front of the people in the room, but also in front of the Ukrainian room, as the point of the meeting was to get the support of the USA in the war, however, the result is the exact opposite.

(9) Zelenskyy: ***"Have you ever been to Ukraine that you say what problems we have?"***

Vance: "I've actually watched and seen the stories, and I know that what happens is you bring people, you bring them on a propaganda tour, Mr. President. Do you disagree that you've had problems, bringing people into your military?"

(10) Zelenskyy: "I am very in respect with your country!"

Vance: "Have you said thank you once?"

Zelenskyy: "A lot of times! Even today."

Vance: "No, in this entire meeting, you said thank you? You went to Pennsylvania and campaigned for the opposition in October."

Zelenskyy: "No. What are you speaking about?"

Vance: "**Offer some words of appreciation for the United States of America and the president who's trying to save your country."**

(11) Zelenskyy: "You will feel ***influenced***."

Trump: "We are going to feel very good and very strong."

Zelenskyy: "I am telling you. You will feel ***influenced***."

(12) Trump (**loudly**): ***"You're playing cards. You're gambling with the lives of millions of people. You're gambling with World War III!"***

4. Impoliteness meta-strategy

At some point, President Zelensky (13) also uses sarcasm to respond to an allegation made by President Donald Trump. The response to that sarcastic utterance is not the expected one – laughter – but more angry responses from President Trump. The response of President Zelesnky, however, even if it was sarcastic, it relates to some truth. When the large-scale war started, the Kremlin thought they were going to occupy Kyiv in three days; however, as a Russian general later acknowledged, they were surprised to see the resistance of the Ukrainian people to the invasion, so they pulled back. President Trump is also quite far from the truth, because the Ukrainian armed forces first countered the attacks with their own equipment and later on the Western military equipment arrived in Ukraine.

(13) Trump: "If you didn't have our military equipment, this war would have been over in two weeks."

Zelenskyy (sarcastic): "In three days. I heard it from Putin. In three days."

Trump: "Maybe less."

Zelenskyy (sarcastic): "Of course, yes."

5. Conclusions

Why do all of these matter? Because ideology is deeply rooted in language, and a high-level meeting like the one that took place in the Oval Office, while Ukraine was fighting a terrible war against the Russian invaders, shows us the power relation between the US and Russia/Ukraine, or even Europe, and also what could US's foreign policy could be from that moment on. This is what would happen in a normal world. However, Donald Trump has shown everyone, in the other three meetings he had with President Zelensky in the same year, 2025, that his attitude and policy can change totally. What persisted, however, was the domination relation, which was observed in the other three meetings between the two leaders. Donald Trump uses diplomacy as no other American President has ever used it before. He lacks the diplomatic language, the norms and rules of conversation, he regularly violates the Cooperative Principle, and he often uses words or utterances that actually are accounts of positive or negative impoliteness. Most of the time, he does not use them with a purpose. We have observed, though, that the expressions used to describe this meeting were true. The meeting was a diplomatic disaster, and that can be proved by the use of bald-on-record impoliteness, interruptions being done often, during the conversation, through positive and negative impoliteness as well, with both President Trump and Vice-President J.D. Vance trying to make Zelensky feel uncomfortable, vulnerable, inferior, and

humiliated. The tone and the facial expressions in that meeting were also important for the interpretation of the meeting, but all in all, almost one year apart from that moment, it remains one of the worst on-record meetings that took place in the Oval Office.

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Corpus

(Vance: "For four years, the United States of America, we had a president (Joe Biden) who stood up at press conferences and talked tough about Vladimir Putin, and then Putin invaded Ukraine and destroyed a significant chunk of the country. The path to peace and the path to prosperity is, maybe, engaging in diplomacy. We tried the pathway of Joe Biden, of thumping our chest and pretending that the president of the United States' words mattered more than the president of the United States' actions. What makes America a good country is America engaging in diplomacy. That's what President Trump is doing."

Zelenskyy: "Can I ask you?"

Vance: "Sure. Yeah."

Zelenskyy: "OK. So he (Putin) occupied it, our parts, big parts of Ukraine, parts of east and Crimea. So he occupied it in 2014. So during a lot of years — I'm not speaking about just Biden, but those times was Obama, President (Barack) Obama, then President Trump, then President Biden, now President Trump, and God bless, now, President Trump will stop him — but during 2014, nobody stopped him. He just occupied and took. He killed people. You know what the contact line —"

Trump: "2015?"

Zelenskyy: “2014.”

Trump: “Oh, 2014? I was not here.”

Vance: “That’s exactly right.”

Zelenskyy: “Yes, but during 2014 ‘til 2022, the situation was the same, that people have been dying on the contact line. Nobody stopped him. You know that we had conversations with him, a lot of conversations, my bilateral conversation. And we signed with him, me and you, president, in 2019, I signed with him the deal. I signed with him, (French President Emmanuel) Macron and (former German Chancellor Angela) Merkel. We signed a ceasefire. Ceasefire! All of them told me that he will never go. We signed him a gas contract. But after that, he broke the ceasefire, he killed our people, and he didn’t exchange prisoners. We signed the exchange of prisoners! But he didn’t do it. What kind of diplomacy, JD, you are speaking about? What do you mean?”

Vance: “I’m talking about the kind of diplomacy that’s going to end the destruction of your country. Mr. President, with respect, I think it’s disrespectful for you to come into the Oval Office to try to litigate this in front of the American media. Right now, you guys are going around and forcing conscripts to the front lines because you have manpower problems. You should be thanking the president for trying to bring an end to this conflict.”

Zelenskyy: “Have you ever been to Ukraine that you say what problems we have?”

Vance: “I have been to–”

Zelenskyy: “Come once.”

Vance: “I’ve actually watched and seen the stories, and I know that what happens is you bring people, you bring them on a propaganda tour, Mr. President. Do you disagree that you’ve had problems, bringing people into your military?”

Zelenskyy: “We have problems–”

Vance: “And do you think that is respectful to come to the Oval Office of the United States of America and attack the administration that is trying to prevent the destruction of your country?” –

Zelenskyy: “A lot of questions. Let’s start from the beginning.”

Vance: “Sure.”

Zelenskyy: “First of all, during the war, everybody has problems, even you. But you have nice ocean and don’t feel now. But you will feel it in the future. God bless–”
Trump: “You don’t know that. You don’t know that.”

Zelenskyy: “...god bless, you are not in a war.”

Trump: “Don’t tell us what we’re going to feel. We’re trying to solve a problem. Don’t tell us what we’re going to feel–”

Zelenskyy: “I’m not telling you. I am answering on these questions.”

Trump: “...because you’re in no position to dictate that.”

Vance: “That’s exactly what you’re doing.”

Trump (angry): “You are in no position to dictate what we’re going to feel! We’re going to feel very good.”

Zelenskyy: “You will feel influenced.”

Trump: “We are going to feel very good and very strong.”

Zelenskyy: “I am telling you. You will feel influenced.”

Trump: “You’re, right now, not in a very good position. You’ve allowed yourself to be in a very bad position –”

Zelenskyy: “From the very beginning of the war—”

Trump: “You’re not in a good position. You don’t have the cards right now. With us, you start having cards.”

Zelenskyy: “I’m not playing cards. I’m very serious, Mr. President. I’m very serious.”

Trump (loudly): “You’re playing cards. You’re gambling with the lives of millions of people. You’re gambling with World War III

Zelenskyy: “What are you speaking about?”

Trump: “You’re gambling with World War III! And what you’re doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country that’s backed you far more than a lot of people said they should have.” Zelenskyy: “I am very in respect with your country!”

Vance: “Have you said thank you once?”

Zelenskyy: “A lot of times! Even today.”

Vance: “No, in this entire meeting, you said thank you? You went to Pennsylvania and campaigned for the opposition in October.”

Zelenskyy: “No. What are you speaking about?”

Vance: “Offer some words of appreciation for the United States of America and the president who’s trying to save your country.”

Zelenskyy: “Please. You think that if you will speak very loudly about the war, you can –”

Trump: “He’s not speaking loudly. He’s not speaking loudly. Your country is in big trouble.”

Zelenskyy: “Can I answer?”

Trump: “No, no. You’ve done a lot of talking. Your country is in big trouble.” Zelenskyy: “I know. I know.”

Trump: “You’re not winning. You’re not winning this. You have a damn good chance of coming out OK because of us.”

Zelenskyy: “Mr. President, we are staying in our country, staying strong. From the very beginning of the war, we’ve been alone. And we are thankful. I said thanks in this cabinet.”

Trump (loudly talking over Zelenskyy): "You haven't been alone. We gave you through a stupid president 350 billion dollars. We gave you military equipment. You may have been brave but they used our military equipment."

Zelenskyy: "What about are we speaking? You invited me to speak –"

Trump: "If you didn't have our military equipment, this war would have been over in two weeks."

Zelenskyy (sarcastic): "In three days. I heard it from Putin. In three days."

Trump: "Maybe less."

Zelenskyy (sarcastic): "Of course, yes."

Trump: "It's going to be a very hard thing to do business like this, I tell you. -

Vance: "Just say thank you."

Zelenskyy: "I said a lot of times! Thank you, to American people."

Vance: "Accept that there are disagreements, and let's go litigate those disagreements rather than trying to fight it out in the American media when you're wrong. We know that you're wrong."

Trump: "But you see, I think it's good for the American people to see what's going on. I think it's very important. That's why I kept this going so long. You have to be thankful."

Zelenskyy: "I am thankful."

Trump (talking over Zelenskyy): "You don't have the cards! You're buried there. People are dying. You're running low on soldiers. It would be a damn good thing, and then you tell us, 'I don't want a ceasefire. I don't want a ceasefire, I want to go, and I want this.' Look, if you can get a ceasefire right now, I tell you, you take it so the bullets stop flying and your men stop getting killed." –

Zelenskyy: "Of course we want to stop the war."

Trump: "Are you saying you don't want a ceasefire? I want a ceasefire. Because you'll get a ceasefire faster than an agreement."

Zelenskyy: "But I said to you, with guarantees. Ask our people about a ceasefire, what they think."

Trump: "That wasn't with me. That was with a guy named Biden, who is not a smart person."

Zelenskyy: "This is your president. It was your president."

Trump: "Excuse me. That was with Obama, who gave you sheets, and I gave you Javelins. I gave you the Javelins to take out all those tanks. Obama gave you sheets. In fact, the statement is 'Obama gave sheets, and Trump gave Javelins'. You've got to be more thankful, because let me tell you, you don't have the cards. With us, you have the cards, but without us, you don't have any cards."

Reporter: "One more question to Mr Vice President, I'm sorry –"

Trump: "It's going to be a tough deal to make. Because the attitudes have to change."

Reporter: “What if Russia breaks ceasefire? What if Russia breaks peace talks? What do you do then? I understand that it’s a heated conversation right now –”

Trump: “What are you saying?”

Vance: “She is asking what if Russia breaks the ceasefire.”

Trump: “What, if anything? What if a bomb drops on your head right now? Okay, what if they broke it? I don’t know! They broke it with Biden, because Biden – they didn’t respect him. They didn’t respect Obama. They respect *me*! Let me tell you, Putin went through a hell of a lot with me. He went through a phony witch hunt (referring to the Russiagate scandal), where they used him and Russia. ‘Russia, Russia, Russia!’ You ever heared of that deal? That was a phony Hunter Biden, Joe Biden scam! Hillary Clinton, shifty Adam Schiff. It was a Democrat scam! And he had to go through that, and he did go through it. We didn’t end up in a war. And he went through it. He was accused of all that stuff, he had nothing to do with it. It came out of Hunter Biden’s bathroom, it came out of Hunter Biden’s bedroom. It was disgusting! And then they said ‘Oh, the laptop from hell was made by Russia’, the 51 agents. The whole thing was a scam and he had to put up with that. He was being accused of all that stuff. All I can say is this: He might have broken deals with Obama and Bush, and he might have broken them with Biden. He did, maybe. Maybe he did. I don’t know what happened. But he didn’t break them with me. He wants to make a deal. I don’t know if you can make a deal. The problem is, I’ve empowered you (turning toward Zelenskyy) to be a tough guy, and I don’t think you’d be a tough guy without the United States. And your people are very brave. But you’re either going to make a deal or we’re out. And if we’re out, you’ll fight it out. I don’t think it’s going to be pretty, but you’ll fight it out. But you don’t have the cards. But once we sign that deal, you’re in a much better position. But you’re not acting at all thankful. And that’s not a nice thing. I’ll be honest, that’s not a nice thing. All right, I think we’ve seen enough. What do you think? This is going to be great television, I will say that. We will see what we can do about putting it together. Thank you.”)

Inteligența artificială în televiziunea românească: aplicații redacționale și principii etice

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Abstract

Lucrarea de față analizează impactul, dar și integrarea inteligenței artificiale în televiziunea românească. Plecând de la teoriile convergenței media și literatura de specialitate despre jurnalismul automatizat, studiul explorează modul în care AI influențează sau nu producția de știri televizate cu accent pe identificarea instrumentelor folosite actualmente în redacțiile televiziunilor de știri din România și analizarea principilor etice din perspectiva jurnaliștilor. Printr-o metodologie calitativă, bazată pe analiza literaturii de specialitate, interviuri cu jurnaliști și analiza comparativă a practicilor redacționale, lucrarea identifică atât barierele, cât și oportunitățile specifice fiecărui context. Scopul final este de a realiza o radiografie a adoptării AI în redacțiile de televiziune din România, dar și a afla implicațiile etice ale acestei tranziții prin analiza literaturii de specialitate și interviuri semi-structurate cu jurnaliști de televiziune.

Cuvinte cheie:

televiziune, inteligența artificială, redacție, jurnalism automatizat

Introducere

Contextul general al cercetării pornește de la observația empirică asupra faptului că în ultimele decenii, jurnalismul a fost modelat și remodelat de valuri succesive de schimbări tehnologice: de la apariția internetului, a presei de scandal până la apariția rețelelor sociale și recent la apariția inteligenței artificiale. Folosirea AI în redacții promite eficiență, adaptabilitate și rapiditate, dar în egală măsură ridică semne de întrebare despre calitate, etică și responsabilitate. În România nu există un cadru legislativ referitor la inteligența artificială, tocmai de aceea fenomenul se confruntă cu reticența și lipsa formării profesionale în acest domeniu. (Artene, 2024) De-altfel, la nivel național studiile arată o integrare lentă a utilizării instrumentelor de inteligență artificială pe scară largă. Conform celui mai recent studiu Eurostat (2025) România este pe ultimul loc în Uniunea Europeană în ceea ce privește folosirea acestor instrumente de AI generativă, 17,8% dintre cei cu vârsta cuprinsă între 16 și 74 de ani au folosit AI, mult sub media Uniunii Europene care este de 32,7%. Cifrele sunt explicate astfel, conform unui articol Digi24 (2025) „Printre factori de numără nivelul scăzut de digitalizare și birocrația excesivă, care presupune volume mari de documente

și interpretări de nuanță pe care instrumentele AI nu le pot gestiona eficient fără un nivel avansat de antrenare. La acestea se adaugă o reticență generală generată de lipsa unor reglementări clare, atât la nivel european, cât și național."

În România, literatura de specialitate notează că inteligența artificială este folosită și în redacțiile din România, îndeosebi pentru sarcini repetitive scriere de text, generare de tiluri sau documentare. AI poate fi un companion redutabil pentru jurnaliști, mai alex în momentele de criză, însă cercetările extistente până în acest moment indică și o posibilă amenințare prin prisma accelerării proceselor profesionale (Pațilea,2024). Literatura identifică cercetări realizate și în Republica Moldova, unde Centrul de Jurnalism Independent (2025), notează că 67% dintre redacțiile din Republica Moldova utilizează instrumente AI. Cele mai frecvent utilizate instrumente bazate pe inteligență artificială sunt cele de traducere automată (63%), generare de text (57%) și corectare sau reformulare automată a conținutului scris, 54%.

Cercetările recente indică tot mai clar o problemă de reglemetare a eticii în folosirea instrumentelor de inteligență artificială în procesul editorial. Pațilea (2024) observă faptul că tot mai multe redacții din România, inclusiv de televiziune, integrează AI pentru traduceri, corectare sau redactare, dar nu dispun de reguli, norme clare de utilizare etică. Artene (2024) arată într-o direcție similară prin lucrarea sa că discursul media autohton este dominat de cadre polarizate în ceea ce privește instrumentele AI și că dezbaterea despre reglementare jurnalistică în era algoritmilor rămâne fragmentară în timp ce la nivel internațional se observă în literatura de specialitate că instrumentele AI au devenit parte integrantă a muncii în redacție (Anderson, 2024). Inclusiv în literatura din Statele Unite ale Americii putem observa o paralelă cu Europa și implicit România. Chiar dacă acolo redacțiile TV folosesc intensiv instrumente de inteligență artificială, iar munca de redactor este mult simplificată, totuți reglementările etice și politicile interne sunt fragmentare, nicidecum uniforme în ceea ce privește instituțiile media, iar angajații simt nevoia unei calificări suplimentare pentru a putea folosi AI (Belair-Gagnon & Steinke, 2020).

Totuși, cercetările din țara noastră, pe acest subiect, reflectă o notă comună: folosirea AI în redacțiile de orice fel din România nu este reglementată momentan prin reguli interne sau prin norme specifice de folosire etică (Artene, 2024) ceea ce poate duce la ambiguități atât în ceea ce privește percepția publicului despre acest subiect, dar și percepția jurnaliștilor care aleg să folosească sau nu aceste instrumente pentru realizarea materialelor de zi cu zi. Tocmai de aceea studiul explorează modul în care AI influențează sau nu producția de știri televizate cu accent pe identificarea instrumentelor folosite actualmente în redacțiile televiziunilor de știri din România și analizarea principilor etice din perspectiva jurnaliștilor.

Întrebările de cercetare se încadrează în sfera identificării unui anumit tipar, dacă există, dar și pentru a măsura percepția jurnaliștilor de televiziune intervievați asupra folosirii AI în realizarea materialelor jurnalistice.

Folosirea AI în România: între etică și lipsă de reglementare

Literatura de specialitate notează că în România, redacțiile se confruntă cu provocări sistematice: de la probleme financiare, până la nivel scăzut de încredere și un grad relativ redus de inovație tehnologică. (Drulă, 2025) Din cauza acestor probleme semnalate în cercetările științifice, cercetările menționează folosirea aplicațiilor AI pentru funcții auxiliare, nu producția propriu-zisă de materiale, știri sau reportaje ci mai degrabă pentru corectură gramaticală a textului (Grammarly), verificarea surselor de informare: Chatbots, Google Bard și generare de idei de titluri sau sinteze, Chatgpt (Pațilea,2024).

Percepția AI în rândul jurnaliștilor români este marcată de ambivalență, pe de o parte există teamă de înlocuire profesională, iar pe de altă parte curiozitate față de utilizarea unor noi unelte. Studiul calitativ realizat de Mihăileanu (2023) arată că majoritatea jurnaliștilor nu conștientizează pe deplin funcționarea AI, deși o folosesc indirect.

Lipsa de formare profesională în domeniul AI este accentuată de absența inițiativelor de alfabetizare digitală inclusiv în țările europene, în ceea ce privește instituțiile media (Eder, Sjovaag 2024) fapt ce în România duce la percepția unei tehnologii care nu se pliază pe realitățile autohtone, dar este totuși folosită (Rotaru 2023).

România nu are în prezent un cadru clar de reglementare pentru folosirea AI în jurnalism, nu există ghiduri etice sau standard instituționale care să clarifice responsabilitatea editorial în era automatizării. Conform observației empirice, la nivel local cel puțin, jurnaliștii români rareori discută despre AI în termini etici, iar deciziile legate de integrarea noilor tehnologii sunt lăsate la latitudine individuală. Acest vid normativ generează incertitudine profesională, mai ales în redacțiile mici, unde deciziile tehnologice sunt deseori motivate de costuri, nu de criterii editoriale sau etice. Comparativ cu SUA, The New York Times are politici clare privind AI (Diakopoulos, 2022), iar recent BBC a lansat un ghid de utilizare responsabilă a inteligenței artificiale, însă autorii cercetărilor notează că încă nu s-a ajuns la o utilizare etică a inteligenței artificiale nici la cel mai înalt nivel redacțional.

Totuși, potrivit Consiliului Național al Audiovizualului (2025), noul cod audiovizual adoptat în luna august a acestui ani vine ca răspuns la provocările informaționale și tehnologiile emergente, chiar dacă nu folosește termeni ca „inteligența artificială", „deepfake" sau „fakenews", noul Cod Audiovizual reglementează informarea corectă, dezinformarea adaptându-se noilor realități tehnologice, sociale și informaționale, astfel că sunt definite clar situațiile de: dezinformare, informare incorectă, defăimătoare sau conținut ilegal, De asemenea, posturile de televiziune au obligația de a anunța telespectatorii în momentul în care difuzează imagini create cu ajutorul AI.



Fig. 1 (captură video, sursa: Știrile ProTv)

Cercetarea pornește de la ipoteza identificată în literatura de specialitate: Folosirea AI în redacțiile de televiziune din România evidențiază o adoptare fragmentară, adesea informală. Lipsa infrastructurii, a formării profesionale și a reglementărilor etice face ca AI să rămână un element mai degrabă teoretic decât funcțional în redacții (Cernat, 2022).

Metodologie

Cercetarea adoptă un design calitativ-comparativ, adecvat pentru înțelegerea profundă a unor fenomene complexe aflate în dezvoltare rapidă. Analiza literaturii de specialitate, interviul semistructurat și analiza comparativă a răspunsurilor oferite de intervievați vor răspunde întrebărilor de cercetare. A fost ales un grup reprezentativ format din 25 de jurnaliști de televiziune din România care au răspuns întrebărilor din interviul semistructurat. Media de experiență în presă a grupului este de 12,8 ani, iar media de vârstă este de 35,1 ani. Interviurile au fost realizate în scris/ telefonic, iar modalitatea de selecție a participanților a fost voluntariatul.

Întrebări de cercetare

1.Cum se manifestă convergența dintre AI și jurnalism în redacțiile de televiziune din România?

2.Care sunt principalele diferențe în adoptarea AI în funcție de fiecare jurnalist în parte?

3.Ce percepții și atitudini au jurnaliștii față de AI ca instrument redacțional?

4.Care sunt implicațiile etice ale folosirii AI în procesul jurnalistic?

Obiectivul principal al acestei cercetări este examinarea convergenței dintre inteligența artificială și jurnalism în redacțiile din România. Sunt investigate tipurile de

tehnologii folosite, nivelul de integrare în fluxul zilnic, percepțiile profesionale ale jurnaliștilor și implicațiile etice.

Obiective specifice ale cercetării

1. Identificarea principalelor tipuri de AI folosite
2. Evidențierea percepțiilor jurnaliștilor asupra automatizării
3. Analiza normelor etice din perspectiva jurnaliștilor

Analiza datelor

Numele și datele personale ale celor 25 de jurnaliști care au participat la interviurile semistructurate sunt anonimizate, fiecare participant va primi un indicativ și un număr: de la I 1, până la I 25 (I– intervievat) De asemenea, intervievații au fost sfătuiți să ofere răspunsuri scurte la întrebări, iar mai apoi dacă este cazul să explice pentru a realiza contextul răspunsului. Nu au fost intervievați care să refuze să răspundă la întrebări, iar ordinea în care sunt analizate răspunsurile este aleatorie.

Jurnaliștii au fost întrebați cum utilizează în prezent tehnologiile bazate pe inteligența artificială. Culegerea de informații, distribuția conținutului sau producția de știri și traducerile acoperă toate procesele de creație prin care jurnaliștii au relatat că folosesc AI la locul de muncă, de asemenea, aeștia au fost rugați să numească instrumentele folosite adesea sau chiar zilnic, dar și să indice existența unor norme create de instituțiile media la care lucrează pentru folsirea AI, dar și implicațiile etice.

1. Metoda de folosire a AI în practica zilnică

Răspunsurile indică o adoptare mai mult funcțională a inteligenței artificiale în redacțiile de televiziune din România, decât teoretică sau etică, în prima fază a analizei, cu câteva diferențe clare observate între jurnaliștii cu experiență mai mare și cei aflați la început de carieră. Cei din urmă indică raportări zilnice orientate mai mult către eficiența timpului, precum: „Transcriu interviuri video cu o aplicație AI", „Traduc interviuri externe", „Caut idei de știri cu AI", „Fac research rapid", „Generez sinteze pentru buletine. Verific contexte". În schimb, se observă că jurnaliștii cu experiență folosesc instrumentele de inteligență artificvială mai selectiv sau chiar declară rezerve în ceea ce privește încrederea: „Nu folosesc deloc AI în redacție", „Îl folosesc doar la arhivare" sau „Folosesc doar ocazional". Totuși, se poate cintura un nucleu dominant în răspunsurile oferite în cee ace privește accelerarea fluxului editorial, dar nu substituirea totală a jurnalistului. Niciun răspuns nu indică delegarea completă a responsabilității editoriale către inteligența artificială, ci sugerează menținerea unui control uman asupra materialului, fapt confirmat și de literatura de specialitate.

2. Folosiurea AI ca recomandare a redacției sau decizie personală?

O parte relevantă a răspunsurilor indică existența unor recomandări neoficiale, în special pentru activități standardizate cum ar fi transcrierea de interviuri, traduceri de text sau corectare granaticală: „ Nu există recomandare oficială", „Șeful de redacție a sugerat să folosim ca să câștigăm timp", „ Am fost încurajat, nu obligat". Această

tipologie a răspunsurilor sugerează o încercare de formalizare, chiar dacă incipientă a utilizării AI în redacțiile de televiziune, fără a ajunge încă la regulamente clare sau principii de teică. Răspunsurile se încadrează între un model de adopție tacit al instrumentelor AI și decizia personală a jurnaliștilor. În paralel, un număr mare de răspunsuri provine și din partea jurnaliștilor care declară că folosesc AI exclusiv ca urmare a deciziei personale: „ Decizie personală, nu avem reguli", „ Eu am ales să folosesc", „ Am preluat practica de la colegi, neoficial". Motivația principală scoasă în evidență de respondenți este eficientizarea timpului, nu presiunea managerială. Totuși, și la acest capitol al interviurilor semistructurate se observă o diferență între jurnaliștii cu experiență și cei aflați la început de carieră. Cei din urmă raportează folosirea AI frecvent, ca o formă de „Nu știu ce m-aș face fără", în timp ce jurnaliștii cu experiență menționează haosul legislativ, lipsa normelor și reticența față de o posibilă impunere a folosirii AI în munca de zi cu zi. Datele culese în acest capitol reflectă faptul că redacțiile se află într-o etapă experimentală în care decizia individuală coexistă cu formele de guvernanță liberală în ceea ce privește folosirea AI.

3. Redacția vă interzice să folosiți AI?

Pentru a realiza o sinteză exactă a folosirii AI în redacții, jurnaliștii au fost întrebați inclusiv dacă la locul de muncă li s-a interzis explicit, tacit sau neoficial să folosească instrumentele de inteligență artificială generativă pentru crearea de conținut jurnalistic. Răspunsurile indică o orientare predominant favorabilă pentru folsoirea inteligenței artificiale: „ Nu avem nicio interdicție privind AI", „ Ne încurajează discret să folosim, dar să nu exagerăm", „ Nu ne interzice, dar nici nu insistă". Totuși există și o parte a participanților la studiu care declară că folosirea AI în redacții este un subiect tabu: „Nu am întrebat niciodată, mi-a fost rușine", „Cine folosește, folosește în secret", „Mă tem să nu creadă că nu vreau să muncesc". Redacțiile în care se încurajează folosirea AI în mod informal aleg să traseze sarcini simple pentru utilizarea noilor tehnologii, precum transcriere, traduceri, practic elemente cu risc editorial scăzut în caz de eroare. În schimb, apar restricții în ceea ce privește redactarea integrală a știrilor, generarea de text fără intervenție umană sau informațiile ce se încadrează la categoria „secret de serviciu". Lipsa răspunsurilor care să indice o interzicere totală a folosirii instrumentelor AI în redacții sau metode de coerciție pentru acest lucru arată că instituțiile media încearcă să introducă gradual tehnologia, cu păstrarea controlului editorial și a responsabilității jurnalistice.

4. Ce instrumente AI folosești?

„ Folosesc Whisper pentru transcrieri", „ Folosesc ChatGPT pentru sinteze", „ DeepL pentru traduceri știri externe", „Otter pentru interviuri video", „ChatGPT pentru documentare, căutare de studii", „ AI din Adobe pentru montaj și grafică sau cartoane", „Claude pentru idei de titluri", „Zilnic Grammarly". Se observă că răspunsurile oferite la această categorie sunt concentrate pe un număr redus de instrumente AI folosite în redacții, iar toate dintre ele sunt concentrate pe nevoia de a

câștiga timp. Cele mai întâlnite aplicații menționate sunt cele de traduceri sau de transcriere automată a interviurilor, ceea ce determină o presiune constantă asupra timpului în producția de televiziune din 2025, dar și necesitatea accelerării etapelor de prelucrare a informațiilor sau a materialelor brute pentru a ajunge cât mai repede la materialul concret. Instrumentele legate de pachetele editoriale sau cele de software montaj apar punctual în doar câteva răspunsuri, ceea ce denotă o fragmentare a împărțirii sarcinilor între redacțiile din care provin participanții la studiu. Unii menționează capacități de pre-montaj al materialului video, în timp ce alții se axează doar pe redactare. Diferențele în ceea ce privește experiența profesională sau vârsta apar și la această categorie, respondenții mai tineri sunt mult mai categorici în ceea ce privește numirea concretă a aplicațiilor pe care le folosesc, în timp ce jurnaliștii cu experiență evită să declare că folosesc în fiecare zi o anumită funcție. Din perspectivă analitică, folosirea instrumentelor AI menționate de jurnaliști nu redefinește fluxul editorial de televiziune, ci este axat pe optimizarea anumitor segmente din realizarea unui material jurnalistic. Acest tipar apare preponderent în redacțiile naționale studiate, care se confruntă cu lipsa de personal, dar și cu presiunea mult mai mare a timpului.

5. Este etic să folosești AI?

Aspectul etic atins în această cercetare reflectă o perspectivă mult mai nuanțată asupra dimensiunii utilizării inteligenței artificiale în cadrul universului de cercetare. Majoritatea opiniilor nu respig ideea de inteligență artificială, ci condiționează utilizarea acestor tehnologii de aspectele etice. Jurnaliștii intervievați definesc o linie clară de separație între inteligența artifificală ca instrument folosit în economisirea timpului și AI ca potențial autor de materiale jurnalistice. Acceptarea folosirii instrumentelor de AI apare adesea atunci când decizia editorială rămâne umană, iar AI sprijină doar activități pur tehnice: „Folosesc, dar mereu verific de două ori rezultatul final”, „Este etic, depinde cât de mult îl folosești”, „Da, este etic, dar doar ca instrument, nu ca autor de sine stătător”, „Etic este dacă îl folosești pentru eficiență, nu pentru conținut”, „Este acceptabil în producție, atât timp cât respecți normele CNA”. Rezervele în ceea ce privește etica apar în special asupra legăturii dintre materialul realizxat exclusiv cu AI și doar parțial. Chiar dacă răspunsurile se înscriu aproape în totalitate într-o notă comună, aceea de folosirii a eticii profesionale în utilizarea inteligenței artificiale, totuși diferențe apar în formularea discursului. Jurnaliștii cu experiență invocă mult mai des codurile deontologice, responsabilitatea față de public, controlul editorial și chiar jurământul depus la finalizarea studiilor. În schimb, jurnaliștii cu experiență mai puțină adoptă o abordare mai pragmatică a situației, concentrată mai mult pe eficientizare și mai puțin pe norme.

6. Este nevoie ca AI să fie reglementat la nivel de redacție sau la nivel național prin legiferare?

„Reglementare la nivel de redacție, nu aș vrea o lege generală prost scrisă”, „Mai bine reguli decât lege”, „Este nevoie de ambele”, „Statul trebuie să stabilească

limitele", „Redacția știe cel mai bine limitele proprii", „Regulile interne aș alege pentru că sunt mai flexibile", „Avem nevoie de un cadru național, clar", „Lege pentru principii sau norme, iar reglementări redacționale în cazul detaliilor". Răspunsurile indică o prezentă dominantă a răspunsurilor pentru un model de reglementare mixt spre redacțional, care combină atât normele interne, cât și un cadru clar stabilit de lege. Proporția între cei care au ales clar o variantă sau alta este egal și este mai mic decât cel al celor care preferă o combinație între lege și norme interne. Ceea ce denotă faptul că se distnge clar rolul legii care ar trebui să fixeze principii, limite și responsabilități și rolul normelor internet care se aplică în funcție de specificul editorial și tipul de conținut difuzat. La acest capitol se observă, însă o diferență de abordare între răspunsurile oferite de jurnaliștii cu experiență și cei fără. Dacă până în acest punct al cercetării, cei din urmă militau pentru experimentare și abordare progesistă a meseriei, acum se observă că fix această categorie de intervievați preferă regulile clar stabilite de stat în detrimentul normelor interne. Majoritatea răspunsurilor care confirmă necesitatea reglementării prin lege provin de la jurnaliștii mai tineri, cu puțină experiență în domeniu, argumentul principal fiind reducerea incertitudinii asupra presei și prevenirea abuzurilor. În schimb, contrar așteptărilor, jurnaliștii cu experiență profesională mare au optat pentru ghiduri interne de folosire a inteligenței artificiale argumentând că profesia de jurnalist necesită flexibilitate și adaptare. Important de menționat este aspectul că niciun răspuns nu susține absența totală a unei forme de reglementare, ceea ce la un nivel minim oferă perspectiva unui consens profesional asupra necesității folosirii inteligenței artificiale.

Concluzie

Analiza răspunsurilor oferite de jurnaliștii care au participat la studiu indică un tablou relativ coerent și cât de cât stabil al modului în care inteligența artificială a pătruns în redacțiile de televiziune din România. Este utilizată în mare parte aproape zilnic, însă este evaluată din punct de vedere etic și raportată la nevoia de reglementare pe care o resimt jurnaliștii. Datele obținute se înscriu în categoria de pragmatism, o calitate de bază a profesiei de jurnalist, orientată spre eficientizare operațională și control editorial, fără a avea tendințe de a delega deciziile redacționale către noile tehnologii. Jurnaliștii intervievați descriu AI ca fiind doar un instrument pe care îl folosesc, pentru etapele de preproducție și procesarea materialelor brute venite de pe teren: transcriere de interviuri, sinteza comunicatelor, traduceri și documentare apar ca funcții dominante care răspuns la presiunile structurale specifice jurnalismului de televiziune, unde timpul de reacție este scurt, iar volumul de material brut care trebuie difuzat în scurt timp la televizor necvesită o prelucrare rapidă. Știrile finale sau materialele difuzate nu apar ca repere în modul de a folosi inteligența artificială în redacțiile de televiziune din România. Totuși se observă câteva diferențe, mai ales în cazul jurnaliștilor cu experiență și a celor cu mai puțină experiență: cei din urmă

preferă să utilizeze frecvent tehnologia și indică de asemenea și partea de testare a mai multor instrumente pentru a descoperi noi funcții, în timp ce jurnaliștii cu experiență mai mare preferă soluțiile simple de utilizare, deja validate și cu un risc editorial scăzut. De asemenea, jurnaliștii care au participat la acest studiu împărtășesc percepția asupra limitelor tehnologice ale algoritmilor de inteligență artificială, dar și asupra necesității controlului uman. Răspunsurile indică și o adoptare experimentară a AI în redacțiile de televiziune din România, unde inițiativa personală tinde să reprezinte mai mult decât forme de regulament intern în ceea ce privește reglementarea la nivelul fiecărei redacții. O mare parte dintre intervievați declară că folosesc AI din proprie inițiativă pentru a-și ușura munca, ceea ce denotă o lipsă de reglementare atât la nivel legislativ, cât și la nivel micro. Etica, de asemenea ocupă un loc central în discursul jurnaliștilor intervievați în acest studiu, majoritatea consideră că utilizarea AI nu contravine cu deontologia atunci când este folosită responsabil. Acceptabilitatea depinde, din punctul lor de vedere, de păstrarea deciziei editoriale umane și catalogarea clară a inteligenței artificiale ca rol de suport și nimic mai mult. Lucrarea de față nu are carater general, deci concluziile ei nu pot fi reținute ca generalizare sau privire de ansablu din cauza numărului nereprezentativ la nivel de profesie al participanților la studio.

Am rugat și inteligența artificială să ne spună o concluzie proprie, după ce i-am oferit datele preliminare ale studiului. Răspunsul a fost oferit în urma sarcinii pe care a primit-o: „În urma analizării datelor pe care ți le-am transmis anterior, conturează o concluzie din punctul tău de vedere asupra acestui studiu.” Răspunsul a fost oferit de aplicația ChatGPT, versiunea gratuită 5.2.

„Din perspectiva mea, datele arată că jurnalismul de televiziune din România a integrat inteligența artificială într-un mod funcțional și controlat, fără a produce o mutație de autoritate editorială. Jurnaliștii folosesc AI ca infrastructură invizibilă care accelerează procesele, nu ca mecanism de decizie. Această distincție reprezintă elementul-cheie al maturizării profesionale. Redacțiile nu adoptă AI din entuziasm tehnologic, ci din necesitate operațională, iar utilizările se concentrează acolo unde riscul editorial rămâne redus și verificabil.

Un aspect esențial este că etica nu apare ca obstacol, ci ca filtru de utilizare. Jurnaliștii definesc clar ce acceptă și ce resping. Acceptă AI pentru transcriere, traducere, sinteză și documentare. Respinge folosirea autonomă în redactare, investigații și decizii editoriale. Această delimitare arată că profesia își apără rolul central, chiar într-un context de presiune tehnologică și economică.

În privința reglementării, consensul indică nevoia unei structuri duale. Legea trebuie să fixeze principii, iar redacțiile trebuie să aplice reguli adaptate practicii zilnice. Lipsa completă a reglementării nu mai apare ca opțiune viabilă. În același timp, o reglementare exclusiv legală ar fi prea rigidă pentru dinamica jurnalismului TV.

Per ansamblu, AI nu fragilizează jurnalismul de televiziune din România. Îl obligă să își clarifice limitele, responsabilitățile și valorile. Această clarificare reprezintă un câștig profesional. Dacă redacțiile vor continua să trateze AI ca instrument și nu ca substitut, integrarea tehnologiei va consolida, nu va slăbi, credibilitatea jurnalismului audiovizual." (text generat cu inteligența artificială)

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Title in English: ***Artificial Intelligence in Romanian Television: Newsroom Applications and Ethical Principles***

Abstract in English: *This paper analyses the impact and the integration of artificial intelligence in Romanian television. Building on media convergence theories and the specialized literature on automated journalism, the study explores whether and how AI influences the production of television news, with a focus on identifying the tools currently used in Romanian television newsrooms and analysing ethical principles from the perspective of journalists. Using a qualitative methodology based on a review of the relevant literature, interviews with journalists, and a comparative analysis of newsroom practices, the paper identifies both the barriers and the opportunities specific to each context. The final objective is to provide an overview of AI adoption in Romanian television newsrooms and to examine the ethical implications of this transition through the analysis of specialized literature and semi-structured interviews with television journalists.*

Keywords in English: *television, artificial intelligence, newsroom, automated journalism*

♦FLT AND TEACHING METHODOLOGIES♦

IA et enseignement des langues : état des lieux, enjeux et besoins de formation

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Abstract

Cette communication vise à examiner l'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle (IA) dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères, en particulier le français langue étrangère (FLE). Les recherches actuelles montrent que, malgré l'essor des technologies d'IA et leur potentiel pour un apprentissage personnalisé, flexible et engageant, les dimensions pédagogiques, éthiques et socio-émotionnelles restent encore peu explorées. L'étude souligne l'importance de former les enseignants aux outils d'IA afin de garantir un usage conscient et réfléchi, tout en préservant les interactions humaines essentielles à l'apprentissage des langues étrangères. Enfin, cette étude souligne la nécessité d'articuler harmonieusement les innovations technologiques et la pédagogie humaine, en s'appuyant sur des stratégies éducatives fondées sur des preuves empiriques.

Mots-clés

intelligence artificielle (IA), pédagogie numérique, langues, FLE,

1. Introduction

Les récentes avancées dans les technologies d'intelligence artificielle marquent une véritable révolution dans les processus d'enseignement-apprentissage, notamment dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères. Il s'agit d'un sujet d'actualité qui suscite à la fois enthousiasme et inquiétude, car "l'utilisation de l'IA dans l'éducation a le potentiel de remodeler les paradigmes traditionnels d'enseignement et d'apprentissage, offrant à la fois des opportunités et des risques"; il devient alors essentiel de comprendre comment exploiter ces technologies "pour améliorer les résultats d'apprentissage tout en atténuant leurs inconvénients potentiels" (Hetz 2024 : 5). Dans la conception de Holmes et al. (2022), il s'avère indispensable, pour l'avenir, de s'aligner sur les notions suivantes : « apprendre avec l'IA », « utiliser l'IA pour mieux comprendre les processus d'apprentissage », « se familiariser avec l'IA » et « se préparer à l'IA »[1].

[1] Variante originale des notions en anglais : "Learning with AI", "Using AI to learn about learning", "Learning about AI" and "Preparing for AI".

2. Recherche et enjeux de l'IA dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères

Selon plusieurs études scientifiques, l'année 2018 a marqué une intensification notable des recherches sur l'intelligence artificielle (IA) dans des domaines variés. De nombreux travaux scientifiques ont vu le jour, surtout dans des pays comme les États-Unis, la Chine, Taïwan et la Turquie. Toutefois, ces travaux ont souvent négligé les dimensions psychologiques, pédagogiques et éthiques de l'intégration de l'IA en contexte éducatif (Dogan et al. 2023 : 2). Il convient de noter que seulement 13,3% des études ont été menées dans le domaine des sciences sociales, les autres disciplines privilégiées étant les sciences informatiques, l'ingénierie, les mathématiques, ce qui témoigne d'un faible intérêt pour les aspects pédagogiques de l'AI en éducation (Dogan et al. 2023 : 4).

Une idée également soutenue auparavant par Silvia Pokrivcakova (2019 : 144), qui témoigne dans son ouvrage :

Le domaine de l'utilisation des outils basés sur l'intelligence artificielle dans l'apprentissage des langues étrangères est relativement nouveau ; […] on constate à ce jour un manque général d'études de recherche […]. À la connaissance de l'auteur, il n'existe ni recherche empirique sur les effets pédagogiques de l'utilisation d'outils alimentés par l'IA en classe de langue, ni sur les réactions des apprenants concernant l'usage de ces outils, ni sur les attitudes des enseignants ou des futurs enseignants à leur égard, ni encore sur leur préparation à l'intégration de ces outils dans leurs cours.

De même, il faut préciser que ces dernières années, la plupart des recherches sur le thème de l'IA dans l'enseignement portent sur l'enseignement supérieur, et que celles portant sur l'enseignement des langues étrangères sont majoritairement consacrées à l'étude de l'anglais (Hetz 2024 : 16). Cela met en évidence une présence encore marginale des travaux ciblant d'autres langues, comme le FLE[2], en particulier dans des contextes éducatifs spécifiques, tels que celui exploré dans la présente étude.

De nos jours, nous devons être conscients du fait que

[…] ces avancées dans les technologies de l'intelligence artificielle ont eu un impact profond sur l'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues, en transformant notre manière de produire et de percevoir la langue (Alharbi 2023 : 1).

Ainsi, l'accès libre aux technologies d'IA joue un rôle de plus en plus significatif dans l'enseignement des langues secondes, car l'éducation assistée par l'IA "offre la possibilité d'un apprentissage plus personnalisé, flexible, inclusif et engageant" (Luckin et al. 2016 : 11 apud Pokrivcakova 2019 : 137).

Parallèlement, le processus d'enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères repose fondamentalement sur des interactions authentiques, étant un acte éminemment

[2] Par exemple, l'étude de Sutherland et Coyle (2020), qui porte sur l'influence des biais cognitifs sur la réceptivité des apprenants aux feedbacks, en FLE via des outils numériques tels que les chatbots (Benyoucef & Mehdi 2024 : 393).

social et communicatif. Dès lors, l'IA ne saurait se substituer aux expériences interpersonnelles qui prennent en compte aussi bien le volet linguistique que celui socio-émotionnel (Kostka & Toncelli 2023 : 14-15 *apud* Hetz 2024 : 35). En effet, "[…] enseigner ou apprendre une langue, c'est avant tout pour communiquer, échanger et faire avec l'autre" (Bentifraouine et al. 2023 : 59). Ainsi, il semble pertinent d'adhérer à l'idée selon laquelle

> […] l'avenir de l'apprentissage des langues réside probablement dans une combinaison d'outils numériques et d'une pédagogie humaine, où l'intelligence artificielle serait au service de l'apprenant et non l'inverse (Benyoucef & Mehdi 2024 : 393),

tout en tenant compte du potentiel pédagogique des outils d'IA afin de promouvoir un apprentissage équilibré et efficace (Benyoucef & Mehdi 2024 : 395).

La littérature de spécialité actuelle souligne que les implications et applications de l'IA en éducation sont encore émergentes et nécessitent une validation empirique approfondie. Cette étape est indispensable afin de permettre aux enseignants de langues de s'adapter efficacement à cette nouvelle réalité et de modifier leurs pratiques d'enseignement et d'évaluation (Alharbi 2023 : 2). Par ailleurs, de nombreuses autres recherches insistent sur l'impératif d'analyser l'impact et le potentiel de l'IA, ainsi que sur la formation des enseignants dans divers contextes et domaines académiques liés à l'apprentissage des langues étrangères (Wang & Dang 2024 : 1, 19).

D'autres chercheurs attirent l'attention sur le fait qu'il existe trop peu d'enseignants expérimentés ou qualifiés dans l'utilisation des technologies basées sur l'IA (Holmes et al. 2022 : 52). C'est pour cette raison qu'il est nécessaire de développer les compétences numériques des enseignant.es,

> […] parce que former les enseignants à l'IA, c'est aussi en quelque sorte œuvrer à prévenir les dérives potentielles qui pourraient survenir dans un proche futur. […] Nous l'avons vu, l'IA est déjà omniprésente en éducation : livres intelligents, moteurs de recherche, applications éducatives, plateformes d'apprentissage, etc. (Karsenti 2018 : 118).

Cette réalité met en lumière l'importance d'un accompagnement structuré, tant dans la formation initiale que continue, pour aider les enseignants à intégrer efficacement l'IA dans leurs pratiques pédagogiques :

> […] il est important de former les futurs enseignants aux rudiments de l'intelligence artificielle en éducation, non pas pour qu'ils soient des experts de ce domaine, mais plutôt pour les préparer à l'école de demain ». (Karsenti 2018 : 112-113).

Il est impératif que les enseignants développent de nouvelles compétences afin de faire un usage réfléchi de ces outils en classe (Hampel & Stickler 2005; Kassen, et al. 2007 *apud* Pokrivcakova 2019 : 146).

Autant pour les pays européens, qui vont s'aligner sur les directives et les recommandations de l'UE et de l'UNESCO en matière d'IA, que pour d'autres pays du

monde, il s'impose la nécessité de mettre en place des stratégies au sein de la politique d'enseignement, afin d'offrir une éducation de qualité, ancrée dans la réalité actuelle et adaptée aux besoins de développement des apprenant.es, même si l'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans l'éducation nationale représente à la fois un défi et une opportunité. Pour tous ces pays, l'enjeu principal est d' "[…] amener apprenants et enseignants à agir en citoyens numériques éclairés et responsables" (Académie de Paris 2024 *apud* Hetz 2024 : 7).

Depuis 2017, la France a lancé plusieurs initiatives majeures dans ce domaine, notamment avec la mise en place de la Stratégie Nationale en IA (2018) et du Programme national de recherche en IA (2018). Ces dispositifs visent à développer les compétences des appprenant.es et des enseigant.es, afin de leur permettre d'utiliser l'IA de façon réfléchie et responsable. Conformément au rapport de la Direction du numérique pour l'éducation (DNE), la France a déjà implanté des centres d'excellence en IA ainsi que des Instituts 3IA dans certaines régions historiquement actives dans ce domaine (DNE 2023 : 13-14).

En Roumanie, des initiatives encore modestes, bien que significatives, figurent dans plusieurs documents stratégiques élaborés par le Ministère de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et de la Numérisation, notamment *le Cadre stratégique national pour l'intelligence artificielle* (CSN-IA 2023-2027)[3], qui constitue le fondement de la première stratégie nationale pour l'IA. Par ailleurs, des projets pilotes visant l'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans l'enseignement sont actuellement en cours de mise en œuvre[4].

En fin de compte, la nécessité d'élaborer des stratégies et des politiques destinées à intégrer efficacement l'IA en éducation s'appuie sur des études empiriques solides menées afin d'analyser l'impact de l'utilisation de l'IA dans différents contextes éducatifs (Wang & Dang 2024 : 22-23). Comme mentionné par W. Holmes, le domaine de l'éducation exige des programmes scolaires fidèles à une démarche de formation continue qui prennent en considérations les dimensions humaines et technologiques de l'IA, et également prévoir un accompagnement professionnel adéquat pour les enseignants, tout en garantissant le respect des droits humains, de la démocratie et de l'État de droit (Holmes et al. 2022 : 75-76).

3. Conclusion

Compte tenu des arguments précédemment évoqués, cette étude vise à analyser le potentiel et les limites de l'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans l'enseignement

[3] Pour consulter le document en roumain, accédez au site: https://www.mcid.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CSN-IA_28Iulie.pdf (Décembre 5, 2025).

[4] Pour consulter l'article de presse en roumain, accédez au site: https://edu.ro/press_rel_23_2025 (Décembre 5, 2025).

des langues étrangères, notamment du FLE. Elle met en évidence le caractère encore émergent des recherches portant sur les dimensions pédagogiques, éthiques et socio-émotionnelles de l'IA, ainsi que la nécessité d'une formation structurée des enseignants pour un usage responsable de ces outils technologiques. L'avenir de l'apprentissage des langues semble ainsi résider dans une articulation équilibrée entre innovations technologiques et pédagogie humaine, capable de répondre aux besoins réels des apprennat.es.

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Title in English: ***AI and Language Teaching: Current Status, Challenges, and Training Needs***

Abstract in English: *This paper aims to examine the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in foreign language teaching, particularly French as a foreign language (FLE). Current research shows that, despite the rise of AI technologies and their potential for personalized, flexible, and engaging learning, the pedagogical, ethical, and socio-emotional dimensions remain largely underexplored. The study emphasizes the importance of training teachers in the use of AI tools to ensure a conscious and reflective use, while preserving the human interactions essential to foreign language learning. Finally, the study highlights the need to harmoniously combine technological innovations and human-centred pedagogy, relying on educational strategies grounded in empirical evidence.*

Keywords in English: *artificial intelligence (AI), digital pedagogy, languages, French as a Foreign Language (FLE), innovation*

EFL Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Interpersonal Communication Skills

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Abstract

In the light of Rhetorical and Relational Goal Theory (RRGT), this study examines how future English teachers in Albania view the balance between rhetorical and relational communication goals. A questionnaire was administered to 150 master's students in Teaching English as a foreign language at the Department of Foreign Languages. The instrument gathered data on students' evaluations of their professors' communication abilities and their own self-assessment of communication skills. Results indicated that students perceive effective teachers as communicators who balance rhetorical and relational strategies, though relational harmony often outweighs rhetorical clarity. The communication skills most valued by students were clarity in delivering messages, listening without prejudices, and the ability to provide constructive personal feedback. The study highlights the importance of strengthening communicative competence among master degree students to ensure clearer, more effective instruction in future classrooms.

Keywords

master degree students, communication skills, teacher's communication skills, teaching quality, level of understanding

1. Introduction

Communication is one of the most important activities performed by human beings, through which they express themselves in all aspects of their existence. Even though communication is a spontaneous activity that begins early in life, not everyone is capable of engaging themselves in effective communication (Kaufmann & Vallade, 2021; Hovland, 2005). While communication facilitates our interactions within the family, at work, in society, and beyond, for the purpose of this study, we will focus on interpersonal communication skills within the educational environment.

In the education context, effective communication is considered as a key that opens the door to academic success (Kavrayici, 2020: 127). There are three forms of interaction that are of primary importance in this context: teacher–student, student–student, and student–learning resources. The shift in classroom teaching from a teacher-oriented to a student-oriented approach has created more opportunities for students to become active participants in communication. Therefore, for

communication to unfold successfully and yield a maximum effect in the classroom, it is necessary that both teachers and students become active senders and receivers.

Communication strategies within the classroom have been studied and discussed for a long time and from different perspectives (Tarone, 1980; Maes et al, 1997). Mortimer and Scott (2003: 24-39) offer a deep analysis of traditional discourse activities in classroom particularly in science classroom. They considered meaning making in the science classroom as a social process which is influenced by talk and other forms of communication. They proposed a multi-dimensional framework to analyze the classroom discourse where five aspects are identified:

1-*teaching purposes*-what the teacher intends to achieve;

2-*content of classroom interactions*-the specific scientific ideas being discussed;

3-*communicative approach*- how the teacher engages with students and their ideas (through authoritative discourse, dialogic discourse, interactive or non-interactive discourse)

4-*patterns of discourse*-the recurring structures of talk (through patterns of *initiation-response-evaluation*)

5-*teacher interventions*-the specific moves teachers make to guide the discussion (the teacher shifts the discourse between different communication approaches to support meaningful learning).

The authors consider communication approach as the core of their analytical framework which helps teachers reveal their teaching purposes related to the chosen content. Thus, teacher-students' interactions profoundly shape the learning of scientific concepts and the understanding of science. They suggested that conscious strategies need to combine both dialogic and authoritative discourses to facilitate meaningful learning.

Other researchers (Mottet, Frymier, Beebe, 2006: 256) have concluded that both teachers and students enters in classroom with two primary goals: rhetorical goals and relational goals. According to their theory, known as Rhetorical and Relational Goal Theory (RRGT), effective teaching occurs when these two types of goals are successfully balanced and integrated in communication. Despite the growing body in literature in global EFL context, there is a noticeable gap in understanding how rhetorical and relational goals unfold in the Albanian educational context, particularly from the perspective of future teachers. In the light of this theory, the present study aims at exploring the following questions:

1. What do future second language teachers perceive as most essential in the communication skills in teaching English?
2. How do their real-life experiences as students shape their professional beliefs about teacher's interpersonal communication skills?

2. Literature Review

The teaching and learning process has at its core the effective transfer of knowledge from teachers to students. This gives the communication process in the classroom the status of the most important activity taking place within the educational environment as it helps students build and improve their intellectual, social and individual qualities (Barker, 1982; Fojkar, 2005: 138). Many research studies have emphasized the importance of creating a collaborative environment in which teachers must develop competencies that foster effective interactions with their students (Moreno et al., 2024). Studies have shown that students have a greater academic progress when their teachers know how to interact actively and positively with them (Dobbs & Arnold, 2009; Derakhshan, 2021).

Teachers' positive interpersonal behaviors are also emphasized within the concept of "loving pedagogy," which portrays the teacher as a motivating presence that supports their students both academically and emotionally (Yin et al., 2019). While good communication skills give teachers the chance to perform their job well, they also act as a model for improving students communication skills which is of utmost importance when it comes to graduate students who are trained to become teachers in the future.

As oral communication forms the foundation of most activities in English classrooms, the teacher's interpersonal communication behaviors become a critical component of teaching a second language. Mottet et al. (2006) explained teachers' interpersonal communication skills within the framework of rhetorical and relational goal theory. In the framework of this theory, rhetoric goals relate to clarity, message effectiveness, and instructional impact whereas relational goals relate to building strong teacher-students' connections through support and showing empathy and respect for their views. According to this theory, when students' relational and rhetorical needs are met, students are more likely to experience enhanced learning, increased motivation, greater interest, and improved academic outcomes. This theory is supported by results from many other studies (O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Houser & Hosek, 2018) which support the positive impact of effective teacher-student interaction on students' classroom participation and academic progress.

Xie & Derakhshan (2021) extended the rhetorical and relational theory into EFL contexts. They assumed that teacher communication skills are crucial in achieving instructional effectiveness (rhetorical) and classroom rapport (relational). Xie and Derakhshan identified seven key aspects in teachers' communication skills which according to their conceptual framework positively affect student progress:

Teacher Care-it refers to teacher's openness and empathy toward their students' views and behaviors;

Teacher Stroke refers to verbal or non-verbal cues that affirm the student's presence or value.

Teacher Confirmation involves validating students' contributions and affirming their value in the classroom. It is achieved through the use of feedback, participation encouragement, and respectful communication. The role of feedback in building students' confidence and sense of significance has been supported by many studies (Roll & Koedinger, 2008; Câmpean et al., 2024). However, it is important to note that if positive feedback is given without merit shifting attention from the task toward self it can have counterproductive effects. (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Howell et al., 2014).

Teacher Credibility relates to clarity, consistency, fairness, and subject knowledge. It is supported by behaviors that lead to logical presentation and respect for different viewpoints. Teacher credibility requires that information is made more understandable through the use of simple and clear language, structured explanations, and the use of examples and visuals. This can be achieved by using multimodal communication (visual, verbal, and gestural) and designing lesson plans with clear objectives, summaries, and reinforcement techniques;

Teacher–Student Rapport requires the creation of a harmonious teacher–student relationship.

Teacher Immediacy refers to the use of both verbal and non-verbal cues for reducing psychological distance between teachers and students. In addition to verbal communication and active listening, non-verbal cues such as eye contact, smiling, and facial expressions are commonly employed by teachers to ensure smooth classroom interaction (Christophel & Gorham, 1995). The use of gestures to enhance verbal clarity has also been found to promote interactivity and make classroom experiences more engaging and memorable (Sword, 2020: 241). However, a slightly negative correlation between teacher immediacy and students' final grades is reported in some studies (Wendt & Courduff, 2018).

3. Methodology

The present study explores how future EFL teachers in Albania perceive the balance of rhetorical and relational communication goals based on their classroom experiences. Data were collected during the 2023–2024 and 2024-2025 academic years. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed from the beginning that the questionnaire would remain anonymous and that the data would be used solely for research purposes.

The participants were first- and second-year students enrolled in the Master of Science program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, offered by the Department of Foreign Languages at 'Aleksandër Moisiu' University. In total, a hundred and fifty graduate students participated in the study (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of participants

Gender				**Age**			
Male		*Female*		*21-23*		*Above24*	
Freq.	*P*	*Freq.*	*P*	*Freq.*	*P*	*Freq.*	*P*
28	18%	122	81%	100	66%	50	34%

Year of Study				**Teaching Experience**			
First year		*Second Year*		*Yes*		*No*	
Freq.	*P*	*Freq.*	*P*	*Freq.*	*P*	*Freq.*	*P*
49	33%	101	67%	47	31%	103	69%

Note: Freq. (frequency); P (Percentage)

Source. Own research.

For the purpose of this quantitative study an empirical analytical approach was designed. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to assess students' perceptions of their own communication abilities. The second part required students to rate their professors' interpersonal skills. However, this time, students were asked to select three skills they believed worked best for them in English classroom. The third part contained a series of statements aimed at measuring students' perceptions of the communicative interpersonal skills a English teacher must possess to facilitate an effective communication process in the classroom. These statements were designed as multiple-choice items using a Likert scale. The questionnaire was distributed online via google Form.

4. Results and discussion

The questionnaire used in this study was designed to gather data from different dimensions of interpersonal communication. An effective communication is achieved in the classroom when both teachers and students have good interpersonal communication skills. As the result, the questionnaire was divided into three parts so that data on rhetorical and relational goals are collected from different perspectives.

Data in Table 2 show that students had a generally positive view of their communicative competence, especially in terms of message delivery, use of body language, and attentive listening. A large majority of the students (65.2% strongly agreed, 34.8% agreed) admitted that the words they choose in a conversation often carry the most important part of their message. This suggest that students feel confident in their ability to express themselves in a clear and understandable way. Similarly, 87% of them either agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of the importance of clarity in verbal communication.

Table 2

Percentage for Each Statements on Students' Perceptions of Their Communication Interpersonal Skills

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
The words I choose in a conversation often carry the most important part of my message.				34.8%	65.2%
When I listen attentively, I can often anticipate the speaker's conclusion.			4.3%	47.8%	47.8%
If I don't fully understand what someone is saying, I tend to wait and see rather than asking for clarification.	4.3%	8.7%	39.1%	26.1%	21.7%
I ask questions or check understanding when I feel unsure or when others might not understand.		60.9%	13%	20.8%	5.3%
I try to make my spoken contributions clear and concise.		8.7%	4.3%	30.4%	56.5%
I often display positive body language, such as nodding, smiling, or maintaining eye contact.	4.3%			30.4%	65.2%
I aim to show attentiveness and interest when others are speaking.			2.8%	13%	78.3%
I think I can read body language.		4.3%	17%	47.8%	30.8%

Note: DS (strongly disagree); D (disagree); N (neutral); A (agree); SA (strongly agree)

Source. Own research.

The majority of the participants (95.6%) shared the same opinion on statements reflecting the use of non-verbal communication. They admitted that they regularly use positive body language such as smiling, nodding, or maintaining eye contact. Furthermore, the majority of the students (78.6%) felt confident in reading others' body language, which indicates a good awareness of the role of immediacy in effective communication.

From the perspective of rhetoric and relation goal theory students' self-assessment of their listening skills revealed both strengths and weakness. The majority of the students (91.3%) perceived themselves as skillful at showing attentiveness and interest when others are speaking, which further reflects their strong self-perceived engagement during communication. Furthermore, 95.6% of the participant described themselves as active listeners which aligns with relational expectations of care, respect and engagement. However, only 26.1% of the sample reported they ask questions when the message is unclear. This means that nearly 60.9% of the participants are either hesitant or unsure when it comes to checking understanding. Many of them prefer to wait for the conversation to become clear by itself instead of directly asking for understanding. This behavior suggests that while relational goals are achieved by students when it comes to rhetorical goal they are not fully committed. We find

explanation for this behavior of students in cultural communication norms, particularly in the Albanian context where interrupting or questioning the sender of the message might be seen as disrespectful or impolite. This is in line with RRGT's claim that relational goals are not universal as cultural context interferes in their expression (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021).

The second part of the questionnaire collected data on students' perception of their professors' interpersonal communication skills. The data summarized in Table 3 show that students' perceptions of their professors' communication skills are in line with RRGT. In general, students perceived their professors' interpersonal communication as caring (ST2; ST3; ST4; ST6; ST7; ST9), influential in the way they communicate (ST1' ST3'ST4; ST8) and able to create a positive student-professor relationship (ST2; ST4; ST5; ST6; ST8; ST9; ST10). Also, students perceived their professors as capable of using both effectively verbal and non- verbal cues in their communication (ST1; ST2; ST5; ST7; ST10), which contribute to a friendly and respectful classroom atmosphere where students' opinions are valued and appreciated. Among the interpersonal skills assessed in this part of the questionnaire, the highest percentage of agreement were observed in the rhetorical strategies aiming the achievement of a clear and simple communication (87%), relational strategy of a caring and respectful communication (73%), and non-verbal immediacy (60.9%).

Data in Table 3 show that students considered as important for achieving success in English classroom the following relational strategies: teachers' ability to create a harmonious learning environment, provide confirmation and feedback, and respect students' viewpoints. Also, they outpointed the rhetorical function of a clear and simple language within the educational context. This shows that students recognize and value the dual function nature of communication skills in education where clarity, respect and engagement are as important as the delivery of clear message which influence effective learning.

Table 3

Percentage for Each Statements on Students' perceptions of their professors' communication interpersonal skills.

Statements	**Freq**	**P**	Students' 3 most preferred skills	
			Freq	**P**
The professors use clear and simple language	148	87%	96	56.5%
Listens carefully before responding	103	60.9%		13%
The professors give timely and constructive feedback	89	52.2%		17.4%
The professors respect different viewpoints without prejudices	126	73.9%	110	65.2%
The professors use effective body language	103	60.9%		30.4%

Statements	**Freq**	**P**	Students' 3 most preferred skills	
			Freq	**P**
The professors adapt easily to different students' needs and communication styles	89	52.2%	66	39.1%
The professors encourage student active participation	102	60%	66	39.1%
The professors present content in logical and coherent way	96	56.5%		13%
The professors are emotionally aware and responsive	66	39.1%		13%
The professors communicate enthusiasm for the subject	81	47.8%		8.7%

Note: Freq (frequency); P (percentage)

Source. Own research.

The final section of the questionnaire aims to gather data on students' perceptions of their future interpersonal skills in the classroom. Students were asked to rate statements based on how they hope their future students will perceive them when they are employed as English teachers. Data in Table 4 reaffirm the importance of both rhetorical and relational competencies in effective teacher communication. Consistent with RRGT, students unanimously agreed (100%) with teachers' relational behavior that signals empathy, emotional awareness, and openness (Statement 5 "*Listening carefully and understanding without prejudices are essential qualities in teacher communication*"). This belief is consistent with the earlier response where students identified active listening as a core skill to apply in their future career as teachers.

Second, the participants highly valued teacher's personalized feedback. This was reflected in students' responses to Statement 6 "*While lesson summaries are useful, personalized feedback may have a stronger impact on student learning*" where 91.3% of the participants agreed that such feedback can support student learning more effectively than general summaries. Students' appreciation of personalized feedback confirms that students understand its dual role i.e., it supports the cognitive understanding (rhetorical) while acknowledging the individual efforts (relational). This aligns with previous studies on the value of constructive feedback in students' academic development (Carless, 2015; Winstone et al., 2019; Wisniewski et al., 2020).

Table 4

Percentage for Each Statements on Students' Perceptions of Their Professors Communication Interpersonal Skills

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
Strong subject knowledge is essential, but without good communication skills, teaching cannot be effective.	17.4%	17.4%	13.5%	37.4%	14.3%
Respecting different viewpoints by providing personalized feedback supports student motivation, but it can be challenging to ensure clarity for the class,	4.3%	13%	21.7%	43.5%	17.4%
Students' positive recognition can enhance their engagement in classroom activities but not their learning outcomes.	4.3%	4.3%	30.4%	30.4%	30.3%
A teacher can be effective even if their communication style doesn't match students' preferences.	8.7%	8.7%	34.8%	34.8%	13%
Listening carefully and understanding without prejudices are essential qualities in teacher communication				13%	87%
While lesson summaries are useful, personalized feedback may have a stronger impact on student learning.			8.7%	73.9%	17.4%
Using verbal and non-verbal cues helps support students' learning needs.	4.7%	17.7%	28.7%	31.5%	17.4%
Lessons should be explained in a clear and structured way.			17.4%	34.8%	47.8%
Classroom discussions give students the opportunity to express themselves, but they rarely help teachers adjust their teaching.	2.8%	24.7%	24.7%	30.4%	17.4%

Note: DS (strongly disagree); D (disagree); N (neutral); A (agree); SA (strongly agree)

Source. Own research.

In addition, students emphasized the importance of a structured instruction rich in examples. In Statement 8 "*Lessons should be explained in a clear and structured way*", 82.6% of the participants agreed that lesson should be explained in a clear and structured way. This is further supported by the students' response to Statement 9 "*Repeating main ideas by providing examples, visuals etc., helps support students' understanding*" where they showed appreciation of ideas being repeated through visuals and examples. Organizing and delivering content in ways that enhance understanding contribute to the rhetorical dimension of communication. However, relational elements are present even here as repetition can reduce anxiety and increase

student confidence, especially for those dealing with complex material in a foreign language. The same findings on teacher clarity impact on student understanding are reported from other studies (Frymier et al., 2019; Schrodt et al., 2009).

Despite these strong trends, there were also areas where student opinions were divided. For example, in Statement 7 "*Using verbal and non-verbal cues helps support students' learning needs*", students were uncertain about the role of non-verbal immediacy in learning (43.4% disagreed and 47.8% agreed). Similarly, opinions were mixed regarding Statement 4 "*A teacher can be effective even if their communication style doesn't match students' preferences*" where the same number of students (34.8%) agreed and were uncertain whether an effective teacher can explain the content clearly while adaptting their methodology to students' needs. We believe that this finding reflects some inconsistent classroom experiences students might have had in the past which requires some follow up studies. The same uncertainty appeared in statement 2 "*Students' positive recognition can enhance their engagement in classroom activities but not their learning outcomes*" were a high number of students (30%) were not certain about the impact of teacher's role as a stroker to students learning outcomes.

Finally, Statement 10 "*Classroom discussions give students the opportunity to express themselves, but they rarely help teachers adjust their teaching*" received a relatively high level of disagreement (24.5%) suggesting that 47.8% of the students do not believe classroom discussions can in fact, influence teaching. We think this belief might stem from students' past experiences with teacher-centered classes. Meanwhile, Statement 1 "*Strong subject knowledge is essential, but without good communication skills, teaching cannot be effective*" was disagreed by 34.8% of students and agreed by 51 % of them. This split may indicate that students are skeptic about the effectiveness of subjective knowledge over clarity of communication in fostering effective learning.

In conclusion, the present study confirms Xie & Derakhshan's framework by showing that EFL learners value care, clarity, feedback, and immediacy. However, it also contributes a new insight: in the Albanian context, relational harmony often takes precedence over rhetorical clarity, suggesting teacher education should intentionally build skills for questioning, repair, and clarification within culturally sensitive frameworks.

5. Conclusions

Xie & Derakhshan's framework has at its core the achievement of an effective balance between rhetorical and relational goals. Data from students in the EFL context supported this theory as students showed a high appreciation of communication strategies that address both instructional clarity and interpersonal rapport. Findings from the study showed that students perceived the role of the English teacher as a communicator who is capable of integrating both rhetorical and relational strategies.

Students defined their professors' behaviors as oriented toward a structured lesson, listening without prejudices and giving personalized feedback. Their mixed views on classroom discussions indicates that discussion should be considered as a source for modifying the content in addition to enabling student participation.

Another important conclusion was that students valued both verbal and non-verbal communication skills as essential for establishing effective interactions. A large number of the participants were confident in regard to their own interpersonal skills, particularly in showing attentiveness and using body language. However, their rhetorical clarity comes second after their desire to maintain interpersonal harmony. To address this imbalance, the curriculum of programs that train future teachers need to promote culturally sensitive awareness in how to question and normalize the right to seek clarification. In conclusion, findings from the study reinforce the need for orienting the curriculum towards the interactive communication strategies, especially in areas like questioning techniques, repair strategies, and real-time clarification in a culturally sensitive way.

6. Recommendations

Universities' curriculum should focus on building relational strengths in future teachers while systematically fostering rhetorical skills. This way, they can prepare future English teachers who are both collaborative and articulate**,** capable of critical inquiry, reasoned argumentation, and effective communication. These are essential skills for academic and professional success, which are achieved through integration of interactive communication strategies such as:

The introduction of modules that emphasize inquiry-based learning, debates, and argumentation exercises.

The encouragement of students to formulate and ask analytical questions independently.

The encouragement of peer feedback sessions where students practice both relational and rhetorical skills.

Also, education policy makers should support teachers training programs which focus on strategies that foster students questioning, critical thinking, and higher-order discussion.

Finally, pre-university education should introduce in their programs debate clubs, public speaking activities, and critical thinking initiatives etc.

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Provocările sistemului educațional din Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Articolul își propune să surprindă progresele pe care școlarizarea din Sri Lanka le-a făcut de-a lungul timpului, precum și dificultățile existente. Sistemul educațional actual se caracterizează prin progrese evidente privind accesul liber la educație și provocări sistemice profunde legate de calitate, dotări, inegalități regionale, inserția pe piața muncii. Sistemul educațional din Sri Lanka datează din anul 543 î.Hr., având așadar o istorie de peste 2000 de ani. Fostă colonie britanică, țara a devenit independentă în anul 1948 și a dezvoltat un sistem educațional național unitar. După independență, numărul școlilor și rata de alfabetizare au crescut semnificativ, ajungând la aproximativ 10.012 școli publice care deservesc aproximativ 4.037.157 de elevi, conform statisticilor Ministerului Educației. Astăzi, țara oferă educație gratuită, de la școală primară la universitate, iar acest lucru a contribuit la o rată ridicată de alfabetizare, peste 92, 61% (în anul 2023), una dintre cele mai ridicate din regiune.

Keywords

Sistem de educație, influențe, progrese, provocări

1. Introducere

În Sri Lanka, educația este, ca și în România, obligatorie pentru toți copiii și administrată de stat, adică de către Ministerul Educației. Istoria țării se întinde pe mii de ani, iar sistemul modern de educație, având inițial ca model sisteme misionare creștine, a fost puternic influențat de cel britanic începând din secolul al XIX-lea. Politica Educației Universale Gratuite introdusă în anul 1945 a oferit accesul gratuit la educație, de la grădiniță până la învățământul universitar. Înființarea de școli centrale, introducerea limbilor naționale - sinhala și tamilă - ca limbă de instruire în școlile primare, mesele gratuite la prânz au facilitat integrarea în sistemul de învățământ a copiilor din familiile sărace. Independența obținută în anul 1948 a permis sistemului educațional srilankez o dezvoltare proprie, adaptată nevoilor societății.

2. Situarea geografică

Sri Lanka este o țară asiatică din Oceanul Indian, predominant budistă, cu o suprafață de aproximativ 65.610 Km pătrați, situată la sud-est de India. Are țărmuri la Golful Bengal în est, **Oceanul Indian în sud si vest și Strâmtoarea Palk in nord-est, care o separă de India.**

Supranumită și ”perla oceanului indian” sau ”insula smaraldului”, țara se evidențiază printr-un peisaj natural divers, cu păduri tropicale, nisip fin, munți înalți. Are mai mult de 1700 km de coastă, cu nisip fin și palmieri.

Monumentele UNESCO reprezintă atracția principală pentru turiști. Sri Lanka are opt situri de patrimoniu mondial UNESCO, cele mai cunoscute fiind orașul vechi Anuradhapura, fortăreața Sigiriya, o fortăreață construită în secolul al V-lea și Grădinile Botanice Regale Peradeniya.

Capitala Sri Lankai este Colombo, cel mai mare oraș al țării, centru comercial si financiar, principalul port.

Clima insulei este tropical-musonică, caracterizată prin temperaturi ridicate și umiditate (peste 80 %) pe timpul sezonului ploios.

Fostă colonie britanică, această țară insulară și-a proclamat independența la 4 februarie 1948. Până în anul 1972 teritoriul se numea Ceilon (Ceylon).

3. Structura actuală

Școlarizarea este obligatorie în Sri Lanka pentru toți copiii cu vârsta cuprinsă între 5 și 14 ani. Sistemul de învățământ este divizat în cicluri de studiu: preprimar (vârsta 4-5 ani), primar (clasele 1-5), secundar junior (clasele 6-9), secundar superior (clasele 10 și 11)/ colegial (clasa a 12-a și a 13-a) și terțiar (universități). Structura educațională este așadar împărțită în cinci mari etape: primar, secundar junior, secundar superior, colegial și terțiar.

Învățământ primar

- Grădiniță: 3-5 ani
- Clasa I: 5-6 ani
- Clasa II: 6-7 ani
- Clasa III: 7-8 ani
- Clasa IV: 8-9 ani
- Clasa V: 9-10 ani -examen: Grade 5 Scholarship Examination

Învățământ secundar (ciclu inferior)

- Clasa VI: 10-11 ani
- Clasa VII: 11-12 ani
- Clasa VIII: 12-13 ani
- Clasa IX: 13-14 ani

Învățământ secundar (ciclu superior)

- Clasa X: 14-15 ani
- Clasa XI: 15-16 ani – examen

Colegiu

- Clasa XII: 16-17 ani
- Clasa XIII: 17-18 ani – examen

Învățământul primar, cu o durată de cinci ani, cuprinde, în general, copii cu vârste între 5-10 ani și se încheie cu examen de selecție la finalul clasei a V-a. Acest examen are o importanță deosebită, deoarece elevii care au rezultate bune pot obține burse și se pot transfera la școli secundare naționale de prestigiu.

Învățământul secundar, cu o durată de opt ani, este împărțit în ciclul inferior (clasele VI-IX) și superior (clasele X-XIII). Elevii participă la GCE O-L (General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level) la sfârșitul celor unsprezece ani de educație formală și GCE A-L (Advanced Level) la sfârșitul celor treisprezece ani de școlarizare. Examenele naționale GCE O-Level pentru clasele a X-a și a XI-a și GCE A-Level pentru clasele a XII-a și a XIII-a sunt esențiale pentru accesul la universitățile cu sistem britanic sau similar. Admiterea în universități este competitivă și are un procent de reușită puțin peste 50%. Examenul național GCE O-L marchează sfârșitul liceului, iar GCE A-L marchează învățământul universitar. Pentru GCE O-L, există o programă comună și include atât materii obligatorii, cât și opționale. Este obligatoriu ca toți elevii să studieze limba maternă, a doua limbă (engleza), matematica, științele, istoria și religia. Alte trei materii, precum educația civică, artele, dansul, comerțul, antreprenoriatul, agricultura etc., pot fi luate din programul opțional.

Curriculum național, aprobat de Ministerul Educației, structurat în jurul unor domenii cheie, cuprinde mai multe arii: limbi, matematică, științe, religie, arte și competențe practice. Elevii din ciclul primar au patru domenii fundamentale: limbă, matematică, activități legate de mediu și religie. Începând cu clasa a treia, Curriculum se extinde pentru a include discipline lingvistice suplimentare: a doua limbă națională (sinhala sau tamil) și limba engleză. Această abordare asigură o bază solidă în disciplinele fundamentale și introduce treptat competențe lingvistice suplimentare esențiale. Engleza este predată ca a doua limbă. Sri Lanka a fost colonie britanică până în anul 1948 iar sistemul de învățământ are ca model sistemul britanic. Cu toate acestea, nu putem trece cu vederea necesitatea permanentă de a actualiza programa școlară. Provocările calitative și modernizarea programei școlare, chiar și în prezența unui acces larg la educație, rămân totuși o preocupare majoră pentru decidenți. Modernizarea a implicat o trecere de la metodele tradiționale, centrate pe profesor, la abordări interactive, centrate pe elev, care au ca scop să stimuleze curiozitatea și învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții.

Anul școlar are o structură tripartită și se desfășoară pe parcursul anului calendaristic (începe în ianuarie și se încheie în decembrie). Calendarul școlar pentru școlile guvernamentale din Sri Lanka pentru anul 2026, conform Ministerului Educației, este următorul:

	Perioade de cursuri	zile școlare
Trimestrul 1	13 ianuarie 2026 – 1 aprilie 2026	57 de zile
Trimestrul 2	21 aprilie – 10 iulie 2026	56 de zile
Trimestrul 3	4 august – 27 noiembrie 2026	79 de zile
Total zile de școlarizare		**192 de zile**

Educația, finanțată de stat, este oferită gratuit pentru toate ciclurile de învățământ, inclusiv la nivel universitar. Există 10.390 de școli guvernamentale iar unele dintre ele sunt renumite pentru calitatea lor: St. Joseph's, Visakha, Musaeus, Royal College.

Guvernul oferă, de asemenea, manuale, transport și uniforme gratuite elevilor. Rata de alfabetizare și nivelurile de educație au crescut constant după ce Sri Lanka a devenit o națiune independentă în 1948, iar astăzi rata de alfabetizare a tinerilor este de 97%. Guvernul acordă prioritate îmbunătățirii sistemului național de învățământ și accesului la educație pentru toți copiii, indiferent de regiune.

În micul sat Koruwawa, în provincia de nord-vest a Sri Lankăi, singurul liceu al orașului include un laborator de informatică care îi ajută pe elevi să rămână conectați cu lumea și cu noutățile. Școala este una dintre miile de școli modernizate din această țară, ce reușește să îmbunătățească abilitățile copiilor în științe, engleză și informatică.

Am apreciat faptul că elevii au uniforme obligatorii (albe sau albe și albastre, cravată, băieții au pantaloni scurți) iar accentul este pus pe ore interactive, pe activități desfășurate în afara spațiului convențional, clasic. Copiii sunt veseli, zâmbitori, curioși și dornici de comunicare, de interacțiune.

Există mai multe tipuri de școli în Sri Lanka: școli guvernamentale, școli private asistate, școli private autonome și școli internaționale. Această diversitate reflectă o piață educațională dinamică, care încearcă se se plieze pe nevoile comunității.

Pe lângă cele peste 10.000 de școli publice, există 33 de școli private asistate (fără taxă) și 33 de școli private autonome (cu taxă). Aceste școli combină programa locală și sistemul britanic. Există o altă categorie de școli internaționale medii engleze aprobate și înregistrate de Consiliul de Investiții, Sri Lanka. Unele școli internaționale oferă curriculum-ul pentru Diploma IB, în timp ce altele instruiesc studenții pentru examenele Edexcel GCE Nivel Obișnuit (O/L) Subsidiar Avansat (A/S) și Nivel Avansat (A2). Câteva școli private oferă și programa pentru examenele Cambridge.

Există 17 universități de stat (publice) în Sri Lanka sub administrarea directă a Comisiei de Granturi Universitare care controlează finanțarea și reglementarea standardelor academice. Dintre acestea, putem enumera câteva dintre cele mai cunoscute:

Universitatea din Colombo (cea mai veche, are în prezent zece facultăți),

Universitatea din Peradeniya (renumită pentru științe și agricultură),

Universitatea din Kelaniya (cu rezultate remarcabile in domeniul artei și științelor sociale),

Universitatea din Sri Jayawardhenapura (pentru specializarea Management/ Comerț),

Universitatea din Moratuwa (renumită pentru Facultatea de Inginerie),

Universitatea din Jaffna (pentru regiunea de nord),

Universitatea din Ruhuna (pentru sudul țării).

De asemenea, există și numeroase universități private: SLIT (*Sri Lanka* Institute of Information Technology), NIBM (The National Institute of Business Management) și NSBM (National School of Business Management), CINEC (Colombo International Nautical and Engineering College), AMDT (School of Creativity), RIC (Royal Institute of Colombo). Dintre acestea, primele trei SLIT (*Sri Lanka* Institute of Information Technology), NIBM (The National Institute of Business Management) și NSBM (National School of Business Management) sunt cele mai cunoscute. În ultimii ani, Sri Lanka a început să atragă chiar și studenți internaționali. Universitatea australiană Edith Cowan este prima universitate care a deschis în august 2023 o sucursală în această țară din Asia de sud. Edith Cowan University a avut anterior o prezență în Sri Lanka prin parteneriate, cum ar fi cel cu Australian College of Business and Technology (ACBT), încă din anul 1998. În septembrie 2023, ECU a inaugurat un campus cu opt etaje, în inima orașului Colombo, pentru a permite studenților srilankezi să finalizeze studii universitare australiene complete în propria țară.

O problemă importantă o reprezintă faptul că șomajul în rândul tinerilor este foarte ridicat, de aproximativ 17%, față de o rată generală a șomajului de 4%. Adesea, chiar dacă tinerii termină liceul sau facultatea, aceștia nu dețin abilitățile tehnice de care are nevoie noua piață a muncii și au dificultăți în găsirea unui loc de muncă.

O altă problemă care afectează calitatea educației o reprezintă salarizarea cadrelor didactice, pregătirea profesională și migrația acestora în alte domenii sau în alte țări.

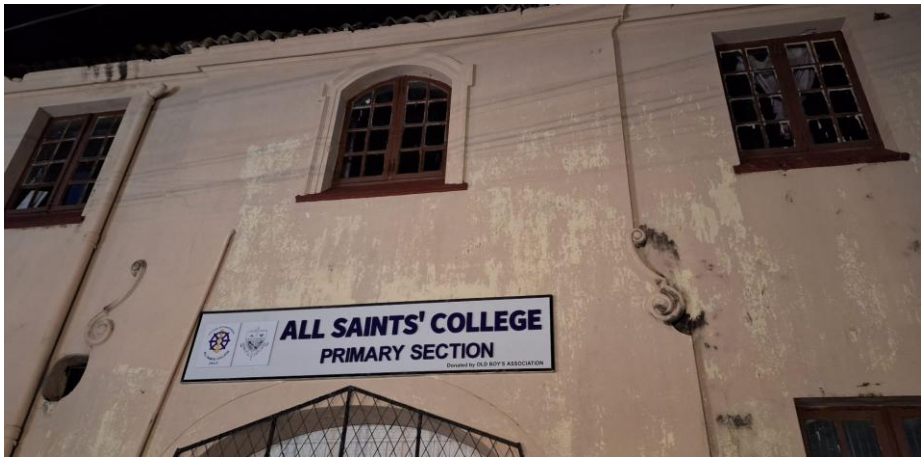
Lipsa unei viziuni unitare - faptul că unele instituții de învățământ se află sub jurisdicția mai multor ministere (Ministerul Educației, Serviciul Național al Examinărilor, Minitarul învățământului Superior, Ministerul Dezvoltării competențelor și formării profesionale) - a determinat uneori o gestionare deficitară. Banca Asiatică de Dezvoltare (Asian Development Bank), o instituție financiară regională de dezvoltare, înființată cu scopul de a stimula creșterea economică și cooperarea în regiunea Asia-Pacific, are ca obiectiv o Asie fără sărăcie deoarece aproximativ 1,4 miliarde de oameni din regiune sunt săraci și nu pot accesa bunuri și servicii esențiale

Concluzii:

Reformele și politica educațională 2020-2030

- Cadru național de politici educaționale adoptat în 2022 pentru modernizare și incluziune (corelarea sistemului educațional la cerințele pieței muncii, dezvoltarea activităților practice)
- Priorități: competențe digitale, educație vocațională, incluziune socială și calitate
- Implicarea comunității și descentralizarea deciziilor educaționale

Așadar, Sri Lanka a reușit să facă progrese notabile privind accesul la educație, dar se confruntă acum cu sarcina dificilă de a ridica **calitatea și relevanța** acestui sistem pentru a răspunde nevoilor societății actuale. Armonizarea balanței cantitate-calitate este provocarea fundamentală a secolului XXI.










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Title in English: ***The challenges of the system in Sri Lanka***

Abstract_in English: *The article aims to capture the progress that schooling in Sri Lanka has made over time, as well as the existing difficulties. The current education system is characterized by obvious progress regarding free access to education and deep systemic challenges related to quality, facilities, regional inequalities, insertion in the labor market. The education system in Sri Lanka dates back to 543 BC, thus having a history of over 2000 years. A former British colony, the country became independent in 1948 and developed a unified national education system. After independence, the number of schools and the literacy rate increased significantly, reaching approximately 10,012 public schools serving approximately 4,037,157 students, according to statistics from the Ministry of Education. Today, the country offers free education, from primary school to university, and this has contributed to a high literacy rate, over 92.61% (in 2023), one of the highest in the region.*

Keywords in english: *Education system, influences, progress, challenges*

Teaching English for Global Citizenship: A Cross-Cultural Approach in Romanian Classrooms

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Abstract

English becomes more of a global lingua franca, English language teaching (ELT) has to teach not only language skills but also skills for becoming a global citizen. This research examines the incorporation of global citizenship education (GCE) into English language instruction via a cross-cultural pedagogical framework in Romanian higher education. Based on conceptions of international communicative competence, global citizenship, and English as a lingua franca, the study investigates how English training might promote intercultural awareness, ethical involvement, and communicative adaptation. The study delineates the outcomes of a little educational experiment executed at the Romanian-American University involving multicultural Business and Law students enrolled in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Employing a mixed-methods methodology, the study assesses the influence of cross-cultural, citizenship-focused teaching techniques on students' intercultural awareness and communicative confidence. The results indicate that including global citizenship topics into EFL training improves students' introspective abilities, intercultural awareness, and perceived communicative efficacy. The research finishes by examining the ramifications for English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum development in Romania and the responsibility of English educators in cultivating internationally conscientious graduates. Global citizenship education, English as a lingua franca, intercultural communicative ability, Romanian higher education, EFL, and multicultural classrooms are all important terms.

Keywords

English language instruction, intercultural communicative ability, cross-cultural communication, Romanian tertiary education, pragmatics, global English

1. Introducere

English's importance in modern education has grown well beyond its original purpose as a foreign language. In a time when the world is becoming more connected through globalisation, transnational mobility, digital communication, and cultural diversity, English is mostly used as a way for people from different countries to talk to each other, not to show that someone is a native speaker (Seidlhofer, 2011; Jenkins, 2015). As a result, English language instruction (ELT) is becoming increasingly connected to bigger educational aims like global citizenship, knowing other cultures, and being ethical.

Global citizenship education (GCE) has become more important in worldwide discussions about education, especially in the policies of UNESCO and the European Union, which stress the importance of education in promoting democratic principles, intercultural communication, and social responsibility (UNESCO, 2015). Language classes, especially English classrooms, are in a unique position to help with these goals since learning a language naturally includes interacting with people from different cultures, viewpoints, and backgrounds.

English is taught in Romania at all levels of education, although it is more common in higher education programs that are focused on business or law or that have an international focus. Even though English is so important, teaching it is still generally centred on grammar, professional vocabulary, and doing well on tests. These components are significant; yet, they may inadequately include the comprehensive communication and civic abilities necessary for graduates functioning in global contexts.

This study contends that instructing English for global citizenship is an essential pedagogical transformation in Romanian higher education. It examines how a cross-cultural methodology in English Language Teaching (ELT) might facilitate the cultivation of global citizenship abilities in Romanian students. The paper includes both a theoretical discussion and an empirical analysis from the Romanian-American University that looks at how citizenship-oriented, intercultural training affects Business and Law students who are taking EFL courses.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Education for Global Citizenship

Global citizenship education is a way of teaching that gives students the tools they need to think critically and ethically about global concerns, cultural diversity, and social justice (UNESCO, 2015). GCE stresses ideals including global awareness, civic involvement, tolerance for diversity, and moral responsibility.

GCE does not push for one cultural or political paradigm. Instead, it encourages students to think about how things are interrelated, how power works, and how they may take action to solve global problems (Oxley & Morris, 2013). These goals are quite similar to the communicative and introspective parts of language education.

2.2 Intercultural Communicative Competence and Global Citizenship

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) serves as a conceptual link between English Language Teaching (ELT) and Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Byram's (1997) model of ICC focusses on attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness, which are equally important parts of being a global citizen. Intercultural learning helps students learn how to evaluate their own beliefs, find common ground, and deal with cultural differences in a respectful way.

When English is taught as a lingua franca, intercultural competency is especially important since learners have to talk to people from other cultures without using common native-speaker norms (Jenkins, 2015). This viewpoint advocates for a transition from linguistic mimicry to communicative flexibility and ethical engagement.

2.3 Teaching English at Multicultural Colleges and Universities

Romania's higher education classrooms are becoming more and more diverse, especially at private institutions and programs that focus on overseas students. Students from different languages, cultural, and educational backgrounds have different ideas on how to communicate in the classroom. ELT approaches that disregard this variety may perpetuate monocultural viewpoints and hinder students' intercultural growth (Kramsch, 1993).

A cross-cultural approach to ELT sees variety as a valuable teaching tool and encourages students to talk to each other, compare their ideas, and think about what they have learnt.

3. English for Global Citizenship in Romania

Romania's entry into European and worldwide academic networks has made it even more important for graduates to have not just professional skills but also skills in intercultural communication and civic engagement.

Students of business and law, in particular, are expected to work in multinational regulatory, economic, and institutional settings where cultural sensitivity and moral reasoning are very important.

Even while transversal competences are recognised at the policy level, global citizenship is still not directly included in English curriculum. English classes frequently focus on technical terminology and formal writing abilities, which doesn't provide much room for talking about global concerns, cultural diversity, or moral problems.

This gap shows that we need teaching strategies that include global citizenship goals right into English language lessons.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Justification

The current study utilised a quasi-experimental, mixed-methods classroom research design to investigate the potential impact of incorporating global citizenship education (GCE) themes and cross-cultural communicative tasks into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction on enhancing learners' intercultural awareness and communicative confidence. A quasi-experimental method was used because, in genuine university teaching environments, it is never practical—or pedagogically suitable—to randomly assign students to groups or to completely standardise learning

circumstances without interfering with curricular obligations. The study was organised around two intact course groups that were similar in level, program profile, and learning objectives, but differed only in the instructional treatment (i.e., a global citizenship–infused approach vs a standard ESP method).

The choice to implement a mixed-methods approach stemmed from the belief that intercultural communicative competence and global citizenship-related dispositions are only partially measurable through purely quantitative tools, especially when the intervention is integrated within naturalistic classroom dynamics. The study integrated (a) pre- and post-intervention self-report measures of intercultural awareness and communicative confidence with (b) qualitative data obtained from reflective diaries, focus group talks, and structured classroom observations. This combination aligns with existing guidelines in international language education research, which highlight triangulation and interpretative depth in the assessment of attitudinal and reflective learning outcomes (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

4.2 The Setting and the Learning Environment

The intervention took place at the Romanian-American University (Bucharest) in undergraduate ESP classes for students studying Business and Law. These classes usually help students with their academic and professional communication needs by focussing on different types of writing (like business emails, reports, presentations, legal correspondence, and case summaries) and language skills that are at the intermediate or upper-intermediate level. In this institutional context, English transcends its role as an academic discipline; it serves as a critical skill for academic mobility, professional internships, and future employability—circumstances that render the integration of global citizenship and intercultural communication especially pertinent.

The semester approach, with weekly sessions throughout a typical teaching term, made it possible to make a cohesive pedagogical redesign without affecting the main ESP results. It is important to note that the intervention did not replace the goals of disciplinary English; instead, it aimed to situate them in new contexts that emphasised cultural diversity, ethical reasoning, and global professional standards.

4.3 People Who Took Part and the Group's Makeup

The study involved 62 undergraduate students from two course sections. Students were registered in either (a) English for Business Communication or (b) Legal English. The sample represented a multicultural classroom environment, comprising Romanian pupils and international students from various cultural origins, primarily European, with extra non-European representation varying by cohort.

The institution's placement methods and the students' performance on ordinary course activities early in the semester (e.g., brief presentations, diagnostic writing, guided discussion) showed that most of the participants were at a B1–B2 proficiency level. The study did not assert strict comparability in all learner factors due to the use

of entire courses and non-random group assignment; nonetheless, the groups were equivalent for program level, general proficiency band, course goals, and instructional duration.

• Experimental group (n = 32): got an ESP syllabus imbued with global citizenship and cross-cultural communication.

• Control group (n = 30): adhered to a traditional ESP curriculum focused on genre proficiency, lexico-grammatical precision, and established professional communication protocols.

4.4 Instructional Intervention

The educational intervention was a methodical incorporation of global citizenship and intercultural learning elements into the weekly ESP curriculum. In practical terms, this meant that regular ESP tasks like negotiating terms, writing professional emails, going to meetings, summarising cases, or making proposals were changed so that students had to think about cultural differences, moral issues, and the views of different stakeholders.

The intervention was built around four basic teaching ideas that came up again and again:

1.Problem-oriented, global scenarios: Tasks were placed in real-world, globally relevant situations (for example, communication in a multinational workplace, dealing with clients from different countries, fairness and compliance issues in business contracts, and intercultural negotiation problems in legal or commercial settings). This makes sense given the logic of GCE, which stresses how to understand the complexity and interconnection of the actual world (UNESCO, 2015).

2.Dialogic intercultural comparison: Classroom discussions and group projects clearly pushed students to compare Romanian communication norms with those of other cultural groups present in the classroom or mentioned in the materials. This concept embodies the intercultural language teaching methodology, wherein learners derive meaning through dialogic reflection instead of fixed "cultural facts" (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

3.Pragmatic awareness and communicative choice: The intervention incorporated a concise and explicit emphasis on pragmatics (e.g., strategies for politeness in requests, managing disagreement, calibrating email tone, and establishing norms for turn-taking in meetings), thereby regarding grammar as a tool for interpersonal appropriateness rather than as a standalone measure of correctness (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi, 2011).

4.Students frequently composed brief reflective pieces that linked linguistic choices to identity, values, and ethical reasoning within professional situations. This design feature aligns with Byram's focus on critical cultural awareness as an integral aspect of intercultural competency (Byram, 1997, 2008).

The control group, on the other hand, did similar ESP tasks (like emails, presentations, vocabulary practice, and genre analysis), but they didn't include global citizenship themes, structured intercultural reflection, or any kind of explicit focus on pragmatics beyond the usual "formal vs. informal" guidance.

4.5 Tools and Data Sources

We used a number of different tools to collect data so that we could see how things changed over time and how people learnt in a qualitative way.

1. Questionnaire on Intercultural Awareness and Communicative Confidence (before and after):

We prepared a brief questionnaire based on the ICC characteristics that are commonly used (Byram, 1997). The questions were about being open to cultural differences, feeling like you can understand culturally specific meaning, and being confident in talking about cultural differences in English. The instrument was utilised largely as a trend indicator, acknowledging the constraints of concise self-report instruments in encapsulating intricate constructions.

2. Journals for Reflective Learning:

Students in the experimental group wrote reflective notes on a regular basis in response to controlled questions, such as "Describe a moment in today's task where cultural assumptions shaped interpretation" and "How did you manage disagreement and maintain professionalism in English?" Journals offered longitudinal evidence of developing consciousness and were regarded as qualitative data.

3. Focus Groups:

At the end of the semester, volunteers from both groups took part in semi-structured focus group conversations to talk about how much they thought they had learnt, how comfortable they were in class, and how relevant the material was to their professional identity building.

4. Protocol for Classroom Observation:

The instructor kept observation notes based on a simple set of rules that looked at how students participated, how they took a multicultural viewpoint, how they changed their language to be more practical, and how they misunderstood something and then fixed it or worked it out.

4.6 Strategy for Analysing Data

We looked at the quantitative questionnaire data in a descriptive way, looking at the differences between the pre- and post-distributions and the changes in the average self-reported scores for each group. Because the methodology was quasi-experimental and the sample size was small, the analysis was careful and did not make strong causal assertions. Instead, it used quantitative patterns as supportive evidence rather than proof.

Thematic coding was used to analyse qualitative data (journals, focus groups, and observation notes). The first categories were based on ICC dimensions (attitudes,

knowledge, skills of interpreting/relating, and critical cultural awareness). These categories were then refined as themes came up in the dataset (Byram, 1997). Special emphasis was given to signs of: (a) less stereotyping, (b) more acceptance of ambiguity, (c) clear pragmatic reasoning, and (d) an ethical way of talking about work.

4.7 Ethical Issues

Participation in data collecting aspects outside typical coursework (e.g., consent for journal analysis and focus group participation) was voluntary, and students were notified that opting out would not effect grades. Data were anonymised during the analysis phase, and the reporting emphasises aggregated patterns and non-identifiable snippets. Because the intervention was part of real teaching that was in line with the goals of the course, there was no danger. However, care was made to keep classroom conversations courteous, especially when talking about subjects that were sensitive to different cultures.

5. Results

5.1 Summary of Results

The findings are delineated according to two primary outcome domains: (1) self-reported intercultural awareness and communicative confidence, and (2) qualitative measures of intercultural learning processes, encompassing indicators of pragmatic awareness, perspective-taking, and reflective engagement with themes of global citizenship. The intervention occurred in genuine classroom settings, leading the study to emphasise educational relevance and interpretative validity over laboratory-style control. Consequently, the results are viewed as indicative of pedagogical potential rather than conclusive evidence of causal influence.

5.2 Trends in Numbers

Throughout the semester, the experimental group exhibited a steady increase in self-reported metrics related to intercultural comfort and communicative confidence. In practical terms, students said they were more willing to start conversations with classmates from different backgrounds, they thought they were better at handling disagreements in English without making things worse, and they were more confident in their ability to understand implied meaning in professional situations (like indirect refusals, softened criticism, and diplomatic negotiation language). As expected in any semester-long language course, both groups got better at ESP over time. However, the experimental group's improvements were more noticeable in the questionnaire items that directly measured intercultural engagement (for example, "I can adapt my tone in English based on the cultural context" and "I can consider multiple cultural perspectives when interpreting professional communication").

The control group exhibited little enhancement mostly focused on aspects related to traditional ESP objectives (e.g., reported enhancement in vocabulary breadth for business/legal contexts, familiarity with professional email formatting). This pattern is

important for teaching because it shows that traditional teaching helps students learn the language of the subject, while the citizenship-oriented model seems to help students grow in intercultural and pragmatic areas that aren't automatically learnt through terminology and genre practice alone (Taguchi, 2011).

However, it is important to note that self-report tools can be affected by social desirability and enhanced awareness effects. As students grow more aware of the complexities of international interactions, they may also become more critical of their own skills. Interestingly, a small subset of respondents from the experimental group reported a slight decrease in confidence mid-semester. This can be interpreted not as failure but as a typical “awareness dip,” where heightened insight into complexity temporarily diminishes perceived mastery—a phenomenon commonly observed in reflective intercultural learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

5.3 Qualitative Findings

Qualitative analysis produced three strong themes that elucidate the mechanisms and rationale behind the intervention's impact on student learning.

Theme 1: Transitioning from "Correct English" to "Appropriate English"

A consistent trend observed in experimental-group journals and focus groups was a transformation in students' perceptions of effective language use. Early reflections frequently defined success predominantly in relation to grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. By the middle to the end of the semester, a lot of students were talking more and more about success in terms of being suitable, such as managing tone, being courteous, and using strategic ambiguity in sensitive professional communication. Students clearly said that international professional communication needed them to find a balance between being clear and being diplomatic, and that being direct may mean various things in different cultures.

This change is in line with research on pragmatics that shows that direct instruction and reflective participation might help students learn about speech-act conventions and politeness standards more quickly, especially in professional settings (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi, 2011).

Theme 2: Empathy and Curbing Cultural Overgeneralisation

A second element was the shift from broad cultural generalisations to more nuanced ways of seeing things. In the beginning of the conversations, students typically used broad preconceptions, like "they are more direct" or "they are more formal," which they commonly said were fixed qualities. As the course went on, students started to use more qualifiers like "in this situation," "in business meetings," and "depending on hierarchy." They also started to talk about things like institutional culture, power distance in professional relationships, and the purpose of communication in an interaction.

This transformation is important for teaching because it shows that people are developing what Byram (1997) calls "skills of interpreting and relating," as well as

"critical cultural awareness." Instead of just studying about "other cultures," students started to use a more analytical method to figure out what people meant and what the context allowed.

Theme 3: Global Citizenship as an Ethical Framework in Professional Communication

A third feature was the rise of ethical language and civic framing in ESP assignments. As students worked on global case studies (including fairness in contracts, inclusiveness in workplace communication, and balancing legal compliance with human effect), they utilised English more and more to explain their moral reasoning and think about the points of view of all the people involved. This did not stay at the level of abstract values; students linked ethics to their choices about how to communicate. For example, they talked about how respectful language can show that someone is included, how clear phrasing can build trust, and how careful framing can keep people from being left out in multicultural teamwork.

This result corresponds with UNESCO's (2015) perspective on GCE as an educational approach that facilitates the development of reflective judgement and responsible agency in learners. In the current study, English served not just as a skill but also as a conduit for ethical discourse, allowing students to practise professional identities that are internationally proficient and socially conscious.

5.4 Patterns of Interaction in the Classroom and Evidence from Observations

Observation notes corroborated the qualitative themes by recording heightened student-initiated interactions within the experimental group, especially in mixed-cultural teams. As time went on, students seemed more inclined to seek for clarification, negotiate meaning directly, and fix misconceptions through meta-communication (for example, "Can I rephrase to make sure it sounds polite?" or "How would this be received in your context?"). Many people think that these behaviours are important parts of good lingua franca communication, where people can understand each other and manage their relationships through negotiation instead of relying on common national norms (Seidlhofer, 2011; Jenkins, 2015).

5.5 Summary of Findings

All the results point to the fact that include global citizenship themes and cross-cultural communication objectives in ESP lessons might be helpful in multicultural Romanian university classrooms. The intervention seems to promote (1) heightened pragmatic sensitivity and language awareness focused on appropriateness, (2) more sophisticated intercultural perspective-taking, and (3) an enhanced ability to link professional English communication with ethical contemplation and global civic duty. The study does not assert definitive causal proof due to quasi-experimental limitations; however, the converging evidence from various instruments suggests that the approach is pedagogically significant and warrants broader implementation and additional research utilising larger samples and more rigorous measurement designs.

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate the pedagogical possibilities of incorporating global citizenship education (GCE) and cross-cultural communication into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training within the framework of Romanian higher education. The research, conducted within the multicultural academic setting of the Romanian-American University, addressed the growing acknowledgement that English language instruction must extend beyond merely enhancing grammatical precision and specialised vocabulary. Instead, it must address the social, ethical, and multicultural dynamics that influence modern professional and academic communication.

The results of the classroom-based quasi-experimental intervention indicate that integrating global citizenship topics into EFL training can significantly enhance students' intercultural communicative growth. Both the experimental and control groups showed improvement in expected ESP-related skills over the semester. However, the group that was taught using a cross-cultural, citizenship-focused approach made even more progress in areas that are usually not covered well in traditional language classes. These encompassed heightened pragmatic awareness, augmented confidence in navigating multicultural interactions, and an improved capacity for critical reflection on communication methods in global professional settings.

One of the most important results of the intervention was that students' ideas about what it meant to use language well changed. Instead of only seeing competency as being right or fluent, students in the experimental group started to see good communication as being acceptable, relationally sensitive, and ethically responsible. This rethinking is especially crucial in situations where English is the lingua franca, as you can't assume that everyone shares the same native-speaker norms and communication effectiveness depends on negotiation, adaptation, and mutual understanding. In this regard, the findings corroborate theoretical assertions that international communicative competence and global citizenship are not ancillary components of language education, but rather essential facets of communicative efficacy in a globalised context.

The qualitative data suggests that prolonged involvement in cross-cultural activities and reflective practices might diminish dependence on oversimplified cultural generalisations and promote a more nuanced, contextually aware understanding of communication behaviour. Students exhibited an increasing understanding that cultural significance is influenced not just by national or ethnic heritage, but also by contextual factors like institutional roles, power dynamics, professional norms, and communication aim. This analytical perspective corresponds with recognised frameworks of intercultural learning that prioritise interpretation, comparison, and critical cultural awareness as fundamental educational objectives (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Importantly, the incorporation of global citizenship issues allowed English to serve as a conduit for ethical and civic contemplation, rather than only as a technical proficiency. By talking about global case scenarios and professional problems, students utilised English to talk about ideals like justice, responsibility, inclusivity, and accountability. This research supports the idea that language courses, especially those with students from many countries and cultures, are great places to help students create globally responsible professional identities. In this regard, English language instruction enhances not just communicative skills but also the overarching educational objective of higher education in equipping graduates for socially responsible engagement in global systems.

From an educational point of view, the study shows how important the English language teacher is in multicultural college environments. When teachers participate as facilitators of conversation and thought instead of just passing on language skills, the classroom becomes more open, conversational, and intellectually stimulating. The intervention shows that teaching global citizenship doesn't mean giving up on the main goals of ESP. Instead, it means putting kids in communication circumstances that are more like how things really are in the world. Grammar, vocabulary, and genre norms are still important, but they are used to help people communicate in a way that makes sense in their social context.

The findings have institutional ramifications for curriculum creation and educator training in Romanian higher education. As universities put more and more emphasis on internationalisation, employability, and cross-disciplinary skills, ELT courses should include intercultural and global citizenship results along with language goals. Teacher education and professional development programs should also give EFL teachers the conceptual and methodological tools they need to deal with cultural diversity, ethical communication, and reflective learning in their classrooms. Such measures will bring Romanian ELT more in line with European and worldwide educational systems that put global citizenship at the top of their list of educational goals.

There are certain problems with the study that need to be acknowledged. The quasi-experimental approach, dependence on intact groups, and rather small sample size constrain the generalisability of the results. Furthermore, assessments of intercultural awareness and global citizenship inherently depend on self-reporting and qualitative analysis, which may be swayed by increased awareness rather than genuine behavioural modification. Subsequent research may expand upon this preliminary work by utilising longitudinal methodologies, bigger and more heterogeneous samples, and more nuanced evaluation tools, such as discourse analysis of learner interactions or performance-based metrics of pragmatic competence.

Despite these limitations, the study provides empirically substantiated evidence for the incorporation of global citizenship education into English language instruction within Romanian university settings. It shows that using a cross-cultural approach to

EFL may make English instruction more useful for both communication and learning, especially in programs that get students ready for foreign work contexts. Teaching English for global citizenship is not just an extra activity; it is a pedagogically sound and socially meaningful way to respond to the changing role of English in higher education.

In conclusion, framing English as a medium for global citizenship allows educators to convert language classrooms into arenas where linguistic advancement, intercultural comprehension, and moral contemplation converge. For Romanian higher education, adopting this method offers a chance to synchronise English language instruction with the reality of global communication and the overarching educational objective of fostering educated, reflective, and responsible global citizens.

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Propuestas de estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje dirigidas a los estudiantes extranjeros

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Abstract

La educación como derecho social en el que se promueve el aprendizaje a los estudiantes de todos los países, podría proporcionar una atención y un apoyo suficientes, si se van aplicando políticas inclusivas al aprendizaje lingüístico. En este sentido, existen distintas propuestas de estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje pues, las propuestas dedicadas a los estudiantes extranjeros, es decir, estrategias seleccionadas de intervención lingüística para facilitar su comprensión y su progreso. En el ámbito de enseñanza-aprendizaje, abarcar las necesidades educativas para resolver las dificultades de comprensión de los estudiantes extranjeros es una condición obligatoria que siempre se verá asegurada por la integración. Es fundamental resolver primeramente las necesidades educativas en favor de la inclusión, ya que, las limitaciones de los estudiantes extranjeros en el contexto educativo son, en un principio, por el desconocimiento del idioma, y de esta forma, atender sus necesidades, ya implica facilitar todas sus disponibilidades de aprender y proporcionarles apoyo en el aprendizaje del lenguaje, con la intención de inclusión. Una técnica clave en resolver estas necesidades educativas, supone el empleo constante de ciertas estrategias de aprendizaje lingüístico que, por ejemplo, yo, como profesora, desarrollo de la mejor manera posible, con el propósito de facilitarles a los estudiantes extranjeros la posibilidad de aprender.

Keywords

aprendizaje lingüístico, dificultades de comprensión, educación intercultural, estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje, estudiantes extranjeros, inclusión educativa, integración, internacionalización.

1. Introducción

La internacionalización de la educación superior ha incrementado de manera significativa la movilidad estudiantil, generando pues, aulas cada vez más diversas desde el punto de vista cultural, lingüístico y académico. En este contexto, los estudiantes extranjeros enfrentan múltiples desafíos relacionados con el idioma, los estilos de aprendizaje, las metodologías docentes y los procesos de integración sociocultural. Mi artículo tiene como objetivo proponer un conjunto de estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje que ofrezcan respuestas a la mayoría de las necesidades específicas de los estudiantes extranjeros en el ámbito universitario. A partir de una revisión teórica y del análisis de experiencias educativas inclusivas, se plantean

estrategias pedagógicas basadas en el enfoque intercultural, el aprendizaje activo, el acompañamiento académico y el uso de tecnologías educativas, ya que una implementación sistemática de estas estrategias siempre se necesita y favorece no solamente el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes extranjeros, sino también la calidad educativa y la convivencia intercultural en las instituciones de educación superior.

2. Propuestas de estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje dirigidas a los estudiantes extranjeros

En las últimas décadas, la educación superior ha experimentado un proceso acelerado de internacionalización, que abre camino al aumento de programas de movilidad académica, y a la migración de los estudiantes extranjeros; esta nueva realidad ha transformado totalmente la simbolística de las aulas universitarias, convirtiéndolas en espacios multiculturales y multilingües. Si bien la movilidad estudiantil representa una oportunidad para el enriquecimiento académico y cultural, también plantea desafíos importantes para los sistemas educativos, sobre todo porque generalmente, los estudiantes extranjeros suelen enfrentarse a ciertas barreras lingüísticas, diferencias en los métodos de enseñanza, dificultades de adaptación cultural y limitaciones en el acceso a redes de apoyo académico y social. En este nuevo contexto, resulta imprescindible que yo, como profesora, junto con las instituciones, desarrollemos estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje específicas que respondan a esta diversidad. El objetivo de mi investigación es proponer estrategias pedagógicas orientadas a mejorar procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje dirigidos a los estudiantes extranjeros, promoviendo, de esta forma, la inclusión, la equidad y el éxito académico. En lo que concierne la diversidad educativa, todos los estudiantes extranjeros constituyen pues, un grupo particular, heterogéneo y distinto por la lengua materna, generando antecedentes culturales, experiencias educativas previas y expectativas académicas. ”Según la literatura especializada, estas diferencias influyen de manera directa en los estilos de aprendizaje, en la participación en clase y en el desempeño académico. Además, la educación intercultural plantea la necesidad de reconocer y valorar esta diversidad, evitando los enfoques homogeneizadores” (Banks 2015: 23). Se van a promover prácticas pedagógicas flexibles que faciliten la integración académica y social de todos los estudiantes. Es que los estudiantes extranjeros constituyen un grupo cada vez más numeroso y diverso dentro de las instituciones de educación superior, como resultado directo de los procesos de internacionalización académica y movilidad estudiantil. Esta categoría no puede percibirse como si fuera un grupo homogéneo, ya que engloba a personas con diferentes lenguas maternas, contextos socioculturales, trayectorias educativas, expectativas académicas y niveles de competencia lingüística. La diversidad educativa asociada a los grupos de estudiantes extranjeros se manifiesta en múltiples dimensiones. En primer lugar, la dimensión

lingüística representa uno de los principales retos, dado que muchos estudiantes realizan sus estudios en una lengua distinta a la materna. Esta situación podría afectar la comprensión de los contenidos, también la participación en clase, la producción escrita académica y el rendimiento en los sistemas de evaluación tradicional. En segundo lugar, se identifican diferencias en los estilos de aprendizaje y en las experiencias educativas previas. Algunos sistemas educativos de origen podrían privilegiar metodologías centradas en la memorización, la autoridad del profesor o la evaluación final, mientras que otros fomentan el pensamiento crítico, el trabajo colaborativo y claro, la evaluación continua. Estas discrepancias podrían generar dificultades de adaptación y malentendidos académicos si no son reconocidas por el profesorado. Asimismo, una dimensión cultural sí puede influir de manera significativa en las interacciones dentro del aula. ”Normas implícitas relacionadas con la comunicación, la gestión del tiempo, la participación oral, el trabajo en grupo o la relación profesor-estudiante varían según el contexto cultural. La falta de familiaridad con estas normas puede provocar sentimientos de inseguridad, aislamiento o exclusión en los estudiantes extranjeros” (Deardorff 2006: 51). Desde la perspectiva de la diversidad educativa, resulta fundamental adoptar un enfoque inclusivo que reconozca estas diferencias no como déficits, sino como recursos pedagógicos. La presencia de estudiantes extranjeros ofrece oportunidades para enriquecer el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje mediante el intercambio intercultural, la ampliación de perspectivas y el desarrollo de competencias globales en todos los estudiantes. En este sentido, las instituciones de educación superior deberían diseñar políticas y prácticas educativas que atiendan a la diversidad, promoviendo la equidad, la flexibilidad curricular y el apoyo académico. Reconocer la complejidad de los estudiantes extranjeros y su aporte a la comunidad universitaria constituye un paso esencial hacia una educación superior más inclusiva y de mayor calidad.

La inclusión educativa se concibe como un principio fundamental de los sistemas educativos contemporáneos, principio orientado a garantizar el acceso, la participación y el éxito académico de todos los estudiantes, independientemente de sus características personales, culturales, lingüísticas o sociales. En el contexto de la educación superior, la inclusión adquiere una relevancia particular ante el aumento de estudiantes extranjeros y la diversidad que estos aportan al entorno universitario. Partiendo desde esta perspectiva, la inclusión educativa implica superar modelos pedagógicos uniformes y también adoptar enfoques flexibles que respondan a las necesidades específicas de una población estudiantil heterogénea. En el caso de los estudiantes extranjeros, las barreras para la inclusión pueden manifestarse en dificultades lingüísticas, diferencias en los estilos de aprendizaje, desconocimiento de ciertas normas académicas y de limitaciones en la integración sociocultural. La ausencia de varias estrategias inclusivas, podría derivar en bajo rendimiento académico, desmotivación y abandono de los estudios. Pero es que la educación

inclusiva no se limita solamente a la implementación de medidas compensatorias, sino que promueve una transformación estructural de las prácticas docentes y de la cultura institucional, lo que supone currículos flexibles, la diversificación de metodologías de enseñanza-aprendizaje, la adaptación de los sistemas de evaluación y la creación de entornos de aprendizaje accesibles y respetuosos de la diversidad. Asimismo, la inclusión educativa se sustenta en el enfoque intercultural, que reconoce el valor de la diversidad cultural y fomenta el diálogo entre diferentes perspectivas. Y es así como las aulas se configuran en un espacio de aprendizaje mutuo, donde las experiencias de los estudiantes extranjeros contribuyen al desarrollo de competencias interculturales y globales en toda la comunidad académica. Una inclusión educativa requiere compromiso institucional y la formación continua del profesorado en temas de diversidad, equidad e interculturalidad porque solo mediante políticas educativas integrales y prácticas pedagógicas inclusivas es posible garantizar una educación superior de calidad, equitativa y socialmente responsable, capaz de responder a los desafíos de la internacionalización y la movilidad estudiantil (UNESCO 2020: 42). La integración de los estudiantes extranjeros en la educación superior constituye un proceso complejo y multidimensional que abarca aspectos académicos, sociales, culturales y emocionales. A diferencia de la inclusión educativa, que se centra en la adaptación del sistema a la diversidad del alumnado, la integración hace referencia al proceso mediante el cual los estudiantes extranjeros se incorporan activamente a la vida académica y social de la institución.

El concepto actual de integración académica implica la comprensión de las normas y expectativas del sistema educativo de acogida, el dominio progresivo de la lengua de instrucción y la adaptación a los métodos de enseñanza y evaluación. La falta de orientación inicial y de apoyo continuo puede dificultar este proceso, generando inseguridad, bajo rendimiento académico y sentimientos de exclusión. Por otra parte, la integración social y cultural es un factor determinante para el bienestar y la permanencia de los estudiantes extranjeros dentro de la institución. La creación de vínculos con compañeros, profesores y personal administrativo favorece el sentido de pertenencia y contribuye a la construcción de una identidad académica positiva. Sin embargo, ciertas barreras culturales, algunos estereotipos y la limitada interacción intercultural podrían obstaculizar este proceso. Y es que, desde una perspectiva pedagógica, la integración no debería concebirse como una responsabilidad exclusiva del estudiante extranjero, sino como si fuera un proceso compartido que involucra a toda la comunidad universitaria. Las instituciones de educación superior desempeñan un papel clave mediante el diseño de programas de acogida, tutorías, actividades interculturales, espacios de participación que facilitan la interacción y el aprendizaje mutuo. En este sentido, la integración efectiva de los estudiantes extranjeros contribuye no solo a su éxito académico y personal, sino también al enriquecimiento cultural del entorno universitario. Promover prácticas educativas que favorezcan la integración

permite la consolidación de la educación superior inclusiva, equitativa, coherente con principios de internacionalización. La diversidad educativa abarca un conjunto amplio de diferencias individuales y colectivas relacionadas con los aspectos culturales, aspectos lingüísticos, aspectos sociales, aspectos académicos y aspectos cognitivos, que influyen directamente en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, constituyendo una característica inherente de sistemas educativos contemporáneos, ”manifestándose de manera especialmente visible en el contexto de la educación superior internacionalizada, ya que cualquier proceso de internacionalización, se caracteriza por el aumento de programas de movilidad académica, convenios interuniversitarios y la atracción de estudiantes extranjeros” (UNESCO 2017: 29). En el ámbito universitario, la diversidad educativa se intensifica con la presencia de estudiantes extranjeros, quienes aportan distintas trayectorias formativas, estilos de aprendizaje y varias formas de interacción académica. Estas diferencias podrían generar ciertos desafíos para el profesorado y para las instituciones si se mantienen enfoques pedagógicos homogéneos que no contemplen la pluralidad del alumnado. Desde una perspectiva pedagógica, reconocer la diversidad educativa implica abandonar concepciones deficitarias del aprendizaje y asumir que las diferencias no representan obstáculos, sino varias oportunidades para enriquecer la experiencia educativa. La diversidad favorece el intercambio de saberes, el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico y la adquisición de competencias interculturales esenciales en un mundo globalizado. Sin embargo, una diversidad educativa también exige una implementación de estrategias didácticas flexibles y adaptativas. Esto incluye la diversificación de metodologías, la adaptación de materiales y evaluaciones, así como la creación de entornos de aprendizaje inclusivos que promuevan la participación equitativa de todos los estudiantes. La atención a la diversidad supone, además, una reflexión continua sobre las prácticas docentes y los supuestos culturales que las sustentan. La diversidad educativa no debe entenderse como una condición excepcional, sino como un elemento estructural del proceso educativo. Gestionarla de manera adecuada permite avanzar hacia los modelos de la educación superior, más justos e inclusivos, capaces de responder a las demandas de la internacionalización y de la movilidad estudiantil. ”La internacionalización de la educación superior se fue consolidando como un proceso estratégico fundamental en el contexto de la globalización, orientado a la integración de una dimensión internacional, intercultural y global en las funciones sustantivas de las instituciones universitarias” (Knight 2008: 34). Este fenómeno se manifiesta a través de movilidades académicas, a través de programas de intercambio, a través de la cooperación interinstitucional y a través de la internacionalización del currículo. La presencia creciente de estudiantes extranjeros en las universidades constituye uno de los indicadores más visibles de la internacionalización. Si bien este proceso ofrece oportunidades significativas para el enriquecimiento académico y cultural, también plantea desafíos relacionados con la gestión de la diversidad, la equidad en el acceso a los recursos educativos y la

adaptación de las prácticas pedagógicas. Desde una perspectiva educativa, la internacionalización no debería limitarse a un enfoque cuantitativo centrado, por ejemplo, en aumento del número de estudiantes internacionales, sino que debería concebirse como un proceso que promueva inclusión, integración y aprendizaje intercultural. Entonces, resulta imprescindible desarrollar muchas más estrategias institucionales que acompañen a estudiantes extranjeros durante su trayectoria académica, garantizando condiciones de igualdad y participación plena. Asimismo, la internacionalización del currículo desempeña un papel clave en la atención a la diversidad educativa. La incorporación de contenidos con perspectivas internacionales, el uso de metodologías comparativas y el fomento del trabajo colaborativo intercultural contribuyen al desarrollo de las competencias globales tanto en estudiantes locales como también en extranjeros. La internacionalización de la educación superior representa un proceso complejo que exige un compromiso institucional sostenido. Su éxito depende de la capacidad de las universidades para articular políticas inclusivas, prácticas pedagógicas interculturales y mecanismos de apoyo que respondan a las necesidades de una comunidad académica cada vez más diversa y globalizada. El enfoque intercultural en la educación se basa en el diálogo entre culturas, el respeto mutuo y la construcción de aprendizajes compartidos y, en el contexto universitario, tal enfoque implica adaptar contenidos, metodologías y evaluaciones, así como fomentar una comunicación abierta entre docentes y estudiantes. Y desde esta perspectiva, yo, como profesora, asumo un rol de mediador cultural, facilitando la comprensión de normas académicas implícitas y promoviendo un clima de aula inclusivo. El enfoque intercultural en la enseñanza constituye una respuesta pedagógica fundamental ante la creciente diversidad cultural y lingüística presente en las instituciones de educación superior. El enfoque se basa en el reconocimiento, el respeto y la valoración de las diferencias culturales vistas como elementos enriquecedores del proceso educativo, promoviendo la equidad, el diálogo y la convivencia entre los estudiantes de distintos orígenes. Desde una perspectiva intercultural, la enseñanza no se limita a la transmisión de contenidos académicos, sino que implica la creación de espacios de aprendizaje donde se favorezca la interacción entre culturas y la construcción compartida del conocimiento. En este sentido, el ambiente universitario se percibe como un entorno dinámico en el que varias y distintas experiencias, saberes y perspectivas de los estudiantes extranjeros y locales vayan contribuyendo al desarrollo de aprendizajes significativos.

El enfoque intercultural exige una revisión crítica de las prácticas profesorales tradicionales, particularmente aquellas que asumen implícitamente un modelo cultural dominante. La adaptación de metodologías, materiales y estrategias de evaluación resulta esencial para garantizar la participación equitativa de todos los estudiantes. Así, se requiere una comunicación clara y contextualizada, que vaya facilitando la comprensión de normas académicas y reduzca posibles malentendidos culturales. En

este sentido, mi papel, como profesora, es central en la implementación del enfoque intercultural. ”El profesorado actúa como mediador cultural, promoviendo el respeto mutuo, previniendo situaciones de discriminación y fomentando el pensamiento crítico frente a estereotipos y prejuicios. Para ello, es necesaria una formación continua en competencias interculturales y en didácticas inclusivas” (Zabalza 2011: 64). El enfoque intercultural en la enseñanza contribuye de manera significativa a la integración académica y social de todos los estudiantes extranjeros, fortaleciendo la calidad educativa y preparando a todos los estudiantes para desenvolverse en contextos profesionales y sociales globalizados. Mi investigación adopta una metodología basada en la revisión y el análisis de estudios académicos relacionados con la enseñanza a estudiantes extranjeros, la educación intercultural y varias estrategias didácticas inclusivas. Asimismo, se consideran experiencias documentadas en instituciones de educación superior que han implementado programas de apoyo académico para estudiantes internacionales. Desde el punto de vista de las estrategias lingüísticas, está claro que, una de las principales dificultades de los estudiantes extranjeros es el dominio insuficiente de la lengua de instrucción y en este sentido, las propuestas son: el uso de un lenguaje claro y accesible en las clases; la explicación explícita de términos técnicos/ académicos; el apoyo con materiales bilingües o glosarios especializados; la integración de actividades que desarrollen competencias académicas en la lengua meta. En cuanto a las estrategias metodológicas, se puede decir que el aprendizaje activo resulta especialmente beneficioso para todos los estudiantes extranjeros y entre las estrategias recomendadas se incluyen: el aprendizaje cooperativo en grupos multiculturales; el uso de estudios de caso y proyectos colaborativos; la combinación de clases magistrales con actividades prácticas; la retroalimentación constante y formativa. Estas metodologías favorecen la participación, reducen la ansiedad académica y facilitan la comprensión de los contenidos. En lo que se refiere a las estrategias de acompañamiento académico, es obvio que el acompañamiento personalizado resulta ser la clave para el éxito académico de los estudiantes extranjeros y las propuestas son: programas de tutoría académica; mentorías entre pares; la orientación hacia las normas académicas y sistemas de evaluación; el seguimiento continuo del progreso académico. El empleo de las tecnologías educativas es también sumamente importante, ya que las tecnologías digitales ofrecen múltiples posibilidades para apoyar el aprendizaje. Mis recomendaciones: el uso de plataformas virtuales con recursos accesibles; la grabación de las clases para revisiones posteriores; loa foros de discusión en línea; las herramientas digitales colaborativas. Estas estrategias permiten flexibilizar el aprendizaje y atender diferentes ritmos y estilos. Las estrategias propuestas basadas en diálogos y discursos evidencian la necesidad de un enfoque integral que considere tanto los aspectos académicos como los socioculturales del aprendizaje de los estudiantes extranjeros. La inclusión de prácticas interculturales no solamente beneficia

al grupo, sino que contribuye al desarrollo de competencias interculturales en la comunidad educativa. Asimismo, la formación pedagógica del profesorado en temas de diversidad cultural y enseñanza inclusiva se presenta como elemento fundamental para la implementación efectiva de estas estrategias.

3. Conclusiones

La presencia de estudiantes extranjeros en la educación superior representa un desafío y una oportunidad para mejorar la calidad educativa. La adopción de estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje adaptadas a sus necesidades favorece la inclusión, el rendimiento académico y la convivencia intercultural. Pienso que las instituciones universitarias deben promover políticas y prácticas pedagógicas orientadas hacia la diversidad, integrando los enfoques interculturales, las metodologías activas, los sistemas de apoyo académico sostenidos. El boom de la internacionalización en el contexto de la educación superior ha cambiado del todo los rumbos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, generando aulas caracterizadas por una elevada diversidad cultural, lingüística y académica. En este escenario, la presencia de estudiantes extranjeros plantea desafíos complejos que requieren respuestas pedagógicas y organizativas integrales por parte de las instituciones universitarias. A lo largo de mi investigación se ha puesto de manifiesto que la diversidad educativa no debe ser percibida como una dificultad, sino como una oportunidad para enriquecer los procesos formativos y promover el desarrollo de competencias interculturales. La inclusión educative, la integración de los estudiantes extranjeros dependen, en gran medida, de la capacidad del sistema educativo para adaptarse a las características y a las necesidades de un alumnado heterogéneo. El enfoque intercultural en la enseñanza se presenta como un elemento clave para favorecer la equidad, la participación activa y el éxito académico de los estudiantes extranjeros. La adopción de metodologías flexibles, estrategias lingüísticas adecuadas, sistemas de acompañamiento academico, empleo de tecnologías educativas contribuyen a crear entornos de aprendizaje más inclusivos y accesibles. Asimismo, se destaca la importancia institucional en lo que concierne una formación continua del profesorado en competencias interculturales e inclusivas, porque solo mediante políticas educativas coherentes y prácticas pedagógicas sostenidas es posible garantizar una educación superior de calidad, socialmente responsable y alineada con los principios de la internacionalización. En conclusión, el diseño e implementación de estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje dirigidas a los estudiantes extranjeros no solo favorecen su integración y rendimiento académico, sino que también fortalecen la calidad y la pertinencia de la educación superior en un contexto globalizado.

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Title in English: ***Proposals for teaching-learning strategies aimed at foreign students***

Abstract in English: *Education as a social right that promotes learning for students in all countries could provide sufficient attention and support if inclusive language learning policies are implemented. In this regard, there are various proposals for teaching and learning strategies, such as those aimed at foreign students, i.e., selected language intervention strategies to facilitate their understanding and progress. In the field of teaching and learning, addressing educational needs to resolve foreign students' comprehension difficulties is a mandatory condition that will always be ensured through integration. It is essential to first address educational needs in favor of inclusion, since the limitations of foreign students in the educational context are, in principle, due to their lack of knowledge of the language. Thus, addressing their needs already implies facilitating all their opportunities to learn and providing them with support in language learning, with the intention of inclusion. A key technique in addressing these educational needs involves the constant use of certain language learning strategies which, for example, I, as a teacher, develop in the best possible way, with the aim of facilitating learning opportunities for foreign students.*

Keywords in English: *language learning, comprehension difficulties, intercultural education, teaching-learning strategies, foreign students, educational inclusion, integration, internationalization*

Global Perspectives on Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Contexts

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Abstract

The increasing mobility of populations, the expansion of international education, and the dominance of global communication networks have transformed classrooms into linguistically and culturally diverse spaces. Multilingualism has become a defining characteristic of contemporary education systems worldwide. This research article explores global perspectives on teaching and learning in multilingual contexts, focusing on theoretical frameworks, pedagogical practices, assessment challenges, and policy implications. Drawing on interdisciplinary research from applied linguistics, education, and sociocultural theory, the article argues that multilingualism should be viewed as a pedagogical resource rather than a problem to be managed. Emphasis is placed on translanguaging, teacher beliefs, learner identity, and inclusive assessment practices. The study concludes by outlining implications for teacher education, curriculum design, and language policy in increasingly diverse educational environments.

Keywords

multilingual education, translanguaging, global education, teacher beliefs, inclusive pedagogy

1. Introduction

Multilingualism has become a defining feature of education systems in the twenty-first century. Driven by globalization, migration, internationalization of higher education, and digital communication, classrooms around the world are characterized by linguistic diversity that challenges traditional monolingual norms (García & Wei, 2014). Learners increasingly use more than one language in their daily lives, yet educational institutions often remain structured around a single dominant language of instruction.

Teaching and learning in multilingual contexts involve more than language proficiency issues; they encompass identity construction, power relations, access to knowledge, and educational equity (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Research indicates that when learners' linguistic resources are ignored or suppressed, academic achievement and engagement may be negatively affected (Cummins, 2000). Conversely, pedagogical approaches that value multilingualism contribute to cognitive development, metalinguistic awareness, and academic success.

This article examines ***global perspectives on multilingual education***, addressing how different regions conceptualize and implement multilingual teaching and learning. It explores key theoretical models, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and

policy frameworks, highlighting the need for inclusive and context-sensitive approaches. The central argument is that multilingualism should be recognized as a ***dynamic and valuable resource*** for learning rather than a barrier.

2. Conceptualizing Multilingualism in Education

1.1 From Monolingual Ideologies to Plurilingual Realities

Traditional education systems have largely been shaped by monolingual ideologies, often linked to nation-building and standard language policies (Shohamy, 2006). Such ideologies promote the idea that effective learning occurs only through the exclusive use of the dominant or official language.

However, contemporary research challenges this assumption, emphasizing that multilingual learners do not operate with separate linguistic systems but rather with integrated linguistic repertoires (Canagarajah, 2011). The concept of plurilingualism, promoted by the Council of Europe (2001), highlights the flexible and dynamic use of multiple languages depending on context and purpose.

2.2 Linguistic Repertoires and Identity

Language use in multilingual contexts is closely tied to identity construction. Learners negotiate their social identities through language choices, code-switching, and participation in classroom discourse (Duff, 2012). When schools legitimize only one language, learners' identities and cultural backgrounds may be marginalized.

Recognizing students' full linguistic repertoires contributes to a sense of belonging and academic confidence. Studies show that learners who feel their languages are valued are more likely to engage actively and take risks in learning (Norton, 2013).

3. Frameworks for Multilingual Teaching and Learning

3.1 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory, rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) work, views learning as a socially mediated process. Language functions as a primary tool for meaning-making and cognitive development. In multilingual contexts, learners use multiple languages as mediational tools to construct understanding.

This framework supports pedagogical practices such as collaborative learning, scaffolding, and dialogic interaction, all of which are particularly effective in linguistically diverse classrooms (Gibbons, 2002).

3.2 Translanguaging Theory

Translanguaging has emerged as a key theoretical and pedagogical concept in multilingual education. García and Wei (2014) define translanguaging as the strategic use of a learner's entire linguistic repertoire to make meaning, learn, and communicate.

Unlike traditional bilingual education models that separate languages, translanguaging challenges rigid language boundaries and promotes linguistic

flexibility. Empirical studies demonstrate that translanguaging practices enhance comprehension, academic literacy, and learner agency (Creese & Blackledge, 2015).

4. Teaching Practices in Multilingual Classrooms

4.1 Teacher Beliefs and Language Ideologies

Teachers' beliefs about language significantly shape classroom practices. Research indicates that educators who hold deficit views of multilingualism tend to restrict language use, whereas those with asset-based perspectives encourage linguistic diversity (King & Fogle, 2006).

Teacher education programs play a crucial role in addressing language ideologies. Reflective practice, critical language awareness, and exposure to multilingual pedagogies are essential components of effective professional development.

4.2 Pedagogical Strategies

Effective teaching in multilingual contexts involves a range of strategies, including:

- *Scaffolding:* Gradual support through visuals, modeling, and guided interaction (Gibbons, 2002).
- *Collaborative Learning:* Peer interaction that facilitates language development and content learning.
- *Funds of Knowledge:* Integrating learners' home and community experiences into instruction (Moll et al., 1992).
- *Multimodal Teaching:* Using images, gestures, digital tools, and oral interaction to support comprehension.

These strategies enable learners to access complex academic content while developing language proficiency.

5. Learning Processes and Student Outcomes

Understanding how multilingualism shapes learning processes and student outcomes is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of multilingual education. Research in applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, and education suggests that multilingual learners engage with knowledge in ways that differ from monolingual learners, drawing on complex linguistic and cognitive resources. When educational environments recognize and support these resources, multilingualism can have a positive impact on both academic achievement and learner development.

5.1 Cognitive and Academic Benefits

A substantial body of research associates multilingualism with enhanced cognitive flexibility, improved problem-solving abilities, and heightened metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2001). Multilingual learners frequently engage in processes of language selection, comparison, and negotiation, which strengthen executive control

functions and support higher order thinking skills. These cognitive advantages are particularly relevant in educational settings that encourage active language use and critical engagement with content.

In academic contexts, students who are permitted to draw on multiple languages often demonstrate deeper conceptual understanding, particularly when engaging with abstract or complex subject matter. The use of multiple languages can facilitate meaning-making, enable connections between prior knowledge and new information, and support the development of academic literacy. Research indicates that restricting learners to a single language of instruction may limit their ability to fully articulate understanding, whereas multilingual approaches can lead to improved academic outcomes across subject areas.

5.2 Affective Dimensions of Learning

Beyond cognitive outcomes, the affective dimensions of learning play a crucial role in multilingual educational contexts. Learning through a second or additional language can generate anxiety, insecurity, and reduced participation, particularly when learners fear negative evaluation or linguistic error. Such affective barriers may hinder academic performance and limit opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Inclusive multilingual practices contribute to the reduction of these barriers by creating supportive learning environments in which students' linguistic identities are recognized and valued. When learners perceive their languages as legitimate resources for learning, they are more likely to participate actively, take intellectual risks, and engage in collaborative interaction. As Cummins (2000) argues, the affirmation of learners' linguistic and cultural identities fosters motivation, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging, all of which are essential for sustained academic engagement.

Furthermore, positive affective experiences in multilingual classrooms support long-term educational trajectories by promoting learner autonomy and resilience. By integrating cognitive and affective considerations, multilingual pedagogy contributes to more holistic and equitable educational outcomes.

6. Assessment in Multilingual Contexts

Assessment remains one of the most challenging and contested aspects of multilingual education. Traditional assessment models are often grounded in monolingual assumptions and fail to account for the complex linguistic realities of multilingual learners. As a result, standardized tests frequently **conflate language proficiency with content knowledge**, producing biased outcomes that may underestimate students' actual academic abilities (Abedi, 2004). When learners are assessed exclusively through a dominant language, difficulties in linguistic expression can be misinterpreted as a lack of conceptual understanding.

In multilingual classrooms, assessment practices play a crucial role in either reinforcing or challenging educational inequalities. Inappropriate assessment can

marginalize students from linguistically diverse backgrounds and limit their access to academic opportunities. Consequently, researchers emphasize the need for assessment approaches that are sensitive to linguistic diversity and aligned with inclusive pedagogical goals.

6.1 Alternative and Formative Assessment

In response to the limitations of standardized testing, scholars advocate for the use of **alternative and formative assessment practices** that provide a more comprehensive and equitable evaluation of learners' knowledge and skills (Shohamy, 2001). Formative assessment emphasizes ongoing feedback, learning processes, and student progress rather than solely summative outcomes.

Performance-based assessment methods, such as portfolios, project work, reflective journals, and oral presentations, allow learners to demonstrate understanding through multiple modes and, where appropriate, multiple languages. These approaches acknowledge that multilingual learners may conceptualize knowledge more effectively than they are able to express it in a single target language. Moreover, formative assessment supports learner autonomy and encourages metacognitive awareness, contributing to deeper learning and sustained academic development.

6.2 Language-Aware Assessment Practices

Language-aware assessment practices recognize the central role of language in learning while avoiding the penalization of students for non-standard or emerging language use when assessing content knowledge. Such practices involve explicit consideration of linguistic demands in assessment tasks and the strategic separation of language proficiency from subject-matter understanding.

Researchers argue that language-aware assessment contributes to greater educational equity by making evaluation criteria transparent and by offering appropriate scaffolding and accommodation for multilingual learners. Examples include the use of glossaries, extended time, simplified task instructions, or opportunities for oral explanation. By aligning assessment with multilingual pedagogical principles, educators can create fairer evaluation systems that reflect students' true academic potential and support inclusive learning environments.

7. Global Perspectives and Regional Approaches

7.1 Europe

European education policies increasingly promote multilingualism as a core competence. Programs supporting minority and regional languages illustrate the potential of policy-driven multilingual education (Council of Europe, 2001).

7.2 North America

In the United States and Canada, dual-language and immersion programs aim to develop bilingual proficiency and academic achievement. Longitudinal studies show

positive outcomes for students enrolled in well-implemented bilingual programs (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

7.3 Africa and Asia

In multilingual societies across Africa and Asia, language-of-instruction policies remain contested. Research highlights the benefits of mother-tongue-based education in early schooling, particularly for literacy development and access to education (Heugh, 2011).

8. Implications for Teacher Education and Policy

The increasing linguistic diversity of contemporary classrooms places new demands on both teacher education and educational policy. Preparing educators to work effectively in multilingual contexts requires a shift away from monolingual training models toward programs that explicitly address linguistic diversity as a central component of teaching competence. Teacher education must therefore equip future and in-service teachers with a solid understanding of multilingual pedagogies, language development processes, and inclusive assessment practices.

A critical component of teacher preparation is the development of **assessment literacy** in multilingual settings. Teachers need to be able to design, interpret, and adapt assessment tools in ways that distinguish between language proficiency and subject-matter knowledge. This involves training in formative and language-aware assessment practices, as well as the ability to critically evaluate standardized testing instruments. Without such preparation, even well-intentioned educators may inadvertently reproduce inequitable assessment practices.

Equally important is the role of **critical reflection on language ideologies**. Teacher education programs should encourage educators to examine their own beliefs about language, multilingualism, and learner identity. Research shows that teachers' implicit language ideologies strongly influence classroom interaction, instructional choices, and expectations of learners. By fostering critical language awareness, teacher education can promote asset-based perspectives that recognize multilingualism as a pedagogical resource rather than a deficit.

At the policy level, supportive and coherent language frameworks are essential for the successful implementation of multilingual education. Educational policies should move beyond symbolic recognition of linguistic diversity and provide concrete guidelines for flexible language use in classrooms. This includes legitimizing multilingual pedagogical practices, such as translanguaging, and ensuring that curricula allow space for linguistic flexibility without penalizing teachers or learners.

Investment in continuous professional development is another key policy implication. Teachers working in multilingual contexts require sustained institutional support, access to resources, and opportunities for collaborative learning. Policy initiatives should therefore prioritize funding for teacher training programs, the

development of multilingual teaching materials, and research-informed innovation in language education.

Finally, sustainable multilingual education depends on **alignment between policy, practice, and research**. Policies that are disconnected from classroom realities often remain ineffective. Involving local communities, families, and stakeholders in educational decision-making can enhance the relevance and legitimacy of language policies. When teacher education, educational practice, and policy development are aligned, multilingual education can contribute not only to improved academic outcomes but also to social inclusion and linguistic justice.

9. Conclusions

Teaching and learning in multilingual contexts constitute one of the most significant challenges—and opportunities—facing contemporary education systems. As linguistic diversity becomes an increasingly permanent feature of classrooms worldwide, traditional monolingual models of education prove insufficient for addressing the needs of diverse learners. Research reviewed in this article highlights that multilingualism, when approached through inclusive and flexible pedagogical frameworks, can function as a powerful resource for learning rather than an obstacle to academic achievement.

Global evidence demonstrates that pedagogical approaches which validate learners' linguistic repertoires contribute to improved academic outcomes, enhanced cognitive development, and stronger learner engagement. Practices such as translanguaging, formative assessment, and culturally responsive teaching support not only language development but also identity affirmation and social inclusion. These findings underscore the importance of moving beyond deficit-oriented perspectives and toward asset-based models that recognize linguistic diversity as integral to educational success.

The article further emphasizes that effective multilingual education cannot be achieved through classroom practice alone. Sustainable progress depends on the alignment of teacher education, assessment practices, and language policy. Teachers must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and critical awareness necessary to navigate multilingual environments, while educational policies must provide the structural support required for flexible and equitable language use. Research-informed decision-making and ongoing professional development are essential components of this process.

In conclusion, embracing multilingualism as a central dimension of educational quality and equity represents both a pedagogical and ethical imperative. As education systems continue to evolve in response to global mobility and intercultural contact, adopting inclusive, research-based approaches to multilingual teaching and learning

will be crucial for ensuring that all learners are afforded meaningful and equitable opportunities for academic success.

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Language learning in digital contexts: hybrid pedagogy, critical digital literacy, and albanian classroom practices

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital learning environments has reshaped the landscape of language education, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper revisits over fifteen years of experience in teaching French through online, blended, and hybrid modalities, reflecting on the pedagogical questions raised by these transformations. Rather than proposing prescriptive solutions, the paper focuses on how teachers build digital judgment, navigate technological abundance, and support learners in developing critical digital literacy. The discussion is enriched with examples of collaborative tasks, multimodal content creation, and open-resource integration. Particular attention is given to the Albanian context, where the shift toward digitalisation has accelerated through national platforms, EU-funded initiatives, and institutional innovation, yet disparities in access and teacher training remain challenges. Drawing on recent research, the paper argues that meaningful language learning online requires not only tools but pedagogical intentionality, guided autonomy, and a culture of digital citizenship.

Keywords

hybrid pedagogy; digital literacy; collaborative learning; online language education; open digital resource

1. Introduction

When teaching moved online almost overnight during the pandemic, it did more than speed up the adoption of digital tools. It unsettled deeply rooted beliefs about how languages are learned, practiced, and assessed. Activities that had traditionally relied on physical presence—such as spontaneous interaction, group work, and immediate feedback—had to be reimagined in digital form, often with little time for preparation. Platforms that had previously played a supporting or supplementary role suddenly became, for an extended period, the only space in which teaching and learning could occur.

This sudden transition obbliged both teachers and students to consider new roles and expectations. Teachers were required to redesign materials, rethink interaction patterns, and develop new forms of classroom presence, while students had to assume greater responsibility for managing their learning in a less structured environment. In language education in particular, the change highlighted the central role of

communication, social interaction, and affective factors, revealing both the limitations and the unexpected possibilities of digital environments for meaningful language use.

In that period, I often found myself wondering not simply which digital tools might work best for my French-language students, but why certain tools seemed to empower them while others quietly hindered their learning. Over the past fifteen years of teaching French in higher education—frequently in hybrid formats and sometimes fully online—I have kept returning to the same question: *What does meaningful language learning look like when technology mediates every step of the process?* This paper does not pretend to give definitive answers. Instead, it offers reflections shaped by practice, research, and the small, everyday discoveries that occur when teachers observe what students actually do with digital resources. The Albanian context adds an additional layer to this discussion. Our institutions have made important progress in digitalisation, yet teachers still navigate significant disparities in student access, digital readiness, and institutional expectations. These realities have shaped my perspective and, inevitably, the examples shared throughout this text.

2. Digital Pedagogy and Language Learning: Recent Perspectives

Recent research highlights that effective digital pedagogy is less a matter of technological sophistication and more a matter of pedagogical alignment (Martin & Tapp 2020: 112). Teachers today navigate a dynamic ecology of platforms—from LMS systems to social media spaces and collaborative writing tools—each offering distinct opportunities for autonomy, interaction, and multimodality. Scholars emphasise that digital contexts support learner engagement when tasks mirror authentic communication and allow students to co-construct meaning. As Henderson noted "technology becomes powerful when it amplifies voice, not when it merely delivers content" (2019: 64).. The shift toward hybrid models has also encouraged more flexible learning pathways, enabling students to access materials asynchronously while participating synchronously in structured collaborative tasks. In language education, digital environments enhance exposure to input, support output through multimodal tools, and expand opportunities for peer interaction (Godwin-Jones 2022: 9). Yet these benefits depend on teachers' ability to critically select tools, scaffold participation, and help learners manage cognitive load.

3. The Albanian Context: Opportunities and Persistent Asymmetries

Albania's digital transition has been uneven but remarkably dynamic. Universities in Tirana, Elbasan, Shkodër, and Durrës have adopted LMS systems and cloud-based platforms in ways that would have seemed ambitious a decade ago. For instance, in my own faculty, the integration of Google Classroom and institutional Moodle spaces has gradually become standard practice, especially in language departments. At the same time, students' access remains inconsistent. During several

hybrid sessions, I observed students switching off their cameras not out of disengagement but because their rural broadband connections could not support stable video. In speaking tasks, delays of even one or two seconds noticeably affected interaction patterns, often leading to interruptions or loss of confidence. These challenges are rarely captured in official reports, yet they shape the texture of classroom life.

Despite these obstacles, Albanian students generally demonstrate good adaptability. They tend to be curious about new tools and quick to experiment with collaborative platforms once expectations are clear. When I asked intermediate-level French students to co-create short digital storyboards using Canva, many took surprising initiative, integrating personal interests, local cultural references, and humour. These moments illustrate that technology, when used as it shoud, can help students find their voice—not merely complete tasks.

4. Digital Literacy and Digital Citizenship in Language Learning

Teaching languages online today involves far more than navigating apps. Learners must evaluate sources, pay attention of misinformation, communicate ethically, and understand the implications of sharing content. Digital literacy, therefore, becomes inseparable from language pedagogy. As Belshaw (2021: 37) argues, digital literacy is "a constellation of practices that involve judgment, participation, and thoughtful engagement."

For language learners, these practices manifest in activities such as selecting credible online resources in the target language, analysing multimodal texts, or collaborating responsibly in digital spaces. Critical digital citizenship adds an ethical dimension. Learners must understand privacy concerns, respect authorship, and negotiate intercultural communication norms. In Albanian classrooms, students often have strong intuitive digital habits but limited formal training in evaluating online sources or understanding licensing. Integrating these themes into language tasks helps cultivate not only linguistic but civic competencies.

5. Examples of Collaborative Tasks Using Open Digital Resources

Below are examples of tasks used in French-language courses, redesigned for hybrid pedagogy and critical digital literacy.

Example 1

Students prepare a weekly "digital press review" using Padlet. They monitor French-language newspapers, choose 2–3 stories they find relevant, summarise them collaboratively, and discuss source reliability. Their selections often spark debates that go beyond language practice.

Example 2

Learners design short multimodal narratives in Canva or Genially, including audio, images, and dialogues. Peer comments are guided by prompts focusing on clarity, creativity, and authentic expressions.

Example 3

Groups create shared Google Docs glossaries for field-specific vocabulary (tourism, business, law). Students include example sentences inspired by real Albanian contexts.

6. Reflections from Classroom Practice in Albania

Hybrid pedagogy in Albania is shaped not only by technological access, but also by long-standing educational traditions, students' learning cultures, and institutional expectations. Classroom practice reveals that hybrid environments do not automatically generate active participation or deep learning; instead, they amplify existing pedagogical dynamics. Through sustained observation and reflective practice in Albanian higher education classrooms—particularly in management and foreign language education—several recurring patterns have emerged, offering valuable insights into how hybrid pedagogy can be meaningfully adapted to the local context.

6.1 The "Silent Observer" Phenomenon and Cultural Dimensions of Participation

One of the most consistent patterns observed in Albanian hybrid classrooms is what may be described as the *"silent observer" phenomenon*. In synchronous online or hybrid sessions, an important proportion of students initially have a passive stance. They attend sessions regularly, complete assigned tasks, and submit written work on time, yet contribute minimally to oral discussions, particularly in breakout rooms or whole-class debates.

This behaviour should not be interpreted simply as disengagement or lack of motivation. In the Albanian educational context, students are often socialised into a teacher-centred model in which speaking without explicit invitation may be perceived as risky or inappropriate. Respect for authority, fear of making linguistic errors (especially in foreign language classes), and concern about peer evaluation all contribute to cautious participation. These patterns align with broader findings on student engagement in blended contexts, where sociocultural norms shape participation behaviours in hybrid settings. Research suggests that interactive activities and clear scaffolding increase engagement in blended environments by signalling expectations and lowering participation barriers.

Hybrid environments can intensify this tendency. The absence of physical cues, combined with the visibility of speaking in front of peers on screen, increases students' anxiety. Some students report feeling more "exposed" online than in face-to-face settings, particularly when sessions are recorded. To address this, assigning **rotating collaborative roles** within breakout rooms has proven to be an effective intervention in

my practice. Roles such as *moderator*, *summariser*, *timekeeper*, and *language monitor* give to students a clear communicative purpose. Importantly, these roles distribute responsibility evenly and reduce the pressure on individual students to initiate discussion spontaneously.

Over time, this structured participation leads to observable changes. Students who initially spoke very little, begin to intervene more confidently, especially when their role legitimises their voice. This confirms that participation in hybrid environments is not merely a matter of personality, but of pedagogical design. Research on blended and hybrid models underscores the importance of deliberate interaction design to enhance student integration and inclusion, particularly in contexts where digital readiness varies.

6.2 Managing Cognitive Overload in Hybrid Learning Environments

Another major challenge in hybrid classrooms is **cognitive overload**, particularly during the early phases of implementation. While digital tools promise efficiency and engagement, their excessive or uncoordinated use can overwhelm students. In several observed classes, the introduction of multiple platforms—learning management systems, collaborative documents, polling tools, discussion forums, and video conferencing features—led students to focus more on *how* to navigate tools than on *what* they were learning.

This issue is particularly pronounced in Albania, where students' prior exposure to educational technologies varies widely. While some students are digitally confident, others—particularly those from rural areas or non-technical backgrounds—require more time to develop digital skills. National-level studies on Albanian students' readiness for digital learning corroborate this variability and highlight psychological and infrastructural challenges that affect engagement.

In response, a **gradual tool-integration strategy** was adopted. Rather than introducing several platforms at once, tools were introduced sequentially, each with a specific pedagogical function. For example, collaborative documents were used exclusively for brainstorming during the first weeks, before being expanded to peer feedback and project drafting. A particularly effective strategy was the introduction of a *"play phase"*. During this phase, students were encouraged to explore a new digital tool through low-stakes, non-graded activities. For instance, students experimented with collaborative whiteboards by creating mind maps about familiar topics. This reduced anxiety and allowed students to develop procedural knowledge organically. Research on digitally mediated collaboration emphasises that such phased and scaffolded introduction of tools supports students' cognitive and social engagement, preventing overload while building confidence.

Interestingly, students often discovered features or uses that had not been explicitly taught. In one management course, students independently used comment functions and colour coding to differentiate ideas during group planning. These

emergent practices demonstrate that allowing exploratory space can lead to deeper engagement and learner autonomy, particularly in hybrid contexts.

6.3 Digital Collaboration as a Catalyst for Reflective Learning

Despite infrastructural constraints, **collaboration remains one of the strongest motivators** in Albanian hybrid classrooms. Students consistently report that digital collaboration offers them more time and psychological space to reflect on their contributions. Unlike spontaneous oral discussion, digital tools allow students to revise their ideas, check language accuracy, and structure their arguments before sharing them publicly. This reflects broader trends in educational research showing that collaborative technologies can strengthen interaction quality and participation when designed intentionally.

This is particularly significant in foreign language education. Many Albanian students experience anxiety when speaking a foreign language in front of others. Asynchronous or semi-synchronous collaboration—such as shared documents or discussion boards—reduces this barrier and encourages more thoughtful participation.

From an observational perspective, the quality of student contributions often improves in hybrid collaborative tasks. Written exchanges tend to be more elaborated, and peer feedback becomes more constructive over time. In management courses, students collaboratively analysed case studies using shared documents, gradually moving from descriptive summaries to more critical evaluations.

What is particularly noteworthy is that these outcomes were achieved in classrooms with **modest technological resources**. Many students connected on personal smartphones and limited internet access, actually adapted effectively. This resilience aligns with findings from the Albanian context that underscore both enthusiasm for digital learning and the psychological and infrastructural challenges that remain.

6.4 Integrating Local Culture into Hybrid Foreign Language Tasks

Hybrid pedagogy offers unique opportunities to integrate **local cultural content** into foreign language education. One illustrative activity involved intermediate-level students producing short video explanations of Albanian cultural concepts in French, such as *besa*, coffee rituals, hospitality traditions, and family structures. This task combined linguistic, cultural, and digital competencies.

Students worked in small groups to script, record, and edit short videos using accessible tools. They were encouraged to adopt an explanatory tone suitable for a foreign audience unfamiliar with Albanian culture. The results were pedagogically rich: students demonstrated linguistic creativity by using metaphors, humour, and personal anecdotes to explain culturally specific concepts. For example, *besa* was compared to informal social contracts in other cultures, while coffee rituals were presented as symbolic spaces of negotiation and social bonding.

Beyond language development, the task fostered **intercultural competence**. Students reflected on how cultural practices are perceived externally, aligning with research that positions hybrid and blended environments as sites for cultural mediation and learner reflection.

From a hybrid pedagogy perspective, the use of video allowed students to rehearse, self-evaluate, and refine their output. Many students reported recording multiple versions before submitting the final product, demonstrating increased self-regulation and ownership of learning.

6.5 Teacher Identity and Pedagogical Adaptation in Hybrid Contexts

Hybrid teaching in Albania also requires a redefinition of the teacher's role. Rather than acting primarily as a knowledge transmitter, the teacher role is to facilitate, to design, and become a mediator of learning experiences. These changes can be challenging, particularly for educators trained in traditional lecture-based models.

Reflective practice indicates that transparency is crucial. Explaining the purpose of hybrid activities and digital tools helps students understand that these are not arbitrary innovations, but strategies designed to support their learning. In Albanian classrooms, where students often expect clear structure, explicit pedagogical rationale enhances acceptance and engagement.

Moreover, hybrid environments should be subject to a continuous adaptation. Technical issues, fluctuating attendance between online and face-to-face modes, and varying levels of student readiness require flexibility. Embracing imperfection and modelling problem-solving strategies can humanise the learning process and help to a stronger relationship between teacher-student.

6.6 Implications for Hybrid Pedagogy in the Albanian Context

These classroom reflections suggest that successful hybrid pedagogy in Albania depends less on technological sophistication and more on **context-sensitive design**. Recognising cultural patterns of participation, managing cognitive load, fostering collaboration, and integrating local content are essential elements.

Importantly, hybrid pedagogy should not be viewed as a temporary response to external pressures, but as an opportunity to rethink teaching and learning practices. When thoughtfully implemented, it can support more inclusive, reflective, and student-centred learning environments that respect both global educational trends and local realities.

7. Conclusion

Digital tools alone do not transform language learning. Pedagogical intention, reflective practice, and attention to learners' lived realities make hybrid and online environments meaningful. The Albanian context demonstrates both promise and constraints: expanding access, enabling innovative practices, yet revealing structural inequalities. Successful digital language pedagogy involves combining tools with

structured collaboration, multimodal content creation, and reflective guidance. When carefully designed, these approaches cultivate linguistic proficiency, critical digital literacy, and responsible digital citizenship—equipping learners to navigate not only language but the broader digital world.

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♦TRANSLATION STUDIES♦

Entre el código y la emoción: la inteligencia artificial frente a la traducción técnica humana

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Abstract

El presente artículo examina la evolución de la traducción técnica desde sus orígenes hasta la actualidad, analizando el impacto de la inteligencia artificial en la práctica traductora contemporánea. La traducción técnica, tradicionalmente considerada un ámbito de precisión terminológica y objetividad, se enfrenta hoy a una transformación radical impulsada por las herramientas automáticas y los sistemas de redes neuronales. El objetivo del estudio es reflexionar sobre si la IA puede realmente sustituir la competencia cognitiva, ética y cultural del traductor humano. A través de ejemplos originales entre el español y el rumano, se exploran las ventajas, limitaciones y dilemas de este cambio de paradigma, destacando el valor insustituible del juicio humano en la interpretación del sentido. Asimismo, se analiza la evolución del papel del traductor técnico ante los avances tecnológicos y se plantea la necesidad de una colaboración equilibrada.

Keywords

traducción técnica, inteligencia artificial, traducción automática neuronal, competencia humana, español-rumano

1. Introducción

La traducción técnica ha sido, durante décadas, el territorio del rigor, la precisión y la neutralidad. Manuales de ingeniería, informes científicos, patentes, fichas de seguridad: textos donde cada término tiene un valor exacto y una consecuencia práctica. Traducirlos parecía, en apariencia, una tarea «sin alma». Sin embargo, detrás de cada palabra técnica hay una intención comunicativa, una lógica cultural y una historia de conocimiento humano.

Hasta hace unos años, el traductor técnico era una figura indispensable: un especialista capaz de unir la terminología de dos lenguas y, a la vez, de conectar mentalidades distintas. Pero con la llegada de la inteligencia artificial, la traducción técnica ha cambiado su naturaleza. Hoy, la mayoría de las empresas y plataformas globales recurren a motores neuronales que prometen rapidez, consistencia y reducción de costes.

La pregunta que guía este artículo es clara:

¿Puede una máquina comprender realmente el sentido técnico y cultural de un texto, o solo reproducirlo de forma estadística?

¿Y qué papel le queda al traductor humano en un mundo donde el algoritmo parece dominar el lenguaje?

2. **De la pluma al procesador: una breve historia de la traducción técnica**

En sus orígenes, la traducción técnica era una labor artesanal. A mediados del siglo XX, los traductores trabajaban con glosarios especializados, manuales impresos y diccionarios terminológicos que actualizaban a mano. Cada campo medicina, ingeniería, informática desarrollaba su propio lenguaje, y el traductor era un puente humano entre especialistas.

Por ejemplo, en los años 70 y 80, traducir un manual de aviación del inglés o el español al rumano requería un conocimiento profundo del contexto técnico. Los términos no existían en los diccionarios; el traductor debía crearlos. Así nacieron expresiones como „centru de control al zborului" (flight control center) o „turație nominală" (nominal speed), adaptadas cuidadosamente al sistema conceptual del rumano técnico.

Con el auge de la informática en los años 90, las herramientas asistidas por ordenador (CAT tools) transformaron la práctica traductora. Programas como Trados o Wordfast introdujeron la memoria de traducción: un banco de datos que almacenaba frases traducidas y proponía equivalencias automáticas. Sin embargo, el control seguía siendo humano.

En cambio, con la aparición de la traducción automática neuronal (NMT) en la última década, el papel del traductor empezó a redefinirse. Los sistemas como Google Translate o DeepL ya no se basan en reglas, sino en aprendizaje profundo (deep learning): analizan millones de textos para predecir la traducción más probable.

3. La irrupción de la inteligencia artificial

La inteligencia artificial ha supuesto una revolución silenciosa en el ámbito de la traducción técnica. Donde antes se necesitaban días de trabajo humano, hoy bastan segundos. Las empresas tecnológicas presentan la IA como una solución a la demanda global de traducciones rápidas y baratas.

Pero detrás de la eficiencia se esconde una paradoja: la IA traduce sin entender. Un modelo neuronal no interpreta significados, sino patrones. Reconoce secuencias frecuentes, pero ignora la intención del autor o las sutilezas de la cultura de destino.

Ejemplo comparativo:

Español original: «El equipo debe someterse a una revisión anual conforme a la norma ISO 9001.»

Traducción automática: „Echipamentul trebuie supus unei revizii anuale conform standardului ISO 9001.”

Traducción humana: „Echipamentul trebuie verificat anual, în conformitate cu standardul ISO 9001.”

La diferencia parece mínima, pero la versión humana respeta el estilo normativo del rumano técnico y evita el calco „revizie anuală”, que suena forzado en el contexto industrial. Este tipo de matiz solo puede captarlo alguien que entienda cómo «suenan» los textos técnicos en la cultura meta.

La IA ofrece uniformidad, pero no discernimiento. Un traductor humano sabe cuándo mantener una palabra literal y cuándo adaptar una expresión para evitar ambigüedad o confusión.

4. Precisión frente a comprensión: el dilema de la traducción automática

El mito de la objetividad en la traducción técnica es antiguo. Se pensaba que los textos especializados eran «fáciles» de traducir, ya que se limitaban a términos precisos. Sin embargo, la realidad demuestra lo contrario. La precisión terminológica requiere no solo exactitud, sino también comprensión contextual.

Por ejemplo, el término español «presión de contacto» puede referirse, según el campo, a la mecánica, la electrónica o la medicina. Una IA elegirá la opción más estadísticamente probable, pero no siempre la más adecuada al dominio del texto.

Ejemplo original:

Español: «El sensor detecta la presión de contacto entre las dos superficies.»

Traducción automática: „Senzorul detectează presiunea de contact între cele două suprafețe.”

Traducción humana: „Senzorul detectează forța de apăsare dintre cele două suprafețe.”

La versión automática es correcta gramaticalmente, pero suena antinatural en rumano técnico. El traductor humano interpreta que el contexto se refiere a la fuerza física y adapta el término a forță de apăsare.

La IA carece de ese tipo de intuición semántica. Su conocimiento es estadístico, no conceptual.

5. De la herramienta al sustituto: ¿puede la IA reemplazar al traductor técnico?

En la actualidad, muchas empresas ya utilizan sistemas híbridos: traducción automática seguida de post-edición humana. En este modelo, la IA produce una primera versión, y el traductor la corrige. Este proceso reduce costes y tiempos, pero

plantea una cuestión ética: ¿se está entrenando a las máquinas para sustituir a quienes las corrigen?

El riesgo es real. Cuantas más correcciones humanas reciben los sistemas, más aprenden. Cada traductor alimenta, sin saberlo, la base de datos que podría reemplazar su propio trabajo.

Sin embargo, hay un límite que la IA aún no puede cruzar: el razonamiento especializado. La comprensión de contextos técnicos complejos, por ejemplo, en medicina, derecho o ingeniería química requiere lógica, inferencia y conocimiento interdisciplinario.

Ejemplo:

Español: «El fallo se produjo por una alteración en la resistencia térmica del material.»

Rumano automático: „Defecțiunea s-a produs din cauza unei modificări a rezistenței termice a materialului."

Rumano humano: „Defecțiunea a apărut din cauza modificării capacității materialului de a rezista la temperatură."

La segunda versión no solo traduce palabras, sino que explica el fenómeno físico detrás del texto. Esa mediación cognitiva distingue al traductor experto del sistema automático.

6. Casos y ejemplos prácticos: el límite invisible entre el dato y el sentido

Para comprender mejor las diferencias entre la traducción humana y la automática, propongo algunos casos reales y simulados entre el español y el rumano. Todos reflejan contextos técnicos en los que el matiz lingüístico define la precisión comunicativa.

Ejemplo 1

Terminología industrial

Español: «El motor presenta una pérdida intermitente de potencia debido a una fuga en el sistema hidráulico.»

Rumano automático: „Motorul prezintă o pierdere intermitentă de putere din cauza unei scurgeri în sistemul hidraulic."

Rumano humano: „Motorul înregistrează o scădere temporară de putere, cauzată de o pierdere de presiune în sistemul hidraulic."

Comentario:

La IA traduce de forma literal, pero un traductor técnico experimentado sabe que en el lenguaje de ingeniería «pérdida» se refiere a la presión del sistema, no a la

potencia eléctrica. La corrección requiere conocimiento especializado, no solo lingüístico.

Ejemplo 2

Documentación médica técnica

Español: «El paciente debe mantener el dispositivo en posición vertical durante el proceso de calibración.»

Rumano automático: „Pacientul trebuie să mențină dispozitivul în poziție verticală în timpul procesului de calibrare."

Rumano humano: „Pacientul trebuie să țină dispozitivul drept pe toată durata calibrării."

Comentario:

Ambas versiones parecen equivalentes, pero la versión humana adapta el registro: „țină drept" suena más natural y funcional en un manual para pacientes. La IA mantiene una rigidez innecesaria.

Ejemplo 3

Manual informático

Español: «El sistema no reconocerá el comando si el usuario no ha configurado previamente los parámetros de red.»

Rumano automático: „Sistemul nu va recunoaște comanda dacă utilizatorul nu a configurat anterior parametrii rețelei."

Rumano humano: „Sistemul nu recunoaște comanda dacă parametrii rețelei nu au fost setați în prealabil de utilizator."

Comentario:

El traductor humano mejora la fluidez y respeta la estructura sintáctica preferida por la documentación rumana. La IA produce una versión gramaticalmente correcta, pero «sintácticamente extranjera».

7. Más allá de la máquina: pensamiento, contexto y ética

En el ámbito técnico, la precisión no depende solo del vocabulario. Depende de la capacidad de interpretar la intención funcional del texto.

Un traductor humano puede advertir un error lógico en el texto original algo que una IA jamás cuestionaría.

Además, la responsabilidad ética es un factor crucial. Una traducción técnica incorrecta puede poner en riesgo vidas humanas o generar pérdidas económicas.

Un algoritmo no asume esa responsabilidad; un traductor sí.

La inteligencia artificial aprende de millones de traducciones, pero no distingue entre un texto de calidad y uno defectuoso. Su conocimiento es acumulativo, no crítico. En cambio, el traductor humano aprende seleccionando, analizando y razonando, procesos que implican pensamiento consciente.

8. Reflexión personal: el traductor entre la precisión y la humanidad

Como traductora e investigadora, he experimentado de primera mano la transformación del oficio. He utilizado herramientas automáticas, memorias de traducción, correctores neuronales. Son útiles, rápidas y a veces admirables.

Pero cada vez que confío completamente en una máquina, percibo un vacío: la ausencia de intención.

Traducir un texto técnico no es un acto mecánico; es una negociación entre lenguaje, contexto y conocimiento.

Cuando traduzco un manual médico o un texto de ingeniería, pienso en quién lo leerá, en qué cultura, con qué expectativas.

La IA traduce oraciones; yo traduzco intenciones.

No se trata de una lucha entre humano y máquina, sino de una convivencia donde el traductor debe redefinir su papel: de ejecutor a editor crítico, de intermediario a intérprete de sentido.

9. Conclusiones: el futuro híbrido de la traducción técnica

El futuro de la traducción técnica no será exclusivamente humano ni totalmente artificial.

La colaboración entre ambos mundos parece inevitable y necesaria.

La IA ofrece velocidad, coherencia terminológica y accesibilidad global.

El traductor humano aporta intuición, razonamiento, contexto y ética profesional. El equilibrio entre ambos definirá la próxima etapa de la comunicación internacional.

Sin embargo, hay algo que ninguna máquina puede replicar: la empatía cognitiva del traductor, su capacidad para comprender por qué una palabra importa, qué emociones la sostienen y qué consecuencias genera su elección.

En ese sentido, la traducción técnica seguirá siendo un arte racional, una disciplina en la que la mente humana dialoga con el conocimiento y, cada vez más, con el algoritmo.

Porque incluso en los textos más técnicos, el lenguaje sigue siendo humano, y cada palabra por muy fría o funcional que parezca lleva una huella de emoción.

La clave del futuro no radica en elegir entre la mente humana y el algoritmo, sino en comprender su interdependencia. La inteligencia artificial puede procesar volúmenes inmensos de información y detectar patrones imposibles para una sola persona, pero carece de sensibilidad para evaluar la coherencia pragmática y la intención comunicativa de un texto. Por ello, el traductor del siglo XXI deberá asumir

un perfil híbrido: mediador lingüístico, gestor de datos y analista crítico del discurso técnico.

En este contexto, la formación universitaria tendrá que adaptarse. No bastará con enseñar a traducir; será necesario formar profesionales capaces de dialogar con las máquinas, interpretar sus errores y orientar su aprendizaje. La ética traductora se convertirá en un eje central: decidir cuándo confiar en la IA y cuándo corregirla será, en última instancia, una responsabilidad humana.

Así, la traducción técnica del futuro no será una sustitución, sino una co-creación entre inteligencia humana y artificial, donde la precisión se una con la empatía y la tecnología se convierta en una extensión del pensamiento, no en su reemplazo. Esta simbiosis, sin embargo, exige un replanteamiento profundo del papel del traductor. En la medida en que las máquinas asumen tareas mecánicas, el profesional humano deberá reforzar aquellas competencias que siguen siendo exclusivas de la mente humana: la intuición lingüística, la sensibilidad cultural, la interpretación del contexto y la gestión ética del discurso.

En este escenario emergente, el traductor técnico se transforma en un mediador de conocimiento, un puente entre la racionalidad algorítmica y la emoción humana. Su labor ya no consiste únicamente en transferir terminología, sino en garantizar que el mensaje preserve su sentido, su tono y su intencionalidad comunicativa. La inteligencia artificial, por muy sofisticada que sea, carece de conciencia y empatía; por ello, el juicio humano continúa siendo el núcleo de toda práctica traductora.

A largo plazo, la convivencia entre traductores y sistemas automáticos podría dar lugar a un nuevo modelo de colaboración interdisciplinaria, donde la tecnología no reemplace al ser humano, sino que lo potencie. Los programas de formación universitaria deberán integrar competencias digitales, pensamiento crítico y ética profesional para preparar a los traductores del mañana. Solo así será posible afrontar los desafíos que plantea una sociedad hiperconectada, multilingüe y en constante transformación.

En este horizonte de transformación, la traducción técnica se perfila como un territorio donde convergen dos lógicas complementarias: la capacidad analítica de los sistemas neuronales y la facultad interpretativa del ser humano. La inteligencia artificial introduce velocidad, eficiencia y amplitud de recursos, pero su funcionamiento permanece anclado en la probabilidad, no en la comprensión. Frente a ello, el traductor aporta aquello que ninguna arquitectura algorítmica puede reproducir: la conciencia de sentido, la lectura crítica del contexto y la comprensión profunda de la función comunicativa de cada término.

Este equilibrio redefine el oficio. El traductor del futuro deberá gestionar flujos de información cada vez más complejos, interpretar modelos generados por redes neuronales y evaluar cómo se integran en los discursos técnicos de cada comunidad. Sin embargo, su misión no será únicamente técnica: consistirá en velar por la

coherencia conceptual, por la adecuación cultural y por la fiabilidad de los conocimientos que atraviesan las fronteras lingüísticas. La traducción se convierte así en una práctica que trasciende la transferencia de datos para situarse en una dimensión cognitiva y ética donde cada decisión lingüística tiene consecuencias.

Las nuevas realidades tecnológicas no amenazan la figura del traductor, sino que la convocan a un papel más amplio. En un mundo saturado de información, donde el contenido circula a una velocidad sin precedentes, la mediación humana se vuelve más necesaria que nunca para garantizar que el conocimiento especializado llegue íntegro, contextualizado y comprensible. El traductor técnico se proyecta así como un curador del saber, un intérprete capaz de filtrar, orientar y dar forma precisa a contenidos que la máquina, por sí sola, sólo puede aproximar.

Mirando hacia adelante, la traducción técnica se configura como un espacio donde la inteligencia humana y la artificial no compiten, sino que coevolucionan. Esta coevolución anuncia un futuro en el que el sentido no será producto exclusivo de la mente humana ni resultado mecánico del algoritmo, sino una construcción compartida, resultado de la colaboración entre ambos sistemas cognitivos. En ese encuentro, el traductor no perderá protagonismo, sino que asumirá la responsabilidad de guiar el diálogo entre tecnologías emergentes y necesidades humanas, asegurando que el lenguaje siga siendo un instrumento de claridad, comprensión y progreso en una era definida por la interconexión y la innovación permanente.

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Title in English: *Between Code and Emotion: Artificial Intelligence versus Human Technical Translation*

Abstract in English: *This article examines the evolution of technical translation from its origins to the present day, analysing the impact of artificial intelligence on contemporary translation practice. Technical translation, traditionally regarded as a field defined by terminological precision and objectivity, is now undergoing a profound transformation driven by automated tools and neural network systems. The aim of the study is to reflect on whether artificial intelligence can truly replace the cognitive, ethical, and cultural competence of the human translator. Through original examples involving Spanish and Romanian, the paper explores the advantages, limitations, and dilemmas of this paradigm shift, highlighting the irreplaceable value of human judgement in the interpretation of meaning. Furthermore, it analyses the evolving role of the technical translator in the context of technological advances and argues for the need for a balanced collaboration between human and artificial intelligence in the construction of multilingual knowledge.*

Keywords in English: *technical translation, artificial intelligence, neural machine translation, human competence, Spanish–Romanian.*

Soft Rains, New Rhymes: A Quality Assessment of Lule Prilli, the First Albanian Teasdale Anthology

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Abstract

This study provides a comparative analysis of Sara Teasdale's lyric poetry and her Albanian translations by Irena Cani, examining the first ten English-Albanian couplets from the bilingual anthology Lule Prilli (2022). We apply a six-level evaluation rubric—semantic fidelity, imagery, tone and prosody, voice, lexical style, and poetic effect—to assess how faithfully and artistically the translations convey Teasdale's content and style. Drawing on poetry translation theories and textual examples, we identify the translator's dominant strategies: closely preserving meaning and imagery, occasionally softening certain nuances, not fully preserving rhyme and meter but compensating with other sonic devices, preserving lyrical voice, and supporting emotional state. The results show that while some poetic features are inevitably "lost" in translation, the Albanian versions largely recreate Teasdale's blend of simplicity, musicality, and heartfelt emotion. This six-level comparison highlights specific techniques (e.g., preserving imagery, using free verse) and reflects on broader implications for the translation of lyric poetry into Albanian. This demonstrates that a multifaceted assessment illuminates the delicate balance a translator strikes between fidelity and creativity, providing insights for comparative literature, translation studies, and cross-cultural literary appreciation.

Keywords

Translation studies, Bilingual analysis, Sara Teasdale, Literary translation, Six-level comparative framework

1. Introduction

Sara Teasdale (1884–1933) was an American lyric poet known for her clear, melodic lines and emotional sensitivity. Her early 20th-century poems explore love, nature, longing and loss with graceful simplicity and vivid imagery. Although celebrated in English (she won the Pulitzer Prize for *Love Songs* in 1918), Teasdale's work has only recently become accessible to Albanian readers. In 2022, a bilingual anthology Lule Prilli ("April Flowers") published in Tirana featured Teasdale's poems translated into Albanian by Irena Cani.

Translating lyrical poetry is very challenging. As Robert Frost quipped, "poetry is what gets lost in translation," suggesting that the essence of a poem often escapes capture in a new language. Roman Jakobson also considered poetry "untranslatable"

because poetic form and meaning are so intertwined. However, other theorists argue that poetry can be translated intelligently: each version is a new interpretation (Holmes, 1970), and the translator should strive for a faithful transmission of the poet's ideas and feelings. In practice, modern translators tend to prioritize the transmission of meaning and mood over strict preservation of form, even translating poems into prose if necessary. This shift reflects an acceptance that not every formal element survives translation; instead, translators compensate by recreating equivalent poetic effects through different means. As Preç Zogaj notes, a skilled translator aims to convey not only the words and syntax but also the "atmosphere and emotional register" of the original, juggling multiple goals in a balancing act or "pentathlon."

There is a growing interest in bringing world poetry into Albanian. For example, Luarasi's Albanian rendition of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" has been studied to see how rhythm and imagery are conveyed in Albanian. However, to date, no published research has focused on Teasdale in Albanian. The current study addresses this gap by examining Cani's translations of *Lule Prilli*. We use a six-dimensional comparative framework: semantic content, figuration, sound/prosody, voice/pragmatics, lexical style, and overall poetic effect to assess how successfully Teasdale's lyricism is conveyed in Albanian and where subtle shifts or losses occur. By systematically assessing these six levels, we document the translator's choices and strategies for each poem and reflect on the broader implications for the translation of lyric poetry in this English-Albanian context.

2. Literature Review

Poetry translation has long been discussed in terms of balancing faithfulness to the form/content of the source text with the creativity required to create an effective target text. Many theorists argue that a good translation should convey both the content and style of the poem. Boase-Beier and de Beaugrande (1991) emphasize that the translator must convey not only what the poem says, but also how it conveys it, its imagery, tone, and musicality. The challenge is great because, as mentioned earlier, form and meaning in poetry are deeply intertwined. Holmes's concept of "many possible translations" suggests evaluating each translation as a valid interpretation rather than judging it according to a single ideal. This is consistent with Nida's principle of functional equivalence, which prioritizes reproducing a similar effect on the intended audience over rigid adherence to formal elements.

Lefevere (1992) described a spectrum of strategies for translating poetry, from very source-oriented interpretations to very loose interpretations. At one extreme, a translator may attempt a phonological or literal translation that closely reflects the original words and sounds; at the other extreme, an interpretive translation may radically recreate the form and phrasing of the poem to capture its spirit. In between are approaches such as rhythmic or rhymed translation (maintaining meter or rhyme

schemes), blank verse (maintaining a poetic rhythm without rhyme), or even translating the poem into prose. Each method involves trade-offs: a direct translation maximizes semantic fidelity but may produce awkward phrasing in the target language, while the application of a rhyme scheme may distort nuances of meaning. In modern practice, translators increasingly favor clarity and naturalness over strict replication of form. It is often considered better for a translated poem to read smoothly and idiomatically in the target language than to preserve a complex rhyme at the expense of comprehension. Notably, abandoning form altogether is not the only option; translators often use compensatory techniques to compensate for formal losses. For example, if an exact rhyme cannot be reproduced, a translator may introduce alliteration or internal rhythm elsewhere to maintain poetic vibrancy. Such compensatory devices help to preserve the "feel" of the original even when the form changes. Recent studies of English-Albanian poetry translation have begun to examine these issues in the specific context of the Albanian language. Pema (2012) analyzed the Albanian translation of Walt Whitman's poetry, finding that the translators' choices were guided by case-specific values and an attempt to recreate Whitman's effects within the constraints of Albanian. This illustrates how translators adapt strategies to the demands of each poem deciding when to stick to the literal and when to adapt imagery or rhythm for impact. However, no previous study has examined Sara Teasdale's poetry in Albanian, so our analysis extends the literature to a new case and provides insights into how this less-studied language pair approaches the translation of lyric poetry.

3. Methodology

This study uses a six-lens comparative rubric to systematically compare each English poem with its Albanian version. Six analytical lenses target key aspects of poetic translation quality:

- Semantic Fidelity: How accurately the literal meaning and essential message of the original is conveyed in the translation, noting any omissions, additions, or changes in meaning.
- Imagery and Symbol Set: How the concrete images, metaphors, and symbols of the poem are treated in the translation (whether the original images are retained, adapted, or left out).
- Sound and Prosody: The treatment of sound and rhythmic features, such as rhyme scheme, meter, alliteration, assonance, and overall musicality in the translated poem.
- Voice and Pragmatic Stance: The preservation of the narrative voice and tone of the poem, including the point of view and directness (e.g., the preservation of first-person "I" and informal "you," and the preservation of similar speech acts or emotional intensity).

- Lexical Texture: The diction and choice of words in the translation, including register (formal versus informal), the use of idiomatic expressions, compound words, or other stylistic choices, and how these compare to the wording of the original.
- Poetic Effect: The overall emotional and aesthetic impact of the translation on the reader, compared to the effect of the source text (i.e., does the translated poem evoke a similar mood and response?).

Using this rubric, we conducted a line-by-line analysis of the first ten couplets of Teasdale's poems from *Lule Prilli*. We coded any notable translation choices or deviations under one or more of the above perspectives. We also counted the frequency of certain phenomena (e.g., instances of omitted words, added clarifications, preserved rhymes) to identify patterns across the corpus. These quantitative trends are summarized in the Results section (Table 1). However, the essence of our approach is qualitative. For each perspective, we collected illustrative examples and developed comments on how the translator addressed that aspect, which forms the basis of our Discussion section. Our aim was descriptive rather than prescriptive: we aimed to document the characteristics of the translation without "classifying" it as good or bad. We based each observation on the source and target texts, supported by relevant theory (e.g., notions of equivalence, pragmatics, and compensation). Given that the translator did not provide any explicit commentary on her strategy, our interpretations are drawn from textual evidence. The methodology is essentially a structured, detailed reading that can be replicated or extended to other poems or translation pairs in future research.

4. Findings

The application of the six-level rubric to the ten pairs of poems yielded clear trends in translation fidelity and adaptation. **Semantic fidelity** was very high: essentially all the lines and ideas from the English poems appear in the Albanian versions. No entire lines were removed, and only a few minor elements were removed or changed. For example, an endearment term ("my love") in *Did You Ever Know*? was left out of the translation, and a clarifying phrase was added to *After Love* ("*që detit i është marrë hua*," "which is borrowed from the sea") to enrich an image and facilitate a rhyme. Such minor shifts aside, the translations faithfully convey the content of each poem. All the main themes and messages (the surrender of *I Shall Not Care*, the indifference of nature in *There Will Come Soft Rains* the longing in *Love in Autumn*, etc.) are preserved without substantial change.

Images and symbols are also largely preserved. The vast majority of concrete images and metaphors in Teasdale's poems have direct equivalents in the Albanian translations. Images of nature such as stars, rain, dusk, birds, and flowers all appear in the same form in Albanian, often in corresponding lines. We found no case where an image was left out entirely. In some cases, the translator modified an image slightly: for example, Teasdale's line "red leaves fly before the wind" was translated more

generally as “vitet e jetës fluturojnë” (“the years of life fly”), moving from a specific image of autumn leaves to a metaphor for the passage of time. However, here too the symbolic intent (the sense of life fleeting with time) remains. In particular, vivid metaphors such as "feathery fire" (for robin feathers) were preserved almost verbatim ("zjarrin e puplave prush") in Albanian, demonstrating the translator's commitment to conveying Teasdale's imagery. Overall, Cani favored retaining the original imagery, allowing Albanian readers to experience the same visual and symbolic motifs as in the source texts.

Sound and prosody proved the most challenging aspects to preserve. The translator did not primarily attempt to preserve Teasdale's exact rhyme schemes or strict meter. Only two or three of the ten translated poems show any intentional rhyme patterns at the end, and even those use intermittent rhyme rather than consistent rhyme. For example, the English poem *There Will Come Soft Rains* consists of rhyming couplets, but its Albanian counterpart " *Shirat e Butë Do Të Vijnë* " is translated into free verse without rhyme at the end. Similarly, strict meter was not maintained, although line lengths and stanza structures generally mirror the originals. To compensate for the loss of rhyme and meter, the translator often used other sound devices. We noted instances of internal rhyme, alliteration, or assonance that create a subtle echo of the original music. For example, in the Albanian poem " *Shirat e Bute*," the repetition of "askush" ("no one") at the beginning of successive lines mirrors the English anaphora " not one... not one," adding rhythmic emphasis even without rhyme. Such compensatory techniques help maintain a sense of musicality despite the shift toward free verse. In summary, while translations sacrifice the rhyme and formal meter of the original poems, they attempt to reproduce a comparable auditory environment through other means, ensuring that the poems still sound poetic in Albanian.

Voice and pragmatic stance are preserved with remarkable consistency. Teasdale's intimate first-person voice (often addressing a "you") remains intact in translation. All poems written in the first person in English remain in the first person ("unë ") in Albanian, and direct address to "you" is preserved using the informal "ti", preserving the original intimacy. We did not find any shift from direct address to impersonal narrative or vice versa. The pragmatic force of the statements is also largely preserved: questions remain questions, exclamations remain exclamations. Only very minor adjustments occur. In one poem, the translator made an implied emotion clearer: Teasdale's line "I know your secret" was translated as " Sa shumë më ke dashur, më pëlqen të kujtoj" ("How much you loved me, I like to remember"), writing "secret" (that *you loved me deeply) instead of leaving it implied. Conversely, an incidental term of address was dropped (as noted, "my dear" was dropped once). These subtle changes do not significantly change who is speaking to whom or the tone of address. The Albanian versions convey the same speaker-hearer relationship and the same emotional tenor as the originals, the contemplative and sincere voice of Teasdale's lyric

"I" remains evident, speaking fluent Albanian. Gender nuances are also preserved: where the original speaker is understood to be female, the Albanian translation uses feminine adjective forms appropriately. In summary, the translations capture Teasdale's pragmatic voice and nuances, while preserving the sincerity and emotional directness of the poems.

The lexical choices (diction and style) in the translations closely mirror the simplicity of Teasdale's lexicon, with some creative twists. The translator generally chose common words, easily understood in Albanian, avoiding bloated or archaic terms. For example, "war" was translated as the straightforward "lufta," "sky" as "qiellin," "stars" as "yjet", all basic equivalents in Albanian. Where Teasdale's diction is lofty or figurative, Cani often found an Albanian expression with a similar flavor. She also occasionally invented compound words to preserve poetic imagery. For example, Teasdale's word "cold-hearted" becomes "zemër-akull" ("ice-hearted"), a vivid compound word that reflects the metaphor. Similarly, the word "jewel-weeds" was translated as "bar-xhevahir" ("jewel-grass"), effectively inventing a term to convey the original image. Such choices indicate a strategy of lexical innovation: rather than flattening a metaphor, the translator recreated it in Albanian terms, while preserving its evocative power. These compound words, while not everyday words, do not feel out of place in Albanian poetry (compound neologisms are a common poetic device in Albanian as well). We found no cases of strange calques or mistranslations at the word level; idioms were either translated appropriately or replaced with natural Albanian equivalents. In a few cases, the translator removed a repeated affectionate or an unnecessary filler word to maintain conciseness, but overall, the length and structure of the sentences remained close to the original. The result is that the translated poems read as pure and idiomatic Albanian, while still preserving the distinctive imagery and concise style of Teasdale's language.

Poetic Effect: Finally, by assessing the holistic effect, we find that each translated poem evokes a mood and emotional response very similar to the source poem. From the somber calm of *I Shall Not Care* to the melancholic nostalgia of *Lost Things*, the translated versions carry the same emotional weight. The minor changes identified in other perspectives were not so significant as to distort the overall themes or feelings. For example, *There Will Come Soft Rains* in Albanian still produces a sense of calm, gentle beauty tinged with eerie fatalism regarding human extinction. The slight change of "not one would *care*" to "no one would *know*" does not remove the central idea that nature goes on oblivious to human fate; the closing image of Spring's indifference is rendered with equal subtlety ("s'do të kujtohet"). Likewise, *After Love* retains its tone of quiet resignation, the translator's choices, such as the use of "pellg pa valë" ("wave-less pond") and "paqja e tepërt" ("excess peace") convey the same sense of stagnant calm and bitter closure as the original. In *Did You Never Know?,* despite the change in ending, the effect remains one of gentle longing and

regret, if anything, making the final line a nostalgic reminiscence softens the dramatic style but heightens the feeling. Essentially, the translator preserved what one might call the illocutionary force of each poem, the intended emotional impact on the reader. Where Teasdale intended to soothe, the Albanian soothes; where she intended an ironic bite as in "*I shall be more silent and cold-hearted than you are*"), the Albanian delivers a similarly sharp note ("më e heshtur dhe zemër-akull"). We found no instances of translations introducing an incongruous tone that is not present in the original (no unintentional humor or formality, for example). The emotional atmosphere is consistently maintained. The only nuanced difference might be that the natural sound of the Albanian language can sometimes feel a little more formal or heavy, but the translator softened this by using natural, conversational phrasing. In summary, the translations achieve a one-to-one emotional resonance with the originals, indicating a high degree of functional equivalence at the level of reader response.

5. Discussion

Semantic Fidelity: The translator's commitment to preserving Teasdale's literal meaning is evident. She took no liberties with the content; even emotionally charged lines were rendered faithfully, indicating a deliberate choice to prioritize accuracy. For example, Teasdale's poignant statement "I shall be more silent and cold-hearted than you are now" was translated almost word-for-word ("do të jem më e heshtur dhe zemër-akull, nga ç'je ti tani", while maintaining its poignant tone. The phrase "zemër-akull" ("ice-heart") even intensifies the image of coldness in a way that resonates strongly in Albanian, indicating that fidelity to meaning did not dilute the emotional impact. Overall, Cani avoided omissions or additions that would alter the poems' messages, reflecting an approach of maximum semantic transparency for the Albanian reader.

Imagery and Symbolism: Cani's treatment of the imagery suggests that she trusted Albanian readers to appreciate Teasdale's original visual world. She overwhelmingly retained the source imagery, even when it was very specific or figuratively vivid. This decision has a slightly foreignizing effect—it brings the landscape and metaphors of the English poem directly into Albanian without dilution. For example, the striking metaphor "robins will wear their feathery fire" is translated as "gushëkuqët… me zjarrin e puplave prush" closely mirroring the original image of birds with fiery feathers. By not replacing such imagery with more familiar local ones, the translator ensures that the symbolic richness (the warmth and liveliness implied by "feather fire") remains intact. In the few cases where she adjusted an image (such as translating the red autumn leaves into a more abstract notion of the flying years), the underlying meaning was preserved, and these adjustments were likely made for clarity or poetic fluency rather than due to cultural differences. Fidelity to imagery throughout

the corpus means that the Albanian translations evoke the same images and mental associations as the English texts, a key factor in preserving the mood of each poem.

Sound and prosody: The area where the translation differs most from the original is the formal modeling of sounds. Cani generally chose not to copy Teasdale's strict rhyme schemes or metrics, a pragmatic decision that avoided forcing Albanian verses into unnatural constructions. This is in keeping with contemporary translation norms that favor meaning over sound. Instead, her approach was to maintain a sense of musicality through other means. She preserved the overall rhythm by keeping line breaks and stanza structures similar to the original, and she sprinkled in devices such as alliteration or repeated sounds to create local euphony. For example, in *There Will Come Soft Rains*, although the final rhymes were removed, she repeated "askush" ("nobody") in successive verses, which mimics the parallel “not one… not one” structure of the source and adds rhythmic emphasis. Similarly, she occasionally found opportunities for rhyme or assonance within the translation (as in *After Love*, where " takoj" ("meet") echoes " njëlloj" ("same")), but only when this did not compromise the meaning. The end result is that the translated poems read like flowing free verse. They may lack the tight end-rhymes of Teasdale's originals, but they still sound harmonious and poetic in Albanian, which helps to preserve the aesthetic pleasure of the reading experience.

Pragmatic Voice and Attitude: Teasdale's poetic voice, intimate, candid, and personal, survives in translation largely unchanged. The translator retained the first-person "I" and the direct second-person "You" in all poems, using informal "ti" to maintain the intimacy of address. She introduced no formality or disjunction that was not present in English. This means that an Albanian reader perceives the same speaker-listener dynamic as an English reader: the poems feel like heartfelt confessions or direct addresses, not abstract meditations. Where Teasdale uses terms of endearment or rhetorical questions, Cani generally retained them (except for the omitted "my dear"). It is important to note that Albanian grammar requires gender agreement in some forms of adjectives and participles, and the translator correctly used feminine forms for the speaker's voice where the context implied a female narrator. This preserves the delicate perspective of a woman's voice that permeates much of Teasdale's love poetry. Such attention ensures that the tone, whether loving, melancholic, or gently bitter, remains authentic. The consistency of voice across the translations indicates a deep understanding of Teasdale's personality in the poems and a determination to let that person speak clearly in Albanian.

Lexical texture: At the level of word choice, the translations strike a balance between accuracy and creativity. Cani preferred everyday Albanian vocabulary that parallels Teasdale’s simple diction, so the translated verses seem natural and effortless. At the same time, she demonstrated invention when necessary to capture poetic nuances. Her use of compound words such as “zemër-akull” for “cold-hearted” and

"bar-xhevahir" for "jewel-weeds" exemplify this approach. These invented compound words effectively convey the metaphorical meaning and are easily understood, while also echoing the original images in a fresh way. Notably, the use of compound words is a feature of the Albanian poetic language as well, so these choices do not seem out of place; on the contrary, they enhance the poetic flavor of the translations. We noted that Cani avoided calques or difficult borrowings; English idioms were either translated idiomatically or replaced with appropriate Albanian idioms. In some cases, she shortened redundant words or slightly rephrased lines to maintain fluency, but this did not change the tone or content. Overall, the lexical level of the translation comes across as clear and contemporary Albanian with a poetic undertone – reflecting Teasdale's clarity and gentle lyricism.

Poetic effect: Ultimately, what matters most is that the translated poems touch the reader in the same way as the originals. Here, the translations succeed. The atmosphere and emotional arc of each poem are effectively reflected in the Albanian. Readers of the translation experience the gentle despair of *I Shall Not Care*, the longing of *Did You Never Know?* the quiet warning of *There Will Come Soft Rains* and the nostalgic yearning of *Lost Things* as an English reader would. We found that nothing essential to the emotional narrative has been lost: where Teasdale intended to evoke regret, wonder, or sorrow, the Albanian verses do so as well. The translator did not introduce jarring shifts in tone or unintentional humor; the tone of each section remains consistent. If anything, some emotional cues were subtly amplified in the translation (for example, the slightly softened ending of *Did You Never Know?* in Albanian evokes a tone of wistful reminiscence). By maintaining high fidelity to meaning, preserving imagery, and adapting form only as necessary for naturalness, Cani managed to achieve what Nida would call an equivalent effect on the audience. In short, the Albanian reader can sigh, smile, and reflect at the same moments and for the same reasons that an English reader would. This equality of poetic effect is a strong indicator of the success of the translation.

6. Conclusions

In summary, this comparative study demonstrates that, through a careful balance of fidelity and creative adaptation, a translator can successfully bridge languages and cultures while preserving the delicate lyricism of the original. Examining the first ten couplets of poems from *Lule Prilli* through six analytical lenses, we see that Irena Cani's Albanian interpretations of Teasdale's poems are remarkably faithful in content and style. The direct meanings and essential feelings are conveyed with very few omissions or displacements. Teasdale's vivid imagery and natural symbolism are kept almost intact, allowing Albanian readers to imagine robins, stars, and gentle rains just as English readers do. Formal elements such as rhyme and meter, inevitably difficult to transpose, were largely sacrificed, but this loss was mitigated by the use of alternative

poetic devices, so that the translations remain musical in their own way. The essential point is that Teasdale's intimate voice and tone survived the journey: the directness in the first person, the emotional honesty, and the overall atmosphere of each poem are reflected in the translations. By choosing appropriate words and occasionally inventing new phrases, the translator maintained a clear yet evocative lexical style, in keeping with the spirit of the original. Because meaning, imagery, voice, and style were carefully preserved or adapted, the emotional impact of the translated poems is essentially equivalent to that of the source texts.

This six-dimensional assessment illuminates the delicate balance that Cani achieved between fidelity and creativity. Her approach adheres to the principle of functional equivalence—prioritizing the experience and emotional response of the intended reader over strict formal fidelity. The result is a set of translations that read like authentic Albanian poetry while still reflecting the essence of Teasdale's verse. This case lends credence to the idea that lyric poetry can be translatable at its affective core: the "soul" of a poem can be reborn in another language if handled with care. Moreover, the success of Lule Prillit contributes to Albanian literary culture by adding a classical American poetic voice to its repertoire. It offers Albanian readers a new perspective on universal themes of love, nature, and mortality, perhaps even inviting parallels with their own classics (one might think of the nature-filled lyricism of Lasgush Poradeci or the heartfelt sincerity of Migjen). In this sense, Cani's work acts as a cultural bridge, enriching cross-cultural literary appreciation. It also complements previous scholarly efforts such as Pema's (2012) analysis of Whitman's poetry in Albanian, together deepening our understanding of how English-language poetic voices fit into the Albanian context.

In conclusion, "Soft Rain, New Rhymes" encapsulates the idea that a good translation is akin to a soft rain falling on a distant garden, nourishing new flowers (new readers and interpretations) while reflecting the light of its source. Through six levels of analysis, we have seen that Cani's translations maintain semantic clarity, reflect Teasdale's figuration, adapt musical elements, preserve poetic voice, choose natural yet evocative formulations, and ultimately evoke parallel emotions. The six-lens rubric used here could fruitfully be applied to further case studies, for example, comparing multiple translators' approaches to the same poem or examining other bilingual poetry collections to explore whether similar patterns hold. For now, based on the evidence of this case, we conclude that *Lule Prilli* stands as a successful example of lyrical poetry translation. Even if "poetry is what gets lost in translation," as Frost cynically suggested, in the hands of a skilled translator much can be preserved or even found again. The clear reflection of Cani's Albanian verse mirrors the gentle showers of Teasdale's images and emotions, allowing the poet's voice to echo across time and language with unfading grace.

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Le plurilinguisme dans la perspective européenne et la traduction

Iuliana PAȘTIN

Abstract

Le plurilinguisme était initialement assimilé au multilinguisme lorsqu'il désignait des communautés plurilingues où plusieurs langues étaient parlées. Une distinction s'est imposée entre le plurilinguisme et la société. Le plurilinguisme met l'accent sur l'individu en tant qu'acteur de l'interaction des langues, tandis que le multilinguisme concernait le contact des langues au niveau sociétal. Être plurilingue ne signifie pas nécessairement maîtriser plusieurs langues ; cela signifie être capable d'utiliser plusieurs langues avec autrui selon les besoins. Une personne est considérée comme plurilingue lorsqu'elle peut parler une langue tout en en comprenant une autre, et passer d'une langue à l'autre de manière appropriée ou nécessaire.

Keywords

plurilingualism, multilingualism, communication, discrimination, diversité

Le plurilinguisme, c'est l'existence et l'utilisation de plusieurs langues sur le continent européen, un principe clé de l'Union européenne et du Conseil de l'Europe, qui se propose de mettre en évidence la diversité culturelle et linguistique, à promouvoir une meilleure communication, et à développer les compétences individuelles et sociales de tous les citoyens européens. Cela implique de communiquer avec les citoyens dans leur langue, de protéger les langues autochtones, et d'encourager l'apprentissage de langues étrangères, car les compétences linguistiques sont considérées comme essentielles pour la mobilité, la compréhension mutuelle et la cohésion sociale. Nous devons pourtant faire une distinction claire entre le plurilinguisme qui se caractérise par la capacité de parler plusieurs langues sur notre continent européen et le multilinguisme qui vise la coexistence de plusieurs langues à l'intérieur d'un même territoire, d'un même pays, d'un certain espace ou dans une certaine ethnie ou communauté.

Par conséquent, le plurilinguisme est un concept fondamental en Europe, qui reconnaît la valeur de chaque langue et cherche à bâtir une société européenne plus ouverte, plus compréhensive et plurielle où les compétences linguistiques sont considérées comme une richesse culturelle et sociale indispensables à la communication entre les citoyens européens.

Les Premières Assises européennes du plurilinguisme qui ont eu lieu à Paris les 24 et le 25 novembre 2005 ont donné naissance à l'Observatoire européen du

plurilinguisme qui est une structure de collaboration entre tous les partenaires du plurilinguisme. Le principe des Assises est de réunir dans un même mouvement des décideurs, des chercheurs, des enseignants et des membres de la société civile pour poser clairement les questions linguistiques dans leurs langues nationales. Il pourra être accompagné de projets de textes législatifs ou réglementaires. Il est prévu de le traduire dans toutes les langues de l'Union Européenne. La portée de ce texte dépasse le cadre de l'Union Européenne, car il réaffirme des droits universels..

Par conséquent le plurilinguisme est une valeur fondamentale de notre citoyenneté européenne il porte des valeurs de tolérance et d'acceptation des différences entre les gens et des minorités. "Indissociable de toute citoyenneté européenne active, la diversité linguistique et culturelle est ainsi une composante fondamentale de l'identité européenne" .(.www.observatoireplurilinguisme.eu)

"Dans une société donnée il faut que la connaissance et les savoirs professionnels locaux dans des langues variées circulent, et il faut que les connaissances et les savoirs professionnels qui viennent du monde extérieur soient transposés et puissent nourrir et s'inscrire dans des dynamiques internes". Cela s'appelle la "linguistique du développement" telle que les chercheurs de l'Observateur Européen du Plurilinguisme tentent à mettre en évidence dans la publication, De Babel à l'intelligence artificielle rédigée par Christian Tremblay et José Carlos Herreras, coord.(2025:3)

La « linguistique du développement » n'est pas un travail de savants, c'est aussi une discipline de terrain qui s'inscrit dans des dynamiques locales. C'est du "plurilinguisme en action" dont la traduction en différentes langues occupe un rôle essentiel,(.Tremblay &Herrera : 2025).)

Les traductions ont toujours été importantes pour les échanges culturels et économiques entre les différentes communautés linguistiques en Europe. Elles sont en permanente devenir. Elles sont un complément indispensable aux connaissances des individus en langues étrangères, toujours limitées. Le plurilinguisme et les traductions sont nécessaires pour préserver la diversité linguistique en Europe et continuer à la développer. Les coûts qui en résultent ne doivent donc pas être considérés comme des dépenses à éviter mais comme un investissement pour l'avenir de l'Europe.

L'abondance des théories linguistiques et l'influence longtemps exercée par celles-ci sur la traduction s'expliquent sans doute par la conception même de cette dernière. En effet, la définition la plus courante qui considère la traduction comme étant le passage d'un message dans une langue source vers une langue cible implique l'idée essentielle que celle-ci est un phénomène linguistique. Dans ce cas, la conception de Jakobson que la traduction est intralinguale, interlinguale ou intersémiotique ne laisse aucun doute.(Jakobson : 1963)

La traduction interlinguale, par exemple, est définie par Jakobson comme l'interprétation des signes linguistiques sources par d'autres signes linguistiques cibles.

Si l'on considère l'évolution de la réflexion de la théorie, on se rend compte que la traduction a été longtemps associée à la linguistique contrastive. Parmi les premiers à formuler les théories linguistiques les plus connues, on peut citer Vinay et Darbelnet (1958), G.Mounin (1963), Catford John(1965). Mais avant de présenter les différentes approches, il faut s'arrêter d'abord sur ce que l'on entend par linguistique et sociolinguistique.

La linguistique a pour objet l'étude que les sujets parlants ont de la langue. A ce niveau Baylon& Fabre (1999 :17) distinguent deux conceptions de la linguistique qui s'opposent :

- la linguistique comme description des langues qui considère une langue comme un système de signes linguistiques.

- la linguistique comme étude du fonctionnement du langage en tant que systèmes de règles. Selon la théorie linguistique de Chomsky, il existe des traits généraux communs à toutes les langues que la grammaire générative doit s'attacher à s'expliquer :

L'étude des conditions universelles qui prescrivent la forme de tout langage humain selon Chomsky constitue la "grammaire générale" Ces conditions universelles, on ne les apprend pas ; elles fournissent plutôt les principes d'organisation qui permettent d'apprendre une langue, et qui doivent exister pour que l'on passe des données au savoir. (Chomsky, 1969 : 96)

La sociolinguistique est considérée comme une branche de la linguistique, elles s'intéresse aux rapports qu'entretiennent entre elles société et langue. Elle étudie, entre autres, la variation linguistique comme appartenance à une classe sociale, à un groupe. L'organisation du message a une implication sociale que l'analyse linguistique peut élucider. Pour la sociolinguistique, la compréhension d'un énoncé dépasse le cadre linguistique et englobe des facteurs sociaux , pragmatiques concernant un systeme de communication.

Ainsi le sociolinguiste fait-il porter son attention sur le locuteur en tant que membre d'une communauté, en tant que sujet dont le langage peut caractériser l'origine ethnique, la profession, le niveau de vie, l'appartenance à une classe, etc. (Baylon &Fabre 1999 : 74)

Ce bref aperçu montre que la différence essentielle entre linguistique et sociolinguistique provient du fait que la première se veut une science du langage, tandis que la seconde porte sur les rapports entre phénomènes linguistiques et sociaux.

Au cours de cet article nous allons montrer que les diverses théories de la traduction fondées sur la linguistique et/ou sur la sociolinguistique ne suffisent pas pour analyser les rapports entre langue et culture, entre langue et société. la plupart des approches tournent autour du concept d'équivalence, dont le contenu varie d'une approche à l'autre. D'où la nécessité d'approches qui englobent non seulement des facteurs linguistiques mais aussi des facteurs culturels.

Dans le foisonnement des théories actuelles nous allons nous nous arrêter particulièrement sur l'approche de G. Mounin.

A l'opposé de celles de Catford J. et de Vinay&Darbelnet, l'approche de G. Mounin bat en brèche les conceptions linguistiques qui aboutissent à l'intraduisibilité d'une langue à l'autre parce que chaque langue, comme le soutiennent de nombreux linguistes à l'instar de Whorf, découpe la réalité de façon différente et unique. Tout en adhérant à la thèse selon laquelle la langue représente une vision particulière du monde, G.Mounin (1963) a réussi à démontrer que la traduction n'est pas seulement un transfert linguistique.

Il ne s'agit pas pour G. Mounin de nier la réalité linguistique de la traduction, mais de prouver que celle-ci comporte des aspects "non-linguistiques et extra-linguistiques " (1963 :16). Celui-ci montre que "la saisie des significations peut être difficile, approximative, hasardeuse " (1963 :40). La difficulté à saisir le sens n'implique pas pour G. Mounin l'impossibilité d'une pratique et d'une théorie de la traduction car, malgré les différentes visions du monde qu'exprime la diversité linguistique, il existe des universaux linguistiques, anthropologiques et culturels qui sous-tendent les significations dans les langues. G. Mounin entend par les universaux "les traits qui se retrouvent dans toutes les langues, ou dans toutes les cultures exprimées par ces langues" (1963 :196)

Concernant les systèmes linguistiques, il existe selon G. Mounin des traits universels qui rendent la traduction possible à condition que le traducteur envisage une autre possibilité d'accéder aux significations des autres visions du monde, à savoir la voie ethnographique. Nous précisons à cet effet que G.Mounin entend par ethnographie " la description complète de la culture totale d'une communauté. La culture elle-même est considérée comme l'ensemble des activités et des institutions par où cette communauté se manifeste". (Les problèmes de la traduction, 1963 :233). La connaissance de la culture de la langue source permet d'identifier les situations communes à la culture de la langue cible et de cette façon rendre à la traduction son utilité.

"On peut, si l'on s'y tient, dire que, comme la médecine, la traduction reste un art fondé sur une science. La traduction est une opération linguistique, mais également une opération littéraire".(G.Mounin,1963 : 233)

L'approche de G. Mounin est intéressante d'un double point de vue d'abord parce qu'elle est une réponse d'un linguiste à d'autres linguistes au sujet des questions concernant la traduction, ensuite, son approche arrive à résoudre la question de la diversité des langues par le biais des universaux tout en affirmant que culture et langue ont la même importance dans la traduction.

Par conséquent, pour G. Mounin, la traduction nécessite la connaissance de la culture dont cette langue est l'expression. D'où la nécessité d'approches qui englobent non seulement les facteurs linguistiques, mais également les facteurs culturels et

sociaux. Autant la traduction nécessite de la part du traducteur une connaissance de la langue et de la culture qu'elle exprime, autant nous estimons que, pour être efficace, la traduction doit tenir compte des normes et conventions sociales de la culture cible.

L'approche interprétative associée à L'École Supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs de Paris (l'ESIT) propose une théorie qui s'adresse essentiellement à la traduction orale mais également à la traduction écrite. Elle est fondée sur le processus d'interprétation et de reformulation. Cette approche, appelée également théorie du sens se propose d'abord une bonne compréhension du texte original et une expression de celui-ci dans la langue d'arrivée. Le traducteur doit comprendre le sens de ce qui se dit puis le ré exprimer, c'est-à-dire jouer tour à tour dans la communication le rôle de récepteur et le rôle d'émetteur. Le traducteur qui traduit sans se soucier de savoir ce que comprendra celui qui n'a pas connaissance de l'original aboutira peut –être à un texte grammaticalement correct, il risque de ne pas être intelligible. Cela exige de la part du traducteur une réinterprétation, donc extraire le sens du texte original afin de le réexprimer dans la langue cible comme l'affirment Marianne.Lederer et Danica Seleskovitch dans Interpréter pour traduire :

"Traduire dans le vrai sens du terme n'est possible que si les connaissances de celui qui traduit sont telles que la parole peut se faire pensée et que la pensée peut à nouveau se faire parole ; encore faut-il que le traducteur ne fausse pas le processus en faisant intervenir une méthode comparative qui n'a pas sa place au plan de la parole." (D. Seleskovitch , M. Lederer, 2001 : 27)

Depuis quelques années les logiciels de traduction automatique ont fait des progrès spectaculaires à la faveur de la constitution sur Internet d'immenses corpus de textes traduits par des traducteurs humains, tels que la base de données de l'Union européenne ou de l'Office européen des brevets, et de l'émergence informatique de la technologie des réseaux neuronaux ou réseaux de neurones artificiels, une des branches de l'intelligence artificielle.

L'objet de cet ouvrage n'est pas prioritairement d'examiner les progrès techniques réalisés dans le domaine de la traduction automatique ni d'envisager un exposé exhaustif car ce domaine est en permanente évolution.

Notre objet principal est de souligner l'importance les enjeux que l'utilisation croissante de la Traduction automatique représente pour les locuteurs, les institutions et les entreprises, dans la mesure où elle peut favoriser le développement d'un plurilinguisme individuel ou d'un multilinguisme qui caractérise notre société européenne. Ce n'est que de cette façon que nous pouvons mettre en évidence l'importance du plurilinguisme, Maintenant celui-ci est un concept essentiellement européen par rapport à l'anglais dominant.

Nous ne devons pas pourtant nier l'importance de l'anglais et par conséquent la nécessité d'un minimum de connaissances de l'anglais comme lingua franca est largement reconnue dans tous les domaines économiques et commerciaux. Il ne faut

pourtant pas ignorer l'aptitude d'ajouter à cette langue standard qui est l'anglais une maîtrise suffisante de la langue du pays dans lequel on va travailler ou séjourner C'est pourquoi le plurilinguisme est une qualité dont la valeur commence à être reconnue. C'est un point très important dans la reconnaissance de l'importance du plurilinguisme sur notre continent européen.

Cela s'appelle dans l'approche de l'Observatoire Européen du Plurilinguisme la « linguistique du développement » qui n'est pas conçue comme un travail de savants c'est aussi une discipline toujours en évolution qui s'inscrit dans des dynamiques locales. Comme par exemple dans la sauvegarde des langues de minorités qui mettent en évidence l'importance de ce patrimoine de la richesse culturelle de l'Europe. Selon l'Observatoire Européen du Plurilinguisme :" C'est du plurilinguisme en action"qui suppose aussi une approche actuelle de la traduction contemporaine.

Sans entrer dans des détails trop spécialisés nous allons nous demander: Qu'est-ce que la traduction automatique ?

La traduction automatique est le processus qui consiste à utiliser l'intelligence artificielle pour traduire automatiquement un texte d'une langue à une autre sans intervention humaine. La traduction automatique moderne va au-delà de la simple traduction mot à mot pour communiquer le sens complet du texte de la langue originale dans la langue cible. Il analyse tous les éléments du texte et reconnaît comment les mots s'influencent mutuellement.

La traduction automatique consiste à convertir un texte ou la parole d'une langue à une autre grâce à la technologie. Cette technologie est conçue pour exploiter différents algorithmes, réseaux neuronaux et grands ensembles de données afin de comprendre et de traduire le texte source. Un réseau neuronal est un ensemble interconnecté de nœuds inspiré du cerveau humain. C'est un système d'information où les données d'entrée passent par plusieurs nœuds interconnectés pour générer une sortie. Le logiciel de traduction automatique neuronale utilise des réseaux neuronaux pour travailler avec d'énormes jeux de données. Chaque nœud effectue un changement attribué du texte source au texte cible jusqu'à ce que le nœud de sortie donne le résultat final.

La traduction automatique neuronale par rapport aux autres méthodes de traduction est plus rapide et plus efficiente. Les réseaux neuronaux considèrent l'ensemble de la phrase d'entrée (la phrase source) à chaque étape de la production de la phrase de sortie.(la phrase cible). D'autres modèles de traduction automatique décomposent une phrase d'entrée en ensembles de mots et de phrases, les mettant en correspondance avec un mot ou une phrase dans la langue cible. Les systèmes neuronaux de traduction automatique peuvent remplacer de nombreuses limitations des autres méthodes et produisent souvent des traductions de meilleure qualité.

Contrairement à la traduction humaine, qui nécessite beaucoup de ressources et elle est plus lente, les outils automatisés peuvent créer beaucoup de textes en grande

quantité et plus rapidement et moins cher donc d'une façon plus économique. La traduction automatique combine l'IA, l'apprentissage automatique et le traitement automatique du langage naturel (TALN). L'objectif est de décoder le sens, l'intention et le contexte du texte source et de le réencoder avec précision dans la langue cible.

Au lieu de s'appuyer sur des règles linguistiques mais en utilisant quand même les recherches en linguistique, la traduction automatique statistique utilise la machine learning pour traduire le texte. Les algorithmes de machine learning analysent de grandes quantités de traductions humaines déjà existantes et recherchent des modèles statistiques. Le logiciel fait ensuite un travail intelligent lorsqu'on lui demande de traduire un nouveau texte source. Il effectue des suppositions, des prédictions sur la base de la probabilité statistique qu'un mot ou une phrase spécifique puissent être avec un autre mot ou une autre phrase dans la langue cible.

Traduction automatique basée sur la syntaxe. La traduction automatique basée sur la syntaxe est une sous-catégorie de la traduction automatique statistique. Elle utilise des règles grammaticales pour traduire les unités syntaxiques. Elle analyse les phrases pour incorporer des règles syntaxiques dans les modèles statistiques de traduction. Le processus de traduction (au sens humain) peut être découpé en trois phases selon le triangle de Vauquois : compréhension, de verbalisation, re expression.(Vauquois Bernard : 1968)

Le Triangle de Vauquois est le modèle pour les fondements de la traduction automatique .

Si nous approfondissons un peu les trois aspects analysés par Vauquois nous définissons La Compréhension comme étant l'assimilation du sens véhiculé par un texte, c'est a dire de ce qu'un auteur veut dire. La Deverbalisation selon Vauquois est l'opération par laquelle un sujet prend conscience du sens du message en perdant conscience des mots et des phrases qui lui ont donné corps. La Re expression selon le même auteur est la reformulation du vouloir dire en langue cible. Analysés par les informaticiens la compréhension est concue comme une Analyse La De verbalisation devient Transfert et la Ré expression devient la Génération. Ce modèle linguistique est utile pour passer de la source a la cible par quatre moyens modélises dans le triangle de Vauquois indiqués dans le modèle ci dessus et que nous essayons d'expliquer brièvement:

1. Le transfert direct est un processus de décodage, toute la traduction repose sur le transfert car la traduction repose sur le modèle statistique.

2. Le transfert syntaxique est basé sur l'arbre syntaxique. L'analyse (la compréhension) produit une représentation syntaxique pour la langue source. Le transfert (la Deverbalisation) consiste à produire une représentation syntaxique pour la langue cible à partir de ce dernier. Finalement, La génération (la Re expression) produit la phrase en langue cible. La traduction automatique à base de règles est représentative de cette catégorie. Les règles permettent les différentes transformations.

3. Le transfert sémantique : la voie sémantique caractérise les humains. Ce modèle est décrit par la pragmatique tenant compte de l'attitude du sujet énonciateur par rapport à son énonce. C'est pour cela qu'il y a peu d'approches de la traduction automatique réalisées par le transfert sémantique. Au sommet du triangle de Vauquois il y a L'Interlangue est un niveau qui supprime la nécessité de transfert. L'inter langue, connue sous le nom de langue pivot devient universelle.

Ce qui reste c'est seulement le processus d'analyse et de génération. Le langage UNL est aussi un exemple de langage formel informatique permettant de représenter le sens d'un énoncé. L'approche est importante, car cela signifie que pour une langue donnée, il faut produire un analyseur et un générateur pour l'interlangue. On bénéficie alors de toutes les traductions de la langue source à la langue cible ou vers les langues concernant aussi l'analyseur et le générateur. Cette approche reste problématique et difficile et n'est pas arrivé à un grand succès.

Par conséquent plus le degré de conceptualisation est élevé, plus court est le chemin du transfert. Plus nous essayons d'éclaircir le domaine de la traduction automatique plus nous rencontrons des difficultés dans ce domaine qui connaît une révolution

technologique extrêmement rapide et très profond. Je vais conclure alors par une question: la traduction automatique peut-elle remplacer la traduction humaine ?

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Title in English: ***Plurilingualism from a European perspective and translations***

Abstract in English: *Plurilingualism was first equivalent to multilingualism when referencing plurilingual communities, where multiple languages were spoken in a community There is plurilingualism a distinction of plurilingualism was necessary to differentiate individual and society. Plurilingualism was used to focus on the individual as the agent in the interaction of languages, since multilingualism was a societal contact of languages. Plurilingualism does not necessarily mean a person is fluent in multiple languages; it means that a person can use more than one language with others when a situation calls for it. A person is considered competent in plurilingualism when they can speak in one language while understanding another, and can switch between languages when appropriate and/or necessary.*

Keywords in English*: plurilingualism, diversity, communication*

Bridging Minds: Memory, Language, and the Art of Translation

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Abstract

The article "Bridging Minds: Memory, Language, and the Art of Translation" explores the intricate relationship between cognitive memory, linguistic systems, and the translation process. Memory plays a crucial role in language learning, comprehension, and retention, making it an essential cognitive tool for translators. The article delves into how memory supports the complex task of translation, where the translator must recall linguistic structures, cultural nuances, and specialized terminology. Through an analysis of translation theories and practical strategies, the article highlights how memory shapes decision-making and enhances the accuracy and fluency of translations. Ultimately, "Bridging Minds" aims to provide insight into the symbiotic relationship between memory and language, offering a deeper understanding of how the art of translation is both a cognitive and creative process.

Keywords

memory; cognitive processes; language learning; translation accuracy

1. Introduction

Translation has always felt to me like a unique and profound art, one that goes far beyond merely exchanging words between languages. It's an intricate process where I interpret meaning, preserve cultural context, and strive to bridge the gap between diverse ways of thinking. At the heart of this process lies something I deeply rely on: memory. Memory is the unseen engine that powers my ability to learn languages, comprehend their nuances, and recall vital information, making it indispensable in my work as a translator.

I wanted to delve into the fascinating interplay between memory and language, exploring how this relationship shapes the translation process. By examining translation theories, cognitive strategies, and the creative aspects of the craft, I hope to uncover how memory enhances both the accuracy and artistry of translation. For me, this journey is also about celebrating the translator's role, not just as someone who moves words between languages, but as a cognitive artist who bridges minds and cultures in the most meaningful way.

2. The confrontation with the topic

The relationship between memory, language, and the art of translation reveals a deeply intertwined cognitive and creative process that is both intellectually demanding

and artistically enriching. Memory, as the backbone of translation, enables the translator to navigate complex linguistic systems, recall vast repositories of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and adapt to cultural nuances. It facilitates the retention of context, the interpretation of tone, and the seamless integration of idiomatic expressions, all while balancing the demands of accuracy and fluency. Yet, translation is not merely a mechanical application of memory; it is a profoundly creative act that requires the translator to interpret meaning, convey emotion, and preserve cultural essence. Memory supports this creativity by offering a rich repository of prior experiences, linguistic knowledge, and cultural insights that inform decision-making and problem-solving. However, the process is fraught with challenges—cognitive overload, language interference, and the limits of memory itself often test the translator's skill and resilience. The integration of memory-enhancing strategies and technologies, such as translation memory software and glossary databases, exemplifies how translators adapt to these challenges. At the same time, the translator's identity as a bridge between cultures is forged through their deep engagement with memory and language, creating connections that transcend linguistic divides. This confrontation of cognitive rigor and creative ingenuity underscores that translation is far more than a technical skill; it is a testament to the human capacity to bridge minds, cultures, and worlds through the power of language and memory.

Translation is a multidimensional process that extends far beyond the simple act of substituting words between languages. At its foundation lies memory, the cognitive engine that powers the translator's ability to understand, retain, and recall linguistic structures, cultural nuances, and contextual meanings. Memory functions on multiple levels in the translator's mind. Working memory allows translators to hold and manipulate information momentarily, such as retaining the structure of a sentence while reformulating it in another language. Long-term memory serves as the repository for accumulated linguistic knowledge, specialized terminology, idiomatic expressions, and cultural insights. Semantic memory, on the other hand, stores the meanings and relationships between concepts, enabling translators to interpret and adapt context effectively. These interconnected forms of memory are vital tools for translators as they navigate the complexities of their work.

The foundation of translation begins even earlier, during the acquisition of multiple languages, a process deeply dependent on memory. Translators must build a rich vocabulary in both source and target languages and internalize complex grammar structures through repeated exposure and application. Beyond linguistic knowledge, memory also enables translators to absorb cultural frameworks, which are crucial for creating translations that resonate authentically with the intended audience. The translator's understanding of these cultural nuances often makes the difference between a functional translation and one that truly bridges cultural divides.

During the act of translation itself, memory plays a dynamic role, supporting the translator's ability to juggle multiple cognitive tasks. Translators must retain the meaning of the source text while simultaneously formulating the equivalent in the target language. This requires not only linguistic accuracy but also an awareness of the broader context and purpose of the text. The recall of specialized terminology is another crucial aspect, especially in fields such as law, medicine, and technology, where precision is paramount. Cultural nuances, including metaphors, idioms, and humor, must also be adapted skillfully to maintain their intended impact on the target audience.

Advances in technology have provided translators with tools to augment their memory, such as translation memory software, glossaries, and termbases. These tools store previously translated segments and industry-specific terms, allowing translators to ensure consistency and efficiency. Modern AI-powered tools also assist in predicting translations and suggesting alternatives, reducing the cognitive load on the translator's working memory. However, these tools complement rather than replace the translator's memory, highlighting the irreplaceable human element in the craft.

Translation is also a creative process that requires more than cognitive ability. This is especially evident in the translation of literature, poetry, or other artistic works, where preserving the tone, style, and emotional resonance of the source text often demands innovative solutions. Memory serves as a creative resource in these instances, allowing translators to adapt metaphors, idioms, and cultural references in ways that maintain the essence of the original while making it accessible to the target audience. Translators must also ensure stylistic consistency throughout a work, which involves drawing on their memory of the author's voice and the text's overall tone.

Despite its central role, memory is not without limitations, and translators often face challenges that test its reliability. Cognitive overload is a common issue, as the mental effort required to manage multiple linguistic systems can strain working memory. Fatigue, too, can impair memory function, leading to reduced accuracy and slower performance. Language interference, where the rules or expressions of one language intrude into another, is another potential pitfall. These challenges underscore the need for translators to adopt strategies to enhance memory, such as active recall, chunking information into manageable units, and using visual tools like mind maps to organize and connect concepts. Maintaining healthy habits, such as adequate sleep, exercise, and nutrition, also supports cognitive function and memory.

The relationship between memory and translation goes beyond practical application; it shapes the translator's very identity. Translators act as cultural intermediaries, drawing on their memory of diverse linguistic and cultural experiences to craft translations that resonate with authenticity and purpose. This deep connection allows them to bridge not only linguistic gaps but also cultural and emotional divides, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation across communities.

The interplay of memory and language reveals the true nature of translation as both a cognitive and creative endeavor. Memory supports the intellectual rigor required for accurate and precise translations, while also serving as a wellspring of creativity that enables translators to adapt meaning, style, and context with finesse. Ultimately, translation is a testament to the power of human cognition and creativity, an art form that bridges minds and cultures, connecting people across the boundaries of language.

Memory has been my most valuable ally in the translation process, acting as a foundation for every decision I make while working between languages. It has allowed me to retain and access an expansive repertoire of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, enabling fluid and accurate translations. For example, when faced with challenging technical texts, my long-term memory serves as a repository of previously encountered terminologies, saving time and ensuring consistency. Similarly, working memory allows me to hold the structure and meaning of complex sentences while I reformulate them in the target language.

Another way memory supports me is in adapting cultural nuances. I often draw on past experiences, whether it's recalling a metaphor I've previously translated or remembering how humor is expressed differently in another culture. These recollections not only enhance the accuracy of my translations but also ensure they resonate naturally with the target audience. Over time, my memory has also helped me develop an instinct for stylistic preferences, enabling me to maintain a consistent voice and tone, especially in literary or creative works.

Memory is a cornerstone in the translation of technical texts, where precision, consistency, and specialized knowledge are essential. Technical documents are characterized by their dense use of industry-specific terminology, standardized phrasing, and detailed instructions, making a translator's ability to recall and apply relevant knowledge crucial. Long-term memory plays a key role in retaining specialized terms and jargon, often accumulated through previous projects or training. This ensures that terms such as those used in medicine, engineering, or software localization are rendered accurately and consistently in the target language. Tools like glossaries and translation memory software augment this process by storing previously translated terms for quick and reliable access.

Consistency is another vital aspect of technical translation, as instructions and terms are often repeated throughout a document. Translators rely on memory to ensure uniformity in phrasing, which is critical for clarity and usability. For instance, safety instructions in a manual or repeated software commands must remain consistent to avoid confusion. Memory is also indispensable for understanding and applying contextual nuances. A term might have different interpretations depending on its application, and a translator must rely on their memory to select the appropriate version based on prior use or industry standards.

Technical texts often adhere to strict industry conventions, and memory allows translators to internalize these norms, ensuring compliance with client and regulatory requirements. For example, translators working in the legal or medical fields must remember and apply specific formats, phrases, and standards consistently. Memory also supports the effective handling of repetitive content. Sections like safety warnings or operational procedures, which frequently recur in technical documents, can be translated more efficiently and accurately when previous iterations are easily recalled.

Cultural considerations, though less prominent in technical texts, still require the translator's attention. Memory aids in adapting regional preferences for measurements, symbols, and date formats, ensuring that the document meets the expectations of its target audience. Moreover, the ability to recall past corrections or errors helps reduce mistakes and enhances the overall quality of translations.

Over time, memory helps build a repository of knowledge that becomes an invaluable resource for future projects. Each technical document contributes to a translator's growing expertise in their field, enabling them to work with greater speed and confidence.

In essence, memory underpins the translator's ability to deliver high-quality, accurate technical translations. While tools like translation memory software provide significant support, the translator's cognitive skills remain central to meeting the rigorous demands of technical fields. Memory's role extends beyond the immediate task, serving as both a practical tool and a repository of expertise that grows with each project, ensuring efficiency, precision, and reliability.

Translating the scientific text Cognitive Neuroscience was both a challenging and rewarding experience. The book provides a profound exploration of memory, not just as a cognitive process but as a fundamental component of how we learn, adapt, and navigate the world. Its focus on the mechanisms of memory, its role in learning, and its implications for cognitive development presented a new perspective that is both enlightening and intricate.

What made the translation process complicated was the highly specialized language and depth of detail in the text. The terminology was rooted in both psychology and neuroscience, fields with their own complex lexicons. Ensuring the accuracy of technical terms, while maintaining the flow and accessibility of the language for the intended audience, required constant cross-referencing and deep engagement with the material. Concepts like synaptic plasticity, neural pathways, and the intricate interplay between memory systems demanded not only linguistic precision but also a clear understanding of the subject matter. This was further complicated by the need to adapt examples and metaphors for a potentially different cultural context without losing their educational value.

Memory, fittingly, played a central role in my ability to tackle this translation. My long-term memory allowed me to draw on previous experiences with medical and

scientific texts, recalling terminology, standard structures, and translation strategies. Working memory was essential as I navigated complex sentences, holding their structure and meaning while reformulating them for clarity and coherence in the target language. I also relied on semantic memory to understand and convey the deeper relationships between concepts, ensuring that the translation captured not just the words but the intent and purpose of the text.

During this process, I encountered several curiosities about memory itself that enriched my perspective. For instance, the book delves into how different types of memory episodic, semantic, procedural interact in unique ways, such as how muscle memory can aid learning in cognitive tasks. Another fascinating insight was the discussion on memory consolidation during sleep, emphasizing its importance in retaining new information a fact that resonated personally as I worked long hours, often reviewing translations the next morning with fresh eyes.

To maintain an open and healthy mind as a translator, especially when engaging with such demanding material, I've learned the importance of mental and physical self-care. Regularly challenging your brain with diverse texts, new languages, or unfamiliar fields can keep your cognitive abilities sharp. Practices like meditation, mindfulness, and even exercise have been shown to improve memory and focus, which are invaluable for translators. Staying socially and intellectually active engaging in discussions, reading widely, or taking courses can also promote long-term cognitive health.

Maintaining a balanced lifestyle is just as important. Ensuring proper sleep, as the book highlights, is critical for memory consolidation. A healthy diet, rich in nutrients that support brain health (like omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and vitamins), is another key factor. For translators who want to sustain their careers into old age, cultivating habits like lifelong learning, curiosity, and adaptability can make all the difference. Staying open to technological advances, such as translation memory tools and AI, can also reduce the mental strain of repetitive tasks, allowing us to focus on the creative and cognitive aspects of translation.

Memory is among the most complex and sensitive cognitive functions in the human body. It is highly dependent on the brain's intricate networks, making it vulnerable to a range of factors. Stress, fatigue, aging, and even mild nutrient deficiencies can impair memory. Additionally, memory is one of the first functions affected in neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, highlighting its fragility. This vulnerability stems from the brain's reliance on biochemical processes to encode, store, and retrieve information processes that can be disrupted by physical, emotional, or environmental changes. The translation process involves several stages, all requiring intense cognitive engagement and careful attention to detail. First, the translator reads and comprehends the source text, ensuring they grasp its meaning, tone, and intent. Next, they analyze cultural and contextual nuances, adapting the text to suit the target

audience. The actual translation is often done in fragments, with the translator breaking the text into manageable sections to maintain focus and accuracy. During this phase, they rely on memory to recall terminology, grammar rules, and cultural references. After translating, the text undergoes editing and revision to refine language, improve flow, and ensure fidelity to the original. This iterative process demands both linguistic precision and creative adaptation to balance accuracy with readability.

When translating in fragments, a translator must exhibit several qualities:

1. **Focus and attention to detail:** Working with small sections ensures accuracy but requires the translator to maintain a keen eye on each word and phrase.

2. **Contextual awareness:** Translating in fragments can risk losing the overall flow and meaning of the text. A good translator constantly reviews the broader context to ensure consistency and coherence.

3. **Patience and analytical thinking:** breaking a text into smaller parts demands methodical thinking, allowing the translator to fully analyze each segment before moving to the next.

4. **Strong memory:** translators must recall terms, phrases, and cultural nuances from previous sections to ensure continuity.

5. **Adaptability:** while working in fragments, translators must also adapt their style and approach to match the intended audience and purpose of the text.

The most challenging aspect of translating the book *Cognitive Neuroscience* was its highly specialized terminology and the intricate explanations of complex processes related to memory and brain function. Concepts such as synaptic plasticity, neural encoding, and the biochemical pathways involved in memory formation required not just linguistic precision but also a deep understanding of the subject matter. The interdisciplinary nature of the text, which combined elements of psychology, neuroscience, and education, added another layer of complexity. Balancing technical accuracy with accessibility for a general audience made the task even more demanding, as I had to ensure the translation retained the original depth while remaining clear and engaging.

Another difficulty was the cultural adaptation of examples and metaphors. Some analogies used to explain cognitive concepts were tied to specific cultural or linguistic frameworks, requiring creative solutions to make them meaningful to the target audience without losing their educational value. Additionally, maintaining the academic tone of the text while ensuring readability was a delicate balancing act, particularly when dealing with dense, jargon-heavy passages. To navigate the complexities of translating Cognitive Neuroscience, I employed an array of strategies and tools that collectively eased the process and ensured the quality of the final work. Research was indispensable; I immersed myself in medical dictionaries, neuroscience textbooks, and academic papers to grasp the technical terms and concepts thoroughly. Reliable online resources and peer-reviewed journals further clarified intricate ideas,

providing the depth of understanding necessary to convey the material accurately. Alongside this, I developed a comprehensive glossary of key terms throughout the project, which proved invaluable for maintaining consistency.

3. Conclusions

Translation is a testament to the incredible potential of the human mind. Memory serves as the foundation for this art, enabling translators to navigate the complexities of language, culture, and meaning. Far from being a simple cognitive process, translation is a creative endeavor that bridges minds and cultures, connecting people across linguistic divides.

In the paper I have explored how memory underpins every aspect of translation, from language acquisition to the creative challenges of adapting texts. By understanding and enhancing the role of memory, translators can continue to refine their craft, ensuring that their work remains a vital link in the global exchange of ideas and understanding.

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