CROSSING BOUNDARIES IN CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2

Crossing Boundaries in Culture and Communication

Journal of the Department of Foreign Languages, Romanian-American University

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CROSSING BOUNDARIES IN CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2

PRO UNIVERSITARIA
2025
BUCUREŞTI

Editat de **Pro Universitaria SRL**, editură cu prestigiu recunoscut.

Editura **Pro Universitaria** este acreditată CNCS în domeniul Științelor Umaniste și CNATDCU (lista A2-Panel 4) în domeniul Științelor Sociale.

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ISSN = 2248 – 2202
ISSN-L = 2248 – 2202

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www.prouniversitaria.ro
Editura Pro Universitaria

Librăria UJmag:
tel.: 0733.673.555; 021.312.22.21
e-mail: comenzi@ujmag.ro
www.ujmag.ro
Ujmag.ro

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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, Communication, Arts and Media Translation Studies and their related fields, providing opportunities fo 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, media etc. which also allow complementary approaches in linguistics, rhetoric, sociology etc.

The present issue includes three sections: Literature and Cultural Studies, Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching and Teaching Methodologies. 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 ♦

Poetic Style in Ion Pillat`s First Poems

Steliana-Mădălina DEACONU
Titu Maiorescu University Bucharest

Abstract

The present paper focuses on the poetic style in Ion Pillat`s first poems, namely in the poems that have been discovered recently. It aims at identifying and analyzing the main figures of speech, mainly the metaphors and similes. After a brief presentation of the way Ion Pillat`s first poems have been discovered, there are some metaphors examined in full detail from the point of view of the cognitive linguistics and that of Group μ, as well as some similes examined from the point of view of the traditional linguistics, namely that of Group μ.

Keywords

cognitive linguistics, traditional linguistics, cognitive metaphor, metaphoric mechanism, similes

1. Introduction – The Newly-Discovered First Poems of Ion Pillat

The aim of this paper is to give a brief insight into the poetic style of Ion Pillat`s first poems, namely the poems he wrote between 1905 and 1912, which have been discovered recently.

Mention should be made of the fact that, along the years, thanks to the constant efforts of numerous researchers and literary critics, many texts belonging to the poet Ion Pillat, never published before, have been discovered. Just when it was believed that nothing more could surface, two manuscripts containing entire sets of poems were found.

The first manuscript was discovered in 2021 in an art antiquarian bookshop in Bucharest. It is a kind of journal belonging to a young woman, which has quotes and dedications written by friends in French, Italian, and Romanian. It contains 32 undated poems by Ion Pillat, and at the end, there are 11 more poems signed by C.N. Fillitti. It appears that the journal belonged to Florica Rosetti, who is believed to have been Pillat's first and true love. She herself dabbled in poetry, sending her first verses to Pillat in Paris, where he was studying, to get his opinion about them. In turn, Pillat sent her his poems, and she was delighted to be his muse. It is very likely that she grouped the poems that she had received along time into five thematic cycles: Songs, Ballads and Idylls, Words by Ion Pillat, Twilight, Philosophical and Lyrical Poems, Other Poems.

Florica Rosetti's notebook has preserved numerous unpublished texts as well as early variants written by Pillat in his youth, that differ greatly from those published in various volumes later on. The comparison of these variants is very interesting as it reveals how his poetry might have been without the influence of the great universal poetry, which he studied thoroughly in Paris.

Ion Pillat's early poetry shows a poetic style which is not distinctive or special, but rather an interweaving of traditionalism with modern literary currents such as Parnassianism and Symbolism. Pillat's early poems often explore rural landscapes, vivid lyrical vision of nature, childhood memories and spiritual or religious elements, with personal introspection playing an essential part. His verse crafting is refined, combining rigorous traditional form with innovative brevity.

2. Cognitive analysis of metaphors

We proceed by analysing some metaphors identified in the newly-discovered first poems of Ion Pillat.

(1) "Twilight, the gentle traveler who pours dreams into the soul"[1] (Pillat 2025: 97)

From the cognitive linguistics point of view, "the gentle traveler" is a conceptual metaphor[2]. Thus, the following elements can be identified:

i. *twilight* – target, vehicle, focus space. It is in attribute relation with the base domain.

ii. *gentle traveler* – source, tenor, base space.

iii. Common features / generic space / ground – [+calmness] + [+transition], and [+quiet presence]. Both "twilight" and "gentle traveler" evoke a sense of peaceful movement: twilight marks the gentle transition from day to night, while the traveler moves softly and thoughtfully. They symbolize a serene passage, bringing subtle change and introspective feelings, just like the way twilight gently changes the light and atmosphere.

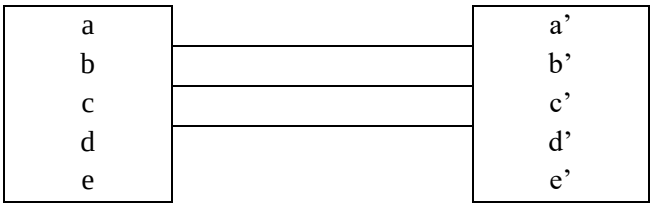
iv. The blended space (the new emergent understanding) – Ion Pillat creates a marvelous, picturesque landscape of a long-gone reality. Both the source and the target are present in the text.

The above example can also be seen from the point of view of the discourse world theory, which considers the cognitive tracking of entities, relations and processes to be a mental space. In order to understand and represent reality, Ion Pillat builds a mental space which contains mental representations of everything that can be perceived in real space (also called *base space*). Pillat's poem is a blended space, a space that combines the other spaces and which has specific features emerging from

[1] Our translation of the original verse "Amurgul, blândul călător ce varsă vis în suflet" (Pillat 2025: 97)

[2] In cognitive linguistics, the association between the target and the source domains is called conceptual metaphor. Cognitive linguistics refers to the process of metaphor as a mapping of properties between the two spaces or domains (Stockwell 2002: 107), (Lakoff, Turner 1989: 78-80), (Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 4-5)

the mapping. Here are the stages that can be referred to: cross-space mapping, generic space and blend.



Base Space / Real Space / Idealised Conceptual Model (ICM)	Projected Hypothetical Space/ Fictional Space / Blend
a = twilight	a'= "gentle traveler"
b = a song was being sung	b'= "a song is swinging"
c = twilight bringing melancholy f or the forever gone past	c'= "twilight pouring dreams in souls"
d = wishes	d'= "treasures of the forever gone realities"

In the base space (real space), there are basic level categories and objects. It is a familiar representation of life, with familiar entities and familiar structure. Thus, there are twilights, songs, wishes, etc. In the projected space (hypothetical space), there are "gentle traveler", songs that "are swinging", twilights that are "pouring dreams in souls", "treasures of forever gone realities".

The generic space contains the commonalities of the two spaces, namely common general nodes and relationships across the spaces. In the projected hypothetical space/ Blend, Pillat creates a world that seems to be like the ICM but, however, it is an entirely different world. In this fictional space, the elements of reality are transfigured in order to point to the forever gone past and to generate profound sadness for the irreversible passage of time.

a', b', c' are counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space.

(2) "The north wind, the winter beggar, is still knocking at the window"[3] (Pillat 2025: 99)

From the cognitive linguistics point of view, "the winter beggar" is a conceptual metaphor. Thus, the following elements can be identified:

i. the north wind – target, vehicle, focus space. It is in attribute relation with the base domain.

[3] Our translation of the original verses "Crivățul, milogul iernii, tot mai bate la fereastră" (Pillat 2025: 99)

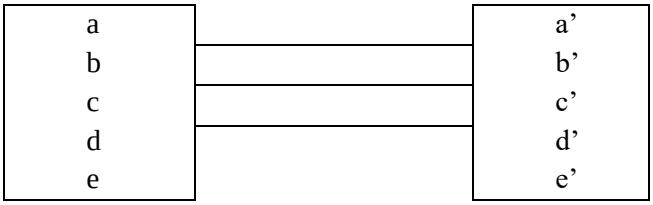
ii. *the winter beggar*– source, tenor, base space.

iii. Common features / generic space / ground – [+harshness] + [+persistence]

iv. The blended space (the new emergent understanding) – Ion Pillat creates a world in which the lonely poet remembers the forever gone past. The image of the cold winter wind that comes to the window is impressive, symbolizing hardship and the unyielding nature of winter, emphasizing an intrusive and demanding presence and highlighting the winter's tough, relentless character as it presses against the shelter, seeking entry or attention.

Both the source and the target are present in the text.

The example can also be seen from the point of view of the discourse world theory:



Base Space / Real Space / Idealised Conceptual Model (ICM)	Projected Hypothetical Space/ Fictional Space / Blend
a = the north wind	a'= "*the winter beggar*"
b = frost	b'= "ice flowers"
c = New Year`s arrival	c'= "the New Year guest", "old friend"

In the base space (real space), there are basic level categories and objects. It is a familiar representation of life, with familiar entities and familiar structure. Thus, there is the north wind, frost, New Year`s arrival, etc. In the projected space (hypothetical space), there are "the winter beggar", "ice flowers", "the New Year guest", "old friend", etc.

a', b', c' are counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space.

In the projected hypothetical space/ Blend, Pillat creates a world that seems to be like the ICM but, however, it is an entirely different world, containing **a', b', c'** as counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space.

(3) "I am a cradle: within me so many longings are born…/ I am a coffin: within me so many longings die."[4] (Pillat 2025: 107) –

[4] Our translation of the original verses "Un leagăn sunt: în mine nasc atâtea doruri…/ Sunt un sicriu: în mine mor atâtea doruri" (Pillat 2025: 107)

From the cognitive linguistics point of view, “cradle” and “coffin” are conceptual metaphors. Thus, the following elements can be identified:

i. *poet* – target, vehicle, focus space. It is in attribute relation with the base domain.

ii. *cradle* – source, tenor, base space.

iii. *coffin*– source, tenor, base space.

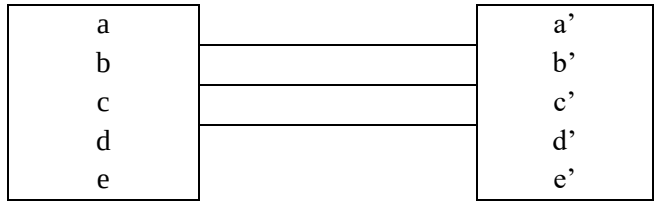
iv. Common features / generic space / ground (for “cradle”)– [+the quality of being origins or sources from which something begins or is nurtured]. In this metaphor, man is portrayed as a vessel or source from which desires, emotions, or longings arise, just as a cradle is a place of safety and beginning for a baby, symbolizing birth and potential. This association of terms emphasizes the idea that human beings are the containers of emotions and longings, nurturing them internally as a cradle would nurture a child.

v. Common features / generic space / ground (for “coffin”)– [+the commonality of being vessels or containers where things come to an end or cease to exist]. In the case of this metaphor, man is seen as a container in which longings and desires die or fade away just as a coffin holds the dead and symbolizes the finality of life. The poet emphasizes human mortality, emotional closure as well as the inevitability of endings within human experience. At the same time, the coffin also points to transition, marking the passage from life to death, which in human terms can signify the emotional death or loss of hopes and desires. Therefore, both man and coffin relate as holders of cessation—places where something vital comes to rest or concludes—highlighting themes of mortality, loss and the transient nature of inner emotional life.

vi. The blended space (the new emergent understanding) – Ion Pillat creates a highly poetic representation of human fate, from birth to death, from cradle to coffin.

Both the source and the target are present in the text.

From the point of view of the discourse world theory, the blended space can be represented as follows:



Base Space / Real Space /
Idealised Conceptual Model (ICM)
a = poet
b =poet

Projected Hypothetical Space/
Fictional Space / Blend
a’= “cradle”
b’= “coffin”

In the base space (real space), there are basic level categories and objects. It is a familiar representation of life, with familiar entities and familiar structure. Thus, there talented, sensitive poets, etc. In the projected space (hypothetical space), there are "cradles "coffins", etc.

a', b', c' are counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space.

In the projected hypothetical space/ Blend, Pillat creates a world that seems to be like the ICM but, however, it is an entirely different world. In this literary world, man is both "cradle" and "coffin", beginning and end. These metaphors reflect the human condition, where inner life is born and can perish within oneself. They embody the cyclical nature of life and emotions—birth, growth, decay and death—capturing the paradoxical experience of hope and despair that coexist in the human soul. Humans carry both creation and destruction within themselves, reflecting the cycle of desires arising and fading within the self, just like life arising from a cradle and ending in a coffin.

3. Traditional analysis of metaphors

Here are some examples of metaphors taken from the recently discovered first poems of Ion Pillat, which are analysed from the traditional stylistics` point of view, namely using the method of analysis introduced by Group μ.

(1) "The frost sprinkled the trees with dew of precious stones"[5] (Pillat 2025: 101)

It is a metaphor *in praesentia*, obtained by the omission-addition operation, the writing degree zero being [+sparkling in light] + [+round/elongated shape].

This metaphor points to a solid state object "frost" by means of a liquid state object "dew of precious stones". The metaphoric mechanism (supression-addition of semes) can be presented as follows:

1. the reader notices a violation of the discourse logic;

2. the reader resorts to a reduction when looking for the third term (I) which is the bridge between the two above mentioned terms:

D → (I) → A

"frost" → (I) → "dew of precious stones"

D = [solid state] + [+sparkling in light] + [+round/elongated shape]

A = [+sparkling in light] + [+round/elongated shape] + [liquid state]

The two different lexemes (D, A) have the following common semes: [+sparkling in light] + [+round/elongated shape]. Therefore, there is a (Sg+Sp)Σ conceptual metaphor.

[5] Our translation of the original "Gerul a stropit copacii cu rouă de pietre scumpe" (Pillat 2025: 101)

(I) is a generalization synecdoche of D (because it supresses some semes of "frost" and by supressing semes, a generalization is obtained) and A is a synecdochy of I (because other semes are added to [+sparkling in light] + [+round/elongated shape] in order to form the class of the semes of the term "dew of precious stones").

(2) "I feel myself a spark"[6] (Pillat 2025: 101)

It is a metaphor *in absentia*, obtained by the omission-addition operation, the writing degree zero being [+illuminating].

This metaphor points to an abstract element "divine light" by means of a real element "spark". The metaphoric mechanism (supression-addition of semes) can be presented as follows:

1. the reader notices a violation of the discourse logic;

2. the reader resorts to a reduction when looking for the third term (I) which is the bridge between the two above mentioned terms:

D → (I) → A

"divine light" → (I) → "spark"

D = [abstraction] + [+absolut truth] + [+illuminating]

A = [+plasma] + [+electrically conductive] + [light] + [+illuminating]

The two different lexemes (D, A) have the following common seme: [+illuminating]. Therefore, there is a (Sg+Sp)Σ conceptual metaphor.

(I) is a generalization synecdoche of D (because it supresses some semes – [abstraction] + [+absolut truth] – of "divine light" and by supressing semes, a generalization is obtained) and A is a synecdochy of I (because other semes – [+plasma] + [+electrically conductive] + [light] – are added to [+illuminating] in order to form the class of the semes of the term "spark").

(3) "I would very much like to fly far away, bird longing for the sun"[7] (Pillat 2025: 77)

It is a metaphor *in absentia*, obtained by the omission-addition operation, the writing degree zero being [+loonging] + [+aspiration].

This metaphor points to a human being "man longing for Divine Light "by means of a animated being" bird longing for the sun". The metaphoric mechanism (supression-addition of semes) can be presented as follows:

1. the reader notices a violation of the discourse logic;

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[6] Our translation of the original "Mă simt însuși o scânteie" (Pillat 2025: 101)

[7] Our translation of the original "Mult aș vrea să zbor departe pasăre cu dor de soare" (Pillat 2025: 77)

2. the reader resorts to a reduction when looking for the third term (I) which is the bridge between the two above mentioned terms:

D → (I) → A
"man longing for Divine Light" → (I) → "bird longing for the sun"
D = [+human being] + [+longing] + [+aspiration]
A = [+animated being] + [+longing] + [+aspiration]

The two different lexemes (D, A) have the following common semes: [+longing] + [+aspiration]. Therefore, there is a (Sg+Sp)Σ conceptual metaphor.

(I) is a generalization synecdoche of D (because it supresses a seme – [+animated being] – of "man longing for Divine Light" and by supressing semes, a generalization is obtained) and A is a synecdochy of I (because other semes – [+animated being] – are added to [+longing] + [+aspiration] in order to form the class of the semes of the term "bird longing for the sun").

The well-known symbol of bird is usually associated with the human soul and spirituality. Birds have transcendent powers and are similar to angels, standing for thought, imagination and delicacy of spiritual processes. A bird will always point to man`s desire to ascend, to return to a higher state of consciousness. Just like birds are not meant to be caged, so people are not meant to be limited, always confined to a mortal, flesh and blood existence, but to aspire to achieve a higher self.

4. Traditional analysis of similes[8]

(1) "They have taken off like falcons in flight"[9] (Pillat 2025: 77)

This simile, introduced by "like", establishes an analogy between the term "people", which is absent in the poem, and "falcons". They have in common the seme [+ rapidity]. The term A is "people", whereas the term B is "falcons". Therefore, the domains [C] →[C] are associated.

From the syntactical point of view, it can be concluded that this simile is simple, of the type A is (x) like B.

(2) "They went away like a shadow after a cloud."[10] (Pillat 2025: 77)

This simile, introduced by "like", establishes an analogy between the term "people", which is absent in the poem, and "shadow after a cloud". They have in common the seme [+ inseparability]. The term A is "people", whereas the term B is "shadow after a cloud". Therefore, the domains [C] →[C] are associated.

[8] The traditional analysis of similes in made in accordance with the method of analysis suggested by Mihaela Mancaș in *Modern Romanian Artistic Language. Sketch of Evolution*.

[9] Our translation of the original "Ca șoimii-n zbor ei au pornit"[9] (Pillat 2025: 77)

[10] Our translation of the original "S-au dus, ca umbra după nori" (Pillat 2025: 77)

From the syntactical point of view, it can be concluded that this simile is simple, of the type A is (x) like B.

(3) "On the heart's emptiness / There gently settles / The silent pain like dead leaves.…"[11] (Pillat 2025: 85)

This simile, introduced by "like", establishes an analogy between the term "pain", which is present in the poem, and "dead leaves", which is also present in the poem. They have in common the semes [+ inevitability] + [ephemerality]. The term A is "silent pain", whereas the term B is "dead leaves". Therefore, the domains [A] →[C] are associated.

From the syntactical point of view, it can be concluded that this simile is simple, of the type A is (x) like B.

(4) "With the skirt tied at the waist, / Veiled like an ear of wheat"[12]

This simile, introduced by "like", establishes an analogy between the term "skirt", which is present in the poem, and "ear of wheat", which is also present in the poem. They have in common the semes [fluffed] + [+ natural grace] + [simplicity]. The term A is "skirt", whereas the term B is "ear of wheat". Therefore, the domains [C] →[C] are associated.

From the syntactical point of view, it can be concluded that this simile is simple, of the type A is (x) like B.

(5) "Like a torch, the thoughtful evening star lights up / Like a prayer, the breath of the wind is heard."[13] (Pillat 2025: 96)

Both similes are introduced by "like".

The former simile establishes an analogy between the term "evening star", which is present in the poem, and "torch", which is also present in the poem. They have in common the semes [+ giving light]. The term A is "evening star", whereas the term B is "torch". Therefore, the domains [C] →[C] are associated.

The latter simile, introduced by "like", establishes an analogy between the term "breath of wind", which is present in the poem, and "prayer", which is also present in the poem. They have in common the semes [+gentle sound]. The term A is "breath of wind", whereas the term B is "prayer". Therefore, the domains [C] →[A] are associated.

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[11] Our translation of the original "P-al inimii gol/ S-așterne domol/ Durerea tăcută ca frunzele moarte" (Pillat 2025: 85)

[12] Our translation of the original "Cu catrința prinsă-n brâu,/ Învoalată ca un spic de grâu" (Pillat 2025: 79).

[13] Our translation of the original "Drept faclă se aprinde luceafăr gânditor/ Drept rugă se aude a vântului suflare"[13] (Pillat 2025: 96).

From the syntactical point of view, it can be concluded that this simile is a multiple simile, namely a ramified one (A is (x) like B1, (y) like B2).

5. Conclusions

Based on the analyzed corpus of poems, one can conclude that similes prevail. The most frequent corelating term is "like". At the same time, most of the similes are formed by means of the verb "to be". Other verbs by means of which similes are formed are "to take off", "to go away", "to go", "to settle". From the semantic point of view, similes associate the domains [C] →[C]. Mention should also be made of other associations such as [A] →[C], [C] →[A]. From the syntactical point of view, it can be concluded that most of comparisons are simple, of the type A is (x) like B. There have also been identified multiple similes, namely ramified ones of the type (A is (x) like B1, (y) like B2).

In point of metaphors, verbal metaphors are the dominant ones. Even if many of them are simple, unsophisticated, characteristic of the early 20th century Romanian poetic style, there are also special metaphors that consist in unusual associations of terms and, thus, generating surprise, such as "But there has been frosting in me" [14] (Pillat 2025: 77) or "Sun! Sun! It has spilled on the floor and on the ceiling"[15] (Pillat 2025: 101). Many of the metaphors create a magnificent scenery, such is the case of the metaphors: "Twilight is dying down, in the valley"[16] (Pillat 2025: 77), " The gentle dusk with its light / Wept on the hill and in the grove"[17] (Pillat 2025: 77), "The flame of the moon is shifting its spell"[18] (Pillat 2025: 77), "The frosted path sprinkling with rust / The leaves fall gently` [19] (Pillat 2025: 77), etc.. In fact, these unusual, special metaphors are a preview of the metaphors found in Pillat`s later stages of creation.

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[14] Our translation of the original "Dar a brumat în mine" (Pillat 2025: 77).

[15] Our translation of the original "Soare! Soare!.pe podele s-a vărsat și pe tavan" (Pillat 2025: 101).

[16] Our translation of the original "Amurgul moare jos în vale" (Pillat 2025: 77).

[17] Our translation of the original "Amurgul blând cu-a sa lumina/ Plângea pe deal și pe zăvoi" (Pillat 2025: 77)

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Truth in Literary and Historical Writing

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Abstract

It is only natural to witness to a change in the construction of novels as the society itself is always different. The ideal realm of the novels relies on the guarantee that readers will discover the meaningfulness of the characters' adventures and of the events described in the text. Another truth of the novels is their organizing principles of what has already happened in real world, the actual events which find their correspondence in the text the readers engage with. Let's take, for instance, factual hard fact like murder, deception, natural catastrophe, evil, human suffering in any possible manner. If the novels emerge as mere fantasy and fulfillment of imagination di doesn't necessarily mean that the facts mentioned above cannot be depicted according to the factuality. It only means that truth can be found in background, very vividly and accurate.

Keywords

fiction, social convention, factuality, quest, meaning

1. Introduction

Once we decide to write an article or to conduct research on a certain topic, a literary one in this case, we try to find an appropriate title, one which should contain the essence of that particular topic. We must confess that *Truth in literary and historical writing* might be considered a suggestive title but, at the same time, it cannot be seen as an authentic, a very original one. Nevertheless, in spite of such a flaw, it helps us to understand the reason of our paperwork: the role of narrative in both fiction and historical writing. Philosophers, novelists, poets, short story writers, philosophers, readers too, they all agree that a narrative process includes a historical situation, a social message and a concept called *truth*. Hayden White, a literary theorist, wrote in 1974: "*how* a given historical situation is configured depends on the historian's subtlety in matching a specific plot structure with the set of historical events that he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind. This is essentially a literary, that is to say, a fiction-making operation." (Ankersmit:1999, 3). In other words, if we compare history and the novel, a literary theorist will rather focus on the literary approach of historical writing. Such an interest should not make us reject the other dimension of the ambivalent relation, namely the novel's truth.

2. The confrontation

2.1. Philosophical approach

To his own question, Frank Ankersmit: "Does the novel give us access – albeit in its own peculiar way- to the same kind of truth that we express in singular true statements and in our assertions about states of affairs in the world?" (Ankersmit: 1999, 2) answers providing philosophers' points of view, such as Hospers[1] and T.M. Green[2].

Both of them have in common the same conclusion and such an approach is also embraced by Ankersmit: on the one hand, the view that the arts can lead the audience, the readers, to truth is rejected. On the other hand, they also provide their own route of arriving to truth by adapting the conventional theories of truth, in order to be applicable to the novel, without, avoiding the core of these theories of truth. Ankersmit brings to light the distinction between a*rtistic truth* and *propositional truth* or *truth.* In his article, *Truth in History and Literature*, Ankersmit highlights that before Kant and Schiller there was no demarcation line between two important domains, the one of knowledge and the one of aesthetics. Once this demarcation line appeared, the arts and aesthetics acquired a new and higher status, one they had never possessed before. So far, we have mentioned two fields, knowledge and aesthetics, but we should bring into discussion the one of truth, as well. What is the connection between knowledge, aesthetics (beauty) and truth? According to Ankersmit, the newly acquired status also had the disadvantage of expelling it from the field of Truth. In order to help undoing the damage brought by Kant and Schiller, other philosophers and writers, such as Gadamer[3], came up to the concept of Aesthetic Truth which, in fact, doesn't allow the reduction of Truth. Therefore, the relation between aesthetics (beauty), knowledge (science, religion, history) and truth is a valid one, a real one and truth turns out to be one of the three components, and not a distinct element.

At this point of our paperwork, we should list the concepts we have met so far in Ankersmit's article for a better comprehension and for highlighting their importance.

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[1] John Hospers, 9th of June 1918 – 12th of June 2011, American philosopher, author, essayist and political activist. He was Emeritus Professor in philosophy at the University of Southern California. He dedicated his research and focused on Objectivism. His work included studies on aesthetics, especially in his paper: "Understanding the Arts". He was also the first presidential nominee of the U.S. libertarian Party.

[2] Thomas Hill Green, 7th of April 1836 – 26 of March 1882, English philosopher, member of the British idealism movement, political activist. His idealism embraced political philosophy, philosophy of history and religion.

[3] Hans-Georg Gadamer, 11 February 1900 – 13 March 2002, German philosopher. He lectured in ethics and aesthetics. He taught at the Universities of Leipzig; Frankfurt am Main and Heidelberg. His most important work is "Truth and Method", published in 1960.

Aesthetics which dwells on the study of beauty, Knowledge which is related to science, history, Truth, Novel's Truth and Historical Truth, the last two of them could be considered parts of Truth's territory. Historical writings are endowed both with Truth and Aesthetics, thus we can speak of the aesthetic truth of the novel. Its purpose it to convey a Propositional Truth (Truth) but without abandoning the essence of the work of art, in this case literary pieces of work.

Using metaphors, suggestions, ambiguity, intertextuality, self-reflexiveness, language becomes a means of expressing data of experience. Language itself represents a field and it was traditionally the object of investigation in the humanities. Scientists always considered language and linguistic unable to express empirical facts and scientific theories, and therefore their incapacity to reveal truth. On the contrary, the advocates of the linguistic turn consider that complex literary texts contain questions of meaning and interpretation, such questions are in fact questions of truth. Therefore, novels have first-level of the truth about the world that are expressed in a text. And they also have the second level of truth about the world and whether those truths are valid and legitimate. We all agree that novels are such complex literary texts and all of them require interpretation and questioning about the real meaning of the matters described in their plots. The issue of meaning turns out to be the issue of expressing the truth. So, unlike scientists' belief, language can express truth and precise data, especially because in the humanities the issue of truth is closely related to the issue of meaning. Revealing the meaning and the one of truth are two independent procedures: understanding the meaning and its interpretation is the first process, and finding out the truth and the relationship between language and the world is the second process. However, both processes are entangled because the meaning determines the truth, once you understood the correct interpretation of the literary text, only then you will be able to find the truth in the background. Another interesting approach that Ankersmit explains in his article is Derrida's view, according to whom a textual meaning defines our world. That is why some of Derrida's advocates took his statement literally and tended to see the world itself as a text which need to be interpreted. Such approach was also adopted in cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, law. What do we know about novels? They are fictional texts and they do not necessarily dwell on describing a course of events that really happened; therefore, it does not make too much sense to wonder about the truth in the background or the novel's referent. Moreover, literary theorists, as we have already mentioned before, are rather interested in meaning and interpretation. But we also know that the text is also connected to the world, in spite of the fact that novel is a fictional one. That is why, deciding to what extent the novel represents actual reality is a difficult issue. Another difficult issue is to tell which of the many complicated theories about the interpretation of the literary text (e.g. phenomenology, structuralism, post-structuralism, hermeneutics, deconstructivism, semiotics, etc.) is the most valid and focused on finding both the text interpretation and

the truth which relies on it. Unlike novelists, historians write historical texts which we all expect to tell us the truth, even if we take into account some flaws, misinterpretations. Their texts are based on argument and documentary evidence. That's why we come to the conclusion that we deal with a historical truth and a truth of the literary text. The first one may help understanding the latter. The common ground between the novel and the historical text is achieved through a specific variant of the text, meaning narrative. We should also mention other types of texts such as poetry, letters, newspaper articles, articles of the law. Historical writings are in fact studies which characterize a specific historical period. Instead, a narrative text will provide an account for some events through time. In the twentieth-century, novels preserved their essential narrative form, but they were no longer narrativist. The narrative's truth is a concept which we would expect to be dealt with by philosophers interested in textual and narrativist truth. But, as Ankersmit drew the conclusion that not too many philosophers had something to say in this concern, in fact, with only one exception, this issue was totally disregarded. The exception is Galen Strawson[4]'s essay on the novel's explanatory function.

2.2. Experiencing the Past

Briefly, Strawson argues in his work that novels help experience the past, but that experience takes place in the present. The past can be considered and dealt with as present, by means of its value of historical present, without being labelled as past. Readers use self-experience or self-knowledge to understand the meaning of the literary text and to reveal the truth in the background. But once again, if we take into account Strawson's view, both self-experience and self-knowledge help us only to a certain extent as they can apply to the present. This brings us in front of a dispute concerning the novel's function and the autonomy of narrative, which is considered *post facto* by Ankersmit and, thus, we witness to a different story than the one it is narrated.

Chiefly, we live, afterwards we can tell the story about what we have lived. This is where narrative has its own autonomy with regard to life because the story might be written in a different way than the original experience, the first-hand experiences. There will always be the untold story, the true side of what happened in opposition to the narrative which approximates the personal story or history in general. Are stories lived or told? Are stories lived while they are told and read? Answering to these questions might turn out to be quite difficult. Another difficulty would be to understand

[4] Galen Strawson, born in 1952, he is a British philosopher and literary critic. He taught at the University of Oxford from 1979-2000, University of Reading, U.K. from 2001-2012 and the City University of New York Graduate Center from 2004-2007.

how stories could be told while they are lived, since certain philosophers took that possibility into account.

If we have doubts about the relation between life and narrative's function, we shouldn't have any such doubts when it comes about the purpose of narrative. It is the only way of looking at oneself and gaining self-knowledge through other's experience. Since we cannot experience everything throughout our own lives we can experience through somebody else's story, thanks to an inner mental process: listening to or reading the narrative, understanding the interpretation of what we listen or read, finally grasping the truth. All these three stages result into our episodic self-experiences and help us to conceive the world as being built up of individual experiences existing in time and space (for instance, we could think of history). Likewise, when we talk about historical writing, we have to be aware and to recognize the asymmetries between past and present. In spite of the fact that the intention is to relate to the past, many times historians fail to adequately take into account the correct and precise events when writing their narratives. Sometimes, the historians' inner mental processes are valid but they don't succeed to provide us with an explanation of a certain event. Historical writings invite us to consider notions like, for instance, the ancient history, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as part of the same historical route, because historians themselves created the feeling of unity and continuity between the two ages. In other words, unless their creation, we wouldn't have had the possibility of understanding and having the knowledge of typically historical events as the ones mentioned above. Does this creation of unity and continuity mean that historical narratives don't contain the truth or that they fail to reveal the truth as it really should be?

2.3. Truth as social convention

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. We still do not yet know where the drive for truth comes from. Because so far, we have heard only of the duty which society imposes in order to exist: to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors. Thus, to express it morally, this is the duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone. Now man of course forgets that this is the way things stand for him. Thus, he lies in the manner indicated, unconsciously and in accordance with habits which are centuries old; and precisely by means of this unconsciousness and forgetfulness he arrives at his sense of truth. (Nietzsche: 1873, 56)

In his essay, Nietzsche's considerations reflect the influences which he encountered during his time at the Universities of Bonn and Leipzig where he studied philology, the interpretation of ancient and biblical texts. We should mention other strong influences like John Winckelmann's *History of Art*, which brings to light ancient Greece as an example of simplicity, rational serenity, and artistic vision, and Arthur Schopenhauer's atheistic *The World as Will and Representation* which rejects religious constraints. In this essay, Nietzsche present the dichotomy of the rational man and the intuitive man. Nietzsche states that in fact truth is nothing else but a creation of conventions between people, human beings in order to interact better and in harmony. He also provides an argument for such an interaction, namely their feature of social creatures. Individuals feel the need to socialize because they are by their nature social creatures, they are endowed with the ability of communicating and sharing their needs, feelings, opinions to the others. Nevertheless, such a feature is not enough unless there are some rules to comply to. Their social interaction is governed by conventions of truth precisely because they want to socialize in peace. As long as all individuals obey to these constraints, they follow the truth and they are considered trustworthy by society. Once, they argue against these conventions and express their individual views they will be rejected or even expelled from the community.

Nietzsche doesn't believe in the concepts of truth as an objective and universal principle and language. The latter one doesn't have the power to convey a total truthful message, in other words language might have expressivity but it lacks the most important function: communicating total and objective truth. He also considers that words are, most of the times, imperfect metaphors. Likewise, the notions of time and space are invented by man to explain the empirical sciences, but they do not express the truth. If the man forgets that all these designations were made arbitrarily, then he can have the illusion that he knows the truth about life, world, science, religion and many other domains.

Primordial language was man's instrument through which an individual experience originating in artistic impulse became his own truth. But once conventions took the place of impulses, language gained autonomy in front of impulses. Man's faith was that language has the ability to represent reality and to adequately communicate truth. In fact, Nietzsche disagrees to this view, moreover he wonders whether the great inventions and rapid technological and scientific development have a real merit since many of them turned out to be a catastrophe such as the Great Depression in the United States of America. His explicit and drastic critique of language and social improvement, in fact, calls into question man's ability to set conventions about crucial notions like truth, beauty, justice, equity. In background we could also notice another critique to man's failure to deal with profound and important social contexts like wars, economical failure and other disruptive events. Often, if not too many times, people relied on their infallible ability to conceive schemes and structures meant to be

considered as recipes for solving universal issues or to provide mind framework. Nietzsche considers that reality proves that man doesn't have such an ability. On the contrary, he made mistakes and caused catastrophes throughout the human history.

2.4. Factuality and Fictionality

Nietzsche's view on truth triggers the distinction between factuality ad fictionality and the different reading or understanding strategies. In his essay "Is Factuality the Norm? A perspective from Cognitive Narratology", Marco Carraciolo tries to identify the connection between narrative and storytelling of personal experience and to what extent factuality can be considered primary. In his opinion, narratives of personal experience are grounded in real events. Nevertheless, we cannot tell for sure if readers or listeners are interested in factuality once they engage with narratives. In the beginning of their engagement with narratives, readers consider that all utterances are true, therefore, factual. Afterwards, they may identify that some of the utterances are falsified, therefore, fictional. Hence there is a psychological mechanism for identifying fictional information, a process of understanding the truth and the fiction in background of the narrative. Engaging with fiction has consequently real-world effects and may influence reader's beliefs and principles. Carraciolo distinguishes between two meanings of the adjective "factual": 1) facts which are to some extent real-world like; 2) facts "that are claimed to have verifiably occurred in the real world" (Carraciolo: 2020, 150). While the first meaning of factuality is a means of finding the correspondence between narrative and real world, the second meaning of factuality indicates the process of reporting on something that really happened. Carraciolo quotes Gerrig's "situation models" which in fact are mental structures which help readers and listeners to make analogy with their experiences. Readers use these constructs in order to understand the narrative interpretation; thus, this is the first step in deconstructing it. Factuality represents the ground of narrative comprehension and readers adopt "situation models" as strategies of interpreting the narratives. These strategies are, in fact, pragmatic factors which expand readers' research on finding the limit between factuality and fictionality.

These models remain unconscious patterns and serve as important tools in narrative comprehension. They enable readers to build a schematic representation of abstract knowledge. The same patterns also help the readers to identify and to follow the characters throughout the narrative. When the reader engages in narrative, he will try to match the text to a pattern. The elements of the text are the baseline of the process of understanding. The interpreters' aim is to understand the narrated events; hence they map them onto a "situation model". Such constructs are possible thanks to interpreters' past experiences and memories. Readers interpret the textual information

through perceptions that are based on real-world. Carraciolo quotes Fludernik's[5] definition of narratology: "complete continuity between narratives of personal experience and fictional narratives" (Carraciolo: 2020, 152). The way fictionality can shape readers 'principles, values and beliefs, the same way the factuality (such as certain social practice and context) can shape readers' narrative interpretation.

When reading literary texts, readers tend to allocate more resources to deconstruct the story in order to match it to Gerrig's[6] situation model they are familiar to. In other words, they pay attention to the linguistic level of the text (metaphorical language and creative uses of language). Since the story is framed as factual, its author encodes in it "causal relations between the narrated events" and invites his readers to decode them in order to deconstruct the thematic meanings.

Comprehension of narrative texts depends on their expectations and on the socio-cultural context they belong to. We have already mentioned that fiction can have a great impact on people's beliefs. Sometimes, this impact is as significant and profound as the factual narrative. In Carraciolo's article we find out about Green's conclusion that people are more likely to scrutinize factual narrative instead of the fictional one, which makes us understand that narrative can have the power of being more persuasive than reality itself. In spite of the fact that empirical accuracy is less or not at all visible in a fictional text, readers won't pay particular attention to it as they tend to do in case of a factual text.

In the conclusion of his article, Carraciolo states that to a certain extent, all narrative is perceived as factual since it is processed by utilizing constructs and patterns which have their ground in the real world. The fictional stories are a deviation from the real-world and readers are willing to assume that the story is factual. Psychologically speaking, readers' evaluation of narrative is less conscious, so that factuality and fictionality seem the same. Consequently, factuality does not have any precedence over fictionality. This discrepancy shows us that truth could be embedded in any kind of narrative as long as readers choose to believe the text they have in front of their eyes. There is a wide range of degrees of narrative persuasion that only readers or listeners decide which one is the most appropriate for them. We may talk about parity between factual and fictional communication when it comes about persuasion.

One of the consequences of this situation is, as we have already mentioned above, that readers adopt a more critical attitude towards factual narrative (for instance news

[5] Monika Fludernik, born in 1957, she is professor of English literature and culture at the Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany. Her major contributions are in the field of narratology, eighteen-century aesthetics, literary criticism and literary studies.

[6] Richard Gerrig, born in 1959. His studies focus on text understanding and representation, cognitive experiences of narrative worlds and psycholinguistics. His academic affiliation is the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

report) instead of fictional one. This asymmetry occurs especially in stories that dwell on negative characters. For instance, readers develop an empathetic attitude with such characters but they are less likely to act the same with characters in a factual text.

2.5. Truth in novels

Novels, according to Ilya Kliger, are opposed to tragedy, history and lyric. Their genealogy is traced back to the epic and the heroic poem, in the Hellenistic age. Nevertheless, there is one differential feature between the epic and the heroic poems and the early modern European novels: the world of the novel is no longer built on truth. Novels "give voice (…) to a truthless world." (Kliger: 2016, 1) There are so many worldviews and discourses, so many universal claims and so many interpretations that eventually none of them seem to be the valid one. Kliger mentions Georg Lukács' comparison between and the epic and the novel: while the first one focuses on the very question of truth seen as the relation between what we think and the concept we think of, the second one dwells on the division between thoughts and things. Since there are multiple views, voices and approaches within a novel, the truth cannot find its own place. A novel is similar to a multicultural and cosmopolitan world: there are too many voices that can be heard but one cannot know which is the most truthful.

Unlike tragedy, the novel deals with concessions and compromises meant to produce enlightenment but it has nothing to do with decisive and important events. Novels lack the authoritative discourse of truth, they only encourage imagination, they fail to edify, on the contrary, they corrupt. In spite of these criticism, we may notice that in fact novels represent the modern world itself with its complexity, with its moral relativism and the multiple mutations. Therefore, in its foreground it prevails fictionality, but in background readers may discover the truth, the factuality. If one considers novels to be truthless just because they are constructed according to another approach of truth, different from the kinds of narrative (for example religious and historical) society agreed upon, then an appropriate standpoint would be to bring into discussion the topic of progress.

Kliger also highlights that narratives claim to provide accurate accounts of the past events and that they render preexisting patterns in terms of truth. Historical narratives are considered to fight against conventional lies and fantasies of the "romance idealism" which is characterized by idealistic optimism. He also continues his piece of work with considering the novel's freedom from the authoritative past similar to its freedom from the burden of truth. In this case *historical* means that the past of the events and histories is seen as part of the present. Novels should have the ability to reflect the culture and time we live in, to express the characteristic orientation of contemporary thought. Sometimes, in order to achieve this ability, novels have to break with conventional patterns and tradition to illustrate truth. "The wisdom of the past" and "the accelerating present" are concepts which Kliger states that novels have

to take into account but on the one hand they are compelled to renounce to the first one and on the other hand, they have to step into the second one. Past might be the site of truth, nevertheless novels are a symbolic form of the modernity, and their function is to capture the experience of the new, the experience of time.

Moreover, novels have the task of promoting moral values and principles. Novels illustrate universal, timeless and higher precepts. In other words, novels are called to engage readers into compliance with truth, morality and virtue. These concepts of truth, morality and virtue existed prior to and independently of the narrative itself. Sometimes, reason and philosophy can't success in influencing people to choose virtue. But such influence can be successfully promoted by narrative through its illustration of what's great and honorable. Novels are as noble as historical narrative, epic, lyric and drama as their purpose it to achieve something that reason and philosophy fail. Novels bring truth closer and render it accessible to readers. Novels teach higher truth of religion and philosophy in a simplified and appealing manner to public. They are not truthless, on the contrary, they have access to ancient wisdom, they continuously look for a truth discourse and its own logic. For instance, for some people, moral percepts can turn out to be too vague and difficult to understand how to put into practice. Through narrative illustration, such abstract values, in spite of being rigorous, can be rendered easier to comply with. Novel illustrations and examples can be seen as pictures in which moral virtue is an object of sight, the author's purpose being the one of striking his readers with the idea of truth (religious, biblical, philosophical, metaphysical, wisdom).

2.6. Novelistic discourse

Let's dwell on the novelistic discourse specific to two different types of narratives: the satirical novel (picaresque novel) and the philosophical novel. The former treats episodic narratives, concrete situations and its interest is less in society in general. The latter pay a lot of attention to humanity, society and elaborates general truth about morality, politics, welfare. It is a rationalist type of novel, it has an ideological background, its ideas are connected to factuality, everyday reality. The satirical novels don't rely on ideological-stylistic plane and they focus on empirical experience rather than on logic and theory. Kliger reveals that there is a compatibility of truth with narrative thanks to the objective authoritative narrator. The narrator holds the truth and through his narrative he offers a perspective of it. Truth is timeless, especially in historical, philosophical and metaphysical narratives. There is a temporality bound between truth and time because truth remains the same. In spite of this bound, we still witness to a disjunction between the depth of truth and the novel seen as description of the state of affairs and episodic runaway time, to a disjunction between the empirical and the ideal. Authors teach good morals in their narratives borrowing examples from life because their purpose is to bring closer their readers to general precepts. The author selects and organizes the episodic narratives in order to

reflect the split between truth, the essential and the idealism. The novel develops its own veridiction which is as authoritative as tragedy, epic or romance and it should be considered a response to the accelerated events in society. Another function is to offer a means of reflection on the notion of progress of future or even on the absolute truth of the past events (e.g. history). Novels are the source of a horizon full of expectations and reflections; they have their own coherence rely on factual experience. They organize facts and events from an original point of view which is similar to a coherent whole. For instance, human history is a totality of interconnected events. Historical narratives split these events and offer a wide range of historical record displays in order to engage readers in particular, more appealing facts. History and narrative come together, they no longer contain different patterns, but rather narratives unfold the truth and bring order into history, they enlighten and introduce a shift in the philosophical discourse of modernity. Such a shift doesn't mean a crisis of truth, on the contrary, it gives a new kind and vivid expression of history and narrative theory. Realist novels, in the nineteenth century and beyond, help readers understand that it is misleading to consider novels truthless but, in fact, they should be seen as means of prompting truth differently. Truth is rather an immanent notion, in spite of its different perspectives.

Narratives reformulate our general ideas about the world we live in, they are no longer confused and vague, but rather distinct, coherent and clear. General principles, truth itself, can be inferred from particular experiences. Coherent experience makes understand better philosophy and general laws that govern our world and society. Novels don't bring revolution in philosophy, religion or history, instead they enable knowledge of the world. They add to the laws of understanding the sensibility, which is a feature of literary texts.

Novels are intelligible and sensible. They help readers to think higher, to get through abstract and timeless percepts. Narratives represent a bridge between truth and all the conventional discourses (e.g. religious discourse, political discourse, philosophical discourse, scientific discourse). We all have personal experiences as a relation between self and world, such events don't leave us unchanged. What novels do is to offer a solution to the problem of the relation between universal notions and particular sensations. They don't leave behind the truth, in fact they provide means of discovering and becoming aware of the world. One gets to the truth only if he is conscious, therefore he can enter into contact with the world, otherwise it would be a limit of his knowledge. Novels are a stage of the way to the knowledge, to the truth.

Chiefly, human consciousness imagine different perspectives, then through novels it discovers new truths. There are three possibilities: they reject such truths, they accept them or they transform them according to their personal experience. Under these circumstances, truth becomes *truths* and it has different meanings: the general, independent truth and the personal truth, the one we perceive. Each truth has the ability to shape our beliefs, values and pattern of thinking. We should focus on the following

example: contemporary global society is shaken by wars; there are nations who are experiencing armed conflicts at the moment of speech and other who witness these confrontations. Therefore, those nations who are facing wars, are experiencing a general truth: there has always been conflicts between states. To this general statement, we can add the fact that they have a personal experience, within the borders of a certain area, under specific circumstances, for different reasons (geostrategic factors, religious factors, economical supremacy). According to the theoretical approach mentioned above, we can state that such nations are experiencing a general truth, they accept it (unfortunately, they are factual victims, not just imaginary characters) and this truth will definitely shape their future lives and way of thinking. Novels don't undermine nor replace truth; in fact, they clarify doubts and project it retrospectively. Narrative texts are metaphors, bridges between consciousness and knowledge.

2.7. Reality, Truth and Literature

In chapter 1 "Nothing Affirms and Therefore Never Lieth: Cognitive and Non-cognitive Accounts of Imaginative Literature" of his work *Literature and Truth. Imaginative Writing as a Medium for Ideas*, Richard Lansdown brings forth the difference between notions like the scientific, the moral and the aesthetics. From his point of view the only high value which can be used in defining these intellectual fields is truth. Philosophy has a central role in explaining truth and the aesthetic in imaginative literature because philosophy reflects on the arts. Imaginative literature contains truth-bearing ideas and paradigms on this matter. Lansdown continues his piece of work argues against those philosophers' view according to which art is not related to truth and that there is no connection between art and truths of philosophy, history or science. Literary theorists' answer was that as a matter of fact "there is no truth in anything", thus there is no discordance between imaginative literature and the other intellectual realms. A possible cause which triggered this approach among philosophers might be the skepticism about reality, truth and literature. Lansdown's approach turns out to be interesting as he suggests that there has always been an antagonistic relationship between literary critics and philosophers. It seems that critics aren't interested in philosophers' passion for abstraction, while the latter ones aren't willing to listen to critics' long arguments and demonstrations. Philosophers find their arguments against art being truthful in Plato's abjections about art: it is rather focused on spiritual and it disguises the truth, it should be controlled by reason, it tends to obscure the power of thought, it represents what is extreme and fantastic, it provides fake arguments, it is an enemy to virtue and moral principles, it employs irony which is against truth, it is focused of appearances, it confuses and it switches the attention to a different direction instead of reality, because of this precise reason one cannot discern the truth anymore, art is for those who try to escape from reality and they find in it an imitation of real, empirical and factual knowledge, it offers pleasures and a false explanation of reality, a caricature of it, finally art is just a substitute for philosophy.

Against such critics Lansdown cites Susanne Langer who considers a literary work an assertion of opinions and facts. He also explains that imaginative literature, like whole literature, uses language which is the expression of rational, logical thought and emotion. One can learn more about life, history, society from literature rather than from any other type of arts (music, architecture, dance, visual arts). In order to convey valid messages about real world artists must know of ideas, facts, feelings, people. A literary text derives from a wide range of domains of experience and it embraces a great diversity of levels.

Lansdown suggests that both critics and philosophers should come together on moral philosophy and literature and that in the last thirty years they had their attempts doing so. If Plato criticized art as truthless, Aristotle defended arts, especially drama in the theatre, describing it as a process based on reason, while the audience makes moral and psychological comparisons between what they see on the stage and their personal experience. The historians describe and explain past facts, what has already happened but artists, writers describe what might happen. In both cases, the process of writing is governed by the principle of plausibility. Literary texts convey universal truths, whereas historical narrative are confined to particular facts. Literature doesn't compel its readers to believe for true what they read, therefore even if it contains something which is not factual, just because it admits that it might not be true, then literature doesn't lie. Philosophy is related to principles and precepts, history focuses on factual, conventional examples, events and personalities, while literature combines the first two of them. Literature can be a source of both moral and intellectual values and pleasure. It shows its audience the way to the precepts in an appealing prospect so as to entice people to choose that path. Literary texts indicate to its readers points of views and perspectives which otherwise they could miss them. Another function of these texts is to make things better than real world brings forth. "Art undoes the work of philosophy be deliberately fusing knowledge be acquaintance and knowledge by description" (Lansdown: 2007, 12). Writers project on real world ideals which help us reach the knowledge, the factual.

The debate on whether art contains factual knowledge, truth is very old. If we accept that art can give us knowledge then another question arises: what kind of knowledge, trivial or non-trivial knowledge? Since aesthetics is associated to art, it means that art gives non-trivial knowledge and the issues it deals with really matter.

Lansdown quotes Gaut's[7] list containing the seven forms of knowledge in art: philosophical knowledge, knowledge of possibilities, knowledge about what is factual,

[7] Berys Gaut, born in 1958, he is a British author and he teaches Philosophy at the University of Saint Andrews. He was president of the British Society of Aesthetics. His studies are related to aesthetics, ethics and philosophy of film.

practical knowledge, knowledge about the significance of events, experiential knowledge and finally moral knowledge. Therefore, literature's role is not mere entertainment but, on the contrary, it has its place in education and in enquiring the values, it is a means of reasoning. It is a complex form of communication between artist and his audience. Another idea that Lansdown highlights is that literature teaches how to behave, it improves our self-knowledge and the knowledge about others and world. Thus, there is truth in literature, in fiction (since most of the stories are fictional) and fiction's capacity for teaching shouldn't be put under question.

2.8. The quest for Truth in Human Existence

Thanks to Haim and Rivca Gordon's *Heidegger on truth and myth. A rejection of Postmodernism* we find out about Heidegger's point of view concerning the relation between the quest for truth and human existence. He strongly believed that looking for the essence of truth in daily life is a symbol of dignity which should be one of human condition's features. For instance, he considered that basic truths may be found both in myths and allegories. A myth is "a story or belief that attempts to express or explain a basic truth; an allegory or parable" (Gordon: 2006, 14). Sometimes myths help us rediscover basic truths or even the essence of truth. Hiam and Rivca Gordon consider that Heidegger's search for truth and his findings about the essence of truth in relation to one's personal existence have been ignored. The essence of truth has a great impact and relevance for human existence because thus man becomes free. Heidegger deconstructs texts and explains philosophical arguments in order to bring forth worthy truths.

Truth has been presented as a factual description of events, according to the principle of correctness. In Heidegger's opinion the conventional definition of truth doesn't necessarily relate to the truth itself. Instead, he suggests that people should struggle to describe truth in relation to its essence. In Greek, the word for truth means unconcealedness which means that things are brought forth from their concealment.

Hiam and Rivca Gordon cite Heidegger: "We know it (concealing) as veiling, as masking, and as covering, but also in the forms of conserving, preserving, holding back, entrusting and appropriating." (Gordon: 2006, 16). We are invited to see all truths and to understand what is concealed. Also questions like "Who does the concealing? How does it take places? When and where does the concealing take place?" (Gordon: 2006, 16) are guidelines on the path of truth. Searching for the truth is an intellectual process which requires knowledge in order to find out whether we are surrounded by concealedness or not. Afterwards, we ask the questions mentioned above, which is the next step toward the essence of truth. This process is complicated because grasping the truth involves another process, the one of deconstructing conventional percepts. In fact, it is a struggle between concealedness and deconstruction. We have already mentioned that sometimes conventional values are opposite to truth, even false. In these cases, the essence of truth is forgotten, and it is a feature of human existence to bring into light

what was forgotten. Heidegger also mentions that this struggle of revealing the essence of truth is part of the truth itself.

Revealing the truth can radically change the ideas and ways of thinking but that is the precise purpose of the whole process. Thinking on the essence of truth concerns all fields of human existence: science, philosophy, art, religion. In spite of the fact that there are a wide range of definitions of conventional precepts, we do not come closer to comprehending the truth. In other words, definitions don't necessarily help grasping the truth because they don't contain the essence of truth. Wondering and questioning can, in fact, guide us in our quest for truth. Firstly, we wonder about "the Being of beings" (Gordon: 2006, 19), then we ask questions and make connections. Heidegger's insights help us understand that works of art, literature and myths clarify some of the conventional thoughts and help us come nearer to the essence of truth. We cannot talk about multiple essences, related to a specific narrative. We can only talk about "truth as truth" (Gordon: 2006, 16). Whenever we search for truth, we are in search for wisdom because humans feel the need to identify the truth in the background, behind the language, behind conventions, behind the public speech as we know it. Philosophical and literary narratives engage readers in questioning themselves and in thinking alone upon a problem. Both philosophy and literature set before the essential vision which is synonym to unconcealing truths about wisdom and life in this world with other human beings. The process of disclosing involves common sense and some personal experiences to which actual truth can be related. In the beginning of this process, human beings have a vague knowledge of the truth and its essence. By the end of the process, the knowledge will be clear and accurate. In everyday life, truth relies on conventional statements and knowledge about world and society. In order to be considered true and accepted, a statement must comply with the conventional version. What it means and states has to accord with the general knowledge. The acceptance of truth based on knowledge and on the conventional version appeared in Ancient philosophical writings, it continued in Christian theology of the Middle Ages while the Modern scientific thinking added validity to its importance. The process of revealing truth is similar to philosophical thinking which consists of asking a major question that will lead to additional questions. It is a challenging activity and the major question about the essence of truth is if human beings really know what is meant by the conventional pattern which supposedly describes it. Our personal experience is a partial answer to the question; therefore, it is an approach based on our unique awareness of events. For instance, Clive Staples Lewis[8], a British literary scholar, a

[8] Clive Staples Lewis, 29 November 1898 – 22 November 1963, was one of the major intellectuals of the 20th century and writers, a literary scholar and an Anglican theologian. He was born in Belfast, Ireland. He was a tutor in English Literature at Oxford University until

theologian and writer, became a champion of communicating truths of the Christian faith. He dedicated many of his religious writings to defend these truths and to explain many of the misunderstandings and challenges about Christianity. In "Miracles", published in 1947, Lewis discloses a completely new view on the cultural and religious concept of the Jews, as the chosen people. He sheds some light on it when he states that the Prophet Abraham was chosen to leave his family and land because of his faith and loyalty to the real and living God. He also explains that the Prophet was chosen in spite of the difficulties and harsh circumstances he had to overcome, once he decided to follow God's calling. Therefore, Abraham was chosen for a difficult mission. Lewis continues with another example: the Jews, as the chosen people. Indeed, they were chosen, but nor for their own sake. Instead, they were selected to carry a heavy burden, to set an example by their behavior and faith in God for the Gentiles (people of non-Jewish heritage).

Their sufferings were many and profound but God's purpose was to cure the other nations by their means. Saint Mary, Jesus's mother was chosen to go through the deepest sorrow and sadness when she lost her beloved son. Her pain too was a way to call the lost sinners and to make the kingdom of God accessible to all. God's own son, Jesus Christ, was chosen to be the only Man who had to suffer and to redeem all men. By means of his absolute sacrifice, he accomplished his Eternal father's calling, like the Prophet Abraham, like kings Saul and David and all the other Biblical figures who were chosen, one way or another, to put into practice God's plan for the world. The above examples introduce a new perspective upon what it means to be *the chosen,* thus not a privilege but a task, not for taking the advantage of being different from the others but a calling and a burden, not enjoying the benefit of having shield against a harsh life but to set a pattern, to be a role model for all the others. C. S. Lewis reveals a new truth about the most important religious writing, the Bible. He challenges a major conventional and traditional approach. His statements no longer fit the general pattern of religious beliefs. Precisely for this reason, his approach doesn't comply with the typical religious mindset. For those who intend dwelling upon it, their personal knowledge will undergo a process of questioning, thinking and finally accepting or rejecting Lewis' thesis.

Literary narratives depict the challenges of living in freedom and endeavouring to unconceal truths. Frequently, truths about past are concealed, thus it is very difficult to overcome the personal and conventional thinking pattern in order to undertake an engagement in disclosing them. Through literary narratives we open up a region in which truth about everything we know is concealed. Once we engage in disclosing

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1954, when he was elected to the chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University until his retirement.

such a region, we become free. The unconcealing of truth is an act of freedom. Many of the crucial truths, that people's lives rely on, are conventional precepts, they are truths that human beings have to struggle to unconceal them. People can be present in the realm of truth only if they choose to be free and to deconstruct the generally accepted moral and social principles. Literature opens the door to its readers, a door which takes them to understand how sometimes truth is manipulated, preserved and managed one way or another just to accord with certain political, social, economic or religious purposes. Heidegger suggests that for centuries philosophy and literature focused on understanding the essence of truth and on revealing that truth was concealed. Once these truths are unconcealed, we find an open realm in which people can feel free. Works of art disclose truth, and they become an open space for worthy principles to become accessible to everyone, thus they will have much relevance in people's daily life. Eventually, people will find out that the essence of truth is freedom itself. As we have already mentioned above, becoming free requires wise questioning, thinking and deconstructing. Freedom is the basis of the struggle between deconstructing and disclosure of truth, it is also an engagement in the disclosure of beings, hence the connection between truth and freedom. The primordial concept of truth appears in myths. For instance, in a play by Sophocles, King Oedipus struggles to find out the truth about his past which was concealed from him. In order to find the truth of his birth, he engages in a quest of unconcealment because it is crucial for his existence if he wants to become free. Therefore, he opens the realms of his past and he endeavours to grasp the truth about his existence. In spite of the conflicts and disputes he has with other characters; King Oedipus continues his difficult search for truth because he knows that he has to achieve his goal: opening the realm of truth. In many other narratives, a hero struggles to unconceal the truth and to let the others being free. People choose to disregard intentionally that concealing of truth limits their freedom and changes their thinking pattern. Their existence is characterized by deceit, corruption and shallowness. That's why heroes are those people who crave for truth and who know that once it is unconcealed it can save the society from disastrous consequences. Those heroes are also aware that society might not praise them for their deeds, rather they will be attacked, punished and even ostracized. Moreover, the hero's fellows will blame him for being the messenger of the truth as they refuse to see it and their wish is to let beings be. A reason for their behaviour is that the hero unconceals harsh truths related to dishonesty and immorality of society. He discloses how the world we live in, the public speech we hear, the conventional principles we are all familiar all are in fact morally corrupted. The hero engages in the process of unconcealing the truth because he wants to become free. He finds himself in the midst of a difficult engagement, being aware that his final goal is to open an entire new realm. The cynical immorality and dishonesty shouldn't have place in those people's lives who want to be free from unscrupulous behaviour. On the one hand, the hero loses his

freedom because, of his own free will, he decides to engage in the attempt of unconcealment of truth. On the other hand, his struggle is linked to the purpose of achieving the very essence of truth. The process of asking major questions and thinking will happen only if he engages in the quest for truth, otherwise none of the two steps of such a process will not occur. Human beings can question the unconcealed truth either if the truth itself is brought forth or if they engage in their own struggle of unconcealing of truths.

Human existence would be mediocre if people refused to focus on this major concern: finding ways to find truth and, once they did, enjoying their freedom. Accepting one's freedom to be repressed, just to comply with the conventional percepts of society, is a major failure. People remain unperturbed by truth, in general, because its unconcealment brings disappointment, dissatisfaction and discontent. They are willing to concede their freedom to question and to act against public politics in order to continue their traditional way of life. They refrain from any attempt to discover the truth in background and accept to be repressed. When history merely enumerates historical facts, it means that such history doesn't reveal any new ideas or unconcealed truths. Such history brings no spiritual accomplishment to people; on the contrary it impoverishes the society. Truth must be contemplated, but in order to reach this condition history should have the function of teaching the value of truth both for each individual and for the whole world. The quest for truth is more than finding out something new or something that was concealed. It is synonym to the search for a spiritual existence which enriches and gives virtue to everyday life. A society without any relationship to truth is a spiritually poor one. True literature is spiritually enhancing and enlightening, it doesn't falsify reality and it is related with the essence of truth as freedom. One shortcoming of literature consists into whether it exposes the readers to the whole truth or not. But it shouldn't be brought under discussion the breadth and depth of the illuminating ideas on truth found in literature. Sometimes a work of art reveals additional insights from the relation between truth and freedom. Myth and art can unconceal truth which are significant for the whole society. Therefore, literary writings don't ignore the essence of truth since they represent precisely the means of revealing it. In other words, literature is a responsible writing, it doesn't ignore truth, instead it conveys it and it shows a genuine interest in its implications.

There are occasions when truths are elusive and readers understand this feature of literature because they are aware that one truth or another are concealed in background of a certain literary piece of work. Thus, we should understand why human beings have to overcome great difficulties when they make the decision to bring forth the truth. Especially if we take into consideration that even by the act of unconcealing, by the process of thinking about truth and by asking major questions we witness to the concealing of other truths. For instance, Greek tragedies, historical and religious narratives provide ample circumstances where the unconcealing of a truth triggers the

concealment of another. Heidegger dismisses as inadequate the statement according to which the concealment of some truths can be considered mystery which we seldom encounter in daily intercourse. Because of this wrong approach many people continue to direct their existence to mystery as it allows them to forget and evade from their daily lives. They prefer relying their lives either on mystery or on what is readily available but they do not embrace very easily the path of struggling for finding the truth. Some human beings are aware that their daily busy life and leaning on what is readily accessible alienate them from truth. Thus, their existence becomes distorted, empty, superficial and inauthentic.

Authenticity means factuality and true essence. Moreover, mystery doesn't allow spiritual existence to accompany people in their daily lives. When they ignore the quest for truth, they also eradicate any possibility for a spiritual permanence. The harsh results are their persistent rejection of thinking about truth and their loss of freedom. This turns out to be a sad outcome which stems from spiritual inertia. Once the possibility of spiritual condition disappears, people will focus only on immediate needs and aims, they will approach to life only in term of success and failure. Everything will be reduced to a pragmatic view, mystery will remain unchallenged and truth will continue to be concealed. Without our search for truth, including the implications we have to overcome, spirituality will no longer find its way in our society.

In daily life, we deal with immediate matters that need our attention in order to be solved. We are no longer focused on unconcealing truth about the one of beauty or love. Living in the immediate space, constantly confronting with the accessible and available affairs alters people's lives into oppressed, sorrowful and imperfect ones. Their freedom is also facing oppression, hence eventually people choose to escape from a crucial dimension of human life. They choose to give up truth and freedom, dedicating every minute of their lives dealing with urgent issues. Every person has the opportunity to seek for truth and to choose freedom but it is their decision not to remain confined to pointless existence. Such a decision and attempt to free oneself from the oppression of concealment are a true challenge. The person who undertakes this defiance is determined to face any challenges just to ascertain the existence of truth. How should we live so that we don't pass over the truth? The answer is that the persistent question of being is one of the worthwhile paths to focus on our quest for truth. The comprehension of one's own being is intertwined with other people's beings.

2.9 Truth and Knowledge

Jukka Mikkonen recognizes the ability of literature to convey comprehension and knowledge ("Truth in Literature: The problem of knowledge and insight gained from fiction") and it describes it as "the cognitive value of literature". This matter as well as the language as a means of conveying truth have always been explored in traditional domains such as philosophy and aesthetics. Fictionality, as a form of art and like all works of art, illustrates theoretical points and analyses human condition. Mikkonen

detects the dilemma whether the fictionality, to its full extent, can always and unconditionally be referred to as a truth-bearer or its contributions can be also insignificant and pointless. Can literature have impact on every reader or only on particular thinkers, philosophers, scholars? Does it have straightforward communicative and didactic purposes? Depending on its focus and content, a literary work can impart obvious truths or disclose ambiguous approaches. For instance, philosophers are interested in understanding how we can learn from literary works and how this process occurs. In philosophy, literature is considered having a contribution to knowledge and an aesthetic value. Literature offers an insight into moral, religious, political, philosophical and psychological matters. A work of literature includes the author's assertions and opinions upon such domains. Fictional texts are used as vehicles of eliciting truths and of shaping the thinking pattern of audience. They engage their readers simultaneously in acts of understanding and disclosing truth. By means of their assertions and tone, the authors reveal the truth inviting their readers to use their imagination in order to support the truth. The truth can also be implied in writing fiction as authors can invite the readers to use imagination because authors are not supposed to bring evidence or arguments in order to support their assertions. Many novels contain implied truths and they represent the central point in their structure in spite of the fact that they seem pointless. Mikkonen points out that moral, philosophical and political principles can be recognized through techniques like allegory, implication, irony, presupposition and illustration without additional explanations. Implication involves interpretation and that's why readers may give different answers and may have various views on the same truth. So as to avoid too many distinct versions, authors should provide hypotheses to their readers which can help them to remain on the right track. By the means of their fictions, authors have to teach their readers skills and knowledge about certain experiences and kind of character. Literature offers various perspectives on a certain matter, it contains different sights and conceptions about truth, world and society. Mikkonen's view is that literary works provide to their readers two types of knowledge which she calls "phenomenal" and "experiential knowledge" (Mikkonen: 1985, 244). While conducting the research for writing this paper, we found Mikkonnen's conclusion about Martha Nussbaum's[9] approach about the enlightenment effect of reading fiction. She also quotes Nussbaum: "Literature is an extension of life not only horizontally, bringing the reader into contact with events or locations or persons or problems he or she has not otherwise met, but also, so to speak, vertically, giving the reader that is

[9] Martha Nussbaum, born in 1947, is an American philosopher and legal scholar. She focused on Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, the philosophy of law, ethics, aesthetics and education.

deeper, sharper, and more precise than much of what takes place in life". (Mikkonen: 1985, 235). Obviously, such a statement can divide the ones who may come across it in readers who can completely agree to it and in readers who might have some amendments. The latter category could state that the probability to undergo, while one reads fiction, something more profound than in real life is inconsiderable. Most of us tend to acknowledge that nothing is more powerful, intense and vivid than life itself. According to many of our human fellows, life is what makes you feel real, dynamic and animate. On the contrary, literature is only an indirect realm, distinct from the factual possibilities of our existence. Nevertheless, there is one thing that we can be sure of, literature helps us to understand the truth, to train and to appreciate the situations depicted in the literary pieces of work. Through our emotional responses, we are sympathetic to characters and their situations. One's emotional response can be more profound if his life experience is similar to the character's and the reader can genuinely understand the truth in background. According to their critics, fictionality and reader's imagination as means of disclosing truth are not enough to unreveal it because fictional perspectives, imagination and personal experience don't necessarily contain a genuine form of knowledge. Literature doesn't have the ability to provide instruments for distinguishing between true and false. It elevates idealism, false beliefs rather than factual knowledge. In addition, what about the validity and accuracy of literary accounts? Are they reliable and adequate? Do the authors have the authority and knowledge of the events which they illustrate? The answer to these criticisms and questions is that we shouldn't forget that the purpose and the content of literary pieces of work apply metaphorically to the real life and to the world.

Empathizing with fictional characters can enhance readers' behavior and perspectives on life. The fictional characters, events, descriptions and plot encourage readers to ask major questions in order to gain knowledge. Current approaches about literature argue that it doesn't provide its readers with new insight or better comprehension, it only helps its audience to throw light on their previous knowledge and life experience so as to get to truth. Through literature our existing awareness is enhanced, thus we understand better the path which gets to truth. Literary works deepen and reshape reader's moral understanding, they become aware of thoughts that hadn't considered before by interpreting, accessing and exploring the realm of their knowledge, experiences and emotions. Readers apply this repertoire as they want to explore and achieve the truth illustrated by literary works. For instance, the audience has the possibility to have a better comprehension of general principles and abstract concepts they are already familiar with and a certain literary work is an occasion to recognize them: treating all people equally, wars are means of propaganda, art and its beauty are an essential part of the human experience, slavery is against human dignity, religion helps humans to overcome difficult moments, so on and so forth. Readers recognize, classify, understand and they either accept the principle as true or they reject

it. Fiction explores attitudes, illustrates situations, describes moral standards, explains beliefs, sometimes it even challenges our system of thinking. But in all cases, it's a gain in self-knowledge and it widens readers' horizons.

3. Conclusions

The cultural significance of literature is a central argument in favour of its comprehensive facet. Unlike other pieces of art, for instance paintings, sculptures, symphonies, literary narratives must contain truths. Literary appreciation relies on the moral principles, well-informed and wise perceptions that literature provides to its audience. The cognitive dimension of literary works adds a philosophical value to the process of thinking necessary in the quest of truth. The social practices tend to become similar to institutions based on a set of rules, governing rules and pre-determined procedures. This sort of system confers power on individuals and makes them think that they deal with true terms. Literary works make part of these social practices and they fulfill the role of story-telling which is characterized by conventions. By means of a literary work, readers deconstruct the conventions and explore the differences between fictions and literature. Literary works have always been regarded as beautiful and salient fruits of human's potential. He uses his imagination in order to create magnificent worlds and to give power to his own imagination. Literature and invented creations have the power to trigger in people a desire for truth, this is what makes it culturally significant. Literary creations contain an imaginative dimension and perspectives with different significance; thus, the reader uses his own creative imagination to disclose the truth. Writers do not simply retell well-known stories or deliver certain dimensions to them. Instead, they create new worlds, new situations and they offer to the readers the possibility to experience new circumstances. Humans are interested precisely in the truth of these new dimensions, whether they can find in such writings something valid and substantial. Readers expect from literature to present universal and major topics: life, death, how to live under certain circumstances – dictatorial regimes, wars. Literature is similar to a theatrical representation which raises problems about religion, politics, the ethics of science, globalization, traditional values.

Throughout history, there has also been implied that literary fiction and factuality are two different facets of human experience. In favour of their link, it has been claimed that the function of literary fiction is to emphasize truth. Modern novelists themselves agree that their fictional writings and real life must be intertwined, that is why their literary works are true. Therefore, literature aims at finding and revealing truth. Fiction and the fictional discourse represent a profound expression of human condition and human experiences in real life. Literature is closely bound to truth-telling, in spite of its fictional feature. Literature is similar to acting when actors pretend to be the characters they create in front of their audience. They assume a special attitude,

appearance, voice and mannerisms, everything should make the audience open the door of a whole new dimension through the actor's part. In this case, we cannot talk about a deceptive dimension of acting. On the contrary, theatrical representations explicit truth to its audience and they are helpful devices for projecting the factuality on stage.

Novelists are independent authors and their works of fiction raise questions, make statements, invite readers to understand certain views, plead for general principles like human dignity or distinguish between general concepts like good and evil. Their contents are fact-oriented and focused on truth-assessment, at the same time they invite the audience to reflect upon world. Valuable literary works will always contain philosophical issues about factuality and truth because they cannot be separated. The practice of fiction is equivalent to a perennial quest for truth and an appraisal of its dimensions in society; therefore, the status of novels is highly significant. Literature doesn't make truth, it doesn't create other versions of truths, it doesn't undermine the process of truth-seeking by providing false and imaginative paths. Instead, it remains faithful to truth, its enquiries, it is not anti-realism, it doesn't extend the bounds of the fictionality in terms of radical rejection of reality and definitely it doesn't become trapped in a picture that merely depicts theories about truth. On the contrary, it offers a close examination and a deep insight of thinking about truth. Another dichotomy which has been taken into account was related to fictions as high-spirited, superficial, unwise writings as opposed to pragmatic, serious and analytic pieces of work. What we can tell for sure is that literary fictions correspond to independent means of explaining truth-conditions. Truth is by itself a process of thinking, a quest, a need of disclosing what lies in background of the social conventions. Truth in literary narratives turns out to be as close as possible to readers, may even closer than from any other fields. It encourages their audience to make distinction between factuality and fictionality, not in terms of imaginative creation but in terms of invented moral principles.

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Mail-Order Brides and the Commodification of Intimacy: Cultural Exchange in the Birthday Girl

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Abstract

This article examines Jez and Tom Butterworth's Birthday Girl (2001) as a critical intervention into the cultural, economic, and affective logics of transnational intimacy in the early twenty-first century. Situating the screenplay within the expansion of online matchmaking and the mail-order bride industry, it conceptualises intimacy not as a private emotion but as a socially regulated and economically mediated practice. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from sociology, feminist theory, and political philosophy—particularly the work of Eva Illouz, Nicole Constable, Judith Butler, Zygmunt Bauman, and Michel Foucault—the article argues that Birthday Girl stages intimacy as a form of relational labour shaped by neoliberal regimes of choice, risk, and commodification. Through close textual analysis of language, gesture, and narrative structure, the study demonstrates how the film initially reproduces stereotypes of Eastern European femininity as compliant, exotic, and transactional, before destabilising these constructions through the figure of Nadia/Sophia. Her oscillation between deception, coercion, and affective commitment exposes the unstable boundary between agency and exploitation that structures transnational marriage economies. Mobilising concepts such as restored behaviour and autopoietic feedback loops, the article shows how intimacy is enacted through repetition rather than grounded in essential authenticity. Ultimately, it contends that Birthday Girl offers a fragile counter-narrative to dominant critiques of mail-order intimacy, imagining relational solidarity that momentarily exceeds economic calculation and national belonging.

Keywords

Birthday Girl, commodification of intimacy, mail-order brides, globalisation, screenplay

1. Introduction

It is precisely within the cultural and economic landscape that Jez Butterworth and his elder brother Tom Butterworth's screenplay *Birthday Girl* (2001), adapted into a Miramax film starring Nicole Kidman, who learned Russian for the movie, British actor Ben Chaplin, French actors Vincent Cassel and Mathieu Kassovitz, is a darkly comic exploration of desire, deception, and cross-cultural encounters. Directed by Jez Butterworth, the screenplay follows John Buckingham (Ben Chaplin), a mild-mannered English banker in his early thirties who, having "become a trusted holder of the keys to the vault" at work (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 21), is

increasingly frustrated by repeated romantic disappointment. He therefore turns to the internet to arrange a mail-order marriage with a young Russian woman, Nadia (Nicole Kidman). Initially enigmatic and compliant, Nadia is narratively positioned as the object of John's fantasy of exoticised and idealised love. However, it is gradually revealed that Nadia's real name is Sophia, and she is part of a criminal scheme with her supposed 'cousins,' Alexei (Cassel) and Yuri (Kassovitz). In fact, together, they target the victims, lonely men, through mail-order marriage, exploiting emotional vulnerability for financial gain. Sophia lures John into this trap, yet the narrative shifts when she unexpectedly develops genuine feelings for him. In the final part, she persuades John to escape with her to Russia, and their joint flight enables them both to outwit Alexei and Yuri and to escape the predicament John has created for himself after being forced, under those men's threats, to rob the bank he works for. Sophia's act of confiscating Alexei's passport underlines her break with the gang, suggesting a genuine commitment to John. Ultimately, the screenplay concludes on an ironic yet hopeful note: John, who had originally sought companionship through an online agency to enliven his monotonous life, and Sophia, who once believed a childhood gift of binoculars from her father symbolised her search for true love, both find in each other the very intimacy they sought across borders.

The figure of the mail-order bride in *Birthday Girl* is inseparable from its cultural context, in which intimacy becomes bound up with global inequalities and transnational flows of capital. As defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a mail-order bride is "a woman who is selected by a man for marriage through a marriage agency, magazine, or the Internet, usually from a country with lower economic status," while mail-order marriage refers to "a marriage arranged in this manner" ("Mail-order bride" 2025). These definitions highlight how the very terminology reflects processes of commodification and selection, positioning intimacy within a transactional framework.

This study argues that *Birthday Girl* positions the mail-order bride as both a cultural symbol, embodying the commodification of intimacy within globalised economies, while simultaneously destabilising stereotypes of Eastern submissiveness through strategic agency. The screenplay both reproduces and subverts cultural stereotypes of East–West relationships, demonstrating that intimacy can be commodified yet strategically negotiated. Reflecting early twenty-first-century anxieties about migration and globalisation, *Birthday Girl* critiques how intimacy intersects with economics, gender, and cultural identity. Accordingly, this study unfolds the cultural phenomenon of mail-order brides, the screenplay's use of stereotypes, intimacy, and Nadia's agency.

2. Mail-Order Marriage, and the Commodification of Intimacy

John's decision to pursue a Russian bride through an online agency is less an individual choice than a symptom of what Constable (2003) describes as "romance on

a global stage," in which economic asymmetries structure desire and intimacy. The early 2000s mail-order bride industry, accelerated by internet technologies, transformed romance into a transnational transaction, intensifying what Constable identifies as time–space compression within global matchmaking economies. John's dissatisfaction with local relationships reflects an anxious Western masculinity that seeks reassurance in a partner imagined as compliant, exotic, and emotionally reliable.

Nadia's post-Soviet identity, meanwhile, invokes anxieties surrounding migration and the erosion of East–West boundaries. As Constable (2009) argues, marriage markets exemplify how globalisation reshapes intimate life, producing what Illouz (2007) terms the "commodification of emotional experience." This logic is explicitly dramatised when Nadia repeatedly asks, "You are happy now, John?", framing happiness as a measurable outcome of exchange, and when John bluntly states, "I paid for this" (Butterworth & Butterworth 2001), momentarily exposing intimacy as contractual.

The agency's presence is further mediated through the Russian gangs. Alexei's exclamation, "It's like a dream!" (Butterworth & Butterworth, 2001: 33), aligns happiness with fantasy and economic aspiration, while Yuri's declaration—"We are all Europeans here" (Butterworth & Butterworth, 2001: 42)—situates mail-order marriage within a broader global imaginary. The mail-order bride thus functions as a cinematic metaphor for global encounter, where love and desire are reconfigured as tradable goods.

The phenomenon of mail-order brides must be understood within a broader cultural, social, and economic context, where intimacy intersects with global inequalities and transnational flows of capital. Nicole Constable (2003) stresses the complexities surrounding the terms "mail-order brides" and "mail-order marriages," noting that many individuals—or couples whose unions are described this way—often find these labels offensive for valid reasons (2). She further questions what motivates people to participate in transnational marriage arrangements: Why would someone subscribe to a magazine or use an Internet agency to write to potential spouses thousands of miles away? Beyond stereotypical explanations such as poverty or desperation, Constable (2003) observes that other, less predictable factors—personal desires, expectations of companionship, or the pursuit of opportunity—can influence these decisions (2). These observations demonstrate that the motivations behind mail-order marriages are complex and cannot be reduced to simplistic assumptions.

The mail-order bride phenomenon is embedded within broader global economic and social structures that shape migration and gendered labour. The transnational marriage market often involves women from post-Soviet or developing countries seeking pathways to better economic or social conditions, while men from wealthier nations pursue partners perceived as loyal, compliant, or culturally exotic (Piper 2003; Constable 2009). Intermediaries, including agencies, magazines, and online platforms,

formalise and mediate these exchanges, structuring intimacy as a transactional process. Scholars argue that such arrangements exemplify how globalization transforms intimate life, rendering personal relationships entangled with economic and cultural transactions (Illouz 2007; Constable 2003). Understanding mail-order marriages in this context challenges simplistic narratives that reduce participants to passive victims or opportunists and highlights the importance of examining the cultural, economic, and social dimensions that inform these complex cross-border unions.

Stereotypes also play a central role in shaping perceptions of mail-order brides and the cultural imagination surrounding transnational marriage. Women in these arrangements are often depicted as exotic, submissive, or morally suspect, reflecting longstanding Orientalist and postcolonial tropes that construct the "Other" as both desirable and controllable (Said 1978; Bhabha 1994). Constable (2003) observes that these perceptions are frequently reinforced by media representations and matchmaking agencies, which frame women as commodities to be selected according to the preferences of Western men (2). Such portrayals often ignore the agency of women, reducing complex individuals to simplistic cultural or economic categories. Moreover, these stereotypes intersect with assumptions about age, beauty, and social status, shaping both public perception and personal experiences (Piper 2003). By examining these cultural constructions, scholars highlight how globalisation and cross-cultural encounters are filtered through pre-existing biases, which simultaneously exoticise and objectify women while legitimising Western desires and power dynamics (Illouz 2007). Understanding the role of stereotypes in transnational marriage underscores the need for nuanced analyses that recognise both structural inequalities and individual agency, moving beyond reductive narratives of victimhood or opportunism.

Together, these perspectives demonstrate that the mail-order bride phenomenon is not simply a set of isolated marriages but a complex cultural phenomenon, informed by social, economic, and symbolic factors. This understanding lays the foundation for examining how intimacy, desire, and agency operate within transnational marriage markets, highlighting the intricate interplay between global structures and individual motivations.

Contrary to the received notion of romantic love as a universal language that transcends historical and geographical boundaries, expressions of love do not emerge in opposition to social forces such as capitalism, political power, or cultural institutions, but are instead produced within them. Romantic love, far from being apolitical, is deeply entangled with the historical formation of the liberal subject and cannot be understood independently of it (D'Aoust 2011: 153–154).

Although both Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas, in different ways, emphasise the intimate relationship between new modes of governance and the emergence of liberal subjectivity, neither directly addresses how love itself is reshaped under these conditions. This theoretical gap is particularly significant for understanding

contemporary forms of transnational intimacy, such as mail-order marriages, where romantic attachment is regulated, mediated, and rendered legible through neoliberal frameworks of choice, risk, and self-management.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's (2007) concept of governmentality—particularly his understanding of security as a mode of risk management—scholars have analysed love and marriage as liberal regulatory technologies rather than purely private experiences. While Foucault himself does not theorise love directly, his work on biopolitics, population, and security has provided the conceptual framework for empirical studies of transnational marriage and mail-order bride economies (Constable 2003; Piper 2003). Within this literature, intimacy is situated within a complex political economy of desire, further developed through poststructuralist engagements with Giorgio Agamben's notion of exception, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, and Carl Schmitt's concept of the political. Understanding mail-order brides as a cultural phenomenon highlights not only the social, economic, and symbolic dimensions of transnational marriage but also emphasises how intimacy itself is mediated and structured. The structural inequalities, stereotypes, and cultural expectations discussed above demonstrate that these relationships are rarely solely personal or romantic; rather, they are shaped by broader systems of economic, social, and cultural exchange. As Zygmunt Bauman argues in his analysis of liquid modernity, contemporary forms of intimacy increasingly resemble what he terms 'virtual relations'—not in the sense of being immaterial or unreal, but in their structural lightness, reversibility, and consumer orientation:

> Connections are 'virtual relations'. Unlike old-fashioned relationships (not to mention 'committed' relationships, let alone long-term commitments), they seem to be made to the measure of a liquid modern life setting where 'romantic possibilities' (and not only 'romantic' ones) are supposed and hoped to come and go with ever greater speed and in never thinning crowds, stampeding each other off the stage and out-shouting each other with promises 'to be more satisfying and fulfilling'. Unlike 'real relationships', 'virtual relationships' are easy to enter and to exit. They look smart and clean, feel easy to use and user-friendly, when compared with the heavy, slow-moving, inert messy 'real stuff.
>
> (Bauman 2003: 9)

These pervasive cultural stereotypes not only shape perceptions of mail-order brides but also influence how emotional bonds and companionship are negotiated, framing intimacy itself as a form of transaction mediated by expectations, desire, and social norms. Recognising this complexity provides a foundation for examining intimacy as a form of transaction, where emotional bonds, companionship, and desire are intertwined with material and symbolic considerations. The following discussion, therefore, shifts the focus from contextual and cultural frameworks to how intimacy is

performed, regulated, and commodified within transnational marriage markets, offering insight into the negotiation of agency, expectation, and power in cross-border relationships.

3. Performing Intimacy: Performativity and Relational Labour

The structural inequalities, cultural stereotypes, and normative expectations discussed above indicate that such relationships are rarely experienced as private or spontaneous; rather, they unfold within broader systems of exchange that regulate how desire, emotional attachment, and companionship are articulated and recognised. From the perspective of performance theory, intimacy can be understood as a reiterated practice rather than an interior state. Judith Butler's theory of performativity is particularly illuminating in this regard, as it conceptualises identity and relationality as effects of repeated, socially sanctioned acts rather than expressions of an essential self (Butler 1990; 2004). Within transnational marriage markets, intimacy is performed through culturally legible gestures, narratives of care, and gendered scripts that must be continuously enacted to remain intelligible. These performances do not merely express intimacy; they actively produce and stabilise it within a framework of normative expectations.

Richard Schechner's distinction between *being*, *doing*, and *showing doing* further clarifies how intimacy operates as a form of restored behaviour (Schechner 2006). Intimate relations in mail-order bride economies often rely on the repetition of pre-existing models of romance, femininity, and emotional availability that circulate globally through media, matchmaking platforms, and cultural imaginaries. These behaviours are not improvised from personal feeling alone, but are rehearsed, adjusted, and strategically deployed, situating intimacy within a continuum of performance that blurs the boundary between authenticity and role-playing.

Furthermore, Erika Fischer-Lichte's concept of the autopoietic feedback loop extends this analysis by emphasising the relational and emergent nature of performance (Fischer-Lichte 2008). Intimacy, in this sense, arises through the dynamic interaction between participants whose expectations, desires, and affective responses continuously shape one another. Emotional bonds are not pre-given but are generated through ongoing exchanges in which recognition, misrecognition, and affective intensity circulate. This process underscores how intimacy is both embodied and relational, contingent upon mutual responsiveness rather than individual intention.

Taken together, these performance-theoretical frameworks reveal intimacy as a regulated and iterable practice, produced through repetition, citation, and interaction rather than grounded in interior authenticity. When situated within the structural conditions of transnational marriage markets, intimacy becomes legible as a form of performed relational labour, shaped by asymmetrical power relations and cultural scripts. The following section, therefore, turns from contextual analysis to a closer

examination of how intimacy is performed, regulated, and commodified, focusing on the negotiation of agency, visibility, and affect within the cross-border relationship of John and Nadia. *Birthday Girl* both reflects and destabilises the paradigms of commodified intimacy, commercialised affect, and transnational anti-romanticism outlined above. Jez and Tom Butterworth stage a dramaturgical transformation in which relationships initially framed by tension, asymmetry, and economic mediation are reconfigured into exceptional forms of attachment, momentarily suspending the corrosive effects of globalisation and gesturing toward the restoration of romantic myth.

In *Birthday Girl*, love is not presented as a universal or timeless emotion, but as a political practice shaped through the construction of the liberal subject. Rather than being regulated through prohibition or moral interdiction, intimacy is organised through discourses of freedom, choice, risk, and security. John experiences his pursuit of love as an autonomous decision, grounded in personal desire and individual agency; yet this apparent freedom unfolds within a managed field of options structured by digital mediation, economic exchange, and normative expectations. As a result, love operates not as a purely private affect but as a governed practice, in which the subject's sense of choice is produced and regulated by broader systems of liberal rationality. Because as John's Branch Manager at the bank declares in his report, "As a local boy, John is a recognizable face to customers and so a valuable tool in maintaining lasting relationships with customers[…] Although John still has some reluctance to/or has problems in carving out new relationships face-to-face" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 22). At first sight, this is the story of John viewed from the outside.

John's pursuit of a transnational relationship emerges not as a romantic impulse alone, but as a response to his social estrangement and affective dissatisfaction, situating his desire within the broader conditions of late modern alienation. Initially, John's pursuit of happiness crystallises into the emergence of a materially and affectively grounded relationship upon Nadia's arrival, transforming a condition of alienated longing into an embodied encounter with the possibility of intimacy. It is not difficult to perceive the artificiality of this initial relationship, a quality that is rendered particularly visible by Nadia's inability to speak English. John finds himself on the verge of yet another disappointment, attempting to direct his complaints to the website through which he met Nadia, only to discover that the agency is unreachable. John is not happy simply due to the communication barrier with Nadia; he emphasises the importance of dialogue, stating, "Someone you can really talk to. I think communication is key" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 2).

Nadia's struggles within this artificial relationship, reminiscent of Butler's (1990; 2004) description of "relationality as repeated, socially sanctioned actions", are also not to be underestimated, especially at the outset of the film. Because Nadia, in her relationship with John, despite the happiness of escaping Russia, is unhappy and lonely

due to a lack of communication. This is disturbing for John, too. Therefore, he calls the web site named From Russia With Love through which he reaches Nadia, and brings a message since he cannot reach them: "This is John Buckingham from St. Albans. I need to speak to you absolutely urgently. There's been a mistake. She doesn't speak English. It's[…] call me back as soon as possible. It's critical" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 12) In their early interactions, Nadia's limited English produces a striking communicative asymmetry. Her utterance of "Da" to John's question "Do you like England?" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 43) even after a few days at John's, and reliance on non-verbal gestures, foreground the artificiality of their intimacy, reducing emotional exchange to minimal linguistic tokens.

However, this limited communication is not a barrier for that couple later. Although it is seen that John says, "I can't take that. I'm not really a ring guy" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 14) when Nadia wants to get married to him. Though John opens to her as if she understood English saying that "Nadia. This isn't going to work. I'm sorry. It's been a terrible mistake. You must go." (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 18), their non-verbal communication gradually develops well due to their bedroom stories. Nadia finally places the ring on his finger, which marks a real step toward marriage.

This communication within a context of communicative deprivation is nonetheless positive for the couple. The amusing behaviours of two strangers, curious about one another, serve as a justified pattern of cultural estrangement. For example, John's hesitant examination of Nadia's belongings while she is in the bathroom, and his discovery of his own photograph in a silver frame, signal the hopeful potential of their relationship:

> int. john's house. bathroom. day.
> *Nadia in the shower, eyes shut, water pouring over her face.*
> int. nadia's room. day.
> *John flicks through a stack of photographs. One of Nadia as a young girl in a meadow, with binoculars around her neck. John looks at the same binoculars on the bed next to him. He turns them over in his hands…*
> *On the mantelpiece, in a silver frame, is his picture, cut from the brochure. He holds it in his hands.*
> *The shower has stopped. In a panic he replaces the picture, the photographs, the gun lighter, the brochure, and the binoculars.*
>
> (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 17-18)

In a short time, Nadia gives the absolute impression of trying to win John over by constantly learning English, using an English-Russian dictionary she acquired and knitting a red jumper—a reminiscent of Erika Fischer-Lichte's (2009) "autopoietic feedback loop"—thus attempting to engage in a reciprocal interaction with John.

Moreover, these situations unfold within a constant give-and-take relationship, in an environment where sexuality is concretised but not commodified until their relationship becomes more intimate, mutual, and even romantic:

> int. John's house. John's bedroom. night.
> *John watches Nadia rise from his bed after sex and walk to the window where she looks out at the rain.*
> ext. John's close. day.
> *It's pouring with rain. John and Nadia emerge from the house. She is barefoot, only wearing her coat. He has a shirt and trousers on. They run to the ice-cream van and order two ice-creams.*
> ext. John's garden. day.
> *Rain coming down in John's garden. The pair sit under the shelter of the back porch…*
> (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 28-29)

At this point, a central question begins to emerge whether Nadia's actions constitute elements of a previously learned relational strategy, a premeditated sequence of behaviour, or a set of performed roles—that is, whether her conduct reflects a relational network grounded in Richard Schechner's concept of restored behaviour. The subsequent introduction of tensions into this increasingly romanticised relationship suggests that this sense of unease is not incidental, but rather consciously embedded by the Butterworths within the dramatic structure. *Birthday Girl* resembles the "personal metamorphosis" type of narrative set by Cold War East-West love movies, "represented by Ninotchka (1939) and the like. Love of a male from the West changes the life of Nadia. [She] realises that there are things like love and family that matter more than money or ideological loyalty." (Kuzmina 2014: 94)

4. Deception, Vulnerability, and Ethical Transformation

It is soon revealed that Nadia is a member of a criminal gang and that she functions as a commodified and instrumentalised mail-order bride, entangled in a financial web. On her birthday, the figures she introduces as her so-called actor cousins—Alexei and Yuri—are, in fact, armed accomplices who manipulate the rhetoric of love to entrap foreign men. Yuri's assertion— "We cannot survive with just work" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 48)—normalises exploitation as systemic inevitability, reinforcing the structural logic of transnational intimacy markets. Through illegal practices such as threats and blackmail, these gangsters specialise in identifying individuals like John and returning them to conditions of dispossession and affective despair.

Nadia's position within this criminal network ultimately becomes decisive for the trajectory of the narrative. The revelation of Nadia's involvement with Alexei and Yuri retroactively reframes her earlier gestures as instances of restored behaviour. As Yuri

bluntly asks, “Do you believe in love?” (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 47). The performative nature of intimacy is violently exposed. What remains to be determined is whether she should be understood as a woman exploited by those intruders, Alexei and Yuri, or whether she actively performs the role of the ‘romantic other’ within the gang’s economy of deception—an ambiguity that fundamentally shapes the ethical and affective stakes of the film.

From a feminist performance-theoretical perspective, Nadia’s ambiguity resists a simple binary between victimhood and manipulation. Drawing on Judith Butler’s (1990; 2004) understanding of performativity, Nadia’s actions can be read as a strategic citation of femininity—one that navigates coercion, survival, and limited agency within a masculinist economy of exchange. Nadia’s claim that she “had no choice” (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001) foregrounds agency as constrained and negotiated, aligning with Butler’s understanding of performativity under conditions of coercion. Whether exploited by the gang or complicit in its operations, her performance of the ‘romantic other’ exposes how femininity itself becomes a negotiable resource, mobilised under conditions of economic precarity and transnational power asymmetry. In this sense, Nadia’s role does not merely advance the plot but foregrounds the unstable boundaries between agency and coercion that structure commodified intimacy.

At this juncture, the Butterworths reframe the narrative by shifting the ethical emphasis from deception to shared vulnerability, foregrounding a conception of humanity grounded in mutual recognition rather than instrumental exchange. They remind that we are still human, in a way similar to Arendt’s words. Remembering what it means to be human is essential for establishing and maintaining healthy human relationships. Being human is difficult, yet it is achievable and sustainable. It depends on us:

> The world is not humane just because it is made by human beings, and it does not become humane just because the human voice sounds in it, but only when it has become the object of discourse… We humanize what is going on in the world and in ourselves only by speaking of it, and in the course of speaking of it we learn to be human. The Greeks called this humanness which is achieved in the discourse of friendship *philanthropia,* ‘love of man’, since it manifests itself in a readiness to share the world with other men.
>
> (Arendt 1958)

In this sense, the Butterworths do not disappoint the audience. This is more than just creating a romantic atmosphere. After Nadia’s birthday party, the director clearly shows that Nadia is not a gang member but a victim, like John. In the morning, Nadia is physically disturbed by Alexei when they swim at the lake near the forest. She even wants a silent help from John as she cannot tell who the cousins or friends really are.

But John does not understand what she means, and wants them to stay with them and have dinner together.

Their presence, later, causes a huge problem for the couple. Alexei and Yuri abduct Nadia. At that time, Alexei asks John, "You think you can buy our women?" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 61). This question is, in fact, rhetorical. It functions as a critical interrogation of the mail-order marriage phenomenon, refracted through the figure of a Russian male presence rather than the Western gaze typically privileged in such narratives. Significantly, it also marks the transition into the film's criminal subplot. The gang confronts John and coerces him into robbing the bank where he works, demanding that he deliver the money in exchange for Nadia's safety. In an act that radically destabilises his previously law-abiding identity, John complies, effectively becoming a criminal for Nadia's sake. Meanwhile, Nadia's apparent complicity with Alexei and Yuri in a motel room complicates the moral coordinates of the narrative. This ambiguity is later violently overturned when she is revealed to be "tied to the radiator, gagged with duct tape" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 81), exposing the coercive structures that underlie both the criminal plot and the commodification of intimacy. Nobody knows whether she pretends or not. Nadia seems more relaxed and more herself, though Alexei has burnt her head with the kettle in that acting. Moreover, after Alexei learns that he is the father of the baby Nadia carries. John learns that soon, too. It is not surprising that their dialogue after Nadia's so-called escape from the gangs reveals their true condition and their true love and devotion. Because Nadia needs a father for her baby, and she knows that Alexei is not a good husband, and he regards everything as a job: "Nadia: Why else would you send off for me? If you just wanted sex, just go to a prostitute./John: Well, as it turns out, I did" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 83).

In contrast to the unwanted ants that intrude into the domestic space at the beginning of the screenplay—figures of external disturbance and contamination—Nadia ultimately secures both a refuge in love and a sense of home, albeit one displaced from her place of origin. What initially appears as an artificial and instrumental relationship is gradually transformed into a site of affective belonging. Nadia thus achieves her underlying objective: the pursuit of happiness within conditions of precarity and dislocation. By the end of the screenplay, this transformation is no longer merely implied through action or mise-en-scène. Still, it is articulated explicitly in her own words, as her emotional truth becomes fully legible in the screenplay's closing moments: "Have you got your passport?" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 89).

This does not mean they do not quarrel about the happenings around them. After Nadia and John escape from their clutches, the hands of those gangsters, they start quarrelling. John even thinks of going to the police. However, it is seen that they live the same faith: "You can't hurt me more than I'm hurt already/Well Nadia, if it's all

the same to you, I'd like to give it a bash." (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 85). They cannot quit each other. Nadia's carrying a folded bank slip on which John's words are written in bad Russian showing such a mutual love: "Dear Nadia, I like you. You are only girl in the world. I dream to talk. What will happen? John" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 95).

John's long-standing desire to escape his solitary existence and to establish a meaningful partnership also reaches a successful resolution. Like Nadia, John attains a state of affective fulfilment, one that is sufficiently transformative for him to accept the prospect of relocating to Russia with her. His decision to leave England is motivated not only by necessity but also by his emotional commitment to Nadia, indicating a decisive break from the conditions of alienation that previously defined his life. The extent of John's joy and anticipation is made explicit in his own words, which reveal both his excitement and his willingness to embrace uncertainty: "You don't know me." However, Nadia's reaction is relaxing for him: "And you don't know me either" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 93).

Their desire to get to know each other also reveals their jealousy of one another. Closeness progresses towards commitment. The best example of this, though it did not attract much attention, is Nadia's curiosity about a photograph of a woman she finds in a closet in John's room while trying to get to know his house, early in the film. This dialogue between them, while John is still angry with her, resembles a classic husband-wife dialogue:

> Nadia: What happened between you and the blonde?
> John: What?
> Nadia: The thin… the girl with small eyes. The one in your cupboard.
> John: It's none of your business. She didn't have small eyes.
> Nadia: Did she leave you? Come on. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Who did she leave you for? Your best friend? Her boss? A woman? Did she leave you for a woman, John?
> John: She's dead.
> Nadia: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you.
> Nadia (CONT'D): Forgive me.
> John: I don't know why I said that. She's not dead at all.
> Nadia: What?
> John: I don't know why I said it. I'm sorry.
> Nadia: She's alive?
> Nadia (CONT'D): She is not dead.
> John: Laugh it up.
>
> (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 97)

This exchange between John and Nadia occurs at the airport, at the moment when John intends to send her back to Russia alone. After their separation, and while Nadia

is already on the plane, John returns to the motel to check on Alexei and Yuri, motivated by his concern for Nadia's safety. However, he initially finds no trace of them. The narrative regains tension when John learns that the men are indeed at the motel with a woman matching Nadia's description. His attempt to intervene and rescue her exposes him to immediate danger, and he is subsequently discovered. This sequence reinforces the film's central preoccupation with misrecognition, delayed knowledge, and the instability of intimacy structured through deception and power:

> Nadia: Leave him!
> Alexei: What? Are you on his side?
> Nadia: He came here with me!
> Alexei: You mean… you're together?
>
> (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 109)

Following their struggle to escape Alexei and their flight with the money, it becomes unmistakably clear that there can be no return—to their past lives, to England, or to the relationships they once inhabited. The narrative marks this moment as a point of irreversible rupture. Having crossed legal, moral, and affective thresholds, John and Nadia are left with no viable alternative but to move forward together. Their departure for Russia is thus framed not only as a romantic choice, but also as a condition of necessity produced by displacement, loss, and the collapse of prior attachments:

> Nadia: This isn't mine.
> John: It's not mine, either.
> Nadia: I don't want it. I can't take it.
> John: You could spend it on the baby.
> *She leans forward and whispers in his ear. John looks at her. He looks to the four corners of the airport. And back at her.*
> John: Why?
> Nadia: I'm not asking you to marry me.
> John: It's long way to go for a date.
> Nadia: I know.
> John: But… I don't know you.
> Nadia: And I don't know you either.
>
> (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 113)

According to Amy L. Elson (1997), "the mail-order bride industry is comprised of an international network that traffics women from less developed countries to men in industrialised nations" (367). This underscores the structural violence that characterises much of the transnational marriage market. As Nicole Constable (2003) and Jennifer Patico (2009) respectively note, there is a clear tendency to insist on

keeping notions of love and sincerity apart from the spheres of self-interest, structural factors and materiality, as if acknowledging the latter would necessarily contaminate, if not deny the former. In her ethnographic study of men participating in international matchmaking social gatherings in Russia, Patico notes that men interpreted "the women's complex orientations towards dating and marriage in ways that tended towards reinforcing that classic view rather than complicating it" (2009: 323). But whereas researchers like Constable and Patico undertake to empirically demonstrate that such theoretical dichotomies between emotions and interests do not hold, this paper values love and intimacy much more than anything. To analyse mail-order marriages as various aspects does not entail denying that such marriages do not have emotional content, including love. While *Birthday Girl* resists this dominant paradigm by staging an exceptional trajectory of mutual recognition, Amy Elson's formulation remains crucial for situating the screenplay within the broader political economy of gendered migration.

In this sense, *Birthday Girl* offers a fragile yet compelling challenge to dominant narratives of transnational intimacy by suggesting that a mail-order marriage, while embedded in global inequalities, does not inevitably culminate in exploitation or affective failure, but may instead give rise to an unexpected form of relational solidarity. At the same time, however, this cinematic resolution must be situated against the broader historical and legal scepticism surrounding mail-order marriages. As historian Elizabeth Abbott cautions, "mail-order marriages should not be models for other spouse seekers" (Abbott 2010: 390), a reminder that such arrangements are typically shaped by structural asymmetries, legal precarity, and gendered vulnerability. Read together, these positions clarify that *Birthday Girl* does not seek to normalise or endorse the mail-order marriage system as such; rather, it constructs an exceptional narrative in which intimacy briefly exceeds the regulatory, economic, and ideological constraints that ordinarily govern transnational marital exchange.

5. Conclusion

In *Birthday Girl*, the relationship between John and Nadia can be read not only as a personal, intimate bond but also as one deeply embedded in broader cultural and political expectations. As Sara Ahmed (2004) thinks, "'Marriage migrants,' and especially 'mail-order couples,' are thus not only assessed based on the love they might have for each other, but also how their love sustains or disrupts a national liberal and multicultural ideal" (134). John and Nadia's transnational union exemplifies this dynamic: their emotional and romantic connection is continually negotiated against imagined norms of cultural compatibility, loyalty, and social propriety. The film underscores how intimacy, particularly when mediated through globalised systems like online matchmaking, is never purely private; rather, it is performed, evaluated, and regulated in relation to wider societal ideals. In this sense, Nadia's arrival and the

couple's eventual partnership highlight the tension between authentic affection and the pressures imposed by national and cultural imaginaries.

As Weber (2001/1948) observes, the more intellectualised and impersonal modern life becomes, the more individuals seek passion and intensity—a primal sense of self—within the sphere of erotic love. "This boundless giving of oneself is as radical in its opposition to all functionality, rationality, and generality[...] The experience is by no means communicable and in this respect it is equivalent to the 'having' of the mystic[...] Knowing 'life itself joined to him, the lover stands opposite what is for him the objectless experiences of the mystic'" (Weber 2001/1948: 347).

Ultimately, John and Nadia are afforded the possibility of revealing their fully human dimensions—facets of themselves that remain inaccessible at the outset of the narrative—and of consciously choosing who they are in relation to one another. As Bauman observes, "in the era of globalization, the cause and the politics of shared humanity face the most fateful of the many fateful steps they have made in their long history" (Bauman 2003: 152). From this perspective, the Butterworths approach male–female relationships from one of his most radical positions, moving beyond narratives of romantic pursuit to rethink global subjectivity and intimacy under transnational conditions.

The final scene of *Birthday Girl* situates Nadia and John at an airport—a liminal threshold space neither in England nor in Russia—underscoring their suspension between national, cultural, and moral coordinates. What remains to them is the money John has stolen from the bank, an act whose motivation he cannot fully articulate, and the affective bond that has emerged between them. What matters is not where they are going, but that they are together; togetherness, rather than territorial belonging, becomes the primary source of meaning.

Their first true date, "Nadia: My name is Sophia./John: Sophia. Hello, Sophia. Mine's still John." (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 115), reconfigures belonging as relational rather than territorial. Furthermore, when they are on a plane to Russia, the final scene's stage direction reveals their rapid transition from being a couple to becoming a family: "The family gets smaller and smaller as the huge Russian landscape beyond grows and grows, as far as the eye can see" (Butterworth and Butterworth 2001: 117). Ironically, Alexei and Yuri are no longer part of the family. These last clues clearly reveal Kant's vision of a non-exclusive global community. What is required, Kant (1795/1991) would suggest, is a form of global community—inclusive without exclusion and aligned with the idea of *allgemeine Vereinigung in der Menschengattung*—a collectivity that, despite its prominence in contemporary political rhetoric, remains largely unrealised, leaving refugees suspended in a sociopolitical void. In this sense, Birthday Girl offers its most compelling challenge to negative academic interpretations of transnational intimacy by suggesting that a mail-order

marriage, while embedded in global inequalities, does not inevitably culminate in exploitation or failure, but instead generates a successful form of relational solidarity.

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El activismo literario de ayer y de hoy

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Resumen

Tengo la convicción de que, la zona de los Balcanes forma una agrupación, digamos que invisible, desde un punto de vista geográfico, pero muy visible, ideológicamente, en cuanto a cierta mentalidad, con las zonas africanas, latinoamericanas y asiaticas, lo que explica la necesidad del activismo cívico en los Balcanes. La idea es la siguiente: estamos en el año 2025, pero si una persona es diferente, debe someterse a una mayoría que aún se considera una autoridad. Las personas pertenecientes a minorías aún van consideradas como si fueran desviaciones de las dichas "normas", como fuentes de subversión respecto a la supuesta "normalidad" de la mayoría, poniendo en peligro, por ejemplo, el orden interno de un país. El activismo surgió como una forma de participación pública a la que, ciertas personas dedican sentimientos, tiempo, esfuerzo y a veces dinero, para lograr cambios positivos en cuestiones humanas, sociales, ambientales o políticas. Los objetivos del activismo implican la defensa de los derechos humanos o ambientales, ya que se ven amenazados o violados. Muchos activistas están asociados con organizaciones no gubernamentales, respondiendo colectivamente a causas que consideran injustas, como la discriminación contra grupos vulnerables o el maltrato animal, intentando resolverlas y tratarndo a las personas afectadas con respeto y dignidad.

Palabras clave

activismo literario feminista, cultura digital, derechos humanos, discriminación, esfera pública, feminismo latinoamericano, grupos vulnerables, literatura testimonial

1. Introducción

La presente investigación se propone analizar el activismo literario en general y el activismo literario feminista en América Latina, en particular, como una práctica discursiva situada, atravesada por relaciones históricas de poder, colonialidad género y diversidad. Desde cierta perspectiva, mi artículo se inscribe en el cruce entre los estudios literarios, la teoría feminista latinoamericana y el pensamiento decolonial, entendiendo la literatura pues, no solamente como si fuera una producción simbólica, sino también como una forma de intervención política.

A lo largo de este análisis voy examinando las genealogías del activismo literario feminista, sus transformaciones históricas y sus configuraciones contemporáneas, prestando especial atención a las tensiones entre canon, marginalidad, mercado cultural y acción colectiva. El activismo literario podría entenderse como conjunto de ciertas

prácticas de escritura, edición, lectura y circulación de textos, prácticas orientadas a intervenir en conflictos sociales, disputar sentidos comunes y ampliar derechos. Mi escrito analiza la evolución histórica del activismo literario *de ayer y de hoy* a partir de una revisión crítica de tradiciones clave: el panfleto y la prensa militante, la literatura testimonial, las vanguardias politizadas, los circuitos alternativos (es decir, editoriales independientes, fanzines, performances) y, en la contemporaneidad, el ecosistema digital (redes sociales, plataformas, escritura híbrida y comunidades transnacionales). Me propuse un marco analítico basado en dimensiones como por ejemplo: materialidad, público, riesgo, mediación, que vaya permitiendo comparar ciertas épocas sin reducirlas a una simple oposición entre *papel* y *pantalla*. A través de estudios de caso representativos (del siglo XIX a la era de hashtags), voy a argumentar que la novedad contemporánea no radica solamente en la velocidad de difusión, sino también en la reconfiguración de la autoría, la economía de la atención y la gobernanza algorítmica, que condicionan tanto la potencia movilizadora como la vulnerabilidad del activismo literario. Asimismo, voy a concluir que el activismo literario sigue siendo una especie de experimento cultural que produce lenguajes para señalar injusticias, que construye memorias colectivas y que ensaya formas de comunidad, aunque hoy enfrenta desafíos específicos de fragmentación, desinformación y precarización.

2. El activismo literario de ayer y de hoy

Es obvio que la literatura ha fusionado históricamente con la política, pero no toda literatura *política* podría ser considerada activismo literario, ya que este último implica intencionalidad de intervención, estrategias de circulación y una relación explícita con públicos, sean reales o imaginados, a quienes se les convoca a actuar, deliberar o reorganizar sensibilidades. Pero la cuestión que me ha motivado a iniciar esta investigación radica en las posibles continuidades y rupturas que presenta el activismo literario entre *un ayer*, el pasado impreso (tradiciones impresas y militancias de base) y *un hoy*, el presente digital (entornos digitales y cultura de plataformas). Y el tema es relevante porque en un contexto de polarización y crisis de confianza en instituciones, la literatura, en formatos tradicionales o bien emergentes, sigue siendo un recurso para construir marcos interpretativos y comunidades afectivas; también porque la digitalización amplificó toda circulación, sin embargo también introdujo mediaciones opacas (algoritmos, monetización, moderación) que afectan qué textos van a tener el privilegio de llegar y cuáles se quedarán invisibilizados; y porque el activismo literario ha sido crucial para articular agendas feministas, antirracistas, anticoloniales, sindicales y de derechos humanos, principalmente en el ambiente hispanoamericano. Entonces, mi escrito adopta una perspectiva interdisciplinaria (estudios literarios, historia cultural, sociología de la cultura), presentando un marco teórico y una metodología, la descripción de genealogías históricas del activismo literario impreso, un análisis de la transformación contemporánea en ecosistemas

digitales, la comparación de estudios de caso, y la síntesis de conclusiones y líneas futuras.

El activismo literario puede entenderse pues, como el conjunto de prácticas (de escritura, edición, lectura y circulación de textos) orientadas a intervenir en conflictos sociales, disputar sentidos comunes y ampliar derechos. Mi artículo analiza la evolución histórica del activismo literario de ayer y de hoy a partir de una revisión crítica de tradiciones clave: el panfleto y la prensa militante, la literatura testimonial, las vanguardias politizadas y, en la contemporaneidad, el ecosistema digital, y me propuse un marco analítico comparativo que permita identificar continuidades y rupturas en términos de materialidad, público, riesgo y mediación. Mi escrito se apoya pues, en aportes de los estudios culturales, la sociología de la literatura y la teoría crítica, y he adoptado una metodología basada en la revisión bibliográfica y el análisis comparativo de prácticas históricas y contemporáneas del activismo literario. Desde el punto de vista histórico, el activismo literario se ha manifestado a través del panfleto, del manifiesto y de la prensa militante y es que estas formas impresas permitieron la difusión de ideas revolucionarias y la organización colectiva, aunque implicaban riesgos de censura y represión.

En el siglo XX, especialmente en América Latina, la literatura testimonial se consolidó como una herramienta central del activismo literario y el testimonio permitió narrar ciertas experiencias de dicha violencia y exclusión, contribuyendo a la construcción de memorias colectivas y a la defensa de los derechos humanos. En la actualidad, el activismo literario se desarrolla en un entorno digital caracterizado por la velocidad, la fragmentación y la mediación algorítmica, ya que las redes sociales, los blogs y las plataformas de autoedición permiten una difusión masiva, pero también generan nuevas formas de precariedad y de control. Aunque hayan cambiado los soportes y los modos de circulación, el activismo literario mantiene su función central, la de producir lenguajes críticos y construir comunidades (la principal ruptura reside en la dependencia de plataformas privadas y en la economía de la atención). El activismo literario sigue siendo un espacio clave de intervención cultural porque en el ayer y en el hoy, la literatura ofrece herramientas para señalar injusticias, movilizar afectos y sostener proyectos colectivos y su desafío contemporáneo es el de articular visibilidad digital con transformaciones duraderas. Yo tengo la convicción de que, el activismo literario feminista en América Latina constituye un campo de análisis fundamental para comprender la relación entre producción cultural, poder y transformación social. ”Desde los primeros textos escritos por mujeres en contextos de exclusión hasta las actuales prácticas literarias feministas y decoloniales, la escritura ha funcionado como una estrategia de resistencia simbólica y política” (Segato 2016: 44). En este sentido, mi investigación propone un análisis histórico-crítico del activismo literario feminista en América Latina, atendiendo a sus genealogías, a sus tensiones internas y a sus reconfiguraciones contemporáneas en el marco del capitalismo global, el colonialismo

persistente y las nuevas tecnologías. La literatura, percibida como práctica social y discursiva, ha desempeñado un papel central en los procesos de articulación del pensamiento feminista en América Latina y ”a diferencia de otros contextos geográficos, el feminismo latinoamericano se ha desarrollado en diálogo constante con problemáticas como la colonialidad, la desigualdad socioeconómica, la violencia política y las dictaduras del siglo XX” (Lugones 2008: 8). En este marco, el activismo literario feminista no puede analizarse únicamente como una expresión estética, sino también como una forma de intervención crítica en los regímenes del saber y del poder. Y entonces pues, mi artículo se inscribe en una perspectiva interdisciplinaria que articula estudios literarios, teoría feminista y pensamiento decolonial, con un objetivo preciso, el de examinar las continuidades y transformaciones del activismo literario desde una mirada situada en América Latina. Las primeras manifestaciones del activismo literario feminista en América Latina emergen en un contexto de profunda exclusión de las mujeres del espacio público y del canon literario. ”Autoras como Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz pueden leerse como precursoras de una escritura que desafía el orden patriarcal del conocimiento, al reivindicar el derecho de las mujeres al saber y a la autoría intelectual” (Castellanos 1973: 62). Durante los siglos XIX y comienzos del XX, la literatura escrita por mujeres comenzó a articular demandas relacionadas con la educación, la ciudadanía y la autonomía, aunque muchas veces desde posiciones ambivalentes condicionadas por las normas sociales de la época. La escritura funcionó así como un espacio liminal entre conformidad y subversión. El siglo XX marca una intensificación del vínculo entre activismo feminista y literatura en América Latina. En contextos de revoluciones, dictaduras y violencia estatal, la escritura de mujeres se convirtió en un medio privilegiado para denunciar la represión, narrar la experiencia del cuerpo femenino como territorio político y preservar memorias silenciadas. Autoras como Rosario Castellanos, Clarice Lispector, Elena Poniatowska y Diamela Eltit desarrollaron poéticas y narrativas que cuestionaron los modelos hegemónicos de subjetividad, introduciendo una crítica radical al patriarcado y a las estructuras de dominación simbólica. En este período, la literatura feminista no solo tematiza la opresión, sino que problematiza los propios lenguajes con los que se construye el sentido. En el siglo XXI, el activismo literario feminista en América Latina se caracteriza por una fuerte impronta decolonial e interseccional y ”las escritoras indígenas, afrodescendientes y disidentes sexuales han ampliado el campo del feminismo literario, cuestionando su posible homogeneización y denunciando la persistencia del racismo estructural y del colonialismo epistémico” (Lugones 2008: 74). La literatura se convierte en un espacio de reapropiación del lenguaje, donde la oralidad, la memoria comunitaria y los saberes ancestrales desafían los paradigmas occidentales de la escritura. Es que este activismo literario no busca únicamente la inclusión en el canon, sino la transformación de los criterios mismos de legitimidad cultural y las tecnologías digitales han modificado profundamente las formas del

activismo literario feminista. Plataformas virtuales, poesía performática, narrativa híbrida y proyectos colectivos permiten la circulación transnacional de discursos feministas, así como la construcción de redes de solidaridad y denuncia. Movimientos como Ni Una Menos han evidenciado la potencia de la palabra escrita en combinación con la acción colectiva, donde consignas, manifiestos y textos literarios breves funcionan como dispositivos de movilización social. La frontera entre literatura y activismo se vuelve así cada vez más porosa y, a pesar de su vitalidad, el activismo literario feminista enfrenta múltiples tensiones, como por ejemplo: la institucionalización académica, la mercantilización de la disidencia y el riesgo de despolitización del discurso. Asimismo, persisten debates en torno a la representación, la autoría y la apropiación cultural. Desde una perspectiva crítica, resulta necesario interrogarnos sobre los límites del activismo literario y su capacidad real de incidir en las estructuras materiales de la desigualdad, sin desestimar su poder simbólico y pedagógico.

En lo que concierne la escritura, la exclusión y la primera conciencia feminista ”las primeras manifestaciones de una conciencia feminista en la literatura latinoamericana se desarrollan en un contexto histórico caracterizado por la exclusión sistemática de las mujeres del espacio público, de la educación formal y de los circuitos legítimos de producción intelectual” (Arendt 1993: 53). La escritura, en este marco, no constituye únicamente una práctica estética, sino una estrategia de acceso al saber y de disputa simbólica frente a un orden patriarcal que monopoliza la autoridad discursiva. Durante el período colonial, la restricción del derecho a la palabra escrita para las mujeres operó como un mecanismo central de control social. La figura de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz resulta paradigmática en tanto encarna una temprana conciencia crítica sobre la desigualdad epistémica de género. Su obra, y en particular la Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz, puede leerse como un texto fundacional del activismo literario feminista en la región, al articular una defensa explícita del derecho femenino al conocimiento y a la interpretación teológica, científica y literaria. La escritura de Sor Juana no solo denuncia la exclusión, sino que pone en evidencia los dispositivos discursivos que la sostienen. En este sentido, su producción inaugura una tradición de escritura femenina que, aun desde espacios de clausura simbólica o material, logra interpelar el orden dominante mediante una apropiación crítica del lenguaje erudito. En el siglo XIX, con la consolidación de los Estados nacionales latinoamericanos, la literatura escrita por mujeres comienza a adquirir mayor visibilidad, aunque sigue marcada por fuertes limitaciones. Autoras como Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda o Clorinda Matto de Turner introducen en sus textos cuestionamientos a la subordinación femenina, a la desigualdad jurídica y a la exclusión educativa, articulando una conciencia feminista incipiente que se expresa muchas veces de forma alegórica o indirecta. Esta etapa se caracteriza por una tensión constante entre la reproducción de los ideales de domesticidad y la emergencia de discursos que problematizan el lugar

asignado a las mujeres en la nación y en la cultura. ”La escritura se configura así como un espacio liminal, donde la primera conciencia feminista se manifiesta no siempre como militancia explícita, sino como fisura en el discurso hegemónico” (Eltit 1996: 31).

Desde una perspectiva crítica, estas primeras escrituras feministas no deben evaluarse únicamente por el grado de radicalidad de sus postulados, sino por su capacidad de abrir un campo de enunciación que hasta entonces había sido sistemáticamente negado. En ellas se sientan las bases simbólicas y discursivas del activismo literario feminista posterior, al establecer la relación entre escritura, exclusión y conciencia de género como eje central de la producción literaria femenina en América Latina. Pensando en la literatura, el feminismo y la política en el siglo XX, hay que dejar bien claro que el siglo XX representa un punto de inflexión en la consolidación del activismo literario feminista. ”En el contexto de revoluciones, dictaduras y violencia estatal, la escritura de mujeres adquiere una dimensión testimonial y política central. La literatura se convierte en un dispositivo para narrar la experiencia del cuerpo femenino como territorio de control, violencia y Resistencia” (Butler 2006: 40). Autoras como Rosario Castellanos, Clarice Lispector, Elena Poniatowska y Diamela Eltit desarrollan proyectos literarios que cuestionan las narrativas hegemónicas de la nación, la identidad y la subjetividad. Sus obras no solo denuncian la opresión patriarcal, sino que interrogan críticamente los lenguajes y las formas tradicionales de representación. Hablando de tensiones, debates y límites del activismo literario, a pesar de su potencial transformador, el activismo literario feminista sí enfrenta tensiones. La creciente institucionalización académica y editorial plantea interrogantes sobre la cooptación del discurso crítico y la mercantilización de la disidencia. Asimismo, persisten debates en torno a la representación, la autoría y la apropiación cultural. Resulta imprescindible pues, problematizar los límites del activismo literario y evaluar su capacidad de incidir en las estructuras materiales de la desigualdad, sin reducir su alcance a una cierta dimensión meramente simbólica. Tocando el marco teórico y metodológico, el abordaje teórico de este artículo se fundamenta en tres ejes: en primer lugar, ”la noción de literatura comprometida, desarrollada desde una perspectiva crítica que concibe la escritura como praxis social” (Bourdieu 1995: 11), en segundo lugar, los aportes del feminismo latinoamericano, que problematiza las categorías universales del feminismo hegemónico y enfatiza la experiencia situada de las mujeres en contextos marcados por la desigualdad structural, en tercer lugar, el pensamiento decolonial permite analizar la persistencia de jerarquías epistémicas heredadas del colonialismo. Es decir que ”metodológicamente, se adopta un enfoque cualitativo y hermenéutico, basado en el análisis textual y contextual de obras literarias, ensayos y manifestaciones discursivas vinculadas al activismo feminista” (Bourdieu 1995: 17). Mi escrito no busca una exhaustividad canónica, sino una lectura crítica que permita identificar continuidades, rupturas y desplazamientos

discursivos. Y en este sentido, las configuraciones contemporáneas del activismo literario feminista en América Latina deben entenderse en relación con profundas transformaciones políticas, culturales y tecnológicas que atraviesan la región desde finales del siglo XX. A saber, el neoliberalismo, la persistencia de la colonialidad del poder, la intensificación de las violencias de género y la expansión de los medios digitales configuran un escenario en el que la escritura feminista adquiere nuevas funciones, formas y estrategias de intervención. En este contexto, el activismo literario feminista ya no se define exclusivamente por la figura individual de la escritora comprometida, sino por algunas prácticas discursivas colectivas, intertextuales y transmediales, que articulan literatura, performance, manifiesto político y acción social. Y es que una de las características centrales del activismo literario feminista contemporáneo es su orientación decolonial e interseccional. ”Frente a los límites del feminismo hegemónico, las escritoras latinoamericanas han problematizado las categorías universales de mujer, género y opresión, subrayando la necesidad de atender a la imbricación entre género, raza, clase, etnicidad y sexualidad” (Sontag 2003: 26). Las escrituras de mujeres indígenas y afrodescendientes constituyen un eje fundamental de esta reconfiguración. A través de la poesía, la narrativa y el testimonio, estas autoras recuperan memorias colectivas, saberes ancestrales y formas de oralidad que cuestionan la primacía de la escritura occidental como único modo legítimo de producción de conocimiento. El activismo literario se orienta así hacia una disputa epistémica, en la que escribir implica descolonizar el lenguaje y las formas de representación. Desde esta perspectiva, la literatura feminista no busca únicamente visibilizar experiencias marginalizadas, sino transformar las condiciones mismas de enunciación, poniendo en crisis el canon literario, las jerarquías culturales y los dispositivos de legitimación académica. Otro eje central del activismo literario feminista contemporáneo es la tematización del cuerpo como territorio político. En un contexto marcado por la violencia feminicida, la criminalización de los cuerpos disidentes y el control reproductivo, la escritura se convierte en un espacio de denuncia y de elaboración simbólica del trauma.

La literatura feminista aborda la violencia no solo como tema, sino como experiencia que atraviesa el lenguaje mismo. Fragmentación narrativa, hibridez genérica y ruptura de las formas tradicionales del relato son estrategias frecuentes para dar cuenta de aquello que excede los marcos representacionales clásicos. En este sentido, el activismo literario no se limita a narrar la violencia, sino que interroga los modos en que esta puede ser dicha. Las tecnologías digitales han modificado de manera sustancial las prácticas del activismo literario feminista. Redes sociales, blogs, editoriales independientes y plataformas colaborativas permiten una circulación ampliada y transnacional de textos, al tiempo que favorecen la construcción de comunidades discursivas y afectivas. Movimientos como Ni Una Menos o las campañas literarias vinculadas al feminismo han evidenciado la potencia de consignas,

poemas breves y manifiestos como formas de intervención pública. En este escenario ”la frontera entre literatura, activismo y comunicación política se resbala, y el texto adquiere una materialidad efímera, performativa y colectiva, esta reconfiguración planteando, sin embargo, nuevos desafíos críticos: la fugacidad de los discursos, la sobreexposición mediática y el riesgo de banalización del mensaje feminista en el espacio digital” (Segato 2016: 38). En conjunto, las configuraciones contemporáneas del activismo literario feminista revelan un campo en constante transformación, donde la escritura continúa funcionando como si fuera una herramienta privilegiada de resistencia, producción de sentido y acción política situada.

3. Conclusiones

El activismo literario feminista en América Latina constituye una práctica compleja y dinámica que articula memoria, cuerpo, lenguaje y política. Lejos de ser un fenómeno homogéneo, se configura como un campo de disputas donde convergen múltiples voces y experiencias. Analizar el activismo literario de ayer y de hoy desde una perspectiva feminista latinoamericana permite comprender la escritura como una forma de acción situada, capaz de cuestionar las narrativas dominantes y de imaginar horizontes alternativos de justicia social. El activismo literario feminista en América Latina se configura como un campo heterogéneo y dinámico, en el que convergen escritura, memoria, cuerpo y política. A lo largo de este artículo, mi intención ha sido demostrar que la literatura constituye una forma de acción situada, capaz de cuestionar las narrativas dominantes y de producir conocimiento crítico. Lejos de ser un fenómeno marginal, el activismo literario feminista ocupa un lugar central en la comprensión de las luchas contemporáneas por la justicia social y de género en América Latina.

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Title in English: ***Literary activism yesterday and today***

Abstract in English: *I am convinced that the Balkan region forms a grouping that is invisible from a geographical point of view but very visible ideologically, in terms of a certain mentality, with the African, Latin American, and Asian regions, which explains the need for civic activism in the Balkans. The idea is as follows: it is the year 2025, but if a person is different, they must submit to a majority that still considers itself an authority. People belonging to minorities are still considered deviations from the so-called "norms," sources of subversion with respect to the supposed "normality" of the majority, endangering, for example, the internal order of a country. Activism emerged as a form of public participation to which certain people devote their feelings, time, effort, and sometimes money to achieve positive change in human, social, environmental, or political issues. The objectives of activism involve the defense of human or environmental rights, as they are threatened or violated. Many activists are associated with non-governmental organizations, responding collectively to causes they consider unjust, such as discrimination against vulnerable groups or animal abuse, attempting to resolve them and treating those affected with respect and dignity.*

Keywords in English: *feminist literary activism, digital culture, human rights, discrimination, public sphere, Latin American feminism, vulnerable groups, testimonial literature*

Healing the Past: Takarazuka Revue's Performative Historicities

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Abstract

This paper examines Takarazuka Revue's post-2015 re-configuration of Edo-period representation, situating the company's shifting dramaturgical strategies within broader cultural debates on historical memory, identity formation, and the ideological legacy of early modern Japan. While Edo period (1603-1868) has long been romanticized as a harmonious and morally coherent era, its dominant narratives continue to shape contemporary Japanese self-understanding in ways which obscure the era's systemic violence, rigid social stratification, and oppressive institutional structures. Building on previous research focused on snow troupe, the present study analyzes Edo-period portrayals in ten *jidaimono* and *nihonmono* productions staged by the remaining four troupes (flower, moon, star, cosmos) since 2015, identifying a discernible shift from idealization toward a nuanced, critically informed realism. Through hermeneutic and phenomenological analysis grounded in 25 years of on-site fieldwork on Takarazuka Revue's production culture, this paper identifies three interconnected strategies: the reframing of the Tokugawa *bakufu* as a dysfunctional military regime; the systematic deconstruction of the samurai as an archetype of proto-toxic masculinity; and the renewed attention to ordinary people whose diverse experiences illuminate a more complex social landscape. These representational strategies collectively function as a performative interrogation of historical authority, challenging the endurance of Edo-centric discourses which continue to influence contemporary political rhetoric and cultural imagination. By staging historically grounded yet forward-looking narratives, Takarazuka Revue not only confronts audiences with unsettling dimensions of the past but also proposes ethical alternatives rooted in compassion, cooperation, and human dignity, offering a culturally resonant counterpoint to rising populist and neo-autocratic tendencies in the present.

Keywords

musical theater, (re-)invention of traditions, (re-)negotiation of modernity, late-modern hierarchies of values, masculinity and femininity.

1. Introduction: Leaning into Historical Truth, Questioning the Historical Legacy

History is generally viewed as a positive repository of lessons and symbols, an expansive database of knowledge allowing humans to keep on building their lives, as individuals and as collectives. Nonetheless, there are pasts which tend to hold the present and, implicitly, the future hostages to their own discourses of grandeur and

immortality. Such is the case with Japan's Edo period (1603-1868), highly romanticized after its ending in 1868 and its replacement with Meiji period (1868-1912) and its rampant policies of modernization, mimicking the Western project of technological progress. This paper observes the performative deconstruction of Edo period by means of the live theater, as pursued by Takarazuka Revue Company since 2015 in so-called *jidaimono* (時代物, historical performances) or *nihonmono* (日本物, Japan-related performances). The complexity of the theme required the division in two separate analytical procedures: one detailing the deconstruction endeavor occurring in performances staged by snow troupe (Grajdian 2024) and one focusing on the other four troupes and the ways in which they were instrumentalized in this project of empowering the present and liberating the future from the almighty dominance of the past (the current paper). The goal is to identify the phases of such an endeavor, the strategies employed, the challenges faced as well as the positive and negative results.[1]

Long associated with firmly conservative gender norms, strictly reinforced socio-economic hierarchies, and an almost military discipline in both training and performance, Takarazuka Revue has accompanied modern Japan since its establishment in 1914: a uniquely enduring institution, it functions at once as a mirror of prevailing social sensibilities and as a subtle barometer of future cultural orientation. Its most recognizable hallmark lies in its all-female cast, which performs both male (男役 *otokoyaku*) and female (娘役 *musumeyaku*) roles. Organized into five troupes, Takarazuka Revue stages a wide spectrum of productions – spanning genres, historical periods, and geographical settings – on the stages of its two principal theaters: Takarazuka Grand Theater in Hyōgo Prefecture and Tokyo Takarazuka Theater close to the Ginza district of the capital (Kawasaki 2005; Watanabe 1999). Across seven to ten weekly performances held year-round, audiences encounter elaborate live theater incorporating Western popular music, intricate choreography, polished vocal acting, lavish scenography, and rapidly changing, meticulously crafted costumes which enable performers to demonstrate both technical mastery and individual artistry.[2] Since the

[1] Takarazuka Revue refers to the cultural and mass-media phenomenon, whereas Takarazuka Revue Company denotes its formal fiscal and organizational entity. Prior to 1945, the administrative leadership exhibited only limited financial and institutional self-definition, resulting in multiple name changes which closely followed the political currents of the respective periods (Tsuganesawa 1991).

[2] A parallel dynamic characterizes Takarazuka Music School 宝塚音楽学校, the exclusive and highly competitive two-year training academy founded in 1919 as the sole recruitment channel for Takarazuka Revue. Each year, the school admits and rigorously trains a select cohort of 40 female students, who subsequently join the approximately 350 actresses performing within the company's five troupes. Like Takarazuka Revue, Takarazuka Music School has undergone multiple renamings over the course of the 20th century, adjusting its denomination in ways

phenomenal success of *The Rose of Versailles* 『ベルサイユのばら』 in 1974, Takarazuka Revue has been closely linked with the broader contours of *shōjo* culture (*shōjo bunka* 少女文化), a cultural framework which articulates ideals of femininity, feminine identity, and female embodiment, often shaped through the figure of the adolescent girl within Japan's competitive and commercially driven environment, in which consumer practices, mediated discourses on sexuality, and normative expectations regarding romance, marriage, and reproduction intersect (Robertson 1998; Ōtsuka 1991; Yamanashi 2012). In the past decade – particularly since the onset of the Reiwa era in 2019 and further accelerated by the global pandemic of 2020-2022 – Takarazuka Revue has undergone a notable shift in orientation: while its traditional business model was anchored in a deeply committed fan base composed mainly of stay-at-home housewives and financially established women over the age of thirty-five, recent institutional strategies have sought to broaden this demographic, so that the inclusion of male spectators and younger, more diverse audiences has prompted an expansion of thematic material and performance styles, reflecting changing cultural expectations and a more pluralistic understanding of theatrical engagement.

The year 2015 marked a significant turning point in Takarazuka Revue's representational strategies: following the highly celebratory centennial festivities of 2014, the company introduced, over the course of its annual cycle of nine productions, three performances which collectively signaled notable shifts in thematic emphasis and narrative orientation (Grajdian 2025). The first of these was *1789: The Lovers of the Bastille* (『1789：バスティーユの恋人たち』, moon troupe), the Japanese adaptation of the French rock opera *1789: Les Amants de la Bastille*, which premiered in 2012 at the Palais des Sports in Paris. Its staging represented a clear departure from *The Rose of Versailles*' paradigm (1974), the work which had long defined Takarazuka Revue's public image and internal aesthetic framework, anchoring it firmly within the cultural logic of *shōjo* sentiment and romanticized historical imagination since the mid-1970s. The second key production was *A Song for Kingdoms* (『王家に捧ぐ歌』, cosmos troupe), based on *Aida* (1871) by Giuseppe Verdi, with a libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni: a revival of the star troupe's 2003 world premiere, the 2015 iteration subtly but decisively transformed the work's underlying message. While the earlier production articulated the ideal of peace as the most elevated and universally cherished human aspiration, the revised version advanced the more complex proposition stating that the preservation of peace may, at times, necessitate recourse to war: this shift

mirroring Japan's tumultuous historical shifts. Its present name, adopted in 1946, marks the beginning of the post-WWII era and signals the institutional stabilization which allowed Takarazuka Revue to evolve into the remarkably enduring cultural force it represents today (Ueda 1976).

reflected a broader re-evaluation of heroic, moral, and political narratives within the company's repertoire. The third performance, *The Night When the Stars Met* (『星逢一夜』, snow troupe), offered an explicit interrogation of Edo-period rhetoric and the *bushidō* ethos: through its tragic focus on a star-crossed romance shaped by the fractured bonds of childhood friendship, the work deconstructs these ideological formations, presenting them not as sources of moral clarity but as deeply constraining and, ultimately, harmful. In doing so, the production marks a deliberate reconsideration of the aesthetic and ethical vocabulary through which Takarazuka Revue has conventionally portrayed premodern Japan.

Among the three innovative productions of 2015, *The Night When the Stars Met* stands out as particularly consequential as it initiates an abrupt and uncompromising departure from Takarazuka Revue's long-standing idealization of modernity and its celebration of the *giri-ninjō* 義理人情 dialectic – the stress-ratio between social obligations and personal emotions – as a form of ethical transcendence. Instead, it presents Edo period as an era characterized by severe oppression, rigid social stratification, and a striking absence of core human values such as compassion, benevolence, mercy – despite its later historical construction as a time of harmony, stability, and prosperity following the violent upheavals of the *bakumatsu* (幕末 "the end of the curtain", the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate in the mid-19th century). *The Night When the Stars Met*'s significance is further amplified by the fact that it was staged by snow troupe: within the Takarazuka Revue's organizational structure – comprising flower troupe (花組 *hana-gumi*) and moon troupe (月組 *tsuki-gumi*, both founded in 1921), snow troupe (雪組 *yuki-gumi*, founded in 1924), star troupe (星組 *hoshi-gumi*, active 1933-1939 and revived in 1948), and cosmos troupe (宙組 *sora-gumi*, established in 1998) – each ensemble carries distinct aesthetic associations which inform and nuance the thematic message of its performances (Hashimoto 1999; Kawasaki 1999). Until 2015, snow troupe was especially known for cultivating a conservative artistic atmosphere, frequently foregrounding "traditional Japan" and the classic tension between *giri* (義理, social obligation) and *ninjō* (人情, personal feeling) as the apex of moral and emotional refinement, and its repertoire tended to concentrate on narratives set in premodern Japan, thereby positioning the troupe as a custodian of conventional dramaturgy within the company (Sansom 1931). Founded alongside the first Takarazuka Grand Theater in 1924, snow troupe has long been regarded as Takarazuka Revue's primary guardian of classical dance and operatic traditions, and although it occasionally favors Western material, it has equally cultivated a reputation as the vanguard of classical Japanese theatrical aesthetics. Against this backdrop, the troupe's Japanese premiere in 1996 of the Viennese musical *Elisabeth* (1992) – later one of Takarazuka Revue's enduring blockbusters – carries symbolic weight, inviting discussions regarding cultural "appropriation", "Japanisation", and the negotiation of

foreign material within Japanese performance frameworks. Furthermore, in line with Takarazuka Revue administration's post-WWII policy to avoid portrayals of modern Japan or Asia – stemming from the company's unequivocal support for expansionist militarist agendas in the first half of the 20th century –, approximately 30% of its annual repertoire consists of *jidaimono* (時代物, period pieces). While all troupes contribute to Japan-themed productions and snow troupe likewise adopts a range of narrative genres, its defining characteristic has remained a pronounced sense of "Japaneseness" structured through the *wakon yōsai* (和魂洋才, "Japanese roots/spirit, Western technology/knowledge"; Mason and Caiger 1979; McClain 2002) paradigm. This framework underpins Takarazuka Revue's broader hybridity, aligning it with Japan's modern identity and supplying the crucial "Japanising" element which informs performances irrespective of their cultural or historical setting.

Accordingly, the *bakufu* (幕府, "tent-government") system and the events of the *bakumatsu* were systematically reframed to align with the ideological needs of Meiji-period technocrats, who employed them – often uncritically – as a counterpoint to the perceived erosion of identity, values, and cultural coherence brought about by Japan's rapid modernization after 1868 and, even more markedly, following 1945 – and interpretative framework which has continued to shape public discourse and cultural production into the present. Following snow troupe's *The Night When the Stars Met* in 2015, the troupe staged four additional *jidaimono* productions, to a total of five, up to the time of this writing (December 2025), all of which have been examined in a previous paper (Grajdian 2024): the second, *Rurouni Kenshin* (『るろうに剣心』, 2016), adapts the widely circulated cross-medial franchise centered on Himura Kenshin, an itinerant swordsman of the early Meiji period. Having played a pivotal role in the Meiji Restoration, Himura Kenshin subsequently dedicates his martial abilities to the protection of ordinary citizens, thereby embodying a moral counterbalance to the era's political and social upheavals. The third work, *The Sun in the Last Days of the Shogunate* (『幕末太陽傳』, 2017), draws on Kawashima Yūzō's 川島雄三 1956 film of the same title: set in an 1862 brothel, it represents a classic "hotel tale," offering a tightly framed portrayal of the daily lives, tensions, and aspirations of its inhabitants during the waning years of the Tokugawa rule. The fourth production, *When the Last Sword Is Drawn* (『壬生義士伝』, 2019), is based on Asada Jirō's 浅田次郎 2000 novel, and recounts the life of a lower-class samurai from Hokkaidō who joins the *Shinsengumi* and ultimately becomes one of the many casualties of the civil conflict preceding the Meiji Restoration – violence rarely acknowledged as such in conventional historical narratives. Finally, *Yumesuke's Dream: Senryō Souvenir* (『夢介千両みやげ』, 2022), adapted from Yamate Kiichirō's 山手樹一郎 (1899-1978) novel, offers a more quotidian lens on Edo-period

society, narrating the experiences of a young couple as they navigate the rhythms, challenges, and understated pleasures of urban life in Edo (present-day Tokyo).

The present analysis focuses on three core strategies evident in eight out of ten *jidaimono* staged by the flower, moon, and star troupes since 2015: collectively, these works reveal a subtle yet decisive shift from idealization toward a calibrated realism. Two separate productions by cosmos troupe respectively star troupe offer an unexpectedly innovative treatment of the Edo period, projecting its thematic concerns into broader, globally resonant futures. The analytical structure parallels a healing process and therefore follows a therapeutic logic: firstly, the identification of the central wound and its careful, honest acknowledgment; secondly, the exploration of alternative frameworks and experimentation with functional elements; thirdly, the implementation of durable strategies aimed at sustainable resolution. Accordingly, the paper is organized into three sections: (1) an investigation of the performative construction of the Edo period as a historically grounded, yet ultimately dysfunctional, military regime; (2) an analysis of the dismantling of the ostensibly heroic samurai figure, whose attributes frequently align with forms of "toxic masculinity" avant-la-lettre; (3) an examination of portrayals of ordinary people and their documented diversity – their aspirations, struggles, moments of joy, and embeddedness in daily life. The overarching aim is to identify the strategies through which Takarazuka Revue rehumanizes historical subjects who have long been represented to their disadvantage, and to consider the broader applicability of these strategies across other domains of public life.

Drawing on 25 years of on-site fieldwork – encompassing sustained phenomenological engagement, extensive empirical inquiry among both producers and consumers of Japanese popular culture, and in particular long-term observation of Takarazuka Revue's productions, as well as comprehensive archival and secondary research – this paper seeks to elucidate, through a hermeneutic lens, the mechanisms underpinning the performative construction of history within contemporary entertainment mass. Takarazuka Revue achieves this, I argue, by placing audiences in direct confrontation with historically uncomfortable realities increasingly permeating their everyday lives, while simultaneously articulating plausible visions of the future grounded in universal values such as compassion, cooperation, and mutual respect. Precisely because these values tend to be assumed as self-evident within late-modern societies, they become vulnerable to erosion through populist narratives invoking notions of "the greater good", "pastoral premodernity", and/or "technological overhaul". Thus, nurturing awareness of the historical fragility of these principles functions as a counterweight to global tendencies aimed at dismantling the achievements of modernity and replacing them with emergent forms of autocracy, coercion, and ideological rigidity.

2. The Confrontation with Brutal Realities: Dissonant Struggles

The healing journey of the past towards the empowerment of the present and the liberated, dynamic co-creation of the future begins with the (self-)awareness of the problem itself: history does not exist in a vacuum but is the accumulation of ideological interpretation of facts and correlations which leads, ultimately, to the re-invention of the collective identity. A first step in dismantling Edo period's overwhelming supremacy over Japan's modernity was, in the vision of Takarazuka Revue Company's ideologues, the deconstruction of the *wa* 和 or "harmony",[3] a

[3] The character 和 is omnipresent in Japanese vocabulary as a marker of purity, tradition, and a distinctly "Japanese" sensibility. Yet its primary meaning is not "Japanese" at all. At its core, 和 signifies "harmony", a semantic field far older than its national associations. The use of 和 to denote "Japan" or "Japanese" is a secondary development, adopted by early Japanese elites as they articulated a cultural identity for themselves and for the emerging nation. Historically, the earliest recorded name for Japan – *Wa* – appears repeatedly in ancient Chinese chronicles. Crucially, however, the Chinese wrote this name with a different character: 倭, which also bore the pejorative connotation of "dwarf". Unsurprisingly, this implication was unwelcome in Japan. By the 8th century, Japanese literati made a deliberate decision to replace 倭 with 和, preserving the pronunciation while discarding the derogatory nuance and instead embracing the dignifying notion of "harmony". This semantic shift equally shaped the written form of Yamato, the early polity from which the Japanese state later claimed descent: the compound 大和, literally "Great Wa" or "Great Japan", combines the characters for "great" and "harmony" but is read "Yamato", reflecting a classical naming strategy which embedded national identity within the ideal of harmonious order. Around the same period, the term 大和魂 (*yamato-damashii*) – commonly translated as "the Japanese spirit" – emerged to express the intrinsic character and moral essence attributed to the Japanese people. The choice of 和 as a self-designation is therefore revealing: in the earliest centuries of state formation, the concept of harmony was not merely desirable but foundational. This emphasis was further reinforced by continental intellectual traditions (Keene 1993; Sansom 1931). Under the influence of Confucian and Buddhist thought, the legendary regent Prince Shōtoku (574-622) enshrined 和 explicitly in his Seventeen-Article Constitution, an early political-ethical document which provided moral direction for the nascent Japanese state. In it, he famously declared: "Harmony should be valued and quarrels avoided […] When superiors are in harmony and inferiors are friendly, discussions proceed calmly and the correct view of affairs prevails." This articulation of harmony as a political and social principle shaped Japanese self-understanding for centuries and remains visible today. The current era name, Reiwa (令和), adopted in 2019, incorporates 和, marking the twentieth time the character has appeared in an imperial era title. Beyond its symbolic usage, the idea of harmony represented by 和 remains integral to how Japanese society imagines itself: social cohesion, group well-being, and communal stability tend to be privileged over individual preference or personal expression. The "good citizen" is often

concept introduced and developed by Shōtoku Taishi on the basis of Confucianist and Buddhist teachings combined with his own interpretation (Keene 1995; Sansom 1931; Varley 1973), and its replacement with a realist worldview encapsulating the singularity of individual life as well as its inexorability.

To start with, moon troupe's *Nobunaga: The Will to Power* (『信長：下天の夢』, literally "Nobunaga: The Genius' Dream"), displays premodern Japan's ferocious social inequalities as well as the thirst for control of its leaders by focusing on the life of the historical figure Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534-1582). Staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 10. June 2016 until 18. July 2016 and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 5. August 2016 until 4. September 2016 with Ryū Masaki 龍真咲 as Nobunaga and Manaki Reika 愛希れいか as Nō-hime 濃姫, also known as Kichō 帰蝶 his wife, the performance follows closely the last decades of the 16th century and the last phases of the civil wars which had dominated the archipelago since late 12th century with calamitous consequences for the population as well as the gradual clarification of the situation which led, eventually, to the victory of Tokugawa Ieyasu and to the constitution of the shogunate. While it does not strictly speaking relate to

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idealized as the person who contributes to collective harmony – an ethical orientation also reflected in compounds such as 平和 (*heiwa*, "peace") and 調和 (*chōwa*, "accord"). Cultural analysts frequently contrast this collectivist ethos with the individualist orientation of many Western societies: from this comparative perspective, the prioritization of harmony can appear restrictive, even repressive, potentially limiting the expression of individuality or suppressing personal rights. Nonetheless, a closer look at the etymology of 和 complicates such a simplistic opposition, as the character consists of two elements: on the left is 禾, depicting an ear of grain. On the right is 口, representing a mouth. One interpretive tradition holds that 禾 symbolizes softness, pliancy, and gentleness – qualities which echo in several Japanese readings of the character: 和らぐ (*yawaragu*, "to soften, to subside"), 和らげる (*yawarageru*, "to moderate, to ease"), and 和む (*nagomu*, "to relax, to become calm"). The mouth radical, 口, evokes sound or speech, suggesting the blending of distinct voices into a harmonious whole. Another explanation proposes that grain entering the mouth evokes nourishment and a pleasing taste: a meal becomes "harmonious" when diverse ingredients combine without losing their individual character, each contributing a distinct flavor enriching the whole. Seen from this perspective, the notion of 和 as suppressive uniformity misrepresents the character's deeper implications: rather than implying the erasure of differences, the etymology of 和 suggests that harmony arises precisely through the interplay of varied elements, each retaining its own quality while contributing to a balanced totality. In other words, the ideal of harmony embedded in 和 assumes not sameness but complementarity: a social order in which diversity is coordinated, moderated, and refined into an integrated and satisfying whole (Oguma 2002; Parkes 1995; Rimer 1995).

Edo period, *Nobunaga: The Will to Power* explains some of the historical-geographical mechanisms underpinning the gruesome events leading to Nobunaga's suicide and the unification of Japan under Tokugawa Ieyasu's rule, in accordance with Takarazuka Revue's own conventions, mostly encapsulated in its intrinsic set of conventions named "the Violet Code" (すみれコード, *sumire-kōdo*; Kobayashi 1955; Watanabe 2002), which prohibits any non-stylized display of ugliness such as violent death, open sexuality, bloody encounters as well as allusions to mundane events such as medical procedures (to which biological birth and death count) on its stage, unless the dramaturgic logic explicitly requires it.

Likewise avoiding idealization but keeping up with "the Violet Code", flower troupe's performance *Messiah: The Legend of Shiroh Amakusa* 『MESSIAH（メサイア）：異聞・天草四郎』, staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 13. July 2018 until 20. August 2018, and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 7. September 2018 until 14. October 2018, was directed by Harada Ryō 原田諒, with Asumi Rio 明日海りお and Senna Ayase 仙名彩世 in the lead roles of the teenage-martyr Amakusa Shirō 天草四郎 (c. 1621?-1638), the leader of the Shimabara Rebellion (which lasted from 17. December 1637 until 15. April 1638), an uprising of the Japanese Roman Catholics against the shogunate; and Rū るう, a girl in the poverty-stricken community of fisher-families living on the southern island of Kyūshū. The performance, relying on flower troupe's reputation since its inception in 1921 as the most treasured of the five ensembles, with larger budgets and more lavish stage and costume designs as well as more powerful and impactful messages, brings into foreground the suffering of regular Japanese people in stark contrast with the opulence and luxury of the aristocracy and military rulers: the warriors known as samurai implicitly turn into oppressors and defenders of the *status quo*, brutally crushing those who do not obey and who, out of sheer despair, look for salvation and hope in alternative existential models, such as Christianity and its promise of *paraíso*, the heavenly land mentioned in Portuguese throughout the performance. While the dramaturgic framework provides indeed some self-reflexive awareness on the side of the shogun, the tenor of the performance incessantly refers to the widening gap between rulers and ruled, with daunting echoes in present-day Japan's quotidian realities.

It is important to note that, while the plot focuses on the transformation of the main male character Shirō from a fearless – and possibly highly aggressive and ruthless – pirate into a promoter of the new religion which had already been banned under the extremely restrictive shogunate order but which had been secretly kept alive among the farmers due to its strong appeal in terms of hope and faith in an abundant life after death, the trigger of his inner metamorphosis manifests in the image of Holy Virgin Mary emulated after Rū's gentleness and natural beauty. Shirō finds in her warmth and acceptance the light to his turn towards a life driven by belief in a better

world, for all the people, and decides to serve as a leader to those who have, eventually, nothing to lose anymore. Charismatic and embodying high ideals inspired by Rū's soft femininity, Shirō mobilizes the masses – a huge action given the historical circumstances – and moves them towards defending their faith. In doing so and eclipsing the documented reality of Amakusa Shirō being only 17 years old at his death in the immediate aftermath of the defeated rebellion, Takarazuka Revue performance brings into the foreground the power of feminine energy as a catalyst of change, and the importance of trust, in oneself as well as in others.

In the chaos of a more realistic representation of Edo period with focus on precisely its formative years until the shogunate and the military government were fully established, Takarazuka Revue openly displays the tragical lack of alternatives for regular people, caught between the political necessity of stability as a consequence of durable peace, of territorial sovereignty and independence, on the one hand, and the economic prerogative of sustainable prosperity, on the other hand. Concurrently, the priorities of the ruling elite were diverging from those of the majority of people confronted with quotidian insolvable hardships, as the elites were preoccupied with their own privileges, wealth, and ambitions, while the vast majority were concerned with bare survival and subsistence. At the center of the narrative stands the figure of the warrior *bushi* 武士 or the samurai 侍, which has been wildly constructed and employed as a middle-way between these two extremes – nonetheless, recent research on this half-mythical presence and his way of life ("the way of the samurai" or *bushidō* 武士道) reveals them as having emerged within discourses of "the (re-)invention of tradition" during Meiji era and ever since, with Nitobe Inazō's English-language book *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* playing a pivotal role in this process: its famous sentence "Bushido was, and still is, the animating spirit, the motor force of our country" (Nitobe [1899] 2002: 71), is still conveyed as a key to "understanding Japan". Consequently, the second step in dismantling Edo period's supremacy and referential position in Japan's self-awareness – and in Takarazuka Revue's efforts to deconstruct it – is to observe critically the samurai's hegemony and hegemonic masculinity encompassed by it – already incipiently addressed in Messiah and the subtle strength of feminine presence.

A distinctive position within this reframing of Edo period and the long-standing engagement with Japanese historical narratives occupies star troupe's *One Samurai from Kagoshima* 『桜華に舞え：SAMURAI The FINAL』 (Takarazuka Grand Theater from 26. August 2016 until 3. October 2016; Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 21. October 2016 until 20. November 2016), offering not simply a retelling of late-Tokugawa and early-Meiji events but a carefully orchestrated meditation on the construction, performance, and ideological afterlives of the samurai figure at a moment of profound historical rupture. Set against the turbulent backdrop of the Meiji Restoration, the performance situates the samurai at the shifting intersection of

collapsing feudal structures, emerging modern statehood, and the psychological disorientation accompanying the transition from Edo period's idealized stability to the uncertain dawn of modern Japan. Through its dramaturgy, aesthetics, and character orchestration, *One Samurai from Kagoshima* both reaffirms and gently deconstructs the samurai mythos, revealing the contradictions embedded within the narrative of Japan's march towards modernity. At the heart of the production lies the figure of Kirino Toshiaki, also known as Nakamura Hanjirō 中村 半次郎 [1838-1877], renowned as one of the "four *hitokiri* of the bakumatsu" 幕末四大人斬り (together with Kawakami Gensai 河上彦斎 [1834-1872], Tanaka Shinbei 田中新兵衛 [1832-1863] and Okada Izō 岡田以蔵 [1838-1865] – warrior elite widely considered undefeatable by normal people, who opposed the Tokugawa regime and later supported the Meiji emperor):[4] significantly, Takarazuka Revue refrains from casting him as a triumphant reformer, and instead, he becomes a liminal figure – half prisoner of the past, half architect of an imminent new order. This interpretive choice allows the production to explore a profound ambivalence: the samurai, whose image had been idealized for centuries as the embodiment of loyalty, honor, and immutable social order, becomes simultaneously the agent and the casualty of Meiji state formation. The elegant gravitas typical of Takarazuka Revue's *otokoyaku* performance tradition enhances this ambivalence as the leading star's Hokushō Kairi 北翔海莉 portrayal of Kirino Toshiaki is meticulously calibrated to blend charismatic authority with visible emotional strain, emphasizing how historical transformation unravels the samurai's ontological coherence.

The production's narrative and visual strategies work to destabilize the conventional myth of the Edo period as a space of "perfect harmony": Takarazuka Revue, famous for its opulent romanticization of Japanese and Western pasts, here leans into a more critical reframing. Although the Edo era is often retrospectively romanticized as an age of peace and artistic flourishing, *One Samurai from Kagoshima* highlights its underlying character as a rigid military dictatorship sustained by the Tokugawa *bakufu*'s coercive apparatus. Scenes depicting surveillance, interrogation, bureaucratic control, and class tensions offer a visual vocabulary disrupting the sanitized nostalgia cultivated in mainstream popular culture. While the production never abandons Takarazuka's aesthetic polish, its tonal shifts – somber musical motifs, stark lighting contrasts, and choreographic restraint – signal an insistence on historical nuance. Simultaneously, the narrative foregrounds the fragmentation of samurai identity as a socio-political category. The dissolution of the class system is presented not merely as an administrative reform but as an existential wound as characters articulate fears of redundancy, accusations of betrayal, and anxieties about the erosion

[4] The word *hitokiri* literally means "manslayer" or "man cutter".

of communal codes which had governed samurai life for generations. These dramatic moments allow audiences to witness a rare theatrical gesture: the samurai as a historically contingent construct rather than a timeless masculine ideal. By showing the internal contradictions of the samurai class – loyalty versus pragmatic survival, martial valor versus the impending irrelevance of swordsmanship, clan allegiance versus national identity – the performance brings into the foreground the broader epistemological rupture characterizing Japan's transition from early modern to modern.

Equally important, *One Samurai from Kagoshima* reframes the Meiji Restoration not simply as a heroic revolution but as a violent, often chaotic process which demanded human sacrifice and emotional dislocation, situating individual longing and interpersonal bonds at the center of structural transformation, a strategy typical of Takarazuka Revue's narrative mode but deployed here with particular poignancy: romantic subplots, friendships, and loyalties are strained or destroyed, illustrating the cost of modernization. The staging underscores this by juxtaposing intimate tableaux with large-scale ensemble scenes, emphasizing the ways in which private lives are engulfed by national upheaval. The subtle choreography of soldiers, bureaucrats, and civilians in transition embodies the disoriented collective body of a society shedding one political ontology and assuming another. Thus, what distinguishes Takarazuka Revue's approach is its capacity to weave historical critique into an emotionally resonant performance idiom: because its productions rely on stylized gender performance, the *otokoyaku*'s embodiment of the samurai introduces an additional layer of meaning. The genre's masculine aesthetic – shaped by female performers – serves as both homage and interrogation as Takarazuka Revue's samurai is dignified yet fragile, authoritative yet uncertain, imbued with both nostalgic gravitas and modern skepticism. This gendered performativity enables the company to revisit the samurai legacy without reproducing the hypermasculine nationalism which often accompanies representations of the Meiji Restoration in other media. Instead, *One Samurai from Kagoshima* delivers a samurai who is emotionally accessible, historically situated, and politically ambivalent.

Ultimately, the production performs a gentle but decisive deconstruction of the Edo-period mythology stubbornly dominating contemporary imagination: by staging the last moments of feudal Japan through the eyes of characters caught between eras, *One Samurai from Kagoshima* foregrounds the messy, often violent processes obscured by narratives of orderly continuity, with Takarazuka Revue's trademark romanticism softening the edges without erasing the underlying tensions so that the performance turns, thus, into a site where myth and history converge, inviting the audience to confront the contradictions of a society negotiating its passage into modernity. In this sense, *One Samurai from Kagoshima* exemplifies Takarazuka Revue's unique capacity to reframe national memory while delivering neither a triumphant modernization narrative nor a nostalgic lament for a lost world, but rather

presenting a nuanced meditation on change, identity, and the seductive yet unstable figure of the samurai – revealed here not as the guardian of harmony but as its most fragile illusion.

3. The Dismantling of *Bushidō*'s Hegemonic Masculinity: Delusional Swordsmanship

As exhibited in the two performances analyzed further below, the members of the samurai class appear as unable to fend for themselves and instead display more accurately the characteristics which have been attributed to them by recent research based on newly discovered documents: they had not been the soft-spoken, mild-mannered intellectuals committed to such superior values as loyalty, honor, compassion. Rather, they were often corrupt, lazy aggressors living off the farmers' hard-work, poverty, crushing taxes; they did not join the new order and economic-political organization of the country after 1868 out of sudden decency, idealism, or enthusiasm for modern values, but out of sheer pragmatism, as most of them clearly understood that clinging on to the past would only mean their own demise, financial ruin, misery (Benesch 2014: 32-37; Schwentker 2003: 112). Furthermore, only approximately 6% of the former samurai participated in the various riots of the emerging modernity, as most of the members of this social stratum were ready and self-confident enough to face and to solve the responsibilities and challenges brought about by modernity. Such warriors are caricatures of a past which has never existed as such, despising, cursing, belittling, gaslighting, abusing those they deem inferior while at the same time taking for granted their efforts and mercilessly exploiting their naivete, kindness, and lack of education.

On the other hand and in strident contrast with such efforts, the warriors' bizarre yet outstanding fighting techniques in combination with the absurd *bushidō* ideology were frontally addressed in moon troupe's *Unmatched in Dreams and Reality* 『夢現無双』, as the year 2019 continued Takarazuka Revue's relentless process of questioning the relevance of outdated – and in fact never truly widely implemented – norms of the *bushidō* ethics in this performance based on the historical novel *Miyamoto Musashi* 『宮本武蔵』 by Yoshikawa Eiji 吉川英治 (1892-1962, real name Yoshikawa Hidetsugu 吉川英次) published in serialized form between 1935 and 1939. Staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 15. March 2019 until 15. April 2019, and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 3. May 2019 until 9. June 2019, *Unmatched in Dreams and Reality* was directed by Saitō Yoshimasa 齋藤吉正, the performance's lead roles were covered by Tamaki Ryō 珠城りょう and Misono Sakura 美園さくら as the legendary Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi and his childhood sweetheart Otsū おつう, respectively, with both longing for each other but unable to reunite due to Miyamoto's resolve to upgrade his swordsmanship skills through overcoming

hardships. In opposition to moon troupe's (月組 *tsuki-gumi*, since 1921) reputation of expanding Takarazuka Revue's staging strategy through the world premieres of *Mon Paris* (『モン・パリ：我がパリ世！』, 1927), *The Rose of Versailles* (『ベルサイユのばら』, 1974) and *Gone with the Wind* (『風と共に去りぬ』, 1977) in its meticulous attention to group performances and in particular to powerful expression in chorus singing through numerous adaptations from Western dramas, in *Unmatched in Dreams and Reality*, the classical *giri-ninjō* stress-ratio turns increasingly ridiculous in this highly fictionalized account of Miyamoto Musashi, the author of *The Book of the Five Rings* 『五輪書』, written around 1645 and arguably the most renowned Japanese samurai who has ever lived: in parallel with his increasing abilities to fight his opponents and to control his emotions and thoughts, he loses the capacity to relate to those who care for him and truly matter. His pursuit of individual excellence in the name of becoming his best self, announces the Western obsession with individuality in modernity, but clashes against the impenetrable wall of a sense of isolation and reluctance to acknowledge the pains he inflicts upon those around him. Performed at a key-moment in Japan's recent history – the abdication of the Heisei emperor Akihito and the beginning of a new era, Reiwa period, under the ruling of his eldest son Naruhito took place on 1. May 2019, an event which had not happened since 1817 –,[5] *Unmatched in Dreams and Reality* challenges the nostalgic revisionism prevalent in mainstream media with their open celebration of premodern glory and limitless grandeur and instead focuses on the convoluted half-mythical life stories of heroes who cannot – ought not to – become role-models for generations of ideologically indoctrinated citizens.

Likewise and not incidentally, the second half of the year 2021 sees a reprisal of performances highlighting the necessity to reconceptualize Japanese masculinity and to more decisively separate it from premodern rigid models. In star troupe's performance *The Yagyū Ninja Scrolls* 『柳生忍法帖』– based on the eponymous novel published in 1964 by Yamada Fūtarō 山田風太郎 (1922-2001, real name Yamada Seiya 山田誠也) under the direction of Ōno Takuji 大野拓史, staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from

[5] Japan's most recent imperial abdication prior to the modern era occurred in 1817, when Morohito 師仁 (23. September 1771-11. December 1840), posthumously known as Emperor Kōkaku 光格天皇 and counted as the 119th sovereign in the traditional line, relinquished the throne after a reign which had begun in 1779. He was succeeded by his son Ayahito 恵仁 (16. March 1800-21. February 1846), later honored posthumously as Emperor Ninkō 仁孝天皇. Following his abdication, Emperor Kōkaku continued to exercise authority as *Daijō Tennō* 太上天皇 ("Abdicated Emperor", also referred to as *Jōkō* 上皇) until his death in 1840 (Mason and Caiger 1979: 157).

18. September 2021 until 1. November 2021, and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 20. November 2021 until 26. December 2021 – Rei Makoto 礼真琴 and Maisora Hitomi 舞空瞳 appear as Yagyū Jūbei 柳生十兵衛, the one-eyed master swordsman who is said to have lived during the Kan'ei era of Japanese history (1624-1644), and O-Yura おゆら, the concubine of a tyrannical local lord. Although Yagyū is the heir to the shogunal family's swordsmanship instructor, he dislikes working in a castle and instead spends his time polishing his own fighting skills. The complicated plot gradually allows for the main idea to emerge: from the early years of Japan's infamous premodern politics of national segregation, a symbolic message is sent into the future, with the unpronounced *mono no aware* ideal as an existential reminder to live life fully. Guided by Yagyū's slightly ironic, even softly self-ironic demeanor, the appeal to overcome one's self-destructiveness and to keep on living becomes almost unbearably strong and promotes in unequivocal words the value of life as the most precious asset one possesses and could ever possess. Then again, finding something more important than oneself is what conveys significance to one's own existence: although initially self-absorbed and indifferent to the sufferings of those around him, Yagyū gradually develops a sense of compassion for them and learn to stand up against oppression and injustice. It is, in fact, a crude manipulation of historical probabilities, but in the framework of Takarazuka Revue's dramaturgic conventions, it serves the broader goal of humanizing history and bringing it closer to its audiences so that the messages resulting from the lessons of the past can be perceived, processed, internalized, and eventually metamorphosed into valid actions in the here and now. Backed by star troupe's solid reputation of charismatic, decisive masculine role-models embedded in performances with impactful – even when less than popular – ideas, Rei Makoto's Yagyū Jūbei is a convincing example of healthy masculinity in the service of humanity at large: he embraces his own sense of man and warrior and develops it to the benefit of those less fortunate, without questioning or resenting his self-assigned mission.

Eventually, the identification of the intrinsic woundedness of Japaneseness as encompassed by its supposed premodern glory must make place to an equally gentle and honest exploration of alternative pathways towards a sustainable journey in which individual-centered hierarchies of values replace the intransigence of mindless obedience. The experimentation of functional elements and structures begins with the elevation of regular people and their dynamic, pragmatic embedding in everyday events.

4. Calm Display of Quotidian Humanness: Countering Self-Ironic Decadence

Socioeconomic practices of long-term benevolent conviviality start with the acknowledgment that the population of Edo period did not consist solely of highly stylized courtesans and self-effacing samurai (master-bound mercenaries-warriors or

masterless), but included a great variety of social actors, engaging in multilayered interactions and activities. From the astonishing but volatile urban life and the intellectually thriving elite to the impoverished rural communities and the outcasts populating its underworld, Edo period's demographics emerges as unexpectedly diverse, although official documents rarely mention it and consistently refer to the Neo-Confucisnist *shi-nō-kō-shō* (士農工商 "samurai, peasants, craftsmen, merchants"; Mason and Caiger 1979) social system. Political tensions and primitively armed riots, particularly in the poorest area of the archipelago, were swiftly and extremely brutally crushed with a cruelty never mentioned as such in the written sources of the time. By providing insights into Edo era's multifaceted populace, Takarazuka Revue's performances allow for innovative ideas to blossom, such as social mobility, meritocracy, and emotional freedom.

Edo period's nonsensical, decadent urban culture is revealed in star troupe's lighthearted comedy *Another World* with the same title in original Japanese, staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 27. April 2018 until 4. June 2018, and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 22. June 2018 until 22. July 2018, directed by Tani Masazumi 谷正純, and with Kurenai Yuzuru 紅ゆずる and Kisaki Airi 綺咲愛里 in the lead roles of Yasujirō, the young heir to a money-exchange establishment in Ōsaka, and of O-Sumi, the daughter of the owner of a sweets shop in the same city. While leaning on star troupe's (星組, *hoshi-gumi*, grounded in 1933, in the same year as the original Tokyo Takarazuka Theatre was inaugurated, but banned from performing between 1939 and 1946) image of delivering strong, charismatic *otokoyaku* performers (such as Wataru Kozuki 2003-2006 and Reon Yuzuki 2009-2015) in performances with memorable messages, *Another World* brings on-stage a love story based on live productions of the *rakugo* 400-year-long tradition referring to Japanese comical storytelling depicting the world after death. In the breezy atmosphere of premodern Japan, life and afterlife are combined ingeniously with the distinct goal of orchestrating masculinity as one possible identity among many others. In the dynamic vitality of the comedy framework, Yasujirō discovers that his return from death is not a condemnation, and, therefore, an obligation, but a choice and a chance. In his learning of respect and admiration for the unique gifts of life, the *mono no aware* もののあわれ concept of classical Japan – particularly in the Heian period (794-1185; Keene 1995: 31-34; Sansom 1931: 257; Varley 1973) – is revived. Usually translated as "the pathos of things" at its basic interpretation, *mono no aware* denotes the awareness of seeing the beauty of things precisely in their very transience and the ability to enjoy such beauty while it still exists.

Similarly, in flower troupe's performance *Genroku Baroque Rock* 『元禄バロックロック』, this appeal turns into the major tenor: staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 6. November 2021 until 13. December 2021, and at Tokyo Takarazuka

Theater from 2. January 2022 until 6. February 2022 – with the performance being suspended mid-run due to COVID-19-caused disruptions – and directed by Tani Takaya 谷貴矢, it employs Yuzuka Rei 柚香光 and Hoshikaze Madoka 星風まどか as the clock-maker Kuronoske/Chronosuke and Kira, the illegitimate daughter of a famous samurai who had been led to ritualist suicide (切腹 *seppuku*) due to political intrigues. Based on the universally famous story of *Chūshingura* (『忠臣蔵』, literally "The Treasury of Loyal Retainers"), the historical incident involving the 47 samurai and their mission to avenge the death of their master Asano Naganori (1667-1701) during the Genroku era (1688-1704) which has been repeatedly taken over in innumerable accounts of literature, poetry, theater, painting, and cinema, Takarazuka Revue's latest version focuses on the palpable warmth of the characters involved, on their relatability to audiences in the midst of the pandemic: namely, as long as we choose to live in dignity, strength, and joy, there is always a way to move ahead, even in times of fear and confusion. The dynamic *mise-en-scène* bursts with authentically affectionate gestures, competitive playfulness, and bright conversations on the background of a flowery stage design. The classical empathic space between performers and audiences opens up to genuine bounding with the powerful message that we can – and must – find common ways to understand, accept, and love each other. The complex figure of the samurai is no longer a substitute for obedience and endurance or self-righteous isolation but turns into a symbol of vulnerable humanity with the supreme goal of living a fulfilled life as an individual in the service of those around him.

In the same flower troupe's *Singing Lovebirds* 『鴛鴦歌合戦』, based on the 1939 eponymous musical comedy movie directed by Makino Masahiro マキノ雅弘 [1908-1993] starring Kataoka Chiezō 片岡千恵蔵 [real name Ueki Masayoshi 植木正義, 1903-1983] and Shimura Takashi 志村喬 [1905-1982]) and staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 7. July 2023 until 13. August 2023 and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 2. September 2023 until 2. October 2023 and from 6. October 2023 until 8.October 2023, Yuzuka Rei 柚香光 as the *rōnin* (浪人, masterless samurai) Asai Reisaburō 浅井禮三郎 and Hoshikaze Madoka 星風まどか as Oharu お春, the daughter of Shimura Kyōsai 志村狂斎, another *rōnin* who now makes his living making and selling umbrellas and who is obsessed with antiques, buying them even though he has no disposable income and even when most of them eventually turn out to be fakes, engage in playful banter which highlights the joy of life and the plentifully warmhearted interaction among Edo inhabitants. The dramatic tension from previous Edo-centered performances is replaced with benevolent dynamism and comical situations: the occasional direct confrontations are solved with grace and tact so that a vibrant yet relatable impression of quotidian life among urban dwellers in Japan's premodernity is conveyed. Moreover, everyday life in Edo is displayed with humor and

an unfamiliar sense of laissez-faire, which conversely encapsulates the protagonists in an aura of familiarity and memorable simplicity. They are not shadows from centuries long past with whom audiences as individuals cannot identify; embraced by flower troupe's reputation of classical elegance which transcends genres and social belonging, *Singing Lovebirds*' jovial characters turn into symbolical neighbors, benevolent but at times annoying, mirroring our own limitations and softly, inconspicuously encouraging vibrant interdependence. Perhaps this is *Singing Lovebirds*' most important feature: it mediates a temporal leap of faith into the past so that one can find solace, validation, and reassurance beyond one's own time and immediate reality.

More often than not, Takarazuka Revue's attempts at realistically depicting Edo period's daily life without embedding the *bushidō* ideology backfire: the narrative lines are often silly, with incredulous characters who cannot seem to find their place on-stage embodied by performers who give off vibes of uneasiness uncommon from other plays – and more appropriate for the show in the second part of any regular performance. While it might seem that the almighty figure of the samurai still dominates collective stories of self-determination, such theatrical efforts bring into the foreground the urgency of re-writing history from a perspective of individual empowerment and liberation rather than collective identification so that an authentic future of national relevance becomes possible.

5. Towards the Future: Instead of Conclusions

As perhaps expected, it was cosmos troupe's *El Japón: The Samurai of España* 『El Japón：イスパニアのサムライ』 which brought forth the most progressive innuendoes of times to come: a synthesis of the three healing stages or strategies, both accumulating them at a crucial moment in Japan's history and opening new avenues towards the future, the performance presented at the same time the necessity for gradual change in overcoming Japan's exceptionalist insularity towards peaceful cooperation on a global level, likewise temporally placed in premodern times. Associated with a non-conformist allure, breaking prevailing standards in Takarazuka Revue's tradition, the employment of the cosmos troupe in *El Japón: The Samurai of España*'s staging struck in audiences' perception a chord of experimental, explorative exuberance. Founded in 1998, cosmos troupe is the youngest among the five ensembles of the Takarazuka Revue Company; in comparison to other troupes, it is regarded as less bound to any sort of image Takarazuka Revue – as a socio-economic or cultural phenomenon – might have established. Staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 15. November 2019 until 15. December 2019 and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 3. January 2020 until 16. February 2020 under the direction of Ōno Takuji 大野拓史, with Makaze Suzuho 真風涼帆 as Kamata Harumichi and Hoshikaze Madoka 星風まどか as Catalina, *El Japón: The Samurai of España* follows a retainer of Sendai

Domain in northern Japan dispatched to Europe on a diplomatic mission in the 18th year of Keichō era (1613): the so-called Keichō Embassy 慶長使節.[6] The plot evolves mostly in the town of Coria del Río in southern Spain, where even nowadays people who use the surname "Japón" identify themselves as descendants of the samurai travelers, tracing back in time the origins of their beliefs. Kamata Harumichi, a skilled swordsman, encounters a different culture and finds himself involved in events beyond his control while reminiscing about the fierce wars he had experienced in his home country. His life story is intertwined with disruptive events, locally and globally, and highlights the inevitability of historical contextualization of individual destinies, regardless of how insignificant one might think one's existence is. Conclusive to the pivotal year 2019, *El Japón: The Samurai of España* inaugurated a new chapter in Takarazuka Revue's performance vision, with Edo period being represented as less of an isolated era and more as a man-made mass delusion. Like *Unmatched in Dream and Reality* and *When the Last Sword Is Drawn* of the same year, *El Japón: The Samurai of España* carefully avoided open critique instead adjusting the narrative architecture to the celebratory atmosphere of the year, while simultaneously drawing on its historical

[6] The Keichō Embassy refers to the diplomatic mission dispatched to Pope Paul V at the Vatican, which traveled via New Spain – landing at Acapulco, crossing the Mexican mainland to Veracruz, and subsequently visiting several European ports. Conducted between 1613 and 1620 under the leadership of Hasekura Tsunenaga 支倉常長 (1571-1622), the mission marked a significant early instance of Japanese engagement with the Americas and Europe. During the return journey in 1619, Hasekura and his delegation retraced their route across Mexico, departing from Acapulco for Manila and sailing onward to Japan, which they reached in 1620. Although commonly regarded as the first Japanese embassy to both the Americas and Europe, the Keichō mission was in fact preceded by an earlier, less widely documented venture known as the Tenshō Embassy 天正の使節. Led by the nobleman Mancio Itō (伊東マンショ, 1570-1612) in the company of Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), this mission took place from 1582 to 1590. It was organized by three Christian *daimyō* (大名, local feudal rulers) of western Japan – Ōmura Sumitada 大村純忠 (1533-1587), Ōtomo Sōrin 大友宗麟 (1530-1587), and Arima Harunobu 有馬晴信 (1567-1612) – and represented the earliest formal Japanese delegation to Europe. While Hasekura's embassy was courteously received in Spain and Rome, it unfolded at a moment when Japan was moving decisively toward the suppression of Christianity. Consequently, European sovereigns declined the commercial agreements he sought. Hasekura returned to Japan in 1620 and died shortly after, with his mission yielding limited tangible results in an increasingly isolationist national context. Japan would not send another formal delegation to Europe for more than two centuries, until the so-called "First Japanese Embassy to Europe" 第 1 回遣欧使節 (also known as the 開市開港延期交渉使節団) was dispatched by the Tokugawa shogunate in 1862, following the end of *sakoku* (鎖国, "locked/chained country") and the reopening of the country (Mason and Caiger 1979).

reservoirs of popularity to push for progressive discourses on self, nation, and global belonging. The juxtaposition of historical facts with fictional details and their dazzling display within the dialectical conglomerate of the live-performance enabled *El Japón: The Samurai of España* to launch a new trajectory towards a less insular yet more relevant Japan in the foreseeable future.

Lastly, by mid-2025, star troupe's production of *Asura* 『阿修羅城の瞳』 occupied a distinctive position within the long trajectory of Takarazuka Revue's engagement with the Edo period: staged at Takarazuka Grand Theater from 19. April 2025 until 1. June 2025 and at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater from 28. June 2025 until 10. August 2025, directed by Koyanagi Naoko 小柳奈穂子, with Rei Makoto 礼真琴 in the lead-role, at one level, the production radically extends Takarazuka Revue's established strategy of re-animating historical eras through heightened theatricality, stylized dramaturgy, and emotionally charged narrative arcs. Simultaneously, it represents a notable moment of intertextual negotiation with the aesthetic vocabulary of GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN 劇団☆新感線, whose influence permeates the work's tonal palette, narrative dynamism, and kinetic sensibilities. In doing so, *Asura* marks a critical point where Takarazuka Revue's own traditions – particularly star troupe's hallmark articulation of charismatic, larger-than-life *otokoyaku* masculinity – intersect with, adapt, and reframe the late-modern legacy of a theater company recently celebrated for its subversive, exuberant reinterpretations of premodern Japan. Indeed, *Asura* manifests as the climax of Takarazuka Revue's efforts to re-frame Edo period as a fertile ground for creating evocative "neo-histories" rather than the historical premodern time it is known for, begun in 2015, bringing forth versions of the past which emphasize emotional legibility, visual spectacle, and a gently idealized nostalgia. Star troupe's approach to Edo, nonetheless, tends to foreground heroic individualism, dramatic moral clarity, and a sharper image of martial charisma than other troupes: in *Asura*, these tendencies are amplified and reoriented by the influence of GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN, whose original *Asura* works were steeped in stylized violence, rapid pacing, and a knowingly anachronistic blending of myth, folklore, and pop-cultural idioms. Takarazuka Revue's adaptation thus becomes a site on which two theatrical genealogies converge: Takarazuka Revue's itself tradition of melodic romanticism and gendered performance, and GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN's iconoclastic, hyper-energetic aesthetic which pushes Edo-era motifs into the realm of the fantastical.

Central to this convergence is star troupe's specific representation of *otokoyaku* masculinity: in *Asura*, the samurai figure becomes a vessel through which both tradition and re-invention operate simultaneously. The *otokoyaku* role – already designed to project integrity, decisiveness, and magnetic presence – absorbs GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN's martial bravado, resulting in a hybrid masculinity at

once larger-than-life, emotionally nuanced, and theatrically stylized. This is not realism; it is an intensified fantasy employing masculine archetypes to articulate moral, emotional, and symbolic stakes. Samurai masculinity, when refracted through Takarazuka Revue's lens, turns into a dramatic technology: it delivers clarity in a chaotic narrative world, generates admiration, and anchors the story's moral universe. In *Asura*, this masculinity is additionally inflected by supernatural elements – demons, curses, heightened destiny –, further elevating the hero's struggle and underscoring the performance's epic tone. At the same time, *Asura* draws heavily on the GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN tradition of revitalizing premodern Japan with contemporary rhythm and aesthetic punch: GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN is known for transforming Edo narratives into kinetic, emotionally raw spectacles blurring the boundary between historical memory and popular culture re-invention. Takarazuka Revue's adoption of this frame subtly transforms its Edo: instead of the restrained, elegant past which often appears in its historical musicals prior to 2015 stagings, star troupe's *Asura* presents a more volatile, stylized world – one which embraces danger, moral ambiguity, and narrative propulsion. This dynamic injects fresh energy into Takarazuka Revue's historical repertoire as Edo becomes not a static repository of tradition, but a living, contested terrain whose meanings must be actively negotiated. The production equally participates in a broader late-modern trend: the re-positioning of Edo as a site for exploring identity, conflict, and transformation in contemporary Japanese culture. While Edo period is often mobilized in modern media as a metaphor for the tension between order and chaos, duty and desire, tradition and rupture, in star troupe's representation, *Asura* metamorphoses into a means of re-thinking Edo not as a nostalgic ideal but as a narrative engine capable of generating new emotional and ethical positions: the story's supernatural dimension – so characteristic of GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN – additionally destabilizes the boundaries between fact and myth, suggesting that historical identity itself is a pliable construct open to dramatization and reinterpretation. Crucially, *Asura* reinforces star troupe's public image as the ensemble of "impact": bold staging, striking silhouettes, and protagonists who deliver memorable, resonant messages. The fusion with GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN's legacy heightens this aspect, giving the troupe a platform to articulate themes of inner conflict, moral courage, and the cost of heroism in a world in which boundaries between human and demon, loyalty and desire, are perpetually blurred. In this sense, *Asura* is not only a reinvigoration of Edo motifs but also a re-affirmation of star troupe's mission to craft emotionally compelling mythologies for late-modern audiences. Ultimately, *Asura* stands as a vivid example of the ways in which Takarazuka Revue can engage with – and re-shape – the cultural memory of the Edo period: positioned at the confluence of Takarazuka Revue's tradition and GEKIDAN☆SHINKANSEN's theatrical legacy, the production

revitalizes the past while propelling it into uncharted imaginative terrain, re-defining Edo's role within contemporary narrative and performance culture.

Confronting the brutal historic realities of the past – and specifically of Edo period – with its incommensurable loads of suffering, oppression and injustice amounts to the beginning of the healing journey: namely, the identification of the core wound, followed by the honest, gentle approach towards its disclosure. An essential part of this phase is addressing the toxic masculinity embodied by the samurai – the central human figure of Edo era's ideology – and the equally toxic absence of a valid feminine presence to counter-balance the bland stoicism of the male elements. The next step is more unstable, involving exploration and experimentation, leading, hopefully to real-life implementation of practices conducive to lasting progress. The representation of regular people in their dynamic diversity occurring on a daily basis seems like a valid strategy, outlining the proclivity of humans to adapt to both positive and negative events and their apparently limitless resilience as a result of recovery from both conquered hardships and, more importantly, from unprevailed adversities – such as unresolved traumas, unrequited love, unprocessed loss of loved ones.

The project of healing the past – of dismantling Edo period itself, of dissolving its iron grip on Japan's modernity – so that the present can thrive and the future becomes a fountain of unlimited potentialities is a daring one: it takes Takarazuka Revue Company's history of relentless advancement and chameleon-like transformation to take over such a task and to sustainably implement it towards the achievement of its ultimate goal: a world in which upcoming generations will depend less on their predecessors and more on themselves, able to learn from history but not to allow it to subjugate them. Takarazuka Revue's intrinsic youthfulness is a valid guarantee of the timely balanced development of such an endeavor.

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Book Review: Locher, Miriam A., and Sage L. Graham. "Interpersonal Pragmatics." *De Gruyter eBooks*, 2010

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In the modern world, language is not just a tool for communication. The book entitled "Interpersonal Pragmatics," edited by A. Locher and Sage L. Graham, invites readers to inquire about different subjects analyzed by various linguistics scholars, which allows us to understand how language shapes human relationships. This book is the 6th volume of the Handbooks of Pragmatics, which focuses heavily on the relational side of the communication, particularly focusing on the interpersonal effects of the discourse. The book reveals multiple key factors that provide us with a comprehensive study that examines how politeness and impoliteness, the role of gender in interpersonal pragmatics, identity and power, etc., shape the interaction in the language in use by emphasizing examinations of notable scholars.

The book is divided into 3 various parts, whereof the first part contextualizes theoretical frameworks in analyzing interpersonal pragmatics in 3 different subdivisions, namely approaches to politeness and impoliteness, approaches to interpersonal interpretation drawn from communication studies and social cognitive linguistics, and finally identity and gender. Moreover, the second part of the book focuses on linguistic strategies for interpersonal effects, while the third and final part of the book illustrates the interpersonal issues in different contexts.

The introduction of the book firstly delves into the definition of interpersonal pragmatics within the perspectives of pragmatics, which precisely focuses on the relational aspects of language use, emphasizing how people use language to create and maintain social relations. Furthermore, the definition of pragmatics is illustrated by the several scholars who adhere to the European traditions, which concentrates on social, cultural, and contextual aspects of language use during the analysis. Afterward, the editors illustrate the well-known sociolinguistic example of Holmes (1992) in order to underscore how a woman can have different types of greeting styles according to power, distance, and intimacy in the relational dynamics, illustrating the importance of interpersonal variation in communication. In addition, editors briefly illustrate the intersection of interpersonal pragmatics with the different fields of linguistics, such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, politeness theory, etc.

Editors dedicate the first part of the book to the theoretical approaches of interpersonal pragmatics by emphasizing different approaches to the relational features of language use examined by several scholars. There are three subsections of this part,

and the first one dedicates itself to the politeness and impoliteness theories in language use. In this subsection there are four different chapters that take into consideration politeness and impoliteness theories from the four distinct perspectives. It must be mentioned that the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) and their metaphor "face" and "face-threatening acts" are considered a key framework to carry out the investigations. The term "face" represents "self-image" that every utterer has in the conversation, whilst "face-threatening acts" are actions that are naturally in contrast with what the speaker and/or addressee says. Based on the literature framework of the well-known authors in Chapter 2, entitled "Linguistic politeness: Laying the foundations," Maria Sifianou delves into the classic literature on the im/politeness theory, underscoring its positive and negative aspects. It must be mentioned that the author's work consists of discussions about other early works, namely Lakoff's (1973) Rules of Politeness and Leech's (1983) Politeness Principles. Moreover, Chapter 3, entitled "'Linguistic politeness theory and its aftermath: Recent research trails" by Richard J. Watts, delves into the evolution of the politeness research, emphasizing two vital progresses in the field. On the one hand, it is argued that researchers must take into consideration first-order (emic) and/or second-order (etic) approaches while carrying out an investigation into the politeness phenomenon, which is extremely vital in the field since it revitalizes it. On the other hand, the research area of the politeness theory progressed notably by including other concepts into the research field, namely "relational work," which incorporates all types of interpersonal actions, including actions that enhance or violate the "face" concept.

Furthermore, in the fifth chapter of this subdivision, entitled "Politeness in East Asia," Shigeko Okamoto argues about the universality of the "face" and "face-threatening acts," emphasizing that in some group-oriented cultures, such as Asian culture, these principles can be accepted as individualistic. By investigating the above-mentioned concepts in the Asian culture, the author emphasizes the progression of the politeness concept in language. Chapter 5, entitled "Researching impoliteness and rudeness: Issues and definitions," investigates impoliteness and rudeness as a relational work that breaks the principles of interpersonal communication and causes "face-damaging." It is vital to mention that the author of this chapter, Derek Bousfield, mentions the growing academic interest in im/politeness research, expanding studies with the concept of intentional and accidental face-threatening behavior, which drastically contributes to politeness studies. The target of the author is English, by examining both emic and etic approaches in the research, while supporting the etic approach, which is based on emic observations.

The second subdivision of the first part of the book contains two different chapters. Chapter 6, entitled "Relating," by Robert B. Arundale, emphasizes the contribution of communication studies and social psychology to the politeness theories in linguistics, which are neglected by readers. In addition, the author mentions the

importance of accurate terminology and reliable methodology that provide an efficient investigation into language use and its effects on building and maintaining relationships. Chapter 7, namely "Social Cognition" by Andreas Langlotz, illustrates that cognitive psychology, cognitive linguistics, and socio-cognitive theories can reinforce the interpersonal pragmatics approach while they are incorporated in a harmony during the investigation. This interdisciplinary framework, namely "social cognition," underscores the dynamic and context-dependent features of language and the roles of these features in shaping meaning, identity, and relationships.

The last chapters of Part 1 are devoted to the two vital aspects of interpersonal pragmatics, namely identity and gender. In Chapter 8, entitled "The Negotiation of Identities," Anna de Fina analyzes the essential position of language in shaping identity in the context of a social constructivist framework, underscoring the idea that identity is fluid but can be constructed gradually in interaction. She highlights three different research frameworks, namely conversation analysis, autobiographical, and sociolinguistic methods, which present distinct perspectives in the methodological framework. The last chapter of the first part of the book, entitled "Gender and interpersonal pragmatics" by Louise Mullany, offers a view on gender and its vital role in identity construction, as well as examines it as a tool that emphasizes the use of language to transmit a relational meaning. Mullany illustrates various research trends on gender in pragmatics and its possible incorporation with politeness theories in linguistics, relating the concepts from the first section of the handbook to his investigation.

The second part of the book focuses on the linguistic strategies, which contribute to the interpersonal functions. There are four linguistic strategies—precisely mitigation, respect and deference, swearing, and humor—that are employed in the different investigations in order to discover their interpersonal effects in the communication.

Chapter 10, entitled "Mitigation" by Stefan Schneider, presents a perspective on the interpersonal functions of mitigation, which is one of the detailed investigated strategies in interpersonal pragmatics. It is important to highlight that he provides readers with pertinent terminology, for instance, disclaimers, bushes, hedges, shields, parenthetical verbs, tag questions, etc., in order to enhance the readers' comprehension of the navigation of the interactional dynamics during the conversation. Chapter 11, by Michael Haugh, examines the concepts of respect and deference, illustrating how these concepts are incorporated with the im/politeness theories in the previous research. He argues for a more delicate investigation of these phenomena through the perspectives of the broader framework of relational work, mentioning that some scholars analyzed them combined with politeness, while others claimed to investigate them separately.

Chapter 12, by Karyn Stapleton, delves into swearing, illustrating how it can function as a conversational strategy with psychological, social, and interpersonal

functions. She highlights the risky nature of swearing words while illustrating to readers their positive sides in communication, for instance, reinforcing in-group solidarity. Moreover, the author links gender and identity construction with swearing, carrying out research on the nuances of gendered swearing. Finally, chapter 13 by Stephanie Schnurr investigates the functions of humor in creating interpersonal relations. The author underscores the various roles of humor in her investigation, mentioning that it can be employed to create solidarity, enhance in-group relations, and create a friendly atmosphere. Moreover, she mentions that it plays a vital role in defining boundaries, enhancing power relations, and decreasing tension. In addition, she delves into social obstacles in the generation of humor, emphasizing the notable effects of gender, culture, intimacy, and ethnicity in creating interpersonal effects in communication, and mentions methodological challenges in humor research.

The third part of this book particularly focuses on the discourse contexts, investigating the role of the linguistic choices in relational effects. It includes five various research areas, precisely workplace, health discourse, legal discourse, political discourse, and the discourse of dating ads, in which researchers demonstrate the vital role of power and solidarity in impacting interpersonal and societal factors.

Chapter 14, entitled “Interpersonal Issues in the Workplace” by Bernadette Vine, illustrates interpersonal issues from the perspectives of power and solidarity. The research underscores the role of humor, turn-taking, small talk, and face-threatening acts to negotiate identities and relationships in both social and workplace interactions. It must be mentioned that she provides readers with in-depth comprehension by analyzing both aspects, which emphasize the strict connection between interpersonal communication strategies and power, which contributes to identity formation in a corporate environment. In chapter 15, entitled “Interpersonal issues in court: Rebellion, resistance, and other ways of behaving badly,” the author analyzes the long-established focus of forensic linguistics on some established rules, such as turn-taking or arguing, while highlighting the notable neglect for investigating power dynamics between courtroom participants. As a methodological framework, the author employs Grice’s cooperative principles in order to transmit how expected principles are challenged by witnesses in courtroom interaction. In addition, the author delves profoundly into the relationship techniques of these witnesses in the courtroom, illustrating the expected consequences of the use of inappropriate language in the courtroom setting.

Chapter 16, entitled “Interpersonal issues in health discourse” by Boyd Davis, illustrates communication with patients who suffer from Alzheimer's disease. The author highlights the disconnection among scholars that examine various interactions in the medical settings, precisely linguists and doctors with different research goals. She mentions that the possible constraints stem from the lack of communication among researchers from the different fields who do not share essential findings with one another, which can cause the limitation in the improvement of patient care. Davis

highlights a huge gap in the research field, investigating conversations of patients with Alzheimer's, emphasizing the importance of the collaboration of researchers from two different areas to improve health communication and shortcomings. In chapter 17, entitled “Interpersonal issues in political discourse,” José Luis Blas Arroyo talks about conflict, power, and authority management in the discourse of political candidates. He highlights the challenging nature of the political discourse since political candidates must maintain balanced relationships with different audiences, such as opponents, voters, and the media. The author specifies the importance of strategic communication in political discourse, especially to shape the public image in front of the media, since political discourse often influences both the politician’s own audience and his target voters and how they comprehend it.

Finally, Chapter 18, entitled “Interpersonal issues in the discourse of dating ads” by Carol Marley, is dedicated to analyzing the language used to shape interpersonal relationships. The author mentions the main goal of the dating ads is to establish a future personal contact, while the interpersonal contact is the key part of the communication. Marley carries out an investigation on the possible strategies used by dating ads writers that target establishing a desirable identity for their audience. The investigations also emphasize how these strategies play a vital role in creating an identity.

The book edited by Miriam A. Locher and Sage L. Graham offers a detailed investigation of the relational aspects of language in use, gathering various theoretical approaches by distinct scholars such as im/politeness theories, discourse analysis, social cognition, and identity studies. The use of different types of approaches plays a vital role in investigating interpersonal communications from various perspectives, which can be a notable resource for the researchers and students from the different disciplines, for instance, linguistics, communication studies, or social psychology. Even though we think Interpersonal Pragmatics is an excellent book that explores the role of language in shaping and reflecting in different contexts such as the workplace, political speeches, courtrooms, and healthcare systems, we would not find this book perfect for researchers who are searching for a unified framework to analyze interpersonal pragmatics, but rather it would be better for those who are seeking to deepen their knowledge about language and how it constructs social relationships in different contexts.

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♦ LINGUISTICS ♦

Nomenclatura creativă în botanica actuală

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Abstract

Domeniile-sursă ale metaforei actuale din botanică sunt variate și asigură transparența necesară comunicării specializate. Cu ajutorul metaforelor, abstractul devine perceptibil. Specialistul dispune de o anumită cultură care îi va permite să realizeze echivalențe specifice. Obiectivul acestei lucrări este de a identifica domeniile-sursă ale metaforei botanice din prezent: titluri de opere, nume de instituții, titluri de filme, nume de personaje celebre, evenimente culturale, realități cotidiene. Acestea necesită o cultură pentru a fi decodificate. De exemplu, „Lord of the Dance”, „Giuseppe Verdi”, „Black Parrot”, „Cacharel”, fac referire la realități culturale, sunt embleme ale acestei epoci. În etapa actuală de evoluție, metafora botanică tinde să își redefinească sursele. Unii termeni sunt ulilizați în limba română, alții în engleză sau în franceză. Prima concluzie care se desprinde este că domeniile-sursă pentru formarea metaforei în etapa actuală sunt ancorate în contemporaneitate și sunt diverse.

Keywords

metaforă, botanică, domeniu, termeni, sursă

Nomenclatură creativă în botanica actuală

Limbajul constituie o modalitate de a da sens lumii din jurul nostru. Utilizând limbajul, omul creează simboluri și metafore care îl ajută să își înțeleagă experiențele din viața de zi cu zi. Dimensiunea limbajului, consideră Coșeriu, este creativă și are ca punct de reper vorbitorul, limbajul fiind permanent „guvernat de indivizi vorbitori”. În studiul „Creație metaforică în limbaj”, specialistul ilustrează ideea că limbajul uman se află sub presiunea creativității, creativitate care determină varietatea. Plecând de la aserțiunile lui Coșeriu (Coșeriu, 2000-2001: 16, 24, 25) „în limbaj […] există relații particulare între cuvinte, datorate asociațiilor subiective și metaforice care se stabilesc sporadic sau în mod constant”, iar „creația, invenția este inerentă limbajului prin definiție, limbajul este „creație continuă a limbii”, vom încerca să identificăm tipare de creativitate în lexicul bogat al botanicii. Creativitatea, în acest sens, vizează accepția terminologică, abordată și de lingvistul Mircea Borcilă care analizează studiile lui Coșeriu, reliefând caracterul creator al limbajului și infinitele creații metaforice care apar în limbă. (Borcilă, 2002-2003: 47-77)

Terminologia botanică este un sector lingvistic mai puțin cercetat. Limbajul botanicii este un domeniu vast și complex care integrează aspecte științifice, culturale și simbolice. Creativitatea în limbajul botanicii este variată, chiar dacă ne situăm într-un domeniu științific. În cadrul botanicii, numele de plante sunt bogat ilustrate metaforic, așa cum se întâmplă în mai multe limbi, aspect exemplificat de Coșeriu în studiul amintit anterior.

După cum consideră Doina Butiurcă, cercetarea metaforei specializate ,,este legată de problema modelului preconceptual, a raportului acestuia cu noțiunea (intensiunea) și cu obiectul (extensiune) care urmează a fi conceptualizat. (Butiurcă, 2016: 69) Modelul conceptual este aprioric denominării. Metaforele specializate ,,reconstruiesc un model de gândire, o corespondență conceptuală între două domenii diferite: domeniul- sursă și domeniul- țintă". (Butiurcă, 2016: 63) Denominația prin metaforă este un proces intelectual propriu științei.

Vom aborda procesul de metaforizare din perspectiva viziunilor actuale referitoare la metafora conceptuală, viziuni care se bazează pe relația dintre domeniul-sursă și domeniul – țintă, precum și pe rolul lor în cunoaștere. Domeniul-sursă este reprezentat de sensul primar al unei unități lexicale, determinat conform dicționarelor (DEX, MDA), iar sensurile termenilor botanici, obținuți prin metaforizare, vor fi precizate din lucrările de specialitate. Domeniile-sursă ale metaforei actuale din botanică sunt variate și asigură transparența necesară comunicării specializate.

Obiectivul acestei lucrări constă în identificarea domeniilor-sursă ale metaforei botanice din prezent (titluri de opere, nume de instituții, titluri de filme, nume de personaje celebre, evenimente culturale, realități cotidiene), și raportarea, dintr-o perspectivă contrastivă, atât la denumirile din botanica românească, cât și la cele din botanica spaniolă.

Valoarea enciclopedică a termenilor din botanică este evidentă. Domeniile-sursă țin de cultură, de epocă. Ne raportăm în prezent la noi tendințe de denominare în botanică. Făcând o vizită la Grădina Botanică din Cluj Napoca, ne-au atras atenția numele unor specii de plante. Pe tăblițele de prezentare a plantelor, era notat numele lui Ștefan Wagner care a creat la Stațiunea Pomicolă Cluj 40 de soiuri de trandafiri, devenind cel mai cunoscut creator de trandafiri din Europa, Numele pe care le-a dat acestor soiuri sunt: *Foc de tabără, Luchian, Simfonia, Rosabunda, Incadescent, Auriu de Cluj, Romstar, Rosalinda, Vigorosa, Zburlici, Golden Elegance, Rusticana, Red Candy, Bordură de nea, Rosadora, Rosagold, Simina, Judith, Splendid, Nobilia, Nostalgica, Carmen, Mirela, Orange Ace, Romana, Doamna în mov, Golden fiesta, Perla Transilvaniei, Petrina, Rosatop, Rosadoll, Steliana, Sandra, Doina, Afrodita, Cezara, Aurora, Pasiune în mov, Cluj 2010.* Tot la Grădina Botanică din Cluj Napoca am întâlnit următoarele soiuri de lalele: *tulipa Don Quijote, Carnaval de Rio, Night Club, Davenport, Purple Dance, Mascotte, Mon amour, Vincent van Gogh, Carnaval*

de Nice, Lambada, Red Princess, Ice cream; soiuri de usturoi*: Ambasador, Purple Rain;* soiuri de crini*: Red Highland, Mapira, Starfire, Dizzy, Casa Blanca.*

Denumirile tradiționale au un mare grad de creativitate și expresivitate, chiar dacă nu sunt poetice: *Saponaria officinalis*, *Sarothamnus scoparius*, *Scutellaria galericulata*. Denumirile moderne și-au pierdut gradul de expresivitate. După cum observăm din exemplele menționate, metafora din prezent nu mai are o terminologie greco-latină așa ca în botanica tradițională, dar păstrează elemente de cultură (*Vincent van Gogh, Botticelli).*

Spre deosebire de metafora tradițională ale cărei domenii- sursă erau *credințele, religia, mitologia, habitatul, toponimia, caracteristicile intrinseci ale plantelor*, metaforele din prezent au elemente aparținând culturii contemporane. Sunt ancorate în marea cultură a lumii, iar limba mai poate constitui un impediment în cunoașterea acestora. Termenii nu mai sunt latinești, ci sunt utilizați din limba engleză sau franceză. Ilustrăm cu câteva domenii reprezentative:

▪**muzica**

Prin sfera culturii, ființa umană se afirmă în lumea existentă. În acest sens, cunoașterea din acest domeniu se reflectă și în cultura generală. Muzica este o artă a exprimării sentimententelor și a ideilor cu ajutorul sunetelor combinate într-o manieră specifică, indiferent de limba care se vorbește. Trăim într-o societate în care muzica are ponderea ei, gustul este diferit, iar moda își spune cuvântul. Peste tot în lume sunt oameni interesați de muzică, indiferent că este clasică sau modernă. În prezent, muzica a devenit un domeniu-sursă pentru formarea metaforei botanice.

Simfonia este un soi de lalele. Consultând un dicționar de specialitate, identificăm sensul primar al acestui cuvânt: *„compoziție muzicală instrumentală (cu soliști, cor)". (*DEX, 2016: 1123*)* Cuvântul este utilizat în comunicare și cu sens figurat și se referă și la o îmbinare armonioasă de culori. Titlul dintr-un articol de ziar este relevant: *Simfonie de culori la grădina Botanică din Cluj! Lalele împânzesc aleile grădinii.* (www.turdanews.net)

Soiul de trandafiri care face parte din clasa *Teahibrid,* numit *Simfonia,* se distinge prin flori mari, albe, cu parfum plăcut.

Lambada este un soi de lalele (*Tulips lambada*) de diferite culori: roșu aprins, portocaliu vibrant, galben strălucitor. Numele acestui soi vine de la un dans modern de perechi samba, de proveniență latino-americană, cunoscut în toată lumea, ce conține elemente coregrafice preluate din mai multe dansuri moderne.

Purple Dance este un soi de lalele. Termenul a fost preluat din muzică unde desemnează o melodie interpretată de Robert Babicz.

▪ **pictura**

Pictura reprezintă realitatea în imagini artistice, create cu ajutorul culorilor aplicate pe o suprafață, iar scopul este de a obține o compoziție cu forme, culori și

desene. Pictura este o artă a privirii, iar florile au rolul de a bucura privirea, fiind surse de inspirație pentru artiști.

Soiul de lalele *Vincent van Gogh* se evidențiază prin culorile profunde și lucioase. Laleaua a fost numită după celebrul pictor neerlandez, care a pictat în culori vii, cunoscut fiind pentru numeroasele portrete, peisaje și picturi cu flori.

Soiul *Luchian* este un trandafir creat în 1972, dedicat memoriei pictorului Ștefan Luchian, la împlinirea a 100 de ani de la nașterea sa.

▪ literatura

Literatura este arta cuvântului și surprinde frumusețea cu ajutorul lui. Cartea este cunoscută peste tot în lume, iar analogiile cu personajele din cărți sunt destul de frecvente. Astfel, numele soiului de lalele, *Don Quichotte,* amintește de personajul lui Miguel de Cervantes din celebra carte *Don Quijote de La Mancha*. Personajul său, un mic nobil influențat de lecturi, ajunge să se creadă un cavaler care caută adevărul. În ciuda faptului că personajul pare nebun, acesta impresionează prin noblețea gândirii.

Starfire este un soi de crin. Numele *Starfire* este cunoscut din benzile desenate create de DC Comics. Starfire este un personaj fictiv, o supereroină cunoscută de copii.

▪evenimente culturale

Evenimentele culturale cu tradiție desfășurate peste tot în lume sunt cunoscute în multe țări. Așa se explică faptul că numele unor asemenea evenimente celebre este dat și plantelor. Soiul de lalele *Carnaval de Rio* amintește de un festival cunoscut care se desfășoară în Rio de Janeiro de câteva secole. Carnavalul de la Rio a devenit o emblemă a distracției și a paradelor în stradă, fiind dedicat sărbătoririi dansului samba. În prezent este considerat cel mai mare carnaval de pe mapamond.

Un alt eveniment cultural de amploare este *Carnaval de Nice*, carnaval care se desfășoară în lunile februarie, martie la Nisa, pe Riviera Franceză. Se organizează în fiecare an parade colorate și bătălii de flori. Numele acestui carnaval este dat unui soi de lalele. *Carnaval de Nice* denumește, în terminologia botanicii, o plantă cu o cromatică deosebită: o combinație de alb cu roșu.

▪ ființe dragi

Numele date unor soiuri de trandafiri sunt antroponime feminine aparținând universului familiar al cercetătorului Ștefan Wagner: *Carmen, Mirela, Judit, Steliana, Sandra, Doina, Afrodita, Cezara, Aurora.* Într-un articol de ziar, creatorul Ștefan Wagner motivează numele pe care le-a ales pentru aceste soiuri. De exemplu, *Judit* este numele unui trandafir galben pe care l-a creat pentru soția lui, ,,un semn deosebit de prețuire pentru cea care i-a stat alături o viață întreagă''. (https://click.ro/actualitate/national/trandafirii-creati-de-un-clujean-infrumuseteaza-2240493.html)

▪branduri

Numele unor mărci de produse alimentare sunt cunoscute peste tot în lume. De exemplu, *Ice cream* este un termen care denumește un desert dulce, o înghețată ce

poate avea culori foarte diferite. Poate așa se explică cum numele unui brand a devenit și numele unui soi de lalele, cu forma asemănătoare unei cupe de înghețată. Analogia poate avea în vedere și culorile inedite ale petalelor.

▪ **filme**

Filmele valoroase sunt cunoscute de persoane din medii diferite pentru că ele rulează în cinematografe din întreaga lume. Acestea au ajuns să facă parte din cultura omenirii. *Mon Amour* este atât un titlu de film, dar și un titlu de melodie. (https://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm_gen_cfilm=180937.html) În timp, a devenit și numele unor cinematografe. Acesta se regăsește și în terminologia botanicii, unde desemnează un soi de lalele de culoare galbenă.

*Purple Rain (*ploaie purpurie) este titlul unui film rock din anul 1984. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm03wqLY3Nc) Acest termen din cinematografie este transpus în terminologia botanicii, desemnând un soi de lalele care au tulpinile înalte și florile mari, fiind foarte rezistente la temperaturi mici.

▪ **toponime**

Și toponimele celebre au devenit domenii-sursă pentru metafora actuală din botanică. *Davenport* este un oraș din comitatul Scott, SUA, situat de-a lungul râului Mississippi. În terminologia botanicii, *Davenport* desemnează un soi de lalele care au o margine galben-aurie. *Casa Blanca* este un oraș-port din Maroc, Africa. Numele a fost preluat de botanică unde desemnează un soi de crin imperial oriental de culoare albă.

▪**trăsături intrinseci ale plantelor**

În funcție de unele trăsături intrinseci ale plantelor, acestea au fost denumite. De exemplu, un soi de trandafir de culoare galbenă a fost numit *Golden Elegance*, unul de culoare roșie- *Red Highland*, unul cu miros puternic-*Dizzy* (în engleză-ametitor), unul de culoare violet -*Mapira* (violet, roșcat, închis la culoare). Observăm că aceste denumiri sunt în limba engleză.

▪ **titluri nobiliare**

Red Princess este un soi de lalele cu flori roșii, cu aspect elegant. Acest nume desemnează un titlu nobiliar. În istorie mai multe prințese au purtat acest nume, una dintre ele fiind Prințesa Maria Teresa de Bourbon, arhiducesa Elisabeta a Austriei.

Observăm că domeniile-sursă ale metaforei actuale sunt variate și asigură transparența necesară comunicării specializate. Cu ajutorul metaforelor, abstractul devine perceptibil. Specialistul dispune de o anumită cultură care îi va permite să realizeaze echivalențe specifice, ancorând denumirile în realitatea cotidiană. La nivel structural, denumirile provin din substantive comune sau proprii. Majoritatea sunt constituite dintr-un substantiv în limba română sau din limba engleză sau franceză care denumesc: antroponime feminine sau masculine (*Carmen, Mirela),* altele din sintagme terminologice alcătuite din substantiv+adjectiv: *Purple Dance, Golden Elegance.* Se observă varietatea denumirilor din limba engleză sau franceză.

În etapa actuală de evoluție, metafora botanică tinde să își redefinească sursele. Prima concluzie care se desprinde este că domeniile-sursă pentru formarea metaforei în etapa actuală sunt ancorate în contemporaneitate.

În Spania, identificăm aceeași dimensiune enciclopedică a denumirilor de plante. În orice țară există actori, creatori de frumos, poeți care au devenit simboluri ale acestei țări, simboluri ale culturii contemporane. Numele lor au fost date florilor. Am identificat câteva denumiri interesante de flori în parcul Retiro din Madrid unde există numeroase soiuri de trandafiri care poartă marca Meilland. Analizând lingvistic denumirile acestor trandafiri, observăm că domeniile- sursă sunt aceleași:

▪ **nume de prinți de la casele regale**: *Princesee de Monaco, Comtesse de Barry*

Princesse de Monaco este un titlu nobiliar cunoscut. Numele ei devine numele unui soi de trandafiri, creat în Franța de Meilland Richardier. Acest soi de trandafir a fost premiat pentru calitățile sale și dedicat prințesei Charlene de Monaco. **(**www.famousroses.eu) Titlul este în limba franceză. Atributul substantival Monaco indică apartenența.

Comtesse du Barry este ultima soție a regelui Ludovic al XV-lea al Franței. Numele ei este dat florii.

▪**actori celebri**: *Charles Aznavour, Daniel Gelin*

Charles Aznavour a fost un cântăreț și compozitor francez, care a apărut în filme, fiind o voce emblematică a culturii franceze. Numele lui este dat unui soi de trandafir. *Daniel Gelin* este un actor de film francez, figură reprezentativă pentru cinematografia franceză. Numele este în limba franceză.

▪**pictori:** *Botticelli*

Botticelli este un pictor italian, renumit pentru frumusețea și grația figurilor pe care le-a reprezentat pe pânză. Un trandafir roz, decorativ, rezistent, care înflorește de la începutul primăverii până la începutul iernii poartă numele acestui artist celebru.

▪**branduri**: *Tequila, Yves Saint Laurent, Carte d' or*

Tequila 2003 este o băutură alcoolică originară din Mexic. Trandafirul *Tequila* are tufe bogate, flori mari de culoare portocalie.

Paris D' Yves St. Laurent este o campanie care produce bunuri de lux, fondată de Yves Saint Laurent. Acest nume a fost transferat unui trandafir cu flori roz, în formă de cupă.

Carte d' or este o marcă celebră de înghețată. În botanică, *Carte d' or* este numele unui trandafir pomișor de culoare galbenă, elegant.

▪ **muzică***: Pink Symphonie, Belle Symphonie*

Belle Simphonie este o compoziție muzicală instrumentală. Numele este dat unui trandafir roz, urcător, cu multe flori.

Pink Symphonie este un soi pitic de trandafiri roz urcători.

▪**evenimente culturale**: Gala Charles Aznavour este un eveniment cultural din lumea muzicii cunoscut în lume. Charles Aznavour a fost actor, cântăreț și compozitor francez. Soiul de trandafiri ce poartă acest nume se distinge prin culoarea alb cu roz.

▪**numele creatorului:** *Papa Meilland* a fost creat în Franța în 1963 de Meilland Richardier. Papa Meilland este un trandafir cu un parfum puternic. Creatorul acestui trandafir era numit papa Meilland, adică tata Meilland pentru a se distinge de fiu, care se ocupa și el de aceeași activitate. *Caprice de Meilland* este denumirea unui alt trandafir deosebit. Numele lui Meilland este cunoscut pentru activitatea sa de cercetare și creare a unor soiuri de trandafiri.

▪**trăsături intrinseci ale plantei-** *Terracotta* este numele unui trandafir. La origine, acest cuvânt face referire la un produs ceramic obținut din argilă prin ardere și are o culoare roșiatică. Trandafirul creat de Meilland Richardier are culoare originală de cărămidă.

Concluzii

Aceste nume sunt în consonanță cu cercetătorul care este o persoană educată. Observăm că în cazul ambelor situații (România și Spania), la nivel structural, termenii sunt alcătuiți dintr-un singur cuvânt (*Terracott*a), din două cuvinte (*Papa Meilland*), dintr-o sintagmă (*Gala Charles Aznavour*).

La nivel terminologic, se observă că termenii nu mai respectă binominalitatea, iar numele create fac referire la diverse domenii din realitate. Termenii sunt formați, în cele mai multe cazuri, prin compunere sau conversiune. Structurile sintactice sunt diferite.

a) substantiv comun sau propriu (*Terracotta*)
b) substantiv +substantiv (*Papa Meilland)*
c) adjectiv + substantiv (*Belle Symphonie*)
d) substantiv+numeral (*Tequila 2003*)
e) substantiv+prepoziție +substantiv (*Princesse de Monaco)*

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Title in English: ***Creative nomenclature in contemporany botany***

Abstract in English: *The source domains of the current metaphor in botany are varied and ensure the transparency necessary for thespecialized communication. With the help of metaphors, the abstract becomes perceptible. The specialist has a certain cultural background that will allow them to achieve specific equivalences. The objective of this paper is to identify the source domains of the botanical metaphor in the present: titles of works, names of institutions, movie titles, names of famous characters, cultural events, everyday realities. These require a cultural background in order to be decoded. For example, "Lord of the Dance", "Giuseppe Verdi", "Black Parrot", "Cacharel", refer to cultural realities, they are emblems of this era. In the current stage of evolution, the botanical metaphor tends to redefine its sources. Some terms are used in Romanian, others in English or in French. The first conclusion that emerges is that the source domains for metaphor formation in the current stage are anchored in contemporaneity.*

Keywords in English: ***Metaphor, botany, domains, sources, terms***

L'Arabe à l'ère de l'interculturalité : De l'emprunt linguistique aux passerelles éducatives et humaines

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Résumé

Dans un monde marqué par la mondialisation et la diversité culturelle, l'enseignement des langues joue un rôle essentiel dans la promotion du dialogue et de la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples. La langue arabe, porteuse d'une riche histoire et d'un patrimoine culturel millénaire, constitue un vecteur privilégié d'échange et de rapprochement interculturel. Malgré le fort enjeu concurrentiel entre les langues, qui reflète souvent des rivalités entre les communautés qui les pratiquent, l'apprentissage de l'arabe demeure essentiel pour préserver et valoriser son héritage culturel tout en favorisant le dialogue interculturel. Ce travail s'interroge sur la manière dont l'enseignement de la langue arabe peut contribuer à créer des passerelles entre les cultures et à renforcer la coexistence pacifique. A travers une approche interculturelle de l'enseignement, et à travers le contact des langues qui se manifeste dans le phénomène de l'emprunt linguistique ; il s'agit de montrer que l'apprentissage de l'arabe ne se limite pas à une dimension linguistique, mais qu'il ouvre la voie à une meilleure connaissance de l'autre, à la tolérance et à la coopération entre les sociétés.

Mots-clés

Communication interculturelle- Concurrence linguistique- Dialogue des cultures – Enseignement – Emprunt linguistique – Interculturalité – Langue arabe – Mondialisation – Rapprochement des peuples.

Introduction générale

L'Arabe est une langue sémitique, l'une des plus anciennes langues vivantes, appartenant à la famille des langues sémitiques qui inclut également l'hébreu, l'araméen, et l'amharique. La langue arabe à une place centrale dans le monde islamique et arabe, étant la langue du Coran et des grandes civilisations passées. Par sa profondeur linguistique, sa richesse sémantique et son rayonnement géographique ; elle s'est imposée comme un vecteur essentiel de communication, de savoir et de culture. A travers les siècles, l'arabe a été un instrument privilégié de dialogue entre les peuples, favorisant un échange constant entre les traditions orientales et occidentales. Ce processus d'interaction culturelle a permis non seulement l'enrichissement du lexique et des formes d'expression, mais aussi la transmission de connaissances philosophiques, scientifiques, et littéraires. Etudier la langue arabe dans la perspective

du dialogue des cultures revient ainsi à analyser un espace dynamique où se croisent héritage, innovation, et universalité.

Dans ce contexte-là, les langues ne sont pas seulement des moyens de communication, mais aussi des vecteurs d'identité et de pouvoir symbolique. Le contact entre les langues peut parfois engendrer un conflit linguistique, qui traduit en profondeur un conflit des cultures. Ce phénomène se manifeste notamment lorsque certaines langues tendent à dominer d'autres, imposant ainsi leurs valeurs, leurs modèles de pensées et leurs représentations culturelles. Face à cette réalité, l'enseignement des langues apparait comme un outil fondamental pour promouvoir le dialogue interculturel et renforcer la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples. En particulier, l'enseignement de la langue arabe revêt une importance particulière, car il permet non seulement de préserver un patrimoine linguistique et culturel riche, mais aussi de contribuer à un véritable rapprochement entre les civilisations à travers la connaissance et le respect réciproque**.**

Sur la base de ce qui précède, il convient de formuler les questions suivantes afin d'orienter notre réflexion :

- Comment la langue arabe parvient -elle à préserver son identité tout en s'adaptant, à travers les emprunts linguistiques, à la concurrence des langues dans le monde contemporain ?
- Dans quelle mesure l'enseignement de la langue arabe peut-il favoriser la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples de cultures différentes ?
- Quel rôle joue la langue arabe comme vecteur de dialogue interculturel dans un contexte de mondialisation ?

Hypothèses de recherches:

- La langue arabe est à la fois influente et influencée par d'autres langues et cultures à travers les emprunts linguistiques et culturels.
- L'enseignement de l'arabe contribue à renforcer la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples en favorisant la connaissance réciproque des cultures.
- La langue arabe peut servir de pont culturel favorisant le dialogue et la coopération interculturelle dans un monde globalisé.

1. L'Interaction des cultures à travers la langue arabe

1.1. L'arabe et l'influence culturelle

La langue arabe se distingue par sa capacité à transmettre et à refléter diverses cultures à travers son vocabulaire et ses structures linguistiques. Historiquement, elle à servi de pont entre différentes cultures, comme la culture perse ; indienne et turque, tout en conservant une grande partie de ces influences dans son lexique.

1.2. Les échanges mutuels entre l'arabe et d'autres langues

Les influences réciproques entre l'arabe et des langues comme La turque, le persan, ainsi que des langues européennes comme l'espagnol, le français, l'italien et le maltais[1]. L'arabe a exercé une influence considérable sur de nombreuses langues à travers l'histoire, notamment pendant la période d'Al-Andlus et grâce aux échanges scientifiques, commerciaux et culturels. On trouve aujourd'hui des milliers de mots d'origine arabe dans des langues européennes.

1.3. L'emprunt linguistique et les modes de contact entre les Communautés linguistiques :

Dès le début, il convient de souligner que l'intérêt porté à l'emprunt linguistique s'inscrit dans un cadre plus large, celui de l'étude des phénomènes d'interférence entre les langues et de leur relation avec les spécificités sociales et culturelles des communautés linguistiques. De nombreux linguistes ont fait de l'emprunt une occasion d'analyser ces particularités et d'approfondir la réflexion sur les motivations qui y conduisent.

Indépendamment de la diversité de ces motivations, le besoin d'une communauté linguistique donnée d'acquérir un produit nouveau importé d'une autre communauté — que ce soit pour répondre à une nécessité sociale essentielle, pour imiter cette communauté et suivre son modèle, pour accéder à la terminologie scientifique liée au progrès des différentes disciplines, ou encore pour comprendre les coutumes et les modes de vie de l'autre — la pousse à emprunter les unités exprimant le produit matériel importé, ainsi que celles qui se révèlent plus aptes à satisfaire les besoins psychologiques et culturels de la communauté emprunteuse. (*N. Deroy Louis, **L'emprunt linguistique**, pp. 137-140.*)[2]

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[1] – Le maltais est la langue nationale de Malte et l'une des langues officielles de l'union européenne. Il appartient à la famille des langues sémitiques, mais il à subit de fortes influences de l'italien ; surtout le sicilien ; et de l'anglais. Pour davantage de détails sur les caractéristiques linguistiques et culturelle de la langue maltaise, se référer à :

- David Wilmsen; Maltese: A peripheral Dialect in the Historical Dialectology of Arabic, dans The Cambridge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics; éd. Karin Ryding & David Wilmsen; Cambridge University Press; 2021,pp 244-274.

[2] -Nous signalons, dans ce contexte, qu'une communauté linguistique peut emprunter une unité lexicale à une langue source **même lorsqu'il existe un équivalent dans sa propre langue**, et cela pour des **raisons essentiellement psychologiques**, telles que l'admiration ou la fascination culturelle qu'elle éprouve envers une autre communauté linguistique jugée plus avancée ou plus prestigieuse.

À cet égard, on peut mentionner les **emprunts effectués par les Français à l'italien à l'époque de la Renaissance**, ainsi que **ceux réalisés par les Allemands au français durant le**

Et à partir de l'étude de l'emprunt linguistique, il devient possible de comprendre les besoins des communautés linguistiques et d'expliquer les facteurs de diffusion et d'interférence des langues.

Dans cette perspective, l'étude de l'emprunt devient un moyen d'analyser les dynamiques du développement linguistique et les formes de concurrence pouvant exister entre les langues, au-delà de leur simple fonction descriptive de la réalité sociale des communautés qui les parlent. La langue devient ainsi un **instrument de pouvoir, de domination et d'influence culturelle et scientifique**, dans le contexte d'une société mondialisée cherchant à dépasser la diversité et la différence, pour instaurer un modèle civilisationnel et social unifié [3]— et ce, malgré la pluralité linguistique, la diversité culturelle, la disparité religieuse et la variété ethnique qui caractérisent les communautés linguistiques à l'échelle locale et mondiale.

2. Les domaines de contact entre les communautés linguistiques : Le cas des Arabes et celui des Européens francophones, anglophones et italophones

À la lumière de ce qui précède, les mutations globales imposées par la mondialisation, dans le cadre d'un processus de **« standardisation civilisationnelle »** fondé sur l'ouverture, l'échange et l'interpénétration, ont mis en évidence les inégalités existantes entre les communautés linguistiques et ont créé les conditions propices à une **compétition linguistique et culturelle**. Chaque communauté cherche désormais à préserver son existence et à la renforcer par divers moyens.

Cela a conduit chaque groupe linguistique à défendre ses spécificités linguistiques et culturelles — y compris ses coutumes et ses traditions — face à l'ouverture massive engendrée par la mondialisation. Parmi les manifestations de cette préservation figurent la création de **dictionnaires spécialisés** recensant les emprunts étrangers dans une langue donnée, tels que *Le dictionnaire des mots français d'origine*

Moyen Âge, les Français étant alors réputés en Europe pour leur **raffinement et leur élégance dans l'expression**.

On citera, à titre d'exemple, le mot **« chic »**, désignant l'élégance, ou encore **« maîtresse »**, utilisé au sens de « amante », ainsi que le mot **« amour »**, emprunté au français par les communautés linguistiques **germanophone**, **anglophone** et **danoise**.

Cette observation peut être approfondie en se référant à l'ouvrage mentionné précédemment.

- Deroy Louis ; L'emprunt Linguistique ; Les Belles Lettres ; Paris ; 1956 ; pp 137-187.

- Ostler Nickolas ; Empires of the word; Harper collins Publishers , London ,2005, 615p.

[3] – Cette observation peut être approfondie en se référant à l'ouvrage *Le Piège de la mondialisation : l'agression contre la démocratie et la prospérité* de **Hans-Peter Martin** et **Harald Schumann**, traduit en arabe par **Adnān 'Abbās 'Alī**, publié dans la collection *'Ālam al-Ma'rifa* (*Le Monde de la Connaissance*), **Conseil national pour la culture, les arts et les lettres – Koweït, octobre 1998**.

arabe,[4] ou encore des ouvrages consacrés aux emprunts de la langue française à l'arabe, comme *Nos ancêtres les Arabes : ce que le français doit à la langue arabe*.

2.1. Manifestations de l'influence de l'anglais, du français et de l'italien sur la langue arabe

L'étude de l'emprunt, qu'il soit **lexical ou culturel**, renvoie à l'analyse d'un aspect révélateur de l'état d'une langue dans sa relation avec les autres. Cette situation reflète en effet la **dynamique d'évolution et de transformation** que connaît la langue. L'emprunt ne naît pas du hasard : il résulte d'un ensemble de facteurs psychologiques, culturels et linguistiques qui justifient le recours d'une communauté linguistique à ce procédé.

Le **besoin de terminologie scientifique ou technique** pousse les locuteurs à importer les mots qui expriment ces notions ; de même, la nécessité d'acquérir de **nouveaux produits matériels** implique l'importation conjointe du produit et du terme qui le désigne dans la langue prêteuse.

Ces facteurs ont joué un rôle essentiel dans **l'interpénétration linguistique** et dans la détermination du degré d'inégalité entre les communautés. Les peuples ayant subi, au cours de leur histoire, une domination militaire ou présentant un certain **retard civilisationnel**, ont été plus enclins à emprunter aux peuples plus avancés. Cette situation s'est accompagnée d'une **hégémonie linguistique**, où la langue du groupe dominant devient prépondérante — même si les langues dominantes, elles aussi, ont parfois recours à l'emprunt pour combler leurs lacunes ou renouveler leur capital lexical dès que l'occasion s'en présente (Mohamed Baazoui, *Questions de l'enseignement de l'arabe comme langue seconde*, 2023, p. 167).

Ainsi, la langue arabe a emprunté à l'anglais des termes tels que :

- *Technology* → « تكنولوجيا »,
- *Internet* → « إنترنت »,
- *Computer* → « كمبيوتر » (issu du grec *computare*),
- *Radio* → « راديو »,
- *Film* → « فلم ».

De même, elle a emprunté au français :

- *Télévision* → « تلفزيون »,
- *Cinématographe* → « سنماتوغراف ».

Dans ce cadre, l'arabe a également emprunté de nombreux termes **à l'italien**, en particulier dans les domaines **du commerce** et **de la gastronomie** :

- *vetrina* → « فاترينة / فترينة »,

[4]- Salah Guemriche ; Dictionnaire des mots français d'origine arabe ;2007.

[4]-Jean Pruvost ; Nos Ancêtres les Arabes ; Ce que le français doit à la langue arabe ; Editions Jean-Claude Lattès ;2017.

- *prova* → « بروفة »,
- *fattura* → « فاتورة »,
- *antica* → « أنتيكا »,
- *marca* → « ماركة »,
- *parrucca* → « باروكة »,

Ces emprunts, qualifiés de **vocables étrangers** (*dakhīl*), ont enrichi le lexique arabe tout en **conservant leurs traits d'étrangeté**, notamment sur le plan morphologique, contrairement aux termes **arabisés** (*mu'arrab*), qui s'intègrent pleinement au système linguistique de la langue d'accueil (Ibrahim Ben Mourad, *Introduction à la théorie du lexique*, p. 162).

L'essentiel, dans ce contexte, est que l'emprunt d'unités lexicales, né du besoin d'une communauté linguistique d'utiliser de nouveaux outils ou de suivre le rythme des progrès scientifiques et des innovations, ou encore de motivations psychologiques et civilisationnelles — résumées par Ibn Khaldûn dans sa célèbre formule selon laquelle *« le vaincu est toujours porté à imiter le vainqueur »* —, constitue un facteur essentiel de développement du patrimoine linguistique de la langue emprunteuse et une manifestation de son enrichissement, même lorsque l'emprunt touche des domaines déjà pourvus dans cette langue**.**

Et bien que nous ayons évoqué plus haut l'influence de certaines langues étrangères sur le fonds lexical arabe, il convient de rappeler que **l'emprunt est un phénomène universel** : les communautés technologiquement et culturellement avancées, tout comme les puissances économiques et militaires, ont également besoin d'emprunter pour **renouveler leur capital linguistique**. Cependant, depuis la seconde moitié du XXe siècle, certaines nations — qu'elles soient dominantes ou en quête d'indépendance — ont manifesté une **réticence envers l'emprunt**, y voyant une menace pour leur langue, leurs traditions et leur identité culturelle.

2.2. L'arabe, langue donneuse (ou prêteuse)

Sur la base de ce qui précède, il apparaît que les **interactions entre l'arabe et les langues qui lui sont liées** — qu'elles soient géographiquement proches ou historiquement associées — ont varié selon les époques. Cette question, ancienne, remonte aux premiers contacts des Arabes avec d'autres peuples et civilisations. L'influence de l'arabe sur d'autres langues, accompagnée d'un **rayonnement religieux et culturel** important, s'est considérablement accrue avec la **propagation de l'islam** et l'**expansion géographique** du monde arabo-musulman.

Cependant, cette position dominante de la langue arabe s'est atténuée à la fin du XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle. L'influence de l'arabe sur des langues telles que le **français**, l'**anglais** ou l'**italien** s'explique à la fois par la proximité géographique des peuples arabophones et de ces communautés, mais aussi par le

contact culturel engendré par la colonisation française, britannique et italienne dans plusieurs pays arabes.

Indépendamment des causes de cette influence réciproque, **Jean Pruvost**, en étudiant les origines des unités lexicales françaises, a reconnu à l'arabe le statut de **source lexicale majeure**, et lui a consacré un ouvrage intitulé *Nos ancêtres les Arabes : ce que le français doit à la langue arabe*, en réponse à ceux qui considèrent que le français tire principalement ses racines de la langue gauloise.

Cependant, l'influence de l'arabe sur les peuples riverains de la Méditerranée ne s'est pas limitée au français ; elle s'est également exercée sur l'anglais, l'italien et le maltais. Bien que chacune de ces communautés linguistiques ait adopté une politique propre à sa langue, les échanges économiques et commerciaux intenses entre les populations du sud et du nord du bassin méditerranéen, notamment au XVIII^{e} siècle, ont favorisé les contacts linguistiques et permis à chaque langue d'intégrer de nombreux emprunts, directs ou indirects, souvent d'origine arabe via le maltais.

En définitive, la prise de conscience des enjeux linguistiques et de la concurrence intense entre les langues — reflet d'une rivalité tout aussi vive entre les communautés linguistiques — a multiplié les débats autour de questions qui n'auraient sans cela pas émergé, telles que l'attitude à adopter face à l'emprunt ou face au plurilinguisme. Ces débats ont contribué à l'apparition de **discours biaisés** et à la consolidation d'une forme de **chauvinisme linguistique**. Dès lors, la classification des langues en « grandes » et « petites », « fortes » et « faibles », a suscité un intérêt croissant, révélant la conscience qu'ont les communautés linguistiques du lien étroit entre leur langue, la cohésion de leur société et la préservation de leur identité. Car la langue demeure le principal instrument de communication, le vecteur de la culture et l'un des piliers essentiels de l'identité collective.

3. l'arabe comme outil de paix et de compréhension internationale

Apprendre l'arabe contribue à une meilleure compréhension de la culture arabe et islamique, réduisant ainsi les malentendus et les stéréotypes.

Cela favorise la création des relations plus harmonieuses et de collaborations constructives sur la scène internationale.

3.1. Les bénéfices culturels et sociaux de l'enseignement de l'arabe

L'enseignement de l'arabe ouvre l'accès à une civilisation riche et ancienne, tout en favorisant une meilleure compréhension des sociétés arabophones. IL développe l'ouverture culturelle, renforce le dialogue entre les communautés et contribue à briser les stéréotypes grâce à une communication plus directe et authentique. En plus de son rôle dans la promotion de la tolérance et de l'inclusion, la maitrise de l'arabe offre aussi des avantages professionnels et académiques importants dans un monde de plus en plus interconnecté.

3.1.1. Rapprochement social

Enseigner l'arabe favorise une meilleure compréhension entre différentes cultures et nations.il représente un moyen efficace de renforcer le rapprochement social entre individus issus de milieux culturels différents. En permettant une communication plus et plus authentique, il ouvre la voie à une meilleure compréhension mutuelle et réduit les barrières qui peuvent exister entre les communautés. La connaissance de la langue arabe facilite ainsi les échanges quotidiens, encourage la convivialité et crée un climat de confiance réciproque.

De plus l'enseignement de l'arabe contribue à valoriser la diversité culturelle au sein de la société. Il offre aux apprenants l'occasion de découvrir des traditions, des modes de pensée et des valeurs propres au monde arabophones, ce qui favorise l'empathie et le respect. Ce processus d'ouverture et de reconnaissance mutuelle devient un moteur puissant de cohésion sociale, permettant de tisser des liens plus solides et d'instaurer une coexistence harmonieuse entre les différentes composantes de la société.

Dans cette dynamique de rapprochement social, la découverte d'une nouvelle langue et d'un univers culturel distinct, l'enseignement de l'arabe joue un rôle clé dans le rapprochement entre des sociétés parfois très éloignées géographiquement ou culturellement. Il permet aux apprenants de mieux comprendre les références, les valeurs et les modes de vie du monde arabophone, réduisant ainsi les malentendus et les idées préconçues. Cette connaissance approfondie renforce la capacité des personnes et des institutions à établir des ponts entre les peuples, encourage la coopération internationale et contribue à créer un climat de respect mutuel entre des communautés qui, autrement, resteraient isolées les unes des autres.

3.1.2. Interaction avec la littérature et les arts

La connaissance de l'arabe permet aux individus d'apprécier la richesse de la littérature arabe et de s'engager avec le patrimoine culturel à travers des domaines tels que la poésie, la musique, et la philosophie. Cette interaction offre une compréhension plus fine des sensibilités, des imaginaires et des valeurs du monde arabe. Par exemple, la lecture de / Mu'allaqat/ dans sa langue originale permet de saisir la musicalité des vers et les subtilités de la rhétorique arabe, tandis que la découverte des d'auteurs modernes comme Nejib Mahfoud ou Taha Houssain, enrichit la perception des réalités sociales et politiques de différentes époques. Grace à cette immersion, les étudiants développent une sensibilité interculturelle plus profonde et une appréciation authentique de la diversité des expressions littéraires arabes.

Sur le plan artistique, la maitrise de l'arabe ouvre la porte à une meilleure compréhension des arts visuels et musicaux arabes. La calligraphie par exemple, ne peut être pleinement appréciée sans connaitre la forme et la signification des lettres ; elle devient alors un art vivant plutôt qu'un simple motif décoratif. De même comprendre les paroles de chansons emblématiques de Abdelhalim Hafed ou de

Fairouz, permet de percevoir l'émotion, le contexte historique et les messages culturels qu'elles transmettent. Ces interactions directes avec les œuvres artistiques donnent aux apprenants la possibilité de tisser un lien plus intime avec la culture arabe et de dépasser une vision superficielle ou exotisée de ses productions culturelles.

3.2. Les défis de l'enseignement de l'arabe

Bien que la langue arabe soit cruciale, de nombreux défis persistent dans son enseignement, notamment la différence entre l'arabe classique/ le fosha/ et les dialectes locaux : d'un côté, l'arabe standard moderne utilisé dans l'enseignement, les médiats et l'écriture formelle, et de l'autre, une multitude de dialectes régionaux qui varient d'un pays à l'autre. Cette situation crée parfois une confusion chez les apprenants, qui doivent maitriser une langue standard tout en étant exposés à des formes parlées très différentes. Pour les enseignants il s'agit de trouver un équilibre entre l'enseignement rigoureux de la norme linguistique et la prise en compte de la réalité linguistique des locuteurs natifs.

Un autre défi réside dans la complexité du système graphique et phonétique. L'alphabet arabe, bien que logique et cohérent, demande un apprentissage méthodique en raison de la variation des formes de lettres selon leurs positions dans le mot, ainsi que de l'importance des signes diacritiques. De plus, certains sons n'existent pas dans les langues européennes, ce qui nécessite un entrainement phonétique spécifique. Cette dimension technique peut ralentir les progrès des débutants et exige des ressources pédagogiques adaptées, ainsi qu'une formation spécialisée des enseignants.

Enfin, l'enseignement de l'arabe souffre parfois d'un manque de matériel didactique contextualisé. De nombreuses institutions utilisent encore des méthodes traditionnelles centrées sur la mémorisation ou la grammaire au détriment de l'interaction et de la communication. La pénurie de supports numériques, de manuels actualisés et de programmes adoptés aux différents profils d'apprenants constitue un obstacle à un apprentissage efficace. Toutefois, malgré ces défis, l'enseignement de l'arabe reste essentiel pour construire des ponts interculturels entre les peuples.

4. Conclusion

Nous parvenons à plusieurs conclusions importantes concernant le rôle de l'enseignement de la langue arabe dans la réalisation des échanges culturels et dans la construction de ponts de communication entre les peuples. Ces conclusions peuvent être résumées comme suit :

- **Insistance sur l'importance de la langue arabe**

L'enseignement de l'arabe n'est pas simplement une question linguistique, mais un outil puissant pour rapprocher les peuples et renforcer la compréhension entre les cultures. Autrement dit, apprendre l'arabe ce n'est pas seulement apprendre son aspect syntaxique, mais comme vecteur de culture, littérature et civilisation. Il est essentiel de

poursuivre les efforts pour promouvoir l'enseignement de la langue arabe et offrir des opportunités aux personnes intéressées par cette langue et sa culture.

- **Compréhension mutuelle**

Apprendre l'arabe permet d'accéder directement aux discours, valeurs et références culturelles des sociétés arabophones. Cela réduit les malentendus et favorise un dialogue plus authentique.

- **Respect et valorisation des cultures**

La langue est un vecteur d'identité : la connaitre montre un respect réel pour ceux qui parlent. Et cela contribue à combattre contre les stéréotypes et à valoriser la diversité culturelle.

- **Accès à une richesse culturelle et historique**

L'arabe ouvre la porte à une tradition littéraire, scientifique et philosophique millénaire. Cet accès crée un terrain de culture partagée favorisant le rapprochement interculturel.

- **Renforcement des liens sociaux**

Communiquer dans la langue de l'autre facilite les relations personnelles, professionnelles et communautaires. Ce qui crée un climat de confiance et de solidarité et favorise l'inclusion dans les pays ou vivent des communautés arabophones.

En enseignant la langue arabe nous pouvons faciliter le dialogue interculturel, renforcer la compréhension mutuelle et réduire les tensions qui peuvent découler de l'ignorance des langues et des cultures. Ceci dit que la maitrise de cette langue permet non seulement de comprendre la richesse et la profondeur de la culture arabe, mais aussi de créer des ponts de communication basés sur le respect mutuel et la tolérance. A travers cette connaissance, les barrières de l'incompréhension et des stéréotypes s'atténuent, ouvrant la voie à un dialogue interculturel plus authentique et à une coopération pacifique. Ainsi, l'enseignement de l'arabe s'affirme comme un instrument stratégique pour promouvoir la paix, renforcer la solidarité entre les sociétés et encourager la construction d'un monde plus harmonieux et uni **: enseigner pour rapprocher.**

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Abstract in English: *In a world shaped by globalization and cultural diversity, language teaching plays an important role in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding among peoples. The Arabic language, bearing a rich history and a millennia-old cultural heritage, constitutes a privileged vehicle for exchange and intercultural rapprochement. Despite the strong competitive dynamic among languages- which often reflects rivalries between the communities that use them – the learning of Arabic essential for preserving and valuing its cultural heritage while fostering intercultural dialogue. This work examines how the teaching of Arabic can help build bridges between cultures and strengthen peaceful coexistence. Through an intercultural approach to teaching and through language contact as manifested in phenomenon of linguistic borrowing, the aim is to show that learning Arabic is not limited to a linguistic dimension but opens the way to a better understanding of others, to tolerance, and to cooperation between societies.*

Keywords in English: *Acculturation; Arabic language; Dialogue of civilizations; Globalization; Intercultural communication; Linguistic borrowing*

Interpreting the Unclear: Challenges of Obscure Speech in Simultaneous Interpreting

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Abstract

Simultaneous interpreting is one of the most cognitively demanding tasks in translation and interpreting studies, requiring linguistic mastery, rapid processing, extra-linguistic knowledge, and constant mental alertness. Because interpreters cannot pause or request clarification, even brief hesitation disrupts communication. This paper examines a key challenge in this process: obscure or unclear speech. Such difficulty arises when speakers are incoherent, ambiguous, poorly articulated, or when technical factors—background noise, weak sound systems, or overlapping voices—distort the message. Interpreters must therefore maintain fluent delivery while conveying meaning that may itself be uncertain. Drawing on the author's professional experience, the study uses case-based analysis to illustrate real examples of obscure input and the strategies applied in real time, including approximation, reformulation, condensation, and contextual inference. By integrating practice-based insights with theories of cognitive load and sense-based interpreting, the paper argues that managing obscurity is a defining feature of simultaneous interpreting, demanding resilience, flexibility, and dedicated pedagogical attention.

Keywords

simultaneous interpreting, obscure speech, cognitive load, interpreting strategies, interpreter training

1. Introduction

Simultaneous interpreting represents one of the most cognitively complex and high-pressure forms of mediated communication. It requires interpreters to process, reformulate, and deliver a message almost instantaneously while maintaining accuracy, coherence, and communicative intent. Because interpreters cannot interrupt the speaker or request clarification, every second demands rapid decision-making and intense concentration. Within this intricate process, one of the most persistent and under-researched challenges is obscure or unclear speech—the moment when the source message becomes partially incomprehensible due to linguistic, acoustic, or pragmatic interference.

Obscurity in speech may emerge for a variety of reasons. Speakers may produce incoherent or ambiguous utterances, use non-standard accents, speak too fast, or fail to structure their discourse logically. External conditions such as poor sound quality,

background noise, or overlapping voices can further distort the message. In such situations, the interpreter is confronted with an acute cognitive and ethical dilemma: how to preserve fluency and communicative flow in the target language while remaining faithful to a message whose meaning is uncertain or incomplete. The management of these breakdowns is not a peripheral skill but a defining element of professional interpreting competence.

The relevance of this problem extends beyond the individual performance of interpreters. It touches upon key theoretical dimensions of interpreting studies—particularly those concerning cognitive load, sense construction, and strategic processing under time pressure. Previous research has largely concentrated on measurable factors such as speech rate, working memory, or terminology density, yet less attention has been paid to the specific phenomenon of unclear input and the interpreter's creative coping mechanisms. Addressing this gap contributes both to empirical understanding and to pedagogical practice, offering insights into how interpreters can be trained to maintain accuracy and composure under ambiguous conditions.

This paper examines the challenge of obscure speech in simultaneous interpreting through a practice-based lens. Drawing on the authors' professional experience as conference interpreters, it analyses real cases in which obscurity emerged either from the speaker's delivery or from technical disruptions. The study seeks to identify the strategies used in real time—approximation, reformulation, condensation, and the use of contextual inference—and to evaluate their effectiveness in ensuring communicative continuity. By linking these practice-based observations with cognitive and interpretive theories, the paper aims to illuminate how interpreters negotiate meaning when the message itself resists clarity.

2. Literature Review: Obscure Speech and Interpreter Response Strategies

2.1. Cognitive Processing and the Interpreter's Effort

The cognitive complexity of simultaneous interpreting has been widely explored in the literature, most notably through Gile's Effort Model (1995), which describes interpreting as the simultaneous coordination of listening, analysis, memory, production, and coordination efforts. Because the interpreter's mental capacity is limited, any increase in processing difficulty—such as unclear input or incoherent delivery—may exceed available cognitive resources and lead to information loss (Gile 1999: 161). Similarly, Seeber (2011) extends this view through a neurocognitive approach, arguing that interpreting performance is highly sensitive to fluctuations in processing load. When faced with distorted or incomplete messages, interpreters must allocate extra attention to decoding and inference, which in turn constrains their capacity for reformulation.

Moser-Mercer (2000) highlights that interpreting is a form of real-time decision-making under uncertainty. Cognitive overload caused by unclear speech leads to

compensatory mechanisms such as anticipation, paraphrasing, or partial omission. These strategies, although necessary, reveal the tension between fidelity and communicative coherence—an issue at the heart of obscure-speech interpreting. Kalina (2000) similarly defines interpreter performance as a dynamic process of comprehension and problem-solving, noting that uncertainty in the source message compels interpreters to rely on contextual reasoning and situational awareness rather than linguistic equivalence alone.

2.2. The Nature and Sources of Obscure Speech

Research on obscure or unclear speech has addressed various phenomena that hinder comprehension in simultaneous interpreting. Shlesinger (1994) discusses disfluency—including hesitations, false starts, and self-corrections—as a major source of difficulty that increases the interpreter's cognitive strain. Pöchhacker (2016) further categorizes problematic input into linguistic, paralinguistic, and environmental factors: unusual accents, rapid speech, technical malfunction, or audience noise. These disturbances are not peripheral, but integral to the authentic conditions of conference interpreting.

Several scholars emphasize the interpreter's dual challenge of understanding both the linguistic message and the speaker's intention. Setton and Dawrant (2016: 178) observe that when semantic or syntactic cues are ambiguous, interpreters often rely on discourse-level prediction and contextual inference. Albl-Mikasa (2017) describes this adaptive behavior as "strategic flexibility," where interpreters oscillate between micro-level decoding and macro-level sense construction. Such flexibility enables them to sustain delivery even when comprehension is partial or uncertain.

2.3. Coping Strategies and the Interpreter's Creativity

Empirical studies have documented a range of strategies interpreters employ when confronted with unclear input. Gile (1995) distinguishes between preventive strategies—such as anticipating the topic and preparing terminology—and remedial strategies used during performance, including reformulation, compression, and approximation. Riccardi (2005) and Kalina (2015) both highlight the interpreter's creativity as an essential resource for managing ambiguity: rather than reproducing the source text verbatim, interpreters reconstruct meaning through inference and coherence principles. This aligns with Seleskovitch's sense theory (1978), which views interpreting as conveying the intended sense rather than the literal words.

At the same time, the use of compensatory strategies involves risk. Misinterpretation or over-interpretation can occur when the interpreter infers meaning that the speaker did not intend. Kurz (2002) notes that in high-stakes contexts—such as diplomatic or technical conferences—accuracy may be valued over fluency, yet professional interpreters must balance both imperatives. The creative handling of obscure speech thus reflects both linguistic competence and ethical judgment.

2.4. Pedagogical and Professional Implications

The phenomenon of obscure speech also has implications for interpreter training. Timarová and Salaets (2011) advocate for incorporating unpredictability and acoustic imperfections into classroom simulations, arguing that exposure to realistic conditions helps students develop coping resilience. Dong and Cai (2021) propose training models that integrate cognitive monitoring and stress management, noting that adaptability under ambiguity is a key marker of professional maturity. Pöchhacker (2010) similarly stresses that interpreter education should not aim for idealized fluency but should prepare students to function under imperfect communicative conditions.

From a professional perspective, the ability to manage obscure speech embodies the interpreter's resilience and autonomy (Seeber 2020). It reflects a balance between analytical reasoning, pragmatic judgment, and emotional self-regulation—qualities that determine long-term performance sustainability. Ultimately, confronting obscurity is not a marginal skill but a defining feature of simultaneous interpreting, demanding ongoing reflection, practice, and pedagogical reinforcement.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, practice-based approach, drawing on the authors' professional experience as conference interpreters. The analysis combines autoethnographic reflection with direct observation from various interpreting contexts, focusing on how interpreters manage obscure or unclear speech in real time.

These general insights are exemplified through a two-day international forum, chosen as a representative case to illustrate recurring challenges in simultaneous interpreting. This approach allows the examination of cognitive and strategic processes that cannot easily be captured through experimental research.

3.2. Data Collection

The material is drawn from professional interpreting assignments in Albania and abroad (2022–2025), with particular attention to one two-day high-density conference involving English–Albanian interpretation. Data include interpreter notes and reflective observations on difficult episodes characterized by: incoherent phrasing or unclear articulation; excessive speech rate or overlapping dialogue; technical noise or equipment malfunction.

Each instance was noted for the type of challenge and the interpreter's response. All identifying details have been anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

3.3. Analytical Framework

Analysis followed a three-stage process:

Identification of obscure input – segments exhibiting lexical, syntactic, or acoustic opacity were marked.

Strategy classification – responses were categorized according to previously described interpreting strategies: approximation, reformulation, omission, anticipation, or contextual inference (cf. Gile 1995; Riccardi 2005; Kalina 2015).

Evaluation of communicative outcome – each strategy was assessed for its success in maintaining coherence, accuracy, and target-language fluency.

This framework aligns with Gile's Effort Model and Seleskovitch's sense theory, linking observable behavior to underlying cognitive mechanisms. Reflexive commentary from the interpreter complemented the analysis, offering insight into real-time reasoning and emotional self-regulation.

3.4. Reliability and Limitations

As the authors are both researchesr and practitioners, subjectivity is recognized as a limitation but also as an interpretive strength. Triangulation was achieved through repeated listening, peer consultation, and comparison with established interpreting theories. The aim is not to measure accuracy but to show how interpreters manage ambiguity under pressure. Using naturalistic data adds ecological validity, reflecting the real complexity of simultaneous interpreting that experimental studies often overlook.

3.5. Contextual Challenges in the Albanian Interpreting Environment

When interpreting within the Albanian professional context, several situational and institutional challenges significantly affect performance, often amplifying the risk of obscure or unclear input. Unlike in more structured international environments, interpreters in Albania are frequently engaged at the very last minute, leaving them insufficiently informed about the event, the participants, or the topic. This lack of preliminary briefing undermines preparation and limits the interpreter's ability to anticipate specialized terminology or thematic focus. As a result, much of the cognitive effort during the live event is redirected toward spontaneous problem-solving rather than efficient message transfer.

A second recurring issue concerns terminological unfamiliarity. Many events, particularly those organized by ministries, NGOs, or EU-funded projects, involve highly technical or specialized domains—law, energy, medicine, finance, or environmental policy—where interpreters may not have access to glossaries or preparatory materials in advance. This increases the cognitive load during simultaneous interpreting and heightens the likelihood of omissions or approximations when faced with complex professional jargon.

Moreover, obscure speech is a frequent reality in Albanian conferences, caused not only by speakers' incoherence or poor articulation but also by technical shortcomings such as inadequate sound systems, room acoustics, or microphone handling. In some cases, speakers are not coherent, switch erratically between topics, or deliver their messages in fragmented or non-linear discourse, which challenges the interpreter's capacity to construct logical meaning on the spot.

Additional difficulties arise from fatigue-related lapses in concentration and anticipation, particularly during lengthy sessions or in settings where interpreters are required to work alone. As practitioners often note, even a brief loss of focus—sometimes less than a minute—can result in losing the thread of speech and consequently affect output fluency. Similarly, the lack of fluency of delivery ("when words fail") reflects the strain of mental overload and the limited time available to reformulate complex input.

Another recurring obstacle is the speed and inconsiderate pacing of speakers, who often disregard the presence of interpreters. Fast delivery, combined with unstructured or unrehearsed presentations, leaves little room for processing and forces interpreters to rely on omission and condensation strategies. In some instances, speakers revert to their mother tongue instead of using the announced conference language, thereby creating confusion for both interpreters and the audience. This linguistic unpredictability adds an extra layer of difficulty, particularly when the speaker's native language differs from the conference's working pair.

Finally, interpreters frequently face a lack of anticipatory cues—both general and problem-oriented—especially when speakers read pre-prepared, highly specialized papers without contextual introduction. Such monologic and dense discourse, often written for publication rather than oral delivery, leaves no room for interaction or clarification. Under these conditions, interpreters must depend on inference, experience, and intuition to maintain coherence, while managing the cumulative stress caused by continuous exposure to uncertainty.

These contextual factors illustrate that obscure speech in the Albanian setting is rarely an isolated linguistic phenomenon; rather, it emerges from a complex interaction of logistical, technical, and human variables. Recognizing these realities helps frame the subsequent analysis of case studies, where specific episodes exemplify how interpreters respond to such challenges in real time.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Interpreting as Crisis Management

Interpreting has often been described as a form of crisis management—a characterization that accurately captures the cognitive, emotional, and communicative pressure under which interpreters operate. In real-life conference settings, particularly in Albania, this description proves remarkably apt. The interpreter's task extends far beyond linguistic conversion; it involves managing uncertainty, unpredictability, and spontaneous problem-solving in real time. Each interpreting assignment presents its own micro-crises—technical failures, incoherent speakers, or unforeseen changes in language use—that require immediate and creative responses.

4.2. Specific Interpreting Challenges and Strategies

Challenge 1. Overlapping Equipment and Restricted Visibility

One of the first difficulties encountered during the event related to technical setup and visual obstruction. The projection screen was placed directly in front of the interpretation booth, which meant that the interpreters were unable to see the visual materials being displayed to the audience. PowerPoint slides and data charts, often essential for understanding the structure and logic of the speech, were thus inaccessible to the interpreters. This configuration forced them to rely solely on auditory input, depriving them of crucial visual cues such as key terms, figures, or textual emphasis.

Furthermore, the interpreters' visual line to the speakers was obstructed: positioned behind the projection screen, they could see only the backs of the speakers whenever these faced the audience or moved around the room. This lack of direct visual contact made it more difficult to interpret nonverbal cues, including gestures, facial expressions, and lip movements—elements that often assist comprehension, particularly when the sound is unclear or the speaker's pronunciation is problematic.

From a theoretical perspective, this situation intensified the cognitive load by increasing the listening and analysis effort described in Gile's Effort Model (1995). The absence of multimodal input forced the interpreters to allocate all processing resources to auditory decoding, reducing their capacity for reformulation and anticipation. As Seeber (2011) notes, such conditions significantly heighten the risk of comprehension failures because interpreters lose access to redundancy—the supportive interplay between verbal and visual channels.

In practical terms, the interpreters compensated through anticipation, contextual inference, and cautious reformulation. Since the visual content of the slides was inaccessible, they reconstructed meaning from verbal hints and discourse markers, using their professional knowledge of conference genres to predict likely terms and transitions (e.g., "As shown in the next graph…" or "This table demonstrates…"). Although this strategy maintained communicative flow, it also required continuous inferential reasoning under pressure, illustrating the adaptive intelligence that defines professional interpreting in suboptimal working environments.

From the author's own professional experience in intensive and prolonged conferences, these challenges are not abstract theoretical notions but recurring realities that shape performance and decision-making. The following sections will discuss several specific problems observed during simultaneous interpreting in Albanian and international events, illustrating how the interpreter's strategic adaptability ensures communicative continuity even under conditions of obscurity, fatigue, or cognitive overload. These examples not only demonstrate the interpreter's resilience and analytical skill but also reveal dimensions of the profession that remain virtually unknown to the wider public.

Challenge 2. Crisis Management on the Spot

When the keynote speaker unexpectedly switched from English to Italian, the interpreting team faced an immediate communicative breakdown. In that moment of uncertainty, the author made a spontaneous decision to activate the microphone and proceed with interpreting directly from Italian into Albanian, despite the lack of official preparation for this language pair. This decision exemplifies the essence of on-the-spot crisis management in simultaneous interpreting — an act of professional initiative that prioritizes communicative continuity over procedural rigidity.

Although the situation carried significant risk, the speech itself was coherent, logically structured, and clearly articulated, which facilitated comprehension and real-time anticipation. The speaker's delivery, though fast-paced, followed a consistent argumentative flow, allowing the interpreter to predict upcoming segments and adjust phrasing accordingly. As Gile (1999) emphasizes, anticipation is one of the key mechanisms interpreters employ to offset processing strain, and in this case it became the foundation of a successful performance.

The interpreter's ability to maintain fluency and precision throughout a 35-minute uninterrupted delivery demonstrates not only linguistic competence but also emotional control and situational adaptability. According to Kalina (2015), effective interpreting under pressure depends on the interpreter's capacity for strategic self-regulation — balancing attention, memory, and expression even when the communicative setting diverges from plan. By daring to intervene proactively, the interpreter ensured the uninterrupted flow of information for the audience, turning what could have been a communicative failure into a practical success.

This episode reinforces the argument that interpreting is inherently an act of crisis management, where real-time judgment, courage, and professional reflexes determine the success of the communicative act. It also highlights the creative and ethical dimensions of the interpreter's agency, often invisible to the audience but crucial for preserving the integrity of multilingual events.

Challenge 3. Very Intense and Technical Interpretation

Another highly demanding segment of the event occurred during the session titled "*New Directions in Regional Innovation Policy: A Network Model for Generating Entrepreneurship and Economic Development*." This presentation, delivered by a panel of experts, proved to be extremely technical, information-dense, and fast-paced, posing a substantial cognitive challenge for the interpreters. The speakers frequently exchanged remarks with one another, interrupting or expanding on each other's statements, which produced a fragmented and unpredictable discourse pattern.

The speed of delivery and level of specialization significantly increased the processing effort required for comprehension and reformulation. As Gile's Effort Model (1995) predicts, when both the listening and analysis components consume most of the interpreter's mental resources, little capacity remains for production and

coordination. Consequently, the interpreting process becomes physically and cognitively exhausting, and fluency can occasionally slow as the interpreter works to reconstruct meaning accurately in real time.

The terminological density of this session further limited opportunities for anticipation. Because the subject matter concerned regional innovation policies, entrepreneurship networks, and models of economic development, it relied heavily on domain-specific terminology and policy jargon. Without prior access to the written papers or slides, interpreters had to rely on contextual inference and strategic approximation. Riccardi (2005) notes that such strategies, while indispensable, carry the risk of under-translation or simplification when faced with sustained high-speed input.

In this case, the interpreters managed the difficulty by using selective compression—omitting redundant modifiers and focusing on key conceptual elements—to preserve coherence. Despite the fatigue and limited preparation, the output remained accurate and intelligible, though at times the delivery rate inevitably slowed. This episode clearly illustrates the trade-off between precision and rhythm that characterizes real-world simultaneous interpreting under technical conditions. As Kalina (2000) argues, the goal in such contexts is not perfect linguistic replication but communicative adequacy: ensuring that the main ideas and argumentative flow reach the audience effectively.

Ultimately, this experience demonstrates that intense and technical interpretation represents one of the most cognitively taxing scenarios interpreters face. It underscores the importance of specialized training, terminology management, and pre-event briefing as integral parts of professional interpreting practice—factors that, in many Albanian contexts, are still not systematically ensured.

Challenge 4. Maintaining Concentration and Managing Fatigue During Prolonged Sessions

A further difficulty frequently encountered in conference interpreting, particularly in Albanian settings, concerns the sustained duration of interpreting sessions. Working continuously for extended periods—sometimes exceeding six or seven hours with only short breaks—inevitably leads to fatigue and short lapses in concentration. Even brief moments of mental drift can result in a loss of coherence or omission of information, especially during highly technical or fast-paced interventions.

The cognitive mechanisms underlying this challenge are well documented in interpreting research. According to Gile (1995), simultaneous interpreting demands the constant balancing of limited attentional resources among listening, memory, and production efforts. As fatigue accumulates, the interpreter's ability to coordinate these efforts diminishes, increasing the likelihood of errors or slowed delivery. Kurz (2002) similarly emphasizes that physiological stress and mental exhaustion reduce working memory capacity, directly affecting performance quality and fluency.

To cope with these conditions, interpreters often adopt adaptive cognitive strategies aimed at maintaining continuity and minimizing disruption. One effective approach involves mental reconstruction, whereby interpreters momentarily recompose unclear segments in their mind, drawing on their knowledge of the topic, the language, and the situational context. This use of extra-linguistic knowledge—a blend of subject-matter familiarity and contextual reasoning—helps bridge comprehension gaps and maintain message coherence even when full attention cannot be sustained.

Additionally, interpreters must learn to react quickly and avoid unnecessary pauses, as hesitation risks breaking the communicative rhythm and reducing audience comprehension. In such cases, fluency is prioritized over lexical precision: the interpreter delivers the sense of the message promptly, even if the phrasing is slightly condensed or paraphrased. This aligns with Seleskovitch's (1978) principle that in high-pressure interpreting, the essential goal is to transmit meaning effectively, not to replicate every linguistic form.

Overall, this challenge highlights the interdependence between cognitive endurance, resilience, and professional training. Managing fatigue is not only a matter of physical stamina but also of strategic awareness—knowing how to adjust one's cognitive effort dynamically to ensure the continuity and clarity of interpretation throughout long and demanding events.

Challenge 5. Obscure Speech and Ambiguous Discourse

One of the most striking examples of obscure speech during the event occurred in the presentation delivered by a distinguished medical professional from the Netherlands, who was a member of the Board of the European Academy of Regions. The session, titled *"The Meaning of the Guidelines and Protocols in the Health Service: The Influence of Political Decisions on National Health Service and/or Free Market — The Guidelines and Prices of the Health Service in a Changing Political Vision*," exemplified the difficulties interpreters face when confronted with syntactically convoluted and semantically overloaded discourse.

From the very outset, the presentation suffered from structural ambiguity. The speaker's sentences were excessively long, filled with embedded clauses and abstract terminology, while the overall argumentative logic was only partially explicit. As a result, the interpreter faced constant uncertainty about sentence boundaries and conceptual relations — a hallmark of obscure speech as defined in this study. Such linguistic opacity is particularly challenging in simultaneous interpreting, where there is no time for syntactic restructuring or retrospective clarification.

The complexity was compounded by the dense intersection of medical, political, and economic terminology, much of which was delivered without clear transitions or examples. According to Pöchhacker (2016), interpreting under such conditions requires rapid conceptual condensation and the ability to extract core meaning from fragmentary discourse. The interpreter's task, therefore, becomes one of sense

reconstruction, aligning closely with Seleskovitch's (1978) principle of deverbalization, whereby meaning must be reformulated from the perceived intent rather than the exact phrasing.

In this case, the interpreter employed a triadic strategy: (1) identifying key thematic clusters (e.g., "guidelines," "health service," "political influence"); (2) simplifying syntactic structures for clarity in the target language; and (3) prioritizing coherence over literal reproduction. This adaptive behavior illustrates the principle of strategic condensation noted by Riccardi (2005), in which interpreters actively reshape the discourse to maintain interpretive accessibility for listeners.

Ultimately, this challenge reveals that obscurity in interpreting is not always a matter of poor articulation or technical interference; it can also arise from conceptual and rhetorical density in the speaker's discourse. Such instances demand from the interpreter not only linguistic agility but also analytical intelligence — the capacity to reformulate meaning in a clear and structured way while preserving the complexity of the original message.

Challenge 6. Extreme Case of Obscure Speech: Inaudible, Fragmented, and Incoherent Delivery

Perhaps the most demanding episode of the entire event involved a medical presentation delivered by a distinguished doctor from the Netherlands, a member of the Board of the European Academy of Regions. The talk, focused on medical and policy intersections, was characterized by an extraordinary degree of obscurity and communicative breakdown, testing the limits of interpretive performance.

From the outset, several factors contributed to the difficulty. The speaker spoke in a very low voice, often could not be heard properly, and used fragmented phrases rather than coherent or connected sentences. There was no PowerPoint presentation or visual support to provide contextual cues, and the speaker mostly read from written notes, producing a monotonous and disjointed delivery. To make matters worse, the speech was filled with dense medical terminology, much of which was unfamiliar and unaccompanied by clarifying examples.

As the session progressed, the technical and cognitive overload became so intense that one of the interpreters was forced to stop interpreting entirely, unable to follow or reconstruct the meaning of the speech. The author, however, chose to continue, relying on common sense, contextual inference, and professional instinct to make the delivery as coherent as possible. Drawing on prior knowledge of healthcare systems and institutional policy, the interpreter attempted to relate disconnected phrases, fill in the logical gaps, and avoid long pauses that could disrupt the audience's understanding.

This episode vividly exemplifies what Moser-Mercer (2000) and Seeber (2011) describe as cognitive saturation—the point at which incoming information exceeds processing capacity, forcing the interpreter to resort to high-level compensatory

mechanisms. It also illustrates Gile's (1999) notion of effort coordination under strain, where the interpreter must redistribute mental energy to preserve fluency at the expense of precision.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the final quality of output ("I am not sure if my best was the best"), the interpreter's persistence ensured the continuation of communication—a crucial ethical and professional act. This challenge encapsulates the central paradox of simultaneous interpreting under obscure conditions: even when comprehension is partial and delivery imperfect, the interpreter's role as mediator compels them to maintain communicative flow through creativity, resilience, and professional integrity.

Challenge 7. Lack of Fluency of Delivery Due to Fatigue and Linguistic Complexity

A recurrent difficulty observed in the Albanian interpreting environment, particularly during intensive, day-long events, concerns the gradual decline in fluency of delivery caused by prolonged cognitive and physical exertion. Interpreting for extended hours without sufficient breaks places considerable strain on the interpreter's attention, memory, and speech production mechanisms, often resulting in moments of hesitation or slower articulation. As Gile's Effort Model (1995) explains, simultaneous interpreting requires constant coordination between listening, processing, and production efforts — when one of these resources becomes overloaded, fluency is the first to deteriorate.

The challenge becomes even more evident when interpreting for highly specialized audiences that employ complex syntactic structures, rapid speech, and technical terminology. In such contexts, maintaining fluency requires not only linguistic agility but also the ability to simplify and reorganize information in real time. As the analysis of this case shows, the interpreter must frequently make micro-decisions: whether to paraphrase, condense, or omit secondary details to sustain communicative rhythm.

One effective strategy identified during the observation involved simplifying syntax on the go and segmenting discourse into meaningful units. Instead of attempting to reproduce the source-language structure verbatim, the interpreter focused on identifying core ideas and logical relations between sentences. This approach aligns with Setton's (1999) notion of online reformulation, where the interpreter reconstructs the message dynamically, balancing accuracy with fluency.

Moreover, the cumulative effect of fatigue and lexical saturation (Moser-Mercer 2000) often forces interpreters to rely more heavily on automatized linguistic patterns and pre-formulated expressions to sustain delivery speed. While this can occasionally lead to reduced lexical variation, it preserves communicative coherence — a critical criterion in professional interpreting where clarity outweighs completeness.

Ultimately, this challenge demonstrates that fluency is not merely a linguistic skill but a cognitive achievement, continuously negotiated under pressure. Maintaining fluency in long, technical conferences requires a blend of anticipatory reasoning, linguistic simplification, and self-regulation — skills that define the expert interpreter's resilience and adaptability in high-demand environments.

Challenge 8. Untranslatability and the Limits of Technical Language

Another persistent difficulty that emerged during the event concerned the partial untranslatability of highly technical language, particularly in specialized sessions such as "New Directions in Regional Innovation Policy: A Network Model for Generating Entrepreneurship and Economic Development." Despite the interpreter's full competence and preparedness, certain concepts resisted precise reformulation, highlighting the inherent limitations of real-time language mediation in technical discourse.

As scholars such as Pöchhacker (2016) and Kalina (2015) note, interpreting specialized terminology involves more than lexical substitution; it requires situational awareness, subject-matter familiarity, and inferential reasoning. Yet even under optimal conditions, "something is always lost"—an inevitable gap between the precision of expert language and the constraints of spontaneous oral reformulation. This limitation is particularly acute when the speaker's discourse blends economic theory, policy frameworks, and administrative jargon, often delivered at high speed and without visual aids.

In this instance, many terms lacked exact equivalents in Albanian institutional vocabulary. The interpreter was thus compelled to resort to approximation strategies such as generic reformulation ("economic model" for "network innovation structure") or functional equivalence, conveying meaning rather than form. These adaptive techniques align with Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence principle and Pym's (2010) concept of translator's risk management, where communicative adequacy takes precedence over terminological precision.

Moreover, untranslatability in this case was not merely linguistic but conceptual, arising from differing institutional realities between Western European and Albanian socio-economic contexts. As Tymoczko (2007) emphasizes, translation always negotiates cultural asymmetry, especially in specialized fields where terminology encodes ideologically specific models of governance or development.

Ultimately, this challenge underscores that untranslatability in interpreting does not equate to communicative failure. Rather, it marks the boundary where the interpreter's creative and interpretive agency becomes most visible — balancing fidelity, functionality, and intelligibility under the constant pressure of immediacy. It also reinforces the broader argument of this study: that simultaneous interpreting, especially under obscure or highly technical conditions, is not a mechanical transfer of

words but an act of interpretive negotiation, shaped by expertise, intuition, and professional ethics.

Challenge 8 (continued). The Pressure of Highly Specialized and Interdisciplinary Language

The challenge of untranslatability was further amplified during sessions that involved multiple speakers from different countries, each presenting within their own disciplinary framework. One particularly demanding panel brought together five to six experts from fields such as information technology, law, software development, and public administration, who discussed their ongoing regional and international projects on entrepreneurship and economic development.

The heterogeneity of professional backgrounds created a multilayered discourse that was highly technical, fragmented, and conceptually dense. Each speaker introduced domain-specific terminology that was not only difficult to render into Albanian but also conceptually embedded in the institutional culture of their respective countries. The interpreter's task, therefore, extended far beyond lexical accuracy—it required a capacity for cross-disciplinary mediation and instant conceptual alignment across legal, technical, and economic registers.

Interpreting in this context was extremely intense, as the speakers' interventions alternated rapidly, often with minimal pauses between them. The presence of IT and legal experts further complicated the situation, as both domains rely heavily on formulaic terminology and syntactic precision. The lack of standardized Albanian equivalents for many of these expressions forced the interpreter to employ approximation, paraphrase, and explanatory reformulation, aiming to preserve communicative continuity rather than terminological fidelity.

This situation aligns with what Kalina (2015) terms multidimensional complexity in conference interpreting—a combination of high informational density, variable speaker styles, and limited contextual support. It also recalls Pym's (2010) observation that interpreters in such settings operate within a "risk management framework", making strategic decisions about what to retain, condense, or omit under pressure.

Ultimately, this example illustrates that technical untranslatability is rarely absolute; rather, it manifests as a continuum of interpretive negotiation in which meaning is actively reconstructed. The interpreter's success in managing such situations depends not only on linguistic expertise but also on interdisciplinary awareness, anticipatory competence, and cognitive resilience—qualities that define the professional interpreter's creative agency in the face of linguistic and conceptual opacity.

A particularly illustrative instance of this technical untranslatability occurred during a panel on public procurement and digital governance, in which several European experts discussed "Digital Governance and E-Government Principles Applied to Public Procurement." The session explored topics such as anti-corruption

strategies, acquisition costs, and governance infrastructures, each of which required domain-specific vocabulary rarely standardized in Albanian. Phrases like "electronic-based infrastructures," "e-procurement implementation," or "governance structures for digital compliance" lacked established terminological equivalents, forcing the interpreter to operate within a space of conceptual approximation.

Faced with this terminological opacity, the interpreter applied functional reformulation strategies — rephrasing technical expressions through explanatory equivalents that preserved the communicative intent. This experience exemplifies what Pym (2010) defines as risk management in translation: the professional decision to privilege clarity and accessibility for the target audience over literal precision. It also highlights the broader theoretical argument made by Venuti (2012) and Tymoczko (2007) that technical discourse is culturally bound, and that its translation often entails negotiating asymmetrical systems of institutional and linguistic reference.

Through such moments, the interpreter's role shifts from that of linguistic mediator to knowledge negotiator, bridging conceptual gaps between differing administrative realities. The experience reinforces the paper's central claim that simultaneous interpreting — especially in highly specialized multilingual conferences — is an act of adaptive cognition and cultural reasoning, not merely a technical exercise in linguistic equivalence.

4.3. Towards the Profile of a Successful Simultaneous Interpreter

The cumulative evidence from the ten challenges discussed above reveals that successful simultaneous interpreting depends not merely on linguistic proficiency but on a complex interaction of cognitive, professional, and situational competencies. Based on both theoretical insights and empirical reflection from practice, several core attributes emerge as essential for ensuring effective performance and preventing communicative breakdowns in real-time settings.

First, interpreters must possess a strong foundation of cognitive knowledge—the ability to process, store, and reformulate information efficiently while maintaining mental flexibility under high pressure. As Moser-Mercer (2000) and Gile (2009) emphasize, the interpreter's cognitive resilience allows them to manage high input density, competing stimuli, and multitasking demands inherent in simultaneous interpreting.

Second, the ability to manage unexpected crises is indispensable. Interpreting has rightly been described as a form of "crisis management" (Jones, 2002), since unforeseen disruptions—technical failures, unclear speech, or last-minute language switches—are inevitable. The interpreter must quickly devise strategies to restore communicative flow, drawing upon intuition, extra-linguistic knowledge, and professional composure.

Third, a successful interpreter must be able to use specialized terminology accurately and appropriately, particularly in technical or interdisciplinary contexts.

Familiarity with the discourse conventions of different fields—law, economics, IT, or healthcare—is vital for achieving terminological precision and maintaining the credibility of interpretation.

Fourth, interpreters must strive to meet the expectations of the audience, ensuring that the interpreted speech remains coherent, fluent, and culturally accessible. As Pöchhacker (2016) notes, interpreting is an act of mediation between the speaker's intent and the listener's reception; hence, the interpreter's performance is judged not only by fidelity to the source but also by clarity and usability of the message.

Taken together, these competencies illustrate that successful simultaneous interpreting is a cognitive-communicative performance, grounded in knowledge, adaptability, and strategic creativity. The interpreter is, therefore, both a linguistic expert and a situational problem-solver — a professional whose effectiveness depends on continuous anticipation, disciplined self-control, and a deep awareness of the communicative environment.

4.4. Synthesis of Findings

The analysis of ten distinct challenges—ranging from obscure speech and overlapping equipment to untranslatability and fatigue—reveals that simultaneous interpreting is far more than a linguistic exercise: it is a multi-dimensional act of cognitive coordination and professional resilience. Each challenge encountered in the Albanian interpreting environment underscores the fragile balance between comprehension, reformulation, and delivery that the interpreter must sustain in real time. Whether dealing with incoherent speech, specialized terminology, or unpredictable speaker behavior, interpreters constantly engage in rapid problem-solving that draws upon their linguistic competence, cognitive agility, and extra-linguistic knowledge.

The findings confirm key theoretical perspectives advanced by scholars such as Gile (1995, 2009), Seleskovitch (1978), Pöchhacker (2016), and Kalina (2015), who emphasize the interpreter's dual role as both processor and co-creator of meaning. In practice, the interpreter's task involves not only decoding messages but also reconstructing sense within complex and unstable communicative conditions. The experience-based cases presented here vividly demonstrate how strategic adaptation, anticipation, and contextual inference serve as survival mechanisms in maintaining communicative flow.

Moreover, the Albanian context adds a crucial dimension to this discussion. The combination of limited preparatory time, technological inconsistencies, and heterogeneous linguistic inputs—often in multilingual, high-stakes settings—illustrates the systemic challenges faced by interpreters working in smaller or emerging markets. Yet, within these constraints, interpreters develop remarkable adaptive strategies that bridge conceptual gaps and sustain communication even under near-impossible conditions.

Ultimately, this synthesis confirms that the simultaneous interpreter operates at the intersection of cognition, communication, and creativity. Their success depends not on flawless linguistic transfer but on their ability to navigate unpredictability with composure, coherence, and ethical responsibility. The cumulative evidence from this study suggests that interpreter training should therefore place greater emphasis on real-time decision-making, resilience under pressure, and strategic management of obscurity—skills that transform interpreting from a technical act into an intellectually and culturally interpretive practice.

5. Conclusion

This study has explored the phenomenon of obscure speech and communicative uncertainty in simultaneous interpreting, situating the discussion within both theoretical frameworks and lived professional experience. By analyzing concrete cases from high-intensity multilingual conferences in the Albanian interpreting context, it has shown how interpreters confront and creatively resolve crises that arise from incoherence, technical limitations, and linguistic unpredictability.

The findings reaffirm that simultaneous interpreting is a cognitively complex and adaptive act, in which the interpreter is required to make instantaneous decisions under severe temporal and informational constraints. The challenges documented—ranging from inaudible or incoherent speakers to highly technical or untranslatable discourse—demonstrate the interpreter's ongoing negotiation between fidelity and functionality. This negotiation, as highlighted by scholars such as Seleskovitch (1978), Gile (1995), and Pöchhacker (2016), lies at the very heart of interpreting competence.

A key insight emerging from this study is that obscurity in interpreting is not an exception but a defining condition of real-life professional practice. Rather than a failure of comprehension, obscurity reflects the inherent instability of spontaneous communication in multilingual environments. It is in these moments of crisis that the interpreter's expertise becomes most visible: through anticipatory reasoning, reformulation, and contextual inference, they sustain communication even when meaning itself is uncertain.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for interpreter education to go beyond purely linguistic training. It calls for a pedagogical shift toward developing cognitive flexibility, crisis management, and interdisciplinary literacy—competences that enable interpreters to perform effectively in specialized and unpredictable communicative settings. Realistic simulation of complex conference conditions, reflective practice, and exposure to authentic speech varieties should form an integral part of interpreter training programs.

Finally, by bridging theory and practice, this research contributes to a broader understanding of interpreting as both a linguistic and cognitive art—an act of critical mediation where clarity must often be reconstructed rather than merely transferred. The

Albanian case studies presented here illuminate a wider truth about the profession: that the interpreter's true mastery lies not in perfection but in resilience, adaptability, and interpretive intelligence.

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Aspecte ale determinologizării lexicului filozofic românesc

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Abstract

Studiul propune o abordare a determinologizării lexicului filozofic românesc dintr-o perspectivă dublă: ca proces de trecere a termenilor dintr-un limbaj specializat în limba generală, dar și ca rezultat al acestui proces. Pornind de la premisa că termenii filozofici sunt entități „mobile”, care traversează granițele dintre limbajul de specialitate și limba comună, studiul urmărește identificarea modificărilor semantice și pragmatice survenite în această trecere. Corpusul analizat este constituit din termeni utilizați în texte specializate (articole din Revista de filosofie), texte intermediare (eseuri culturale, articole de vulgarizare) și texte generale (dicționare, presă). Analiza comparativă a unor termeni (absolut, absurd, actual, adevăr, aparență, categorie, cauză, concret, destin, fericire, formă, haos, individ, intuiție, limită, morală, scop, senzație, substanță) evidențiază o dublă dinamică: pe de o parte, pierderea preciziei conceptuale și desprinderea de rețeaua teoretică originară; pe de altă parte, resemantizarea lor prin extindere, metaforizare sau valorizare axiologică. În concluzie, determinologizarea în domeniul filozofic se dovedește a fi un proces multidimensional și neliniar, implicând reconceptualizarea sensului în funcție de perspectiva discursivă și de scopul comunicativ.

Keywords

determinologizare, lexic filozofic românesc, resemantizare, metaforizare, reconceptualizare, limba generală

1. Determinologizarea – delimitări conceptuale

În tradiția terminologiei clasice, termenul a fost definit ca o unitate lexicală caracterizată prin monosemie, univocitate, referențialitate și stabilitate semantică, fiind conceput ca o „etichetă” aplicată unui concept precis delimitat, „termenul etichetă” servind identificării și clasificării și fiind opus „termenului din discurs” (Thoiron și Béjoint 2010: 109). Această viziune, asociată în principal modelului wüsterian, a susținut ideea unei opoziții radicale între termen și cuvânt, precum și autonomia terminologiei față de lingvistică. Totuși, evoluțiile recente din domeniul lingvisticii de corpus și analiza discursurilor specializate au pus sub semnul întrebării validitatea absolută a acestor principii, evidențiind caracterul dinamic, contextual și variabil al termenilor în uz (Humbert-Droz subliniază „relativitatea termenului”, 2021: 18). Astfel, numeroși autori au arătat că termenii, odată inserați în discurs, pot prezenta

trăsături considerate anterior incompatibile cu statutul lor: polisemie, sinonimie, variație contextuală și chiar încărcături conotative. În această perspectivă, diferența dintre termen și cuvânt nu mai apare ca una de natură, ci ca una de grad, dependentă de existența unui „control" exercitat de comunitatea de specialiști asupra sensului și utilizării unității lexicale, reflectat în „definiția fondatoare" (Thoiron, Béjoint 2010: 110). Atunci când acest „control" slăbește sau dispare, termenul își pierde progresiv statutul specializat și începe să funcționeze ca element al lexicului comun:

> dacă termenul și cuvântul sunt opozabile, această opoziție se manifestă mai degrabă printr-un continuum decât ca două unități aparținând unor sisteme distincte și ireconciliabile. Prin urmare, nu este surprinzător să regăsim, în definiții, urme ale acestui continuum (Thoiron, Béjoint 2010: 110, traducerea noastră).

Fenomenul determinologizării poate fi astfel înțeles ca un proces discursiv și social, strâns legat de circulația termenilor dincolo de comunitățile de experți, de difuzarea cunoașterii prin intermediul mass-media și de interacțiunea dintre domenii (interdisciplinaritatea).

În literatura de specialitate, determinologizarea este descrisă ca un proces de pierdere parțială a semnificației specializate a unui termen, pe măsură ce acesta este preluat în comunicarea nespecializată (perspectiva procesuală). Privită astfel, (integrare progresivă), determinologizarea implică o dimensiune diacronică în abordare, o dependență de factorul timp și de diversele canale de integrare: media, texte de vulgarizare, texte didactice. Potrivit lingviștilor cehi, în cursul acestui proces, termenul poate înceta să mai funcționeze ca unitate terminologică fie în sensul său primar, fie în sensurile derivate, devenind astfel un element al lexicului comun (Holeš și Honová 2023: 68). Determinologizarea este explicată, în această perspectivă, ca rezultat al utilizării frecvente și adesea imprecise a termenilor în afara comunităților de experți. Fenomenul a fost abordat și în alte tradiții teoretice, sub denumiri precum „extindere a sensului terminologic" (Meyer și Mackintosh 2000: 200), „despecializare", „dedomenializare" sau „banalizare", termeni care reflectă accentul pus fie pe pierderea ancorării conceptuale, fie pe circulația termenilor între limbajele specializate și limba comună. Dincolo de variația terminologică, aceste abordări converg în a sublinia permeabilitatea tot mai accentuată a graniței dintre lexicul general și cel specializat, într-un context marcat de difuzarea cunoașterii și de prezența masivă a termenilor în discursurile contemporane.

Într-o încercare de definire și operaționalizare a noțiunii, Humbert-Droz (2021) propune o delimitare a determinologizării, relevantă pentru înțelegerea circulației termenilor în raport cu procese conexe (despecializare, vulgarizare, banalizare etc.), punând accent pe circulația termenilor în discursuri nespecializate, dar mai ales pe efectele semantice ale acestei circulații (rezultatul procesului). Când termenii circulă în

afara discursurilor specializate, arată autoarea, ei sunt reînscrişi în cadre discursive cu constrângeri şi finalităţi diferite (informare, popularizare, controversă publică, persuasiune etc.), ceea ce modifică inevitabil modul lor de funcţionare semantică şi pragmatică. Din această perspectivă, cercetările despre vulgarizare şi despre „discursurile de transmitere a cunoştinţelor" (Humbert-Droz 2021: 25) pun accentul pe două fenomene complementare: pe de o parte, circulaţia socială a termenilor (care îi face accesibili non-experţilor), pe de altă parte, mecanismele discursive prin care sensul este reconstruit, adesea prin procedee metalingvistice şi reformulări cu scop didactic (sinonime, parafraze definitorii, explicaţii în limbaj comun). În cadrul comunicării contemporane, această transmitere nu mai funcţionează liniar (de la „discursuri-sursă" către public), ci se realizează printr-o reţea de discursuri „secunde" (inclusiv media generalistă), unde termenii pot suferi simplificări, deplasări semantice şi conotaţii noi. Rolul mass-media în circulaţia termenilor este subliniat şi în terminologia clasică. Astfel, Cabré observă că dezvoltarea comunicării de masă favorizează difuzarea largă a terminologiei şi interacţiunea dintre lexicul general şi cel specializat, în condiţiile în care termenii ajung să facă parte din cultura comună prin utilizarea lor în mass-media:

> Dezvoltarea comunicării de masă permite o difuzare pe scară largă a terminologiei, cu efectul unei interacţiuni crescute între lexicul general şi cel specializat. Termenii specifici devin parte a culturii populare prin utilizarea lor în mass-media. (Cabré 1999: 4, traducerea noastră).

În consecinţă, prezenţa crescândă a termenilor în comunicarea obişnuită devine un indicator al migraţiei dintre limbaje, iar includerea lor în dicţionarele generale poate fi interpretată ca efect al acestei circulaţii şi al aşteptărilor utilizatorilor, chiar dacă pragul exact al „trecerii" în limba generală rămâne dificil de fixat.

Cu toate că numărul termenilor care pătrund în comunicarea nespecializată este în creştere, determinologizarea nu afectează în mod uniform ansamblul lexicului specializat. Mai mulţi autori au subliniat că acest proces vizează cu precădere anumite categorii de termeni, în funcţie de gradul lor de specializare, iar nu domeniile în ansamblu. Astfel, s-a arătat că unii termeni se determinologizează mai uşor decât alţii, în special cei caracterizaţi printr-un nivel redus de specializare (Holeš şi Honová 2023: 69). În acest sens, literatura de specialitate propune o distincţie între termeni cu grad scăzut de specializare, termeni cu grad mediu de specializare şi termeni cu grad înalt de specializare (termeni ultra-specializaţi, „nucleul dur" al fiecărui domeniu). Termenii cu grad scăzut de specializare sunt cei mai apropiaţi de limba generală şi pot fi recunoscuţi şi utilizaţi, cel puţin parţial, de către non-specialişti. La polul opus, termenii cu grad ridicat de specializare se caracterizează, în principiu, printr-o serie de trăsături formale şi semantice care limitează circulaţia lor în afara discursurilor de

specialitate: recursul la forme savante de origine greco-latină, opacitate semantică, caracter arhaic sau livresc, precum și structurare prin sintagme complexe (*ibidem*). Aceste caracteristici explică, cel puțin parțial, rezistența lor la procesul de determinologizare și pot fi constatate și în cazul terminologiei filozofice.

2. Specificitatea terminologiei filozofice

Spre deosebire de terminologiile constituite în cadrul științelor pozitive, lexicul filozofic se caracterizează printr-o relație structural ambivalentă cu limba comună (Hoinărescu 2021: 102). Această particularitate este legată, pe de o parte, de natura discursului filozofic (polimorf, oscilând între dialog, eseu, tratat sistematic sau text cu grad ridicat de tehnicitate) și, pe de altă parte, de statutul reflexiv al filozofiei, care își interoghează propriul limbaj, dând naștere unei metaliteraturi dedicate explicării termenilor filozofici (Hoinărescu 2021: 102). Numeroase unități lexicale aparținând limbii comune dobândesc, în contexte filozofice, un statut terminologic. Noțiuni precum: *adevăr, bine* sau *cunoaștere* funcționează ca termeni filozofici prin recontextualizare, revenind ulterior în discursul cultural sau literar, iar circulația lor între registre discursive diferite implică modificări semantice.

O altă trăsătură distinctivă a lexicului filozofic o constituie gradul relativ de stabilitate semantică al termenilor. Ambiguitatea sau plurivocitatea reprezintă, în cazul terminologiei filozofice, o caracteristică structurală, întrucât sensurile sunt adesea construite, negociate și reinterpretate în cadrul tradițiilor teoretice (Hoinărescu 2021: 103). În acest sens, literatura secundară, glosarele și dicționarele filozofice nu urmăresc atât fixarea unui sens unic, cât cartografierea variațiilor conceptuale asociate termenilor în funcție de epoci, curente sau autori. Astfel, termeni precum *logos*, *dialectică* sau *psyche* nu pot fi definiți independent de cadrele doctrinare în care sunt mobilizați, ceea ce face ca istoria terminologiei filozofice să fie inseparabilă de istoria ideilor (Adorno: 37).

Această dependență de autor și de școală teoretică constituie un alt element care diferențiază lexicul filozofic de terminologiile standardizate. În filozofie, elaborarea unui vocabular propriu funcționează frecvent ca marcă identitară și ca instrument de legitimare intelectuală (Hoinărescu 2021: 103): *intuiția* (Bergson), *cunoașterea luciferică* vs. *paradiziacă* (Blaga), *apolinic* vs. *dionisiac* (Nietzsche), *cartezianism* (Descartes), *ondulațiunea universală* (Conta), *critica (rațiunii pure)* (Kant), *empirismul* (Locke), *existența – esența* (Sartre), *fenomenologia* (Husserl), *Dasein* („a fi aici", Heidegger) etc. Odată consacrați, termenii introduși sau resemantizați de un autor sunt reluați, comentați și integrați în discursuri critice și meta-critice, intrând într-un circuit interpretativ care depășește contextul inițial de producere. Această dinamică explică atât integrarea unor termeni în cultura generală, cât și predispoziția lor la resemantizare în afara cadrului strict filozofic.

De asemenea, lexicul filozofic se distinge printr-o pronunțată deschidere interdisciplinară (Hoinărescu 2021: 103). Numeroase concepte care funcționează astăzi în domenii precum psihologia, sociologia, teoria politică sau studiile culturale au o

origine filozofică, ceea ce face ca delimitarea unui termen exclusiv filozofic să fie, de cele mai multe ori, contextuală. Această mobilitate inter-domenială, coroborată cu utilizarea frecventă a termenilor filozofici în discursuri publice și mediatice, contribuie la slăbirea „controlului" conceptual exercitat de comunitățile de specialiști și creează condiții favorabile procesului de determinologizare.

Din această perspectivă, analiza determinologizării lexicului filozofic reclamă o abordare socioterminologică și discursivă pentru a surprinde nu doar structura conceptuală a termenilor, ci și circulația, recontextualizarea și transformările lor semantice în afara discursurilor specializate.

3. Termenii filozofici în context nespecializat (discursul mediatic)

Analiza determinologizării lexicului filozofic se bazează pe un corpus de termeni selectați din dicționare filozofice și din dicționare de limbă generală, corelat cu ocurențe în presa românească contemporană. Corpusul este constituit dintr-un număr de aproximativ 200 de termeni filozofici, aleși în funcție de frecvența lor în discursuri nespecializate și de funcționarea lor atât ca unități conceptuale în discursul filozofic (*Revista de filosofie*, 2021-2022), cât și ca elemente lexicale în uzul comun. Au fost reținuți cu precădere termeni care prezintă o circulație semnificativă în discursul mediatic și care permit observarea unor modificări semantice sau pragmatice față de sensul lor filozofic de bază. În acest sens, corpusul reunește termeni cu grade diferite de specializare, de la concepte accesibile până la termeni cu un nivel mai ridicat de tehnicitate, dar care încep să fie utilizați în contexte nespecializate. În vederea analizei, am avut în vedere două axe principale:

a) gradul de specializare, considerat un factor determinant al predispoziției spre determinologizare;

b) tipul de modificare semantică observabilă în uzul nespecializat.

Analiza concretă a termenilor arată că cele două axe se articulează în mod necesar. Gradul de specializare influențează tipurile de modificări semantice observabile în uzul nespecializat, iar identificarea mecanismelor de determinologizare presupune corelarea acestor două dimensiuni.

Astfel, după gradul de specializare, prima categorie reunește termeni care, în stadiul actual al limbii, se află în proximitatea limbajului comun și sunt, cel puțin parțial, accesibili non-specialiștilor chiar și în afara unui cadru teoretic explicit. Numeroși termeni din această categorie își au originea în reflecția filozofică clasică (în special în filozofia greacă). După cum arată Rey, în stadiile timpurii ale dezvoltării cunoașterii nu exista o delimitare strictă între lexicul comun și cel specializat, iar termenii filozofici funcționau simultan ca unități lexicale și concepte teoretice. Gradul lor redus de specializare în uzul contemporan este astfel rezultatul unei circulații istorice îndelungate și al unor recontextualizări succesive, care au favorizat integrarea lor în limba comună (Rey, 1995: 11–17). În acest sens, utilizarea/ re-utilizarea lor în

filozofie presupune mai degrabă o rafinare conceptuală decât o redefinire radicală. Exemple reprezentative din corpus includ termeni precum: *absolut, absurd, actual, adevăr, aparență, categorie, cauză, concret, destin, fericire, formă, haos, individ, intuiție, limită, morală, scop, senzație, substanță, timp, tragic.* În cazul termenului *absolut*, definiția din *Dicționarul de filozofie* reține un sens ontologic: „substanță generică, concepută ca existență autonomă, existență primordială, perfectă, completă, necauzată, independentă, necreată", dar și pe acela de „norme sau principii prime obiectiv-imanente, universal valide". Evoluția istorică a termenului este clar marcată: „dintre multiplele ipostaze filozofice ale conceptului de a. notăm: Unul (eleați), Ființa și Binele (Platon), Forma (Aristotel), Unitatea (Plotin), Dumnezeu (creștinismul), Substanța (Descartes, Spinoza), Energia, Experiența pură (fenomenalismul), «Ding-an-sich» sau lucrul în sine (Kant), valoarea pură (Windelband)" (DF 1978: 10). Această diversitate de ipostaze conceptuale, acumulată pe parcursul unei istorii filozofice îndelungate, indică faptul că termenul *absolut* nu funcționează ca un concept univoc, stabilizat într-o singură definiție, ci ca un nod teoretic supus reinterpretării continue. Tocmai această mobilitate conceptuală explică, în bună măsură, predispoziția termenului la ieșirea din cadrul strict filozofic și la integrarea sa în limba comună. În uzul contemporan nespecializat, *absolut* își pierde treptat funcția ontologică și este resemantizat ca intensificator discursiv sau marcator evaluativ, fiind utilizat pentru a exprima totalitatea, certitudinea sau radicalitatea unei afirmații: „Pentru a vă atinge scopurile absolut mizerabile sunteți gata să pârjoliți tot, să ne puneți ținte pe spate și să ne duceți în arenă", https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/societate/o-judecatoare-a-lansat-o-scrisoare-deschisa-catre-2486299.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „Zvonul că premierul Bolojan ar fi demisionat este fake absolut", https://www.g4media.ro/dogioiu-zvonul-ca-premierul-bolojan-ar-fi-demisionat-este-fake-absolut.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „Trump l-a întrebat pe Zelenski dacă Ucraina poate lovi Moscova și Sankt Petersburg, confirmă surse FT / Zelenski a răspuns: «Absolut. Putem, dacă ne dați arme»", https://www.g4media.ro/trump-l-a-intrebat-pe-zelenski-daca-ucraina-poate-lovi-moscova-si-sankt-petersburg-confirma-surse-ft-zelenski-a-raspuns-absolut-putem-daca-ne-dati-arme.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025). Determinologizarea termenului *absolut* poate fi astfel înțeleasă ca rezultatul unui proces dublu: pe de o parte, sedimentarea istorică a unor sensuri filozofice multiple, care afectează caracterul univoc al conceptului; pe de altă parte, adaptarea termenului la nevoile expresive și evaluative ale discursului comun, în special ale discursului mediatic.

Un fenomen de acumulare semantică comparabil poate fi observat și în cazul termenului *absurd:* „(în filozofia lui Kirkegaard) Termen desemnând distanța dintre subiectivitate și rațiunea considerată ca încercare de a stabili un sistem rațional al lumii […]. (în filozofia existențialistă franceză) Indiciu al contingenței absolute a existenței umane, al ruperii omului de lume și al lipsei de temei uman rațional, deductibil din exterior, manifestate prin ostilitatea, neutralitatea sau înstrăinarea omului față de lume

[...]. (în structuralism) Termen care desemnează inadecvarea semnificantului la semnificat, ruptura dintre simptomul conștient, rațional, manifest al vieții psihice sau sociale și infrastructura inconștientă, nesesizată ca atare" (DF 1978: 12). Definiția din dicționarele de limbă generală confirmă deplina integrare a termenului *absurd* în lexicul comun: „care contrazice gândirea logică, care nesocotește legile naturii și ale societății, contrar bunului-simț; ilogic. Loc. adv. Prin absurd = admițând un raționament fals, o situație aproape imposibilă", https://dexonline.ro/definitie/absurd/definitii (consultat pe 12.11.2025), consacrând un sens nespecializat, desprins de cadrele filozofice în care termenul funcționa ca indicator al unei condiții ontologice sau epistemologice. Ocurențele din presa generalistă și sportivă ilustrează stabilitatea și productivitatea acestui sens evaluativ. Construcții precum: *a friza absurdul, a duce la absurd* sunt utilizate pentru a marca excesul, disproporția sau inacceptabilitatea unei situații. Termenul funcționează astfel în frazeologisme, ceea ce indică o determinologizare avansată: „Antrenorul lui Dinamo vrea să vadă Statul implicat doar în infrastructură și la nivel de juniori: «Niște propuneri legislative care frizează absurdul»", https://www.prosport.ro/fotbal-intern/liga-2/ovidiu-burca-se-opune-modificarii-legii-in-favoarea-csa-steaua-antrenorul-lui-dinamo-vrea-sa-vada-statul-implicat-doar-in-infrastructura-si-la-nivel-de-juniori-19640605 (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „De doi ani, Iohannis caută (inventează) intenții pesediste care să scoată lumea în stradă. Tenacitate săsească dusă la absurd", https://www.cotidianul.ro/cinism-sau-ce/ (consultat pe 13.11.2025).

În cazul termenului *actual*, determinologizarea se realizează printr-o deplasare semantică profundă, care implică o schimbare a categoriei conceptuale. În sensul său filozofic, *actual* desemnează, în tradiția aristotelică, „ceea ce este «in actu», adică reprezintă ceva înfăptuit, spre deosebire de ceea ce există doar «in potentia», adică în mod virtual, ca potențialitate (posibilitate). În filozofia contemporană se folosesc, de regulă, termenii real-posibil (respectiv realitate-posibilitate)" (DF 1978: 13), fără a avea o valoare temporală propriu-zisă. În dicționarele de limbă generală, termenul este însă redefinit în raport cu prezentul, fiind asociat ideii de existență sau de desfășurare „în momentul de față": „1 Care există sau se petrece în prezent, în momentul de față. 2 Care corespunde momentului prezent, de actualitate. 3 (Fiz; înv; d. energia unui corp în mișcare) Care poate produce în acel moment un travaliu". Opoziția act / potență dispare, iar *actual* devine un adjectiv descriptiv cu funcție deictică temporală. Ocurențele din presa contemporană confirmă această resemantizare, termenul fiind utilizat pentru a localiza situații sau realități în prezent („Era prima instituție de învățământ superior universitar de pe teritoriul actual al țării", https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/la-fata-locului/o-descoperire-majora-pentru-istoria-invatamintului-2286772.html (consultat pe 12.10.2025)). Cu toate acestea, determinologizarea termenului *actual* nu implică o ruptură semantică totală față de sensul său filozofic originar. Sensul

aristotelic de *in actu* se conservă, într-o formă reziduală, prin ideea de realizare efectivă și de existență concretă, opusă virtualului sau ipoteticului.

În ceea ce privește termenul *adevăr*, determinologizarea nu se manifestă prin pierderea nucleului conceptual: „categorie filozofică ce desemnează concordanța cunoștințelor cu obiectul cunoașterii, autenticitatea acestora în raport cu realitatea exprimată de ele, în opoziție cu falsul, care exprimă oglindirea denaturată a realității” (DF 1978: 16), ci printr-o extindere semnificativă a funcțiilor sale discursive. Definițiile din dicționarele generale păstrează relația fundamentală dintre adevăr și realitate, ceea ce indică o continuitate semantică puternică față de sensul filozofic originar: „Ceea ce corespunde realității. A spune ~ul. Într-adevăr sau în ~ de fapt; în realitate. 2) filoz. Reflectare fidelă a realității obiective în conștiința omului“, „a corespunde cu adevărul; a se dovedi adevărat; a dezvălui adevărul, a da de adevăr; a stabili adevărul, a privi adevărul în față; a fi de partea adevărului, a se apropia de adevăr; cu adevărat“, https://dexonline.ro/definitie/adev%C4%83r/definitii (consultat pe 13.11.2025). În presa contemporană termenul este utilizat frecvent ca marcator pragmatic (*într-adevăr*, *cu adevărat*), ca instrument evaluativ sau ca element stilistic metaforic („toată carnea de adevăr”): „Dacă vrem într-adevăr să fim împreună trebuie să avem Republica Moldova în Uniunea Europeană”, https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/societate/noul-test-al-republicii-moldova-si-rolul-romaniei-2474727.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „Să legi tot ce s-a desfăcut în bucăți și să scrii o poveste, pur și simplu o poveste, nu doar cu un sîmbure de adevăr, ci cu toată carnea de adevăr”, https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tema-saptamanii/o-carte-cu-toata-carnea-de-adevar-632866.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „Prin urmare, prin jocul majorităților din Parlament se decide asupra valorii de adevăr, respectiv de fals a unei teorii”, https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/editoriale-si-opinii/situatiunea/antiiluminism-630648.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025). Un caz particular îl constituie utilizările de tipul *valoare de adevăr*, care reintroduc termenul într-un cadru conceptual, de această dată într-un discurs nespecializat, cu funcție argumentativă.

În cazul termenului *destin*, determinologizarea se realizează printr-o reconfigurare semantică care nu anulează complet sensul filozofic originar, dar îl modifică semnificativ. În discursul filozofic, destinul desemnează, în mod fundamental, ideea determinării ca non-libertate (DF 1978: 192), chiar dacă noțiunea a cunoscut, de-a lungul timpului, interpretări diverse, de la *moira* greacă la concepțiile existențiale moderne: „Forța a ceea ce se întâmplă și care pare să ne fie impusă fără ca vreuna dintre acțiunile noastre să poată schimba ceva. […] Cursul existenței individuale considerat ca scăpând voinței. Destinul trimite la o împărțire transcendentă, un decret imuabil asupra căruia acțiunea nu are nicio putere: moira, în greacă, este partea atribuită (heimarmenê) fiecăruia. […] La Heidegger, Dasein-ul și maniera în care ființa se dezvăluie acestuia. (În germană Schicksal, Geschick.)”, traducerea noastră (GDPh 2003: 289). În dicționarele de limbă generală, termenul suferă o

extindere semantică, devenind un descriptor al cursului vieții individuale sau colective, al împrejurărilor și al traiectoriei existențiale, cu estomparea dimensiunii de inexorabilitate: „soartă, viitor; împrejurare, condiție de viață etc. sau concurs de împrejurări în care se află sau se va afla o persoană sau o comunitate la un moment dat; curs al evenimentelor (importante) din viața (sau dintr-o parte a vieții) unei persoane; viață; persoană care are un anumit destin“, https://dexonline.ro/intrare/destin/16159/definitii (consultat pe 9.12.2025). Utilizările din presa contemporană confirmă această resemantizare – *destin* se referă la un parcurs istoric sau politic susceptibil de a fi influențat de acțiunea umană: „Momentul în care omenirea și-a schimbat destinul a fost când a lăsat jos sulița și a plantat primul grăunte”, https://adevarul.ro/stil-de-viata/cultura/omenirea-o-istorie-de-peste-300000-de-ani-ella-2485401.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „Într-un anumit număr de sectoare absolut cheie, apărarea, reindustrializarea, decarbonizarea, trebuie să ne luăm destinul în propriile mâini”, https://www.cotidianul.ro/victoria-lui-trump-franta-reactioneaza-prin-purtatorul-de-cuvant-al-guvernului/ (consultat pe 13.11.2025).

Ne oprim și asupra termenului *fericire*, în cazul căruia determinologizarea se manifestă printr-o deplasare de la un concept etic normativ la o valoare afectivă și pragmatică. În discursul filozofic, *fericire* este o noțiune asociată conștiinței morale, care desemnează „situația în care se realizează satisfacerea tuturor trebuințelor și aspirațiilor omului, atât în extensiune, cât și în intensiune” (DF 1978: 266). În dicționarele de limbă generală, termenul este definit ca stare emoțională intensă și ca rezultat al unor împrejurări favorabile, iar apariția locuțiunii *din fericire* marchează o desprindere de sensul filozofic originar: „Stare de mulțumire sufletească intensă și deplină; din fericire – printr-un concurs de împrejurări favorabile; (Fig) persoana sau obiectul care procură fericirea”, https://dexonline.ro/definitie/fericire/definitii (consultat pe 13.11.2025). În presa contemporană, noțiunea este utilizată fie ca marcator discursiv circumstanțial, fie ca element de intensificare afectivă („în culmea fericirii”), asociat unor evenimente punctuale sau spectaculoase: „Din fericire, dacă ai deja în familie un caz, există un panel genetic care îți poate identifica acest risc“, https://www.g4media.ro/dr-ovidiu-ferician-medic-urolog-medlife-varsta-de-diagnosticare-a-cancerului-de-prostata-a-scazut-pana-la-50-de-ani (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „Elena Udrea e în culmea fericirii. Va pleca din România cu fiica sa“, https://www.capital.ro/elena-udrea-e-in-culmea-fericirii-va-pleca-din-romania-cu-fiica-sa-vreau-sa-fie-mandra.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025).

Analiza câtorva termeni din această primă categorie evidențiază faptul că determinologizarea lexicului filozofic nu urmează un mecanism unic, ci se realizează prin procese diverse, dependente de natura conceptului și de funcționarea sa discursivă. Termenii cu un grad redus de specializare, caracterizați printr-o circulație istorică îndelungată, sunt predispuși la resemantizări sau deplasări categoriale. În toate cazurile

analizate, determinologizarea nu presupune o dispariție completă a sensului filozofic, ci conservarea unui nucleu semantic primar.

A doua categorie reunește termeni cu un grad mediu de specializare, pe care nu îi resimțim ca aparținând în mod curent limbii comune, dar care circulă în discursuri nespecializate, în special în presa culturală, eseistică sau de opinie. Acești termeni presupun un minim „capital" cultural din partea receptorului și sunt uneori însoțiți de marcaje discursive (ghilimele, parafraze, explicații) care indică statutul lor conceptual. Determinologizarea lor este parțială, nucleul semantic rămânând relativ stabil, chiar dacă termenii sunt utilizați metaforic sau extensiv în afara domeniului filozofic. Termenul *abstracție* ilustrează un caz de determinologizare parțială, specific termenilor cu grad mediu de specializare. În discursul filozofic, *abstracție* desemnează: „1. (în sens epistemologic, în raport cu experiența) Rezultat al proceselor de abstractizare. În raport cu modalitățile de abstractizare se pot întâlni diferite tipuri de abstracții în știință și în cunoaștere în general: a) a. empirice […] produse de abstractizarea analitică, realizate prin abstragerea notelor comune, degajate prin analiza și prin compararea obiectelor și proceselor concrete, sau a unor alte noțiuni; ele exprimă un invariant prin trecerea de la un element al clasei la altul; b) a. constructive […] obținute prin abstractizare constructivă sau idealizantă (combinată cu cea analitică) […] 2. (în sens semantic) Rezultat al procesului de formalizare folosit ca procedeu în științele moderne" (DF 1978: 11-12). Dicționarele de limbă generală păstrează acest nucleu semantic, definind *abstracția* ca operație a gândirii, dar consemnează totodată apariția unor sensuri secundare, dintre care se remarcă expresia frazeologică *a face abstracție de*, desprinsă de cadrul teoretic inițial: „1. Operație a gândirii prin care se desprind și se rețin unele dintre caracteristicile și relațiile esențiale ale obiectului cercetării. 2. (concretizat) Lucru abstract. 3. (în expresie) A face ~ de ceva A nu lua în considerare, a ignora" (MDA I 2001: 5). Prezența termenului în presa culturală confirmă această bifurcare: pe de o parte, termenul este utilizat cu valoare tehnică în contexte estetice („abstracție lirică", „abstracție gestuală"), indicând o recontextualizare interdisciplinară; pe de altă parte, în expresii idiomatice, *abstracție* funcționează ca marcator pragmatic al ignorării deliberate a unor fapte sau situații: „În România, opțiunea pentru nonreprezentațional a însemnat, pe de o parte, orientarea către abstracția lirică – a se vedea cîteva dintre numele tocmai enumerate: Cojan, Sălișteanu, Agrippa, Gheorghiu, cărora le alăturăm pe cele ale lui Pavel Codiță și mai ales Corneliu Vasilescu: acesta din urmă a pornit pe calea abstracției gestuale încă din prima jumătate a anilor '70", https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/o-privire-asupra-liberalizarii-culturale-viii (consultat pe 12.10.2025); „Să faci abstracție de cele ce se petrec, să le poți pune în paranteze, este un exercițiu contra naturii omului – și totuși, tocmai așa dovedești că rămîi om", https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/la-zi-in-cultura/carte/delirul-realitatii-2271769.html (consultat pe 12.10.2025). Spre deosebire de termenii din prima categorie, termenii cu grad mediu de specializare, precum *abstracție*,

manifestă o rezistență mai mare la determinologizare totală, sensul filozofic coexistând cu utilizări extinse sau idiomatice.

Termenul *aserțiune* reprezintă un alt caz de determinologizare parțială, caracteristic termenilor cu origine logico-epistemică. În discursul filozofic, *aserțiune* se referă la un tip de enunț formal, definit prin raportarea sa la valoarea de adevăr și prin funcția sa metalingvistică, fiind supusă unor criterii stricte de validare logică: „1. Enunțare a simplei apartenențe sau neapartenențe a unei însușiri la un obiect sau a unei relații între două sau mai multe obiecte. 2. Enunț prin care se afirmă caracterul de a fi adevărat al altui enunț" (DF 1978: 48). În dicționarele de limbă generală definiția din filozofie este simplificată, iar apariția sensului generic de *afirmație* indică deja o generalizare semantică. Ocurențele din discursurile nespecializate evidențiază utilizări diferențiate: în contexte pedagogice sau juridice, termenul este utilizat cu un grad ridicat de precizie conceptuală, în timp ce în presa generalistă *aserțiune* funcționează ca sinonim erudit pentru *afirmație*, cu rol evaluativ sau critic: „Aserțiunea, respectiv afirmația pe care vreți s-o demonstrați sau concluzia la care vreți sa ajungeți, poate fi comparată cu acoperișul unei case. […] În plus aș mai spune că aserțiunile pot fi de 4 tipuri: factuale, de definiție, de valoare sau de policy", https://www.ethos.ro/2017/05/arhitectura-unui-argument-formula-are/ (consultat pe 12.10.2025); „Aceasta aserțiune a noastră este susținută din punct de vedere normativ de câteva dispoziții culese din Codul nostru administrativ", https://bloghamangiu.ro/intre-capacitatea-juridica-civila-si-competenta-administrativa (consultat pe 12.10.2025); „Pretinsa explicație «că e vorba de un alt student» cu o «dramă similară», că «au mai fost, poate, destui în acele vremuri» este o nouă aserțiune nefondată a politicianului", https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/andrei-ursu-tariceanu-incearca-sa-isi-asocieze-abuziv-numele-patat-in-dosare-de-coruptie-cu-cel-al-unui-disident-ucis-de-securitate-1112636 (consultat pe 12.10.2025). Cazul termenului *aserțiune* arată că nu orice utilizare a unui termen filozofic în afara cadrului teoretic constituie determinologizare propriu-zisă, ci că aceasta trebuie distinsă de vulgarizare sau de transferul pedagogic.

Termenul *cinic* ilustrează un caz reprezentativ de determinologizare prin inversare axiologică. În sensul său filozofic originar, *cinic* desemnează adeptul unei școli etice antice care promova autarhia, simplitatea și viața conform naturii (DF 1978: 115), valori cu o încărcătură pozitivă în contextul gândirii elenistice. Extinderea semantică menționată chiar de dicționarele filozofice marchează desprinderea termenului de cadrul său doctrinar și reinterpretarea lui în registrul moralei comune: „prin extensiune incorectă, dar devenită tradițională, se numesc cinici oamenii care manifestă dispreț față de principiile elementare ale moralei" (DF 1978: 115). Dicționarele de limbă generală consacră acest sens evaluativ negativ, în care *cinic* desemnează o atitudine condamnabilă, lipsită de scrupule și de empatie: „(Despre oameni: adesea substantivat) Care manifestă o atitudine condamnabilă, sfidând regulile moralei, normele de conviețuire socială și de bună-cuviință; (despre manifestări ale

oamenilor) care trădează, exprimă asemenea atitudini", https://dexonline.ro/definitie/cinic/definitii (consultat pe 13.11.2025). Presa contemporană confirmă stabilitatea acestui sens, termenul fiind utilizat pentru a califica comportamente percepute ca instrumentale, reci sau lipsite de valori morale: „O viziune proaspătă, vivace, mai cinică decît originalul, ce îi conferă acestei comedii negre dinamism, dar și profunzime", https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/obsesia-puterii-naste-monstri/ (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „CFR e un obiect cinic de cîștigat trofee interne, ceea ce se pare că au și dorit genitorii ei, dar repetarea unei idei la nesfîrșit creează suficiență și ratare", https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/editoriale-si-opinii/pe-ce-lume-traim/pyunik-erevan-e-totuna-cu-radio-erevan-641283.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „transmitem un semnal că social-democrații nu pot susține un stat român cinic care nu recunoaște meritele celor care și-au pus viața în slujba țării", https://www.gandul.ro/stiri/grindeanu-am-promis-romanilor-si-am-livrat-psd-si-a-facut-pe-deplin-treaba-dar-nu-accepta-taxarea-mamelor-si-pensionarilor-20619222 (consultat pe 13.11.2025).

Termenul *coerență* ilustrează un caz de determinologizare parțială, realizată prin extensiune, cu păstrarea nucleului semantic de bază. În sensul său filozofic, desemnează: „1. Compatibilitate și unitate internă (sintactică și semantică) a elementelor componente ale unui argument, ale unei ipoteze, teorii sau, mai general, ale unui sistem de gândire, ale unei doctrine sau lucrări. 2. Teoria c. (asupra adevărului), interpretare gnoseologică a naturii adevărului (adecvată în special disciplinelor formale, matematice și logice), care susține că adevărul este o proprietate corespunzătoare, primar, unui corp sau sistem consistent de propoziții și, derivat, oricărei propoziții dintr-un asemenea sistem, în virtutea ei de a fi parte a sistemului" (DF 1978: 125). Dicționarele de limbă generală rețin ideea de legătură armonioasă între părțile unui întreg: „1 Legătură strânsă (și armonioasă) între părțile și elementele unui întreg. 3 Înlănțuire" (MDA I 2001: 594). În selecția noastră de exemple din discursul mediatic contemporan, termenul este utilizat pentru a evalua acțiuni politice, strategii instituționale sau decizii manageriale, unde coerența nu mai funcționează ca indicator al adevărului, ci al consecvenței, credibilității și eficienței: „Cetățenii au nevoie să perceapă coerența din acțiunile politice, coerență în primul cu un proiect politic pe care l-au votat în prealabil. Oamenii votează politicieni pentru a lua anumite măsuri, pentru a face anumite alianțe. Atunci când se pierde coerența, oamenii se simt trădați", https://adevarul.ro/blogurile-adevarul/actiune-proiect-si-criza-politica-despre-nevoia-2118972.html (consultat pe 18.10.2025); „Alături de stațiile PRO FM și Dance FM, cu sute de mii și, respectiv, zeci de mii de fani, întreaga rețea media a trustului demonstrează coerență strategică și o capacitate de adaptare la gusturile variate ale publicului", https://www.digi.ro/anunturi/campus-media-tv-ramane-o-voce-puternica-in-presa-romaneasca-peste-22-milioane-de-ascultatori-zilnic-pe-frecvente-67984 (consultat pe 18.10.2025).

Termenul *finalitate* oferă un exemplu relevant de determinologizare prin orientarea sensului dinspre teleologia imanentă spre o finalitate pragmatică. Astfel, în discursul filozofic, termenul desemnează un „raport cauzal imanent care exprimă procesul de autodeterminare a fenomenelor, de autoorientare (autodirijare) a sensului lor obiectiv" (DF 1978: 282). Redefinit ca scop sau rezultat al unei activități în dicționarele generale („scop în vederea căruia are loc o activitate; tendință sau orientare a cuiva sau a ceva spre un anumit scop", MDA II 202: 421), își pierde parțial dimensiunea teoretică și este reinterpretat în registrul intenționalității și al eficienței: „Această dublă mișcare, prin care ideea capătă învelișul de carne al realității, ea însăși fiind transfigurată prin această întâlnire, are drept finalitate chiar nevoia permanentă a autorului de a înțelege", https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/la-zi-in-cultura/amintiri-din-prezent-627793.html (consultat pe 18.10.2025); „În haosul unui război tot mai sângeros și mai lipsit de finalitate, apar tot mai multe dovezi că armata rusă își tratează propriii soldați cu o brutalitate care sfidează orice cod militar sau uman", https://adevarul.ro/stiri-externe/rusia/unitatea-31831-rusinea-armatei-ruse-soldati-2458881.html#google_vignette (consultat pe 18.10.2025); „Slaba finanțare, schimbarea permanentă a legislației, dar și lipsa de interes pentru sistemul de învățământ au ca finalitate diferențe enorme de rezultate între elevii din mediul urban și cei din rural, arată un raport al Comisiei Europene", https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/educatie/educatia-romaneasca-intre-print-si-cersetor-2222469.html (consultat pe 18.10.2025); „Lilian Carp: Aștept finalitate pe dosarul îmbogățirii ilicite a deputaților", https://adevarul.ro/stiri-externe/republica-moldova/lilian-carp-astept-finalitate-pe-dosarul-2147601.html#google_vignette (consultat pe 18.10.2025).

În sensul său filozofic originar, termenul *formalism* este definit ca „1. (în filozofia matematicii) Orientare de ordin metodologic în filozofia contemporană a matematicii, inițiată de D. Hilbert, care susține că această disciplină își găsește deplina ei justificare în construcția formală, perfect închisă și izolată de orice adaos exterior [...]. 2. (în logică) Interpretare idealistă a formalizării logice prin negarea caracterului reflectoriu al formelor logice, prin ruperea lor de conținut […]" (DF 1978: 286). În dicționarele de limbă generală, termenul este înregistrat cu sensul de „atitudine conformistă; atitudine exagerat de protocolară" (MDA II 2002: 452). Ocurențele din presa contemporană confirmă stabilizarea acestui sens depreciativ: formalism este utilizat pentru a critica rigiditatea birocratică, lipsa de substanță a procedurilor politice sau artificialitatea exercițiilor culturale: „Verificările au mai relevat că avizarea programelor anuale de exploatare la nivelul Salinei Praid a fost caracterizată de formalism", https://jurnalul.ro/stiri/observator/guvern-praid-control-1012564.html (consultat pe 18.10.2025); „Este o execuție politică ascunsă sub un formalism de partid, dar care, în esență, nu are nici legitimitate, nici temei legal", https://jurnalul.ro/stiri/politica/lasconi-usr-judecata-994965.html#google_vignette (consultat pe 18.10.2025); „Drum lung, mi-am zis, pe șosele bortilite, formalism, discursuri, politichie, butaforie medievală gen

Sighișoara”, https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/la-zi-in-cultura/carte/cu-dilema-la-alba-iulia-604982.html (consultat pe 18.10.2025).

Termenul *paradox* desemnează, în sens filozofic, un enunț contradictoriu, dar demonstrabil în cadrul unui sistem formal, punând în evidență limitele acestuia: „enunț contradictoriu și totodată demonstrabil. Dacă în cadrul unui sistem este demonstrabil atât enunțul a, cât și contradictoriu său, enunțul non-A, atunci ia naștere un paradox care constă în aceea că A și non-A sunt adevărate în același timp” (DF 1978: 523). Redefinit, prin extensiune, ca „enormitate a unei afirmații, a unei situații etc. Situație în care două idei, elemente, fenomene etc., deși ar trebui să se excludă reciproc, coexistă. Ciudățenie”, https://dexonline.ro/definitie/paradox/definitii (consultat pe 13.11.2025), termenul este utilizat în presa contemporană cu această deplasare semantică (pentru a descrie incongruențe politice sau sociale): „Trabantul era un paradox mecanic, o dovadă că posibilul e mai tare decît realul”, https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tema-sapta manii/amintiri-despre-trabant-619015.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025); „Dar marele paradox este altul: disciplina se cere doar cetățenilor, nu și statului”, https://jurnalul.ro/editorial/datorie-iluzie-aroganta-fragilitate-1008768.html (consultat pe 13.11.2025).

Ansamblul acestor exemple arată că termenii cu grad mediu de specializare nu sunt afectați uniform de determinologizare. Procesele identificate variază de la extensiuni pragmatice și generalizări până la resemantizări axiologice sau metaforizări cognitive. Spre deosebire de termenii din prima categorie, aici determinologizarea nu presupune pierderea completă a nucleului conceptual, ci o negociere continuă între sensul filozofic și utilizările discursive nespecializate.

A treia categorie reunește termeni cu un grad ridicat de specializare, a căror circulație în discursuri nespecializate rămâne limitată sau problematică. Acești termeni sunt caracterizați printr-un nucleu conceptual dens, strâns legat de cadre teoretice specifice și dificil de recontextualizat fără pierderi semantice semnificative. Din acest motiv, ei nu se pretează unei analize detaliate a mecanismelor de determinologizare, întrucât utilizările lor în afara discursului filozofic sunt rare, marginale sau profund simplificate. În cazul lor, determinologizarea nu se realizează prin integrare deplină în limba comună, ci mai degrabă prin simplificare sau prin utilizări aproximative, ceea ce conduce fie la estomparea sensului filozofic, fie la apariția unor pseudo-sensuri. Este cazul termenilor *intenționalitate, inteligibil, negație, sintetic*, dar și al unor termeni ultra-specializați precum *apodictic, apodicticitate, asertoric, epistemic, foronomie, numenal, ontogeneză, silogism* sau al unor sintagme filozofice consacrate (*rațiune pură, forme platonice, idei-specii, metaforă revelatorie, substanțe secunde aristotelice, timp absolut newtonian*), care funcționează mai degrabă ca repere conceptuale stabile decât ca unități susceptibile de determinologizare efectivă. Aceștia ilustrează, prin rezistența lor semantică, limitele transferului terminologic în discursul mediatic contemporan.

4. Concluzii

Analiza determinologizării lexicului filozofic românesc evidențiază faptul că acest proces nu afectează în mod uniform ansamblul termenilor specializați, ci privilegiază, în mod constant, unitățile lexicale cu un grad mai redus de specializare. Termenii care prezintă o structură formală simplă și o circulație istorică îndelungată se dovedesc mai permeabili la integrarea în discursul nespecializat, în timp ce conceptele cu un nucleu teoretic dens și strict delimitat manifestă o rezistență semantică semnificativă. Determinologizarea nu implică, în majoritatea cazurilor, dispariția completă a sensului terminologic originar, ci mai degrabă o diluare sau o reconfigurare a acestuia. Analiza termenilor a arătat că, în uzul comun, se menține frecvent un nucleu semantic fundamental, recognoscibil, asupra căruia se grefează extensiuni (de natură pragmatică, evaluativă sau metaforică). Reținem, de asemenea, diferența de funcționare dintre limbajul specializat și limba comună: dacă în terminologie hiperonimia și clasificarea conceptuală riguroasă sunt esențiale pentru precizia științifică (precizie susținută adesea printr-o abordare diacronică a conceptelor), în limba comună predomină mecanismele de simplificare, de generalizare. În acest context, includerea termenilor filozofici în dicționarele generale constituie o mărturie a dinamicii limbii și a circulației cunoașterii dincolo de comunitățile de specialiști. Determinologizarea apare astfel nu doar ca un fenomen lexical, ci ca un proces sociolingvistic și cultural complex, situat la intersecția dintre limbaj, cunoaștere și discurs.

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ProSport – https://www.prosport.ro

Resurse lexicografice

DEX online – https://dexonline.ro

Title in English: ***Aspects of the Determinologisation of the Romanian Philosophical Lexicon***

Abstract in English: *This study examines the determinologisation of the Romanian philosophical lexicon from a dual perspective: both as a process through which terms migrate from specialised discourse into general language, and as the outcome of this process. Starting from the premise that philosophical terms are inherently "mobile" entities that traverse the boundaries between specialised language*

and common usage, the study aims to identify the semantic and pragmatic changes that occur during this transition. The corpus under analysis consists of terms drawn from specialised texts (articles published in Revista de filosofie), intermediary texts (cultural essays and popularising articles), and general-language sources (dictionaries and the contemporary press). A comparative analysis of selected terms (such as absolute, absurd, actual, truth, appearance, category, cause, concrete, destiny, happiness, form, chaos, individual, intuition, limit, morality, purpose, sensation, and substance) reveals a twofold dynamic: on the one hand, a loss of conceptual precision and a detachment from the original theoretical framework; on the other hand, a process of resemantisation through semantic extension, metaphorisation, or axiological valorisation. In conclusion, determinologisation in the philosophical domain proves to be a multidimensional and non-linear process, involving the reconceptualisation of meaning according to discursive perspective and communicative purpose.

Keywords in English: *determinologisation, Romanian philosophical lexicon, resemantisation, metaphorisation, reconceptualisation, general language*

♦ FLT AND TEACHING METHODOLOGIES ♦

Modelizarea structurilor didactice pentru formarea competenței fonetico-fonologice (studiu de caz: rolul dicționarelor de fonodidactică și pronunție)

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Abstract

Lucrarea își propune să prezinte punctele de confluență ideatică a conceptului de formare a competenței fonetico – fonologică pentru studenții străini, într-o activitate centrată pe resurse didactice: dicționare de pronunție și de fonodidactică.
Inițial, s-a formulat problema care constă în faptul că o caracteristică a realității profesionale în studiul RLS este prezența confuziei versus modalitatea de predare a compartimentului fonetico – fonologic. Așadar, propunem elaborarea și implementarea unui curs de fonodidactică pentru profesori, care are drept obiectiv echilibrarea modelului de predare a foneticii sub cele două aspecte fundamentale: abordarea implicită și abordarea explicită.
Ulterior, sunt prezentate conceptual și structural resursele de referință relativ la formarea competențelor de pronunție (Dicționarul de pronunție de L. Canepari și Dicționarul de fonodidactică). Concluziile cercetării se vor reflecta în programa de studiu al limbii române ca limbă străină.

Keywords

competența fonetico-fonologică, fonodidactica, dicționar de fonodidactică, dicționar de pronunție

1. Dialogul ideilor. Încadrarea resurselor de fonodidactică în soluția cea mai fezabilă.

Într-o abordare dialogată a ideilor din arealul didactic vom face referire la o lucrare care poate avea elemente de congruență structurală și arhetipal-ideatică în raport cu Dicționarul de fonodidactică – resursă utilizată ca instrument facilitator de învățare în cadrul cursului de RLS. Fără îndoială vom face referire la studiul *The Needs Analysis, Design, Development, and Evaluation of the English Pronunciation Guide:an ESL Teachers Guide to Pronunciation Teaching Using Online Resources* realizată de cercetătorii americani Jenelle L. Cox, Lynn E. Henrichsen, Mark W. Tanner, Benjamin

L. McMurry. Lucrarea a apărut în revista electronică Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, nr.4, februarie 2019 (volumul 22).

Studiul formulează o problemă importantă relativ la rolul compartimentului fonetico- fonologic în studiul limbii materne ca limbă străină sau L2. Valorificarea impactului sistemului fonetic poate avea o mai mare importanță dacă ar fi bine pregătite cadrele didactice de a utiliza structuri didactice pentru formarea la utilizatori a competențelor fonetico – fonologice. Autorii constată nevoia utilizatorilor de a forma/ consolida abilitățile/competențele care derivă din aplicarea adecvată a valențelor sistemului fonetic al limbii studiate. De altfel, autorii propun un algoritm de soluționare a problemei enunțate conform următoarelor componente: ”1. Descrierea problemei/ 2. Analiza nevoilor, / 3. Soluții posibile, / 4. Soluția cea mai fezabilă. / 5 Aplicarea soluției fezabile, / 6 Pagini web, /7. Evaluare” (Cox, Henrichsen, Tanner, McMurry 2019: 2). Printre argumentele care au stat la baza explicitării rolului pronunției într-o limbă străină este aplicarea conceptului de *inteligibilitate* referitor la competența comunicativă a utilizatorului. Din perspectiva dialogului de idei, în cadrul Dicționarului de fonodidactică, un rol aparte pentru asigurarea inteligibilității îl are abordarea progresivă a sistemului fonetic.

Fonetica didactică devine sinonim cu noțiunile de fonetică ghidată, cadrul didactic are rolul de a vizualiza procesul didactic de apropriere a unei limbi străine, dintr-o perspectivă generală, a finalităților. Profesorii care nu predau limba maternă ca limba a doua sau limbă străină, prin competențele lor de interacțiune cu utilizatorul (uneori sistematic, în contexte formale sau informale) au rolul de mediator lingvistic, care urmărește, mai curând, realizarea actului comunicării imediate. Cadrul didactic, profesorul de Limbă Maternă ca Limbă Străină (LMLS) va urmări rolul competențelor fonetico – fonologice în vederea asigurării inteligibilității, ca finalitate, parte integrantă a competenței de comunicare. Monitorizarea nivelului de inteligibilitate se va realiza în contextul manifestării competențelor de producere a unui discurs, de comprehensiune, de interacțiune, etc... Aspectul pragmatic al conceptului de inteligibilitate este de a-i ajuta pe utilizatori să se facă ușor înțeleși în mediul noilor achiziții lingvistice. Este important a menționa deosebirile dintre utilizatorii care au studiat o limbă străină având elementul fonetico – fonologic explicit și cei care au beneficiat de elemente implicite ale acestui domeniu.

Pornind de la experiența personală profesională, putem afirma că utilizatorii devin mai atenți la propriile puncte slabe în pronunție/ receptare, conștientizează segmental receptarea/ pronunția unui lexem, revin la secvențele fonice cu un grad sporit de receptare/ producere, se manifestă conștiința fonetico – fonologică în cadrul abordării activităților de pronunție/ receptare. Pentru studiul foneticii în cadrul EL2 (Engleza Limba a doua) la începutul mileniului al treilea s-au realizat multiple studii care au evidențiat două aspecte importante ale minimalizării rolului compartimentului fonetico – fonologic: a) aspectele de comunicare și gramatică au fost considerate mai

importante decât elementele fonetico – fonologice și b) lipsa siguranței de sine a profesorului de engleză în predarea pronunției. Autorii Cox et al. Citează studiile circumscrise temei menționate: Fraser (2000) – Australia, Burgess; Spencer (2000) – Marea Britanie, Foote, Holtby și Derwing (2011) – Canada, Derwing (2008) în SUA.

Principiul dialogării didactice ne permite să menționăm cercetările, incipiente, realizate de M. Bâlici în teza de doctorat Atribuțiile formative ale sistemului fonetic pentru învățarea limbii române de către studenții internaționali (2023).

Cercetarea a propus, ca instrumentar de lucru, un chestionar pentru cadrele didactice care predau RLS, a enunțat punctele forte și aspectele problematice relativ la predarea modelului de pronunție receptare pentru nivelul segmental și intersegmental, dar nu a constituit vectorul central de cercetare. Astfel putem constata că un chestionar – instrument de măsurare a nivelului de disponibilitate a cadrului didactic de a conferi valenței formative a sistemului fonetic un grad al importanței mai mare sau mai mic ar cuprinde detalii despre atitudinea profesorului versus prioritizarea domeniilor din structura didactică a achiziției unei limbi, determinarea abordării studiului domeniului fonetico- fonologc din punct de vedere explicit sau implicit și nivelul de încredere în propriile forțe ale cadrului didactic de a preda compartimentul modelării pronunției/receptării în LMLS. Din punct de vedere metodologic sunt foarte interesante descrierile observațiilor realizate de grupul de cercetători Cox et al., care au monitorizat pe secvențe temporale aplicarea învățării pronunției: planificată, spontană, explicativă, ghidată. Elementul suprasegmental a fost deseori neglijat: structurile intonaționale, ritmul, accentul, accentul frastic au fost, deseori minimalizate sau excluse, cu desăvârșire. Astfel, s-a constatat necesitatea unui curs de fonodidactică ce ar include formarea abilităților de planificare a compartimentului fonetico – fonologic pornind de la elementul segmental, intertersegmental și până la formarea competenței de utilizare a achizițiilor suprasegmentale în cadrul discursului sau în contextul interacțiunii. Din această perspectivă, figurativ vorbind, dialogul poate continua prin descrierea unui curs de Fonodidactică propus de M. Assunta Simionato (Simionato 2009/2010: 109). Un prim modul al cursului de Fonodidactică cuprinde ”dezvoltarea și aprofundarea dimensiunii orale ale limbii” (Simionato 2009/2010: 109). Modulul își propune să furnizeze informații teoretice și aplicarea acestora în practică relativ la structurile fonetice și fonologice ale limbii italiene. Se expun principalele caracteristici ale sistemului vocalic și consonantic, precum și elementele de prozodie.

Modulul al doilea face referire la fonetica contrastivă, sunt prezentate structurile fonologice pe care le folosește utilizatorul în practica L1 în contrast cu structurile fonologice ale limbii studiate (L2). Modulul al treilea face referire la rolul foneticii în educația lingvistică. Modulul al patrulea prezintă tehnicile de formare și consolidare a competențelor fonetico- fonologice, sunt expuse, în modulul 5, fonoresursele, iar modulul al șaselea prezintă nișa de proiectare și verificare.

Așadar o modalitate de a utiliza caracterul practic al modelului de ghidare a utilizatorului prin valențele formative ale sistemului fonetic specific limbii studiate este prezentarea pentru cadrele didactice a unui curs de formare continuă – fonodidactica. Rolul acestui curs va minimaliza expunerea spontană și implicită a componentei fonetico- fonologice și va prezenta un nivel mai înalt de conștientizare, planificare, integrare a elementelor segmentale și suprasegmetale fonetice în cadrul unității de învățare, dar și de proiectare a modulelor de studiu, încadrarea integratoare în programele de studiu și reflectarea acestora în curriculumul de studiu al LMLS.

Conturul de conexiune dintre cele trei resurse propuse de Cox et al., Simionato A și Dicționarul de fonodidacă se pliază pe ideea de soluția cea mai fezabilă. Astfel soluția cea mai fezabilă ar fi participarea cadrelor didactice la cursul de formare continuă în domeniul fonodidacticii, prezentarea resurselor video cu un pronunțat caracter didactic versus predarea elementelor de fonetică și fonetică segmentală și frastică și elaborarea unui corpus de resurse video relativ la pronunție, în baza Dicționarului de fonodidactică, care ar cuprinde elemente practice de utilizare echilibrată a elementelor segmentale (sistemul vocalic, consonantic, diftongi, triftongi, consoane cu alternanță dublă, triplă, cvadruplă) și elemente de prozodie (ritm, volumul vocii, modulație, structuri intonaționale, etc...)

I. Descrierea dicționarului de fonodidactică: structură vs. oportunități

1.1. Dicționarul de pronunție versus dicționarul de fonodidactică. Diferențieri și similitudini

Dicționarul de fonodidactică propus are o structură conceptuală pornind de la rolul său de a contribui la realizarea progresului competenței fonetico – fonologice a utilizatorului pentru limba studiată. Astfel propunem următoarele părți integrante ale unei pagini de Dicționar de fonodidactică:

- Structura Dicționarului va avea un caracter dihotomic: sistem vocalic/ sistem consonantic,
- Se vor prezenta liste cu lexeme în care fiecare fonem/grafem are o topică diferită: inițială, în interiorul cuvântului și finală
- Fiecare cuvânt va fi însoțit de o scurtă notă explicativă despre semnificația acestuia,
- Cuvântul propus va avea traducerea în limba engleză, iar utilizatorul va propune și traducerea în limba maternă,
- Pentru a se realiza conexiunea dintre diverse formate de informare se va folosi ultima ediție a Dicționarului de ortografie și ortoepie pentru a se plasa, în mod adecvat, accentul,

- Utilizatorul va avea posibilitatea de a se înregistra vocal citind cuvântul propus cu accentul selectat și să compare prezentarea cuvântului rostit propus de autori,
- Dicționarul de fonodidactică permite eliminarea variantelor de citire cu care utilizatorul nu este de acord până în momentul în care consideră că a atins un grad rezonabil de similitudine.
- Cuvintele propuse vor fi încadrate într-un enunț. Pentru edițiile viitoare se va apela la harta cromatică afectivă. Utilizatorului i se va propune câte o culoare care corespunde cu un sentiment / emoție. Studentul va citi enunțul, cu posibilitatea înregistrării acestuia, în concordanță cu sentimentul/emoția prezentată,
- În mod similar se va proceda și pentru sistemul consonantic. Un accent aparte se va pune pe alternanța consonantică ce ar putea fi dublă, triplă sau cvadriplă.
- Corpusul de diftongi – ascendenți și descendenți
- Triftongii și i ca vocală și semivocală
- Vocalele și consoanele duble. Pronunția cs/ cz

Așadar modelul propus de Dicționarul de fonodidactică poate comporta un caracter dual: elemente de cogniție și metacogniție.

De altfel, printre lucrările la care face referire Cadrul European Comun de Referință pentru Limbi- volumul complementar (CECRL, 2020) este și lucrarea Guide for the developmentand implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education (Beacco et al.,2016). Studiul cercetează o realitate a procesului complex de instruire, impactul competențelor transversale relativ la studiul limbilor. Metacogniția este o competență transversală. Resursele didactice pot comporta, prioritar, sau, implicit, un caracter reflexiv sau tranzitiv. Dicționarul de fonodidactică poate fi considerat ca o manifestare a echilibrului între componentele de reflexivitate și tranzitivitate. Astfel, afirmațiile grupului de cercetători Beacco et al., sunt relevante: ”Anumite activități, cum ar fi reflexivitatea, nu se referă la nicio materie academică specifică: în schimb, reflexivitatea, un concept din științele educației cunoscut și sub numele de metacogniție, se referă la acele activități ale utilizatorilor care nu sunt preocupate, exclusiv, de dobândirea de cunoștințe specifice sau de aplicarea anumitor abilități. În schimb, reflexivitatea presupune analiza echilibrată a acestora, sub forma conștientizării proceselor utilizate în învățare (Beacco et al., 2016: 38). Structura conceptuală și de implementare praxiologică a valențelor acestuia presupune asimilarea de către utilizator a aspectelor cognitive referitoare la conținutul sistemului fonetic al limbii studiate. Algoritmul propus pentru fiecare lexem care conține unitatea minimală fonică presupune parcurgerea unui proces, al cărui vector acțional are drept finalitate dobândirea competenței utilizatorului, de a se face, într-un context de comunicare, inteligibil și capabil de a interacționa prin aplicarea abilității de comprehensibilitate. Acești factori, indispensabili unei comunicări eficiente, care comportă un caracter de

finalitate al studiului, pot fi însușiți printr-un traseu algoritmic. Principiul de apropriere a competențelor de pronunție și receptare este al modelizării – modelul de recuperare a realității fonice non – echivalente dintre limba maternă și limba studiată. Gradul de diferențiere poate fi divers, iar utilizatorul, prin intermediul parcurgerii unui proces cu caracter iterativ, sistematic și repetitiv este conștient de noile realități fonetice generate de sistemul fonetic al limbii studiate.

Utilizatorul conștientizează nevoia de a reduce din discrepanța de articulare prezentată ca model în limba studiată și propria deprindere de pronunție. Concepe același model de învățare a elementelor de fonetică, inițial, în baza metodelor articulatorii și, ulterior, axată pe metodele verbo- tonale ca pe modelul/calea personală de achiziție a deprinderilor și abilităților, care printr-o abordare conștientizată, asigură formarea competenței fonetico – fonologice.

1.2. Tranzitivitatea Dicționarelor de pronunție. Constatări și oportunități

În același context al dialogului ideilor, dialogului resurselor de studiu considerăm foarte utile referințele la două surse importante în domeniul învățării fonetice: Manuale di pronuncia italiana de Luciano Canepari și a doua resursă, derivată din prima, Dizionario di pronuncia italiano. Din prefața Manualului este enunțat principiul pe care se axează metoda fonetică utilizată de ilustrul fonetician italian: ”Metoda fonetică utilizată este suficient de simplă, dar riguroasă și va da, fără îndoială, rezultate bune, proporționale cu efortul fiecărui individ, deoarece se bazează pe „ceea ce face deja fiecare dintre noi în fiecare zi, spontan, dar nu încă în mod conștient” (Canepari: 3). Autorul consideră importantă utilizarea unei pronunții adecvate și pentru integrarea individului plenar în cadrul noului mediu lingvistic. Aproprierea deprinderii de pronunție adecvată poate contribui la sporirea încrederii în sine a utilizatorului, factor de consolidare a motivației în studiul unei noi limbi, dar și de transmitere a unui mesaj, al cărui inteligibilitate să nu aibă de suferit.

Pentru o mai bună apropiere de resursa de referință, considerată a fi foarte importantă, propunem prezentarea viziunii generale relativ la structura de conținut a manualului de pronunție propus de L. Canepari. Inițial, autorul prezintă abordarea subiectului propus și modul de reflectare a perspectivei didactice pe parcursul întregii lucrări. Autorul constată, în capitolul de prezentare a temei de cercetare, că: „... modelarea pronunției, conform vectorului de corectitudine, este posibilă și constituie un semn de bun gust și civilizație, precum și de respect pentru ceilalți, și mai presus de toate, pentru propria limbă!” (Canepari: 9)

Am remarcat preocuparea majorității cercetătorilor de a constata nivelul insuficient de interes acordat compartimentului fonetico – fonologic în studiul unei limbi străine și, ulterior, argumentarea solidă a faptului că atribuțiile formative ale sistemului fonetic specific limbii studiate poate avea valențe multiple, impactul poate fi important în vederea realizării obiectivelor finale, în cazul în care abordarea/perspectiva/paradigma didactică este aleasă în mod adecvat. Principiul

fonetic al lui Canepari este că „nicio ureche nu e suficient de surdă.” Elementul conștiinței fonetice este sub prioritatea audierii: „... suntem pur și simplu ghidați de ureche, atât în faza de percepție (și de analiză riguroasă, deși inconștientă) cât și în faza ulterioară de producere, prin consecutivitatea încercărilor de pronunție și a erorilor, timp în care urechea noastră monitorizează ceea ce noi încercăm să producem și sugerează schimbările pe care trebuie să le facem pentru a ne apropia tot mai mult de o performanță satisfăcătoare.” (Canepari: 10)

Ca și enunț constatator, Canepari introduce noțiune de fonetică naturală. Astfel instrumentele foneticii auditive corelează cu fonetica articulatorie, iar rezultatul este perpetua modificare a produselor fonice – modificări, care, de obicei, se îndreaptă spre minimalizarea nivelului de diferențiere dintre tipurile de pronunție din bagajul de competență fonică a utilizatorului și ceea ce este prezentat ca model de vorbitorul nativ. Foneteciaul italian face comparația dintre activitatea de apropriere a deprinderilor fonetico – fonologice cu mersul pe jos, care este o activitate spontană și, parțial, inconștientă. Deși continuă analogia prin imposibilitatea individului de a oferi instrucțiuni de mișcare de la sistemul nervos central pentru sistemul locomotor în mod constant, autorul vorbește despre modalitatea de pliere a unui sistem fonetic pe aparatul fonator. Autorul prezintă produsele sistemului fonetic, mai curând, ca un derivat al firescului natural, al funcționalității aparatului fonator și nu al unei activități conștiente a utilizatorului nativ.

Pentru evidențierea, conturarea conceptului caneparian versus actul de formare a competenței de pronunțe este important să vedem rolul/rostul afirmației: ”Avem capacitatea analitică, dar o folosim doar global. Ceea ce ne lipsește este, pur și simplu, modalitatea de a începe să ne antrenăm urechea și să dezvoltăm capacitatea auditivă pentru a putea izola diversele fenomene și a le putea înțelege unul câte unul...„ (Canepari: 11). Acest proces de modelare algoritmică pentru realizarea similitudinilor sau diferențierilor pe baza activității de comparare, comportă și secvențierea/ izolarea fonică pentru a marca elementul distinct este privit din două perspective. Din perspectiva utilizatorului, care, inițial, acționează după un model spontan centrat pe audiere – comparare – modelare. O altă perspectivă este a cadrului didactic care, în cazul vorbitorilor non-nativi, prezintă modele de formare a deprinderilor de secvențiere a unităților fonice care nu corespund, în pronunție, cu ceea ce prezintă un vorbitor nativ, și prin reflexivitate, să identifice procesul eficient de achiziționare a deprinderii de articulare/producere și receptare. Printre metodele de studiu asociat modelului algoritmic, Canepari propune, argumentat, și transcrierea fonică.

Capitolul 1 al lucrării face referire la varietatea pronunției, idei și structuri de conținut care sunt prezentate și în dicționarul de pronunție italiană. Apoi sunt reliefate rolul vocalelor, consoanelor în realitatea ortoepică a limbii italiene. Un capitol aparte este rezervat ortoepiei. Structural, deși nu este delimitat, urmează nivelul suprasegmental al domeniului fonetico – fonologic, autorul abordează aspectele de

coerență și coeziune a cuvintelor în frază și, fără îndoială, apare descrierea aspectelor de intonație, ca parte integrantă a termenului de fonologie. Lectura recitativă este un alt element secvențial al cercetării și este urmată de tipologia testelor, interpretate din perspectiva foneticii lexemului, frastice și textuale. Capitolele de final fac referire la formele regionale de pronunție și rolul foneticii în școală.

Cu certitudine, această prezentare a unei lucrări de referință din perspectiva conceptelor clasice ale structurării domeniului fonetic: segmental, intersegmental și suprasegmental reprezintă un model de cercetare. Lucrarea excelează prin varietatea elementelor integrante ale unui domeniu lingvistic, dar și didactic. Varietatea aspectelor tematice sunt într-un mod foarte clar sistematizate, structurile ideatice sunt conturate evident. Acribia și responsabilitatea cercetării sunt într-o deplină coerență cu o metodologie a cercetării riguroase, fapt care îi conferă lucrării unreal statut de resursă științifico – didactică de referință.

1.2.1. Structura unui dicționar de pronunție. Caracteristici, congruențe, variabile

Este momentul, bineînțeles, de a prezenta resursa informațională care a derivat dintr-o cercetare sintetică pe care am prezentat-o în subcapitolul anterior.

Pentru început vom descrie câteva caracteristici ale Dicționarului, pe care a intenționat însuși autorul să le expună în materialul propus. Această lucrare, conform reflecțiilor autorului, este un produs rezultat al celor treizeci de ani de cercetare pe teren pentru a studia diversele regiuni de pronunție ale Italiei și stocarea unui mare patrimoniu de înregistrări ale diverselor forme de pronunție. S-a optat, în mod prioritar, pentru varianta de pronunție cea mai tipică și frecventă. Dicționarul cuprinde menționarea formelor tradiționale, moderne, acceptabile ale pronunției. Sunt prezentate și exemple de pronunție care nu e parte integrantă a normei de pronunție italiană. Resursa prezentată conține cuvinte – substantive comune, specializate, nume, prenume și toponime. Se remarcă, de asemenea, o preocupare pentru corectitudinea scrierii și normele de pronunție recomandabile. Autorul răspunde la câteva întrebări importante referitoare la așteptările lectorului vizavi de Dicționarul de pronunție italiană: „Cum și ce să cauți în DiPi. E cazul a se căuta formele cele mai frecvente și cele mai potrivite pentru evidențierea problemelor de omografie, omofonie și ortoepie.” (Canepari: 30) Caracteristicile dicționarului pot fi prezentate sinoptic:

- Prezentarea diverselor tipuri de pronunție din perspectivă geofonetică,
- Prioritizarea tipurilor de pronunție după principiul frecvenței utilizării acesteia,
- Identificarea diverselor tipuri de pronunție după principiul dihotomic: tradițional/modern
- Prezentarea modelelor de pronunție acceptabile și nerecomandabile,
- Preocuparea pentru coerența dintre ortoepie și ortografie, – Cultivarea culturii lingvistice prin pronunția adecvată.

1.2.2. Dialogul intergenerațional: receptarea perceperea modelului caneparian

Considerăm, fără îndoială, foarte importantă abordarea metodologică de identificare a nivelului de influență pentru cercetările ulterioare. Din această perspectivă am analizat lucrarea de doctorat, coordonată de Luciano Canepari, a cercetătorului italian Marco Zagnoli: „Il metodo fonotenetico naturale nell'insegnamento della pronuncia dell'inglesi a studenti italofoni: analisi e proposte didattice." (Zagnoli, 2009/10) Autorul consacră mai multe secvențe ale lucrării sale, în mod explicit, analizei perspectivei lui Luciano Canepari: „5.2. Il metodo fonotonetico naturale di Canepari; 9. Il modello per la fonodidattica dell'inglese proposto da Canepari; 10. Interferenze foniche: l'italiano neutro e il modello di Canepari." (Zagnoli, 2009/10)

Cercetătorul constată, afirmație cu care suntem în concordanță ideatică, faptul că metoda fonotonetică a lui Canepari se bazează pe principiile fonologiei articulatorii în corelație cu principiile foneticii funcționale, care:„... studiază funcțiile fonemelor în sistemul unei limbi."(Zagnoli, 2009/10: 45) Metoda fonotonetică implică, în concepția autorului acesteia: Canepari, înțelegerea capacităților articulatorii ale aparatului fonator și exersarea /producerea unui anumit număr de sunete analizate sistematic. Utilizatorilor li se explică modul în care se produce, într-un context natural, sunetul în aparatul fonator, apoi au posibilitatea de a exersa producerea sunetului pornind de la analiza sagitală a aparatului fonator. Procesul didactic de formare a capacității fonetice la utilizator implică alternanța activităților de producere și receptare a sunetelor în context comparativ. Studiul sistemului fonetic al unei limbi se realizează în raport cu experiența anterioară a utilizatorului versus valențele sistemului fonetic corespunzător limbii materne. Marco Zagnoli constată: „Este important, prin urmare, să fim conștienți de diferențe, exersând recunoașterea și distingerea sunetelor noi, deoarece acesta este primul pas către imitarea lor." (Zagnoli, 2009/10: 45)

Din perspectivă praxiologică, considerăm că este important a realiza activități didactice care ar presupune marcarea secvențială sau plurisecvențială a unităților fonice care nu au corespondență în pronunție, prin comparare cu limba maternă (Flege, Monrley). Primul pas al modelului de receptare/producere este recunoașterea noilor modele ale sistemului fonetic, și aplicarea, prin exersare a metodei articulatorii pentru producerea noilor structuri fonice. În proiectarea unităților de învățare este necesar a se reflecta și abilitatea de pronunție a noilor sunete dintr-o perspectivă sistemică/repetitivă/algoritmică.

Elementul inovator pe care l-am propus pentru programul de studiu al limbii materne ca limbă străină este al structurii modului de învățare conform modelului:1,2, 7, 28. Ce presupune acest model? Relativ la cifra 1, înseamnă prezentarea unui model de recunoaștere și exersare a unităților fonice care n-au/ sau au parțial, echivalență în limba maternă. 2- Reprezintă reflectarea acestui nou fonem, în mici contexte de comunicare la următoarea oră. După o săptămână – 7; cadrul didactic va combina

exercițiile directe cu cele indirecte pentru a exersa studiul noului fonem și a aplica evaluarea punctuală referitor la acesta. 28 – este activitatea de monitorizare a modalității de articulare și percepere a sunetului studiat în contexte non – formale. Fără îndoială componenta 1, 2 poate implica, preponderent, metoda articulatorie, iar componenta 7, 28 – metoda verbo- tonală, în care se reflectă mai clar elementele de prozodie. Citându-l pe Jenkins, Zagnoli face referire la procesul de apropriere/ internalizare/ automatizare a pronunției unui sunet care se realizează, aproape fără implicarea conștientă a utilizatorului, și care, pentru un student internațional, implică un proces de recuperare a diferenței fonice, dar și conștiința fonologică. Lucrarea: „The phonology of

English as an international language: new models, new norms, new goals" de Jennifer Jenkins (citat de Zagnoli) reintroduce importanța tehnicii exercițiului, ca modalitate de formare a automatismelor de creare a deprinderii de articulare. De fapt, este un dialog al perspectivelor: Jenkins propune tehnica exercițiului ca o modalitate de consolidare a deprinderilor și abilităților fonetice ale utilizatorilor, iar Canepari nuanțează utilizarea acestei tehnici, propunând aplicarea elementului conștientizare a utilizatorului versus modalitatea naturală de producere a sunetului de către aparatul fonator. Astfel de activități premergătoare exercițiului contribuie la conștientizarea unui proces de producere a sunetelor specifice limbii studiate și eludează activitatea de imitate momentană, care nu poate fi fundament al unei deprinderi temeinice în receptarea și articularea sunetului.

II. Contextualizarea instrumentarului fonetic: manifestări de coeziune și coerență în mediul didactic

2.1. Manifestări ale caracteristicii „coeziune" în cadrul perspectivei gramaticii valențiale

O lucrare care propune descrierea perspectivei gramaticii valențiale e „C'e grammatica e grammatica…" de Elena Maria Duso bazată pe experiența temporală de doi ani a cursurilor de formare în cadrul Departamentului de Studii Lingvistice și Literare al Universității din Padova (Duso, 2017-2019). Inițial, autoarea introducerii studiului monografic face referire la imaginea conceptual praxiologică a demersului didactic traditional, bazat pe o gramatică abstractă a multiplelor definiții și etapa începutului deceniului al optulea din secolul trecut când se introduce gramatica valențială în educația lingvistică. Avantajul acestei perspective este, conform afirmațiilor didacticianului Italian Lo Duca, faptul că utilizatorul putea beneficia de reflecție asupra limbajului. De altfel, am selectat în mod itenționat aceste resurse educative pe care le-am prezentat în studiul propus tocmai pentru că „Trunchiul arborelui resurselor didactice" se află în zona conștientizării și reflecției. Elementul de reflexivitate, pe care pune un accent deosebit, resursele la care face trimitere CECRL,

se poate manifesta atât la componenta de conținut (Canepari, Duso, Menegale, Lo Duca, Calabro) cât și la cea de proces, numită și metacogniție.

Prin urmare, reprezentarea mentală a enunțului poate fi expusă în mod grafic în gramatica valențială și activitatea precursoare modelului fonetic achizițional în fonetica naturală propusă de Canepari. De asemenea, realizată în context cu prezentările grafice ale aparatului fonator, dar și de expunerile grafice personalizate ale utilizatorului și sistemul conventional de transcriere pe care și-l selectează studentul pentru realizarea actului de studiu al unei limbi străine poate concorda cu modelele conceptuale menționate anterior.

Așadar, propunem integrarea instrumentarului de studiu Dicționarul de fonodidactică în:

- Principiul reflexivității după Canepari, (și)
- Principiul „reflecției asupra limbajului" (Lo Duca) derivat din modelul gramaticii valențiale.

Prezentarea grafico – schematică ca reprezentare mentală cu reflecții expuse pe format material este punctul liant al acestor două abordări.

Pornind de la aceste realități propunem următorul algoritm de reflectare a reflexivității duale (RD) în procesul de formare a competenței fonetico – fonologice utilizând instrumentul didactic

Dicționarul de fonodidactică:

1. Utilizatorul va citi lexemul propus- Lectura (sau încercarea inițială),
2. Utilizatorul va asculta modelul de citire a lexemului propus de un vorbitor nativ – Audiere,
3. Se va compara lectura utilizatorului versus cea propusă – Comparare,
4. Se va marca (eventual, cromatic) elemental diferit în pronunție – Identificare,
5. Se va propune comentarea funcționării aparatului fonator în timpul producerii sunetului identificat – Conștientizare,
6. Se va realiza activitatea de exersare a pronunției – Automatizare conștientă,
7. Se va verifica corectitudinea amplasării accentului cu ajutorul DOOM3 (preferabil în format tipărit) – autovalidarea,
8. Se vor crea sintagme pentru verb după modelul V+S, iar în cazul părților de vorbire din grupul nominal se vor realiza sintagme pe interiorul grupului nominal și, ulterior, se va realiza conexiunea cu partea de vorbire: verbul – Corelare,
9. Se vor prezenta grafic valențele enunțiative ale extensiei semantice verbale:

A Substantiv

B Substantiv +calificativ unic,

a. Substantiv +calificativ multiplu,

b. Grupul complementelor: (inițial, cele folosite mai des: de timp, de loc, de mod) ulterior, celelalte tipuri de complemente – Clasificare, 10. Repetarea algoritmului Citire- producere/ încercarea inițială – audiere – comparare – identificare – conștientizare – exersare – încercări repetate la nivelul frastic – activitatea se va realiza în baza enunțurilor formulate de către utilizator și a celor propuse de Dicționarul de fonodidactică,

11. Lectura enunțului cu modificări relative la: ritm, volumul vocii, structuri intonaționale, context de comunicare, etc…

Așadar, putem remarca modalitatea de realizare a conexiunilor dintre abordarea bazată pe aldoritmi de tipul MARSS (Calabro, 2025) și gramatică valențială, paradigma constructivistă a arhitecturii didactice, dar și perspectiva asupra conținutului pornind de la conceptele de coeziune și coerență, pot fi toate unite de un instrumentar didactic – Dicționarul de fonodidactică. Principiul fundamental al acestei resurse didactice îl constituie congruența, confluența, concordanța, corespondența, corelarea cu alte componente ale structurii procesului de învățare, astfel încât Dicționarul de fonodidactică comportă un caracter integrator.

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Abstract in English: *The paper aims to present the points of ideological confluence of the concept of phoneticphonological competence formation for foreign students, in an activity focused on didactic resources: pronunciation and phonodidactic dictionaries. Initially, the problem was formulated that a characteristic of the professional reality in the study of RLS is the presence of confusion versus the teaching method of the phoneticphonological compartment. Therefore, we propose the development and implementation of a phonodidactics course for teachers, which aims to balance the phonetics teaching model under the two fundamental aspects: the implicit approach and the explicit approach. Subsequently, the reference resources related to the formation of pronunciation skills (L. Canepari's Pronunciation Dictionary and the Phonodidactic Dictionary) are presented conceptually and structurally. The conclusions of the research will be reflected in the Romanian language as a foreign language curriculum.*

Keywords in English: *phonetic-phonological competence, phonodidactics, phonodidactics dictionary, pronunciation dictionary*

Innovative Approaches to Teaching Intercultural Communication in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The present study reveals the necessity of using innovative approaches to teaching intercultural communication to students of higher education institutions. The authors determined that the effectiveness of intercultural communication training is provided by experiential learning methods: Case Studies, Intercultural Training \ Intercultural Workshop, Forum Theatre, Role-play, Storytelling, etc. This experiential learning encourages the active participation of all learners, aims to change behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, and understanding of others, promotes the development of the ability to act effectively in non-standard communicative situations, as well as the development of a wide range of information-searching, practical and professional knowledge and skills. These innovative approaches aim to lead learners to develop critical and reflexive thinking for themselves. Learning has cognitive, physical, and emotional dimensions, which are included in the approach of an innovative and active pedagogy. A creative combination of these methods will contribute to the development of students' ability to intercultural communication in the field of future professional activity, will develop the skills of avoiding and solving intercultural conflicts, the skills of effective professional communication with representatives of different cultures, the skills of using various communication styles, understanding cultural contexts and will contribute to the formation of learners` intercultural competence.

Key words

experiential learning, teaching intercultural communication, case study, intercultural training, situational modeling, storytelling.

1. Introduction

Intercultural skills are essential in European societies of today and tomorrow. Diversity, whether it is gendered, professional, cultural, religious, geographic, etc., is inherent and more apparent in our societies while coexistence has become a major

issue to the extent that it has been the subject of social debates in recent years. In the conditions of modern challenges of globalization processes, there is a growing need for specialists capable of effective professional activity in a multicultural society, who successfully use a foreign language in professional situations of intercultural communication during interaction with foreign partners and clients.

The effectiveness of a specialist's professional activity in the modern labor market largely depends on the culture of his interaction with service users, colleagues, and partners. Naturally, this communication takes place both in the native language and in a foreign language. The practice of communicating with speakers of a foreign language has shown that deep knowledge of a foreign language does not yet guarantee full understanding and the absence of conflicts with native speakers. University graduates lack professionalism in the process of intercultural communication, which is manifested in the insufficient level of formation of their intercultural competence (understanding the specifics of intercultural relations, communications, and interaction; mastering modern strategies of foreign language communication; the ability to respond tolerantly and openly to cultural peculiarities, settle intercultural conflicts, etc.). Today a specialist in the labor market must possess not only knowledge of native and foreign languages but also be well-versed in the styles of communication, cultural peculiarities of communication, use of non-verbal means of communication, rules of etiquette, traditions, etc (Lyakh, 2004). That is why it is important to study not only a foreign language but also the peculiarities of national culture and intercultural communication in training a specialist. In this regard, the task of higher education institutions, in particular heads of departments, is to introduce new approaches to the organization of the multicultural education of future specialists for the development of intercultural competence. New innovative methods will make intercultural communication interesting for students, and attract more listeners, and the learning process will turn into an exciting activity.

2. Literature Review

Over the last decade, the increased attention of scientists and practitioners has been directed to the study of an effective system of multicultural education for future specialists in higher education institutions. To the Council of Europe (2008), one of the major roles of higher education institutions resides in fostering intercultural dialogue: “The university is ideally defined precisely by its universality”, through the training of “intercultural intellectuals” able to play a full part in civil society (Conseil de l’Europe Livre blanc sur le dialogue interculturel, 2008, p.33). The Council of Europe strongly supports and assists in the development of intercultural skills within university and non-university settings to foster cultural dialogue and inclusivity. In this work, the term “interculturality” is used to refer to “the capacity to experience cultural otherness, analyze it, and use that experience to think about issues generally taken for granted

within one's own culture or environment" (Byram, 2009). Concurrently, intercultural education is pivotal in shaping individuals capable of embracing diversity and contributing to social cohesion (Spulber, 2018).

The analysis of scientific research shows that various aspects of intercultural training are characterized in pedagogical literature. In the modern scientific discourse, intercultural communication has acquired new research vectors, in particular research into the social nature of language, culture, and communication, patterns of development of modern intercultural interaction, intercultural communication and paradigmatic asymmetry of terminology, linguistic transformations, intercultural barriers of communication, methodology of intercultural training, etc. The theoretical analysis of the literature made it possible to state that there is a problem in the scientific and pedagogical discourse of the organization of intercultural training of future specialists in different contexts.

Today there is an increasing search for new approaches that will make intercultural learning exciting for students. Many materials and digital manuals appeared in various manuals published that are part of the productions funded by the European Union within the framework of the Erasmus+ – Key Action 2 for the strategic partnership in higher education. For example, MICEP (Mainstreaming Intercultural Competences in Education Project) presented Methodological Manual Compendium Innovative Practices in Intercultural Education, where case studies and various innovative practices from non-formal education are collected. The purpose of such manuals is to help develop intercultural skills through progressive practices that promote intercultural awareness and learning.

3. The Facilitator's role

The facilitator has to play multiple roles. He/She has to make sure that trainees are improving in their learning and help them reach beyond their comfort zone. Participants could find it difficult to understand that this training is only an introduction to an intercultural approach, which requires the facilitator to be able to manage expectations and frustrations.

The purpose of the article is to highlight innovative approaches to the organization of intercultural communication training in higher education institutions.

4. Materials and Methods

Today, scientists discuss the concept of "innovative practices", for they entail cooperation (Cnire, 2016, 11-12) with people of other origins or cultural orientations and aim to develop the possibility of creating common intercultural projects. Developing intercultural competencies begins with developing a critical understanding, which means being able to question one's attitudes and behaviors, and having the capacity to observe oneself to explore other ways of seeing and doing.

Experiential learning will be favored because training in intercultural skills can only be done through an action-oriented approach toward education. This pedagogical approach, which encourages the active participation of all learners, aims to change behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, understanding of others, and actions. Face-to-face teaching and lecturing do not fit these objectives. To be efficient, learning by doing and active teaching methods are more suitable. Learners have to be actors, even authors of their learning: they get involved in their learning by comparing, contextualizing, thinking, analyzing, cooperating, and communicating. The techniques used here lead the learners to innovate their relationships with themselves and relations to the object of knowledge.

The innovative approach presented here encourages exercises around a subject; a theme can be adapted according to the context, the level, the age of the participants, and the objectives and contents – all of which will turn learners into actors. They are bringing representations, images, themes, and stereotypes to construct knowledge and attitudes collectively. This approach aims to lead learners to develop evaluative, critical, and reflexive thinking for themselves. Learning has cognitive, physical, and emotional dimensions, which are included in the approach of an innovative and active pedagogy.

Collaborative or cooperative modes are essential to developing intercultural skills. These learnings aim at developing both the cognitive aspects and social abilities of a person.

Dealing with the social-cognitive conflict aims to work on one's mental representations, reconsider one's stereotypes and be aware of the exclusion mechanisms of some members. As Kurt Lewin (1959) puts it, the group constitutes a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. Working in groups enables each of its members and the whole group to bring something new (new knowledge, new behaviors, and new abilities). For this reason, working in a favorable environment is important. Social psychology shows that the context in which the learning takes place is crucial: feeling safe is a necessity (importance of framing, clear and non-contradictory instructions).

Forum Theatre is a teaching tool that works as one's representation – it helps know, identify, and recognize prejudices, points of view – and behavioral change, thanks to acting games (Oberlé, 1989). It enables the work with stereotypes and cultural stereotypes to discuss, criticize, and transform them within a group. The notion of a group is also central to the Forum Theatre: all the activities proposed are centered around the group. Role plays, case scenarios and theatre contribute to the development of intercultural competencies, for they encourage learners to act differently from what they habitually would, by using new attitudes, norms, or reactions. The game consists

of following rules and respecting new norms, values, convictions, and ideas – in other words, discovering a "new identity".

Role-play or simulation encourages reflective thinking and develops and practices new language and behavioral skills in a relatively nonthreatening setting. When participating in role-play activities, higher education students are then offered the opportunity to benefit from the development of their professional skills and identity. Furthermore, the enlargement of metacognitive skills is an intrinsic and integral part of the peer-collaborative role-play experience. Additionally, if the intercultural activity is designed in such a manner, the students can be persuaded to autonomously assume a degree of responsibility. By actively participating in first choosing their topic, the students can then proceed to conceptualize an original idea and construct their dialogue while preparing their personalized role-play scenarios.

In terms of methodology, the role-play activity can encompass various types of communication in the classroom. Mortimer and Scott (395-406) define what they characterize as the four main types of communication, as follows:

Interactive/Dialogic: Both the teacher and students participate in exploring new ideas, asking and responding to questions while working on differing viewpoints;

- Non-Interactive/Dialogic: The teacher summarizes various points of view and explores or works on different perspectives;

- Interactive/Authoritative: The teacher focuses on one viewpoint, using a streamlined sequence of questions to consolidate a specific point of view;

- Non-Interactive/Authoritative: Only the teacher presents a specific point of view and she/he does not interact with the students.

During the first class dedicated to this pedagogical approach, a dialogical teaching method is used to introduce the topic of interculturality in the classroom (Di Pardo Léon-Henri, 2017). Some examples are given to the students to focus their interest on the topic at hand. For example, the facilitator may begin with the following questions:

In your opinion, how would you react in the following professional settings?

- You invite a colleague to lunch and you learn that she/he only eats halal foods.

- You call a foreign client, and you don't understand her/his dialect or accent.

- Your new foreign colleague has a habit of dressing very casually and they often arrive quite late for meetings and appointments. This behavior is drawing the attention of colleagues and it is quickly becoming a problem.

- You are transferred to another office in a foreign country and you are worried about certain stereotypes [you have heard about food and traditions] and a negative image of that culture or that country.

The situations above encourage the students to imagine how they would react in very different circumstances. In addition, this activity orients the students' focus on the importance of thinking about, preparing for, and developing intercultural communication skills in different professional settings.

The students may then be asked about their knowledge on the topic when the teacher initiates a dialogue by asking probing questions such as: What is interculturality? and why is it so important in today's professional setting? These questions stimulate an open dialogue and a debate ensues. The objective here is to assist the students in formulating a clear working definition of interculturality with specific examples and illustrations.

Next, the facilitator can take another 20 minutes or so to introduce the different types of barriers in intercultural communication. These barriers include some of the following types of features:

- linguistic (language varieties, dialects, accents),
- cultural (body language, concept of time management, national holidays, special cuisine customs…),
- socializing (formal dress, hospitality, religious obligations, and constraints…), and
- ethnic (as well as moral differences).

Since cultural stereotypes can hinder or damage intercultural communication and relations, the teacher should address how they can sometimes lead to generalizations and narrow-mindedness. This is followed by discussions on various professional situations such as how different cultures manage meetings, conferences, or telephone calls and how to deal with visiting foreign companies. Effective intercultural communication practices are then briefly brainstormed and discussed with the students.

Lastly, the students are given a list of expressions and vocabulary (refer to Appendix A) to review for the next class. These expressions and words can be useful in overcoming barriers associated with intercultural communication in a professional setting.

5. Case Study

We support the opinion of scientists that the "case-study" method contributes to the formation of one's ability to act effectively in non-standard communicative situations, the development of a wide range of information-searching and practical-professional skills and abilities, primarily analytical, communicative, reflective, which it is important in the process of intercultural interaction, (Zhulkivska, 2014). The advantages of this method in the context of teaching intercultural communication are the use of methods of problem-based and resource-oriented learning for students to

acquire skills: teamwork, information-search and presentation activities, holding press conferences, debates, "round tables", interactive discussions, etc. The presentation of cases activates the complex knowledge of students from various disciplines, and promotes the development of critical thinking, and reasoned formulation of opinions for solving problem situations. Creation of intercultural cases (for example, "Intercultural models of adaptation", "Culture shock and reactions", "Influence of a foreign culture on people's behavior", "Misjudgments in the intercultural context", "Ethnic stereotyping", "Cultural profile of the country") involves taking into account the principles of interdisciplinary, integration of knowledge, communicativeness, situational, multiculturalism. The purpose of intercultural cases is to promote the development of the creative abilities of the applicants, their independent cognitive activity, and the ability to build intercultural knowledge and work in groups based on partnership. Intercultural cases allow applicants to simulate real situations of intercultural, business communication, to prepare for conducting business negotiations based on various intercultural discourses. With the help of cases, applicants learn to analyze situations, discuss models of masculine behavior of the participants in the situation, and evaluate the choice of strategies of communicative behavior and ways to overcome ethical problems. Intercultural cases ensure the individual's ability and readiness for intercultural dialogue; formation of tolerance; and elementary skills of communicative behavior in professional communication (Lutsyk, 2006).

6. Storytelling

Scientists interpret the method of “storytelling” as the art of creating an exciting novel (Nemchenko, 2015). This method involves creating a story and using it to convey the necessary information to influence the emotional, motivational, and cognitive spheres of listeners. The story (for example, a story on the topic "Tourist trip") should tell about situations of interaction between representatives of different cultures or conflict situations that arise in the process of organizing and carrying out the trip. The purpose of the method is to help applicants become aware of the influence of various factors (country of residence, religion, culture, family, etc.) on people's daily lives; promote interest and sympathy for another culture; to develop a critical attitude to the history and traditions of one's country; get to know each other better. It is important to give clear instructions, to detail the task, which can be done in groups or take turns in a circle to continue the story by saying only one sentence. It is also advisable to give an intriguing first sentence at the beginning of the story, for example: “In April 2020, Josh arrived at the Google office in NY with an envelope in his hand…”

7. Intercultural Training\ Intercultural Workshop

Of practical value is intercultural training aimed at the development of intercultural behavior, and cognitive and emotional skills necessary for effective

communication and interaction in different cultures. The task of intercultural training is to form a system of intercultural knowledge and skills, values and beliefs, attitudes for positive perception of a new culture, appropriate behavioral reactions, and cultural self-awareness in the participants.

Scientists distinguish six key approaches to the organization of intercultural training: informational – provides training participants with various information about other cultures; attributional – focuses on explaining behavior from the point of view of a representative of another culture; cognitive – familiarization with the main ideas of intercultural relations through the study of values and behavioral norms common in another culture; cognitive-behavioral – involves orientation to known principles of learning to solve problems of adaptation in another culture; empirical – realizes the main goal of empirical learning – active acquisition of experience of another culture; activity approach (intercultural interaction) – active interaction with representatives of another culture (Samoilenko, 2013).

Intercultural training is of great significance because it develops auditory skills, oratorical skills, improvisational skills, confidence in communication, appropriate habits and manners of behavior, and adaptability to changes in the cultural environment. For example, the training "Effectiveness of conducting intercultural negotiations" is aimed at implementing the following tasks: definition of strategies of different cultures and their mutual adaptation; selection of a successful negotiation strategy; discussion of methods of evasion and countermeasures. Stages of conducting intercultural negotiations: preparation for negotiations (gathering information, establishing friendly relations, etc.); analysis (clarification of the opponent's interests and determination of the decision-maker); proposal (arguments, persuasiveness of arguments, sources of arguments); discussion (techniques, debates, criteria for persuasiveness of argumentation). With the help of this method, there is an introduction to cultural differences in interpersonal relations by playing situations that are perceived differently by individuals in different cultures. In the training process, acquaintance with a foreign culture takes place with the help of emotionally colored activities, replaying of situations, and their analysis.

Different types of intercultural communication training are described in the literature, each of which has its own goals and fulfills the corresponding tasks. The typology and content characteristics of intercultural training are detailed in the research of R. Brislin. According to his classification, trainings are classified into: self-awareness training, as a result of which an individual must realize himself as a representative of a specific culture; cognitive training (participants receive information about other cultures); attribution training (explanation of situations and actions of partners from the point of view of another culture); behavioral training (teaching practical skills needed for life in another culture); situational training (playing and

analyzing specific situations of intercultural communication, discussing problems) (Brislin, 1994).

8. How to implement innovative teaching methodologies?

Implementing innovative teaching methodologies at higher educational institutions requires a strategic approach that integrates technology, creativity, and student-centered learning. Here's how institutions can adopt and foster innovative teaching practices:

1. Incorporate Active Learning Techniques

Flipped Classrooms: Students review materials before class, and classroom time is used for discussions, problem-solving, and practical applications. This fosters deeper understanding and engagement.

Collaborative Learning: Encourage group work, peer-to-peer learning, and collaborative projects that help students engage with content actively and share diverse perspectives.

2. Use Technology to Enhance Learning

Digital Tools and Platforms: Leverage learning management systems (LMS), online discussion forums, and virtual collaboration tools to create interactive learning environments.

Multimedia Integration: Incorporate videos, podcasts, virtual simulations, and augmented reality to provide students with different ways to engage with content.

Gamification: Use game-like elements (badges, leaderboards, challenges) to motivate students and make learning more engaging.

3. Emphasize Problem-Based and Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Real-World Applications: Design courses around real-world problems or case studies that students can solve. This makes learning more relevant and helps develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Industry Collaboration: Partner with industry professionals to create projects where students can work on practical challenges, gaining insights into their future careers.

4. Foster Interdisciplinary Learning

Cross-Department Collaboration: Encourage collaboration between different departments or faculties to create interdisciplinary courses or projects that break down academic silos and foster innovative thinking.

Multidisciplinary Projects: Engage students in projects that require knowledge from different fields, enhancing creativity and broadening their problem-solving abilities.

5. Focus on Personalized Learning

Adaptive Learning Technologies: Use AI-driven tools that adapt to students' individual learning paces and needs, providing customized feedback and support.

Student-Led Learning: Give students some control over their learning paths by allowing them to choose project topics or areas of focus based on their interests and *career goals.*

6. Encourage Experiential Learning

Internships and Service Learning: Provide opportunities for students to learn through practical experience, such as internships, co-op programs, and community engagement projects.

Study Abroad Programs: Encourage global exposure and cultural learning by offering international exchange programs, which help students develop intercultural competence.

7. Promote Critical and Creative Thinking

Open-Ended Assignments: Allow students to approach problems with creativity by designing assignments that don't have a single correct answer, encouraging them to explore different solutions.

Socratic Method: Engage students in critical thinking by asking probing questions and encouraging debate, which develops their ability to argue logically and think independently.

8. Implement Faculty Development and Support

Ongoing Training: Provide professional development opportunities for faculty to learn about innovative teaching strategies, such as active learning, digital pedagogy, and inclusive teaching.

Encouragement of Experimentation: Foster a culture where faculty are encouraged to experiment with new teaching methods without fear of failure.

9. Integrate Inclusive Teaching Practices

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Design curricula that reflect diverse cultural perspectives and are relevant to students from various backgrounds.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Create flexible learning environments that accommodate diverse learners, ensuring that materials, assessments, and activities are accessible to all students.

10. Regularly Assess and Iterate

Student Feedback: Use student feedback to continuously improve teaching methodologies. Implement surveys, focus groups, or classroom observations to gather insights on teaching effectiveness.

Data-Driven Decisions: Analyze student performance data to assess the impact of innovative methods and identify areas for improvement or further experimentation.

11. Develop Learning Communities

Communities of Practice: Encourage faculty and students to form learning communities where they can share ideas, challenges, and solutions, fostering an innovative academic environment.

Peer Learning Networks: Create opportunities for students to teach each other, such as peer tutoring or mentorship programs, enhancing both knowledge sharing and leadership skills.

By adopting these strategies, higher education institutions can create a more dynamic, inclusive, and innovative learning environment that prepares students for the complexities of the modern world.

9. Discussion

Higher education institutes, including research universities and universities of applied sciences, face the challenge of developing effective internationalization practices to prepare students for the demands of a globalizing world. Researchers reporting on studies focused on universities' internationalization practices show that few practices efficiently develop students' intercultural competence. Generally speaking, intercultural competence means the ability to distinguish between real differences in values and behaviors across cultures, as well as the appreciation of values and behaviors even if they differ from one's own. Interestingly, across the board researchers do not explain what drives intercultural competence development.

Intercultural competence refers to the ability of a person to naturally employ a wide range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that will assist in facilitating communication with people from different cultural origins. Appropriate intercultural communication includes appropriate behaviors that correspond with the expectations of a specific culture, the particularities of a given situation, and the rapport between the parties involved.

Individuals who possess excellent intercultural skills are people with high levels of cultural self-awareness and a deep understanding of and respect for the influence of culture on behavior, values, and beliefs. These individuals also consider their cultural norms and choose the most appropriate and most comfortable compromise between the different cultural norms to accommodate their interlocutor and minimize feelings of uneasiness and awkwardness.

Equally, both in the educational and professional setting, intercultural skills and competency are of great significance and value, since cultural awareness leads individuals to grasp how his/her culture functions and behaves while respecting the differences associated with foreign cultures.

For instance, an individual who has these skills and is thus of intercultural differences will self-monitor (cognitive) to censor (behavior) anything (verbal or non-verbal) not acceptable (affective) to another culture during an intercultural interaction. In general, social, open-minded, and non-judgemental individuals generate respect for the differences associated with foreign cultures, since they are considerate of others.

How to teach intercultural communication? The involvement of students in educational, practical, and scientific research activities creates opportunities for them

to acquire the necessary competencies. One of the ways to improve and develop the professional competence of future specialists is the use of innovative approaches in the process of teaching intercultural communication. The pedagogical essence of these approaches lies in the focus on training teamwork, increasing independence, using interactive learning methods, forming the ability for interpersonal interaction, etc. However, all the methodologies of intercultural learning described here must be adjusted according to the audience, the location, the number, the objectives, and how they are conducted.

All action, interaction, and participation of people to develop intercultural skills that, in turn, require people to enhance their capacity to build themselves, build common projects, and take on measured and shared responsibilities, to establish the common foundations of a respectful coexistence. New pedagogies aim to be innovative, for, from an experiment, they seek to emancipate and give the power of action back to learners and develop citizenship while respecting cultural diversity. Intercultural skills are an indispensable part of democratic citizenship. They are a key point of any education, where cultural diversity is central.

The issue of promoting innovative intercultural learning is important and debatable: Will it be easy to get rid of the traditional classroom setting and change the classroom environment? How do we encourage students with mixed abilities to work together by facilitating small group or whole class activities while watching and discussing a film or TV series? Does the cooperative learning environment encourage students to actively absorb and process new information by cross-modeling it with others?

10. Conclusions

Based on the analyzed material, we can claim that the implementation of innovative methods of teaching intercultural communication makes it possible to form practical skills of intercultural communication to avoid misunderstandings as a result of cultural differences and the negative consequences of culture shock. Intercultural innovative teaching methodology is beneficial for students for several key reasons:

1. *Promotes Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity*: It exposes students to diverse perspectives, helping them understand and respect different cultures, values, and traditions. This fosters empathy and reduces prejudice or stereotypes.

2. *Enhances Critical Thinking*: Students are encouraged to analyze issues from multiple cultural perspectives, which improves their ability to think critically and solve problems more creatively and inclusively.

3. *Prepares for Globalization*: In an increasingly globalized world, intercultural teaching helps students develop the skills they need to succeed in diverse professional and social environments. They become better equipped for international communication and collaboration.

4. *Encourages Flexibility and Adaptability*: Exposure to different teaching styles and cultural norms helps students become more adaptable, which is crucial in rapidly changing environments, whether in education, the workplace, or personal interactions.

5. *Fosters Innovation and Creativity*: Intercultural approaches often involve innovative teaching strategies that encourage out-of-the-box thinking. By blending different cultural insights and methodologies, students are more likely to develop unique solutions and creative ideas.

6. *Improves Language and Communication Skills*: Intercultural methodologies often involve multilingual or culturally diverse communication, improving students' language skills and their ability to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds.

7. *Builds Social and Emotional Intelligence*: Interacting with peers from diverse cultures helps students develop emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills, which are essential for personal and professional success.

By incorporating these methods, education becomes more inclusive, dynamic, and better suited for the diverse realities students will face in the future.

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L'enseignement du français sur objectifs spécifiques dans les disciplines non linguistiques : un levier de professionnalisation et d'intégration européenne

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Abstract

L'enseignement du français sur objectifs spécifiques (FOS) dans les formations non linguistiques occupe une place centrale dans les stratégies contemporaines de développement du plurilinguisme et de professionnalisation dans l'enseignement supérieur européen. Il articule compétences linguistiques, connaissances spécialisées et ouverture interculturelle, en répondant aux attentes croissantes du marché du travail européen. En s'appuyant sur des dispositifs didactiques conçus dans des filières telles que le droit, l'économie ou l'administration, cet article analyse les mécanismes par lesquels le FOS soutient la construction de compétences transversales et la mobilité académique. Les études de cas menées à l'Université de Bucarest éclairent les pratiques pédagogiques mises en œuvre, l'usage de supports authentiques et la collaboration interdisciplinaire. Le FOS se révèle ainsi un outil structurant pour répondre aux besoins spécifiques des étudiants et pour renforcer leur intégration dans l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur.

Keywords

Français sur objectifs spécifiques, langues de spécialité, enseignement supérieur, professionnalisation, intégration européenne, compétences interculturelles, plurilinguisme, communication professionnelle.

Introduction

La transformation des systèmes universitaires européens au cours des deux dernières décennies accorde une importance toujours plus grande au développement du plurilinguisme, de la mobilité étudiante et de la professionnalisation. Les politiques linguistiques universitaires s'alignent progressivement sur les orientations du Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (CECRL) et sur les exigences d'un marché du travail globalisé, sur lequel la maîtrise d'une langue étrangère spécialisée constitue un avantage compétitif (CECR, 2001 : 12). Dans ce contexte, l'enseignement du français sur objectifs spécifiques (FOS) occupe une place stratégique, particulièrement dans les formations non linguistiques où la communication de spécialité devient une compétence structurante. (Dolz, 2008 : 15)

Le FOS répond aux besoins émergents des étudiants inscrits dans des cours tels que le droit, l'économie, l'administration publique ou les sciences. Dans ces disciplines, la compétence linguistique ne se limite pas à la communication générale, mais mobilise des registres techniques, des conventions discursives et des pratiques professionnelles propres à chaque domaine. (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 27). Le FOS vise à rendre les étudiants opérationnels dans ces contextes spécialisés, tout en contribuant à leur intégration dans l'espace académique et professionnel européen. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 : 56).

La problématique de cet article est la suivante : comment l'enseignement du FOS dans les disciplines non linguistiques contribue-t-il à la professionnalisation et à l'intégration européenne des étudiants ? L'analyse s'appuie sur trois axes majeurs déjà esquissés dans la littérature (Toader, 2021: 7) et approfondis ici : les fondements théoriques du FOS, son adaptation aux besoins spécifiques des filières non linguistiques, et son rôle dans la construction de compétences et d'identités européennes. Une annexe regroupant des extraits commentés de productions étudiantes complète cette approche et illustre les observations présentées.

1. Le français sur objectifs spécifiques : fondements théoriques et enjeux institutionnels

1.1. Définition et spécificités du FOS

Le français sur objectifs spécifiques s'inscrit dans la continuité des travaux consacrés aux langues de spécialité et à la didactique des langues à finalité professionnelle. La distinction entre FLE, FOU et FOS, souvent rappelée, permet de clarifier les objectifs. (Dolz, 2008 : 18) Le FLE vise la communication générale, le FOU accompagne l'intégration dans les études supérieures, tandis que le FOS répond à des besoins professionnels précis liés à des secteurs disciplinaires définis (Mangiante, Parpette, 2004).

Le FOS s'est développé dans le prolongement des réflexions sur les langues à visée professionnelle, particulièrement après les travaux de Hutchinson et Waters (1987), qui ont posé les principes de l'analyse des besoins et de la centration sur l'apprenant. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 : 64)En didactique du français, l'essor du FOS est lié aux mutations du monde économique, à la construction de l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur et à la demande croissante de formations linguistiques contextualisées. (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 31).

Le FOS ne se définit pas par un niveau de langue, mais par une démarche : analyse des besoins, définition de compétences cibles, création de séquences contextualisées et évaluation adaptée. (Parpette, 2010 : 25). Il mobilise des ressources propres à la discipline étudiée, des genres discursifs professionnels et des pratiques langagières spécifiques. (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 35)

1.2. Le FOS dans les cours non linguistiques

Dans les universités européennes, un nombre croissant de formations non linguistiques intègrent des modules de FOS destinés à renforcer les compétences de communication professionnelle des étudiants. (CECR, 2001 : 18) Les filières concernées sont diverses : droit, économie, administration publique, sciences politiques, biologie, communication institutionnelle.

Dans les *cours de droit*, par exemple, les étudiants peuvent travailler sur l'analyse et la rédaction d'arrêts de la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne, la lecture de directives européennes ou la préparation de dossiers juridiques en français. Ils apprennent non seulement à comprendre la terminologie juridique, mais aussi à formuler des arguments écrits et oraux selon les conventions propres à la pratique judiciaire (Dolz, 2008 : 27).

Dans le domaine de *l'économie et de la gestion*, les étudiants peuvent être amenés à analyser des rapports annuels d'entreprises francophones, des articles économiques spécialisés ou des documents de stratégie commerciale internationale. Par exemple, la simulation de réunions d'entreprise en français permet aux étudiants de présenter des bilans financiers, de proposer des stratégies de marché ou de négocier avec des partenaires fictifs, dans un environnement linguistique réaliste (Parpette, 2010 : 29).

En *administration publique et sciences politiques*, le FOS peut inclure l'étude de documents institutionnels tels que des rapports du Parlement européen, des conventions internationales ou des notes de service gouvernementales. Les étudiants apprennent à résumer ces documents, à rédiger des notes de synthèse ou à présenter des propositions politiques lors de simulations de commissions ou de débats (Dolz, 2008 : 27).

Pour les *sciences et la biologie*, le FOS prend la forme de modules de vulgarisation scientifique ou de rédaction de protocoles expérimentaux en français. Par exemple, les étudiants peuvent rédiger des comptes rendus de laboratoire ou présenter des posters scientifiques lors de conférences étudiantes, ce qui les prépare à la diffusion de leurs recherches dans un contexte international (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 52).

Dans le domaine de la *communication institutionnelle*, les activités peuvent inclure la rédaction de communiqués de presse, la gestion de newsletters internes ou l'élaboration de supports de communication bilingues pour des organisations européennes. Ces exercices permettent aux étudiants de combiner précision linguistique et adaptation au public cible (CECR, 2001 : 18).

Dans tous ces contextes, la dimension linguistique ne constitue pas un simple complément, mais un élément structurant de la formation. Les enseignants doivent articuler contenus disciplinaires, exigences linguistiques et stratégies de communication propres au domaine, afin que les étudiants puissent mobiliser la langue française dans des situations réelles (Dolz, 2008 : 27). L'intégration du FOS dans ces

formations s'inscrit également dans la logique du processus de Bologne et de l'harmonisation européenne des parcours universitaires, favorisant la mobilité et la reconnaissance des compétences acquises dans différents pays (Parpette, 2010 : 29).

L'intégration du FOS dans ces formations s'inscrit également dans la logique du processus de Bologne et de l'harmonisation européenne des parcours universitaires (Parpette, 2010 : 29). La capacité à travailler dans une langue étrangère constitue désormais une compétence clé pour la reconnaissance des qualifications et la mobilité professionnelle (Toader, 2023 : 10).

Ainsi, le FOS ne se limite pas à l'apprentissage de la langue : il constitue un véritable outil de professionnalisation, permettant aux étudiants de se préparer à des situations concrètes telles que la participation à un projet européen, la rédaction d'un rapport institutionnel ou la présentation d'un exposé scientifique devant un jury international.

1.3. Enjeux européens et internationaux

Le FOS s'insère pleinement dans les orientations du Conseil de l'Europe et dans les programmes Erasmus+, contribuant à la formation d'une identité académique européenne, fondée sur des compétences partagées, une circulation accrue des connaissances et une communication transnationale fluide (CECR, 2001 : 21). Il permet aux étudiants de participer à des projets européens collaboratifs, de rédiger des rapports en français destinés à des institutions partenaires, ou encore de présenter des travaux lors de colloques internationaux, consolidant ainsi leur capacité à fonctionner dans un environnement multilingue et interculturel (Dolz, 2008 : 33).

Le français occupe une place particulière dans l'espace européen. Langue officielle de l'Union européenne, langue de travail des organisations internationales telles que l'ONU, l'OTAN ou l'OIF, et langue historique de la diplomatie, il continue de jouer un rôle central dans les échanges culturels, scientifiques et institutionnels (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 48). Par exemple, un étudiant en droit européen peut être amené à rédiger un avis juridique en français destiné à une institution européenne, ou un étudiant en sciences sociales peut analyser et résumer des rapports de politique publique européens en français.

La maîtrise du français spécialisé ouvre également l'accès à des ressources documentaires riches, telles que les bases de données législatives francophones, les publications scientifiques de référence ou les archives des institutions européennes (Parpette, 2010 : 33). Elle permet de créer et d'entretenir des réseaux professionnels stratégiques, en facilitant la communication avec des collègues francophones lors de stages, de conférences ou de projets internationaux.

Enfin, la compétence en français spécialisé offre de nombreuses possibilités de mobilité, qu'il s'agisse de stages dans des institutions européennes, de participation à des programmes Erasmus+ ou de collaborations académiques transfrontalières (CECR, 2001 : 24). Cette intégration dans l'espace européen favorise non seulement

l'employabilité des étudiants, mais renforce aussi leur identité européenne en tant que citoyens capables de naviguer avec compétence et aisance dans un contexte multiculturel (Dolz, 2008 : 37).

2. Adapter l'enseignement du FOS aux besoins des étudiants : approches didactiques et dispositifs pédagogiques

2.1. Analyse des besoins et élaboration de programmes ciblés

L'analyse des besoins constitue le fondement de toute formation en FOS. Cette analyse porte sur trois dimensions essentielles : le niveau de langue des étudiants, leurs objectifs professionnels et les exigences spécifiques de leur discipline (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 : 72). Elle permet de déterminer les compétences linguistiques et communicatives réellement nécessaires, d'identifier les écarts entre les acquis des étudiants et les exigences du domaine professionnel, et de planifier des séquences pédagogiques pertinentes (Dolz, 2008 : 36).

Cette étape requiert une collaboration étroite entre enseignants de langue et enseignants de spécialité, afin de construire un programme cohérent qui articule objectifs linguistiques et besoins professionnels. Cette démarche interdisciplinaire favorise l'adaptation du contenu aux réalités du terrain et permet de développer des compétences transférables dans des contextes professionnels réels.

Dans les cours non linguistiques, la co-construction des programmes se traduit par l'élaboration de modules intégrés, centrés sur des situations authentiques. Par exemple :

En droit européen, les étudiants peuvent analyser des arrêts de la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne, rédiger des commentaires d'articles juridiques ou préparer des dossiers de jurisprudence en français. Cette approche leur permet de se familiariser avec la structure et le style des textes juridiques francophones, ainsi qu'avec les exigences de communication propres aux institutions européennes (Dolz, 2008 : 36).

En sciences et biologie, les étudiants peuvent rédiger des protocoles expérimentaux, résumer des articles scientifiques francophones ou préparer des présentations pour des colloques. Ces activités articulent lexique spécialisé, techniques de synthèse et compétences argumentatives, renforçant la capacité à vulgariser des connaissances complexes pour différents publics (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 52).

En économie et gestion, l'analyse de rapports financiers, la rédaction de notes de synthèse sur des bilans d'entreprise ou la simulation de réunions stratégiques en français permettent de mobiliser à la fois la terminologie technique et les stratégies de communication professionnelle, préparant ainsi les étudiants à des situations réelles de travail international (Parpette, 2010 : 34).

La démarche pédagogique suit une progression ascendante, partant de la compréhension de documents simples (articles, extraits législatifs, résumés scientifiques) vers des productions autonomes complexes telles que rapports, exposés

ou projets collaboratifs. Cette progression graduelle favorise la consolidation des acquis linguistiques tout en intégrant les dimensions méthodologiques et argumentatives propres à chaque discipline.

Enfin, l'analyse des besoins et la conception des programmes doivent intégrer la dimension interculturelle et européenne. Les étudiants apprennent non seulement à maîtriser la langue, mais aussi à comprendre les conventions professionnelles et culturelles de différents pays, ce qui constitue un atout majeur pour la mobilité académique et l'insertion sur le marché du travail européen (CECR, 2001 : 28 ; Dolz, 2008 : 39).

2.2. Documents authentiques et contextualisation des apprentissages

L'usage de supports authentiques constitue un élément central du FOS, car il permet aux étudiants de se familiariser avec la complexité du discours de spécialité et de comprendre les conventions propres à leur domaine. Ces supports offrent un lien direct avec les situations professionnelles réelles et favorisent l'acquisition de compétences transférables.

Les documents mobilisés varient selon les disciplines :

Textes législatifs, décisions judiciaires, conventions internationales (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 55) ; par exemple, un arrêt de la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne peut être utilisé pour analyser la structure argumentative et le vocabulaire juridique spécifique. L'étudiant apprend à identifier les parties clés d'une décision (faits, arguments, jugement), à reformuler les concepts dans un langage clair et à préparer une note de synthèse destinée à un public non spécialiste. Cette activité permet de travailler à la fois la compréhension fine et la production écrite spécialisée.

Articles économiques et rapports d'entreprise (Dolz, 2008 : 43) ; un rapport annuel d'une entreprise francophone peut servir à étudier la présentation de données financières, la terminologie du management et la logique argumentative des recommandations stratégiques. Les étudiants peuvent ensuite rédiger un résumé analytique ou préparer une présentation orale, simulant une réunion de direction.

Publications scientifiques, résumés de recherche, protocoles expérimentaux (Parpette, 2010 : 38) ; par exemple, un protocole expérimental publié dans une revue scientifique en français permet aux étudiants en biologie de s'entraîner à synthétiser les objectifs, la méthodologie et les résultats, puis à présenter oralement leurs conclusions en adoptant le registre scientifique approprié.

Documents administratifs et institutionnels (CECR, 2001 : 25) ; la lecture et l'analyse de notes de service, circulaires ou rapports ministériels développent des compétences de lecture critique et de rédaction adaptées au contexte administratif.

Les activités didactiques centrées sur ces documents visent des compétences multiples :

Compréhension détaillée et repérage de l'information pertinente (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 : 79) ; les étudiants identifient les informations essentielles, hiérarchisent les données et repèrent les concepts clés.

Production écrite structurée, synthèses et reformulation (Dolz, 2008 : 46) ; ils apprennent à rédiger des documents clairs, concis et adaptés à leur domaine, respectant les conventions discursives et le registre professionnel.

Prise de parole en contexte professionnel (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 60) ; simulations de réunions, exposés ou débats permettent d'entraîner la communication orale en situation authentique.

Exemple concret d'analyse : Prenons l'arrêt « Van Gend & Loos » étudié dans Mangiante & Parpette (2004 : 55). Ce document juridique est utilisé pour plusieurs activités :

Compréhension et repérage : l'étudiant identifie les parties de l'arrêt (faits, procédure, argumentation juridique, décision finale).

Analyse de vocabulaire et structures discursives : termes techniques (obligation, compétence, juridiction), connecteurs logiques et phrases types du discours juridique.

Production écrite : rédaction d'une note de synthèse résumant l'affaire et ses implications pour le droit européen.

Production orale : simulation de présentation de l'affaire devant un comité fictif d'étudiants, reproduisant la pratique des juristes en contexte professionnel.

Ainsi, la contextualisation avec des documents authentiques ne se limite pas à l'apprentissage linguistique : elle intègre les pratiques discursives, méthodologiques et culturelles de la profession, permettant aux étudiants de se préparer à des situations réelles et de développer des compétences transférables (Parpette, 2010 : 42).

2.3. Évaluation par compétences et accompagnement

L'évaluation en FOS repose sur des critères étroitement liés au domaine de spécialité. Elle ne se limite pas à mesurer la correction linguistique, mais prend en compte la pertinence des arguments, la précision terminologique et l'adaptation au public visé (Dolz, 2008 : 51). L'évaluation vise à refléter les exigences réelles des professions, en intégrant les dimensions linguistiques, méthodologique et contextuelle.

Les outils d'évaluation utilisés sont variés et permettent de mesurer différentes compétences :

Portfolios de formation (CECR, 2001 : 28) : les étudiants rassemblent leurs travaux tout au long du module (notes de lecture, résumés, synthèses, productions orales enregistrées) pour documenter leur progression et réfléchir sur leurs stratégies d'apprentissage. Par exemple, un étudiant en droit peut inclure des notes sur l'analyse d'arrêts, des fiches de vocabulaire juridique et une synthèse d'un dossier européen, montrant l'évolution de ses compétences spécialisées.

Auto-évaluations inspirées du CECRL (Dolz, 2008 : 53) : elles encouragent la prise de conscience des forces et des faiblesses de l'apprenant, favorisant l'autonomie.

Par exemple, un étudiant en sciences peut évaluer sa capacité à résumer un protocole expérimental en français, à expliquer ses résultats oralement et à utiliser correctement le vocabulaire technique.

Certifications professionnelles telles que le DELF Pro (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 63) : ces certifications permettent de valider officiellement les compétences de communication professionnelle en français, en particulier dans des contextes tels que la gestion, le droit ou les relations internationales. Elles fournissent un atout concret pour l'employabilité et la mobilité.

Dossiers thématiques ou projets collaboratifs (Parpette, 2010 : 47) : les étudiants réalisent des travaux en groupe sur des situations professionnelles réelles, par exemple la rédaction collective d'un rapport d'activité pour une organisation européenne ou la préparation d'un exposé scientifique pour un colloque. Ces activités favorisent la coopération, la négociation linguistique et la production de contenus authentiques.

L'accompagnement pédagogique est essentiel pour garantir la réussite des étudiants. Il peut inclure :

- des ateliers de méthodologie, pour travailler les techniques de synthèse, d'argumentation ou de présentation ;
- du tutorat individuel ou en petits groupes, afin de guider l'étudiant dans la planification et l'exécution de ses tâches linguistiques et professionnelles ;
- des ressources numériques, telles que plateformes d'exercices interactifs, forums de discussion ou supports multimédias authentiques, permettant aux étudiants de pratiquer en autonomie.

L'objectif de cette approche combinée d'évaluation et d'accompagnement est de développer des stratégies d'apprentissage durable, adaptées aux exigences disciplinaires et professionnelles (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 : 85). Elle vise à rendre l'étudiant capable de mobiliser ses compétences linguistiques et méthodologiques de manière autonome dans des contextes authentiques, préparant ainsi à la professionnalisation et à l'intégration européenne.

3. Le FOS comme levier de professionnalisation et d'intégration européenne

3.1. Compétences transversales et communication professionnelle

Le FOS favorise le développement de compétences transversales essentielles dans l'enseignement supérieur, telles que la communication interculturelle, la capacité de synthèse, l'argumentation, la prise de parole en public et l'analyse critique (Dolz, 2008 : 57). Ces compétences ne se limitent pas à la maîtrise linguistique : elles permettent aux étudiants de naviguer avec efficacité dans des situations professionnelles complexes et de s'adapter aux exigences de divers contextes institutionnels et organisationnels (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 70).

La dimension interculturelle joue un rôle central dans l'enseignement du FOS. Les étudiants apprennent à reconnaître et à respecter des normes de communication

variées, à interagir dans des environnements internationaux et à négocier des significations dans des situations complexes, telles que des réunions multilingues, des projets collaboratifs ou des présentations devant des publics internationaux (Parpette, 2010 : 52).

Par exemple, un étudiant en droit européen peut participer à une simulation de négociation interinstitutionnelle en français, où il doit défendre des positions juridiques tout en adaptant son langage aux attentes des interlocuteurs issus de différents systèmes juridiques. Un étudiant en économie ou gestion peut préparer et présenter un plan stratégique d'entreprise à un comité fictif composé de partenaires européens, ce qui requiert à la fois la précision terminologique et la clarté de l'argumentation (Dolz, 2008 : 59).

Le FOS développe également des compétences de synthèse et d'analyse critique : les étudiants apprennent à repérer l'information pertinente dans des documents spécialisés, à hiérarchiser les idées et à produire des synthèses adaptées au contexte professionnel (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 72). Par exemple, l'analyse d'un rapport annuel d'entreprise ou d'un texte législatif complexe permet de confronter des données multiples, d'évaluer leur fiabilité et de formuler des recommandations argumentées, simulant les situations professionnelles réelles.

Enfin, la formation en FOS prépare les étudiants à la communication professionnelle orale, essentielle pour l'insertion dans le marché européen du travail. Les exercices pratiques, tels que les présentations, débats et simulations de réunions, développent la confiance en soi et la capacité à articuler des idées de manière claire et persuasive, tout en respectant les conventions discursives propres au domaine (Parpette, 2010 : 55).

Ainsi, le FOS dépasse la simple acquisition linguistique : il devient un véritable outil de professionnalisation, permettant aux étudiants de combiner compétences spécialisées, transversales et interculturelles, et de se préparer à des carrières dans un contexte européen et international.

3.2. Employabilité et mobilité européenne

La maîtrise du français spécialisé constitue un atout déterminant pour l'accès aux stages, programmes de mobilité ou postes dans des institutions internationales (CECR, 2001 : 32). Elle permet aux étudiants d'intégrer des environnements professionnels multilingues et de se positionner comme des acteurs compétents dans des contextes européens et internationaux.

Les étudiants peuvent participer à des programmes Erasmus+, à des échanges universitaires ou à des concours européens, ce qui favorise non seulement l'apprentissage linguistique, mais aussi la familiarisation avec des pratiques professionnelles et culturelles diversifiées (Dolz, 2008 : 62). Par exemple, un étudiant en droit européen peut effectuer un stage au Parlement européen, rédiger des rapports en français pour un comité juridique ou participer à des consultations transnationales. De même, un étudiant en économie ou en gestion peut travailler dans une entreprise

francophone à l'étranger, analyser des bilans financiers et préparer des présentations destinées à un public international, renforçant ainsi ses compétences professionnelles et sa mobilité.

Dans les parcours professionnels internationaux, la communication en français représente une compétence valorisée. Elle permet de :

Consulter des sources documentaires spécialisées (articles scientifiques, rapports institutionnels, textes législatifs), ce qui facilite l'accès à des informations pertinentes pour la prise de décision ou l'élaboration de projets (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 75).

Participer à des réunions multilingues et collaborer avec des collègues francophones et non francophones, en adaptant le discours et les stratégies de communication aux interlocuteurs et au contexte professionnel.

Rédiger des documents institutionnels tels que rapports, notes de synthèse ou propositions de projets, en respectant les conventions linguistiques et discursives propres au domaine (Parpette, 2010 : 59).

Ainsi, l'enseignement du FOS constitue un levier concret de professionnalisation, en préparant les étudiants à des carrières européennes et internationales, en renforçant leur employabilité et en facilitant leur intégration dans des réseaux professionnels transnationaux.

3.3. Intégration dans l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur

L'intégration du FOS dans les programmes de formation s'inscrit dans la logique de l'harmonisation LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorat) et renforce la visibilité internationale des établissements (Parpette, 2010 : 58). Cette démarche permet d'aligner les compétences linguistiques et professionnelles des étudiants sur les standards européens, tout en facilitant la reconnaissance des qualifications et la mobilité académique et professionnelle.

Les universités qui adoptent une politique linguistique cohérente améliorent la mobilité entrante et sortante, diversifient leurs partenariats et valorisent les compétences linguistiques comme composante de la qualité académique (Dolz, 2008 : 65). Par exemple, un programme de master en administration publique proposant des cours de FOS intégrés permet à des étudiants d'effectuer des stages dans différentes institutions européennes tout en utilisant le français comme langue de travail. Ces expériences renforcent non seulement la compétence linguistique, mais aussi la capacité à appliquer les savoirs disciplinaires dans un contexte international.

Le FOS soutient également les stratégies institutionnelles de coopération transfrontalière, telles que les programmes de double diplomation, les réseaux universitaires européens et les projets de recherche collaboratifs (CECR, 2001 : 36). Par exemple, une université peut développer un partenariat avec une institution francophone en Belgique ou en France, permettant aux étudiants de suivre des cours de droit ou de gestion en français et d'obtenir des crédits reconnus dans les deux

établissements. Ce type d'initiative favorise la circulation des connaissances, le développement de compétences interculturelles et la création d'un réseau académique européen solide.

En outre, l'intégration du FOS contribue à l'harmonisation des curricula, en alignant les contenus pédagogiques, les objectifs d'apprentissage et les modalités d'évaluation sur les standards européens. Les étudiants deviennent ainsi capables de :

- mobiliser leur compétence linguistique dans différents contextes professionnels et académiques ;
- collaborer efficacement avec des partenaires européens sur des projets multidisciplinaires ;
- participer activement à des réseaux institutionnels et scientifiques transnationaux.

Ainsi, le FOS ne se limite pas à l'acquisition d'une langue de spécialité : il représente un véritable outil de professionnalisation et d'intégration européenne, renforçant à la fois la mobilité, la reconnaissance académique et la compétitivité des étudiants sur le marché européen du travail.

Conclusion

Le français sur objectifs spécifiques (FOS) se révèle comme un outil incontournable pour répondre aux besoins des étudiants inscrits dans des formations non linguistiques et pour soutenir leur intégration dans l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur (Dolz, 2008 : 70). En combinant apprentissage linguistique, compétences professionnelles et ouverture interculturelle, le FOS contribue à la construction d'un profil académique et professionnel adapté aux exigences d'un marché du travail européen en mutation (Mangiante & Parpette, 2004 : 80).

L'originalité de cet article réside dans la mise en lumière des liens entre FOS, professionnalisation et intégration européenne, en se fondant sur des exemples concrets issus de diverses disciplines (droit, économie, sciences, administration). Il montre comment l'enseignement du FOS dépasse la simple acquisition linguistique pour devenir un véritable levier de développement des compétences transversales, telles que la communication interculturelle, la synthèse, l'argumentation et la prise de parole, indispensables à l'employabilité et à la mobilité des étudiants dans un contexte international (Parpette, 2010 : 62).

Cet article propose également une approche systémique et pratique, en combinant analyse des besoins, co-construction des programmes, utilisation de documents authentiques, évaluation par compétences et accompagnement individualisé. Ces dispositifs favorisent l'autonomie, la réflexivité et la professionnalisation des apprenants, tout en contribuant à la cohérence des curricula et à la reconnaissance des compétences linguistiques dans l'espace européen.

L'apport nouveau de cette étude réside enfin dans sa capacité à relier pédagogie linguistique et enjeux institutionnels européens, en soulignant que le FOS peut soutenir les stratégies de coopération transfrontalière, la mobilité académique et la participation à des réseaux professionnels internationaux. Il ouvre ainsi des perspectives pour l'innovation pédagogique, la recherche comparative sur les pratiques FOS et l'intégration de technologies numériques au service des apprentissages spécialisés (CECR, 2001 : 40).

En conclusion, cet article démontre que le FOS constitue non seulement un instrument d'enseignement linguistique, mais aussi un levier stratégique pour la professionnalisation, la mobilité et la construction d'une culture universitaire européenne partagée.

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Annexe 1

Extraits commentés de productions étudiantes

Les extraits suivants, anonymisés, proviennent d'évaluations finales. Ils illustrent les compétences visées, la progression observée et la capacité des étudiants à mobiliser la langue dans des contextes professionnels.

1. Droit européen (Licence 2)

Tâche : résumer un arrêt de la CJUE en 120 mots

Extrait étudiant :

« La Cour conclut que l'absence d'information claire sur les droits du consommateur constitue une violation du principe de transparence. Elle rappelle que les États membres doivent assurer une protection effective contre les clauses contractuelles ambiguës, lesquelles ne peuvent être interprétées au détriment de la partie la plus faible. L'arrêt insiste sur l'obligation de garantir un consentement éclairé, condition essentielle de la validité d'un contrat dans l'espace européen. »

Analyse :

– emploi correct de la terminologie (protection effective, consentement éclairé) ;

– restitution fidèle de la structure juridique ;

– capacité à condenser un texte complexe.

2. Économie/gestion (Master 1)

Tâche : analyser un facteur d'attractivité économique dans un mini-rapport

Extrait étudiant :

« Les flux d'IDE observés en 2023 montrent que la stabilité réglementaire reste un déterminant majeur. Les entreprises privilégient les zones où les normes comptables, les procédures fiscales et les coûts de conformité sont prévisibles. Cette stabilité réduit l'incertitude stratégique, favorise la planification à long terme et influence directement les choix d'implantation, en particulier dans les secteurs à forte intensité capitalistique. »

Analyse :

– articulation claire entre théorie et données ;

– usage pertinent des concepts économiques ;

– mise en relation entre environnement réglementaire et stratégie d'investissement.

3. Biologie (Licence 3)

Tâche : rédiger une mini-discussion scientifique à partir d'un graphique

Extrait étudiant :

« Les variations observées dans l'efficacité du traitement suggèrent une réponse dose-dépendante. La diminution progressive après 48 heures pourrait être liée à un phénomène d'adaptation cellulaire ou à une dégradation partielle du composé actif. L'hétérogénéité des courbes entre les trois groupes expérimentaux laisse penser que des facteurs biologiques supplémentaires influencent la réponse. Des analyses complémentaires seraient nécessaires pour vérifier ces hypothèses. »

Analyse :

– maîtrise des formulations prudentes ;

– interprétation adéquate des données ;

– usage approprié des modalisateurs scientifiques.

4. Activité transversale : présentation orale (toutes filières)

Tâche : présenter une analyse structurée en 5 minutes

Extrait étudiant (transcription abrégée) :

« Je vais montrer comment la règle jurisprudentielle s'est stabilisée au fil des décisions. J'utiliserai d'abord un exemple issu du droit de la consommation, puis je comparerai la structure argumentative avec un extrait de rapport économique. Cette

comparaison met en évidence la place du raisonnement hypothético-déductif dans les deux disciplines. »

Analyse :

– maîtrise du métadiscours ;

– capacité à structurer l'oral académique ;

– transposition réussie entre disciplines.

Teaching French for Specific Purposes in Non-Linguistic Disciplines: A Lever for Professional Development and European Integration

Abstract in English: *The teaching of French for Specific Purposes (FSP) within non-linguistic academic programs plays a key role in current strategies for developing multilingualism and professionalization in European higher education. It combines linguistic competence, specialized knowledge and intercultural awareness, responding to the growing expectations of the European labor market. Drawing on didactic frameworks implemented in fields such as law, economics and public administration, this article examines how FSP supports the development of transversal competences and academic mobility. Case studies carried out at the University of Bucharest shed light on the pedagogical practices involved, the use of authentic materials and interdisciplinary collaboration. FSP thus emerges as a structuring tool that addresses students' specific needs and strengthens their integration into the European Higher Education Area.*

Keywords in English: *French for Specific Purposes, specialized languages, higher education, professionalization, European integration, intercultural competences, multilingualism, professional communication.*

Business English and the Labor Market Nowadays[1]

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Abstract

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "English is the first choice of foreign language in most other countries of the world, and it is that status that has given it the position of a global lingua franca". In a globalized and multicultural world where people of all ages need to communicate with others, we are not surprised that "it is estimated that 1.5 billion people speak English worldwide". As a Foreign Language Teacher for 25 years, this is an encouraging prospect for continuing my career. Additionally, if we consider the increasing need for developing soft skills, we can firmly state that English is one of the keys to success in personal and particularly, in professional life. This article focuses on the benefits of learning English, particularly Business English, for career development, on the challenges that both language teachers and adult learners have to face nowadays, and the various needs and motivations that (do not) seem to be enough anymore for people to improve their language skills (external factors such as the university curriculum, requirements of the labor market).

Keywords

Business English, labor market, needs, motivation, lifelong learning, soft skills.

1. Introduction

Allow me to begin my article (or should I call it essay?) by making a few remarks on a personal note. I am a Foreign Language Teacher, with a background in Humanities, a keen interest in Business English that I have been teaching for 25 years, and a passion for literature, arts, travelling, and personal development. This paper aims to present, in a development-focused manner, theoretical and mainly practical aspects related to the process of teaching English to adults, the benefits of learning English, particularly Business English for career improvement, and the needs and motivation that determine mature learners (or not) to improve their language skills. The research is based on my own experience as university lecturer, language trainer and CELTA certificate holder and various current trends and challenges in the labor market.

Learning foreign languages in 2025 is (still) one of the keys to success in personal and professional life. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "English is the

[1] Excerpts from this article were previously published in the seminar materials for my students, *Teachy's Business English Practice File 1,2 or 3*, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

first choice of foreign language in most other countries of the world, and it is that status that has given it the position of a global *lingua franca*"[2]. In a globalized and multicultural world where people of all ages need to communicate with others, we are not surprised that "it is estimated that 1.5 billion people speak English worldwide". If we consider the increasing need for identifying and improving soft skills, we can firmly state that English is one of the key competences for the future. Soft skills, which recruiters value a lot, can be defined as "skills that enable you to fit in at a workplace, [that] include your personality, attitude, flexibility, motivation, and manners", being complementary to "hard skills/ technical skills". Even if it seems that hard skills carry more weight as they "are directly relevant to the job for which you are applying", soft skills "are often the reason employers decide whether to keep or promote an employee"[3]. A short list of the soft skills I value most comprises: communication, critical thinking, leadership, positive attitude, teamwork spirit, work ethic, problem solving, or intercultural fluency, public speaking, communication in business, or negotiation skills and many, many others[4].

The truth is that some of these competences are innate, while some need to be acquired, this being the reason why students continue their academic preparation at university level, adults continue their studies, companies organize in-house training courses, etc. Thus, I would like to draw your attention on the concept of: lifelong learning, continuing education or adult education. According to the Communication of the Commission of the European Communities, this refers to "all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training", which are important for an individual's "competitiveness and employability, but also for social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development" (Brussels, 23.10.2006, COM(2006) 614 final)[5]. As the title of the above-mentioned document states: "It is never too late to learn" and I would add, it is never enough! So, learning never stops! Is it good news or bad news? It depends on the respondent.

However, learning should have a purpose and the learner should be motivated, in other words, people have to identify and analyze the needs they have to fulfil in order to feel complete, to evolve, and to be happy. Need is defined as "the state of having to have something that you do not have, especially something that you must have so that you can have a satisfactory life"[6] (I love this definition!), which is probably best described by Abraham Maslow's motivational theory. In his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943, further refined over decades), Maslow classifies human needs into 5 categories, "the hierarchy of needs [being] used to study how humans intrinsically

[2] https://www.britannica.com/topic/English-language

[3] https://www.thebalancemoney.com/list-of-soft-skills-2063770#toc-what-are-soft-skills

[4] https://www.thebalancemoney.com/list-of-soft-skills-2063770

[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52006DC0614

[6] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/need

partake in behavioral motivation"[7]. In a nutshell, it is required to fulfil lower levels of needs such as "physiological", "safety", "love" to move to higher pursuits such as: "esteem" and self-actualization needs.

Becoming aware of one's needs and motivations, one can become more confident, more focused on results, more inclined to collaboration. When (not if!) one becomes aware of their self-worth, that is they have enough confidence in their own worth, abilities and morals, it means they will "know how to live", quoting Goethe from his famous play *Faust*. But where should one start?

Actually, all lessons start before the teacher enters the class. The first question a teacher asks is: "Who are the learners?" (Scrivener 61). If we consider the formal education in Romania, particularly primary and secondary level, the answer is quite clear and homogeneous. The lessons take place at daytime, once or several times per week, they address groups of around 25 students who are the same age. The students are monolinguals, have previous formal education, similar abilities, and they are mixed gender, and most of the teachers are non-native English speakers.

However, the analysis is partially or totally unclear and heterogeneous when it comes to groups made up of adult learners. On the one hand, university students come from various backgrounds, are slightly (to say the least) unmotivated, undisciplined, uninterested or difficult to get interested in anything, therefore talkative, and their language skills vary profoundly (from almost A1 level to Cambridge certificate holders). On the other hand, employees who benefit from language classes within the company they work for are impossible to profile: they can range from newly employed graduates to retired part-time workers, in terms of age and their academic profile hardly fits a grid.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that teaching grown-ups is different from teaching young(er) learners, particularly due to the adults' motivations, needs and individual differences (or the absence of these). Teaching English to adult learners brings new factors to the fore: their previous knowledge of the foreign language, the degree of linguistic exercise, and their language skills. According to Scrivener and to my own observations, they can be impatient (not allowing teachers time to speak and not allowing themselves time to read and internalize instructions), stubborn and experienced which can be translated by certain attitudes towards learning and teaching and lack of openness towards new teaching methods. Last but not least, the most discouraging factors are their embarrassment to make mistakes in public and their frustration with their level of English.

[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs#CITEREFMaslow1943

2. Practical observations

But let us assume that everybody joins the lesson with their best intentions, willing to discover the best version of themselves. In the educational context of the language class, confidence is the feeling of belonging in the world, being ready "to communicate in an ever-growing range of situations beyond the classroom"[8]. And this can only happen with exercise as *practice makes perfect*. I would suggest opening up the perspective and thinking of the bigger picture, as the ideal learner profile is more and more difficult to find. The following questions are part of one of my practice files for my students, which we read and discuss in class, but today, I am the one giving the answers, or attempting to...

- Does improvement mean reading books? Yes, as reading "could help you live longer", facilitates the development of "skills for the future", and "builds your vocabulary[9].

However, how much does Gen Z read (if they read at all)? From my experience, they stopped reading in middle school (and maybe just a few in high school) and they can hardly be convinced of the benefits. We are talking about a huge shift of paradigm here. We, the previous generations, grew up with the solid foundation that "[t]he world of print is orderly, logical and rational"[10], but that was the only other world that we had access to, more than often an escape from the dull and cruel reality (in my case communism until 1989, the very ambiguous and uncertain 90s, the "brave new world" of the new millennium which brought incredible changes to the Romanian society). For hundreds of years, books were our supreme source, as "[i]n books, knowledge is classified, comprehended, connected and put in its place" (*Ibidem*). Which, to be honest, is still a conception which keeps me going, thus my hesitance to embrace ChatGPT, AI, etc., while the younger generations feel very comfortable with.

But these are different times, different contemporaries, so, what incentives could we find to encourage Gen Z (my students) and Gen Alpha (my daughter and our friends' children) to read? The article quoted above depicts a gloomy perspective, but I believe that the focus should be put on content and not on means, i.e., you can find valuable content online, such as the article that I am just quoting, posted by an acquaintance, and all the online sources that I found on Google. I realized a while back, that I use the internet more than printed materials, simply due to convenience, which is

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[8] https://www.macmillanenglish.com/ro/blog-resources/article/nurturing-confident-communication-skills-in-the-classroom

[9] https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/06/5-reasons-why-reading-books-is-good-for-you/

[10] https://jmarriott.substack.com/p/the-dawn-of-the-post-literate-society-aa1?sfnsn=wa

what the youth look for. Ironically, I am part of a Facebook group that provides reading recommendations for children, and offers regular discounts on printed books! A solution at hand, could be to guide young people to identify their style, interests and preferences, refine these, in order to be able to choose the best content appropriate for them, be it online or printed.

- Does progress mean studying foreign languages? Yes, as "being multilingual gives your brain some remarkable advantages: … higher density of the grey matter, that contains most of your brain's neurons and synapses", helping "delay the onset of diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia by as much as five years"[11].

Let me give you some context. I teach students in the field of agricultural engineering. (Business) English is compulsory and is studied for 3 years, while, for the second language, they can choose between French and German, which are studied for 2 years. From my experience, Gen Z's English skills range from Elementary to Upper-Intermediate and identifying a common path to follow during the seminar, level wise, is very difficult. As far as French is concerned, I have only heard students saying that they simply do not like it and that is the most common response for the past 25 years. When it comes to German, it is a difficult language that they are not necessarily willing to learn, considering the effort they have to put in. Not even the Erasmus+ opportunities are tempting enough, on the one hand, because of the lack of language skills, on the other hand, because of the fear of the unknown, of stepping out of their comfort zone. So, I would not say that students could be motivated by the perspective of a better old age, which is quite normal, as they are too young to care about this. But I still believe we can resort to the right triggers in order to show the youngsters the incredible world that can be revealed through multilingualism and multiculturalism. Emphasizing the importance of communicative competence, feeling good about yourself when being able to understand the others and to make yourself understood, "understanding, appreciating, and respecting another culture [so that you are] respected and appreciated by the others" in order to work together[12] (Jack Ma), enriching your life and opening your mind (paraphrasing the motto for the European Union's Erasmus+ program) might be the convincing factors.

- Does personal development mean enriching your specialized vocabulary in English? Yes, as "business English skills are vital for getting ahead in your

[11] https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-speaking-multiple-languages-benefits-the-brain-mia-nacamulli
[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDy07cIYrdg

career" and while learning Business English, you "understand how the business world works".[13]

This time, some recent news totally caught me off guard and I have been thinking about the information ever since. "According to the latest Eurobarometer data, a quarter of Romanians can have a conversation in English and less than 10% in Italian, French, or Spanish."[14]. I honestly expected a higher percentage, as there has always been a myth in the teachers' world that Romanians have the necessary skills to learn languages, but on the other hand, from my encounters with numerous university students and employees working on improving their skills, the English level has generally been somewhere between A2 and maximum B1, so, insufficient for one to be considered a competent communicator in a professional environment.

So, how can we convince students that their inability to communicate in English results in lost job opportunities or that, in recent years, English is no longer considered an asset, but a prerequisite, while speaking a second foreign language can generate significant revenues?[15] A valid starting point is increasing young people's self-esteem and confidence. According to trainer Irina Vlad, it is all about "attitude…[and] understanding that in communication, politeness and respect for others' personal boundaries are extremely important". Nowadays, it is no longer necessarily relevant to refer to these linguistic abilities in terms of a diploma or a good score[16]. What you can do with these abilities matters more, how you can put them into practice. When I am lucky enough to have a student with work experience, whose competences have already been tested in job interviews and trial periods and who is willing to share their professional path, the other young people in the class are more receptive to the importance of Business English and the benefits of understanding the business environment. This is the kind of example they can relate to and also the above-mentioned piece of news, reality itself, surprised some of them and has given them food for thought.

- Is collaboration (another term for cooperation or for teamwork**)** a job facilitator? Yes, as it involves communication among people, departments, organizations, in their endeavor to achieve something together.

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[13] http://www.businessenglishstudio.com/here-is-why-business-english-is-so-important-for-your-career/?lang=en

[14] https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/financiar/limbile-straine-un-avantaj-pe-piata-muncii-in-2025-doar-un-sfert-dintre-romani-pot-purta-o-conversatie-in-engleza.html

[15] https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/societate/cunoasterea-limbii-engleze-nu-mai-este-un-mare-2336184.html

[16] https://adevarul.ro/stil-de-viata/a-vorbi-engleza-bine-la-job-se-traduce-in-2125093.html

Whether or not students feel comfortable working collaboratively with their peers, particularly when we organize random pairs, I assign several projects which imply two (exceptionally three) peers working together to create a presentation which is to be delivered and evaluated in class, both by me and their groupmates. My arguments are to teach the youth the importance of teamwork and that daily workplace activities call for "people [to] discover their strengths", for instance, Meredith Belbin considering that "everyone can make a valuable contribution at work, as long as they are able to identify and use" their strong points in a "high-performing" "team setting"[17].

Obviously, when we refer to strengths, to qualities that we can resort to in our individual or team tasks, we should also take a moment of introspection into weaknesses, identifying, accepting, and learning from them. That can be also challenging in the interaction with persons in their 20s, as, for example, some of them do not see their lack of language skills as a weak point, or they are not willing to open up and share flaws they perceive as very personal. Again, I have my own "secret remedy" for this and one of my oral examinations consists of a proper job interview with the job portfolio prepared in advance, including the description of a job suitable for students that they could apply for with their current knowledge and skills demonstrated by their CV and application letter. This is a very practical exercise that gives students real life, job-related skills and boosts their self-confidence.

3. Conclusions

I really hope this does not sound like a negative, gloomy opinion essay, as I am very happy with my career and the results I obtain. Teaching Business English enables me to offer many opportunities for student development: improving communication skills in English, focusing on listening, speaking, writing and reading, improving computer skills (making PowerPoint/ Canva/ Prezi presentations, and Google Forms tests), developing interpersonal skills (quizzes, role-play, presentations in pairs), focusing on various soft skills which are extremely relevant to my Management students.

Yes, teaching is a demanding job and learning is a long-term process. But "you can't force love", you need to take one step at a time, as "it takes two to love". There are students who get involved, who are interested in personal development, who do their best and dream big. They are the ones I love teaching to. But I don't want to give up on the others either, I always involve everyone in my classes and everybody gets a fair share of active participation and the most surprising students are those who, given a chance, can finally find the appropriate environment to bloom. There are surely

[17] https://www.belbin.com/about

better, different, more engaging teaching methods, but "I'm only human… Maybe I'm foolish, Maybe I'm blind/ Thinkin' I can see through this and see what's behind!"[18]

Probably the biggest challenge we are all facing nowadays is speed, the fact that the world we live in is changing amazingly fast. What we are learning today will not be relevant tomorrow! With the impact of generative artificial intelligence and its immediate applicability to occupations, considering that AI can assist and even perform different work activities[19], we surely cannot predict the future. "Only time will tell"! Instead, I teach my students that we should aim at accepting that agility and flexibility, the capacity to be aware of the environment and to gain control over the daily circumstances in the most efficient way might be the answer to the future.[20]

Let me conclude by highlighting that the above introspections and theories are meant to be guidelines for my seminar activities (such as job interviews and presentations in pairs, for more interactive exercises, online activities, etc.), for enabling students to choose their future careers, and further suggestions for everybody's own improvement as individuals and professionals.

In the end, maybe the best piece of advice that we can bear in mind is to be hard working and willing to learn, to be open-minded to opportunities, and to be curious. It is all about doing what we love, "lead[ing] a life typified by some quality, condition, or style"[21], by morality and ethics and achieving work-life balance "through a process of increasing awareness, conscious reprioritizing, and implementation of public and private changes."[22]

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L'impact des outils numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des langues étrangères

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Abstract

L'enseignement d'une langue étrangère est un processus complexe qui implique de nombreux acteurs et compétences. Aujourd'hui, les enseignants sont confrontés à de nombreux défis dans les salles de classe en raison du développement continu de la technologie. L'adaptabilité est à la base du progrès, donc il faut accepter et apprendre à s'adapter à la nouvelle réalité numérique. Quelle que soit l'évolution de la technologie, le besoin d'apprendre des langues étrangères ne disparaîtra pas. Les méthodes d'enseignement ont été adaptées aux besoins et aux attentes des élèves. Dans cette nouvelle ère où l'intelligence artificielle et les compétences numériques deviennent la norme, les enseignants doivent adapter leurs cours en conséquence. Les outils numériques aident les enseignants à maximiser leurs résultats et aident les élèves à mieux comprendre. L'utilisation de ces outils est nécessaire afin de répondre aux nouvelles attentes des nouvelles générations.

Keywords

la technologie, outils numériques, l'intelligence artificielle, évolution

1. Introduction

Dans cet article nous nous proposons de mettre en avant l'impact des outils numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des langues étrangères. Pour savoir comment il faut s'adapter à la nouvelle réalité, nous allons comparer plusieurs méthodes d'enseignement qui se sont développées à travers les âges. Nous allons illustrer plusieurs typologies des outils numériques ainsi que leurs avantages. Ce travail cherche d'aider les professeurs à bien choisir leurs outils numériques en analysant les avantages et les désavantages offerts par cette technologie. Nous allons observer l'impact des outils numériques sur l'apprentissage des langues sur les professeurs, mais aussi sur les étudiants. Nous visons à mettre en lumière quelques nouvelles compétences essentielles que l'enseignant devrait maîtriser. Enfin, nous voudrions faire des recommandations pour une utilisation efficace et éthique de ces ressources.

2. L'évolution de l'enseignement des langues étrangères

(Rodríguez Seara, 2001) décrit les principales méthodes d'enseignement et leur évolution dans le temps. La première méthode abordée est la méthodologie

traditionnelle qui est aussi surnommée la méthodologie grammaire-traduction. Cette méthode était employée dans l'enseignement du grec et du latin et elle s'est développée dans la seconde moitié du XIXème siècle. Comme méthode pratique, elle privilégiait la traduction et la lecture et n'accordait pas beaucoup d'importance à l'oral (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 2).

Après l'émergence de la méthode traditionnelle, on observe l'apparition d'une nouvelle méthode-la méthode naturelle qui coexiste avec la première. Cette nouvelle méthode s'oppose aux principes précédents et elle accorde beaucoup plus d'importance à l'oral. Selon cette méthode, l'oral doit être privilégié par rapport à l'écrit, parce qu'une langue étrangère doit être apprise à travers le langage usuel, quotidien (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 4).

Vers la fin du XIXème siècle et le début du XXème siècle, on peut observer une nouvelle méthodologie qui est apparue en Allemagne et en France. La méthode directe suppose une approche plus naturelle. Cette méthode interdit la traduction des mots pour les expliquer. L'enseignant doit faire appel à d'objets ou des support visuels pour expliquer un mot et jamais le traduire dans une langue maternelle. Elle vise que l'enfant essaie de penser dans une langue étrangère dès les plus jeunes âges. La prononciation et la conversation sont des aspects privilégiés par la méthodologie directe (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 5-6).

Depuis les années 1920 jusqu'aux années 1960, on s'oriente plutôt vers les méthodologies traditionnelles, comme la méthodologie directe. Une nouvelle méthodologie, la méthode active est utilisée pour enseigner les langues vivantes étrangères. On privilégie l'écrit comme support didactique par rapport à l'oral et on observe une plus grande flexibilité dans l'enseignement du vocabulaire grâce à la réintroduction de la langue maternelle pour expliquer des concepts. C'est ainsi que la traduction des mots inconnus était désormais permise (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 7).

Pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale, on observe l'émergence d'une nouvelle méthode- la méthodologie audio-orale qui s'est développée comme un outil d'apprentissage qui visait à aider l'armée américaine à former des gens qui parlaient plusieurs langues que l'anglais. Cette méthode accordait beaucoup d'importance à l'oral et s'axait sur des exercices de répétition et imitation qui aident les apprenants à assimiler la structure de la langue. La grammaire n'était pas très importante, car la compréhension, la prononciation et les dialogues étaient favorisés (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 8).

Datant des années 1920-1930, mais reprise pendant les années 1950 comme la méthode orale britannique, la méthodologie situationnelle anglaise devient une méthode très connue. Elle donne beaucoup d'importance aux éléments visuels, même la grammaire est enseignée en tableaux, et à l'oral. L'enseignant encourage les étudiants à parler et choisit le vocabulaire en fonction de sa pertinence et fréquence (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 9).

La méthodologie audiovisuelle se basait sur le besoin de la France de renforcer son implantation dans les colonies. La France voulait lutter contre le développement de la langue anglaise et crée ainsi une affaire d'Etat qui comprend l'enseignement du FLE. Le Ministère de l'Education Nationale a créé une Commission qui était chargée de renforcer le français élémentaire qui était un mélange de grammaire et lexique, conçue à partir de la langue quotidienne. Cette méthode privilégie le rapport entre les images et les sons et la composante orale (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 10).

Conformément à (Rodríguez Seara, 2001: 15), de nos jours, ,, Il n'y a pas de méthodologie unique, forte, globale et universelle sur laquelle tous seraient d'accord.''. Chaque enseignant choisit de créer ses leçons en se basant sur des principes fondamentaux comme la grammaire, la graphie, la phonétique, la prononciation, mais qui sont adaptés à chaque classe. Le professeur adapte le processus d'apprentissage en fonction des besoins de ses étudiants. G.Vigner considère que la méthodologie actuelle repose sur l'interactivité qui devinent la motivation de l'apprentissage. En créant des leçons interactives, les enseignants font appel à toute sortes de techniques d'apprentissage qui stimulent les étudiants et qui leurs donnent envie d'apprendre.

Nous pouvons identifier une nouvelle méthode-celle numérique qui continue de se développer grâce au progrès technologique et dont nous allons discuter dans cet article.

3. Typologie des outils

Un outil numérique pédagogique est un logiciel ou une application utilisée dans un cadre éducatif pour soutenir l'enseignement et l'apprentissage (Kwark, 2024). On peut distinguer parmi plusieurs types des outils numériques. (Linkpick, 2024) identifie plusieurs typologies comme les plateformes d'apprentissage en ligne, les outils de collaboration à distance, les supports pédagogiques interactifs et les solutions de gestions des cours et des évaluations. Nous allons illustrer l'utilisation et l'efficacité de chaque outil.

Les plateformes d'apprentissage en ligne peuvent être divisés dans deux catégories: les LMS (Learning Management System) et MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course). Les LMS sont des plateformes qui permettent la gestion de l'apprentissage et l'organisation, la distribution et le suivi d'une formation ou d'un cours. Un LMS est une plateforme fermée dont l'accès est restreint aux apprenants inscrits à une université ou une organisation. Ce type d'outil est utilisé pour les formations internes et parmi les plus utilisés on remarque Moodle ou Canvas. Les MOOCs offrent des cours en ligne qui sont accessibles à tous. Ce type d'outil ne requiert pas que les participants appartiennent à une certaine institution. L'accès est libre et souvent gratuit, car le but de MOOCs est de former beaucoup de gens. Coursera et edX sont des MOOCs qui offrent une grande variété des cours. Ces plateformes sont très utiles dans le processus d'apprentissage parce que les enseignants

peuvent ainsi communiquer avec les étudiants à distance en attribuant des devoirs, créer des forums ou des espaces d'interaction virtuelle. Grâce aux plateformes, c'est plus facile de gestionner la classe et d'offrir un feedback personnalisé aux apprenants.

Les outils de collaboration à distance représentent aussi un outil numérique très important. Les outils tels que Zoom, Microsoft Teams et Google Meet permettent aux enseignants de se connecter en ligne pour un cours transmis en direct. Ces outils permettent d'avoir une interaction en temps réel sans se déplacer. Ce sont des outils extrêmement importants dans le cas des formation suivis à distance ou dans des cas où il est impossible de participer en présentiel au cours. Grâce au caractère interactif ces outils permettent aux étudiants de collaborer, de discuter et d'avoir une expérience d'apprentissage qui imite l'apprentissage classique en présentiel. Malgré la distance physique, les étudiants et les professeurs restent connectes et interagissent de manière efficace. Ces outils réduisent le besoin de se déplacer et aident ainsi à gagner du temps lors du processus d'apprentissage.

Un autre outil numérique qui contribue au processus d'apprentissage est représenté par les supports pédagogiques interactifs. Des outils comme Kahoot et Quizinière aident les enseignants à créer des leçons interactives et de vérifier de manière ludique les connaissances de leurs étudiants. En participant à un quiz, les étudiants ne se sentent pas évalués, mais ils perçoivent l'exercice comme un jeu. La composante visuelle offre une expérience pratique aux étudiants et renforce leurs compétences. Genially aide aussi les enseignants à créer des présentations très intéressantes, des infographies et des jeux pédagogiques. L'apprentissage devient plus interactif et dynamique, c'est à dire plus attirant pour les étudiants. Padlet est un outil qui permet de créer des murs collaboratifs. Les étudiants partagent leurs idées et leurs connaissances qui sont puis publiés.

Une grande aide pour les enseignants est représentée par les plateformes de gestions de cours et des évaluations. Ces outils, tels que Turnitin et Moodle, permettent la création, la distribution et l'évaluation des examens ou des devoirs. Ces plateformes aident les enseignants à détecter le contenu plagié et de fournir du feedback personnalisé plus facilement. Parfois, les professeurs peuvent fournir les réponses correctes et certaines plateformes corrigent automatiquement les devoirs des étudiants en leur offrant du feedback instant. Ces plateformes se basent sur l'automatisation des processus administratifs et répétitifs, en offrants aux enseignant plus de temps à accorder aux activités pédagogiques.

Les applications tels que Duolingo, Babbel ou Memrise sont aussi très utiles dans le processus d'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère. Elles sont très accessibles et flexible. L'étudiant peut apprendre n'importe où et n'importe quand depuis n'importe quel support numérique. L'accessibilité de l'apprentissage assure la consistance. Ces applications motivent les apprenants à travers des points et niveaux et petits prix qui transforment l'apprentissage dans un jeu. Le processus d'apprentissage est basé sur la

répétition de concepts appris à intervalles réguliers afin d'aider les étudiants à ne pas oublier et à répéter constamment. Grâce à ces applications, les étudiants renforcent toutes les compétences élémentaires (la lecture, la compréhension de l'écrit, la compréhension de l'oral et la production écrite).

Le dernier outil que nous allons aborder- les outils de traduction comme DeepL ou Google Translate et les dictionnaires en ligne comme Larousse, ou Le Petit Robert. Les outils de traduction permettent aux étudiants de comprendre très rapidement un texte. Les étudiants peuvent chercher la traduction d'un mot ou d'un texte et ils apprennent ainsi beaucoup de nouveaux mots. Une variante assez moins populaire, mais très utile, chez les étudiants- les dictionnaires. Parfois, malheureusement, les étudiants oublient l'utilité des dictionnaires. Ils nous offrent l'explication des mots et plusieurs exemples et contextes. Les dictionnaires en ligne représentent une très grande opportunité d'apprendre de nouveaux mots et d'apprendre comment les utiliser correctement. Les dictionnaires contribuent aussi à la prononciation en offrant aux étudiants la variante correcte pour prononcer un certain mot. Tous ces outils contribuent à l'expérience d'apprentissage de l'apprenant et facilitent l'interaction avec les étudiants.

Le choix d'un outil numérique est assez simple si on prend en compte quelque aspects essentiels. (Kwark, 2024) offre quelques conseils pour bien choisir son outil numérique. Premièrement, il faut identifier les objectifs de la leçon et les compétences visées. L'enseignant doit choisir l'outil en fonction des besoins des étudiants et en fonction du spécifique du sujet enseigné. Le professeur doit aussi tenir compte des ressources technologiques auxquelles il a accès. L'équipement disponible guide l'activité numérique parce que le professeur doit s'assurer que l'équipement permet l'utilisation d'un certain format. L'enseignant doit aussi tester plusieurs outils afin de savoir leur efficacité, leur attractivité pour les étudiants. Il faut demander du feedback constat pour savoir si les étudiants aiment ou n'aiment pas cet outil. Un aspect très important est la confidentialité et la sécurité des données. L'outil choisi doit respecter les normes de sécurité et de confidentialité parce que les données des étudiants sont très importantes et doivent être protégées.

4. Avantages et limites

Il y a beaucoup d'avantages lors qu'il s'agit de l'utilisation des outils numériques, mais cette technologie a aussi quelques limite et défis auxquels il faut faire face. Nous allons discuter les principaux avantages et les défis imposés par les outils numériques.

Le premier grand avantage est la capacité de personnaliser le contenu en fonction du niveau et des besoins de chaque apprenant. Grace aux outils numériques, on peut simplifier une leçon ou les exercices proposés très rapidement. Ensuite, les étudiants

qui ont des difficultés à suivre les leçons bénéficieront d'un contenu personnalisé qui va les aider à mieux comprendre.

Les outils permettent aussi une plus large inclusion et accessibilité. Les personnes qui souffrent d'un handicap peuvent trouver des leçons adaptées grâce aux outils qui permettent la création de tels matériaux accessibles. Il y a beaucoup d'outils qui emploient la synthèse vocale, ou le sous-titrage afin de correspondre aux besoins des apprenants. Ces outils favorisent ainsi une éducation plus inclusive. Les outils sont aussi très accessibles parce qu'ils nous permettent d'apprendre partout et à tout moment. On peut suivre un cours en ligne ou utiliser une application chez nous. C'est très facile et flexible.

Un autre avantage est représenté par l'amélioration du processus d'apprentissage. Ces outils proposent des leçons plus interactives, plus modern grâce aux vidéos, aux quiz et aux plateformes qui encouragent la collaboration. Les cours deviennent ainsi plus dynamiques et mieux adaptés aux styles d'apprentissage des étudiants qui préfèrent de plus en plus les leçons digitalisées. Ce nouveau système devient plus adapté à l'époque actuelle ou les étudiants sont plus autonomes, ils maîtrisent les technologies et ils aiment et savent comment collaborer même à distance. Les outils aident énormément l'enseignant car ils facilitent la gestion du temps. Ils permettent la correction des exerces et une communication immédiate avec les étudiants. Un autre avantage significatif est l'interactivité et l'engagement des étudiants grâce aux outils numériques. L'utilisation de la technologie stimule les étudiants de participer aux jeux et cours, car ils deviennent les principaux acteurs du processus d'apprentissage. Ils sont motivés à apprendre grâce au caractère pratique et dynamique des cours. Leur curiosité est stimulée et la rétention des informations est accrue.

Même si les outils numériques apportent beaucoup de bénéfices au processus d'apprentissage, il faut prendre en compte les limite de cette technologie. L'utilisation des outils numériques peut susciter quelques réticences chez certaines personnes. Il a beaucoup de gens qui craignent cette technologie parce qu'ils ne sont pas habitués avec les ressources numériques. Il y a des enseignants qui craignent d'être remplacés par ces outils, mais nous pensons que c'est impossible, parce que les enseignants ont un rôle qui est parmi les plus importants dans la société. Ils forment les futurs professionnels et leur métier est très spécial, nécessite beaucoup de travail et de formation , donc ils ne seront pas remplacés par des mécanismes. Les outils vont juste les aider, pas voler le métier.

Un autre défi est la sécurité des données. Dans l'ère numérique, la sécurité des informations est essentielle. Si les outils n'offrent pas les meilleurs mesures de sécurité, les données pourraient être mal utilisées. La cybersécurité est très essentielle lors de l'utilisation des outils numériques.

Peut-être le plus grand défi est l'inégalité d'accès à une connexion Internet et aux outils numériques. Il y a beaucoup de pays et de régions ou les étudiants n'ont pas un

accès stable à Internet ni à un ordinateur ou un autre support digital. Ces différences affectent le processus d'apprentissage pour beaucoup d'étudiants. Il est essentiel donc de faire face à cette fracture numérique afin de pouvoir employer les outils numériques partout. Les inégalités ne se résument pas juste à l'accès à Internet. Il y a beaucoup de différences entre les compétences numériques des enseignants de différents pays. Ils n'ont pas les mêmes compétences numériques et certains n'ont pas bénéficié d'une formation. Cela peut limiter la qualité de l'enseignent numérique et peut accroitre les inégalités dans les processus éducatifs de différents pays. Ces outils ne sont pas parfaits. Ils se confrontent à nombreux problèmes comme les problèmes de connexion, les bugs ou la lenteur des plateformes. Ces difficultés techniques ralentissent les cours et peuvent parfois décourager les utilisateurs à les accéder.

Un autre défi extrêmement important est lié à l'éthique de l'IA. Il faut prendre en compte la qualité des informations transmise et il faut être transparent avec l'utilisation de ces outils.

Malgré les défis, il faut apprendre à intégrer les outils numériques dans les leçons afin d'adapter le processus d'apprentissage aux besoins et aux attentes de la nouvelle génération.

5. L'impact des outils numériques sur l'apprentissage des langues

Pour les étudiants, les outils numériques ont un impact significatif et positif dans la plupart des cas. Les outils numériques aident les étudiants à développer leurs compétences numériques, ce qui est très important parce que l'utilisation de ces outils leur permet d'évoluer dans une société qui devient de plus en plus digitalisés. Utiliser assez constamment ces technologies leur permet de maîtriser les programmes, de s'habituer avec la recherche des informations et de s'adapter à la communication à distance.

Ces savoir-faire deviennent indispensables pour leur future profession et représenteront un atout majeur pour leur future employabilité.

Les outils numériques offrent du feedback instantané aux utilisateurs. Grâce à l'intelligence artificielle, les étudiants peuvent identifier leurs erreurs et peuvent apprendre quelle et la solution correcte. Ce type de feedback renforce la motivation parce qu'il permet de visualiser le progrès en temps réel.

L'apprentissage à son propre rythme devient possible grâce aux outils numériques qui s'adaptent aux besoins des utilisateurs. Grâce à cette technologie, les étudiants peuvent réviser une certaine leçon et peuvent s'entrainer à travers des exercices. L'adaptabilité est essentielle pour assurer l'efficacité du processus d'apprentissage.

Les outils numériques deviennent aussi un facteur de motivation intrinsèque. Les étudiants ne se sentent plus obligés d'apprendre quelque chose, mais par leur choix. Les enseignants peuvent encourager cette motivation en offrant aux étudiants accès aux

outils qui il vont utiliser et à suggérer de nouveaux outils de gestion du temps (Labo Société Numérique, 2023).

Les outils numériques favorisent aussi le travail en équipe et les interactions entre les étudiants en permettant des interactions hors de la classe. Lors de la pandémie, nous nous sommes habitués avec des visioconférences qui remplaçaient les classes traditionnelles. Les cours en ligne ne peuvent pas remplacer les méthodes traditionnelles mais dans certains cas ils sont très efficaces. Grâce aux outils numériques on peut partager des ressources et des documents très rapidement et on peut compléter la leçon (Labo Société Numérique, 2023).

L'impact des outils numériques sur les enseignants est aussi assez évident. Les enseignants doivent adapter leurs pratiques pédagogiques. Le développement technologique pousse les professeurs à repenser leurs méthodes et à adapter leurs leçons afin qu'elles deviennent plus interactives. Par l'intégration des nouvelles techniques, les enseignants attirent leu étudiants et favorisent une participation plus active grâce aux activités proposées.

L'utilisation des outil numériques aide le professeur à développer leurs compétences numériques. Ils apprennent à rechercher en ligne, à communiquer avec les étudiants et à créer des contenus interactifs et multimédia. Ces outils permettent aussi de diversifier les méthodes d'évaluation. Les enseignants peuvent utiliser des quiz en ligne ou des projets multimédia afin de tester les compétences des étudiants et afin de les évaluer plus rapidement.

Les outils numériques deviennent une aide pour les enseignants qui devraient collaborer avec ces nouvelles technologies pour transformer la salle de classe dans un espace plus interactif et plus divers.

Le développement des outils numériques affecte aussi les compétences requises pour les enseignants. Au-delà des compétences traditionnelles le professeur doit former de nouvelles compétences. Conformément à *2017 – European Framework For The Digital Competence Of Educators*, l'enseignant doit savoir s'informer et doit savoir comment utiliser le contenu numérique. L'enseignant doit savoir communiquer et collaborer dans des environnements numériques. Il doit savoir comment partager et collaborer à travers les outils. L'enseignant doit être habitué avec la création du contenu numérique (la création des vidéos, textes, des quiz, des programmes). Une autre compétence importante est la sécurité des données il doit savoir les principes de la protection des données et il doit utiliser de manière sure et durable les outils numériques. Ensuite, l'enseignant doit être capable de résoudre les problèmes (choisir les outils adéquats, faire face aux problèmes techniques, utiliser sa créativité et développer et actualiser ses compétences numériques.

Les outils numériques ont un impact assez évident sur le processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage, donc il faut impliquer tous les acteurs des processus afin de faire face aux défis.

6. Recommandations pour une utilisation efficace

Ces outils numériques peuvent offrir une aide significative, mais il faut prendre en compte quelques aspects très importants pour s'assurer que ces outils sont utilisés de manière éthique et efficace. Selon (Linkpick, 2024), il y a plusieurs mesures que nous devons prendre en compte pour une utilisation efficace des outils numériques.

Premièrement, il faut impliquer chaque partie qui est connexe au processus didactique, c'est à dire pas juste les enseignants et les étudiants, mais aussi les parents et l'administration d'une école. Il faut communiquer de manière ouverte et collaborer afin de faire face aux problèmes et afin d s'assurer que chaque besoin est pris en compte. La transition vers un processus d'apprentissage plus digitalisé, numérique devrait être progressive et pas du tout dépêchée.

Deuxièmement, il faut vérifier l'efficacité des outils pour identifier les avantages et les désavantages de chaque plateforme. Les enseignants doivent analyser les performances des étudiants et leur feedback pour pouvoir adapter leurs pratiques pédagogiques. Ainsi, le processus d'apprentissage sera amélioré et les étudiants pourront atteindre leurs objectifs.

Il faut aussi accorder beaucoup d'importance à la sécurité de données qui doit être une priorité. Les institutions tel que les écoles ou les universités doivent être transparentes et très informées à ce sujet. Elles pourraient implémenter des politiques concernant la cybersécurité dans l'ère numérique afin d'assurer la sécurité des informations sensibles des étudiants et des enseignants. Les réseaux des écoles devraient être sécurisés et l'institution devrait respecter les régentations sur la confidentialité des données.

Un autre aspect très important est la formation aux outils numériques. Les enseignants devraient bénéficier d'une formation pour savoir comment intégrer les outils numériques dans leurs cours. Ils devraient avoir accès à des cours réguliers pour continuer de progresser et de renforcer ses compétences numériques. Les enseignants devraient aussi bénéficier d'un soutien technique et d'assistance afin de les aider à faire face aux problèmes techniques. C'est ensuite le rôle de l'étudiant, après avoir été formé, d'aider les étudiants à utiliser ces outils.

(Kwark, 2024) propose encore deux mesures importantes que nous devrions prendre en compte lors de l'utilisation de ces technologies. Ils insistent sur la diversité des outils et l'importance de la collaboration. Les enseignants devraient choisir des outils numériques adéquats aux besoins des étudiants et ils devraient alterner les ressources choisies. Les étudiants peuvent penser que l'utilisation d'un seul outil est ennuyeuse et ne les suscite plus l'attention. La collaboration est aussi un élément clé dans le processus d'apprentissage à travers ces outils. Les enseignants devraient proposer des travaux collectifs grâce aux outils. Cette technologie n'aide pas qu'à la consultation des informations, mais elles facilitent aussi le travail en équipe.

Nous voudrions insister sur un certain défi imposé par l'utilisation des outils numériques- l'usage responsable des outils qui utilisent l'intelligence artificielle. Il est très important de choisir un outil ou une ressource libre de droits afin de respecter les droits d'auteur. Il faut toujours citer les sourcer si on utilise des extraits ou des images ou chansons que nous trouvons en ligne. Si on utilise l'IA pour générer des textes ou images nous devrons mentionner cela. Il faut aussi éviter de copier-coller des exercices ou activités sans être autorisé. L'utilisation des outils numériques, devrait restaurer une aide, pas une substitute dans le processus d'apprentissage.

7. Conclusions

Nous avons essayé de démontrer, à travers notre travail, l'importance des outils numériques. Nous avons néanmoins essayé d'être objectifs et de présenter les avantages aussi que les limites de ces technologies. Les outils numériques peuvent appuyer sans doute les processus d'apprentissage parce qu'ils mettent à disposition des étudiants un environnement plus accessible, tout en ouvrant de nombreuses perspectives de développement, Il convient toutefois de prendre en considération les limites inhérentes à ces outils, et d'apprendre à les utiliser de façon éthique et efficiente.

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Title in English: ***The impact of digital tools on foreign language teaching and learning***

Abstract in English: *Teaching a foreign language is a complex process that involves numerous participants and skills. Nowadays, teachers are facing a lot of challenges in the traditional classrooms because of the continuous development of technology. Adaptability lies at the base of progress, therefore it is our duty to embrace and to learn how to adapt to the newly digitalized reality. No matter how advanced technology becomes, the need for learning foreign languages will not disappear. Over the years, teaching methods have been adapted to students' needs and expectations. In this new era where artificial intelligence and digital skills are becoming the new normal, teachers must adapt their lessons accordingly. Digital tools contribute to the teaching process as they help teachers maximize their results and help students understand better. The use of such tools is necessary to meet the new expectations of the new generations of students to come.*

Keywords in English: *technology, digital tools, artificial intelligence, evolution*

Cultural Narratives in Marketing Education: Teaching Students to Decode and Create Meaning across Cultures

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Abstract

Marketing education in business programmes frequently relies on international case studies to illustrate branding and communication across cultural contexts. These cases are typically approached through managerial lenses that emphasise evaluation and effectiveness. This paper argues that marketing case studies can instead be read as cultural narratives that construct and circulate meaning. Drawing on intercultural competence research (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006), cultural studies theories of representation and meaning-making (Hall, 1980, 1997; Barthes, 1957), and interpretive approaches to marketing education (Hackley, 2003), the paper develops a conceptual framework for treating marketing cases as cultural texts. It then demonstrates how sustained *decoding* practices, using familiar marketing communication cases (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020), can foster intercultural learning without introducing additional curricular content.

Keywords

cultural studies; marketing education; cultural narratives; intercultural competence; decoding; representation; case-based learning

1. Introduction: Marketing Education as a Cultural Site

Marketing education occupies a distinctive position within higher education. Marketing communication is, by its very nature, a cultural practice. Advertising and branding rely on narrative, symbolism, imagery, and affect to construct meaning around products, identities, and lifestyles. At the same time, marketing education has traditionally framed these practices in instrumental terms, emphasising strategy, effectiveness, and performance. As a result, the cultural work performed by marketing communication often remains implicit rather than explicitly addressed.

This tension is particularly visible in the widespread use of case-based learning. Marketing students are routinely exposed to international campaigns through textbook cases that present examples of successful or unsuccessful communication strategies. These cases are concrete, recognisable, and professionally relevant. They offer students a sense of proximity to real-world practice. Yet the way they are typically discussed encourages rapid judgment. Students learn to assess campaigns in terms of coherence, brand fit, or return on investment, often without sustained attention to how meaning is produced and interpreted.

Within international and business-oriented programmes, culture is frequently invoked as a competence to be developed. Graduates are expected to work across borders and communicate with diverse audiences. Yet culture is often treated as contextual background rather than as a central object of inquiry. This paper starts from the assumption that marketing education itself is a cultural site, one in which meanings are produced, circulated, and normalised through pedagogical practices.

The paper argues that marketing case studies can be productively reframed as cultural narratives that invite decoding rather than immediate evaluation. By treating marketing communication as a cultural text, educators can support students in developing interpretive awareness and critical engagement with meaning. The argument is developed through a review of relevant literature, the articulation of a conceptual framework, and an extended discussion of pedagogical practice grounded in long-term teaching experience.

2. Literature Review: Intercultural Competence, Cultural Studies, and Marketing Education

Intercultural competence has become a central learning objective in higher education, particularly within international and business-oriented programmes. As professional practices increasingly unfold in culturally diverse environments, graduates are expected to communicate effectively and appropriately across different cultural backgrounds. Educational research has therefore sought to conceptualise what intercultural competence entails and how it can be developed.

Deardorff's (2006) process-oriented model defines intercultural competence as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, grounded in attitudes such as openness and curiosity, supported by cultural knowledge and interpretive skills. A key feature of this model is its emphasis on development. Intercultural competence is not presented as a fixed set of abilities, but as an ongoing process shaped by experience and reflection. This understanding aligns well with educational contexts, where learning unfolds over time.

Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence complements this perspective by focusing on critical cultural awareness as a core component. Byram emphasises the ability to evaluate cultural practices and representations, including one's own. Culture, in this view, is not something to be managed, but something to be interpreted and critically engaged with. Together, these models position intercultural competence as an interpretive and reflective capacity rather than a purely behavioural one.

Cultural studies offers theoretical resources that resonate strongly with this view. Rather than treating culture as a stable set of traits, cultural studies conceptualises culture as a process of meaning-making. Hall's (1997) theory of representation is foundational here. Representation is understood not as a mirror of reality, but as a constitutive process through which meaning is produced. Cultural texts draw on shared

codes to make meaning intelligible, linking signs, concepts, and values in ways that appear natural because they are familiar.

Barthes' (1957) notion of myth further explains how culturally specific meanings become normalised. Myth transforms historical constructs into apparent universals. In marketing communication, products are repeatedly associated with abstract ideals such as success, happiness, or authenticity, while the cultural assumptions underpinning these associations remain unexamined. Cultural studies reveals how such narratives acquire authority and shape common sense.

Within marketing education, culture has often been addressed instrumentally, framed as a variable influencing consumer behaviour or communication effectiveness. Hackley (2003) challenges this orientation by arguing that marketing knowledge is inherently interpretive. Understanding marketing communication requires engagement with meaning, symbolism, and discourse. From this perspective, marketing education offers a productive site for integrating cultural analysis and intercultural learning.

While intercultural competence research emphasises interpretation and reflexivity, and cultural studies offers robust theories of meaning-making, these perspectives have rarely been systematically integrated into marketing education's case-based pedagogy. As a result, marketing case studies are predominantly approached as strategic problems rather than as cultural texts for intercultural learning.

3. Conceptual Framework: Marketing Case Studies as Cultural Texts for Intercultural Learning

This paper adopts a conceptual framework that integrates intercultural competence research, cultural studies perspectives on meaning-making, and pedagogical work on case-based learning in marketing education. Central to this framework is the conceptualisation of marketing case studies not merely as instructional tools for applied business problem-solving, but as cultural texts through which intercultural competence can be developed.

Intercultural competence is understood here as a developmental educational outcome involving attitudes of openness, cultural knowledge, interpretive skills, and critical cultural awareness, as articulated by Deardorff (2006) and Byram (1997). These models emphasise that intercultural learning requires more than exposure to cultural difference. It requires guided interpretation, reflection, and engagement with meaning. Learning activities must therefore encourage students to analyse cultural assumptions, question taken-for-granted norms, and reflect on their own interpretive positions.

Cultural studies provides the analytical lens through which marketing case studies can fulfil this function. Drawing on Hall's (1997) theory of representation, marketing communication is understood as a system through which cultural meanings are encoded and circulated. Advertising and branding do not simply transmit

information about products or services, but construct narratives about identity, values, and social relations. Barthes' (1957) notion of myth further highlights how marketing messages naturalise culturally specific meanings, presenting them as common sense or universal. Within consumer culture theory, branding and consumption are similarly viewed as sites where cultural identities and social distinctions are produced (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

When marketing case studies are approached through these perspectives, they become analytically rich pedagogical objects. International marketing cases commonly found in marketing communication textbooks illustrate how cultural values, symbolic appeals, and representations differ across contexts. Rather than treating these differences primarily as functional adaptations aimed at market effectiveness, the present framework positions them as opportunities for cultural interpretation. Attention is directed toward how meanings are constructed, whose perspectives are privileged, and which assumptions underpin particular marketing narratives.

The pedagogical dimension of the framework builds on interpretive approaches to marketing education. As Hackley (2003) argues, marketing learning is inherently cultural and interpretive. Within this framework, marketing case studies serve as a bridge between theory and practice. They provide concrete material that can be analysed using cultural concepts while remaining grounded in the realities of business education. Through sustained engagement with marketing cases as cultural texts, intercultural competence is developed through interpretive practice and reflective engagement, rather than through prescriptive models that specify correct behaviours or cultural responses.

4. Marketing Case Studies as Cultural Narratives: From Strategic Problems to Interpretive Objects

Building on cultural studies and marketing pedagogy, this paper conceptualises marketing case studies as cultural narratives. The point is not merely that marketing communication often takes narrative form, but that case materials themselves invite particular modes of reading. In conventional case pedagogy, the dominant reading practice tends to be diagnostic and instrumental: students identify a problem, weigh options, and propose solutions. This mode of reading is professionally valuable, yet it also predisposes students to treat meaning as transparent and to treat cultural difference as an "external variable" rather than as something constitutive of the communication itself.

A cultural studies orientation shifts the case from being primarily a managerial puzzle to being an interpretive object. Hall's encoding/decoding model is central here. Marketing communication encodes preferred meanings, through imagery, language, narrative sequencing, and emotional appeal, while audiences decode these meanings through culturally-situated interpretive frameworks, producing dominant, negotiated,

or oppositional readings (Hall, 1980). Meaning is therefore not an inert substance carried by the message, but a social process that becomes visible when reading is slowed down and made explicit. Barthes' (1957) notion of myth complements this perspective by highlighting how marketing narratives naturalise culturally specific meanings, presenting them as universal or self-evident through repetition, aesthetic coherence, and affective appeal.

Consumer culture theory further situates these narrative processes within the wider dynamics of identity and belonging. Brands function as symbolic resources through which consumers position themselves and make sense of social relations (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). For pedagogy, this means that case analysis can move beyond the question of whether a campaign succeeds to the question of what cultural work it performs: what kinds of subjects it imagines, what forms of life it renders desirable, and what values it "normalises".

To operationalise this shift, the conceptual framework implies a change in reading practices. Decoding becomes the bridging mechanism between theory and classroom practice. It involves disciplined attention to representational choices; close reading of narrative structure and imagery; comparative interpretation across contexts; and structured reflection on positionality, referring to how one's own cultural location shapes what appears "natural," "effective," or "appropriate." Within this framework, marketing cases become sites of cultural interpretation in which students learn to articulate how meaning is constructed, contested, and stabilised. The following section shows how this interpretive approach can be enacted through sustained *decoding* practices that remain grounded in familiar marketing case materials while fostering intercultural learning as an educational outcome (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006).

Conceptually, the framework links marketing case studies (as texts), cultural studies concepts (as analytical tools), and intercultural competence models (as learning outcomes), with *decoding* functioning as the pedagogical mechanism that connects analysis to learning.

4.1. Decoding Meaning in the Marketing Classroom: Pedagogical Practice and Extended Examples

This section forms the empirical and pedagogical core of the paper. It draws on long-term experience of teaching marketing communication in higher education and examines how the conceptual framework outlined above can be enacted through sustained *decoding* practices in the classroom. Rather than presenting *decoding* as a discrete teaching technique, this section approaches it as a gradual reorientation of how students engage with marketing communication. The emphasis shifts away from immediate assessment toward interpretive attentiveness, reflexivity, and cultural responsibility.

Students typically approach marketing case studies with a high degree of confidence. Global brands, recognisable campaigns and clearly articulated objectives

create an immediate sense of familiarity. This familiarity lowers the threshold for participation and encourages active discussion. At the same time, it also shapes the mode of engagement. Students tend to move quickly toward evaluation, offering judgments about effectiveness, creativity, or brand fit. These judgments are often articulated fluently, yet they rest on largely unexamined assumptions about what counts as persuasive, appropriate, or appealing communication. The interpretive labour performed by marketing communication is thereby rendered invisible: students treat meaning as if it were naturally present, rather than culturally produced.

Introducing *decoding* deliberately interrupts this habitual pattern. Rather than asking students whether a campaign works, the pedagogical focus shifts toward how meaning is produced. This change initially feels counterintuitive to many students, particularly in professionally-oriented programmes where competence is often tacitly associated with speed, decisiveness, and the ability to offer "solutions." Over time, however, *decoding* makes it possible to cultivate a different mode of engagement in which interpretation precedes evaluation. Campaigns are no longer treated as self-evident messages, but as cultural constructions that invite multiple readings. This shift resonates strongly with Hall's encoding/decoding perspective, in which meaning does not reside transparently in the message, but is produced through interpretive encounters shaped by cultural positioning (Hall, 1980).

Cases involving the localisation of global campaigns are especially productive in this regard. Marketing Communications (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020) includes numerous cases in which the same brand communicates differently across cultural contexts. Within a managerial frame, these differences are often explained in terms of strategic adaptation or market effectiveness. A *decoding*-oriented approach reframes the task by directing attention to the preferred meanings encoded in each campaign. Students are encouraged to examine what values are emphasised, which identities are "normalised" and how audiences are imagined through narrative structure, imagery, and emotional appeal.

In practice, this often reveals patterns that would otherwise remain unnoticed. Campaigns aimed at different markets may articulate contrasting visions of success, belonging, or selfhood. One execution may emphasise individual autonomy and personal achievement, while another highlights social harmony, family relations, or collective identity. Rather than attributing these differences to broad cultural categories, students are guided to remain close to the text itself. Attention is directed to representational choices: who appears in the campaign, how relationships are depicted, what emotions are invoked, and which forms of life and success are presented as desirable. Decoding in this sense is not concerned with categorising cultures, but with tracing how meaning is produced through representation, and how interpretations become culturally stabilised.

Cases relying on humour, emotion, or symbolism further deepen this interpretive work. These campaigns frequently generate divergent responses within the classroom. What some students find humorous or engaging, others experience as confusing, inappropriate, or excessive. Within a *decoding* framework, such divergence is treated as analytically valuable rather than problematic. Students are encouraged to articulate not only what they feel about a campaign, but why a particular reading feels natural or uncomfortable. This process makes visible how interpretation is shaped by cultural familiarity, social norms, and personal experience, and it turns disagreement into an object of inquiry rather than a failure of comprehension.

Over time, students begin to recognise that meaning is not fixed at the point of encoding. Hall's distinction between *dominant, negotiated, and oppositional* readings becomes tangible as students encounter their own interpretive limits (Hall, 1980). Advertisements initially perceived as neutral or universal are recognised as relying on gendered, racialised, or class-based assumptions. Conversely, campaigns dismissed as exaggerated or clichéd are understood as drawing on culturally specific narrative conventions. These moments of recognition are pedagogically significant because they reveal the distance between encoded meaning and decoded interpretation. They also connect directly to the development of critical cultural awareness in intercultural competence models (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006): students learn to examine not only "the other" but also their own interpretive habits.

Visual branding cases add an additional layer to this practice. *Marketing Communications* (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020) includes numerous examples in which visual elements such as colour palettes, spatial arrangements, bodily posture, and gaze carry substantial communicative weight. Students are often accustomed to discussing visuals in terms of aesthetics or brand consistency. A decoding-oriented approach shifts attention toward the cultural codes activated through these visual choices. Representations of bodies, relationships of proximity or distance, and patterns of inclusion and exclusion become central objects of analysis. Through sustained engagement, students come to understand that visual communication is never culturally neutral, but always embedded in systems of meaning and power (Hall, 1997).

4.2 Illustrative Examples: Decoding Cultural Meaning in Marketing Communication Cases

Cases drawn from *Marketing Communications* (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020) are already familiar to students and educators in marketing programmes, which makes them particularly suitable for pedagogical reorientation. Their recognisability lowers the threshold for engagement and encourages participation, yet it also shapes how students read them. Familiarity often leads students to move rapidly from recognition to evaluation, treating the communicative task as self-explanatory. Within a decoding-oriented pedagogy, this familiarity becomes an advantage rather than an obstacle. Because students already feel confident navigating the material, attention can be

redirected toward the interpretive processes through which meaning is produced, stabilised, and contested.

In classroom practice, decoding begins by suspending verdicts. Students are asked to describe what the campaign is doing before deciding whether it is doing it well. This sounds simple, yet it represents a substantial reorientation. It replaces an evaluative stance with an interpretive one, and it asks students to build claims about communication from textual evidence, such as visual composition, narrative sequencing, implied audience, symbolic appeals, rather than from instinctive reactions. In this sense, the case becomes a training ground for interpretive discipline. What is at stake is not only "better analysis" but a more culturally literate form of professional judgment.

A recurring family of cases in De Pelsmacker et al. (2020) concerns the localisation of global campaigns. These cases are often introduced as examples of adaptation and market effectiveness. A decoding approach treats localisation as a representational event: a reworking of narrative and symbolism that reveals culturally situated assumptions. Students begin by identifying the preferred meaning encoded in each execution. The analysis focuses on which lifestyles are presented as desirable, which relationships are highlighted, and which forms of selfhood are implied as normative. Attention then shifts to narrative and affect, examining whether the campaign constructs aspiration through individual achievement, through belonging, through family intimacy, through humour, or through restraint. Differences between executions are not reduced to stereotypes; instead, they are read as differences in cultural storytelling practices.

This close reading often produces an important pedagogical outcome: students become able to articulate their own interpretive positioning. Campaigns that initially appear "strange" or "less appealing" become intelligible once students recognise how their own cultural norms shape what feels persuasive. The classroom thus becomes a site where interpretive confidence is not removed but re-grounded. Students learn to justify interpretations, to recognise alternative readings, and to distinguish between what a campaign encodes and how they themselves decode it (Hall, 1980).

A second family of cases that consistently supports decoding practice involves humour, emotion, and symbolism. These cases frequently generate divergent student responses. Rather than treating divergence as confusion, decoding treats it as evidence of meaning's contingency. Students are encouraged to identify the points at which their readings diverge and to articulate how humour may be experienced as playful or disrespectful, how emotional appeals may be read as authentic or manipulative, and how symbolic elements may be immediately recognisable or remain opaque. Through this process, students come to understand that meaning does not travel intact from sender to receiver but is negotiated in the encounter between message and audience, shaped by culturally learned codes and expectations.

From extensive teaching experience, such moments can trigger "productive" discomfort. Students sometimes discover that campaigns they perceived as neutral depend on gendered, racialised, or class-based assumptions, or that their own immediate judgments were anchored in culturally local definitions of taste, politeness, or credibility. Conversely, campaigns dismissed as clichéd may be recognised as working within culturally specific narrative conventions that are unfamiliar rather than inherently inferior. These are not minor insights. They represent a shift from taking one's own reading as universal to treating it as situated, and this is precisely the kind of reflexivity indicated in the intercultural competence models referred to in this paper (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006).

Visual branding and imagery cases provide a further deepening of decoding practice. Students often begin with aesthetic descriptors such as modern, premium, clean, or authentic. A decoding approach treats these descriptors as interpretive outcomes that require explanation. Analysis focuses on which visual codes make "premium" legible, which behaviours and spaces become associated with "authenticity," and which forms of social life are normalised as desirable through representational choices. Hall's (1997) work on representation becomes concrete as students trace how meaning is carried by visual decisions that appear "natural" only because they are culturally familiar.

At this point, decoding can be extended beyond interpretation into re-encoding without collapsing into a purely creative exercise. Students can be asked to propose alternative encodings for a different cultural context, but only after they have demonstrated interpretive grounding: what they believe the original campaign encodes, and how that meaning is likely to be decoded differently elsewhere. This preserves analytical seriousness while connecting interpretation to professional responsibility. Students become more attentive to the ethical implications of representation, more cautious about assumed universality, and more capable of explaining creative choices in culturally literate terms.

Taken together, these examples show how *decoding* functions as more than a single classroom activity. It operates as a pedagogical orientation that reshapes how students relate to marketing communication. Over cohorts, a consistent pattern emerges: students who learn to decode develop a more measured engagement with campaigns, a stronger capacity to justify interpretations, and a more reflexive awareness of how meaning is constructed and contested. Evaluation does not disappear, but it becomes anchored in analysis. In this sense, the marketing classroom becomes a site where intercultural learning is enacted through interpretive practice, through close reading, comparative analysis, and reflective discussion grounded in familiar case materials (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020).

These classroom sequences also make visible a practical boundary that matters in business education: *decoding* is not an open-ended invitation to "interpret anything,"

but a disciplined practice of accountable reading. Students learn to anchor claims in evidence from the communication itself, including visual composition, narrative structure, and the implied addressee, tonal register, while also learning to articulate the interpretive frameworks they bring to the text. In this sense, *decoding* becomes simultaneously methodological and ethical. It provides criteria for making judgments without prematurely reducing interpretation to effectiveness metrics. Once students can demonstrate interpretive grounding, they can move into professionally relevant tasks, such as adaptation or redesign, in ways that avoid reductive or stereotypical representations of culture. The following clusters extend this discussion by examining cases that explicitly mobilise moral universals, such as brand purpose campaigns, and cases in which consumer "normality" is constructed through visual coding.

4.2.1. Example Cluster A: Misrecognition and the myth of universality in brand purpose cases

While the preceding examples focus primarily on narrative structure and audience interpretation, *decoding* can be further deepened by examining cases that explicitly mobilise moral "universals" and normative ideals. Brand purpose and values-driven campaigns provide a particularly productive site for this discussion, as they combine ethical language with commercial intent in ways that often appear self-evident to students.

A particularly productive family of cases in *Marketing Communications* (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020) concerns campaigns framed as values-driven, ethical, or socially responsible. In classroom discussion, these cases often trigger a kind of misrecognition: students initially treat the campaign's moral language as self-evidently positive and broadly applicable, interpreting it through their own cultural and institutional norms. The discussion then stays at the level of managerial payoff: whether purpose strengthens brand equity, whether Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) improves reputation, whether authenticity is credible. A *decoding* approach reframes the case by asking what moral universe the campaign constructs, which publics it imagines as legitimate addressees, and which values it renders "common sense."

This shift matters because moral narratives in marketing are rarely neutral. They rely on culturally specific assumptions about individuality, responsibility, agency, and social change. Barthes' (1957) notion of myth offers a precise vocabulary for how culturally situated values become naturalised through narrative coherence, repetition, and affect. Students learn to see how empowerment, sustainability, or inclusion can be mobilised as desirable identities while also delimiting what those ideals mean, for whom, and under what conditions. Here, intercultural competence becomes an interpretive practice rather than a tolerant attitude: students practice recognising how their own interpretive comfort is shaped by cultural familiarity, and they develop the

capacity to imagine how alternative audiences might decode the same "ethical" campaign differently (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006).

4.2.2. Example Cluster B: Visual codes, bodies, and the production of "normal" consumers

As outlined earlier, decoding visual branding requires treating aesthetic judgments not as self-evident responses, but as interpretive outcomes shaped by culturally shared codes (Hall, 1997; Barthes, 1957). This analytical move becomes particularly tangible in the visual branding cases included in *Marketing Communications* (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020), where packaging design, lifestyle imagery, and influencer-based campaigns are used to illustrate brand positioning. These cases provide concrete material for examining how visual representation operates through bodies, spaces, and social relations, contributing to the production of normative consumer identities.

For instance, packaging cases frequently rely on minimalist design, muted colour palettes, and spatial restraint to signal "premium" positioning. When approached through decoding, such aesthetics are no longer treated as neutral indicators of quality, but as culturally coded representations that normalise particular classed forms of consumption. Similarly, lifestyle and influencer-style campaigns often centre youthful, mobile, and socially confident bodies in carefully curated domestic or leisure settings. These representational choices actively construct ideals of authenticity, success, and belonging, rather than merely reflecting existing consumer realities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

This is where Hall's work on representation becomes pedagogically concrete (Hall, 1997). Students can be guided to notice how meaning is carried by seemingly minor visual decisions across these cases: who is centred or absent, which relationships are depicted as intimate or aspirational, and how gender, age, and social status are encoded through posture, gaze, outfit and setting. Once students articulate these patterns, they often recognise that their initial reading of a campaign as "neutral" or "universal" was itself culturally positioned, reflecting the operation of myth as the naturalisation of specific cultural meanings (Barthes, 1957).

In several cross-market cases presented in *Marketing Communications* (De Pelsmacker et al., 2020), this insight is reinforced through comparison. Visual adaptations across cultural contexts reveal how assumptions about family, individuality, or social harmony are revised through imagery rather than explicit explanation. *Decoding* such cases enables students to understand how meaning is negotiated across contexts, preparing them to move toward adaptation or redesign with interpretive grounding rather than reliance on cultural stereotypes.

Taken together, these classroom practices demonstrate that *decoding* functions not as a supplementary analytical exercise, but as a sustained pedagogical orientation. Through repeated engagement with familiar marketing cases, students learn to slow

down their reading of communication, to anchor interpretation in textual and visual evidence, and to recognise the cultural assumptions that shape both representation and response. Over time, this practice reshapes how students understand marketing itself. Campaigns are no longer approached solely as problems to be solved or strategies to be optimised, but as cultural narratives that participate in the construction of meaning, identity, and social norms. In this way, *decoding* cultivates interpretive responsibility alongside professional competence, allowing students to move toward tasks such as adaptation or redesign with increased reflective skills and ethical awareness. Rather than displacing established marketing objectives, this approach deepens them by embedding analytical judgment within a culturally informed understanding of communication.

Having shown how decoding can be enacted through everyday teaching practices and widely used marketing materials, the discussion now turns to the broader implications of this approach. The conclusion reflects on what a cultural studies orientation contributes to marketing education and to intercultural learning more generally, and considers how treating marketing cases as cultural narratives reshapes both pedagogical priorities and professional preparation.

5. Conclusion

This paper has argued for a cultural studies approach to marketing education that treats marketing case studies as cultural narratives rather than purely strategic examples. By integrating intercultural competence research, cultural studies, and pedagogical reflection, it has shown how *decoding* can foster interpretive and reflective learning within existing teaching practices.

The contribution of the paper lies in its conceptual integration and its sustained pedagogical discussion. For cultural studies, it demonstrates how theories of representation and meaning-making can be mobilised within educational settings. For marketing education, it offers an approach to culture that moves beyond instrumental adaptation toward interpretive engagement. When marketing classrooms are approached through *decoding*, they become spaces in which students learn to read communication as culturally situated, to recognise difference without reduction, and to reflect on the social implications of meaning-making in professional practice.

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Practices that Support Effective STEM Education: Lessons from Research and the Romanian Context

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Abstract

This paper synthesizes research-based instructional practices that characterize effective K-12 STEM education, framing its analysis based on Chapter 3 of Successful STEM Education: A Workshop Summary (National Research Council, 2011). The review is focused on three key instructional domains that underlie good teaching practice: science teaching as a disciplinary practice; mathematics instruction oriented toward conceptual understanding; and formative assessment as a mechanism for learning. Locating these evidence-based practices within the Romanian landscape of education, the paper reflects upon recent participation statistics and labor market trends in relevant STEM segments. The analysis shows that although Romania has achieved admirable levels of gender equality at the educational levels within STEM, important structural barriers still exist when it comes to moving from completion to professional and leadership roles in research. Thus, this paper highlights the need for consistent, research-oriented, pedagogical strategies that are entirely focused on equity of access and opportunity, along with systemic policy changes that will lead to actual progress into careers and leadership trajectories in STEM.

Keywords:

STEM education, mathematics, gender participation, teaching

1. Introduction

Modern STEM education is progressively placing demands on educators and learners to surpass knowledge transmission and movement of information from context-free facts and to foster scientific reasoning, mathematical argumentation, and creative problem solving. These cognitive and epistemic endeavors are evident in professional scientific and engineering practice. The National Research Council's (2011) examination of high-performing STEM schools and programmes identifies a consistent pedagogical characteristic: effective instruction fosters active, inquiry-based learning experiences rather than passive knowledge reception. This paper examines these instructional practices in detail and situates them within the Romanian educational context, where measurable progress has been achieved in STEM

participation and gender representation; yet, substantial challenges remain in translating educational attainment into professional advancement, equitable labor market participation, and systemic coherence in STEM pedagogy across academic institutions.

2. Science Teaching as Disciplinary Practice

A central premise in Chapter 3 of the National Research Council's (2011) synthesis is that science instruction should be reconceived as engaging students in the practices through which scientific knowledge is constructed, validated, and refined—rather than presenting science primarily as a fixed body of established knowledge. According to Duschl et al., this epistemological turn in orientation places the instructional focus not on what scientists know, but on how scientific understanding is generated, tested, and communicated. In that respect, scientific practices include:

- The development, use, and iterative revision of conceptual models
- The design of investigations, systematic data collection, and analytical interpretation
- The construction of evidence-based arguments and critical engagement with competing claims
- The use of disciplinary representations effectively and communicating findings

All of them are clearly important parts of this pedagogical approach; learning progressions are, at their heart, empirical statements about how student understanding changes, from intuitive or naive understandings to more complex disciplinary reasoning at different grade levels. With this, learning progressions are significant to curriculum design to help ensure alignment of curriculum content, curriculum design, and curriculum assessment, creating cohesion throughout the educational experience. Still, far too many curricula are primarily characterized by fragmentation: too many unrelated topics; weak-to-no links between curriculum content and investigatory practice; and very few opportunities to connect knowledge claims with the methods for developing them via scientific practices. This means that, at a minimum, real reform means a commitment to connection and combine investigation, model-based reasoning, and argumentation in regular classroom activity, not simply contemplations of occasional, or additional activities.

3. Equity and Diversity in STEM Education

Equitable educational opportunity is a defining principle of modern STEM education. Research by Lee and others has convincingly established that documented achievement gaps between mainstream and non-mainstream students – including those from economically disadvantaged, multilingual, and ethnic minority backgrounds –

reflect differences in access to quality learning opportunities rather than differences in innate potential. Equitable science teaching accordingly requires:

- Explicit recognition and valuation of students' cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources
- Intentional use of those resources in disciplinary scientific practices
- Purposeful, equitable provision of access to materials, technological resources, instructional time, and academic support across the wide array of student populations.

Under such conditions present purposefully, students from underrepresented groups succeed at levels that mirror their mainstream counterparts, while also beginning to see themselves as capable participants in scientific knowledge-generating practice. In the Romanian context, this framework encourages attention to observed urban and rural differences in educational contexts, inequitable resource allocation, specific issues related to minority and multilingual student populations, and gender as a dimension of diversity that requires particular consideration. And importantly, more recent equity frameworks favor moving beyond issues of initial access to STEM programmes toward substantive equity of participation and opportunity, making sure that students not only sign up but actually experience confirming, challenging, and intellectually rewarding learning experiences.

4. Mathematics Instruction and Maintenance of Cognitive Demand

Studies collected in Chapter 3 of the National Research Council (2011) highlight that implementation quality is a much more powerful indicator of variance in student learning than a particular curricular program selection and Confrey and colleagues have shown how achievement rests on deep curricular knowledge by teachers facilitating the classroom with consistent high levels of cognitive demand in tasks and actively managing classroom discourse related to explanation, reasoning, and argumentation in mathematics. Nasir (2012) discusses that mathematics is a cognitive and cultural practice and expands this investigation to suggest that when mathematical ideas have meaning linked to lived experiences, and experiences help students' identity to become a competent learner who reasons mathematically, students learn deeper mathematical understandings and develop more persistence as mathematicians. Identity plays an important role in mathematics: a student's sense of their identity as a mathematically competent student will correlate positively with persistence, their engagement, and their willingness to tackle cognitively challenging mathematics problems. Good pedagogical approaches to effective mathematics pedagogy make use of:

- Mathematics tasks with multiple solution strategies and metacognitive reflection by students

- Classroom discourse that is organized to place the focus of students' attention on reasoning and justification of mathematical procedures
- Explicit order that focuses on conceptual understanding before teaching procedural fluency
- Explicit connections among the mathematical ideas between and across topic areas; authentic application to real-life contexts

5. Formative Assessment as an Integral Component of Instruction

The National Research Council (2011) Chapter 3 reframes assessment as fundamentally independent of summative testing to another important area of the instructional cycle. Furthermore, it shifts in favor of Minstrell's Bridging Opportunities for Learning and Thinking (BOLT) Cycle and Frameworks for the Assessment of Conceptual and Epistemological Thinking (FACET) as more operational tools for educators to develop ways of assessing students' reasoning and challenge misconceptions in real time. Assessment that is formative and supportive of learning includes:

- Formative, open-ended inquiry that addresses reasoning and evidence
- Intentional selection of common misconceptions and planning to productively and intentionally engage ideas
- Intentional use of feedback data and cycles of instruction, to create differentiated learning opportunities for students
- Assessment reconceptualized as cyclical (instruction – formative assessment – feedback from learners – refine instruction)

This model creates a significant shift within classroom culture – students move from passive participants in instruction to active learning agents of their own mind; Instructors move from sole authority or dispenser of knowledge to participants in students' conceptual growth or understanding.

6. Disciplinary Integration and STEM Coherence

One consistent theme from Chapter 3 is that the disciplines of science, mathematics, technology, and engineering must work together consistently and intentionally, with coherence between these disciplines and various ways of knowing. The disciplines have deep epistemological and pragmatic roots: mathematics is the formal language with which science constructs descriptions and models of phenomena, while engineering supplies legitimate real-world, complex problems that properly integrate an application of scientific knowledge (either directly or indirectly) and mathematical tools, and finally, technology plays an important role in enabling

complex investigation, simulation, and modeling. Thus, good STEM education programs should:

- Engage students in real-world problems that require students to apply integrated disciplinary knowledge and problem-solving skills
- Make the links between mathematics and scientific phenomena explicit through the process of teaching and modeling
- Implement a design-based learning and project-based learning model in which students are required to iterate on developing solutions, test their prototypes, and revise their work with empirical feedback.
- Promote collaboration, and thereby transparency of sharing findings, to replicate the legitimacy of professional work in the informal and non-formal STEM sectors.

7. Gender Participation in STEM: the Romanian Educational Contexts and Market Outcomes

The case of Romania represents a complex context: on the one hand, there has been a trajectory of significant progress with respect to access to education and gender equity, and on the other hand, that there are structural barriers that remain for professional advancement and labor market participation. To be more specific, Romania has the highest share of women in tertiary STEM education of the EU member states: women enrolled in STEM studies made up upwards of 42.5% of all graduates of tertiary education in STEM areas for Romania in 2021, which is significantly higher than the EU-27 averages. Almost 47% of researchers in Romania also self-identify as women across all sectors of research. However, this educational representation does not proportionately align with employment outcomes. There are noticeable large gender employment gaps recently reported in labor market statistics: in 2023, the OECD reported a nearly 19 percent employment gap for women in STEM, with women only making up 26 percent of professionals in information technology and communications. This disparity between educational attainment and employment can be traced to identifiable structural barriers, such as limited research funding in the sector, implicit bias in hiring and promotion, barriers to accessing leadership and mentoring opportunities, as well as barriers to work-family integration generally. The data suggest, accordingly, that educational access, though needed, is insufficient in bringing about equal professional outcomes in the absence of policy and institutional changes that address the structure of the labor market and professional obstacles.

8. Implications for STEM Education Policy and Practice in Romania

The merging of the research-informed pedagogical practices from Chapter 2 with the Romanian context yields major implications for policies and practices at the school level:

- Science Instruction: Establish inquiry-based processes for pedagogical practices in the science classroom in which all students, particularly students from underrepresented populations, are intentionally involved in model development, data collection and analysis, and developing claims and supporting arguments with evidence.
- Mathematics Instruction: Strategically create mathematics instruction that gives priority to students' mathematical reasoning, explores multiple solution pathways, and real-world engagement relevant to real-world problems.
- Assessment Practices: Develop formative assessment practices in the school that enable teachers to observe student reasoning processes, engage with their conceptual understanding, address misconceptions, and make instruction more timely, based on student understanding.
- Integrated STEM Design: Create STEM experiences for students focused on simulating the "authentic" problems of disciplinary applications, collaboration, and problem solving in cyclical iterations of the design process, integration, and awareness of the connections across mathematics, science, technology, and engineering.
- Equity and Transition: Work towards equitable access and appropriate engagement in STEM experiences through comprehensive means for all students, simultaneously addressing barriers to STEM engagement for students in rural and urban contexts, supporting multilingual and marginalized populations, and further leveraging Romania's existing capacity for equity in gender and STEM employment.
- Systemic Support: Engage with targeted policy interventions that address the transition from STEM education into meaningful professional engagement in research and industry, pathways for mentorship, and building leadership, mentorship, pedagogy and language, and developing quantitative measures in our own school and classroom experiences, states and territories around changes to STEM education implementation.

9. Conclusion

Pedagogically aligned curricula will not yield effective STEM education; it necessitates placing students as intellectual agents—investigators, problem-solvers, and collaborators in authentic disciplinary work—through consistent, integrated practices in classrooms. There are strong improvements to student engagement and gender equity for STEM education in Romania. However, there is still a gap between educational completion and professional labor market engagement—that is, improved educational completion alone is not sufficient. If educational engagement is to be transformed into meaningful professional labor, leadership development and sustained innovation will require a more concerted policy and institutional investment. Accordingly, future work will have centered on evidence-based teaching practices

while also paying appropriate attention to transitions between educational completion and professional STEM engagement.

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Teaching English Beyond Grammar: Cross-Cultural Communication Skills for Romanian Students

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Abstract

In a progressively globalised academic, professional, and digital landscape, English language instruction must extend beyond mere grammatical precision and lexical proficiency. Proficient communication in English necessitates intercultural awareness, pragmatic skill, and the capability to manoeuvre between varied cultural norms, values, and communications styles. This research examines the need of instructing English beyond grammatical confines, specifically emphasising the cultivation of cross-cultural communication competencies among Romanian pupils. This paper analyses the shortcomings of conventional grammar-focused English instruction in Romania, utilising theories of communicative competence, intercultural communicative competence, and pragmatics, and suggests a pedagogical framework for incorporating cross-cultural elements into English language education. The research emphasises pedagogical practices and evaluative methods that promote intercultural sensitivity, communicative adaptability, and global preparedness.

Keywords

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

1. Introduction

The worldwide proliferation of English has altered its function from a foreign language linked to native-speaker cultures to a lingua franca employed in global intercultural communication (Seidlhofer, 2011). Consequently, effective communication in English increasingly relies on not only grammatical precision but also on speakers' capacity to discern meaning, navigate cultural disparities, and adjust language usage to various circumstances (Byram, 1997; Jenkins, 2015).

In Romania, English holds a major role in the educational system, being instructed at all tiers of official education. Nevertheless, English language education (ELT) has conventionally emphasised grammar, vocabulary, and test outcomes, frequently to the detriment of pragmatic and intercultural ability. Romanian students often exhibit high formal correctness, although they may struggle with real-world intercultural relations, especially in academic mobility programs and foreign professional settings.

This research contends that instructing English beyond grammatical confines is crucial for equipping Romanian pupils for significant engagement in global communication. The objective is to (1) investigate the theoretical underpinnings of intercultural communication in English Language Teaching (ELT), (2) assess the Romanian educational landscape, and (3) provide pedagogical approaches for enhancing cross-cultural communication competencies.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Evolution of Communicative Competence

The notion of communicative competence emerged as a counter to exclusively structural perspectives on language proficiency. Hymes (1972) contended that proficiency in a language encompasses the ability to utilise it suitably within social circumstances. Canale and Swain (1980) subsequently operationalised this viewpoint, identifying grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence as essential components of communication.

These methods established the groundwork for a transition from grammar-focused education to conversational language teaching. As English evolved into a worldwide language franca, the necessity to openly address multicultural characteristics became more apparent.

2.2 Intercultural Communicative Proficiency

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) enhances communication competence by including cultural knowledge, attitudes, and critical evaluation. Byram (1997) defines ICC as a synthesis of information, abilities, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness that facilitates effective intercultural interactions. Within the framework of English as a lingua franca, intercultural communication competence (ICC) does not include the emulation of native-speaker standards, but rather encompasses the capacity to negotiate meaning, embrace ambiguity, and honour cultural variety (Jenkins, 2015; Kramsch, 1993). This viewpoint is especially pertinent for Romanian students, since their English interactions increasingly involve other non-native speakers.

2.3 Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication

Pragmatics examines the construction of meaning within context, encompassing speech actions, politeness techniques, and implicit meaning (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Cross-cultural pragmatic disparities may result in misconceptions despite great grammatical correctness.

Research indicates that pragmatic competence does not evolve only via exposure to grammar teaching and necessitates particular pedagogical focus (Taguchi, 2011). Romanian learners may have difficulty in intercultural communication due to variations in directness, formality, and politeness traditions.

3. Instruction of the English Language within the Romanian Context

As Romania has increasingly integrated into European and international academic spheres, English has emerged as a crucial instrument for mobility, employability, and academic prominence. Notwithstanding curriculum revisions in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020), classroom practices frequently prioritise linguistic form and assessment results.

This method enhances accuracy but may restrict students' capacity to participate confidently in spontaneous interactions, academic discourse, and professional communication. Research in Central and Eastern European contexts indicates a continual disparity between formal language proficiency and communication effectiveness in multicultural environments (Sercu et al., 2005).

4. Instructing English Beyond Syntax

Instructing English beyond grammar entails redefining language as a social and cultural activity. Grammar is crucial, although it is integrated into communication activities that mirror genuine settings of application.

English educators therefore adopt the role of facilitators of intercultural education, directing pupils to contemplate cultural conventions, communication methods, and identity. Kramsch (1993) asserts that language classes ought to serve as venues for intercultural discourse instead of merely facilitating the transfer of linguistic structures.

5. Educational Approaches for Cultivating Cross-Cultural Competencies

5.1 Task-Oriented and Project-Oriented Learning

Task-based learning promotes the utilisation of language as a means to accomplish communicative objectives, reflecting authentic interaction (Ellis, 2003). Initiatives encompassing intercultural case studies, virtual exchanges, or international collaboration enable Romanian students to engage with English in significant, culturally enriched environments.

5.2 Use of Authentic Materials

Genuine resources provide learners to many forms of English and cultural viewpoints. Multimedia information, academic lectures, and samples of professional communication assist students in cultivating pragmatic awareness and interpretative abilities (Gilmore, 2007).

5.3 Reflective Practice

Reflection is fundamental to intercultural education. Journals, facilitated talks, and reflective writings allow students to scrutinise their preconceptions, acknowledge cultural disparities, and cultivate critical awareness (Byram, 1997).

Conventional language assessments frequently do not adequately assess intercultural and pragmatic competencies. Alternative assessment approaches,

including portfolios, role-plays, presentations, and self-assessment tools, offer a more thorough evaluation of students' communication skills (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Formative evaluation, which prioritises feedback and reflection, facilitates ongoing development instead of only assessing performance at a single point in time.

6. Consequences for Romanian Higher Education

Incorporating cross-cultural communication into English Language Teaching necessitates institutional backing, curricular reformation, and educator training. Teacher education programs must incorporate elements of intercultural communication, pragmatics, and global citizenship to match Romanian higher education with worldwide benchmarks.

7. Conclusions

Romania's English language education must decisively transcend a limited and primarily grammar-centric framework to adequately address the communication exigencies of an increasingly globalised environment. Grammatical correctness and lexical knowledge are still important parts of language competency, but they are not enough to guarantee meaningful participation in today's academic, professional, and intercultural settings. As English continues to serve primarily as a global lingua franca rather than a language restricted to native-speaker conventions, communicative success significantly relies on learners' capacity to navigate cultural diversity, interpret contextual meaning, and interact appropriately with interlocutors from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The results and arguments in this study show how important it is to teach cross-cultural communication skills as a key part of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Romania. Romanian students are becoming more familiar with programs that let them move across the world, work in global companies, collaborate together on school projects online, and talk to people from other countries through digital means. In these situations, communication problems are more likely to happen because of cultural and practical misunderstandings than because of grammar mistakes. As a result, an educational approach that values linguistic form more than communicative function might lead to students who are good at grammar but not good at communicating.

Improving Romanian students' ability to communicate across cultures helps them feel more at ease and do better in academic and professional settings throughout the world. Intercultural communication competence gives students the tools they need to understand hidden meanings, deal with different ways of communicating, and adapt to new social norms. It also encourages people to be open, curious, and respectful of cultural variety, which are important traits for both good communication and being a good global citizen. From this standpoint, English language education serves as a

foundation for cultivating expansive cognitive, social, and ethical capabilities that beyond mere verbal proficiency.

Incorporating international communicative ability into English language teaching has important effects on teaching methods as well. It necessitates a redefinition of educational objectives, pedagogical approaches, and evaluative techniques. Instead of getting rid of grammar lessons, they should be moved to a place where they may be used as a useful tool to help people reach their communication objectives in real-life situations. Teachers should provide learning situations that mimic real-life interactions, include cultural comparisons, and encourage students to think about both their home culture and the target culture. This kind of teaching turns the language classroom into a place for cross-cultural conversation, critical thinking, and hands-on learning.

Additionally, the function of the English instructor experiences a significant metamorphosis within this framework. Teachers are no longer only people who teach language; they are also people who help people learn about other cultures and act as a bridge between civilisations. This broader function necessitates not only linguistic proficiency, but also instructional acumen, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to reflective practice. Teacher education and professional development programs in Romania should prioritise intercultural communication, pragmatics, and global pedagogical abilities, ensuring that educators are sufficiently equipped to assist learners in this intricate educational process.

The incorporation of intercultural communicative ability into English language teaching at the institutional level is strongly aligned with the overarching goals of internationalisation in Romanian higher education. More and more, universities want to make themselves more visible throughout the world, bring in more foreign students, and get their graduates ready for occupations that span borders. Incorporating cross-cultural communication skills into English language teaching (ELT) courses directly supports these objectives by providing students with transferable abilities that are highly esteemed in global academic and professional settings. In this way, teaching English becomes a strategic tool for both the growth of institutions and the empowerment of individuals.

The move towards teaching English beyond grammar is important since it also helps people learn for the rest of their lives. Intercultural competence is not a fixed accomplishment; rather, it is a dynamic and perpetual process that develops through experience, reflection, and sustained interaction with difference. ELT may help Romanian students get ready for future issues in a world that is changing quickly by teaching them to be aware of other cultures and how to communicate in different ways. These abilities are still useful even after formal schooling is over, which shows that English is a tool for learning, working together, and growing as a person throughout your life.

In conclusion, including intercultural communicative competency into English Language Teaching allows teachers to turn English from a simple subject into a strong tool for global involvement, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. This method not only reflects the reality of global communication, but it also fulfils the educational duty of getting students ready to interact with the world around them in a moral, intelligent, and successful way. For Romania, adopting this pedagogical change signifies both a needed adjustment to global trends and a chance to improve the quality, relevance, and efficacy of English language instruction at all levels.

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Addressing *Dyslexia and ADHD* in Primary and Secondary Education: the Albanian Context

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Abstract

In Albania's educational system, dyslexia is still one of the most misdiagnosed and misunderstood cognitive disabilities. Many students with this illness are not identified in the classroom and do not get the help they need to learn the fundamentals of reading and writing. This paper delves with the benefits and difficulties of offering inclusive education to students with autism and dyslexia. It looks at the effectiveness of individualized teaching techniques to meet these students' particular demands and guarantee their social and academic participation. This study seeks to identify obstacles that teachers and students encounter in order to suggest workable solutions that improve the learning environment as a whole. The results will help create inclusive teaching models, training programs for teachers, and policy suggestions to help students with dyslexia and ADHD issues to achieve their potential.

Keywords

dyslexia, identity, inclusive education, ADHD problems, autism.

1. Introduction

Dyslexia and ADHD are two distinct conditions, the two frequently co-occur and can have a knock-on effect on one another. Despite significant advancements in the scientific understanding of dyslexia, misconceptions about its nature remain widespread among educators. Many teachers continue to associate dyslexia with visual symptoms, such as letter reversals, or rely on outdated methods like colored overlays, which have no substantial evidence of efficacy. This ongoing misunderstanding, coupled with limited exposure to evidence-based training in pre-service education programs, contributes to a lack of preparedness in classrooms to meet the needs of dyslexic students.

These gaps often result in delayed identification, insufficient support, and educational practices that fail to recognize the complexity of dyslexic learners' needs. *In this article,* we'll take a look at how to provide early intervention and support for children, as well as ways to develop the positive skills and capabilities that both conditions can bring, to investigate how inclusive education theories and practices support students with dyslexia and ADHD, to examine the effectiveness of teaching

strategies, assistive technologies, and universal design principles in promoting inclusion, to compare international models of inclusion with the current educational landscape in Albania, to identify the systemic, institutional, and cultural barriers that affect the inclusion of neurodiverse students in Albanian primary and secondary schools, to propose recommendations for enhancing inclusive practices through teacher training, policy reform, and educational support structures.

2. Understanding similarities and differences between ADHD and dyslexia

Scientists still don't fully understand the exact neurological mechanisms for either dyslexia or ADHD. Dyslexia, however, is generally categorized as a language-based disability (although some dyslexics read above their peers and struggle more with spelling and executive function). ADHD on the other hand is a neurodevelopmental disorder that makes it challenging for children to stay focused on a task, due to problems with attention. Individuals with dyslexia have problems with phonemic awareness, in other words working with the smallest units of sound and matching these to written letters. They also struggle with verbal memory and verbal processing speed.

ADHD, on the other hand, is characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity and is often thought of as atypical activation in the regulatory systems in the frontal lobe. People tend to fall into three categories, those that display more inattentive symptoms, those who have problems with hyperactivity and impulsiveness and those that have a combination of the two. Boys in particular often get diagnosed earlier because they tend towards hyperactivity dimension.

There are 9 symptoms of ADHD which may include:

(1) Impulsiveness.
(2) Disorganization and problems prioritizing.
(3) Poor time management skills.
(4) Problems focusing on a task.
(5) Trouble multitasking.
(6) Excessive activity or restlessness.
(7) Poor planning.
(8) Low frustration tolerance.

3. Shared characteristics

(1) Attention; children with dyslexia and ADHD both struggle with attention. However for dyslexic thinkers, this is pretty much limited to reading and writing, whereas for ADHD it can apply to any task that doesn't immediately capture their interest.

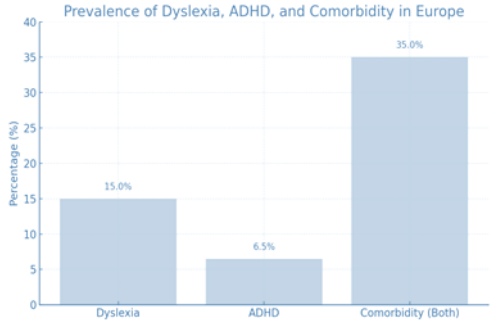
(2) Organisation and timekeeping; working memory deficits can be common to both dyslexia and ADHD, resulting in poor time-keeping and forgetfulness. Children may also struggle with general organisation skills.

(3) Spatial awareness and motor skills; tasks co-coordinating fingers can be a challenge for some learners with ADHD and some children with dyslexia. For example, tasks coordinating index fingers on both right and left hand (bi-manual coordination) and one finger and the adjacent fingers on the same hand (uni-manual coordination.) (Marchand-Krynski et al 2017)

(4) Reading; children with ADHD and/or dyslexia might misread individual words, skip over or miss out chunks of text, or lose their place on the page. Individuals with ADHD may particularly struggle to retain and connect meaning from one part of the text to another.

(5) Writing; children with both conditions may struggle with written work. However, for children with ADHD, the problems will focus more on organising and structuring their work, whereas children with dyslexia will have specific problems with spelling and grammar. Both may have problems with keeping their handwriting neat and tidy.

At the European level, dyslexia affects approximately 15% of students, while ADHD is present in about 6.5% of school-aged children. (Dyslexia Basics, 2020) Studies suggest that up to 35% of students with one of these conditions may also experience the other, significantly increasing the complexity of their educational needs (see graphic 1). (Russell A. Barkley,2014) These figures highlight the urgent need for an educational system that recognizes and proactively includes neurodiversity.



Graphic 1: Prevalence of dyslexia, ADHD in Europe.

Country	%	Country	%
Belgium	5	Nigeria	11
Britain	4	Norway	3
Czech Rep.	2-3	Poland	4
Finland	10	Russia	10
Greece	5	Singapore	3.3
Italy	1.3-5	Slovakia	1-2
Japan	6	U.S.	8.3

ResearchGate

Figure 1. Percentage of dyslexic individuals by country (adapted from Be Special Project Consortium, 2020, ResearchGate

There is no specific, official percentage for dyslexia in Albania, but studies on related reading difficulties suggest the figure is likely within the general global range of 5% to 10% or potentially higher. A study on *Albanian students found that 13.7%* had reading difficulties, which correlates to the prevalence of dyslexia worldwide.

(1) *Difficulty in measurement:* Measuring the exact percentage of dyslexia is complex, as it is often diagnosed in children with good cognitive abilities who don't progress in literacy skill.

(2) *Supporting both conditions at the same time:* According to Dr. Cheryl Chase (ADDitude, 2024), interventions for dyslexia and ADHD must be addressed in parallel, since managing one condition in isolation often limits the overall effectiveness of learning outcomes.

4. Strategies to help children in school

Teachers should vary instructional methods to maintain engagement, dividing literacy or focus sessions into shorter, dynamic segments of 10–15 minutes interspersed with movement or interactive games (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023).

(1) Audiobooks; switching from text to video or audio input can help reduce reading fatigue and help maintain focus.

(2) Sensory supports; can also help during reading activities.

(3) Teach meta-cognition; helping pupils identify better learning strategies can help them approach reading and comprehension more effectively. A common example might be encouraging a deeper understanding of certain keywords in questions, and asking pupils to highlight such words before they dive into the answer.

(4) Coloured strips and bookmarks; can help dyslexic children keep their place when reading.

(5) Using technology; any speech-to-text technology can help as can setting up virtual discussion groups, or providing digital note taking apps for older children.

(1) The use of BESPECIAL supporting platform for students with dyslexia based on artificial intelligence adaptive learning. It consists in the development and validation of a digital solution based on artificial intelligence able to suggest the most appropriate supporting methodologies for dyslexic students based on the student-specific issues.

(2) The implementation of BESPECIAL (BeSpecial Project Consortium, 2020) will require a deep knowledge of the actual methodologies used in the universities to support students with dyslexia during teaching and studying in order to evaluate how BESPECIAL can enhance the inclusion of dyslexic students.

Functionality of BESPECIAL

(1) Uses artificial intelligence to analyze individual learning profiles.

(2) Suggests the most effective teaching methods based on the learner’s cognitive needs.

(3) Incorporates adaptive feedback, enabling teachers to adjust strategies in real time.

(4) Promotes inclusive education and equal learning opportunities.

(5) Encourages evidence-based, personalized interventions in universities and schools.

Application

(1) Useful for identifying the most effective combination of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and digital supports for dyslexic learners.

(2) Integrates smoothly into higher education and teacher-training systems.

(1) Organisation Pictorial checklists, colour-coded timetables or short to-do lists; while anything too wordy might add to reading fatigue, short checklists and use of images, or colour-coded timetables can act as useful prompts. (*Silent Way Method of teaching* works well, with Fidel charts, Cuisenaire rods, etc)

(2) An indicative reinforcement system—rewarding students for positive classroom behavior—has proven effective in maintaining focus and building self-regulation skills among students with ADHD (CDC, 2023).

(3) Emphasize difference – not weakness, help pupils to see what they are good at. For people with ADHD and dyslexia this might be activities, such as *storytelling, art or graphics or creative problem-solving and expression.* Bringing neurodiverse role models into school and having a whole-school approach to embracing neurodiversity can also help challenge negative self-beliefs.

(4) Improvisation; working on improvisation in drama and music often plays to the strengths of individuals with both ADHD and dyslexia.

(5) Encourage musical instruments; learning to play an instrument may have multi-fold benefits, helping with listening skills, memory, concentration and self-confidence for children with both dyslexia and ADHD.

(6) Managing anxiety; *cognitive behavioural therapy***,** has been shown to have positive benefits for some children with ADHD. *Get moving*- not only can exercise improve well-being but also help to absorb excess energy, particularly for children who have a greater tendency towards hyperactivity. *Meditation*- some studies suggest meditation and mindfulness may work for young adolescents with ADHD, although if it is to be effective it must be practiced at home not just at school.

5. Celebrating the strengths of young people with ADHD and dyslexia

Children with dyslexia *might show above-average creativity, curiosity, imagination* and non-verbal skills. As with other neurodivergent conditions, strengths and weaknesses are not rigidly defined; some dyslexic children may be exceptionally gifted with oral vocabulary, others may even read silently at levels above their peers. Children with ADHD may also be highly creative and more open to trying new experiences. The ability to engage in hyper focus can help them become passionate

subject-matter experts relatively quickly, on topics that they find naturally engaging. It's also worth pointing out that both ADHD and dyslexia also have greater occurrence in entrepreneurs than in the general population. The energy, creativity, and resilience that emerge either out of necessity or natural ability are highly valuable attributes in the rapidly changing dynamics of the modern workplace. *Notable figures include*: Bill Gates Ingvar Kamprad (founder of Ikea) John T. Chambers (CEO of Cisco) Zoe Saldana McKenna Hallem (model) Mark Ruffalo, Whoopi Goldberg, Albert Einstein.

6. Albanian Context

One of the central issues in the Albanian context is the limited preparation of teachers to identify and address learning disorders. Most pre-service education programs in Albanian universities do not include modules on neurodevelopmental disorders, inclusive pedagogy, or assistive technology. Consequently, many teachers report feeling unequipped to recognize signs of dyslexia or to apply the necessary interventions. This lack of expertise not only delays diagnosis but reinforces stigma, as students are often mischaracterized as inattentive, lazy, or unmotivated.

Furthermore, there is no national framework for early diagnosis or systematic support for learning disorders such as dyslexia or ADHD. While some support structures exist for students with formal medical documentation, those without a diagnosis, who may still present clear symptoms, are often excluded from targeted interventions. The current educational model in Albania also lacks emphasis on emotional and psychological support for students with learning difficulties. Students with dyslexia often experience chronic academic failure, which can lead to low self-esteem, frustration, and social withdrawal. Johnston (2019) and Federico (2023) both highlight the importance of emotional well-being as a foundational aspect of inclusive education.

Yet, in Albania, the absence of school psychologists, *particularly in rural schools*, counselors, and structured social-emotional learning programs leaves many vulnerable students without adequate support. Emotional resilience-building, peer collaboration, and inclusive classroom cultures must be incorporated into teacher training programs to ensure that education addresses the holistic development of every learner. In light of these challenges, several strategic recommendations emerge for the Albanian educational system. *First*, inclusive education modules should be embedded in all teacher preparation programs, with particular attention to dyslexia, ADHD, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). As Al-Azawei et al. argue, UDL provides a flexible framework that anticipates diverse learning needs and supports students through proactive curriculum design. (Al-Azawei, Ahmed, 2023). The adoption of UDL in Albania could transform classrooms from reactive spaces, responding only when a diagnosis is present, into proactive environments that welcome and support diversity from the outset.

Second, schools should be equipped with assistive technologies and practical tools such as structured notebooks, graphic organizers, and literacy software. Funding mechanisms must be established to ensure that even low-resource schools have access to basic tools that enable students with learning difficulties to participate effectively. These resources should be paired with ongoing professional development for teachers, focusing on multisensory instruction, differentiated learning, and communication strategies suited for students with neurodevelopmental conditions.

Third, Albania should create support units in every school composed of multidisciplinary teams, teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, and special education specialists, who collaborate to develop and implement individualized support plans. These plans would be based on teacher observations and student profiles, not just formal diagnoses, aligning with inclusive assessment models proposed by Christani (2024) and Dockrell et al. (2019). Additionally, schools must promote the use of both verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to support engagement and comprehension, especially for students with ADHD who may struggle with sustained attention and impulsivity.

In the Albanian context, teachers frequently report feeling unprepared to support students with specific learning difficulties. Most university programs in education do not include detailed modules on inclusive pedagogy, neurodevelopmental disorders, or the use of assistive technologies. Consequently, classroom practices tend to lack the flexibility and responsiveness needed to address the unique challenges of dyslexic learners, who are often mischaracterized as inattentive or unmotivated.

Lastly, the cultural dimension of inclusion should not be neglected. Building inclusive schools in Albania requires addressing stigma, fostering empathy, and reshaping how disability is understood. Public awareness campaigns, school-based inclusion days, and family engagement programs can help shift attitudes toward learners with dyslexia and ADHD. Teachers should also be supported in cultivating inclusive classroom cultures where diversity is seen not as a barrier but as a resource for collaborative and meaningful learning. In this context, ELTA Albania (English Language Teachers Association) has begun to give a hand through workshops and training sessions for inclusive education, as shown in the screenshot of November sessions.



7. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides a broader framework for inclusion by promoting flexible and accessible curriculum design. UDL encourages presenting information in diverse formats, text, image, audio, and physical activity, to accommodate different learning preferences. (Sutton, Julie, and Marion Shields. 2016). This is particularly beneficial for dyslexic learners who may grasp a concept better through diagrams, audio narration, or hands-on tasks. In Albania, *however, implementation of UDL* remains limited due to infrastructure and training gaps. Yet research consistently shows that when classrooms incorporate UDL principles, dyslexic students experience higher engagement, better comprehension, and reduced anxiety around reading tasks.

Studies in the United States and Europe reveal that many teachers lack confidence in identifying and supporting dyslexia due to limited training during teacher education. (Rogers, Angela ERIC,2015).Therefore, continuing professional development, policy reforms, and cross-sector collaboration are essential in promoting meaningful inclusion.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – Three Core Principles (CAST, 2022)

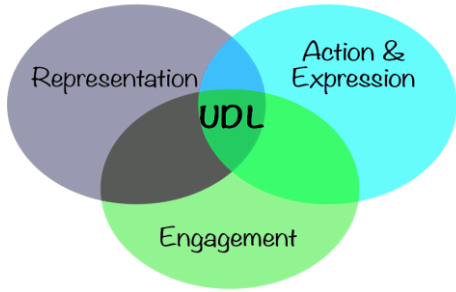


Figure 2 Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – Three Core Principles (CAST, 2022)

(1) *Representation* – This principle emphasizes delivering information in diverse formats, such as text, images, audio, or visual aids, so that all students, including those with dyslexia, can engage with the content effectively (CAST, 2022).

(2) *Action and Expression* – This dimension refers to how learners demonstrate their understanding. Instead of relying solely on written assessments, teachers can allow oral presentations, visual projects, or digital portfolios, giving every student an equitable chance to demonstrate mastery (CAST, 2022). This refers to *how students express what they know*. Traditional written tests may not suit every learner, especially those with ADHD or language processing challenges. UDL encourages offering

multiple ways of expression: oral presentations, visual projects, role-play, digital tools, etc., giving all students a fair chance to succeed.

(3) *Engagement* – This principle focuses on motivation and participation. By offering students choices, collaborative tasks, and gamified learning experiences, teachers can maintain attention and encourage active involvement, particularly for learners with ADHD (CAST, 2022; Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, 2025).

This understanding is reinforced in the monograph *Autism and Dyslexia* by Mukades Gixhari and co-authors, which offers an in-depth treatment of the behavioral characteristics, causes, and practical approaches to supporting students with dyslexia in the Albanian context. (Mukades Gixhari dhe Drande Kola 2012). The authors advocate for an integrated response involving teachers, parents, and specialists. Among the strategies they recommend are multisensory methods, the use of concrete materials, phonetic exercises, and visual techniques that help students form associations between letters and sounds. Equally important is the creation of a supportive classroom environment that avoids stigmatization and reinforces the student's confidence and self-esteem.

In relation to ADHD, concerns in Albania mirror those observed with dyslexia. A report from the University Hospital Center "Mother Teresa" estimates the prevalence of ADHD among school-aged children at approximately 1%, with higher rates among boys. The report notes a significant challenge in early identification and highlights the disconnect between the needs of children with ADHD and the traditional classroom environment. Effective treatment, the report suggests, must combine pharmacological interventions with psycho educational support, particularly behavioral therapy and structured in-school assistance. These conclusions are echoed in a study conducted at the University of Tirana by Ana Majko, 2020 which analyzed the impact of working memory deficits on the academic performance of children with ADHD. The findings revealed that difficulties in attention and information organization significantly hinder academic outcomes. The study recommends that teachers be trained in strategies designed to support working memory, including step-by-step instructions, visual signals, and clearly structured routines to help children manage cognitive load and improve classroom engagement.

Despite growing awareness, the inclusion of students with dyslexia and ADHD in public Albanian schools continues to face numerous challenges. A joint report by UNICEF and the University of Tirana found that teachers often feel unprepared to manage the behavior of students with special needs. The absence of teaching assistants and specialized training in inclusive pedagogy represents a major obstacle to effective implementation. This gap not only limits pedagogical effectiveness but also contributes to the stigmatization and exclusion of students from meaningful learning experiences. A related report by Save the Children highlights that, although some inclusive education initiatives have shown promising results in certain regions, the lack of resources, both technological and human, remains a serious barrier. Many schools lack

even the most basic tools to support students with learning disorders, while teachers often work in overcrowded classrooms with rigid curricula that leave little room for differentiated instruction or individualized support.

In this context, the study by Kafia, Ibrahimi, and Ibrahimi (2023) offers a promising model through a bio-psycho-social approach to inclusive education. This model emphasizes close collaboration between schools, families, and community stakeholders. The authors argue that successful inclusion should not be determined solely by formal medical diagnosis but must focus on the real, observed needs of students. Continuous classroom observation and personalized intervention plans are seen as central to supporting children effectively. This perspective is particularly relevant in Albania, where access to institutional support is often conditioned by formal diagnostic documentation, excluding many students who remain undiagnosed. So the importance of preparing instructional methods to align with the unique neurological profiles of learners with dyslexia, rather than applying one-size-fits-all pedagogies. The Multisensory strategies known as the VAKT model, can work quite well in the Albanian context.

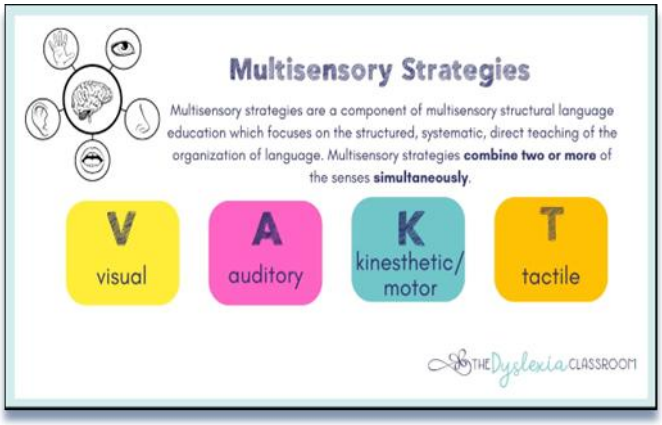


Figure 3. Multisensory strategies - VAKT model.(December 2022)

Multisensory strategies are instructional methods that use two or more sensory modalities simultaneously to improve learning, particularly in literacy acquisition (Marchand-Krynski et al., 2017). These approaches draw on the Orton- Gillingham philosophy, emphasizing visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile (VAKT) learning pathways to strengthen reading and writing skills.

The **VAKT** model stands for:

(1) **V –** Visual: Learning through images, symbols, colors, and written words

(2) **A –** Auditory: Learning through listening, speaking, or hearing sounds and language

(3) **K –** Kinesthetic (Motor): Learning through body movement, gestures, or physical activity

(4) **T –** Tactile: Learning through hands-on experiences and the sense of touch (e.g., tracing letters in sand)

But, social-emotional challenges are particularly severe in the Albanian context, where inclusive practices are still emerging, and awareness of neurodiversity remains limited. Without systematic training, some educators misinterpret the struggles of students with dyslexia as laziness, lack of effort, or behavioral problems. These misconceptions often lead to stigmatization and social exclusion. Peer interactions may also be affected, as students internalize negative labels and withdraw from collaborative learning experiences. The lack of national awareness campaigns or consistent messaging on neurodevelopmental diversity perpetuates these harmful beliefs. One of the most pressing structural issues in Albania is the absence of a legal framework that mandates early identification and intervention for learning disorders. This results in a decentralized and often inequitable system, where support varies drastically between schools and municipalities. In some cases, students receive no intervention at all. Policymaking inspired by international models, such as inclusive education acts or national strategies for learning disabilities, could help standardize practices and ensure that all students receive the support they need from an early age.

In Albania, the educational system faces numerous barriers in effectively supporting students with dyslexia and ADHD. One of the most significant challenges is the lack of early identification and diagnosis. Many students with these conditions do not receive formal diagnoses until they are already struggling academically, often by which point the emotional and psychological consequences—such as low self-esteem and increased anxiety—have already taken root.

8. Conclusions

ADHD and dyslexia can create more complex problems for children. If specialist literacy teachers suspect ADHD, they should share this knowledge with class teachers who can make joint decisions about the best next steps and how parents should be involved. A joint strategy must be put in place to help support the pupil. A critical recommendation for Albanian educational system, is to develop and *enforce educational policies* that support students with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and ADHD. These policies should prioritize early identification, intervention, and the implementation of inclusive educational frameworks . *Teacher training* in special educational needs *is another* significant barrier to effective inclusion in Albania, many educators feel unprepared to address the needs of students with language-based learning difficulties.

Teacher preparation programs in Albania must be revised to include specialized modules on dyslexia, ADHD, and inclusive pedagogy. *Improving infrastructure and*

technology - access to technology for students with learning difficulties remains limited. Bridging this technological gap requires both systemic investment in the necessary tools and training for teachers to use them effectively. Integrating these technologies into the curriculum, alongside teacher training, could significantly enhance the learning experiences of students with learning difficulties in Albania.

In addition to academic support, students with dyslexia and ADHD *require emotional and psychological support*. Many students in Albania report feelings of isolation, shame, and frustration due to their learning difficulties. Educators should be trained not only in academic strategies but also in building inclusive classroom cultures that foster resilience, promote peer collaboration, and develop emotional skills. Implementing UDL could help shift away from a rigid, diagnosis-based system and provide more personalized, needs-based support. By incorporating multisensory learning, assistive technologies, and differentiated instruction, UDL would allow Albanian teachers to adapt their teaching methods to each student's learning profile. By focusing on providing flexible teaching strategies, Albania can create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

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