

**GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS: DIALOGUES ACROSS
CULTURES**

Emerging Identities in a Globalised World

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Abstract Booklet

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ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE FIRST EVENT OF THE
GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS: DIALOGUES ACROSS CULTURES
CONFERENCE SERIES:

Emerging Identities in a Globalised World

The multidisciplinary online conference is devoted to the study of how global forces—economic integration, transnational mobility, digital media, and cross-border institutions including education—shape the formation, negotiation and performance of identities in political, business and academic communities, and how those identities in turn shape contemporary media and communicative practices.

Recent research highlights new, interlocking tendencies in this area that call for comparative, interdisciplinary investigation: (a) transnational cooperation and mobility promote the formation of hybrid and multi-sited identities rather than simply weakening national identities; (b) digital and screen media have become central arenas where identities are formed and contested; and (c) political, economic and academic globalization is producing new identity-based alignments and conflicts that operate across borders. We invite scholars from all disciplines within the humanities and social sciences to share their insights and research results on these issues. The language of the conference is English.

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Dr. Irina Golubeva, plenary speaker



Dr. Irina Golubeva is Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Modern Languages, Linguistics and Intercultural Communication at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (USA). Her main research interests include the internationalization of higher education and the development of multilingual awareness, empathy, and intercultural citizenship. She teaches and publishes in four languages: English, Hungarian, Russian, and Spanish. She is co-editor of *From Principles to Practice in Education for Intercultural Citizenship* and *Intercultural Learning in Language Education and Beyond: Evolving Concepts, Perspectives and Practices*, and co-author of *Intercultural Competence for College and University Students: A Global Guide for Employability and Social Change*. She also co-hosts the acclaimed webinar series, *Decentering Intercultural Research and Practice*, which brings together international scholars and practitioners to critically reimagine the field. She is deeply committed to non-profit work and served for seven years as Vice-President of the European Association of Teachers. In 2020, she received the title of “UMBC Innovation Fellow” for her contribution to fostering intercultural dialogue on campus and enhancing students’ engagement in Internationalization at Home. Most recently, she was elected a Fellow of the International Academy for Intercultural Research.

This plenary examines how universities can move beyond surface-level diversity initiatives to cultivate students’ sense of belonging through intercultural citizenship education. Drawing on campus-climate research and evidence from a Minority-Serving Institution, Dr. Golubeva illustrates how intercultural citizenship frameworks can be intentionally integrated to improve campus climate, enrich intergroup relations, and foster students’ democratic and intercultural competencies in an increasingly polarized and globalized world.

Dr Tamas Kiss, plenary speaker



Dr Tamas Kiss works as an Associate Professor at Sunway University, Centre for English Language Studies. He has been involved with language teacher education programmes in Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America and South East Asia. He delivered one-off talks and directed longer, intensive workshops in more than 20 countries by invitation of universities, language teacher organizations, cultural institutions, or international publishing houses. His main research interests include language pedagogy, language teacher education, creativity, intercultural communication, the link between complex dynamic systems and education, and the role of culture in language teaching materials. One of his latest projects has been on creativity in language teaching which resulted in a co-authored book: Maley, A. & Kiss, T. (2018). *Creativity and English Language Teaching: From inspiration to implementation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. His research expertise lies primarily in the areas of English Language Teaching and Teacher Education, with a specific focus on the following three areas: 1) novice language teacher experiences 2) teacher education as a complex dynamic system, 3) (inter)cultural content in EL textbooks, and 4) creativity in language teaching. His research generally follows an interdisciplinary approach.

This talk explores how Hungarian and Malaysian university students engaged in intercultural dialogue through an online collaborative project designed to foster cultural awareness and communication skills. Working in small groups, students created short videos (3–4 minutes) about their own culture, which were then shared with peers abroad. While watching these videos, participants completed a Directed Viewing and Thinking Activity (DVTA), reflecting on prior knowledge, assumptions, and curiosities. The questions they formulated to learn more about the other culture provided data for research and analysis. In this project, Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence provided the conceptual framework, while Causadias’ (2020) p-model (*peoples, places, and practices*) guided the coding of cultural dimensions. Results show that most questions focused on *practices*, with Malaysians more curious about *places* and Hungarians about *people*. The analysis also suggests that Causadias’ model is incomplete, as it omits *products* as a significant cultural dimension. Furthermore, questions students asked tended to remain at a knowledge-seeking level rather than demonstrating critical or reflective engagement. This points to students’ difficulties in formulating higher-order questions that would strengthen intercultural competence as outlined by Byram. The study shows that there is a need for educators to illustrate and model questioning techniques that encourage deeper engagement, and allow time for exploring ideas and cultural meaning-making in their classrooms. It also suggests that in monocultural and multicultural contexts, a different approach to developing intercultural competence might be justified.

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NEGOTIATING AND RESHAPING MOROCCAN RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN THE DIGITAL PUBLIC SPHERE

Abstract: Digital media has dismantled the domination of religious knowledge which was previously held by the official religious establishment. During the pre-digital age, religious knowledge was top-down and regulated; for instance, the Friday sermon or khutba was standardized by the state and learning about religious issues was restricted to mosques and madrasas. With the revolutionary emergence of social media and the proliferation of diverse platforms and networks that facilitate the spread of information, religious knowledge is now democratized and decentralized. This process contributes to the shaping of a new religious identity for the users of social media.

This paper examines the profound transformation of religious authority and identity formation among Moroccans in the digital age. It suggests that social media has dismantled the traditional, state-centric monopoly of religious discourse. This shift enables individuals to actively and critically engage with Islamic teachings using social media thereby transforming and reshaping their own religious identity. Furthermore, this research demonstrates that the digital sphere is a critical site for understanding the future of Moroccan religious identity. It is where the tension between the state-sponsored ideology of "Moroccan Islam" and transnational religious currents is most vividly manifested. This societal transformation marks a move away from collective, geographically restricted religious practice toward an individualized, digitally-mediated faith, holding profound implications for the evolution of national identity in contemporary Morocco.

This study attempts to answer three major questions: How does social media shape the understanding of Islam for young Moroccans compared to traditional religious authorities? In what ways do digital spaces allow for the exploration and transformation of a more liberal religious identity? How do Moroccans navigate the tension between global Islamic discourses and local Moroccan religious identity online?

To answer these research questions, this paper applies discourse analysis to comments on popular religious YouTube channels and Facebook pages and semi-structured interviews with young Moroccans about their digital religious knowledge and practices to examine the way Moroccans react to religious ideas online and how their religious identity is being reshaped. To complement this and understand the lived experiences of users, this discourse analysis is paired with semi-structured interviews with Moroccan youth who actively consume online religious content; the digital content analysis projects public ideas and religious tendencies, while the interviews provide crucial insight on how individuals personally interpret, negotiate and integrate these ideas into their own religious identities and practices.

Keywords: transformation, social media, Moroccan identity, religious discourse

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CODESWITCHING AS A PEDAGOGICAL RESOURCE FOR IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN REACTION TO HEGEMONIC MONOLINGUAL POLICIES IN MOROCCAN EFL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

Abstract: English-only instruction is part of broader political, social, and economic hegemonies linked to imperialism and the promotion of monolingual pedagogies (Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 2005). In Moroccan EFL classrooms, the exclusion of learners' L1s (Moroccan Arabic and Tashlhit) restricts access to linguistic and cultural resources that are central to their identities. Drawing on Mohanty's (2003) notion of active resistance to hegemonic structures, this ongoing study conceptualizes codeswitching as both a pedagogical resource and a reaction to monolingual classroom policies that marginalize learners' linguistic and cultural repertoires. It also addresses a gap in research on the attitude–behavior relationship in Moroccan learners' use of codeswitching, focusing on how learners' intrinsic attitudes relate to their actual multilingual practices in EFL classrooms (Hoffman, 1977). The study examines multilingual codeswitching as a form of identity construction in 21st-century globalized classrooms, where learners negotiate hybrid local and global identities. This ongoing research adopts purposive sampling of public high schools in Agadir and combines classroom observation, semi-structured learner interviews and audio-recorded individual, pair and group work. Discourse analysis of the recordings will be complemented by thematic coding in NVivo to ensure a systematic and reliable interpretation of the data. Preliminary analysis suggests that codeswitching fulfils affective functions, provides collaborative scaffolding to fill communicative gaps and enables learners to resist the constraints of English-only norms. These emerging findings point to the value of translanguaging in EFL pedagogies that recognize learners' lived experiences and challenge hegemonic monolingual practices in 21st century globalized educational context.

Keywords: codeswitching, EFL classrooms, identity construction, multilingual practices, translanguaging.

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BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: FOSTERING GLOBAL AWARENESS THROUGH CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Abstract: In an increasingly interconnected world, higher education plays a critical role in shaping students' abilities to navigate cultural diversity. This talk reflects on my experience teaching an elective Cross-Cultural Communication course, exploring how learning outcomes often extend far beyond expectations. While the curriculum emphasizes theoretical frameworks and practical communication skills, students consistently demonstrate profound insights into cultural respect, empathy and ethical engagement. Through reflective exercises, interactive activities and real-world case studies, students not only develop intercultural competence but also cultivate emerging global identities that resonate with their personal and professional lives. This session draws on both student experiences and teacher reflections, highlighting how such courses empower learners to connect theory with lived experience and spark transformative understanding in a global context.

Keywords: emerging identities, higher education, intercultural competence

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BETWEEN NATIONAL DUTY AND GLOBAL VISION: HYBRID PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS IN INTERNATIONALISING HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXTS IN MOROCCO AND FRANCE

Abstract: The internationalisation of higher education places university teachers in non-Anglophone contexts at the intersection of national missions and global academic imperatives. This comparative qualitative study examines how lecturers in Morocco and France negotiate hybrid professional identities that blend local/national commitments with emerging global expectations. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with ten academics (five in each country) working in public universities with active internationalisation strategies, the study employs reflexive thematic analysis to identify shared and context-specific identity positionings. Findings reveal three recurring stances: (1) custodians of national educational culture, (2) pragmatic navigators of global pressures, and (3) creative “glo-cal” academics who actively fuse both spheres. Despite markedly different historical and policy contexts, participants in both countries experience hybrid identity as a dynamic, sometimes conflictual process shaped by institutional demands, personal values and daily pedagogical realities. The paper highlights the lived tensions of academic identity under asymmetric globalisation.

Keywords: hybrid professional identity, global-local tension, academic identity, internationalisation of higher education, qualitative comparative study, glo-cal academics

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AN EXAMINATION OF IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION IN THE ESSAYS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS STUDYING IN HUNGARY

Abstract: In recent decades, Hungary has witnessed a steady rise in the number of international students who arrive from diverse cultural, linguistic and geographical backgrounds. As these students enter a new sociocultural environment, they are confronted with linguistic differences, unfamiliar norms and various adaptation challenges. These experiences frequently require them to reassess and renegotiate aspects of their cultural identity, which may transform gradually throughout their stay.

The present study aims to investigate international students' cultural identities and identity transformation as a consequence of student mobility. The research is based on the content analysis of essays written by international students studying at a Hungarian higher education institution and attending an intercultural communication course.

J.W. Berry's acculturation theory (1992), which describes the psychological and social changes that occur as people adapt, negotiate, and sometimes integrate elements of the host culture into their own identity, serves as the theoretical background of the research. It includes four strategies that individuals use to adapt to a new culture: integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization.

The findings reveal students' cultural identities through references to their home countries, traditions, and comparisons with the host culture. The analysis also identifies emerging themes and frequently occurring keywords that illustrate recurring patterns of cultural negotiation. Moreover, a linguistic examination of the essays indicates students' identity transformation. Notable similarities and differences between male and female participants are highlighted, pointing to potential gender-related variations in the acculturation experience. Finally, the results demonstrate which of Berry's acculturation strategies are most clearly reflected in the students' essays and how these strategies manifest in their written self-representations.

Keywords: international students, identity transformation, cultural identity, acculturation theory, Hungarian higher education

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THE LANGUAGE–CULTURE NEXUS IN A GLOBALISED WORLD: MEANING, IDENTITY, AND COMMUNICATION ACROSS CONTEXTS

Abstract: The language–culture nexus offers a powerful lens for understanding how identities are formed, negotiated and performed in an increasingly globalised and interconnected world. Drawing on Karen Risager’s theoretical framework, this paper examines the dynamic interplay between language, culture and meaning across communicative events in both lived and imagined communities. By analysing convergent and divergent nexuses, the study highlights how linguistic practices shift across local, multilingual and transnational contexts, revealing the fluid and hybrid nature of contemporary identity formation. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, conceptually driven approach grounded in a critical reading of key theoretical contributions in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and intercultural communication. Foundational works by Risager, Hymes, Kramsch, Anderson and Bhabha are analysed alongside illustrative examples from educational, social and digital contexts. This approach allows the paper to explore how communicative events function as sites of identity work, where individuals negotiate cultural references, power relations, and belonging across convergent and divergent language–culture nexuses. The paper integrates insights from these theorists to show how meaning-making practices vary across contexts. In global digital spaces and multilingual environments, divergent nexuses become particularly salient, producing new forms of hybrid identities that transcend national and linguistic boundaries. Finally, the study demonstrates that meaning-making is never fixed but emerges through the interaction of linguistic signs, cultural knowledge and contextual realities, an insight that is increasingly relevant to intercultural communication, education and identity studies in a globalised era.

Keywords: language–culture nexus, identity formation, communicative events, globalization, intercultural communication, imagined communities, hybrid identities, multilingual contexts, meaning-making, transcultural interactions

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THE SHAMEFUL WRITER: EMERGING IDENTITIES OF REMORSE, CONCEALMENT, AND AI-ASSISTED AUTHORSHIP IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

Abstract: The rise of generative AI has transformed writing practices across borders, producing new authorial identities shaped by globalised expectations of productivity, originality, and academic performance. This conceptual paper introduces the figure of the shameful writer, an emerging identity defined by the emotional tension between using AI tools and the need to conceal this reliance. Drawing on Foucault's author-function, Sara Ahmed's affective economies and Goffman's presentation of self, the paper argues that shame is produced not solely within individuals but within globalised affective and institutional networks. In an interconnected world where academic norms, plagiarism policies and standards of authorship circulate transnationally, writers internalise global pressures to appear authentic, autonomous and humanly original. Consequently, they engage in practices of textual masking, strategic editing, and backstage erasure of AI traces to align with universalised ideals of "legitimate" authorship. The shameful writer thus occupies a liminal space caught between globalised moral expectations and the technological realities of contemporary writing. By theorising this identity, the paper reveals how globalisation intensifies the emotional labour around authorship, reshapes writing ethics and produces new cultural narratives around visibility, legitimacy and the role of AI in global writing cultures.

Keywords: authorship, shame, AI-assisted writing, globalised identity, concealment

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MEDIA, GLOBALIZATION, AND HYBRID IDENTITY FORMATION: A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH INTO MOROCCAN YOUTH'S NARRATIVES

Abstract: National identity is commonly understood as an “imagined community” rooted in shared memories, values and territorial belonging (Anderson, 1983). Globalization, on the other hand, is frequently portrayed as a homogenizing force that threatens these foundations by diffusing global cultural forms and weakening the symbolic boundaries of the nation-state. Yet, recent scholarship suggests that the relationship between globalization and national identity is far more complex than narratives of erosion imply (Ariely, 2021; Bearce, 2023). Rather than simply undermining national belonging, global flows often expose the limitations of nation-state strategies of maintaining national narratives and open spaces for new hybrid forms of identification. Following a bottom-up, narrative inquiry approach, this study addresses this gap by deconstructing Moroccan youth discourse to reveal the cultural meanings they attach to their everyday consumption of international media content and to examine what they find in global entertainment that is absent local media. Nevertheless, the analysis refrains from specifying particular programs to minimize content-driven bias and highlight participants’ meaning-making practices. Preliminary findings suggest that Moroccan youth do not perceive globalization as a threat to national identity. Instead, they articulate a dual identification that embraces global citizenship while reaffirming pride in Moroccan cultural heritage. Exposure to global content fosters openness, intercultural awareness, and aspirations for transnational mobility, yet this does not entail a rejection of national belonging. Rather, youth reinterpret national narratives through a global lens, producing hybrid identity positions that combine rootedness with cosmopolitan orientation. Overall, through highlighting these emerging forms of identification, this study challenges the discourse suggesting a fragmentation of national identity among Moroccan youth and contributes to debates on globalization and identity by illustrating how young people negotiate cultural encounters and craft meaningful identities that transcend binary oppositions between national and global belonging.

Keywords: national identity, hybrid identity, globalization, media consumption, Moroccan youth

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BECOMING A COSMOPOLITAN: BORDERS CROSSINGS AND MIGRANT IDENTITY IN POSTCOLONIAL FICTION

Abstract: Following Edward Said in his *Reflections on Exile*, “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience.” Identities in exile can be fragmented when they are positioned in specific historical and turbulent moments. The journey of people from one place to another coincides with the process of change in the way they see and are seen by the world around them. Being in exile brings many changes to a person’s life and results in the exilic person suffering an identity crisis especially when they are located in a different culture and operate within a different political situation. As such, literature can be one of the most important spaces where the exilic individual can create themselves and voice the unvoiced experiences about the journey of identities and their positionalities. Based on postcolonial exilic/diasporic literature, this paper seeks to examine how the notions of displaced identity, strangeness and memory are framed and reframed in two postcolonial diasporic Americans’ narratives, Shaila Abdullah’s *Saffron Dreams* (2009) and Laila Halaby’s *Once in a Promised Land* (2007). Drawing upon Diasporic and postcolonial approaches, this paper argues that both novels – the former by a Pakistani-American author and the latter by a Jordanian American author – can be considered as representative of “unhomely” world literature, to use Homi Bhabha’s term, wherein the ‘unhomely’ can live and articulate their cosmopolitan identity from transpositional and transnational literary perspectives.

Keywords: cosmopolitan identity, fiction, border crossings, Diaspora

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CURATING THE SELF ONLINE: DIGITAL TRAVEL IDENTITIES IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Abstract: The paper explores today's interconnected digital landscape, where identity is increasingly constructed, negotiated, elaborated and performed online. Digital identity is a form of emerging hybrid identity, shaped not only by individual self-representation but also by digital footprints, platform-specific affordances and algorithmic visibility. Drawing on previous research on social media, digital ethnography, performativity and platform studies, digital identity is conceptualized as a dynamic, relational and performative construct, which is strongly audience-oriented and functions as a hallmark of contemporary selfhood. Digital identities emerge through choices of usernames, profile pictures, shared content, narrative self-disclosure, as well as through interaction metrics, including likes, comments, shares, followers and subscribers, which indicate audience engagement.

The study examines digital travel identities through a qualitative content analysis of selected travel-focused YouTube channels and travellers' Facebook profiles. The sample comprises publicly accessible accounts curated by self-identified digital travellers, selected to reflect diversity in geographic mobility and global audience reach. Posts and videos have been systematically coded for recurring themes related to self-presentation, narrative framing, visual aesthetics, interaction patterns and representations of place and culture. This approach allows for a comparative analysis of how digital travel identities are constructed and negotiated across various digital platforms for contemporary travel narratives.

Findings show that digital travellers curate highly selective online personas, portraying themselves as adventurous, cosmopolitan and socially engaged. They create online media content to selectively highlight expertise and international presence. Travel experiences such as encounters with exotic locations, local cuisine and cultural practices are strategically foregrounded to promote a rewarding lifestyle of mobility and leisure. Present-day digital travellers can be seen as modern counterparts of traditional travel writers who both document journeys, shape audiences' perceptions of places and mediate identity through storytelling. The choice of digital platforms also affects how digital identities are negotiated and performed: YouTube promotes visual storytelling, performative charisma and aesthetic appeal, while Facebook emphasizes personal networking, community-building and dialogic interaction. Overall, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of emerging identities by highlighting how digital life fosters travel-related selfhood, social belonging and globalized cultural presence in the 21st century.

Keywords: digital identity, travel identity, performativity, platform studies, globalization, social media practices

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DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR INCLUSIVE INTERPRETER TRAINING IN GLOBALIZED HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract: In an era defined by globalization, transnational mobility and digital connectivity, identities are increasingly performed, negotiated and contested. In relation to this, university students embody hybrid, multilingual and transnational identities that challenge traditional frameworks of education. An example of this can be clearly observed in interpreting training classrooms. Interpreting studies highlight the importance of interpreters' ability to mediate diverse narratives. Interpreters increasingly encounter these identity-rich narratives, yet receive little structured training to handle them. This study proposes a practical, research-based training model that integrates digital storytelling into interpreter education to prepare trainees for emerging identity dynamics in a globalised world. Findings show that digital storytelling enhances interpreters' ability to recognise identity signals, manage culturally sensitive content and operate effectively in multilingual environments. By linking interpreting pedagogy with real digital identity practices, this study proposes a pedagogical model for interpreter training grounded in digital media and inclusive educational practices.

Keywords: interpreting, digital storytelling, interpreter training, multilingual education, higher education

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PATRIOTIC IDENTITY IN TRANSITION: DECONSTRUCTING PATRIOTIC DISCOURSE IN MOROCCAN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Abstract: Humans are infused with affection for their homeland and its symbols, patriotism, which is manifested in attachments that transcend the supremacy of ethnolinguistic nationalism. Based on this, the current study accentuates patriotism as an affective bond to the monarch (Bay'a), differentiating it from nationalism by the cultivation of institutional loyalty within the school curriculum. The study critically examines the discourse of patriotism—conceptualised as the state's prescribed linguistic and ideological framework of affective belonging—by investigating how it is discursively manifested within the school curriculum and examining its intended role in shaping learners' (youth) patriotic identity in the Moroccan context.

A mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis is employed to systematically analyse a corpus of 37 official curriculum documents comprising 5291 pages, using #LancsBox X software. Quantitative findings reveal a significant curricular emphasis on two major themes: unity and nationalism. This indicates that the citizenry comprises multiple ethnic backgrounds (Arab, Hassani Saharan and Amazigh) unified within a framework of territorial integrity. These themes significantly dominate patriotic discourse, whereas themes such as democracy, pluralism, and social justice have a lower prevalence. CDA further explains the linguistic strategies, particularly the pervasive use of the imperative mood, which signal an authoritative, top-down approach to knowledge transmission. The analysis suggests that the Moroccan curriculum primarily cultivates a state-centric (loyal) form of patriotism that consolidates various ethnicities and social layers into one single Moroccan identity, defined by a fundamental devotion to the monarchy. This model foregrounds national cohesion and a singular national vision, effectively subordinating citizenship as a critical civic engagement. This study, thereby, contributes to understanding how national narratives are pedagogically constructed and aims to shed light on the official vision for Moroccan national identity as fostered through its education system.

Keywords: patriotic discourse, school curriculum, national identity, citizenship, critical discourse analysis, Morocco

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EXPLORING LANGUAGE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AS A FACTOR OF EMPLOYABILITY IN KOSOVO’S MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT CONFERENCE

Abstract: This study investigates how English proficiency shapes employability, career mobility and social opportunity in Kosovo’s multilingual and post-conflict context. As Kosovo increasingly integrates into European and global economic structures, English has acquired heightened symbolic and practical value across professional fields. Building on sociolinguistic frameworks of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), identity and investment (Norton, 2000), and the linguistic marketplace (Heller, 2011), the study examines how English operates simultaneously as an enabling resource and a mechanism of inequality within Kosovo’s evolving labour market. The research draws on qualitative data from semi-structured interviews conducted between May and July 2025 with 20 participants across eight sectors: IT (n=3), finance (n=2), education (n=3), NGO work (n=3), public administration (n=3), locally oriented businesses (n=2), international business (n=2) and marketing (n=2). Interview analysis was conducted using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019), allowing participants’ narratives to illuminate the meanings they attach to English proficiency and its role in career pathways. Findings reveal that English functions not only as a practical skill—facilitating access to international documentation, training, and collaboration—but also as a form of linguistic capital that enhances prestige, signals professional competence and increases eligibility for international projects and scholarships. However, the study also identifies significant disparities in access to quality English education. Participants from rural areas, smaller municipalities and lower socioeconomic backgrounds reported limited instruction, high costs for private courses and restricted access to certification exams. As a result, English increasingly serves as a gatekeeping mechanism; English language certificates are often required even for roles where daily communication occurs primarily in Albanian or Serbian. These credentialing practices exacerbate inequalities and exclude otherwise qualified candidates. The study concludes that while English proficiency can expand mobility and opportunity, it also reinforces inequalities when learning resources are unevenly distributed. Policy recommendations include broadening equitable English instruction beyond urban centres, integrating English into vocational and higher education, supporting employer-funded training, and promoting multilingual practices that value Kosovo’s linguistic diversity. Through these measures, English can function as a tool for inclusive development rather than a barrier to participation.

Keywords: English proficiency, employability, linguistic capital, multilingualism, Kosovo, language inequality

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LOVE, LANGUAGE AND LAUGHTER: GENDERED NUANCES OF MOROCCAN EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

Abstract: Men and women often exhibit distinct speech patterns, shaped not only by linguistic conventions but also by socialization processes that instil culturally prescribed gender norms. These patterns extend to the expression of emotion, as both psychological predispositions and societal expectations influence the ways in which men and women convey affection, intimacy, and vulnerability. This study examines the intricate interplay between gender, culture and emotional expression in Moroccan Arabic, focusing on the linguistic articulation of love and affection. The study adopts a qualitative, cross-cultural sociolinguistic approach. By combining discourse analysis with ethnographic observation, the research explores the interplay of gender, culture and socialization in shaping emotional expression. Drawing on a cross-sectional analysis of spoken interactions, the research investigates how men and women negotiate, perform and modulate expressions of love, highlighting the subtle role of humour and laughter as both a social facilitator and a discursive strategy. Findings reveal that emotional expression is deeply gendered, shaped by cultural norms, social expectations and communicative context, with women and men employing distinct verbal strategies to navigate intimacy and relational dynamics. By situating these patterns within broader sociolinguistic frameworks, the study contributes to our understanding of how language both reflects and constructs gendered emotional realities. The research underscores the significance of laughter and playful language as essential mediators of affective expression, offering new insights into the nuanced ways Moroccan speakers convey emotion while negotiating social and gendered boundaries.

Keywords: gender, emotional expression, love, laughter, sociolinguistics

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REWRITING IDENTITY: GENDER AND VOICE IN LITERARY TRANSLATION

Abstract: This article explores the complex relationship between gender and identity in the context of post-colonial literary translation, revealing how gender is expressed and portrayed in literary works translated from one language and culture to another. The study illustrates the various ways in which gender roles and individual identities are renegotiated in the wake of colonial rule through the application of feminist translation theory and a comparison of two translations of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). By highlighting the intersectionality of gender, class, and culture, the analysis clarifies how these elements influence the protagonists' identities and their defiance of imperialist and patriarchal norms. The results show that literary translation serves not only as a medium for negotiating and challenging gender norms and constructs but also as a bridge across languages and cultures. According to the research, women translators have long been literary activists, challenging what they perceived as the traditional language, establishing new channels of transmission and participating in cultural discussions. In contrast, male translators emphasize political and cultural resistance to colonialism while attempting to uphold patriarchal standards through the objectification and perpetuation of gender stereotypes. The study highlights the translator's role as an active mediator in this process, suggesting that understanding gender-related issues in translation may influence readers' viewpoints and promote intercultural conversations about gender parity. The results advance knowledge of the socio-political underpinnings of post-colonial literary translation and its continuing significance in discussions of gender equity and identity politics today. The study's findings reinforce the necessity of considering gender in literary translation in order to promote gender parity and enhance our comprehension of gender in a global context as translation can serve as a platform for negotiating gender identity, dispelling gender stereotypes and encouraging gender inclusion.

Keywords: cultural identity, gendered language, patriarchy, translation

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HOW DO TRANSLATORS RECONSTRUCT IDENTITIES VIA TRANSLATION? A CASE STUDY: ARABIC TRANSLATION OF THE WASTE LAND

Abstract: This study aims to investigate linguistic deviations in literary translation as a key site where translators attempt to reconstruct textual, cultural and aesthetic identities. Taking the Arabic translation of *The Waste Land* by the Egyptian critic and intellectual Nabil Ragheb as the focus of this study, the paper examines how deviations at the lexical, grammatical, phonological and semantic levels are handled not merely as stylistic features but as translational choices that reconstruct meaning and identity in the target text. Thus, translation is approached as an interpretive act through which the translator negotiates between the deviant stylistic features of the source text and the normalization process governing the target language and culture. Gideon Toury (1995, p. 265) states that “normalization could be generalized based on inferences drawn from observations of large quantities of data”. Sometimes the translator looks for alternative deviations in the target language in order to create a similar literary effect for the receiving audience, while at other times opts to replace them with the more conventional linguistic structures and meanings.

The study adopts a Descriptive Translation Studies approach. That is, the analysis focuses on how the translator handles literary deviations through an ongoing negotiation between aesthetic deviant structures and the process of normalization. While in some instances Ragheb reproduces deviations by recreating equivalent or alternative forms of deviation in Arabic for the sake of achieving comparable literary effects, in others he opts for normalized structures for the sake of reconstructing a distinct translatorial identity in the target language. The study, which contributes to poetry translation in particular and literary translation in general, concludes that the poet has made use of seven out of eight linguistic deviations, which are: lexical deviation, grammatical deviation, phonological deviation, graphological deviation, semantic deviation, deviation of register and deviation of historical period.

Keywords: literary translation, linguistic deviations, meaning and identity reconstruction, translation as an interpretative act, descriptive translation studies

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GENDER DISCOURSE IN THE ARMED FORCES (2015-2025)

Abstract: Organizations like the military are male-dominated organizations and women still constitute a minority in these institutions. The study investigates gendered practices and women's dual labor and domestic experiences in the Moroccan security forces, particularly the armed forces. I argue that on the surface, it appears that the Moroccan security structure replicates traditional gender roles, but a careful examination of the performance of gender reveals a more complex reality. On the one hand, the gender integration discourse adopted by the armed forces is more a *complimentary* understanding of gender shores performed by men and women, more than a gender equality discourse that enhances women's equal participation and integration in all armed forces departments and their access to decision making positions. On the other hand, women tend to be relegated to female stereotypical roles, serving as secretaries, health workers, and teachers. This research aims at investigating the various discourses of gender integration in the Moroccan Armed Forces. More precisely, it examines narratives published by the Armed Forces that shed light on women soldiers. To achieve this aim, the study will apply critical discourse analysis as a tool to analyse the different written and audio-visual narratives.

Keywords: gender, women, Moroccan armed forces, critical discourse analysis, Morocco

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CULTURAL MEDIATION IN AI TRANSLATION OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS: DOMESTICATION OR FOREIGNIZATION?

Abstract: Translators often play the role of cultural mediators when translating culture-loaded texts to preserve the cultural components embedded in the source text (ST). Furthermore, rapid advances in Neural Machine Translation (NMT) and Large Language Models (LLMs) have accelerated translation productivity and enhanced cross-cultural communication. However, the capacity of AI tools to provide culturally appropriate translations, especially between distant language pairs, such as Arabic and English, remains an underexplored research area. This present study examines the translation potential of two AI tools: Bing Translate (NMT) and Microsoft Copilot (LLM) in rendering culture-specific items (CSIs) found in the work of the Moroccan writer Leila Abouzeid, *The Year of the Elephant*. It aims to identify the cultural tendencies that either promote or hinder the source language (SL) culture in the target text (TT) and to determine which of these two tools is more effective in cultural mediation. The dataset included excerpts from the novella containing various culture-specific items rooted in the Moroccan culture and belonging to the five categories of CSIs outlined by Newmark (1988). The study used a quantitative approach, incorporating human evaluation to assess the AI-generated English translations. The evaluation process was informed by Venuti's (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization and Davies' (2003) CSIs translation procedures. Preliminary results revealed that, while both tools tended to foreignize, due to their reliance on preservation procedure, Microsoft Copilot outperformed Bing Translate by also opting for addition to convey the connotative meaning of each CSI, thereby helping to promote the SL cultural identity in TT. This suggests that the current state of LLMs attests to their potential to serve as cultural mediators, bridging cultural gaps in a world where effective intercultural communication is required in different fields. Nevertheless, human intervention remains essential to overcome the limitations of LLMs as translation tools. These findings contribute to the growing body of work conducted on AI integration in the translation field.

Keywords: AI translation, cultural mediation, CSIs, domestication, foreignization

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THE ROLE OF CULTURAL CONTENT IN ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Abstract: This paper explores the role of cultural content in Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) programs and its impact on learners' psychological engagement, intellectual development and evolving identity. Grounded in an interdisciplinary perspective, the study investigates how language textbooks—used at the intermediate level—shape learners' perceptions of self and other, particularly through the representation of cultural narratives. Using content analysis and drawing on the “Big C” and “little c” culture framework, the research categorizes the cultural elements in AFL materials and examines their alignment with intercultural communicative competence and identity formation. Findings reveal an overemphasis on traditional themes such as religion and history, and limited presence of contemporary social practices, diversity, or critical global issues. This imbalance can restrict learners' ability to engage with the language in meaningful psychological and intellectual ways. Moreover, when learners encounter static or narrow representations of the target culture, their spatial imagination and sense of belonging within that culture may remain limited, ultimately influencing their motivation and emotional connection to the language. The paper argues that cultural content in language education should not merely serve as background information but rather as a dynamic space for interaction, reflection, and identity negotiation. As learners navigate between their native cultural frameworks and the target culture, their psychological well-being, critical thinking, and sense of place are constantly in flux. This interplay between mind, thought, and context is essential in understanding the full experience of language acquisition. Recommendations are offered for curriculum designers and educators to include more diverse, inclusive, and contextually rich cultural materials. Doing so would enhance learners' intercultural competence, support their emotional and cognitive development, and contribute to a more holistic understanding of the human experience in language learning. By situating the learner at the intersection of the psychological, intellectual, and spatial dimensions, this study contributes towards a more integrated and humanistic approach to teaching Arabic as a foreign language.

Keywords: Cultural content, Language identity, TAFL (Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language), Intercultural competence

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EMERGING IDENTITIES THROUGH LANGUAGE: CULTURAL INSTRUCTION IN MOROCCAN EFL CONTEXTS

Abstract: Understanding how, why, and when to say what to whom is essential for culturally appropriate communication in foreign language contexts. Yet EFL educators and scholars have increasingly highlighted the lack of cultural instruction in English language classrooms, particularly in Moroccan educational settings. This study investigates the under-representation of target language culture—especially its deep, invisible features—in Moroccan EFL curricula and explores how this gap affects both teaching and learning processes. The research also examines the intersection of cultural instruction and language identity, recognizing that language is not merely a tool for communication but a carrier of identity. Language identity reflects how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others through the language(s) they speak. In multilingual and multicultural contexts like Morocco, where learners navigate between native and target languages, the negotiation of identity is a central pedagogical concern. The absence of deep cultural content in textbooks may hinder learners' ability to create hybrid or global identities, limiting their intercultural competence.

To explore these dynamics, the study employed a mixed-methods approach: a questionnaire distributed to 58 teacher trainees, interviews with five teacher trainers from two Marrakesh-Safi training centres, and a textbook analysis of *Gateway to English* (1st and 2nd baccalaureate levels). Findings revealed a significant lack of representation of the target culture and a strong desire among trainees for more meaningful cultural engagement. Teachers reported challenges in teaching culture attributable to limited resources, time constraints and insufficient training. This research underscores the need to integrate cultural and identity-based content into EFL instruction to foster learners' communicative competence and intercultural awareness. It calls for a re-evaluation of both textbook design and teacher training programs to better support the development of global citizens capable of navigating diverse cultural landscapes.

Keywords: EFL education, Cultural instruction, Language identity, Intercultural competence, Textbook analysis

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LANGUAGE POLICY AND MEDIA: GLOBAL INSIGHTS FROM A BIBLIOMETRIC AND A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Abstract: Language policy has long played a crucial role in shaping public discourse, constructing national identity and influencing how linguistic hierarchies are reproduced or challenged. In an increasingly globalized and mediatized world, these processes extend beyond national boundaries, contributing to the formation of transnational, hybrid and multi-sited identities through print, digital and broadcast media. However, the ways in which media institutions participate in these processes remain insufficiently explored. To address this gap, this study adopts a mixed-methods design that combines a quantitative bibliometric analysis with a PRISMA-guided qualitative systematic literature review (SLR). Scopus was selected as the primary database for its broad disciplinary coverage and strong reputation as an indexer of high-quality scholarly publications. An initial keyword search generated 6,051 documents, which were then filtered through predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in 326 relevant articles for detailed analysis. In the first phase, the bibliometric analysis identifies key nations, institutions, journals, keywords and influential authors in the field of language policy and media. This phase provides a macro-level understanding of the field's landscape and illustrates the international and interdisciplinary nature of language policy research in mass communication and media studies. The second phase consists of a systematic review of 22 selected scholarly articles identified after the screening stage. This in-depth review sheds light on current applications, emerging trends, challenges and future directions in language policymaking across media contexts. The findings from this combined approach outline the main patterns in how language policy is framed, negotiated and contested across different forms of media. They further demonstrate how media-driven language policy debates contribute to the construction and circulation of identities that operate across national borders, reflecting broader dynamics of globalization and transnational communication. The results further highlight the role of media in promoting linguistic diversity, supporting minority languages, shaping public narratives and influencing broader communication dynamics. They also offer an integrated overview of existing research and identify areas where further empirical work is needed. This study not only contributes an integrated perspective on how language policy interacts with media practices but also serves as a reference point for scholars, policymakers and media practitioners seeking to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Unlike previous reviews, this paper provides a comprehensive, mixed-methods synthesis of language policy and media research, offering novel insights into the dynamic interplay between media institutions, linguistic diversity and policy implementation.

Keywords: language policy, media, bibliometric analysis, systematic literature review (SLR)

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THE COGNITIVE SWITCH: A STUDY OF LANGUAGE MIXING, MENTAL TRANSLATION, AND MULTILINGUAL SELF-EXPRESSION

Abstract: This study investigates the dynamic linguistic practices of multilingual individuals at the crucial intersection of identity and translation, specifically within demanding globalized academic and professional contexts. The core aim of this research is to move beyond prescriptive views of language separation by exploring the practical and psycholinguistic cognitive dimensions of language use. We examined the frequency, context and motivations underlying code-switching (language mixing) and the essential role of mental translation (internal cognitive shifts) in facilitating both overt communication and internal cognition. The study specifically addressed key research questions concerning the situational utility of multiple languages, perceived ease of expression and transition across languages, and the use of external translation aids. Our research method involved a comprehensive survey of 157 multilingual participants, utilizing an online questionnaire designed to capture nuanced linguistic behaviours across cognitive and communicative domains, including speaking, reading, writing and, crucially, thinking. Data was used to isolate language dominance for self-expression and gauge the habituality of internal translation. Participants were asked if they habitually translate words or phrases in their head and whether they perform in-head translation of new academic material presented in class. The results provide empirical evidence illuminating the modern multilingual repertoire. Findings indicate that 60% of participants routinely engage in mental translation, demonstrating it as an integrated cognitive skill and a mechanism for identity maintenance rather than a purely compensatory strategy. This internal translation was particularly active when processing new academic material, 49% reporting they translate teachers' presentations, highlighting the vital role of this internal linguistic mediator in knowledge acquisition. Data revealed a clear situational distinction in language preference: many students preferred L1 for emotional expression, thus affirming cultural and affective roots, and nearly 40% found professional correspondence easier in L2, facilitating effective functioning in the globalized sphere. Analysis revealed that most switches occurred from the language of instruction to the mother tongue, reflecting a need to manage cognitive load and affirm a personal linguistic comfort zone. This capacity for "cognitive switching" is established as a fundamental component of effective multilingual competence. Ultimately, this research offers valuable insights that challenge restrictive language attitudes, underscore the necessity of recognizing mental translation as a critical component of personal identity and provide a clearer picture of linguistic behaviour in a globalized society.

Keywords: code-switching, language repertoire, mental translation, multilingual context, tertiary students

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CREATING GAMES AS A WINDOW TO UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL THEORIES IN PRACTICE

Abstract: Gen Z often has a difficult time understanding the world in which the Frankfurt School first came to be and the relationship between the disillusionment with Enlightenment reason and the cultural theories birthed in the early to mid-twentieth century. Yet it is vital to understand these theories in order to navigate a globalized, postcolonial world. To this end, I ask students to create games in my cultural theories class, putting into practice the concepts which they have learned in theory. One of these is Foucault's idea about making a fit between the material reorganization of space, life-practices, values and discourses. We also discuss how the sharing of cultures is dependent upon willing interpreters and receivers, something which was absent in the colonial mindset. This past semester one of my students from Beregszász created a game implementing all these aspects. Another group of students created a game which aids in distinguishing between high culture, popular culture, mass culture and folk culture, as defined by Paddy Whannel and Stuart Hall in *The Popular Arts*. This is valuable not only in a monocultural context but also in an intercultural context, as the evaluation and appreciation of any culture involves an ethical dimension. My presentation briefly discusses the theories behind the games and introduces the rules of the games themselves, together with their relevance for helping students understand how these theories help them navigate various situations in the real world.

Keywords: games, cultural theories, Foucault, Hall

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CONSTRUCTING AUTHORIAL IDENTITY IN L2 ACADEMIC WRITING: THREE CASE STUDIES

Abstract: Acquiring discipline-specific academic style is the result of an extended learning process, even in one's native language, and poses particular difficulties in a foreign language due partly to limited linguistic competence and experience with academic style, and partly to differing cultural expectations. A sensitive aspect is constructing authorial identity which allows the writer to claim ownership of research and ideas and could be especially challenging for novice writers. Numerous studies have examined the construction of authorial identity emerging in disciplinary socialization, typically from the reader's perspective, but little attention is paid to uncovering authors' decisions and strategies. This presentation aims to contribute to this field of research by offering case studies that illustrate the construction of authorial identity in the English-language theses of three Hungarian students majoring in English BA studies. The investigation explores the strategies of personalisation and impersonalisation contributing to the development of different authorial identities from two perspectives: through a researcher–reader discourse analytical framework and interviews with the authors. The findings suggest that the characteristics of authorial identity are significantly influenced by the thesis topic, the students' knowledge of and experience with English academic style, their confidence in their own professional competence, their communicative intentions and the supervisor's recommendations.

Keywords: scientific objectivity, authorial identity, personalisation, impersonalisation

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THE WASHBACK OF INTERNATIONAL HIGH-STAKES LANGUAGE EXAMS ON LEARNERS' MOTIVATION AND IDENTITY

Abstract: International high-stakes language exams such as the International English Language System (IELTS), the Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE) and the Deutsches Sprachdiplom (DSD) play a central role in shaping learners' international academic opportunities and global mobility. While much research has examined the impact of these globally recognised international language exams on teaching practices, comparatively little attention has been given to how learners themselves perceive and respond to the washback impact of the exams particularly in relation to learning motivation and learner identity. This preliminary study offers foundational insights into the washback of these international exams on learners' motivation and identity, guiding the design of a forthcoming longitudinal investigation. The study draws on semi-structured interviews with Hungarian secondary-school students (n = 6), all aged 18, who had recently taken one of the above exams to pursue further studies abroad. All participants are graduating this school year. The interview data were analysed using thematic coding, allowing for the systematic identification of recurring patterns related to motivational orientations, learning behaviours and identity development during exam preparation. Findings indicate that the high-stakes nature of these exams strongly influenced learners' motivation by promoting goal-directed effort, sustained engagement and structured learning habits. At the same time, participants reported negative washback effects, including increased stress and performance pressure, demonstrating the dual impact of international high-stakes language assessments. Participants also described evolving identities as prospective global language users, shaped by exam requirements and aspirations for international academic participation.

On a global scale, these findings highlight that international high-stakes exams influence educational trajectories, mobility opportunities and professional pathways worldwide. Understanding their impact on motivation and identity provides insight into the broader consequences of standardised language testing in interconnected educational systems. The study underscores the need for globally informed pedagogical practices that balance exam preparation with authentic language use, promote learner well-being and foster adaptable global citizens. Policymakers, curriculum designers and language educators worldwide can use these insights to mitigate negative washback while enhancing learners' motivation and identity development in diverse international contexts.

Keywords: globally recognised high-stakes language exams, learner motivation, learner identity, washback

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TAKING FAMILY TIES INTO ACCOUNT IN THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THIRD-COUNTRY WORKERS IN HUNGARY – LEGAL CONTEXT

Abstract: Recently, there has been a notable increase in the number of third-country nationals arriving in Hungary for employment purposes. However, rigorous conditions apply to their ability to work legally and their residency in Hungary is contingent upon their employment status. The termination or cessation of their employment generally results in the termination of their right of residence. This raises the question as to whether strict conditions are necessary in all such cases. Should social considerations be taken into account? Furthermore, how should the situation be viewed when a third-country national starts a Hungarian family while in Hungary? Based on these considerations, is it feasible to disregard some of the residence rules and facilitate integration into society through family ties? This issue will be presented through a recent ruling by the Regional Court of Budapest. Using elements of legal research methodology, this study aims to explore the situation and conduct a legal analysis. The research will involve a thorough examination of the text of the relevant laws and judgments.

Keywords: migration, family law, inclusive society, social law

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CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS: THE PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES, AND CHALLENGES OF MOROCCAN ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Abstract: The language classroom in the 21st century extends beyond the teaching of linguistic skills and components such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, and listening. In an increasingly globalized world, English language learners and teachers are expected to develop essential 21st-century competencies, particularly creative thinking, collaboration, and communication, which play a crucial role in shaping their emerging academic, professional, and cultural identities. Consequently, fostering creative thinking has become a key pedagogical priority in EFL education, as it enables learners to participate meaningfully in global knowledge communities and supports teachers in redefining their instructional identities.

This study explores Moroccan EFL teachers' perceptions, classroom practices, and challenges related to the integration of creative thinking skills in English language teaching. Adopting an exploratory qualitative research design, the study employs a qualitative survey questionnaire to elicit teachers' views, experiences, and instructional realities. Data were collected from 82 Moroccan English language teachers working across different educational levels and analysed thematically to identify recurrent patterns and themes.

The findings reveal that while teachers recognise the value of creative thinking in fostering learner autonomy, global awareness, and identity development, their efforts are constrained by contextual challenges, including limited resources, rigid curriculum requirements and large class sizes. Despite these constraints, the study highlights teachers' attempts to negotiate their professional identities within globalized pedagogical discourses. By situating creative thinking within the framework of emerging identities, this study contributes to EFL pedagogy by offering context-sensitive insights into how Moroccan teachers engage with global educational demands while responding to local classroom realities.

Keywords: 21st-century skills, creative thinking, emerging identities, teachers' perceptions, EFL, globalized education.

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ON URBAN SPACE AND FEMALE MOBILITY IN CONTEMPORARY MOROCCAN CINEMA

Abstract: Casablanca has exerted and continues to exert a fascination for both international and national filmmakers. Within the framework of Orientalist discourse, this paper examines the intersectionality of 'gender' and 'space' by interrogating the link between women and the city in two postcolonial Moroccan films: Abdalkader Lagtaa's *Love in Casablanca* (1991) and Mustapha Darkaoui's *Casablanca by Night* (2004). It unravels how Casablanca, as a postcolonial city, empowers and disempowers Moroccan women. The chosen corpus is worthy of scrutiny since it addresses the role of the urban space in liberating women. Drawing on several postcolonial studies on the shaping of space (e.g., Said, 1978; Foucault, 1986; Jacobs, 1996; Williams, 1997; Shohat, 1997; Bordwell, 1998; Clayden, 2005; Fenster, 2005; Edwards, 2005; and Khatib, 2005), and appropriating thematic film analysis, this paper demonstrates that Casablanca is constructed as a city of patriarchal rule (i.e., where men assume the role of power and control women) and, in tandem, as a space of unrestricted female mobility (i.e., where women's emancipation is intensely felt and experienced) in the films examined. Both filmmakers, Laqtaa and Darkaoui, reveal that while Casablanca is, at first glance, a male-dominated city where women suffer from patriarchy and oppression, it is, ultimately, a city where women can move freely and withhold power. The two films also show how the utopian space is superimposed upon the dystopian space. While the dystopian space does not meet the subjects' expectations, the utopian space (i.e., dreams and fantasies) is exploited as an alternative for individuals to escape daily life in Casablanca. This paper contributes to the better understanding of other similar postcolonial movies about Morocco. It is a potential avenue for readers to enlighten their mindset about cross-cultural encounters, thereby attaining a comprehensive vision about the nature of postcolonial cinema. This paper remains a 'literature of resistance' against postcolonial cinema whose main goal is to disseminate cultural ideologies about the colonized 'Other'.

Keywords: Moroccan cinema, gender, urban space, mobility, intersectionality, postcolonial criticism.

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FACTORS HINDERING AND FACILITATING THE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Abstract: Globalization and the growing prevalence of destabilized and impoverished regions have significantly intensified contemporary migration flows, creating complex challenges for the regulation of migration under international law. This study examines the international legal frameworks governing both regular and irregular migration, analyses key case law and labour law dimensions, and focuses specifically on the obstacles related to linguistic and cultural integration. Instruments adopted by the United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and various regional human rights bodies consistently enshrine the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination. However, persistent inconsistencies in implementation render these legal guarantees largely formalistic in practice.

The analysis highlights the kafala system applied in several Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states as an illustrative example. While this model achieves high levels of economic integration of migrant labour, it simultaneously fails to foster social integration and, in many cases, perpetuates migrant vulnerability. Drawing on statistical data from the OECD, Eurostat and the ILO, the study demonstrates that linguistic barriers and cultural distance are significant determinants of integration outcomes. Nevertheless, host-state integration policies and the reluctance of many destination countries to ratify relevant international legal instruments are equally decisive factors. The findings suggest that current ideologically-driven international agreements are insufficient to ensure the effective protection of migrants' rights and/or their successful social inclusion. The paper argues for a pragmatic reconfiguration of the international migration regime, advocating a model that reconciles the interests of migrants with the economic imperatives and social priorities of host states. Such an approach is essential for moving beyond formal legal equality toward substantive integration.

Keywords: ILO, kafala-system, integration, discrimination, legal guaranties

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DIGITAL SOUTH–SOUTH ENCOUNTERS: REFRAMING MOROCCAN IDENTITY THROUGH SUB-SAHARAN MIGRANT NARRATIVES

Abstract: This paper examines how South–South migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to Morocco reshapes narratives of national and cultural identity within digital spaces. While much scholarship continues to frame African migration in terms of North–South dynamics, this study highlights Morocco’s growing role as a hub of intra-African mobility and cultural negotiation. Drawing on postcolonial theory, digital anthropology and migration studies, it investigates whether digital representations of Sub-Saharan migrants reproduce colonial hierarchies or promote more inclusive and pluralistic understandings of Moroccan identity. Focusing on Generation Z migrants (aged 18–25) residing in Rabat, the research explores how young Sub-Saharan Africans articulate belonging, resilience and self-representation on platforms such as TikTok, Facebook and WhatsApp. Using a qualitative methodology that integrates online ethnography, semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis, the study investigates how digital storytelling and everyday communicative practices mediate migrants’ lived experiences and encounters with Moroccan society.

Preliminary findings suggest that Moroccan digital discourse continues to reflect certain colonial and racial hierarchies. However, migrant youth actively subvert these structures by constructing transnational, Afro-diasporic identities that challenge exclusionary narratives of the nation. By situating these dynamics within broader South–South cultural exchanges, the paper argues that Morocco’s digital sphere has become a critical site where global and local identities intersect and are continually redefined. This study contributes to contemporary debates on decolonial belonging, digital citizenship and African connectivity by demonstrating how digitally mediated encounters between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans generate new models of intercultural dialogue and solidarity. It highlights the capacity of digital platforms not only to reproduce inherited inequalities but also to serve as transformative arenas for negotiating identity, power and belonging in a globalized yet asymmetrical world.

Keywords: South–South migration, Moroccan identity, digital anthropology, digital sphere, Generation Z

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CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE – OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Abstract: Cultural and linguistic diversity in the workplace is becoming one of the key challenges of the contemporary labour market bringing both significant opportunities and potential threats. The source of this diversity stems from the processes of globalization, migration and increasing professional mobility. Cultural diversity is not only an opportunity to reveal many positive effects, both social and organizational, but also a potential source of many problems. Therefore, this presentation will highlight the issue of cultural and linguistic diversity in the workplace from the perspective of labour and criminal law with the aim of identifying the opportunities (including increased creativity, innovation and a better understanding of global markets) and threats (particularly discrimination, mobbing and other undesirable behaviours) associated with this phenomenon. The presentation will analyse the following issues:

1. Causes of cultural and linguistic diversity in the workplace from the perspective of the employer and the employee.
2. The language in which employee documentation is prepared, particularly employment contracts – an analysis of European Union and national law regulations.
3. The language used for communication in the workplace in the context of national legal regulations.
4. The dress code in the workplace and employee attire preferences motivated by cultural and religious reasons.
5. Discrimination, mobbing and other undesirable behaviours due to cultural and linguistic differences.

Appropriate diversity management can minimize the risk of discrimination, mobbing and other undesirable behaviours, which are subject to both labour law regulations and criminal law sanctions. From a criminal law perspective, three aspects are crucial: identifying situations that may constitute an offense or crime, establishing mechanisms for sanctioning such acts and the recognising the preventive role of criminal law as a guarantee of employee dignity.

The issue of cultural and linguistic diversity, and particularly legal instruments aimed at achieving full social integration in the workplace, is interdisciplinary in nature. Consequently, it is necessary to present issues related to international law, EU law, human rights law, labour law and criminal law. The presentation will employ a dogmatic-legal approach.

Keywords: cultural and linguistic diversity, employer, employee, discrimination, criminal law

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TEACHER RESEARCH AS A MEDIATING SPACE FOR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN EAL CONTEXTS

Abstract: The development of teacher identity is a dynamic and multi-dimensional process determined by personal histories, social interactions and evolving professional practices. Teachers' self-perceptions as professionals are constantly influenced by the interconnections between their experiences in the classroom, their interactions with colleagues and students and the broader social and institutional contexts in which they work. In an increasingly globalised world characterised by intensive mobility, digital interconnectedness and intercultural encounters, teachers have to negotiate complex professional roles that transcend local boundaries and respond to diverse learner needs. Within this landscape, teacher research has emerged as a critical mediating space that enables practitioners to systematically investigate their own teaching, reflect on challenges and successes and engage in collaborative dialogue with the communities of practice to which they belong. Such inquiry supports the ongoing construction and reconstruction of professional identities and supports teachers to situate themselves more strategically and flexibly within diverse educational environments.

This study investigates how teacher-led research contributes to professional identity development among teachers of English as an additional language (EAL) enrolled in a one-year specialisation programme at the University of Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria). The programme integrates academic study with an individual research project. It requires participants to investigate their own classroom practices, analyse the data they have obtained and produce a research-based diploma thesis. The study employs a qualitative methodology using data collected from a survey to capture participants' self-perceptions and was complemented by qualitative interviews that explored their experiences and reflections on teaching and research in depth. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, insights and emerging dimensions of professional identity development. The findings indicate that teacher research not only strengthens language teachers' sense of agency and professional confidence but also empowers them to redefine their roles as autonomous professionals within diverse linguistic, cultural and professional contexts. Participants reported a more reflective turn of mind, a clearer articulation of their professional values and a greater ability to position themselves as both classroom practitioners and producers of knowledge contributing to both academic and professional communities.

Keywords: teacher identity, teacher research, EAL

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UNITED IN RICE: THE EMERGENCE OF A GLOBAL NON-WHITE IDENTITY IN YOUTUBE COMMENTS

Abstract: This presentation will discuss the emergence of a globalized non-white identity in the YouTube comments of a comedic 'Mock Asian' performance. The study aims to investigate how YouTube comment sections may function as sites for the construction of transnational identity in a globalised digital space. The data consist of 2,526 comments collected from five videos by Malaysian-English comedian Nigel Ng (A.K.A 'Uncle Roger'). A mixed-method discourse analysis was conducted, coding for reaction comments, quotations, metapragmatic commentary and explicit ethnic or racial self-identification. This study focuses predominantly on the final category of 'ethnic or racial self-identification' comments, identifying patterns in how these comments construct their identity in relation to the video. The results show that while the videos draw on stereotyped East Asian cultural references, the comment section becomes a space for a much broader form of identification. Commenters from a wide range of national, ethnic and racial backgrounds consistently align with the content of the video through narratives of food culture, strict parenting and cultural authenticity, alongside explicit discursive distancing from 'whiteness.' In this way, a global 'non-white' identity is constructed outside of nationally bounded categories. These patterns suggest that YouTube videos and comment sections can actively facilitate the emergence of hybrid, postcolonial identities that operate across borders. The study thus contributes to understanding how digital media enables different forms of identity construction in a globalised digital world.

Keywords: digital identity, racialised identity, globalization, YouTube comments